

Spare Wife 311

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Giddy Fans

After seeing Abigail's fans showering her with concern following her tweet, CoolVogue retweeted Abigail's tweet with a sarcastic response of their own.

"Wow. What horrible employees you have there. All of us at CoolVogue must have jumped the gun in the heat of the moment. So sorry for the misunderstanding. You have our utmost sympathy, Ms. Alana.

Following their tweet, Sean also shared a retweet of his own.

'Alana called every single company she has dealings with to explain the situation. CoolVogue was the only one who made a scene about it on social media immediately after receiving the call and accused Alana of plagiarism. Is it because they think she doesn't have evidence to prove her innocence, so they decided to boost their popularity by making the first move to paint themselves as the victim?'

Once Sean's tweet went out, Abigail's fans began to rebuke CoolVogue.

'She already reached out in person to explain the situation. So many brands have partnered with her. Even though Lyshe was accused of plagiarism during the livestream yesterday, they didn't post anything on Twitter today to condemn Ally. You guys are the only ones blowing things out of proportion. Now that Ally has provided evidence to back herself up, here you are, pretending to be all magnanimous. Look at you addressing her as Ms. Alana as if you actually respect her!'

'Over a hundred unpublished designs were stolen. While you don't need to sympathize with Ally, as a business partner, you shouldn't be coming forward to say she plagiarized either! What a shameless attempt at getting your ten minutes of fame. No other brand is as despicable as you.

'No wonder you're still a small brand despite being around for so many years now. You're not worth supporting at all. Even Ally can't give you the boost you need to make a name for yourself. None of the bigger brands said anything about plagiarism. You're the only one who backstabbed your business partner. Who would dare to collaborate with brands like you that throw their own partners under the bus?'

Abigail saw the commotion online and sent Sean a text.

Do you have so much time on your hands that you're browsing Twitter every day now? You didn't need to come forward and talk about this. Why do you keep using your personal account anyway? Are you planning to become an influencer now?'

Sean knew Abigail wouldn't be happy to see him getting involved in her matters.

After mulling things over, he replied, Just wanted to ride on the coattails of your popularity. If Graham International goes bankrupt, I can still become an influencer. Maybe I'll be known as the nation's husband? I'd get a ton of gifts from just one livestream. I see a lot of the other scions. doing this.

Abigail didn't know how to respond to his message.

It was true that the wealthy young men attracted more viewers with their live streams. Compared to ordinary people, they earned a lot more money.

'Fine. Soak up as much of my popularity as you want.

She didn't care about him tagging along to get his five minutes of fame on Twitter.

It was getting late. Abigail turned off her computer and went to bed. She had such a busy day that she fell asleep the moment her head hit the pillow.

Alas, never would she have thought that the tides online would slowly change thanks to Sean's involvement.

In the morning, when Abigail rushed into the office, she saw her assistant stealing peeks at her and giggling now and then.

"If you have nothing else to do this morning, you might as well come up with a few more designs. We have to give our clients over a hundred designs in three days," Abigail said without even lifting her head.

Her assistant's gaze had been too intense. Even though she was focused on her design work, she could still sense a pair of eyes on her.

"Abigail, haven't you checked Twitter? You have no idea what they're saying about you and Mr. Graham," her assistant chattered in 'excitement.

Abigail tensed and hurriedly asked, "Are there rumors about him and me again?"

"Nope. Everyone's shipping you guys. They say that each time you post a tweet, Mr. Graham instantly backs you up and mocks your enemies for you. What else could that be, if not true love?" Abigail's assistant relayed animatedly.

Abigail stiffened. "Hold it... Don't pay any attention to what the netizens are thinking. Sean is just trying to ride the wave of our popularity. Don't take it seriously."

Her assistant was taken aback. "Why does he want to ride the wave of our popularity? He's rich."

"Get back to work. Say another word, and I'll give you more work to do." Abigail glared at her assistant.

Nevertheless, she checked Twitter.

The trending tags left her feeling thunderstruck as soon as she opened it up.

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The hashtag #SealanaAreSoSweetTogether made the top ten list.

Are netizens so obsessed with shipping people these days?

When she clicked on the hashtag, she found so many comments about her and Sean!

‘#ScalanaAreSoSweetTogether! Guys, do you know what I found? I spent the entire night gathering information and realized that Sean truly loves Alana. Whenever she posts a tweet, he’d definitely retweet it. If someone criticizes her, he’s nearly always the first to come and fight her battles for her. Apart from that one time when Eric Davidson beat him to it, he has always stepped forward to defend Alana. This is true love!’

I noticed that too! He doesn’t seem afraid about suffering any kind of repercussions. He gives it his all to protect Alana every time. Could this really be true love? Alana and Sean are both so attractive. They’re even better looking than many of the celebrities who’ve been voted the most attractive! I’m so happy to ship them together!”

Does Sean really have feelings for Alana? During the show a while back, he played the role of a company president while she played the assistant. He looked so serious, but he kept dropping subtle hints. I was so giddy shipping them that I nearly fainted!”

Once Abigail finished reading the tweets, she clutched her chest and thought, You nearly fainted from shipping us, whereas I’m about to faint from fright after reading your tweets.

Abigail never expected the netizens to be such avid shippers. How were they able to come up so many theories and scenarios when there were barely any meaningful interactions?

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Are You Baiting Me

What Abigail found even more ludicrous was the fanfiction the netizens posted featuring her and Sean...

Some of the stories were pretty R-rated. Abigail blushed while reading them.

“Is it too warm in here, Abigail? Why are your cheeks so red?” Abigail’s assistant asked while bringing some documents over.

“It’s pretty warm,” Abigail answered with fake composure. However, she hastily tapped her mouse a couple of times and minimized her Twitter tab.

Her assistant came over and placed the documents beside her. “Shall I lower the temperature?”

“It’s fine. Just get me a bottle of cold water, please.” The steamy scenes in the fanfiction Abigail saw made her throat a little dry.

It didn’t seem appropriate to be reading such things in broad daylight..

While her assistant left to get some water for her, she quickly closed the tab and forgot about what she had read-focusing on her design work instead.

Just as Abigail started feeling dizzy from focusing on one thing for too long, her phone began buzzing.

She checked her phone and saw the notifications from Luna. Since they were only Twitter notifications, she didn't respond to them.

Less than a minute later, Luna called.

Abigail sighed exasperatedly. Isn't she away on a business trip? Why does she have so much time on her hands now?

She took the call, but before she could say anything, Luna shrieked, "You were reading smut on Twitter during your working hours?"

"Huh? How did you know?" Abigail felt sheepish-as if her secret had been exposed.

"The entire internet knows. You liked the fanfiction someone wrote. The screenshots your fans took have gone viral too," Luna informed.

Abigail felt like she had been struck by lightning. After blanking out for some time, she said, "I didn't click the like button..."

"Did you actually read it? Luna sounded flabbergasted.

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"I only glanced at it while scrolling past... I didn't read it... I didn't like the tweet!" Abigail felt. awkward. It was as if the entire internet was gawking at her.

She couldn't stay on Earth anymore. She had to pack her bags and move to a different planet.

"Well, you did like the tweet! Do you want to smooth things over? I don't know how to help you. with that though. Of all the things you could've liked, why was it a smutty fanfiction with Sean?!" Luna sounded helpless.

Abigail was even more despairing. She uncapped the bottle and took several gulps of water to calm herself down. "Do you think it's too late for me to leave Earth?"

Luna snorted. "Too late, my dear. Everyone knows that Alana liked the smutty fanfiction her fan wrote about her and Sean."

Abigail scratched her head. "I'm getting off work now. I won't be heading into the office the next few days."

"Alright..." Luna couldn't say anything else about the situation.

She sensed how awkward Abigail was feeling. The awkwardness could fill an entire house.

After ending the call, Abigail gathered her things and got ready to leave.

"I have some matters to attend to, so I won't be coming into the office the next few days," Abigail said while passing by her assistant's desk. Then, she walked off without hesitation.

Would it make a difference if I unlike the tweet now....

It was Abigail's first time experiencing a crisis like this. Her mind was a mess.

Abigail's assistant looked up from her computer and hid her giggling.

As one of the most eager shippers, she had seen that tweet already.

Abigail's just being stubborn.

At last, Abigail managed to flee her office. Once she got inside her car, she patted her chest and exhaled.

She felt mortified.

Just as she was about to drive home, Sean called.

Abigail was initially reluctant to take the call, but if she didn't, she would seem even more like a coward. She didn't want to seem like she was too embarrassed to face him.

So, she took a deep breath and accepted the call.

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"What is it?" she asked coolly.

"Do you want to release a clarification?" Sean asked.

Abigail immediately knew what he meant.

"What should I clarify? Should I say that I didn't read it and that I liked the tweet by accident?" Abigail asked. Though her tone was fairly normal, her face was scarlet. She was only pretending

to be calm.

"So, you did read it, and you didn't click like by accident," Sean abruptly remarked.

"Are you baiting me?" Abigail's voice sharpened.

"No. I thought you misclicked. I never suspected you," Sean said with sincerity.

Abigail scoffed. "It was a misclick. Don't read too much into it. When I was working, I saw the hashtag, so I clicked on it. I didn't notice what I had clicked or liked. I wouldn't have found out about it if Luna hadn't called me to tell me about it.

Sean hummed in acknowledgment. "Got it. Do you need me to help you clear things up?"

"Oh, shut up." Abigail snapped before dropping the call.

She sat in her car and huffed.

None of this would've happened if Sean never made those high-profile tweets that led to the fans fantasizing about them as a couple.

It's all Sean's fault!

Sitting in his own office, Sean was smiling as he liked the fanfiction tweet as well.

He had to admit that there were talented writers online these days.

The plot was simple but well-written and fairly evocative.

Even at the end of the work day, Cameron noticed that Sean was still smiling.

“Keep an eye on the trending hashtag involving Abigail and me. Let it stay up for a few days. Oh, right. Make sure you do it secretly. Don’t let Abigail find out we paid to keep it up,” Sean

instructed Cameron before walking off with his car keys in hand.

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Unexplained Hostility

To Abigail’s surprise, the fanfiction remained a trending topic on social media for several days.

Most importantly, Sean liked the tweet as well, seemingly as a response to the fans.

“What do you think he means by that? Is he trying to stir up rumors about us on purpose?”

While sitting in the bar, Abigail vented to Luna in dissatisfaction.

Luna swirled her glass and said, “Well, there’s no way you can clarify the matter now.”

Abigail was too embarrassed to unlike the tweet.

It had been four days, and she was still too afraid to go on Twitter. She used Luna’s account to browse instead.

“What a coincidence.”

Just then, a familiar voice rang out.

Abigail and Luna turned around to find Anthony standing behind them. He was dressed in a sapphire blue suit. Judging from his carefully styled hair, he had put in much effort to dress up.

“Are you here to have some drinks with your friends, Mr. Booker?” Luna spoke up first.

“That’s right. I’m meeting someone, Anthony replied, but his eyes were still on Abigail.

Abigail knew what he was thinking. She felt the urge to hide.

“A client?” she asked with an awkward chuckle.

“Nope. A client’s daughter. She just came to Pendorf, so I’m showing her around,” Anthony said.

The moment he finished speaking, an elegantly dressed woman came over. “Anthony?”

Anthony turned around and smiled at her. “That’s me.”

Luna cocked an eyebrow at Abigail. They both thought the same thing.

“Why don’t we share a table?” The woman abruptly suggested to Anthony.

Anthony looked at Abigail and Luna with a conflicted smile. “Can we?”

“Sure. Abigail nodded with ease.

After all, they had to show some courtesy to the daughter of Anthony's client.

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A round of introductions later, Abigail learned that the elegantly dressed woman was named Lacey Fernandez.

Is she related to Ronaldo Fernandez? Abigail wondered.

Lacey didn't seem to be a talker. Anthony and Luna did most of the talking, but it was mostly about work.

All of a sudden, Luna asked Lacey, who was scrolling on her phone, "Where are you from, Miss Fernandez?"

"Eastbay. Ronaldo Fernandez is my cousin. Abby should be acquainted with him," Lacey responded to Luna after pocketing her phone.

I knew it. Abigail thought.

"Speaking of which, don't you plan on clarifying that incident where you liked that fanfiction?" Lacey's eyes fell on Abigail.

Thanks to her, the easygoing atmosphere became a little awkward.

Anthony cleared his throat and said. "Even if she doesn't, it's not a big deal. It brought publicity to their studio. It's just fans shipping them together. It's not serious enough to require a formal clarification."

"Is that so?" Lacey asked innocently.

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"I'm not trying to stir up any rumors about us as a couple. The fans started it themselves. I clicked on the tweet by accident. A formal clarification is a little unnecessary," Abigail said stiffly before sipping her drink.

"Why did

you pay to have it stay on the trending list if you're not trying to stir up rumors about you two being a couple? It doesn't seem right to do this just for the sake of publicity. Is Mr. Graham going to play along with such a meaningless thing?" Lacey asked. Though she had an expression of genuine confusion, her words were biting.

Luna's smile went from joyous to meaningful. She set her glass down and asked Lacey, "What makes you say that we paid to have it remain on the trending list? Are you related to the owner of Twitter?"

"No, but Anthony said you care about publicity, so that's why you encouraged the shippers. If that's not the case, then I must have misunderstood. Sorry." Lacey shrugged after giving an insincere apology.

Abigail would be a fool if she didn't sense the veiled hostility behind Lacey's seemingly innocent remarks.

She sipped from her glass as she wondered when she had ever offended Lacey. Is it because of

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Ronaldo or Anthony?

Anthony's smile was a little stiff as well. He glanced apologetically at Abigail before saying, "Abigail isn't someone who would stir up rumors like that. She's not familiar with social media either. Who knows who paid to make the tweet go viral? There's no point in us discussing this any further."

"I'm done for the night. Grandma's still waiting for me. Why don't you guys continue without me?" Abigail set her glass down and suggested to Anthony.

Anthony nodded and said softly, "Okay."

Luna was frustrated. Anthony and that woman had crashed their table, and now they had to leave early?

Abigail saw Luna's mouth opening, so she placed her hand on the latter.

Luna glanced at Abigail. Then, she set her glass down on the table with a heavy thud and flashed a sarcastic smile. "We won't disturb you two lovebirds then."

Once the women were outside, Luna crossed her arms and scoffed, "What's her problem? Did she sit with us on purpose just so she could mock you?"

"Perhaps, Abigail responded indifferently.

Anthony was very protective of Lacey today. She must be important to him. It looks like they're dating.

Since they were friends, Abigail didn't want to see Anthony lose his dignity in front of Lacey.

"Are you just going to leave it at that?" Luna was still angry.

Abigail glanced at her and said, "It wouldn't have been easy for Anthony to establish a relationship. with the Fernandez Family. We shouldn't make things difficult for him. That way, it'll be easier for us to ask him for help if we ever need it."

After all, in the business world, one never knew when it was one's turn to do someone a favor or ask for one in turn.

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Cameron Listens to You

Luna had been furious, but after hearing that, she deflated like a balloon.

"Why do you think that Lacey woman was so hostile toward you?" Luna held Abigail's hand and asked with a frown.

Abigail's brows creased as she thought about it. Moments later, she commented, "It probably has something to do with Anthony. He was all dressed up. Doesn't that signify they're on a date?"

Luna rolled her eyes. "I'm speechless."

She finally understood the situation. If Anthony had been on a date with Lacey, the latter would have been hostile toward Abigail because of how well Anthony treated her.

While they were studying, Anthony took very good care of Abigail. All their classmates said he liked her. Lacey wouldn't have had to dig very deep to find out about that.

Meanwhile, Abigail paid no mind to this.

The next day, soon after Abigail came into the office, her assistant came to say there was a visitor.

As soon as Abigail's assistant finished speaking, the door to the office flew open.

"Miss, you can't enter-

"It's fine, Abigail cut her assistant off

Abigail's assistant glanced at Lacey. She quelled her dissatisfaction and exited the office in silence.

"Are you here for a visit, or do you wish to place an order, Miss Fernandez?" Abigail stood up with a polite smile on her face.

Lacey sat on the couch and studied the office before looking at Abigail. "You should know that I don't like you."

"Yeah. I picked up on that last night," Abigail calmly responded. She was startled by Lacey's bluntness.

"I figured you weren't stupid. Do you know why I hate you?" Lacey crossed her legs and tilted her head upward as if she owned the place.

I'm guessing it's because of Anthony," Abigail deduced.

Lacey cocked her eyebrows and declared domineeringly, "I know you two have had a good relationship ever since your schooling days. Even though you're both working now, he's still very protective of you and keeps helping you. I don't like that. But, when it comes to work, you can't be

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of any help to him. He needs my family more, so that's why he chose me. I'm sure you know when to give up. Since you're busy creating rumors about you and Sean, just focus on that. Stop contacting Anthony."

Abigail realized Lacey had come to mark her territory.

"Anthony and I have always been nothing more than business partners. Don't overthink it, Miss Fernandez. If something could have happened between us, it would have happened by now, don't you think?" Abigail responded with a nonchalant smile.

"You're not in a relationship with him because you like being surrounded by men. Be it my cousin, or him, or even others like Sean Graham and Eric Davidson, aren't they all your knights in shining armor? Truth be told, I despise women like you. I've seen more than my fair share of two-faced b*tches like you in college." Lacey had a look of scorn and derision on her face.

Abigail was about to speak when the door to the office opened again.

Sean stood in the doorway. An icy aura emanated from him.

Abigail's assistant stood by the door. She was a little worried that Abigail would chide her for not stopping Sean.

When Lacey looked at Sean, she sensed the terrifying look in his eyes and swiftly got to her feet. She was a lot less domineering now. "I said what I came to say. I'm leaving now."

"Who said you could leave?" Sean asked as he fixed his ice-cold gaze on Lacey.

"Let her leave," Abigail said.

Sean pursed his lips and eyed Lacey.

Lacey's knees turned to jelly. She held the couch for support as she stepped back.

"If you leave without apologizing, I'm not sure whether your tongue will remain in your possession for much longer," Sean remarked before entering the office.

Cameron, who was behind Sean, started walking toward Lacey with a threatening air.

Abigail frowned. "Cameron!"

Cameron reined in his intimidating air. He looked at Abigail and said, "Since you're so kind, Ms. Quinn, I won't be too hard on her."

"Leave Abigail said to Lacey.

Lacey had waltzed into the office with her nose in the air, but she was leaving with her tail between her legs now.

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Cameron wisely left the office and closed the door behind him. Abigail looked at Sean. "Why did you come here?"

"I was in the area, so I came to see you," Sean said. He stared at her and asked, "Are you really not going to clarify what happened on Twitter? You're not going to say you misclicked?"

"Why did you like the tweet anyway?"

Abigail was pissed about that. She did it by accident. Did he?

"I can do whatever I want with my Twitter account," Sean said breezily as he sat down.

He was like an old geezer who barely knew what social media was back then, but now, he's even picking on internet slang.

"Who's the guy who's the reason why that woman's picking on you?" Sean asked.

“She’s unimportant. If you have nothing else, you should get back to work. I’m busy.” Abigail didn’t want to talk to Sean.

She wasn’t going to take Lacey’s words to heart anyway.

“How do I know whether or not I should let her off the hook if you don’t clarify the situation?” Sean leaned into the couch and said while toying with his tablet.

Abigail instinctively glanced at him. “Has Cameron gone off to deal with her?”

“Cameron still listens to you. At least, before I give him the order, he won’t go against your wishes.” Sean was smiling faintly.

Abigail didn’t know what to say.

When did Cameron switch his loyalties from Sean to her?

“Don’t keep getting Cameron to do these things. He’s your assistant. He’s not a bodyguard hired to get physical with people. Why do you keep making him do your dirty work?” Abigail questioned with a look of displeasure.

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Incompatible Personalities.

Sean looked at Abigail with a faint smile on his lips.

She felt uneasy under his scrutiny and furrowed her brow. “Do you need anything else?”

“Even if you don’t say anything. I’ll still go after her. His eyes remained calm, but an unmistakable air of determination surrounded him.

“Ronaldo is her cousin. If you go after her, I might as well stop the deal with him. I’ll have to bring his pearls to him and plead for clemency,” she huffed.

After a brief moment of contemplation, he asked, “Is Anthony in a relationship with her?”

Abigail had to admit that Sean had a shrewd mind. “I don’t know if they’re in a relationship. What does it have to do with me?” she replied nonchalantly.

“While

you think it doesn’t concern you, she views you as a threat. How does Anthony feel about. you?” he asked calmly. It was an unexpected turn of events for him to find himself discussing another man’s feelings for her in such a calm manner.

“I don’t think we’re close enough for us to discuss this,” she declared, placing her pen down and casting an unpleasant glance in his direction.

“Your ‘like’ on that fanfiction about us on Twitter, without any clarification, left me pondering for four days.” Sean sounded rather aggrieved. “After all, it was quite... steamy, and we were once married. I couldn’t help but think about it.”

“Don’t keep bringing up the past! You didn’t need to come here to tell me about your thoughts. Do you think I have that much free time? Besides, there’s no need to clarify such matters. Even when celebrities mistakenly like something, they don’t make official statements. Let the fans think what they want; it’s their enjoyment,” Abigail explained, restraining her frustration.

In fact, not clarifying was the best course of action. Clarifications often implied guilt.

“That means we’d be shipped as a couple. You don’t mind that?” His mood lifted slightly. He enjoyed seeing fanfiction about them trending on Twitter daily.

“You know well that in such situations, it’s best to leave the fans to their imagination. Making official clarifications might seem like making mountains out of molehills.”

She longed to scream from the mountaintops that she had nothing to do with him. Unfortunately, even the most renowned celebrities turned a blind eye to their fans’ fantasies. about their romantic relationships with other people.

He nodded, acknowledging her point. “You’re right.

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Taking a deep breath, she composed herself. “Mr. Graham, could you please return to your work now? I’m really quite busy.”

“Of course,” he replied, standing up.

Just as Sean took a couple of steps, Abigail stopped him. “Please, don’t go after Lacey. Both Mr. Booker and I are part of the same industry, and we often cross paths. Besides, she’s Ronaldo’s cousin.”

He turned back to look at her. “You’re quite protective of Anthony, but he might not appreciate your efforts.”

“We’re both businesspeople. When it comes to business, emotions don’t have a place,” she stated coolly.

With her putting it that way, he had nothing more to worry about. He was only concerned that she would feel uncomfortable. After all, she had a good relationship with Anthony. Still, for the sake of her business, she had to endure such grievances.

“Don’t come to my office for no reason in the future. I don’t care about fans pairing us up, and it’ll be even more annoying if someone takes pictures of you deliberately coming here,” Abigail reminded as Sean was about to leave.

His jovial mood soured again, and he left without saying a word.

She was about to resume her work when a call came from Anthony. She stared at her phone for a while before finally answering. “Is there something you need, Mr. Booker?” Her voice was as crisp as ever, devoid of any personal emotions.

“Lacey went over to your office, right? You don’t have to care about what she said. She’s straightforward and often speaks without thinking. I apologize on her behalf,” he expressed

remorse.

She pursed her lips before chuckling and said, "I understand how a young woman can feel insecure at the beginning of a relationship, Mr. Booker. You just need to clarify things with her. There's no need for you to call and explain. I wouldn't want her to jump to conclusions again, wouldn't you agree?"

Anthony remained silent.

Just as Abigail was about to end the call, Anthony said gloomily, "I chose her because the company isn't doing well. There are many things I can't openly share with you, but you've always been an important junior of mine."

"Mr. Booker, that's in the past. I understand the challenges of running a business. You have your difficulties and your decisions. In any case, I hope your company continues to thrive. I have a lot of designs to work on, so I won't linger for idle chat. Her voice sounded light and pleasant, but her face remained expressionless.

In reality, Anthony's company was doing quite well, with impressive annual profits. His claim about the company's performance was just an excuse to climb the social ladder. Nevertheless, Abigail respected his choice. His pursuit of fame and success was his decision, just as it was her choice to transition from being friends to acquaintances with him.

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Harassment

After exchanging pleasantries, Anthony and Abigail hung up the phone, each holding their thoughts.

She placed her phone on the table and stared at her computer screen, lost in her thoughts for a while before finally regaining her focus. However, her peace was short-lived as her phone buzzed. with a new message.

'Don't contact Anthony again, you two-faced b*tch!'

She read the message and scoffed, promptly deleting it. However, within moments, another text arrived, this time from Lacey.

'Do you think I'm scared of you just because you have Sean backing you up? If you piss me off and cause problems with Anthony's business, he'll cut off all ties with you.'

Abigail read the message, pondering her response for a while.

'Do you lack self-confidence to the point that you need to target me?'

The tone in Lacey's messages seemed completely incongruent with her appearance and demeanor. Still, Abigail found the contrast quite striking.

'Are you trying to belittle me just to make yourself look good? Don't be so cocky, b*tch! For whom are you pretending to be gracious? No matter how graceful you are, Anthony won't choose to be with you.'

'I have no interest in Anthony. To me, the man you're protecting is just an ordinary person. Besides, you're rather useless. All you do is hurl insults at me instead of discussing your insecurities with him. Is it because you're too much of a coward?'

After typing her reply, Abigail felt resigned to wasting her time dealing with Lacey.

'I don't talk to him because I know what kind of person he is. I'm talking to you because there's always a chance you'd keep being the b*tch you are.

'If you feel so insecure, Lacey, just tell Anthony to block me on every platform. Don't come up and throw a fit at me. Is that clear?'

She finished her message and blocked Lacey's number. To her surprise, Lacey switched to a different number to continue harassing her. Abigail continued to block each new number, and it took four blocked numbers before Lacey finally stopped.

By this point, it was already noon, and the harassment had completely soured Abigail's mood. She hadn't been able to complete a single design all morning. Anyone subjected to such baseless accusations would feel equally upset. Just when things had settled down with the Pearsons, Lacey

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had emerged as a new source of trouble.

During lunch, Abigail contemplated the idea of having a heart-to-heart conversation with Lacey to resolve their misunderstandings. However, Abigail quickly dismissed the notion, thinking, First, I have to find out why Lacey hates me so much. After considering the way Lacey looked and behaved at the bar, Abigail couldn't believe she was the one who sent those

messages.

After lunch, Abigail went back to her office and called Luna to help her investigate Lacey.

"What did she do to you now?" Luna inquired immediately.

"I believe there's a misunderstanding between us, and I want to get to the bottom of it," Abigail replied.

"Sure, but I need to know the nature of the misunderstanding." Luna understood Abigail's character. She wouldn't have taken such a step without good reason.

After a brief pause, Abigail admitted, "I'll forward you the messages, but promise me you won't get angry."

"Fine," Luna agreed.

Abigail sent Lacey's messages to Luna.

Abigail sent the messages to Luna, who, after reading them, was fuming with anger. "Just who is this woman?! She doesn't seem like the type to say such things. Who would've thought she'd do this?! You really can't judge a book by its cover, huh? Well, I learned that lesson today!"

"I find her appearance and these messages completely contradictory," Abigail remarked.

“Maybe we should skip the investigation and have an open conversation. If that doesn’t work, we’ll just block Lacey. Investigating her would be a waste of time,” Luna concluded, now eager to call Anthony and get to the bottom of things.

Abigail fell silent for a moment and then asked, “Will that work?” She was eager to understand why Lacey had developed such a strong aversion to her.

“Do you trust me?” Luna asked abruptly.

“Of course, why wouldn’t I?” Abigail replied.

“I’ll arrange a meeting between the two of them,” Luna said, ending the call. It was almost time to get off work when Abigail received a call from Luna.

“I couldn’t arrange it. Anthony claimed he’s out of town, and Lacey mentioned she has a busy work with classes, so she can’t meet up,” Luna said through gritted teeth.

“Let’s set it aside for now. September is approaching, and we need to prepare for the collaboration with Freshie TV,” Abigail said.

“Okay.” Luna replied.

After ending the call, Abigail let out a sigh, wondering, What’s with modern couples these days? Why are they causing trouble for others when they’re the ones in a relationship?

When Abigail returned home, she pitched in with Analise to prepare dinner. Her grandmother had set up a workspace in the living room to handle the ingredients.

While they were at it, Abigail’s phone continued to ring incessantly. Observing her granddaughter’s distraction, Analise temporarily set aside the dough she was working on and fetched Abigail’s phone from her bag. As she was about to bring the phone into the kitchen, she couldn’t help but notice the barrage of text messages coming in.

Are you too afraid to answer my calls, you two-faced b*tch?”

Are you getting your friend to set me up so you can beat me up?”

With the phone in hand, Analise retreated to the bathroom to answer the call that had been persistently ringing.

“Why did you take so long to answer? Are you scared? Blocking numbers won’t stop me. I have plenty of friends. Even if you block me, I’ll find ways to reach you!”

“Who are you to say such things? Didn’t your parents teach you how to respect other people? You’re an adult. Stop playing these games. Aren’t you just being an embarrassment to your family?”

[Chapter 317](#)

Deal With It Once and for All

Lacey hesitated for a moment, then said, “You’re Abigail’s grandmother, right? Are you aware that she’s going behind your back-”

“Young lady, before you say anything, you need to have evidence to back you up. How can you say such baseless things to slander others? Did your parents not teach you right?” Analise cut Lacey off.

“It’s still better than raising a granddaughter who enjoys being a fake b*tch,” Lacey retorted before abruptly ending the call.

Analise was furious and about to call back when she heard Abigail’s voice from behind.

“Give me the phone, Grandma. Don’t worry, it’s just a misunderstanding.”

“Is one of your competitors sending people to harass you?” Analise turned around and passed the phone to Abigail.

Abigail shook her head. “I’m not sure either.” Dinner didn’t sit well with her. After returning to her room, she decided to call Lacey.

Soon, Lacey picked up.

“What’s this? Are you teaching me a lesson in place of your grandmother?” Lacey’s tone carried a sense of smugness.

“I’ll bring all the messages you sent to your house to clarify exactly where I’ve offended you,” Abigail calmly stated.

Lacey paused for a moment and then continued, “Can’t handle it already, old lady?”

Abigail, feeling a sense of frustration, terminated the call and promptly blocked it. She couldn’t help but think, I extended some courtesy for Anthony’s sake, but now she’s taking advantage of it.

Wanting to clarify her suspicions, she decided to send a text to Ronaldo. ‘Is Lacey Fernandez your cousin? The one who’s dating Anthony Booker.

The man responded with a shocked emoji. ‘How did you know? Has the news spread that fast?’

‘Yeah, Anthony brought her to Pendorf, and I ran into them. Since he’s helped me out, I should pay a visit to your cousin to offer my congratulations. I’m catching a flight soon, and I’d appreciate it if you could pick me up at the airport

Even though a pesky fly wouldn’t stir up much trouble, it was still an annoyance.

She decided it was time to address the issue at its root.

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“Oh. Sure!’ he replied with a cutesy emoji after that.

Two hours later, Abigail arrived at the Eastbay airport. Ronaldo was there with a few of his friends to welcome her. She was dressed professionally, and her confident appearance made him and his friends momentarily captivated.

“Where does your cousin live?” she asked, seemingly unaware of the man’s reaction.

He immediately snapped out of his reverie and replied, "It's not that far from here, but it wouldn't be right to drop in at this hour, don't you think?"

Who would pay someone a visit at 10.30PM?

"There's nothing wrong with that. Just lead the way," Abigail said coolly.

Ronaldo was about to say something when one of his friends interjected, "Go ahead and take her there. In Eastbay, we don't sleep this early anyway. Lacey's parents might still be up for a nightcap.

Alright then, Ronaldo said, realizing what was happening.

Abigail wasn't here to congratulate anyone. She was here to address a problem, and she was dressed to make her presence authoritative.

Once they got in the car, Ronaldo asked her, "Tell me, Ms. Quinn, what's going on? Why did you come at this hour dressed like a lawyer about to enter a courtroom? It's a bit intimidating."

She glanced at him. "You'll find out soon enough. Don't worry about it."

"It's not something serious, is it, Ms. Quinn? I'm a little scared." He placed his hand on his chest, appearing quite innocent.

"You haven't done anything, so what's there for you to be afraid of?" Abigail eyed him.

"I just want everything to go well," he said.

She chuckled and said nothing.

Lacey's family lived in the city in a standalone villa. They appeared quite well-off

"You know that my cousin's parents aren't ordinary people, right? You need to be more courteous when you speak to them. They have their eyes on my station, too. That means they're keeping an eye on our collaboration," Ronaldo reminded Abigail before they entered the house.

"Alright," she replied more amicably.

Lacey's parents had been informed in advance, and they were waiting in the living room. When Abigail saw them, she nodded politely and said, "I apologize for coming over at this hour of the

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night. I'm Alana, L.Moon Studio's designer. My real name is Abigail Quinn. Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. Fernandez."

"We know who you are. Anthony mentioned you before. He spoke highly of your talent as a designer. Now that I see you in person, it's clear that you're a spirited young woman," Tony Fernandez said with a smile. However, these words were merely polite pleasantries. His smile did not reach his eyes, and there was a hint of superiority in his tone.

His wife, Carla Rock, smiled faintly and asked, "What brings you here?"

"I need your help with something." Abigail retrieved a tablet from her bag and opened the image gallery, passing it to them.

Tony accepted the tablet, and after browsing through the screenshots, his expression hardened.

"Did Lacey send these to you?" His voice was filled with anger as he set the tablet down on the coffee table.

Carla took the tablet next, examined the contents, and then regarded Abigail with a hostile gaze. She murmured, "Lacey is a good girl. Everyone knows she's polite and mature. How could she possibly have said such things? Is this some kind of misunderstanding?"

Abigail maintained a calm expression and added, "There's also an audio recording of a phone conversation. You can check if it's your daughter's voice."

Ronaldo cautiously moved closer behind Carla and reached out to tap on the tablet.

[Chapter 318](#)

Don't Let Her Suffer Any Grievances

"Did

you come to see us hoping we would talk to Lacey, Ms. Quinn?" Tony looked at Abigail with a stern expression.

"Unfortunately, my grandma answered my phone today. She's in poor health and was quite upset, which is why I came here. I don't know how to communicate with Miss Fernandez, and I'm unclear on why she's behaving this way. So, I had no choice but to seek advice from wife, Mr. Fernandez," Abigail responded calmly, maintaining eye contact with him.

you and

Just as he was about to respond, his phone rang. The caller ID displayed Pendorf's area code, causing his brows to furrow.

"Please excuse me for a moment, Ms. Quinn. This is an urgent call." Tony left with his phone.

your

While he was away, Ronaldo exclaimed, "Why did Lacey do such a thing? If there's a misunderstanding, shouldn't she try to talk it out instead of using these messages to humiliate Ms. Quinn? She's gone too far!"

Carla shot a cold glare at him. "This hasn't even been confirmed yet. How can you accuse her? Why would she have so many numbers?"

Abigail politely addressed Carla, "I came here to find a solution. We all have our responsibilities. and little time for these inconsequential matters, don't you think?"

"It hasn't been confirmed that it was my daughter's doing yet, so I can't give you an answer," Carla declared with a haughty air, deliberately avoiding eye contact with Abigail.

Abigail realized that her visit might have been presumptuous and potentially caused some resentment. However, she believed it was the right thing to do. If she continued to avoid the issue, what would happen if Lacey's harassment extended beyond her? What if Lacey targeted Analise or others? Remaining composed, Abigail suggested, "You could find out by informing her to return home and discussing the matter with her."

Inside the study, Tony took the call and immediately greeted, "Hello."

"Mr. Fernandez? I'm Sean Graham." Though the man's voice carried a pleasant tone, it still made Tony feel uneasy.

"I've heard much about you, Mr. Graham. May I know the reason for your call at this late hour? Is it an urgent matter?" Tony inquired respectfully.

"I've heard that Abigail is visiting Eastbay, so I have to ask you to take care of her for me, Mr. Fernandez. Please don't let her suffer any kind of grievance while in a foreign city," Sean said with a subtle smile.

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Tony couldn't miss the subtext in Sean's words. Sean wasn't merely asking for hospitality; it was a clear warning not to allow any harm to come to Abigail while she was under his roof. Everyone in their social circle had heard about what Sean did to the Pearsons, and even Tony, being in

Eastbay, had heard plenty of rumors.

It was common knowledge that nobody would want to get on Sean's bad side, as those who did would pay a hefty price.

With these thoughts racing through his mind, Tony reassured Sean with a smile, "Of course. You have my

word, Mr. Graham. I'll ensure that Ms. Quinn has a pleasant stay here in Eastbay."

After concluding the call with Sean, Tony returned to the room and looked at Abigail with a much friendlier expression. "I called Lacey, but she's currently studying in another city and can't return."

"That's right. Lacey is pursuing a career as a violinist, Carla said proudly.

He glared at his wife. "Why are you butting in? No one asked for your input. You're not needed here. Go upstairs."

Abigail was taken aback by the sudden change in his attitude. She couldn't help but wonder, Did that call have something to do with me?

Carla sensed that something was up with her husband, too, so she left without protest.

Tony sat across from Abigail, and he had the household staff serve some fruits and desserts. Then, he prepared tea himself as he said, "Lacey's behavior is the result of us spoiling her. She cares deeply for Anthony, and she takes her relationships very seriously. She often becomes preoccupied with unwarranted concerns.

"It's evident that Lacey becomes obsessive in her relationships. If she's so fond of Anthony, she should just hold onto him. Why is she secretly insulting Ms. Quinn?" Ronaldo expressed his frustration.

Tony felt exasperated by Ronaldo's lack of cooperation. He wondered why Ronaldo was siding with an outsider rather than supporting his family. After glancing at Ronaldo, he nodded awkwardly. "She's insecure when it comes to relationships. I heard that Anthony and you got along very well in school, Ms. Quinn. Even now, Anthony helps you no matter what kind of difficulty you face at work. My daughter... I'm sure she's jealous because she heard about that."

Abigail resisted the urge to roll her eyes as she asked with a smile, "How do you think we should resolve this? Mr. Booker and I are simply business partners. If your daughter is so concerned, Mr. Fernandez, why don't we invite them over for a proper discussion? I don't mind extending my stay by a day."

Ronaldo immediately expressed his support, saying, "Inviting them for a clear discussion is the best approach."

She glanced at him, and he grinned, saying, "I'm on the side of reason, not family. It's clear that Lacey is at fault here."

"Anthony is currently on a business trip, so he can't return. I'll call Lacey again and try to arrange a meeting. Feel free to extend your stay, Ms. Quinn. We'll cover your accommodation expenses," Tony assured, serving Abigail a cup of tea.

[Chapter 319](#)

His Idol

Abigail wasn't insistent on reaching a resolution today. She understood the importance of flexibility and not burning bridges unnecessarily.

As she brought the teacup to her lips, she appreciated the delicate fragrance. In Eastbay, it was customary to use smaller cups for tea, but they were always well-crafted. "This is the Silver Needle. It's a delightful tea, perfect for a summer day," she commented after taking a sip.

Tony was pleasantly surprised by her ability to identify the tea based on its taste.

Silver Needle might not be widely recognized, but it had earned local fame in Eastbay, remaining a hidden gem to those beyond the region.

With a smile, Tony asked, "Are you a tea connoisseur, Ms. Quinn?"

In truth, she wasn't, but her knowledge of tea came from Josh's tea house. He was quite the enthusiast, and their conversations often revolved around tea culture.

"I have a friend who is quite passionate about tea and has shared some knowledge with me," she replied politely.

He nodded, assuring her, "Regarding Lacey, Ms. Quinn, I promise to provide you with an explanation."

“Mr. Booker and I were once classmates who got along fairly well, Mr. Fernandez, but that was all in the past. If something were to happen between us, it would’ve happened a long time ago, wouldn’t it?” Abigail asked, her tone serene as she set her cup down.

“You’re absolutely right, Ms. Quinn. Lacey’s not thinking straight,” Tony agreed right away.

Ronaldo was taken aback by the abrupt change in Tony’s demeanor. He couldn’t help but wonder if it was related to the phone call his uncle had received earlier. As they left the house, he couldn’t resist voicing his frustration, saying, “You lied to me!”

She gave him a teasing glance and remarked, “Even after discovering my little fib, you still defended me. You’re quite the handsome and honorable gentleman, Mr. Fernandez.”

Her compliment instantly melted his mock anger. “Ms. Quinn, why not just tell me the truth next time? Why bother lying? Were you afraid I wouldn’t take your side?”

“You’re Lacey’s cousin,” Abigail said.

“Still, I’m a man of principles!” Ronaldo declared proudly, hand on his chest.

She chuckled. “That’s true. How about you choose a place for supper? I’ll treat you and your friends.”

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“No, no... Why should you treat us? That’s not necessary!” He livened up at the mention of supper.

She had initially believed this trip would be a one-woman battle, but to her surprise, she found unexpected support both from an unidentified ally and from Ronaldo.

During supper, Ronaldo and his friends engaged in lively, humorous conversation, which helped Abigail relax and improve her mood. It was her first time being surrounded by such enthusiastic young individuals, and it felt rather enjoyable.

As they arrived back at the hotel that Ronaldo had arranged for her, her cheeks were slightly flushed from the alcohol. She said, “Thank you for your hospitality, and I assure you, I won’t disappoint you in our collaboration.”

He waved his hand, saying, “Why talk about these things? You’re our guest. Rest well tonight, and tomorrow, we’ll teach that errant cousin of mine a lesson!”

“Get a good night’s sleep, Ms. Quinn. We’ll take you to other places in the city tomorrow. You’ll have a great time!” Ronaldo’s friends chimed in with enthusiasm.

Abigail nodded. “Alright.”

She closed the door, and Ronaldo and his friends left.

As they rode the elevator, one of Ronaldo’s friends couldn’t resist asking, “She’s so beautiful, Ronaldo. Do you think you can win her over? It seems like a long shot.”

Ronaldo was startled. Then, he stomped on his friend's foot and exclaimed, "What are you thinking?! She's a genius designer who graduated from Pendorf Design Academy. How can I even think about dating her? Besides that, her ex-Do you know who her ex is?"

"Who is it?" Ronaldo's friends crowded around, curious.

"It's Sean Graham from Pendorf! With an ex like that, do you think I even stand a chance?" Ronaldo rolled his eyes and pushed his friends away.

His friends fell silent.

A while later, one of them muttered, "I thought you were trying to pursue her."

Ronaldo shot him a glance and scolded, "Shallow! Being nice to someone doesn't mean I'm trying to date them. I respect her. She's an artist. Do you understand what art is? I doubt you understand.

it at all!"

His friends were mostly involved in various business ventures, and their focus was solely on making money. Art appreciation wasn't in their wheelhouse.

"An artist is... well... it's hard to put into words. You'll understand how amazing she is when you see the clothes she designs," Ronaldo confessed. He might not have been a connoisseur, but he genuinely admired Abigail's work.

"I'll check it out when I get home to see how remarkable her designs are."

The crowd jostled among themselves as they got out of the elevator.

After taking a shower, Abigail climbed into the bed. She hesitated for a while but ultimately decided not to send a message to Sean. She couldn't be certain if he had made the call to Tony. If it weren't Sean, she would seem presumptuous if she called him to inquire about it.

She could not help but think, Oh well... Let's just pretend I don't know anything. Then, she tossed her phone aside and tried to sleep, but her mind remained restless. In the end, she picked up her phone again.

Just then, Sean texted her.

'Did you go to Eastbay?"

'How did you find out so quickly? Did you get someone to spy on me?"

By now, Abigail was certain Sean had been the one who called Tony.

[Chapter 320](#)

Firm Denial

No one else would have done it.

'Nope. Cameron told me about it. He still treats you like you're one of his bosses. Sean shifted all the blame onto the innocent Cameron.

Abigail bit her lip and responded to his text. Cameron takes such good care of me. I'll get him a gift. Thank him for me."

The reply left Sean with a heavy heart.

Without receiving a response, she set her phone down. Her mind was now free of any lingering concerns.

The next day, Abigail stayed in the hotel waiting for Tony's call. She took the chance to discuss the promotional schedule for the designs for Freshie TV with Ronaldo.

"Do you think it's enough only to release a promotional video in September? Must we wait until December?" He expressed his desire for an earlier program release.

She reassured him, "Not to worry. I have a unique design to unveil, and I'll handle the program's promotion as well. Publicity won't be an issue..

He looked at her silently for a moment before saying, "I haven't even seen the design yet. How will I know if it's good enough?"

She responded, "You won't be able to see it. This design is part of a collaboration with a special industry, and I've signed a non-disclosure agreement."

"Fine. It's only a few days till September. Even if I disagree, I can't do anything about it," Ronaldo said, although he had faith in Abigail's designs. There were always risks involved in creating a program, as many directors and production crews thought a show would be a massive success, only for it to turn into a failure,

"Trust me. I won't let you down," she promised.

He was about to speak when there was a knock on the door. "I'll get it," Then, he leaped to his feet.

As soon as the door opened, Lacey huffed, "Do you think just because you came in person- Ronaldo? What are you doing here?"

Ronaldo pulled her into the room while questioning, "Are you here to apologize or to start a fight?" He easily dragged her in before closing the door behind her. "Apologize to Ms. Quinn!" He stood in front of the door and instructed with a rare display of sternness.

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"Why should I apologize? I wasn't the one who sent those messages! Her haters did it!" Lacey crossed her arms and retorted haughtily. She had no intention of admitting her wrongdoings.

"Why are you lying when there's even an audio recording?" Ronaldo sounded noticeably angry.

Abigail sat on the couch and eyed Lacey indifferently. She suddenly realized there was more to Lacey than she let on.

“Aren’t there a ton of platforms where you can use AI to change a person’s voice? Some people. even got conned out of their money with AI-created videos of their friends and family! Why would I stoop so pick a fight with her?” Lacey staunchly defended herself with a slew of reasonable-sounding excuses.

“You’re certain it wasn’t you, correct?” Abigail asked.

Lacey rolled her eyes at Abigail. “Anthony is my fiance. Why would I pick a fight with you? Do you think I have nothing better to do? And you, what a joke you are to come and complain to my parents when all you have is some texts and a fake audio recording. Are you even an adult?

Abigail nodded. “Since it’s not you, that makes things easy. I’ll file a police report. They can trace the numbers to see who did it. Since it’s not you, I won’t have to show any mercy. If they’re students, I’ll just have to make sure it becomes a part of their juvenile record. If they’re already working, I’ll make sure this leaves a mark on their careers. I won’t let anyone get away with this.” Once she finished speaking, she clearly spotted Lacey tremble..

“You’re so petty, Ms. Quinn. You have so many haters. Are you going to catch them all?” Lacey stubbornly retorted.

“If they had limited their actions to posting scathing comments on Twitter or sending me private. messages, I might not have taken any action. However, my phone number has never been. disclosed. The fact th these online harassers could employ multiple phone numbers to insult me suggests that someone has breached my privacy. Such an intrusion demands a serious response.”

Abigail maintained her composure, wondering if Lacey truly believed she could outwit her. She held a strong conviction that Lacey, like many others on the internet, had a limited. understanding of the law. Lacey might have thought she could craft a flawless lie to evade consequences, but in reality, she was only digging a deeper hole for herself and her friends.

Ronaldo intervened, “Lacey, are you still going to lie about this? Ms. Quinn approached your parents to give you a chance. Don’t let your parents suffer because of your actions.”

Lacey vehemently denied, “What do you mean I lied? I didn’t lie!”

He smiled at Abigail and proposed, “Why don’t you allow me to delve into this further and explore the possibility of resolving it privately before considering a police report?”

“Fine. Abigail agreed. She was willing to do this for his sake. It was evident to anyone with a discerning eye that Lacey was being dishonest. If a police report were filed, those responsible for her actions would face consequences. Moreover, Lacey’s parents were not ordinary individuals. If news of their daughter’s actions spread online, it could tarnish their reputation and draw them. into the controversy.

Ronaldo dragged Lacey out of Abigail’s room.

As they left the hotel, she wrestled free from his grip and seethed, “Has that two-faced b*tch cast a spell on you? I knew she was a sly one! She keeps saying she and Anthony are nothing more than friends. These fake b*tches like to use the same excuse. In the end, they’re just attention-seeking whores who rely on their looks!”