

Crazy Love 131

Chapter 131

“A blind date?” Monica’s voice suddenly became sharp. She looked at Thomas in disbelief and asked, “Don’t you like me?”

Thomas calmly said, “But you don’t like me. No matter how much I’m fond of you, I have to learn to let go.

Monica’s face suddenly turned pale!

She had never thought that Thomas would give up on her one day and go on a blind date with another woman!

How could this be?

Although she didn’t like him, she had already regarded him as hers.

Even if she wouldn’t be with Thomas, she thought he should still treat her as his goddess and worship her for the rest of his life!

How could he date someone else?

Monica wouldn’t say these dark thoughts out loud.

She couldn’t help but look at Thomas pitifully. “Thomas, but I’m really bored alone. How about you take me with you? I promise I won’t say anything improper. I’ll sit next to you and help you.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea.” Thomas refused.

Tears welled up in Monica's eyes. "I used to love that painter so much, but he lied to me and hurt me. I said I would never come back, but now I'm back. I'm really desperate. When I'm back, you're the only

one who came to pick me up. You're the only person who treats me well unconditionally. If you leave me, I really don't know how to live."

Monica suddenly burst into tears. "Maybe I shouldn't have come back this time. I was deceived, and I deserved it. I should have ended my life."

She wiped her eyes hard and said, "Forget it, you can go on your blind date, and you don't have to send me to the hotel. I will take good care of myself."

After Monica finished speaking, she looked at him with reddened eyes.

Thomas's heart softened visibly

He sympathized with her. If it weren't for the fact that Monica was at her wit's end, she wouldn't have been willing to come back

She regarded love as everything.

Now without love, she must be very heartbroken.

"I'm leaving" Monica pursed her lips and was about to leave

Thomas sighed and gently pulled her back. "Let's go together"

"Really?" Monica's eyes lit up and she asked softly, "Will it cause you any trouble?"

Thomas shook his head. "My blind date doesn't know you. There won't be any

trouble.”

Monica immediately smiled with tears in her eyes. “Thomas, you’re so nice to me.”

Thomas stroked her hair and said nothing.

In the cafe.

Theresa glanced at her watch.

The pointers read 9:30.

“Late for the first blind date?”

That’s interesting.”

Behind the thick black-framed glasses, Theresa revealed a strange smile.

Her blind date seemed to be very reluctant to go on this blind date.

Theresa thought it made sense.

In her view, it was strange that people of different genders should fall for each other.

Thinking of her mother’s crazy urge for her marriage, Theresa felt that Thomas was a perfect candidate.

Theresa was not in a hurry even though Thomas had not arrived yet.

She put a classical literature book on the table and pretended to read it.

Then, she browsed her phone under the table.

Theresa was a graduate student at Anaville University, majoring in classical literature.

This was just one of her identities.

Yet this identity was enough to make her a talent in people's eyes.

Almost everyone who had met Theresa said that she was quiet and well-behaved, born to be an academic.

At Anaville University, there were already professors fighting to get her to be their Ph.D. student.

Everyone felt that Theresa would become a prominent academic figure in the future.

But no one knew that she had another identity that was incompatible with her academic career.

Theresa was casually browsing through the gossip.

Her cell phone suddenly rang.

"Theresa Austin!" The voice on the other end of the line was extremely sharp.

Theresa calmly put the phone away for a while and then put it back to her ear. "What's the matter?"

“Do you know you’re fucking lucky? You’re going to be famous. As your agent, my career is taking off too.” The voice on the other end of the line was so excited to the extent that the speaker might faint.

Theresa listened expressionlessly to her agent’s roars. After her agent stopped speaking, she asked lightly, “Tell me, what’s the matter?”

Her agent took a deep breath but still couldn’t hide her excitement. “Do you know the Storm Group? It wants you to be their spokesperson for their new phone!”

Theresa was stunned for a moment. “The Storm Group? I’m just a model. Why would they want me to be their spokesperson?”

“Don’t look down on yourself. You’ve already made a name for yourself in the

industry. What’s strange about that company taking a fancy to you and wanting you to be

its spokesperson?” The agent said excitedly, “I’ve already accepted this endorsement for

you. You should go to the Storm Group to sign a contract tomorrow and shoot advertisements. Theresa, we’re really going to be rich this time.”

“Maybe,” Theresa said flatly.

“Don’t be so calm.” The agent was a little upset. “You make me feel no sense of accomplishment at all.”

Theresa smiled. “Do you want me to shout or exclaim now?”

“Forget it! Theresa, you’re doing so well in the modeling industry now, and the entertainment industry is opening its arms to you. Are you still not going to confess your identity to your family and classmates?”

Confusion flashed past Theresa's eyes.

A few years ago, she entered the model industry by chance and used the stage name Rose. She was used to wearing thick glasses in daily life, while her makeup was very exaggerated on the stage.

As a result, over the past few years, neither her family nor her friends had found that the famous supermodel Rose was the promising candidate wanted by professionals at Anaville University.

Her two identities were so different that even those who think of the possibility. /

were familiar with her would not

Theresa didn't want to hide it from her family and friends at first.

But now, no one around had ever found it out, which was a little embarrassing.

Should she confess?

If she confessed, would her mother beat her up?

Theresa shivered.

Just then, she saw Thomas coming in. She quickly said, "Let's talk about it later. My blind

date is coming."

"What? You went on a blind date? Theresa, don't enter a relationship so rashly. Your career is in a period of expansion. You..."

Theresa calmly turned off her phone when she heard her agent's frantic voice.

Well, the world was quiet.

After entering the cafe, Thomas quickly targeted his blind date.

He saw a girl who wore black-framed glasses, liked reading, dressed conservatively, and seemed to be quiet. He easily recognized Theresa.

Monica followed his gaze and saw Theresa.

She heaved a sigh of relief.

She could tell that Theresa was old-fashioned, boring, and unsophisticated at first glance.

She believed that Thomas would never fall for such a girl.

“Sorry, I’m late.” Thomas walked over.

“It doesn’t matter.” Theresa looked at Monica, who was next to Thomas.

Monica immediately said in a sweet voice, “Nice to meet you, Miss Austin. I’m Monica. Please don’t get me wrong. Although I grew up with Thomas, we’re just good friends. This is his first blind date, and he’s a little nervous, so I’m here to help him. Will you mind this?”

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“I’m sorry. shouldn’t have brought someone else with me.” Thomas said awkwardly. Theresa glanced at him and smiled meaningfully. “Well, it doesn’t matter. don’t mind.” She made an inviting gesture.

Then, Thomas sat down with Monica.

As soon as they sat down, Monica reached out and took Thomas's arm.

Before Theresa could react, she said sweetly, "Miss Austin, our relationship is too good. We usually pay no attention to our distance. believe you will understand it."

After that, she whispered in Thomas' ear, "I'm here to help you test her to see if she's really gentle and quiet." She was rarely so close to Thomas.

Although Thomas felt that it was wrong to do so, he couldn't help but feel his heart beating

faster.

Theresa looked at them with great interest. There was no emotion in her heart, and she even wanted to smile. In her opinion, Thomas must be gay.

She wondered if Thomas was putting on a show with that girl today.

Theresa smiled gently and became even more elegant and virtuous. "Of course, it doesn't matter. Everyone has a few good friends."

Monica was surprised.

For a moment, she was not sure if Theresa simply didn't care about it or if she was pretending.

Monica leaned on Thomas' shoulder shyly and sweetly and said, "Miss Austin, it's great that you think so." Theresa was more sure that they were doing so on purpose.

Her smile deepened. "Don't worry, won't mind."

The two women talked compactly. Thomas couldn't cut in even if he wanted to.

Monica looked at the book in front of Theresa and suddenly asked, "Is this classical literature?"

Theresa pushed up her glasses and looked extremely quiet. "Yes, it is an anthology of the bard of Avon. casually picked it up from the bookshelf."

"The bard of Avon?" Monica frowned and said, "I've never heard of this person before. don't think he's famous. Miss Austin, advise you not to waste your time reading books written by unknown writers."

As soon as she finished speaking, Theresa and Thomas looked at her in shock.

"What's wrong?" Monica was confused, but then she suddenly realized it. "Ah, see. People like you must be proud of reading little-known books, aren't you? shouldn't have said that."

Theresa smiled and didn't say anything. Monica thought that Theresa had admitted defeat and was about to continue.

But Thomas was afraid that she would make a fool of herself again, so he couldn't help but softly say, "Monica, the bard of Avon refers to Shakespeare."

The smile on Monica's face froze.

Although Monica was from a rich family and was provided with a good learning environment since she was a child, she was born with no interest in studying. Her family doted on her and didn't interfere with her studies after they witnessed her lack of interest.

Monica didn't pursue knowledge anymore after she got a master's degree in college. In terms of academic knowledge, she was

actually a good—for—nothing.

But no matter how stupid she was, she had still heard of Shakespeare.

How come she said that Shakespeare's anthology was little known and that he was unknown?

Monica suddenly felt like she was about to explode with shame.

She hated Theresa in her heart.

She thought Theresa, who looked rustic, was very scheming.

Mentioning Shakespeare was fine, but why did she have to say the bard of Avon? Wasn't she deliberately embarrassing her? "No, can't let Thomas be with such a woman," she thought.

Monica immediately felt her fighting spirit soar.

"It isn't that don't agree with Thomas looking for a girlfriend, but don't think Theresa was worthy of him." She justified herself in her heart.

"Sorry, didn't react in time." Monica tried her best to smile.

"There's nothing to be sorry about." Theresa shook her head. "Everyone has their own blind spots of knowledge." Theresa really thought so.

However, Monica felt that Theresa was mocking her.

For a moment, her face darkened.

Monica took a deep breath and suddenly said in a sweet voice, "Hey, Theresa, you've been reading such books all day long. Could it be that you're a literary youth? heard that literary youths like to speak of

words and sentences unintelligible to others, thus to gain a sense of knowledgeableness. Do you really understand these classical literature books or are you just acting?"

What Monica said was rude, but her eyes looked very innocent as if she was really curious. Theresa smiled and didn't say anything.

Monica refused to let her go. She went on to say, "Miss Austin, advise you to put more energy into your real life. Don't put on air all day long. The books can't get you a Ph.D. degree, can they?"

As she spoke, she burst into laughter.

Theresa smiled as well.

Thomas couldn't smile.

He was really embarrassed for Monica.

"Miss Austin, what are you smiling at? Do you think what said is wrong?" Monica asked.

Thomas had no choice but to pull her again and whispered, "Theresa is a graduate student in classical literature at Anaville University. She's indeed about to apply for a Ph.D."

Monica's smile froze again. She looked at Theresa in disbelief. She couldn't believe this bumpkin was a graduate student at Anaville University. "Miss Austin, I'm sorry," Thomas said apologetically.

Theresa raised her eyebrows and said, "It's nothing. There are indeed a lot of people who just think reading is a way to show off. Ms. Lynn is not completely wrong."

Monica glared at Theresa. She didn't think Theresa was trying to help her out at all.

She only felt that Theresa was too scheming.

In her view, Theresa had skillfully made a fool of her twice, and she was just pretending to

be kind now.

Theresa was terrifyingly scheming to her!

However, given she had been defeated in succession today, she thought it was not appropriate for her to continue to pester Theresa..

She covered her stomach with her hands and exclaimed, "Thomas, my stomach hurts."

"What's wrong?" Thomas was a little nervous.

"It just suddenly hurts." Monica looked at him pitifully. "You know, I've had stomach problems since was a child." Thomas was about to take Monica to the hospital, but he hesitated after glancing at Theresa.

Although he didn't want to develop a relationship with Theresa.

It was too rude to leave a girl alone like this.

However, Theresa didn't care. She chuckled and said, "It's- Se bi I'll have some coffee."

"I'm really sorry for what happened today. I'll pay the bill." apologetically, This Theresa refuse and allowed him to pay the bill.

Thomas hurriedly took Monica to the

hospital. The physician but co nit some medicine to treat Monica's stomachache.

Thomas took Monica back to the hotel and served her for a long time before Monica said that she felt much better. "Thomas." Monica looked at him pitifully. "You treat me the best. No one has ever taken care of me like this except my parents." Thomas didn't respond.

What was the point of being good to her?

She didn't like him, and this wouldn't change.

"Thomas, can you take care of me like this forever?" Monica put on an even more pitiful

look.

Thomas' heart softened and he said gently, "I will take care of you until find a girlfriend or you find a boyfriend." Monica was not satisfied. She frowned and asked, "What if you have a girlfriend?"

"Then have to consider my girlfriend's feelings." Thomas calmly replied.

Monica's expression immediately became unhappy.

After a long time, she said, "What you said makes sense."

However, there was a flash of gloom in the depths of her eyes.

"Girlfriend?"

Theresa?

Don't ever think of it!" She thought.

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Theresa didn't know that Monica had a grudge against her.

She finished her coffee in a good mood and then went home slowly.

As soon as she got home, she saw her agent sitting on her sofa.

"Theresa, how dare you!" The agent was angry. "Explain to me what's going on with the blind date!"

Theresa raised her eyebrows and took off her glasses, revealing her charming eyes. Then she took off her loose hoodie and revealed her perfect figure.

"What's wrong with going on a blind date? My mother is in such a hurry to marry me that she's almost threatening me with her life. It's better to have a boyfriend so that she can stop pestering me," Theresa said.

"That makes sense, but your career..."

"It's Rose's career. What does it have to do with Theresa?" Theresa said calmly. The agent choked on her words.

Theresa's words made sense. So she bit back her retort.

"Why don't you talk about the endorsement of the Storm Group instead of talking about my blind date with me? Theresa lay on the sofa lazily and naturally, revealing her wonderful

figure.

The agent glanced at it and blushed. She couldn't help saying, "I wonder what you are thinking. Your figure is so hot, but you always cover it up. If I were your classmate, I would never guess that you are Rose."

“Thank you for your compliment,” Theresa said.

“Well.” The agent was helpless. “I’ll tell you about the endorsement first.”

She took out a pile of contracts and carefully explained them to Theresa.

The new phone of the Storm Group was the first of a new series.

This series was called Allure.

It was said that Allure was a fay that was extremely charming and could tempt people.

The reason why the new series of mobile phones of the Storm Group was named Allure was to tell everyone that their new mobile phones had extreme charm and could make everyone fall in love with them.

In this way, when choosing a spokesperson, they looked for very charming people.

As a result, the person who was in charge of it noticed Theresa.

Rose had become a top supermodel in merely a few years.

Her style on the catwalk was enchanting, and every move she made was breathtakingly attractive.

Je was very s

The person in charge felt that Theresa’s to that of the Allure series, so he submitted her name and the names of some other people of the same style to his

boss.

“In the end, it was Mr. Landor, who decided to choose you.” The agent added, “It is said that Mr. Landor doesn’t pay much attention to the modeling industry. He originally planned to let his subordinates choose the candidate directly, but Mrs. Landor happened to be next to him. I heard that you were chosen because she said casually that you are the most suitable.”

Theresa replied, “Is it so casual?” “People say 1

that Mr. Landor dotes on his wife very much. Mrs. Landor’s words are more useful than anyone else’s words.” The agent also sighed. “If you have a chance, you have to invite her to dinner.”

“Forget it. I don’t think a meal will matter to her. Maybe she’ll think I’m trying to curry favor with her,” Theresa said. The agent thought for a moment and said, “Maybe. Anyway, you can play it by ear.”

Theresa agreed casually, then picked up the documents and read them carefully.

Because the new phone was about to be released.

So it was urgent this time.

The contract would be signed tomorrow, and the advertisement would be filmed in a week.

With the strength of the Storm Group, this advertisement would definitely be released all over the world after it was filmed. That was why her agent was so excited.

Not only was the payment high.

But also this advertisement could make her be seen by everyone and greatly increase her popularity.

Theresa enjoyed the stage very much. Now that such a good opportunity was in front of her, she would do her best. Seeing that Theresa was reading the advertisement script seriously, the agent smiled and left quietly.

While Theresa was focused on reading the advertisement script, a piece of breaking news broke out in the upper circle of Anaville.

Monica, the daughter of the Lynn family who had accidentally fallen into the sea and died, returned alive. How could she survive the turbulent waves?

In the beginning, no one believed it, but her parents had excitedly brought their daughter who came back to life to a few banquets in a high profile and publicized the news that she had been rescued.

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Monica's words could justify herself. Moreover, Thomas had faked a witness for her.

In addition, Monica's body wasn't found back then.

It was not too hard for people to accept that Monica was still alive.

As a result, Monica quickly returned to the circle of socialites which she was particularly familiar with.

After restoring her identity, Monica was busy attending all kinds of banquets. After confirming that Thomas had no intention of meeting Theresa again for the time being, she immediately forgot about him.

On this day, she was attending a lady's party.

Monica had carefully dressed up. As soon as she walked over, she heard the girls talking about Ben and Susan. Her face immediately darkened.

"If I had known earlier that Ben's scar is faked, I would have cried and begged to marry him. He's actually so handsome!" One of the girls said regretfully.

“Forget it. If people had known that Ben was so good-looking, you wouldn’t have a chance. Many young ladies would want to marry him.”

“That’s not true. The Landor family doesn’t need to rely on marriage to add to their glory. The current Mrs. Landor’s family is barely an upstart. But Ben still dotes on her.”

“You mean Susan, right? She is really lucky.”

As soon as Susan’s name was mentioned, the girls began to discuss her enviously.

“It’s said that Ben is temperamental. When she first got married everyone discussed how many ways she could survive. But in the end, she found her happiness.”

“Those who spread rumors deserve to die. Ben dotes on his wife so much. He doesn’t look like a violent and unpredictable man.” “That’s right. It’s nonsense to say that he brings bad luck to his wife: Monica is still alive, isn’t she? She has come back.”

“Monica is so unlucky. If nothing had happened to her, she would still be Mrs. Lagdos, now! Ben should have protected her. They must have a good relationship.”

“Luck is sometimes predestined. There’s no point in being envious.”

The girls were chatting enthusiastically when one of them suddenly turned her head and saw Monica standing behind them with a livid expression.

“Monica!” The girl exclaimed nervously. All of a sudden, everyone fell into silence.

Monica suddenly smiled and said,

“You’re right about things. If you’re right about one thing, if,

hadn't fallen into the sea, it still be mislabeled. Even though Edie has remarried, it doesn't change our feelings

for each other."

Everyone looked at each other for a while and echoed her. Only then did Monica feel a little better.

However, she must hurry to see Ben.

Now her identity was legal.

Moreover, the Lynn family and Landor family had been friends for generations. Visiting one another would be fair and reasonable.

Monica went to beg her parents that very night.

Her parents had always been spoiling their only daughter, which was why she grew so brainless. Now that their daughter was back, they doted on her even more.

As soon as they heard that Monica wanted to visit the Landor family.

Mr. and Mrs. Lynn immediately sent the official visiting card to the Landor family.

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Charlie perked up at the sight of the formal visit request.

After all, the Lynn family and the Landor family were long-time acquaintances.

Otherwise, the children from both families wouldn't have ended up together in the first place.

But then, Monica mysteriously disappeared.

Thankfully, Monica's parents didn't succumb to the swirling rumors tying Ben to Monica's disappearance.

However, losing their beloved daughter, especially in the Landor's house, had unavoidably soured relations a bit, and gradually, the families drifted apart, with no contact for over a

year. Now that Monica had returned, it seemed that her parents could finally breathe a sigh of relief, laying their worries to rest.

It was time for both families to reconnect and rebuild their relationship, starting with this first visit, which seemed like a chance to break the ice.

Taking this visit seriously, Charlie made it a point to discuss the matter with Ben. The Lynn family visiting? Ben frowned slightly.

It would normally be a non-issue, but considering the strange news about Monica previously, he couldn't shake off a feeling of unease.

"Ben, Monica's parents have had a hard year," Charlie sighed sympathetically. "Don't hold it against them for directing their anger at us. Anyone would be a little bit irate, losing a daughter like they did."

Ben shook his head. He couldn't possibly blame Monica's parents.

In truth, guilt nestled persistently in his heart. Back then, Monica had been at her wit's end, threatening to take her own life if he didn't assist in faking her death. Thomas had

persistently pleaded with him as well. Eventually, he agreed to help Monica escape by faking her death. Understandably, her parents were devastated, and Ben couldn't offer any explanations, only offering secret assistance to the Lynn family when he could.

“Now that the Lynn family has officially sent a visit request, could you stay home with me to host them tomorrow?” Charlie asked. Ben’s brows knitted together, but he remained silent.

Realizing the implication, Charlie hastily turned to Susan, saying, “Susan, don’t get the wrong idea. The Lynn and Landor families have indeed been acquainted for generations. Otherwise, our elders wouldn’t have tried to pair the children up. Unfortunately, it turned into a good intention gone awry. Ben and Monica, although they grew up together, couldn’t stand each other. Even after they got married, they barely spoke and slept in separate rooms. There wasn’t any romantic involvement.”

Caught somewhat off guard, Susan replied, “Grandpa, don’t mind it. Should Ben and I stay home to welcome them tomorrow?”

Relieved, Charlie patted Susan’s hand gently, “Yes, yes, that would be wonderful. Rest assured, Monica genuinely had no romantic chemistry with Ben. Seeing him with you now, she would only feel happy for him.”

Even though Susan had a faint sense of foreboding, she promptly nodded in agreement. Charlie then left, finally at ease.

Susan glanced at Ben but before she could say anything, he spoke anxiously, “I have blocked her completely. We haven’t had any contact since.”

Susan couldn’t help but find the situation slightly amusing, “Why are you so nervous? She might not even have any intentions, and I’m just overthinking things.”

Ben nodded fervently, in agreement.

Raising an eyebrow, Susan teased, “So you do think I’m overreacting?”

Ben found himself at a loss for words, not knowing how to navigate this precarious conversation.

“I need help right now,” he thought.

Susan snorted disdainfully and brushed past him to open the large wardrobe.

Desperate to salvage the situation, Ben suggested, "It seems like there aren't many clothes here. Should we get some more delivered?"

"That won't be necessary," Susan responded, as she began pulling out outfits one by one. "What are you doing?" Ben inquired.

Meeting his gaze, Susan stated firmly, "Your ex-wife is coming over tomorrow! As your current wife, do you expect me to just sit back and lose?"

Ben shook his head vigorously, "My dear, there's no way you could lose. Even in a sackcloth, you would be the most beautiful." "You're saying only I deserve to wear a sackcloth now?" Susan asked, her face expressionless.

Ben found himself tongue-tied again, unable to respond appropriately.

Ignoring him, Susan turned away to continue selecting her outfit...

A potent intuition kept Ben rooted to the spot, patiently waiting instead of wandering off or engaging in other activities. After choosing a set of clothes, Susan moved to the dressing room to change.

Ben waited with a serious expression, anticipating her return.

A few minutes passed.

Susan emerged wearing a white dress, "How about this one?"

Ben nodded vigorously, "It looks good."

And it truly did.

The dress was a sophisticated pearl white, woven with soft golden and silver threads that created streaks of shimmer. Though it appeared simple, it had a very artistic design. However, Susan inspected herself in the mirror and was not satisfied, "It's too plain."

After a while, she came out wearing a red dress, transforming instantly from a little fairy

into a little seductress.

Ben continued to nod eagerly, but Susan wasn't paying him any mind. She scrutinized her reflection again, "It's too flashy." Then she changed into another gown.

"Too formal!"

She went back in.

"Too casual!"

And so, the cycle continued.

Ben, initially ready and attentive, eventually slumped into the sofa, seemingly defeated.

Though Susan politely asked for his opinion each time, it seemed she didn't actually require his input.

Ben watched in awe as Susan tried on outfit after outfit, almost covering the entire bed with heaps of clothes.

He knew that on normal days, Susan was someone who was content with a simple shirt and jeans. She rarely ever explored the depths of her wardrobe like this. "Is she planning to try on a lifetime's worth of clothes tonight?" Ben thought.

Once Susan appeared in yet another outfit, Ben braced himself and suggested, "Actually, Susan, every outfit! Look, it's pretty good. Why not just pick one at random?"

"You don't understand! This isn't something to be taken lightly," Susan said, her reflection in the mirror radiating a fierce determination, "I cannot lose tomorrow."

Her eyes were practically aflame with competitive spirit.

At that, Ben found himself silenced, not daring to utter another word.

At long last, the clothes were ready.

Ben thought they could finally get some sleep.

But to his astonishment, Susan summoned a stylist in the dead of night, intent on staying up to perfect her look. Ben was speechless.

"In some ways, women really are a terrifying species," he mused.

After a night of constant fussing, with Ben accompanying her the entire time, morning finally arrived.

It was time to welcome the guests as mentioned in the request.

Since Monica's parents were elders, Charlie had instructed Ben and Susan to greet them at

the entrance.

Ben glanced at his meticulously dolled-up young wife standing beside him, and his mouth twitched involuntarily. In the end, the dress Susan chose was...

The initial white dress she tried on.

“So what was the purpose of that three-hour outfit-swapping saga?” Ben thought, biting his tongue to keep from voicing his thoughts out loud.

However, all the fuss from last night did yield results.

The dress looked great on Susan, and her slightly curled hair added a touch of allure to her appearance, Combined with @ iriyriad of clever lifledelSID like the tiny ribbon tied on her high heels, and the fringe on her earrings matching perfectly with her brooch, Susan looked nothing short of a fairy descended from the heavens today.

As Susan stood ready and radiant, Monica’s family arrived.

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The car halted at the entrance, and Monica’s parents were the first to step out.

Following them, Monica emerged.

The moment Monica stepped out of the car, Susan swiftly cast a glance at her.

Then, she felt immensely relieved about the thorough preparations she had made the night.

before.

Clearly, Monica hadn’t just thrown something on either!

Decked out in a goose–yellow dress paired with a matching headband, Monica exuded at youthful aura. The ensemble worked wonderfully to counterbalance her inherently delicate

features.

She had even added a touch of flair to her outfit, with the hem of the dress stopping right at her ankles, giving glimpses of them as she walked—a subtle yet tantalizing detail.

At the same time, Monica caught sight of the impeccably dressed Susan.

Her face immediately clouded over.

She had anticipated outshining an unprepared Susan with her meticulously planned attire, leaving her in the shadows.

To her surprise, Susan had been equally cunning, transforming herself overnight.

Moreover, Monica had had a rather rough year, and despite the makeup artist's best efforts, a hint of fatigue was still visible on her face.

In contrast, Susan seemed to be in high spirits recently, leading a comfortable life. Her skin radiated a healthy glow, and there was a vivacious twinkle in her eyes.

Somehow, she seemed to have outshone Monica.

Unbeknownst to the others, the two women had already engaged in a silent duel.

“Mr. and Mrs. Lynn,” Ben greeted, “this way please.”

Monica's parents seemed to be in a good mood.

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Mr. Lynn gave Ben a friendly pat on the shoulder, saying, "You didn't have to bother coming. to receive us personally."

"It's only right for the younger generation," Ben replied.

Mr. Lynn's smile broadened, warming up even more.

After Monica's previous accident at sea, he had held a grudge against Ben for a while. Now that Monica was back, he felt a bit embarrassed about his previous hostility.

Now, no matter how he looked at Ben, he found him agreeable.

"Edie," Monica called out in a sweet, coquettish tone, walking towards him in her towering four-inch heels.

Her eyes shone as she looked at Ben.

Earlier, just from seeing the picture circulating online, she already thought that Ben's looks were excessively handsome after getting his scar removed.

Now, seeing him in person, she almost couldn't restrain a gasp..

"So handsome, way too handsome!"

Even that painter who had previously enchanted her couldn't hold a candle to this visage.

If she had known earlier what Ben actually looked like, why would she ever divorce him? Why pursue something called "true love"?

Looks are the embont of true love.

Lost in her infatuation, she hurried over and instinctively reached out to hug Ben.

Ben was confused.

Lost in her infatuation, she hurried over and instinctively reached out to hug him.

But she stumbled slightly, her face turning a shade of awkward red.

Quickly, Ben moved aside, taking Susan's hand. "Let's lead everyone inside first he suggested, with Susan by his side.

shall we?"

Monica eyed their intertwined hands, her lips pressed tightly together for a moment before

she forced a smile and said, "Yes, let's listen to Edie."

Suddenly, Ben felt a sharp twist on his hand.

He refrained from yelping in pain, only shooting Monica a glance. "We are grown-ups now, maybe drop the childhood nickname," he suggested.

A puzzled expression took over Monica's face. "Why? We grew up together, and I've always called you that. Even after we got married, I continued calling you that.

Realizing what she just mentioned, she suddenly covered her mouth, shooting at somewhat annoyed look at Susan. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Landor. Should I not have brought that up? If it really bothers you, I won't call him that anymore."

Susan offered her a smile that didn't reach her eyes. "Yes, I am quite bothered by it. It would be wonderful if you could correct that."

Monica was speechless.

Why should Susan get to be bothered?

She couldn't help but cast a pitiful glance at Ben and say, "Eddie~~"

The way she elongated the ending made Ben shudder involuntarily.

"I mind it too," he chimed in immediately.

Monica was speechless again.

Monica's parents exchanged somewhat perplexed looks at their daughter's behavior.

In their memories, Monica had always been quite averse to Ben.

Pair un the

two you

Back then, they had to forcefully with Monica wearing an unhappy expression each day.

Now that Ben was married, they had let go of their stubborn insistence. As long as Monica was happy, they didn't care about family background or anything of that sort.

But why had Monica suddenly become close to Ben?

Monica's parents couldn't have imagined that their daughter was such a fanatic for handsome faces.

The atmosphere was getting a bit awkward.

Mr. Lynn tried to smooth things over. "Monica, we're all adults here. The childhood nicknames sound a bit inappropriate now. You two are from the same generation, so calling each other by first names would be more suitable.

Even her father wasn't siding with her. Monica felt increasingly aggrieved.

She looked as though she was on the verge of tears, but she managed to respond pitifully, "I understand."

Ben pretended not to notice the longing glances Monica kept throwing his way and led the Lynn family inside the house.

Charlie had already prepared some top-notch coffee and snacks, ready to welcome them.

Seeing Monica, Charlie greeted her with a genuine smile. "Monica, come, sit next to Grandpa."

"Grandpa!" Monica's spirit lifted at once, and she hurried to sit beside him.

"You've been through quite an ordeal. When we heard about your sea accident, your parents were beside themselves, even I felt like my heart was breaking," Charlie said kindly.

Monica offered a gentle smile as she replied, "I was fortunate that a fishing boat was nearby to rescue me. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to return."

"That was a stroke of luck on your part," Charlie said, patting the back of her hand affectionately.

“What luck do I have?” Monica sighed heavily. “I was only away recovering for a year, and to think, when I came back, Edie... Ben had already married someone else.”

She cast a deeply resentful glance at Ben, her eyes filled with sorrow and regret.

Ben, Monica’s parents, and Charlie were all confused.

The look in Ben’s eyes turned noticeably colder in an instant.

What was she talking about? She had been recovering for a year?

This

him?

lie might have passed with her parents, but she had the audacity to say it in front of

“Ah, I’m sorry. I... shouldn’t have said those things. Monica put on a face that seemed to show she realized that she had misspoken, yet her eyes rapidly filled with tears. “I... I just couldn’t help but reminisce about the times Ben and I shared together. We were childhood. friends who entered into marriage with the support of both our families. I initially thought that we would be together forever. I never expected... that one accident would ruin everything. I... I just couldn’t hold back.”

As she spoke, Monica covered her eyes, seemingly on the brink of collapsing.

Tears streamed ceaselessly through the gaps between her fingers.

She was throwing herself wholeheartedly into her performance.

The grand hall of the Landor's' house fell into a deep silence.

A shadow seemed to pass over Charlie's eyes.

He had been overjoyed at Monica's return initially.

But what did she mean by this now?

Was she trying to sabotage the relationship between Ben and Susan?

Charlie found himself becoming increasingly displeased.

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In the beginning, when Monica married into the family, she acted as if she was in a

perpetual state of displeasure, hardly the demeanor of someone who wanted to settle into a blissful life.

Ben had treated Monica like she was invisible back then, with almost no interaction

between them.

In reality, the marriage was virtually non-existent.

But then Susan arrived, and it was apparent that Ben's mood had significantly lifted.

The fierceness that once lingered in his eyes had lessened considerably, and smiles even began to grace his lips occasionally. He even willingly had the scar removed that he had borne for 20 years.

It could be said that it was only after Susan entered his life that he genuinely began to live.

Though Monica was someone Charlie had watched grow up, holding a certain affection for her, how could she compare with Ben?

Charlie would never want to see Ben return to the state he was in before meeting Susan.

“Charlie,” Mr. Lynn chimed in, slightly embarrassed, “Monica just got back and is perhaps not quite herself. Please don’t hold it against her.”

Charlie simply smiled and gestured for Susan to come over. “Susan, come here.”

Susan then walked over obediently.

Charlie gently held Susan’s hand, introducing her casually. “Let me introduce you all. This is Susan, Ben’s wife. The kids, Susan and Ben, got together out of mutual affection. I am more than happy to see their relationship flourish. Besides, this means I might be holding a great–grandchild sooner rather than later, right?”

Knowing that Charlie was offering her his support, Susan couldn’t help but smile gently.

Monica wiped away her tears, her voice tinged with sobs. “Grandfather, if I hadn’t been recuperating for a year, you might already have a great–grandchild by now.”

Charlie’s face darkened considerably at her words.

“Monica, stop talking nonsense!” Mr. Lynn warned, noticing the growing tension.

“But I didn’t say anything wrong,” Monica retorted, looking somewhat wronged.

Ben’s brows furrowed. He couldn’t hold back and was about to say something when Susan said softly and gently, “Ms. Lynn.”

“What is it?” Monica replied, still maintaining her tear–streaked face.

Susan spoke with a soft gentleness. “From what you’re saying, it seems you and Ben must’ve had a great relationship.”

Maintaining her woeful expression, Monica responded, “We grew up together. What do you

think, Ms. Miller?”

Ben instantly became apprehensive, eager to clarify something immediately.

Susan wasn’t in the slightest bit rushed as she continued to ask warmly, “So, you must know him quite well then?”

Monica’s heart skipped a beat.

She and Ben had indeed grown up together, that was true.

But to say she knew him well...

Well, she really didn’t know him that much.

But could she admit defeat at this moment?

No, she couldn’t.

Monica stiffened her neck and said, “Of course I do.”

“Oh, then you must certainly know about Ben’s love for spicy food?” Susan asked with a face feigning surprise.

Monica hastily responded, "Of course I know that."

At the corner of Ben's lips, a faint smile began to emerge. Suddenly, he wasn't in a hurry at all and even felt a hint of amusement bubbling within him.

Susan continued, "Then, do you know about his habit of lazing around in bed in the morning?"

Monica replied quickly, "We were married, how could I not know that?"

"Oh, and his strong dislike for tea, you must be well aware of that too?" Susan inquired further.

Monica nodded swiftly. "Naturally."

Susan nodded with an even warmer smile, and said, "Truly childhood sweethearts."

She said nothing more, simply returning to sit calmly beside Ben.

Monica felt confused, sensing that something was off, but with her level of intellect, she couldn't quite figure it out in the moment.

It was Charlie who spoke up nonchalantly. "Monica, it seems like you don't quite understand Ben. He has never liked spicy food, and he has always been accustomed to waking up early. As for tea, he has been drinking quite a bit since he was a child, accompanying me."

Monica was speechless.

Her face involuntarily turned ashen.

So Susan was tricking her!

This woman was really too cunning!

Monica couldn't help but glare at Susan with a trace of anger. "Did you do that on purpose?"

Susan chuckled lightly. "No, I was just asking casually. I didn't expect Ms. Lynn to know

Ben so well."

Susan wore a warm smile, yet her words were laced with a subtle disregard for Monica's dignity.

Tears welled up instantly in Monica's eyes. She couldn't help but look at Ben with an aggrieved expression. "I didn't expect your current wife to be so eloquent!" she exclaimed.

Ben chuckled, a hint of pride in his demeanor. "Thank you for the compliment."

Monica was speechless again.

Was this a compliment?

Was it?

Was it?

Monica looked at Susan, then at Ben, and finally at Charlie.

She suddenly realized that since the moment she left, there was no place for her in the Landor family anymore.

“Monica,” Mr. Lynn couldn’t bear to see her discomfort and suggested, “perhaps it’s time for us to leave for today?”

Monica wiped her tears but remained seated, not budging an inch.

The current scenario at the Landors’ didn’t signify a permanent state.

From the first moment she truly saw Ben, she fell deeply in love with him.

Wasn’t there a saying, “Chasing a man is only a veil away”? She and Ben shared years of connection.

Monica believed that nothing in this world was too difficult if one was determined.

As long as she persevered, she could reclaim everything that belonged to her.

Besides, she didn’t come today just to engage in a war of words.

She came prepared!

From what she understood, Susan came from a humble background. Despite appearing refined and graceful, she lacked the depth and upbringing of a family with a profound heritage, something Monica possessed.

Monica was never academically inclined, barely scraping by in her studies.

However, she dedicated herself to becoming a perfect wife, learning various skills.

For instance, in a world where families cherished traditions, Monica was taught embroidery by a master artisan.

She was adept at it, along with other life-enhancing skills like flower arranging and coffee

artistry.

Could Susan match this?

Did her family have the resources to nurture these skills?

Monica was resolute. Today, she would make Susan feel inferior and gain the admiration of Charlie and Ben.

With this intent, even amidst mounting embarrassment, she stayed put.

She said with a shallow smile, "Actually, I brought gifts for everyone on this visit."

She produced a delicate box.

Neatly placed inside were two handkerchiefs, one embroidered with a green pine and the other with a coiled dragon.

Speaking softly, she said, "While I was recovering, I had nothing else to do. At that time, I wasn't aware that I had been presumed dead, nor did I know that Ben had remarried. These two handkerchiefs... were embroidered stitch by stitch with all my longing and affection. However, Ms. Miller, I wasn't aware of your existence then, so I didn't prepare a gift for you. You won't mind, right?"

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Susan shook her head expressionlessly.

“That’s good then,” Monica responded, handing the pine–embroidered handkerchief to Charlie and the one with the dragon embroidery to Ben.

However, both men refrained from accepting the gifts, leaving Monica’s hand awkwardly hanging in the air.

Mr. Lynn felt a rising irritation. Although he believed that Monica was indeed causing a scene today, he couldn’t bear to see the Landor family treat his daughter, who had returned against all odds, with such disdain.

“Charlie, this embroidery wasn’t easy to create. These two pieces took Monica at least two months to finish. Please accept them, considering her efforts,” he urged, his tone becoming slightly rigid.

Monica’s face portrayed a picture of silent cries. “I disappeared for just a year. Has all the affection between our families really dissipated within that time?”

Ben narrowed his eyes and finally reached out to take the handkerchief.

But before Monica could even break into a smile, he casually handed the piece to Susan, saying, “Here, you can have this.”

“Thank you,” Susan replied, smiling sweetly.

Monica felt a surge of urgency. “I put a lot of effort into this embroidery! Perhaps, given Ms. Miller’s background, she might not fully appreciate the craftsmanship!”

Susan examined the handkerchief closely before admitting, “Indeed, I can’t quite

understand it.”

A gleam of triumph flashed in Monica's eyes, and she was about to retort when Ben, utterly nonchalant, interjected, "The embroidery hanging in our bedroom is a true masterpiece. Once you've seen a true masterpiece, how can you appreciate something of this playful

caliber?"

Monica was speechless.

Playful caliber?

How come she never realized that Ben had such a venomous tongue?

Monica's lips quivered, unable to find words for a moment.

"Alright, alright," Charlie intervened, trying to smooth things over. "Monica is still a child. I think this handkerchief is quite nice."

Monica managed a strained smile, her facial expression growing increasingly stiff.

Seeing Monica like this, even Susan started to feel secondhand embarrassment for her.

Truth be told, Monica's sudden return did stir a flicker of unease within Susan.

It would be impossible to say she felt absolutely no threat.

But Ben's demeanor greatly reassured her.

Even Charlie had unhesitatingly chosen to stand by her side.

This eased the nervous knot in her stomach significantly.

Now, all she had to do was wait for Monica to acknowledge defeat and back down.

Given how clear Charlie and Ben had made their stance, even if Monica had harbored some hopes earlier, she should give them up now, right?

However, Susan severely underestimated Monica's level of irrationality and infatuation. Even amidst the prevailing awkwardness, Monica had no intention of backing down.

She believed that the only reason Ben hadn't changed his opinion of her was due to that embroidery piece hanging in his bedroom.

"Had he not been accustomed to masterpieces, he would have been dazzled by my dragon embroidery," she thought.

But no matter, she had other skills to fall back on.

Ignoring the previous embarrassment as if nothing had happened, Monica stood up and took a stroll around the living room.

Noticing that the room only housed bare vases without a single fresh flower, a glint of opportunity sparked in her eyes.

"Grandpa, why are there no fresh flowers in this room?" she asked proactively. "I've studied flower arrangement for a long time. How about we get some flowers delivered here and I can help decorate?"

Flower arrangement?

Susan froze for a moment before hurriedly declining. "That won't be possible."

“Why not?” Monica asked, wearing a triumphant expression as if she had caught Susan off guard. “Ms. Miller, it’s quite impolite for the lady of the house not to know flower arranging. If you can’t do it, why not let someone else help? What are you afraid of?”

Believing that she had finally found an opportunity to turn the tables, Monica spoke with an air of smug satisfaction.

Before Susan could respond, Mr. Lynn pulled at his daughter, wearing a speechless expression.

“Dad, why are you pulling me?” Monica asked, a bit annoyed.

Mr. Lynn explained, “Charlie is allergic to pollen. It’s not just in the Landors’ house that flowers cannot be placed, but even when other families invite Charlie, they have to ensure there are no fresh flowers around.”

This was a well-known fact amongst the established families in Anaville.

Monica, who had once been Charlie’s granddaughter-in-law, was oblivious to this.

Even though no one had verbally reprimanded her, it felt as though she had been slapped mercilessly, numerous times.

Her face was alternating between shades of red and pale, like a dye workshop experiencing a malfunction.

“Charlie, we should take our leave for today,” said Mr. Lynn as he stood up.

“Alright,” Charlie replied with a courteous smile. “Visit us again soon.”

This time, he didn't even extend the customary offer of asking Ben to escort them out.

Mr. Lynn, wearing a stern face, led Monica and her mother to their car without uttering a word.

Monica, still fuming, protested. "Dad,

soon!"

"Haven't you embarrassed yourself enough already?" Her father shot her a stern look.

"How have I embarrassed myself?" Monica retorted defiantly. "So, I have a bad memory, so

what?"

Mr. Lynn was about to continue the reprimand when Monica's mother intervened, hugging Monica and saying, "Enough now. Our daughter just recovered from her injuries and returned home after a long time. Why are you yelling at her?"

Mr. Lynn's face soured further as he replied, "Just keep spoiling her."

"I will, she's my daughter, I'll spoil her as I wish." Monica's mother dismissed his concerns, but even she seemed a bit puzzled by Monica's behavior today.

She turned to Monica and said, "Monica, I remember you weren't at all fond of Ben. When you were married, you always had that dissatisfied expression on your face. But now, why...

"Mom!" Monica's face turned a bright red. "Times have changed! I didn't realize back then how handsome Ben was."

Mr. Lynn was baffled. "Just because of that?"

“Isn’t that reason enough?” Monica argued back boldly, her eyes twinkling with a hint of infatuation.

He couldn’t help but chuckle at her naivety. “Ben hasn’t changed one bit in terms of his character and temperament. If you couldn’t stand him back then, what makes you think things will work out just because he has a handsome face now?”

“Dad, I had no interest in getting to know him better when he wasn’t this handsome. Now it’s different. As long as he stays this attractive, I’m willing to follow his lead for the rest of my life, be it east or west,” Monica declared, a hint of enchantment twinkling in her eyes.

Mr. Lynn was speechless.

He sighed deeply and said after a pause, “Look, no matter what you’re thinking, the fact remains that he’s already married. You need to let go of these fanciful thoughts. We’ll attend more social gatherings and find someone suitable for you.”

“But will anyone you choose be as handsome as Ben?” Monica pressed anxiously.

Her father was left somewhat speechless. “So if they’re not as handsome as Ben, you won’t marry them?”

“Of course I won’t,” Monica responded matter-of-factly. “Why should I settle for second best when there’s clearly a better option? Unless you find someone even more attractive than Ben, he’s the one I’ve set my heart on for this lifetime.”

“You...” Her father felt a twinge of pain in his chest. “Are you trying to be the death of me?”

Monica looked at him with pleading eyes, and said, “Dad! If not for that accident, I would still be Ben’s wife. Now that I’m back, why is there no place for me in the Landor family anymore? It’s not fair to me. And consider this—I’m a divorcee now. Who from a reputable family would be willing to marry me? If I can’t remarry Ben, I’d be settling for someone far beneath us. Would you really be content with that?”

Monica's words struck a chord.

In the depth of Mr. Lynn's eyes, a flicker of contemplation couldn't help but manifest.

In their circle, the trend was to have daughters marry into families of higher or equal

status.

Monica and Ben's initial union perfectly epitomized this principle, bringing numerous benefits to the Lynn family.

Now, with Monica having been presumed dead, the marriage to Ben had automatically

dissolved.

Despite this, Ben had continued to take good care of the Lynn family, showcasing the merits of a prosperous match.

However, Monica now bore the stigma of a divorced woman, and if she were to remarry, it would likely be into a family less prominent than theirs.

This wouldn't assist their family, rather, it would be a drain on their resources.

Thinking about this, Mr. Lynn suddenly realized that a remarriage indeed seemed like a brilliant idea.

"Even if the idea of remarrying is good, it doesn't mean the others will agree," he said, his

tone becoming somewhat gentler.

“How can they not agree?” Mrs. Lynn burst out, getting increasingly anxious. “Our daughter was raised to be the perfect bride for a prominent family, surely she’s not inferior to Susan, who comes from a humble background!”

“It’s not about being inferior,” Mr. Lynn replied calmly. “It seems that this Susan is rather crafty. Both Ben and Charlie are now on her side, leaving Monica with no opportunity.”

“Dad, you have to help me find a solution,” Monica urged, clearly distressed.

Mr. Lynn narrowed his eyes in thought before saying, “Indeed, we need to strategize properly.”

If Monica herself was reluctant, he wouldn’t have insisted, but now that she was willing, he certainly didn’t want to give up on this advantageous alliance with the Landor family.

If a remarriage was possible, it would indeed be the best outcome.

“Dad, I’m relying entirely on you now,” Monica said, her face filled with hope and expectation.

Mr. Lynn nodded, his mind buzzing with plans and strategies.

From his perspective, Ben still harbored some affection for Monica.

Otherwise, why would he have clandestinely supported the Lynn family believing that Monica was dead?

There had to be lingering affection.

Ben’s ruthless demeanor today must be the result of Susan’s manipulation.

Susan seemed innocent but harbored deep and intricate schemes.

He needed to find a way to reveal her true colors to both Charlie and Ben.

Once Susan was out of the picture, it would only be natural for Monica and Ben to reunite.

But how to execute this plan?

Finding Susan's vulnerability was the first step.

As Mr. Lynn was about to instruct someone to investigate Susan, they arrived home, where the housekeeper informed them that a Miss Smith had been waiting for a considerable amount of time.

"Miss Smith?" Mr. Lynn exclaimed, somewhat surprised. For the housekeeper to announce her with such gravity, she could not have an insignificant background.

But there wasn't a family with the surname Smith among Anaville's prominent families.

"Mr. Lynn, it's Isabella Smith, from the Smith family of Riowert," the housekeeper quickly clarified.

The Smith family from Riowert.

Mr. Lynn nodded, registering the information.

This Miss Smith, although a foreigner in their midst, had been making significant waves lately.

She had outright rented a whole floor in the most bustling area of Anaville, even paying more than 2 million dollars in rent for a year upfront.

Furthermore, she was massively investing in her company, ensuring the facilities, software, and employee benefits were all top-notch within the industry.

In just a few days, she had probably spent tens of millions.

Despite splashing out so much money, she hadn't shown any specific moves yet.

The people of Anaville were all keen to see how she planned to play her hand.

Unexpectedly, the person who was such a hot topic took the initiative to visit them today.

Mr. Lynn squinted his eyes, inquiring, "What is she wearing today?"

The housekeeper responded, "A very formal ladies' business suit."

Mr. Lynn nodded, understanding the gravity of the situation. "I see. I'll go change my clothes. Ask her to meet me in the study."

The housekeeper immediately went to carry out the instructions.

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A few minutes later, in the Lynn family's study, Mr. Lynn sat firmly at the head of the table while the housekeeper respectfully ushered the visitor in..

"Miss Smith, please have a seat," Mr. Lynn greeted with a smile.

Isabella sat down and got straight to the point, "Mr. Lynn, am here today to borrow some money from you."

As she spoke, a hint of reluctance was palpable in her demeanor.

In her past life, she rarely focused on business matters. Only if it involved Ben would she pay a bit more attention.

In her memory, a grand opportunity in the business Lynn family.

She knew that directly asking for a loan might not be well-received, but she was also aware that Monica had returned. In the past life, the Lynn family had stirred quite a bit of drama in their attempts to

reconcile Monica and Ben.

This time around, she saw no reason why they wouldn't cause a stir again.

If they were harboring such intentions, then she just happened to have the information they were craving. A world was looming in the next few days.

Back then, Ben entered the scene with ten million dollars and exited with a staggering hundred million dollars, a feat hailed by many as a business miracle.

Now, Isabella wanted to replicate this remarkable success.

Ben admired capable individuals. If she could also turn ten million dollars into a hundred million dollars, he would surely regard her with newfound respect, realizing that she was indeed the person who could genuinely assist him.

Originally, Isabella was brimming with confidence, intending to accomplish this all by herself. However, there had been a series of unexpected setbacks recently.

First, when she established her company, mysterious additional expenses kept cropping up, causing her budget to be severely strained.

Furthermore, she planned to start an entertainment company and had covertly reached out to several promising talents for the future.

Yet, every time she made contact with someone, they would promptly inform her that they had already signed with another company, named "Future Entertainment."

1. In her previous life, there was no trace of this company in the entertainment industry. It was evident that the company either went bankrupt or was too insignificant to remember. It irked her that the talents she had her eye on were snatched away by that company, one after another. Following these developments, Isabella's company remained nothing but a shell. A shell that couldn't generate any income, yet required continual investment to maintain. Consequently, her funds were dwindling. She had initially received twelve million dollars from her family to kickstart her business venture in Coraland.

After purchasing property, establishing the company, and hiring several high-salaried talents, she was left with merely four million dollars.

Isabella had no choice but to approach her family once again for financial aid. However, her usually doting parents unequivocally refused, stating that the twelve million dollars was their limit. If she exhausted this amount without building a successful venture, she would have to return home and settle down in marriage, a prospect Isabella was adamantly against.

But without money, she couldn't invest and therefore couldn't reap any astonishing profits. Left with no other options, Isabella decided to seek out a partner for herself. Isabella had tried to reach out to Leo, but the moment he heard it involved investing money, he bolted faster than anyone else.

She even sought collaboration with other established families in Anaville, but those people didn't trust her at all. They didn't even allow her to speak before refusing her partnership

request.

After much consideration, Isabella set her sights on the

Isabella believed there was a foundation for collaboration between them.

As for whether Monica and Ben would actually reconcile after receiving the information, Isabella wasn't the least bit concerned. No matter how the Lynn family plotted, Monica was like a blob of mud that couldn't be propped up against a wall.

"Borrowing money?" Mr. Lynn chuckled. "Let's forget about borrowing. I can gift you ten thousand dollars, and you don't have to repay it. Consider it as fostering a good relationship between our families."

Ten thousand dollars?

Isabella replied calmly, "I intend to borrow six million dollars."

Mr. Lynn narrowed his eyes, "I'm afraid we don't have that much liquid capital at our disposal." Isabella flashed a slight smile, "What if I could facilitate a reconciliation between Monica

and Ben?"

Mr. Lynn's pupils constricted sharply, "I don't know what you're talking about. Ben is already married,"

"What era are we living in? Just because someone is married, it doesn't mean they can't divorce," Isabella remarked. "Besides, if it weren't for that accident, Ms. Lynn would still be Mrs. Landor. Why should she return, fully recovered from her ordeal, only to find her position usurped? It really irks me on Monica's behalf."

Mr. Lynn scrutinized Isabella closely, who met his gaze with a smiling face.

After a lengthy silence, he finally spoke, "Why would someone from Riowert be capable facilitating a reconciliation between Ben and Monica?"

"Because I have compromising information on Susan," Isabella whispered mysteriously, of

her voice dropping to a conspiratorial tone.

“Oh?” Mr. Lynn remained impassive.

Feeling the need to reveal a bit more to pique his interest, she continued, “Right now, the public believes that Ben and Susan are a loving couple. But who knows that in Susan’s heart, there lies affection for another man, and it has been there for a full decade?”

“Oh?” This time, a glimmer of interest sparked in Mr. Lynn’s eyes.

“And there’s more. Susan has a very bad relationship with her family. Her parents and even her own sister regard her as an enemy. Do you know why?”

“Oh?” The spark in Mr. Lynn’s eyes brightened. He was genuinely unaware of these details.

However, Isabella decided to hold back the rest of the information for now. She looked at Mr. Lynn and proposed, “Six million dollars, and I’ll tell you everything I know. Furthermore, I can write an IOU, promising to repay the amount with interest within five days at the latest. I am, after all, a member of the Smith family, you shouldn’t worry about my ability to repay the loan, right?”

After a moment of reflection, Mr. Lynn spoke slowly, “If the information you’ve provided is all true, I can lend you the six million dollars.”

“It is, it is, all true,” Isabella couldn’t hide the excitement bubbling inside her as she hastily replied.

Without hesitation, she revealed everything — Susan’s relationship with Timothy and the complications between Susan and Yana.

These events had been exposed to the public in her previous life.

It was one of the reasons Isabella had always felt that Susan didn’t deserve Ben. How could someone as fickle and heartless as Susan merit a lifetime of affection from Ben?

Was she worthy of it?

Mr. Lynn listened intently, occasionally probing for further details.

Observing that Isabella answered each query without faltering, and she seemed to be fabricating anything, a subtle glint of interest appeared in his eyes.

Interesting.

He was surprised to find that Susan had quite a colorful background.

The explosive information shared by Isabella seemed to have significant potential for manipulation. "Six million dollars, it's a deal," Mr. Lynn finally said, his decision made.

Isabella nodded vigorously, her face beaming with happiness. "You won't be disappointed."

Half an hour later, Isabella walked out of the Lynn family, holding a card loaded with six million dollars. Back inside, Mr. Lynn was lost in thought, contemplating the bombshells Isabella had dropped.

Firstly, he needed to verify the information.

Even after that, he couldn't act impulsively.

He would wait for the perfect opportunity — a day when he!

could strike hard @ Susan with no possibility of recovery.

But such an opportunity wouldn't just present itself.

He had to create it.

Mr. Lynn pulled out a piece of paper and expressionlessly wrote down two names: Carl and Jane.

These two people would be the breakthrough point in his plan.

He needed to give it more thought, considering the detailed logistics.

After all, it was rare for Monica to finally open up to the idea of being with Ben again. Both as a father and for the sake of their family's reputation, he needed to strategize carefully for his daughter's sake this time.

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No matter what Mr. Lynn was planning to do, Isabella managed to secure a loan of six million dollars. Adding it to her own four million dollars, she finally accumulated a total of ten million dollars.

A relaxed smile spread across her face as she looked at the balance in her account.

It won't take many days for this ten million dollars to turn into a hundred million dollars.

Isabella reminisced once more about the business miracle that Ben had pulled off in her previous life.

In the vicinity of Anaville, there was a smaller city called Malabo.

If one considered Anaville as a top-tier metropolis, Malabo was more of a second-tier city.

While it wasn't too shabby, it still lagged far behind a city of Anaville's caliber.

But now, Anaville was experiencing an overpopulation issue, and most companies were

nearing a saturation point.

Therefore, the government had plans to establish a high-tech zone in Malabo to transfer some of the businesses from Anaville, gradually elevating Malabo to first-tier status.

This initiative, spearheaded by the government, was moving at a swift pace.

In her previous life, the government chose a spot at the junction of the two cities and rebuilt it completely. Indeed, within five years, they successfully established a high-tech park, giving Malabo a

ticket to rapid development.

And nestled within this project was the opportunity that Isabella was seeking.

Before the government had announced their plans to construct the high-tech area, the land there was virtually worthless.

However, Ben had spent ten million dollars to acquire a large area there in advance.

At that time, people were baffled by his move, not understanding the motive behind it.

But just three days later, the government announced the development plan for the high-tech park.

The value of that piece of land skyrocketed almost immediately.

Ben then sold off the acquired land, walking away with a neat profit of a hundred million

dollars.

Isabella might not know the finer details, but she figured that this venture should be quite straightforward.

All she needed to do was to buy that piece of land, wait for the government to announce their plans, and then resell it at a premium.

Making a hundred million dollars seemed almost too easy.

After going over her plan several times to ensure no loopholes, Isabella hurried to Malabo overnight. She approached the land bureau there with the intent to purchase the exact plot Ben had bought in her previous life.

A few minutes later, Ben received news of Isabella's intentions to buy the land.

"Mr. Landor, originally, the government had agreed to cooperate with us on this project. Now, Miss Smith suddenly wants to purchase this land. What should we do?" his secretary inquired.

Ben raised an eyebrow, finding the situation somewhat amusing.

Isabella had mentioned starting an entertainment company, but suddenly she was keen on acquiring land—land that he was about to invest in, no less. Her moves were so blatant, as if she was practically broadcasting her foresight ability to the world.

Yet, her foresight seemed to only scratch the surface of things.

She seemed unaware that his initial land acquisition was anchored on an agreement with the government.

He was a renowned Midas of investment. Wherever he chose to buy land, it would instill a profound confidence in the investors, enticing other capital to flood in as well.

Essentially, this was a performance orchestrated hand in hand with the government to bolster investor confidence in that area.

But Isabella...

What use was it for her to buy land?

Could she inspire confidence in the investors?

Could she attract capital to settle there?

When Ben acquired land, he could turn a barren plot into a goldmine.

But when Isabella bought land, that barren area would remain just that – barren.

“Mr. Landor, they are asking if we want to reject Isabella’s request to purchase the land?” the secretary inquired.

Ben couldn’t help but chuckle, “Reject? Why reject? Give her as much land as she wants.”

“Yes.” The secretary didn’t probe further and promptly left to carry out the instructions.

A playful glint flickered in Ben’s eyes.

Come to think of it, he owed Isabella a bit of gratitude recently.

Over the years, the Storm Group had ventured into investments across various fields, consistently reaping substantial profits.

Ben keenly sensed that the entertainment industry might be the next big opportunity. Hence, he planned to invest in the entertainment sector next.

However, he wasn't particularly interested or knowledgeable about the entertainment industry, so his initial plan was merely to invest in a few projects, without getting personally involved.

But now, hadn't Isabella appeared with her foresight ability?

Therefore, things had become much simpler for Ben.

He established Future Entertainment.

Then, he would buy whoever Isabella approached.

Following that, Ben had professionals evaluate them.

As it turned out, all the individuals Isabella had identified had the potential to become huge stars.

Future Entertainment suddenly had a host of promising artists under its wing. So, shouldn't Ben be thanking Isabella?

At this point, if he leveraged Isabella's foresight ability further, Ben was sure to gain even more.

But money wasn't inexhaustible, and personally, Ben was not in need of more. After using Isabella slightly, he planned to have her exit the scene, cleanly and neatly.

Yet before he could set a trap, Isabella seemed to have set one up for herself.

It was simply... mind-blowing.

A few minutes later, the secretary returned to report, "Mr. Landor, that plot of land has been sold to Isabella. She spent a whopping ten million dollars."

Ben raised an eyebrow, "Ten million dollars? She shouldn't have that much money left. Investigate where the funds came from."

The news of Isabella visiting the Lynn family was hardly a secret. Soon after her departure. from the Lynn family's residence, the information that she was heading straight for Malabo landed squarely on Ben's desk.

The Lynn family...

Ben frowned, his expression clouded with concern.

He hoped that things were not as he suspected.

#

If the Lynn family were gearing up to make some irrational moves...

A shadow seemed to pass over Ben's eyes, lending a slightly dark hue to them.

For now,

he decided to put the matter of the Lynn family aside. He got in touch with the

officials from the government, “Regarding the land area for the collaboration, I believe we can discuss it further.”

There were many options available at the junction between Anaville and Malabo.

The parcel that Isabella had bought wasn't the only option.

Since Isabella wished to purchase it, Ben decided he would abstain from buying.

After all, construction had not yet commenced, and changing the location would not entail

any losses.

However, it might cause a slight delay

But neither Ben nor the government were in any nunh

On the other hand....

Isabella was anxiously waiting for the government to announce the development of that piece of land.

According to the trajectory of events in her past life, the government should have made the announcement the day after she bought the land

So, the next day, she didn't go anywhere, instead constantly refreshing the governments official website at home.

But to her dismay, she spent the entire day refreshing the page and not a stred of news came through.

Panic began to seep into Isabella's mind.

Had there been a mistake somewhere?

Why hadn't the government announced anything yet?

If the government had decided not to develop that are what was ste doing with this expensive barren plot of land? Hold onto it as a costly mistake?

“No, there's no way they won't develop it, Isabella muttered to herself trying to stake off her anxiety, “Perhaps there's just been a shift in the schedule? Maybe they'll announce it

tomorrow.”

Forcing herself to remain calm, she continued to wait

Another day passed.

Still no news.

On the third day.

Still nothing.

On the fourth day.

Again, no updates were to be found. However, Mr. Lynn had already called to inquire about the repayment of the loan.

On the fifth day.

The day she had promised to repay the money had arrived. Yet, the government. announcement she was desperately waiting for was nowhere to be seen.

“How can... this be...

Isabella was glued to the government website, as if trying to will some news into existence by sheer force of staring.

This can't be happening. There had to be an announcement.

In her past life, Ben had made a whopping hundred million dollars from that piece of land. It couldn't be that when it was her turn, things wouldn't pan out.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lynn couldn't help but make another call.

“Miss Smith,” Mr. Lynn asked, “we agreed on a five-day deadline, and today marks the end of it. I was wondering about the repayment...”

Isabella instantly became agitated, “What's the rush? The time isn't up yet, is it?”

Mr. Lynn narrowed his eyes, his voice icy yet controlled, “Miss Smith, six million dollars is

not a small amount.”

For a family like the Lynn family, lending six million dollars isn't a big deal, but the money didn't just fall from the sky. There's no reason to give it away to an outsider, right?

“I know,” Isabella replied, her irritation apparent as she refreshed the government webpage.

yet again.

Suddenly, a new notification popped up.

“The Five-Year Plan for the High-Tech Zone Development in Malabo.”

Isabella’s eyes widened dramatically.

“It worked, it worked!” she exclaimed joyously.

“What worked?” Mr. Lynn inquired, slightly confused.

Isabella, now brimming with confidence, replied, “Do you really think I would abscond with your six million dollars? Mr. Lynn, check the Malabo government website yourself. They are about to develop a high-tech zone there, I used the six million dollars you lent me, added four million dollars of my own, accumulating ten million dollars to buy land in the future high-tech park ahead of time. Now, with the government’s official announcement, the value of my land has increased tenfold in an instant. Do you still believe I can’t repay the loan?”

There was a pause from Mr. Lynn, followed by the sound of clicking.

Finally, seeming to verify Isabella’s claim, his tone softened, “Miss Smith, you truly have an eye for opportunities, getting hold of such insider information. I didn’t expect that you bought that piece of land by the Lippe River in Malabo. Ben has also invested there. It’s bound to be a gold mine.”

Isabella’s face changed instantly, her voice rising sharply, “What did you say? Land by the Lippe River?”

Mr. Lynn frowned, “Is there a problem?”

“No, this can’t be,” Isabella said, her hands trembling as she clicked on the link.

The high-tech park in her past life was clearly built by the Leith River!

That's why she had bought land surrounding the Leith River.

If the location for the high-tech park had suddenly switched to the Lippe River area...

Her land would be worthless!

Frantically, Isabella scanned the announcement, her gaze freezing on the words 'by the Lippe River'.

Her face turned ashen.

This was different from her past life.

Why, why did this happen?

"This can't be!" Isabella screamed sharply.

Mr. Lynn, startled by her sudden outcry, squinted his eyes, asking cautiously, "Miss Smith, has something unexpected happened?"

"It's over, all over," Isabella had no mood to respond to Mr. Lynn. She stood up abruptly, "No, I need to get this sorted."

Leaving her phone behind, she dashed out like a madwoman.

"Miss Smith? Miss Smith?"

Mr. Lynn called out a few times but received no answer.

His eyes took on a dangerous glint.

Was Isabella planning to default on her debt?

Chapter 140

Isabella rushed all the way to the land bureau, causing a scene and frantically questioning why the new high-tech zone wasn't being built by the Leith River as she had anticipated.

The people at the bureau looked at her as if she had lost her mind.

"Miss Smith, the location of the high-tech zone is decided by the higher—ups. Making a scene here won't change anything," one of them said diplomatically.

"don't care! You sold me that land, you have to take responsibility," Isabella argued stubbornly, adding, "At the very least, you should refund me the ten million dollars. Can't just return the land to you?"

The bureau officer glanced at her, "Miss Smith, you can sell the land to someone else. But selling it back to the government? That's not an option."

Isabella's face turned into a portrait of frustration.

These barren lands remained unsold, gathering dust in the government's hands since no one wanted to undertake such a risky investment.

Isabella, however, wished someone would take this burden off her hands. But who would be foolish enough to purchase a wasteland requiring a hefty sum to develop?

In her past life, it was only the considerable influx of funds from the government and private investors that had brought this area to life.

"don't care! demand you to buy it back at the original price!" Isabella insisted vehemently, determined to cause a scene until she got her way.

At first, the officer engaged with her calmly, but Isabella's escalating aggressiveness was met with a brick wall of patience. Finally, unable to tolerate her tantrum any longer, an officer dialed the police.

In no time, the police arrived.

On charges of picking quarrels and provoking troubles, they took Isabella away without any hesitation

As the cell door closed behind her, she felt like her world was crumbling.

“Isn't it said that the squeaky wheel gets the grease? How did I end up behind bars?” she

thought

Isabella was slapped with a seven-day detention sentence.

Despite feeling profoundly wronged, she didn't dare make another scene, fearing that her charges might escalate.

In the holding cell, surrounded by towering, stern—faced women, a shiver raced through Isabella, her scalp tingling with fear. She couldn't comprehend how she had ended up in such a dire situation.

“Why did the government change their decision so suddenly? she wondered, her mind swirling with confusion.

Ben was still investing in the future high-tech park, just like he had in her previous life.

“Why this change? Were my past experiences merely fragments of a dream, events that never truly existed? Or did my reincarnation flutter the wings of a butterfly, altering the course of many events?” She thought.

If that was the case, what was the purpose of her being reborn? Locked away, Isabella continued to grapple with her existential doubts. Meanwhile, Mr. Lynn had been calling out for a while with no response, his face darkening to a stormy hue.

Upon pulling some strings to investigate the matter, Monica's father found that, to his disbelief, Isabella had indeed been incarcerated.

The rumor had it that after having buyer's remorse over the wasteland purchase, she had caused a ruckus at the land bureau. This tumultuous behavior had swiftly earned her a charge of causing disturbances and she was put behind bars.

Mr. Lynn was confused. Piecing together the bits of information from Isabella's outbursts, he managed to grasp the situation.

It seemed that Isabella had received some sort of tip—off, convincing her that the barren land she purchased was slated for development.

But, in a cruel twist of fate, it was a different plot of land that was being developed.

Consequently, Isabella had landed herself with a white elephant that threatened to swallow a colossal amount of capital for development.

Even if she wanted to unload this burden, finding a willing buyer now seemed like a pipe dream.

What about his six million dollars?

Mr. Lynn's face darkened in an instant.

But with Isabella now locked up, he was left with no options but to wait for her release, and then somehow find a way to recover his money.

Meanwhile in Anaville, the news of Isabella's detainment reached Ben, who couldn't help but chuckle.

“This woman is even more foolish than initially thought. She seems to have no redeeming qualities without her foreknowledge,” he thought amusingly.

Ben had figured it out by now.

In the past life, without Isabella’s involvement, he would have invested in the land by the Leith River as planned. Subsequently, after a public announcement by the government, he would have resold the land at a profit.

But that was just the tip of the iceberg.

In reality, it was all an orchestrated act between Ben and the local government.

The government’s vigorous promotion of Ben’s ten million dollars investment turning into a whopping hundred million dollars profit was merely a ploy to allure other investors, convincing them of the lucrative potential of the land. This way, it would attract a flood of capital that would truly kickstart the development of the area.

In a nutshell, Ben’s so-called business miracle of earning a hundred million was nothing more than a clever tactic to draw in investments.

Ironically, Isabella had rushed onto the stage with only half the script, leading to a catastrophic downfall.

With the Isabella issue sorted, Ben seemed to be in high spirits.

On their way home, even Susan couldn't resist asking, seeing his gleeful demeanor, “Why are you so happy all of a sudden?” Ben couldn't hold back his laughter as he recounted Isabella’s self-sabotaging antics that

led her straight into jail to Susan.

Susan was at a loss for words.

She found it hard to articulate her thoughts on Isabella's recent maneuver.

"Thanks to her, was able to poach quite a few promising talents for my newly established Future Entertainment," Ben said with a grin, seemingly unfazed by Isabella's downfall. "Seeing her in this miserable state, feel slightly guilty."

Susan gave him a sidelong glance. To her, Ben didn't seem remorseful in the slightest.

However, it was true that Isabella was indeed in a sorry state.

Her foresight ability was so wonderful. Had she been up against anyone else, she would have probably triumphed spectacularly.

Unfortunately for her, she encountered Ben, a sly fox who not only utilized her abilities to his advantage but also managed to strip her of everything she had.

It was indeed... "Do you want to give me some praise?" Ben asked with a puppy dog look, begging for approval.

"Why should praise you?" Susan retorted, her cheeks flushing a delicate shade of red. Ben om immediately puboh ont ekplession. "Alright then, it was my duty after all," he said, though his eyes radiated a sense of grievance which seemed to intensify with each passing moment.

Finding herself at a loss, Susan turned her head and quickly planted a light kiss on his cheek. JMI

Ben's eyes sparkled with delight, prompting him to ask, "Can have another one?"

The driver was speechless.

“Why am I constantly subjected to this public display of affection?” he thought silently, feeling somewhat besieged by their lovey—dovey behavior.

“Scram!” Susan snapped at Ben, her face a mask of embarrassed rage. “Don't push your luck now, are you, getting all cocky! Haven't even started on your penchant for attracting women yet!”

Ben feigned innocence with a shrug, “I'm blameless here. I didn't wish for this either.” Seething, Susan retorted venomously, “That's the sole reason you're still breathing.” The driver couldn't help but feel a tad anxious, overhearing the fiery exchange from the backseat.

“Would Mr. Landor get angry with Mrs. Landor's harsh words?” he wondered nervously. “What should I do if their argument escalates? Perhaps I should pull over...”

Caught up in his whirlpool of thoughts, the driver was jolted back to reality when Ben suddenly turned his head and planted a kiss on Susan.

Heaven knows how much he adored this fiercely candid side of her. Susan shot him a glare but then naturally leaned into his embrace.

The driver was at a loss, his mind echoing with a singular thought: Any argument that doahibehe with talks of dWorce is just a blatant display of affection.”