

Read Novel Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 1401

Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 1401-Even the pine trees and cypresses in front of the door seemed to have straightened up. They stood tall in the soil, as if beckoning to him.

"Mr. Channing."

The woman speaking was someone new that Oliver had brought. He introduced her to Fanny.

"This is Yvonne."

Yvonne was Oliver's nanny when he was a child. His mother passed away early, and instead of giving Oliver powdered milk, his family found him a wet nurse and nanny.

Oliver drank her milk until the age of two, and only then switched to powdered milk before transitioning to regular meals.

Although this nanny left the Channings when he was two, she always kept in touch with Oliver.

On holidays, Oliver would bring gifts to visit her.

This time, when he and Fanny had an accident, she was the first person he thought of.

He saw that Fanny didn't even lift her eyes; she just lay on the sofa, her black hair scattered all over.

He wasn't angry; he simply handed the vegetables to Yvonne, and said, "Go cook."

Fanny probably hadn't eaten for the past few days.

She had just had a miscarriage, and a little hunger could help stimulate her appetite. It wouldn't be good if she developed actual health issues due to starvation.

Otherwise...

He approached her, and a hair tie appeared in his hand from who knows where.

He squatted down, pulled her long hair together, and tied it up.

He didn't do a good job with it.

It hung loosely on her shoulders; from a distance, her hair looked like a big lump on her shoulder. However, because Fanny's face was so outstanding, even if it looked like a lump, no one found it embarrassing.

Oliver was almost amused looking at it.

He also tidied up the loose strands in front of her forehead.

"Let's go." He pulled her up. "I'll give you a checkup."

There was a list of things she couldn't eat after the surgery, and there wasn't much to eat here these past two days. Oliver was sure she must have followed the diet restrictions.

There was one more thing: he wanted to see how she was doing after the dilation and curettage.

Some situations required the use of instruments.

Although he hadn't dealt with patients for three or four years, when it came to Fanny needing a doctor, Oliver felt like his medical knowledge had returned.

He noticed Fanny's face stiffen for a moment, and quickly realized something.

"Where does it hurt?"

Fanny shook her head. Seeing his concern, she couldn't help but find it ironic.

What a hypocrite.

Suppressing the disgust in her heart, she looked at him. "It doesn't hurt."

She stood up, the long tail of her white dress falling like an open umbrella, swaying with a hint of elegance. She had become much thinner.

Oliver followed her, and his heart couldn't help but ache with every step.

If only she could let go of her hatred...

He would truly be willing to be with her forever.

"Let's go." Sensing that Oliver was lagging behind, Fanny turned around and called out to him.

At that moment, her features seemed to have become alluring, and she looked like the most vibrant rose in full bloom in spring. It was so intense, it almost seemed to take Oliver's soul away.

He loved her. Loved her to the extent of being despicable, that he would give up his own flesh and blood.

He didn't want to take her to the hospital. He didn't want to give her a chance to leave him.

He was so despicable, he pretended to try to commit suicide to prove that Fanny had really died. He was unwilling to give her any hope of leaving this villa.

To everyone, Fanny was already dead. Even if she suddenly contacted someone one day, people would dismiss it as a misunderstanding or a prank.

Oliver followed Fanny, and their footsteps almost synchronized.

Finally reaching the bedroom, Fanny turned and closed the door, leaving her and Oliver in the guest room. She quickly untied the white robe she was wearing.

Then, she laid stiffly on the bed.

Oliver turned around, and all he saw was her pristine figure.

She was completely uncovered before him.

Yet he felt no joy, no desire—only a fleeting moment of irony and profound anger.

He gritted his teeth. He snatched the blanket, and wrapped it around her.

"Fanny! What are you trying to do?"

“Do?” A smile played on her lips, but her eyes were bleak. The desolation in them gave her pale face a beauty others didn’t possess.

She raised her foot, and wiggled her toes in Oliver’s direction.

“I’m trying to do you, of course. Who else would I do?”

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Didn’t he want a child?

How could they have a child if they didn’t do anything?

Oliver choked on Fanny’s words. He stood still for a long time; at this moment, he realized Fanny’s genuine desire to have children with him, even if the desire wasn’t entirely voluntary.

Wasn’t that enough, as long as the outcome was good?

People often say that once a woman had a child, she was tied to the family. If she wanted to leave, she had to consider the child. In the end, she couldn’t bear to go.

Perhaps he could indeed continue living with her.

Just like Julian and Diana, they would happily raise their children together.

Heartwarming scenes repeatedly played in his mind, and a sense of tranquility surged in Oliver’s heart. He hadn’t moved to speak yet when Fanny made the first move.

She stood up, and pulled at his collar. Oliver was forced to lean close to the tip of her nose, and he could almost see the swollen corners of her eyes.

She had cried more than once.

Now, however, she presented a smiling and radiant demeanor before him.

Was it necessary to disguise herself so much in front of him?

Oliver’s heart felt like it had been filled with a heavy stone.

He instantly stopped her, and said, “How can I be interested in your broken body?”

His gaze showed no concern, only disdain. It pierced Fanny’s heart deeply.

It felt like he had torn out her heart again, and there was a fleeting moment where she wanted to cry.

This was her husband, once so beloved and trusted. And beyond being a husband, he was also the brother she had grown up with.

Although now, thinking about that brotherly title filled her with irony. Even so, those past emotions were real and couldn’t be erased.

She held back.

In the end, she looked at him with a smile, and said, “Alright, I’ll make sure to satisfy you next time you come, once I’ve recovered a bit more.”

Her smile was coy, an evident attempt to please.

Oliver suddenly felt irritated. The images of a family together in his mind were like fragile bubbles, popping before he could even touch them.

He finally understood—he and Fanny couldn’t go back.

Even though they couldn’t go back to being a truly loving couple, as long as they were still legally married and she was physically present and under his watchful eyes, he could console himself that Fanny couldn’t escape.

In this life, she would always be his.

“Alright.” Oliver wasn’t angry, but his eyes were chilly. Noticing this, Fanny felt she had truly been blind.

How could she have fallen for him in the past?

With things having come to this point, she could only take it one step at a time.

She wrapped her clothes tightly around her, completely discarding the idea of dying with her child. She went downstairs to eat before Oliver moved.

Oliver had arranged for Yvonne to live in the villa with Fanny and take care of her daily needs. In reality, it was more like surveillance.

After all, Oliver couldn't be here twenty-four hours a day.

Everything was tightly secured, and Fanny couldn't escape from there.

However, Oliver was always afraid of unexpected incidents.

Before this, their life together had finally settled into a good rhythm, and their relationship had become deep and affectionate.

Due to a few words from his father and the sins he committed in his youth, everything turned into nothing!

Oliver wouldn't allow anything to happen outside his control.

"If the madam feels uncomfortable anywhere, please inform me promptly," Oliver reminded Yvonne before he left the villa.

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Yvonne nodded.

"I understand. You can rest assured and leave her in my hands. I'll definitely take good care of her health." When Fanny heard their conversation, she joined it, which was unexpected.

She was an actress, once a quite outstanding one. After spending the afternoon with Yvonne, she had already grasped the essence of Yvonne's appearance, movements, and gestures.

In front of Oliver, she learned to imitate them vividly.

"Mr. Channing, don't worry. I'll cooperate well with Yvonne and present you with a healthy and interesting Ms. Smith." She didn't refer to herself as Mrs. Channing, but used Ms. Smith instead.

Her speech was filled with various forms of irony. Her deliberately exaggerated expressions amplified her sarcasm.

Oliver took a deep breath, struggling to suppress the anger in his heart. Then, he turned and left.

She had just undergone a miscarriage not long ago. He shouldn't be angry with her; taking good care of her health was the top priority.

When he left, her mind wouldn't be occupied solely with thoughts about the matters in bed. She wouldn't be in a rush to get pregnant and have a child.

Seeing him walk away, Fanny immediately turned around. She glanced at Yvonne, her eyes languid like a cat.

Then, she threw herself onto the sofa with a casual kick, sending her slippers flying a considerable distance, even brushing against Yvonne's cheek.

Yvonne's expression instantly turned unsightly.

"Madam..." Fanny immediately covered her ears with the sofa cushion. "I'm not listening. I'm not listening!" Yvonne's face became increasingly unpleasant.

After all, she was Oliver's nanny for many years, and he respected her deeply.

Therefore, when he asked her to take care of his wife, she readily agreed, thinking Oliver's wife would also give her the same respect.

However, when she thought of the slippers flying by her face just now, she couldn't muster a smile anymore.

For a moment, Yvonne stood still without moving.

When Fanny heard no movement or sound, she began shouting and commanding Yvonne., "What's going on? Can't you see my slippers have run far away? Hurry up and pick them up for me!" She was an actress, once and now. Even if she didn't pursue acting anymore, she could still make a living through it—living her life.

Fanny looked at Yvonne, who was showing a hint of disdain, and became more determined about her upcoming role. She was going to be the arrogant and overbearing rich mistress who treated others with disdain.

But when Oliver was around, she would transform into a pitiful, innocent, and clueless woman.

Fanny refused to believe that Yvonne could continue staying here with her acting so insufferably. After all, her greatest strength was making people uncomfortable.

Fanny stared at Yvonne's slightly plump figure, and the smile on her face grew colder. From now on, she would show no mercy to anyone from or related to the Channings.

— Cecilia and the man across from her were getting along well. They discussed various topics, from the customs of the Leaf Country, to the vast farms in Tuou.

They even made plans to go cherry-picking together.

"Unfortunately, I have a cold now," Noel said.

He had been eating poorly and not sleeping well lately, leading to a weakened immune system. As a result, someone in the office who had a cold easily passed it to him.

On the way to the blind date, his nose had started to feel stuffy. Now, it was starting to itch. Even his voice had changed.

"If I weren't sick, we could book plane tickets now and gone to Tuou to pick cherries." "Oh?" Cecilia was excited; she felt like her heart had flown out of her chest when she heard his suggestion.

It had been quite a while since she had left town.

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The moment Cecilia heard someone invite her for a long trip, joy filled her. Even her body and mind relaxed considerably. Her shoulders slumped lazily against the back of the seat.

The spontaneity of the invitation was something she appreciated. Being with such a person meant life wouldn't lack freshness and excitement.

Cecilia now had some experience with love. Though she couldn't say she was at complete ease when conversing with men, she knew how to steer the conversation while chatting.

Even the voice changer turned her initially unpleasant mature voice into a cute childish voice.

“In what position would you take me cherry-picking?” When the person on the other side changed the tone, Noel hesitated. He wanted to express his dislike for deliberately sweet voices. Thinking back to their good conversation just now, everything seemed compatible, so he held back.

Cecilia used to say he was far too straightforward. Thus he kept the unpleasant comments to himself, because the girl probably meant well and was expressing her liking towards him.

Cecilia asked, “Why aren’t you saying anything?” Noel replied, “No reason. I was just thinking about your question, so I didn’t rush to answer.” “Have you figured out how to answer it?” Noel shook his head. “No, I still haven’t.” Although Cecilia had told him not to be too direct, Noel already held back his thoughts about the girl using a childish voice.

He didn’t want to hide his feelings on any other matter. Otherwise, this blind date would be meaningless.

Blind dates should showcase one’s true self. Otherwise, when the curtain was lifted, both sides would expect the “fake persona” they had been conversing with.

They might even start to feel that they wouldn’t get along with the real person when they started to get to know each other more.

So, Noel continued, “I just said I wanted to pick cherries with you in the heat of the moment. Unfortunately, it’s true that I have a cold now, and I can’t go. Now that I’ve calmed down, I think I wouldn’t go even if I wasn’t sick.

“Moreover, I wouldn’t have invited you. Naturally, there’s no question of taking you along and what position I would have when going with you.” What a typical inconsiderate male statement!

When Noel said this, Ginny happened to pass by. She couldn’t help but glance in Noel’s direction.

His clothes weren’t made of ordinary fabric; they looked well-tailored, and although he looked a bit disheveled, he gave the impression of a talented youth.

In theory, with such appearance and temperament, he wouldn't find it difficult to attract a partner in real life.

After hearing his straightforward words just now, though, Ginny had to admit... Truly high-quality men, with no flaws, caring and articulate, were long picked by girls back in their school days.

In comparison to women, the basic level of men in their country was always a bit lower.

Men enjoyed gender advantages since childhood, so those who matured early weren't as competitive as women, who knew from a young age that they had to rely on themselves for everything.

However, this situation has also produced numerous outstanding women. They left unfriendly environments through hard work and came to Richburgh, a tolerant and inclusive metropolis.

This further led to abnormalities in the marriage market.

For example, men from rural areas with poor conditions struggled to find partners. At the same time, many city girls couldn't find suitable partners.

One group faced challenges due to poor conditions, while the other, having good conditions and the ability to support themselves, enjoyed life and wasn't in a hurry to find a partner.

As for those good men, they had long since been off the market. Girls who liked them back had secured them without hesitation back in their younger days.

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Someone like Noel, Ginny thought, with a mouth more distressing than a typical straight guy's, seemed to be his major flaw.

This explained why, despite his appearance and temperament, he couldn't find a partner.

It ultimately led him to this blind date in their café.

Ginny instinctively looked at Cecilia. Cecilia's expression matched what Ginny had in mind, appearing both awkward and amusing.

Ginny promptly filled up some coffee for Cecilia. She gave Cecilia a friendly smile, as if she hadn't heard anything, before quietly exiting their blind date corner.

Ginny's refilling of Cecilia's coffee had acted as a buffer that conveniently suppressed Cecilia's momentary anger.

Now, she could resume talking to the man in front of her as usual. For some reason, he once again reminded her of Noel. As the saying went: once bitten, twice shy.

Cecilia took a sip of coffee, and returned her voice to the original mature tone before she continued, "Okay, you're quite honest. You're not saying sweet words to deceive me." The normal, mature tone sounded pleasant, unlike that childish voice that made Noel shiver all over. Hearing his blind date change her voice, he secretly breathed a sigh of relief.

It turned out that what Cecilia said before was true. Sometimes, being a bit more patient with girls could make both parties happy.

It was like when she said she was cold. Back then, he shouldn't have said he wasn't cold and asked her to go home quickly.

He should have taken off his coat and endured the cold with her.

He should have also lingered a bit longer at the door.

Unfortunately, there was no chance now. She didn't and wouldn't believe him at all.

Her mistrust of him deeply hurt him.

Noel smiled. "I don't know how to say sweet words." Even this tone was a bit like Noel's.

The more Cecilia thought about it, the more uncomfortable she felt. Suppressing the urge to lift the bamboo curtain in front of her, she continued the questioning.

"If my parents are dissatisfied with you after we're in a relationship and want to give you a lot of money, like fifteen million, to leave me, would you agree?" Noel was silent. Why did this sound so much like what he just experienced?

However, he wouldn't take someone else's money before, and he wouldn't now—even if it's just answering a hypothetical question.

"Would you?" He answered her question with a question.

Cecilia was somewhat displeased, suddenly feeling that the other party was being a bit cunning.

She got angry. "You were tempted, weren't you?" "I wasn't." After listening to her question, he found it somewhat absurd.

"I definitely wouldn't take it. If I took that money, wouldn't it be a betrayal of love?" His voice gradually lowered, becoming softer. If one listened carefully, it carried disappointment and dissatisfaction.

"Love is so hard to come by. How could I betray it...?" Yes, love was hard to come by. How could anyone bear to betray it...?

Cecilia's heart ached; she thought about her rocky romantic journey, and felt like something had struck her.

Without hesitation, she pressed the button in front of the table, indicating that she had chosen this man on this blind date!

She would wait for Ginny to lift the curtain and meet him soon!

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There were some developments on Julian's end, and at a crucial moment, Noel was needed to handle some important matters.

Julian wasn't too confident if someone else did it; he preferred Noel's involvement.

After some thought, Julian sent a message to Noel.

[How's the blind date? Are you done with it?] In the past, Julian would never use such a tone. Ever since he remarried Diana and started raising children together, his empathy had improved.

Even when giving orders, he would first consider the other person's situation and convenience.

Such was the power of love. It could soften one's edges.

Noel couldn't help but think about the conversation he had just had with his blind date. They agreed that love was a good thing, but unfortunately, they might not be lucky enough to experience it.

Perhaps it was inaccurate to say that maybe... Noel was sure he wouldn't experience it again.

He didn't believe that a blind date could solve the pain caused by love. Besides, it was just a casual conversation. How could one determine so quickly whether the other person was suitable?

He came here because Diana had kindly arranged it. He didn't want to disappoint Diana. The significance of Diana and Julian's existence to him wasn't as simple as being his bosses who provided him with his salary to survive.

Julian valued him. In turn, Noel also valued Julian. Caring for Julian also meant that Noel cared for Julian's family.

[It's over. Any instructions, sir?] Noel replied.

Without much thought, Julian quickly texted the tasks Noel needed to do.

[Within an hour, I need you to collect this information and synchronize it with the technical department. Can you do it?] Noel read through the requirements quickly. Soon, he nodded and replied, [I can do it.] The difficulty of this task wasn't in its complexity, but in its meticulous nature. It required someone to be attentive, careful, and delicate.

If he started now, he could definitely complete it in time.

Noel looked around at the coffee shop. Suddenly, he realized that it was an ideal place. Except for the second floor, where the blind dates were taking place, there were many available seats on the first floor.

Despite the crowd, when he focused on his work, he couldn't hear the noisy chatter. Now, what he needed was to shake off the identity of someone on a blind date and return to his normal persona—a diligent worker.

He was about to leave.

But then, he paused.

Should he say something to the girl across from him?

Noel pondered. The girl had changed back to the childish voice, and maybe she had a favorable impression of him.

Upon careful consideration, he dismissed the idea. Even if there was a good impression, was he really going to pursue a relationship with someone else when Cecilia was in his heart?

Developing a relationship with someone else in such circumstances would be disrespectful to the girl.

Stopping here was fine.

With this in mind, Noel stood up and made his way to the first floor. The place was crowded, with lines extending outside onto the main street. Fortunately, there was a person just getting up in a corner. Noel quickly took the seat, and opened the laptop that he carried with him.

Today, Ginny was mainly in charge of the blind date on the second floor. There were many people, and she hadn't noticed Noel leaving.

She waited for another five minutes to see everyone's intentions towards each other. If both sides were interested, she would help lift the bamboo curtain.

As for whether the two parties could develop a relationship, that was beyond her responsibility.

Another man was sitting diagonally across from Cecilia, next to Noel.

His name was Larry Webb. He was slightly overweight, and was a local in Richburgh. He had a decent job in this first-tier city, and his family conditions were considered comfortable.

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Larry had no criminal record and no undesirable habits. He was diligent, and lived a life that met the standards of a good person for over thirty years.

He even went so far as to find people to take in the stray cats he found on the roadside, and took full responsibility for them.

He met his previous girlfriend because of a cat. She was a beautiful girl working as a live streamer in an anime-related company.

Nowadays, no matter how good one's education was, it couldn't match the earnings of an overnight sensation live streamer.

However, behind these money-making streamers, there were countless aspiring small streamers who couldn't catch a break.

They were attractive and slim, and sat in front of the camera daily. They used all their tricks, yet their income and fan base couldn't compare to big internet celebrities and top streamers.

What was more infuriating was that many internet celebrities and streamers hadn't done anything special.

They seemingly effortlessly posted videos some with bewildering content like [My husband treats me like this] or [Watch me perform a stunt called 'Hand in Hot Oil']. Then, they actually put their hand into hot oil unharmed, revealing later that they didn't even turn on the heat.

But with videos like these, they could gather an immense number of fans overnight, creating a myth of getting rich quickly. They would then receive numerous advertising opportunities, seamlessly transitioning into live selling and endorsing products.

Larry's ex-girlfriend, Lulu, struggled in this environment. For many years, she failed to gain popularity despite her efforts.

Yet, she couldn't switch to another industry after all these years. If she was willing to endure hardship, she could easily get a job as a luxury salesperson at SK Mall with her face. She could be earning forty to fifty thousand dollars a year.

However, Lulu couldn't bear the hardship.

She would complain about standing all day, which made her legs look bad, and feared developing varicose veins in the long run.

Moreover, she had to greet customers with a smile. What terrified her more was that every person who came to shop wasn't a poor person.

She said, "Watching so many people spend hundreds of thousands every day like how we average people spend a few hundred or thousand dollars every day... I can't stand it! My mental state will be crushed!" In the end, she wanted to stay in the livestreaming industry. After all, being a live streamer, though hard, meant streaming for only two to three hours a day.

If they streamed for too long, their condition would suffer. Poor condition meant looking bad on camera, and if they didn't look good, sponsors would decrease.

In short, Lulu had gotten used to this job of short durations with high returns.

Even if she couldn't compare to those top streamers, in reality, her earning power was stronger than office workers who worked hard all day just to earn a few hundred bucks.

However, she was getting older.

Newcomers kept emerging in the industry, putting pressure on Lulu's position.

Even the recent livestreaming tasks assigned to her were designed to showcase new faces on her existing fan base. Wasn't she essentially giving away the fans she had worked so hard to maintain?

Lulu refused to comply.

"Not doing it? Then you don't need to stream for the company!" Well, there weren't many streamers in the company anyway. In reality, most of them did it on their own and broadcasted from home.

But Lulu was different; her streaming account belonged to the company.

When she was younger and the livestreaming industry was booming, someone approached her just as she entered the scene.

They said they saw potential in her. Their company intended to sign her, and would pull their entire resources to turn her into a super popular streamer.

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Becoming a super popular streamer meant receiving a lot of money.

Lulu was tempted, and so signed a contract with this company. However, upon entering, she discovered it was just the company's standard pitch.

Yet, it wasn't ruled out that someone could emerge from the crowd and become an industry benchmark.

Lulu didn't think too much about it, and focused on her work. Only after becoming an experienced streamer did she realize that the company had set traps for her from the get-go. Streamers affiliated with the company couldn't even take their accounts with them when they wanted to resign.

She wanted to leave? Sure, go ahead!

However, she had to create a new account from scratch.

Not everyone had the luck to become an overnight sensation, and many struggled for years without any improvement.

Although Lulu wasn't popular, after so many years in the company, her streaming account had around two to three hundred thousand followers.

With so many new streamers, and considering she wasn't as young and attractive as before, it was uncertain if she could maintain her current level of success if she abandoned her account.

Her personal career crisis was right in front of her, and Lulu began to contemplate her true way out.

"Larry, let's get married!" Lulu proposed to Larry. "We've been dating for two years, and I think you're great. You make me feel secure." It was mainly because Larry had a house, and his ID was registered in Richburgh. Not to mention, he had a car with a Richburgh license plate. It would be convenient to use him for travel. What's more, his parents had paid fully for the house.

Larry was delighted to hear this, and was deeply moved too. This was Lulu, his girlfriend of two years. Not only was she beautiful, but she was also understanding!

Unlike other girls, she didn't mind taking the initiative, even in marriage proposals.

Larry was instantly captivated. He immediately took Lulu to a DR specialty store, and customized a one-carat diamond ring for her.

The diamond wasn't large, but Lulu happily accepted it. Exiting the store, she happily linked arms with Larry.

"Larry, we're getting married. Does that mean your parents will move out of the house you're living in now?" She didn't want to get married and still live with his parents!

Larry looked troubled.

"Our current house is located within the Second Ring Road, with a spacious area of one hundred and fifty square meters. The housing prices in Richburgh have skyrocketed to one thousand seven hundred dollars per square meter.

Because of the increase in school districts, the price continues to rise. If my parents move out, we can't afford to buy another one..." His parents bought the house early. Otherwise, with their middle-class status, it would be unaffordable. It would have been too expensive.

Lulu wasn't pleased.

"Your family has another property near the Second Ring Road in Richburgh. It's slightly off-center, but with the opening of the Universal Studios in that area last year, it's not considered remote. Your parents can take the subway to come here easily." Larry hesitated. "But the house there is a bungalow..." There wasn't even a toilet in the place. They had to go outside if they wanted to use the toilet, and the nearest one was an old public toilet. It was dirty and smelly. In the summer, there would even be bugs.

Also, it wasn't regularly cleaned. Larry had gone in once, and he vomited as soon as he went in.

And now, she was asking his parents to live there?

His dad was somewhat better off in such an environment. However, his mother had always been in a managerial position in her company.

She had never lived in such an environment before, and Larry's father had never let her suffer that way.

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His mother was accustomed to life within the Second Ring Road, with hospitals, convenience stores, and beauty salons everywhere. Within a few steps, there were various attractions and delicious restaurants.

If they suddenly moved to a dirty and inferior bungalow without heating, they wouldn't be able to bear it.

Seeing his reluctance, Lulu, feeling a bit angry, insisted, "Can't we buy another one? Go to the suburbs around the Second Ring Road, and buy a small apartment. That's better than that house, right? Your family earns enough money, and you shouldn't have trouble coming up with this amount." They did have some money on hand.

His parents never hid it from him. However, that money was their retirement fund. Now that the elderly live longer, his parents, having retired, wanted to travel and enjoy life.

Moreover, with children in Richburgh, the expenses will be higher in the future.

In essence, that money served as a safety net.

If Larry lived a stable life, he could live comfortably. But if he wanted to make a significant breakthrough on his own and earn ninety to a hundred thousand a year, it was difficult.

His job only brought in forty to fifty thousand. Maintaining that throughout the year was already good enough.

"Our industry isn't as booming as it used to be," Larry gently advised Lulu. "I heard there have been severe layoffs recently. I'm about to turn thirty-five, and this is a critical period. In case of layoffs, the money my parents have can at least guarantee that our quality of life doesn't decline. If we really use it to buy a house..." It would be difficult for their family to handle any issues.

After pondering for a while, he asked, "What about your family?" Originally, it was just a casual question. He wanted to figure out how much Lulu's dowry would be. After all, she was a girl from out of town, and the marriage market in Richburgh was different.

Out of respect, Larry wanted to make sure he understood everything so he wouldn't mistreat her later. It would also help him plan how to spend the money on hand and how to settle his parents.

It wasn't easy for a girl like Lulu to be with him. He also knew that given his background and appearance, finding a beautiful partner like Lulu was not easy.

Moreover, she was a girl from out of town, and he couldn't mistreat her.

However, when Lulu heard Larry's question about her family, she immediately became anxious.

"What? Are you already thinking about my family's money even before getting married? Ugh, I knew I couldn't marry a poor man like you! How dare you think about a woman's money!

"Let me tell you, Larry! We get married, and I won't contribute a single penny! In our hometown, dowries are lavish and colorful, totaling around sixty to seventy thousand dollars. I plan to leave that for my parents. I'm marrying into a family that's far away from them, and they raised me with difficulty. Don't even think about touching my money!" Even before marriage, she defined the dowry as her money.

Yet, what she said made sense.

Larry thought for a moment, and quickly agreed.

"Don't get upset," he continuously reassured her. "Don't worry, we'll give it to your parents." Lulu's parents had indeed worked hard to raise her. Besides, Lulu wouldn't be able to go home often in the future. Parents would miss their children, so the dowry could be considered their retirement fund.

Larry had no intention of taking it back.

"Don't be angry," he said.

Lulu instantly became happy. "Larry, you're the best. I'm marrying you without expecting anything materialistic. I just hope you'll treat me well." He would definitely treat her well!

Larry looked at his lovely future wife in his arms. As long as they got married, and both were determined enough, everything else was not a problem.

He would surely treat Lulu well!

As for his parents, he could go home and discuss the living situation with them.

However, just as he started discussing his marriage with his family, he received a text message from Lulu.

[Larry, I'm sorry... My family says that since I'm so beautiful and have two younger brothers waiting to get married, the dowry must be raised to a hundred and fifty thousand...]

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Larry felt a bit uncomfortable upon hearing this.

When it came to the dowry for his marriage with Lulu, he was willing to bear whatever was within his capacity.

Even if it suddenly doubled, he wouldn't mind.

However, now that it was related to her younger brother's marriage... He believed in the deep bond between siblings, but there should be some limits.

However, seeing Lulu's attitude, she clearly didn't think there was any problem.

Larry reluctantly agreed. "Let me discuss it with my parents." As he had said before, he would treat her well for a lifetime. He couldn't harbor negative thoughts even before their wedding.

Larry's parents were also very understanding, and quickly provided a solution for their son, "We'll cover the dowry. As for the house... Your father and I will move out, so you don't need to worry." Youngsters nowadays prefer not to live with their parents, and Larry's parents understood this well.

"Thank you, Mom and Dad. You're sacrificing so much. I'll definitely take good care of you in the future!" Larry's mother consoled him gently. "Whether you take good care of us or not, we brought you into this world to experience the joy of growing up together with you. Besides, we'll be the ones uncomfortable

living with you once you're married. As long as you and your wife live happily, we're content." Touched by their words, Larry promised, "I'll make sure Lulu and I have a good life! We must let everyone around us know that our family has an exceptionally beautiful and considerate daughter-in-law." Larry then shared the story of how Lulu had proposed to him today.

"She's not like other girls, asking for expensive bags or waiting for me to support her. She's independent, ambitious, gentle, and considerate. Once you meet her, you'll surely like her!" Larry's parents nodded in approval. "We're used to seeing girls who love luxury, spending tens of thousands on a bag. Someone like Lulu is indeed worth cherishing." After discussing, the elderly couple made a decision.

"As for the dowry, we can give a little more. We'll round it up to ninety-nine thousand. This represents our appreciation for Lulu." Larry nodded. "I'll quickly inform Lulu!" Before he could make the call, Lulu called him first.

Having solved his parents' issues, Larry was now both happy and proud. He felt like he could hold his head high in front of Lulu, and that he could provide her with a better life.

"Hello, Lulu, guess what? My parents have decided to move out, and as for the dowry..." "Sniff, sniff..." Lulu's crying voice came through the phone.

The delicate sound of a woman's cry sent shivers down Larry's spine.

The joy on his face gradually faded. "What's wrong? Why are you crying? Don't cry! Hurry, tell me, what happened?" "Sob, sob... Larry, I'm sorry. Our marriage...might not happen..." How could that be?!

His parents were so supportive, and he liked Lulu so much. How could their marriage not happen?

Larry panicked. He avoided his parents, went outside, and asked, "What's going on? Tell me. I'm sure we can solve it." Lulu's crying paused for a moment. "Really?" Larry nodded. "Of course!" Otherwise, he wouldn't even be qualified to marry her!

Lulu then said with a relieved tone, "My parents won't compromise on the dowry."

It's been five or six minutes since I sent you the message, and you haven't replied. Is it because your family doesn't agree to it?" This sentence choked Larry.

"Lulu, it's not that we don't agree to it. My parents even willingly increased it from seventy-five thousand to ninety-nine thousand. They even offered to move out and leave the bigger house to us. It's just..." "Just what?" "Ninety-nine thousand is all they can afford. I wanted to wait a bit longer to save up some money myself, and see if I could get it up to the amount your parents asked for." "Heh." Lulu's tone turned from crying to mocking.

"I knew it! You men are so shrewd! I haven't even married into your family, and you're already considering burdening me with debt! The so-called dowry sounds nice, and you wanted to give it to me, but in reality, it's a debt. After I marry you, I'll have to work with you to repay the debt in misery!"