

His Housewife Had Secret Identities

Housewife 18

Marina was still holding court at the table, her words tumbling out with practiced confidence.

“Wow, psychology is so profound. Marina, you’re just incredible, someone gushed.

“That’s nothing! Marina’s so knowledgeable and worldly—she’s nothing like a certain freeloader who never leaves the house and only knows how to leech off others,” chimed in Lucy, her tone dripping with disdain.

Niamh knew Lucy was talking about her.

“Aunt Lucy, actually... there’s a psychological term for people who refuse to be self-reliant,” Marina said, feigning mystery as she launched into another

long-winded explanation. Lucy was so impressed she slapped her thigh, eyes shining with admiration.

“Marigold, if only Marina had married into our family back then—at least we’d have someone impressive to show off! Just look at us now...” Lucy’s words trailed off as she shot Niamh a look of utter disappointment.

Marigold was clearly embarrassed, clearing her throat awkwardly. “Well, you know what they say—a woman’s virtue is in her modesty...”

“That’s right. In that regard, Niamh is doing just fine,” Jonathan cut in, his voice casual, his tone impossible to read—half-praise, half-mockery.

Niamh had never cared much about Lucy’s or Marigold’s opinions. But Jonathan’s comment—careless as it was—sparked a stubborn defiance in her.

“Jung proposed the theory of the collective unconscious in 1922, not 1923. The iceberg analogy was first introduced by Fechner, then Freud adapted it. Jung, who was Freud’s student, took Freud’s ideas about the unconscious and divided them into the ‘personal’ and ‘collective’ unconscious...” Niamh’s voice was calm but cutting.

As she spoke, color drained from Marina’s face.

“You can’t even get the basics right. Did someone else take your psych exams for you?”

“Niamh, that’s enough!” Lucy snapped, seeing Marina’s eyes fill with tears.

“If you think I’m wrong, just look it up on your phone,” Niamh replied coolly.

Lucy immediately grabbed her phone, determined to catch Niamh in a lie. But the more she read, the quieter she became.

Marina rushed to save face. “I’ve just been so busy with design work lately... I guess. I’ve forgotten all the psych stuff.”

“If you’ve forgotten it all, maybe don’t brag about it in front of everyone, Niamh said under her breath.

“Niamh, that’s enough. Marina is our guest today,” Marigold interjected, scowling at Niamh’s uncharacteristic bluntness. “What’s gotten into you?”

But Clifford, the only one at the table willing to stick up for Niamh, spoke up. “Funny how you didn’t stop Lucy from running her mouth just now, Marigold.”

Clifford was clearly pleased. Today, he’d discovered yet another reason to admire Niamh.

“She’s the granddaughter-in-law I chose: not only does she cook well, she knows her stuff. Jonathan, if you ever treat Nia badly—if you let yourself get seduced by some pretty little vixen—I’ll be the first to object,” Clifford declared, pointedly looking at Marina rather than Jonathan.

Marina bowed her head and pretended not to hear.

“Don’t worry, Grandpa,” Jonathan said, offering Niamh a sidelong glance and a smile that was impossible to decipher. “I treat her very well.”

Niamh looked up at him, catching the sharp edge in his eyes. Maybe, in Jonathan’s mind, he’d already given her enough.

Dinner ended. Jonathan rounded up Niamh and Marina, and they left together.

Marina’s mood had soured; by the time they reached the car, tears were streaming down her face.

“Marina, Grandpa wasn’t targeting you,” Jonathan tried to reassure her.

“I know... I just... I wanted to make a good impression on your family, especially after all these years. I didn’t expect things to turn out like this. I’m sorry, Jonathan—I embarrassed you..

The more she spoke, the harder she cried, her shoulders shaking.

Niamh watched as Jonathan gently put his arm around Marina and helped her into the car with quiet care.

200

She hesitated, meaning to tell Jonathan he didn't have to drive her home—she could make her own way. But before she could speak, Jonathan beat her to it.

23 33