

The Mbahsb 401

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At first, Janet had been focused on the food, but when she glanced down by chance, she saw Ronald fumbling on Patty's thighs. His face was almost buried in her chest.

Janet's seat was very close to Patty's so she heard what Ronald had said very clearly. A frown settled on her face at the words, and she felt uncomfortable. She was still thinking about how to deal with the situation, when Patty smiled faintly.

To Janet's surprise, she stood up, smashed the wine glass in Ronald's face, and spat, "You old goat! How dare you get fresh with me?! Do you think you can take advantage of me just because you are in charge of the project?"

The glass shattered against Ronald's forehead, leaving a cut. He covered the wound immediately and groaned in pain. Blood and wine flowed down his face. He was so stunned that it took him a few seconds before he raised his head again and glared at Patty. "Are you crazy?" he shouted angrily. "You came on to me first! You came to have dinner with me, and you're wearing such a sexy dress on purpose! Why are you suddenly pretending to be a saint? You bitch!"

Patty's face turned red in rage. Not to be outdone, she responded loudly, "When did I come on to you? Bastard! You asked us out just to take advantage of us! Spend a night with you? Why not look at yourself in the mirror first? Go fuck yourself, you disgusting old bastard!" At first, Janet had been focused on the food, but when she glanced down by chance, she saw Ronald fumbling on Patty's thighs. His face was almost buried in her chest.

The two of them began exchanging fierce insults and the atmosphere in the private room became increasingly tense. It looked like the two were close to exchanging blows, so Janet decided to take Patty away for the time being, scared that things would escalate. "Miss Jenkins, can you please come to the bathroom with me?" Janet quickly grabbed Patty's bag from the chair and dragged her out of the private room.

The door shut behind them, cutting off Ronald's insults as he yelled after them, and leaving the restaurant's hallway silent. Patty's rage hadn't subsided yet. She pushed Janet away and said, "You're such a coward. Why didn't you stand up to him?"

Janet let out a helpless sigh. Considering the fact that Patty was still in a bad mood after being harassed like that, she didn't argue with her. "It's best if we aren't in there with him right now. He's drunk. If we really fight him, we could get seriously hurt. We're both women after all."

The two of them began exchanging fierce insults and the atmosphere in the private room became increasingly tense. It looked like the two were close to exchanging blows, so Janet decided to take Patty away for the time being, scared that things would escalate. "Miss Jenkins, can you please come to the bathroom with me?" Janet quickly grabbed Patty's bag from the chair and dragged her out of the private room.

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Patty didn't respond to that. Rolling her eyes at Janet, she snatched her bag from her and left the restaurant still looking pissed.

The next day, Janet went to the company as usual. She was thinking about how to deal with the situation after Patty offended Ronald the day before, but before she came up with a solution, Tiffany came to find her.

"Janet! I want to see you in my office, right now!" Tiffany's eyes were full of rage.

Tiffany rarely lost her temper. It was terrifying seeing her so angry. It seemed she had heard what happened. Trembling with fear, Janet headed to Tiffany's office. When she got there, she found that Patty was already there.

Tiffany glared at the two of them and slammed the documents in her hands on the table. "Now which one of you wants to explain to me what is going on?! Ronald called me this morning in a fit. He said that they are canceling all plans to cooperate with us and that they would never have any contact with Larson Group's design department ever again. Not only that, they have made us an enemy, so they won't just ignore us, they will go out of their way to work against us!"

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Seeing the accusatory look on Tiffany's face, Janet didn't know how to explain the situation.

'Ronald molested Patty first. How dare he complain and act like we were in the wrong here?'

Tiffany looked unhappy. Seeing that both Janet and Patty were silent, she continued, "This collaboration is extremely important to us. Yoyo Fashion holds a significant position in the fashion industry with a worldwide reputation and popularity. But you have now offended Ronald. It will inevitably affect the project we're working on. They now want to call it off and the bonus of this quarter for the design department will definitely be ruined."

Tiffany took a deep breath and cast a reproachful look at Janet. "What the hell is going on? I know you two had dinner with Ronald last night. What the hell happened?"

"Didn't Ronald tell you why he wants to cancel the collaboration when he spoke to you over the phone?" Janet asked in confusion.

"He lost his temper and didn't tell me why he canceled the cooperation. Now you tell me what happened last night so we can find a way to deal with it." Tiffany was incredibly distressed. Seeing the accusatory look on Tiffany's face, Janet didn't know how to explain the situation.

Janet pursed her lips and glanced at Patty.

After all, she was responsible for everything. It would be better if she explained everything.

The latter dropped her gaze to the floor without uttering a word.

Patty seemed fierce last night, and Janet believed she would own up to it soon. Therefore, she stood aside without saying anything.

Noticing that Janet was staring at her, Patty raised her head and cast a hesitant look at Tiffany. "Miss Fisher, can I talk to you in private?"

After a moment's thought, Tiffany nodded before turning to look at Janet. "Lind, you can leave now. I'll call you in if I need anything."

Janet returned to her workstation in silence.

She wondered if Tiffany would reprimand Patty. After all, judging from Tiffany's rage, it seemed obvious this project was important to the company. However, what happened last night was Ronald's fault. She believed Tiffany, being a woman, would understand what Patty had done to protect herself.

After a long while, Patty finally walked out of Tiffany's office.

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After a long while, Patty finally walked out of Tiffany's office.

As Patty walked past Janet's desk, she glanced at Janet and shook her head, her eyes full of helplessness and disappointment.

The strange look in her eyes confused Janet. She couldn't understand Patty's expression, but it made her stomach churn with anticipation.

“Why is Patty staring at you that way? Did you make a mistake?” Gerda whispered to Janet as she munched the chips. She always ate snacks while working to help herself relax.

Janet’s brows furrowed in confusion. “I don’t know.”

Not long after, Tiffany came out of her office. She looked at Janet and let out a weary sigh. It looked like she wanted to say something but stopped on second thought. Finally, she returned to her office without saying a word.

Janet could sense that Tiffany’s attitude toward her had changed. After all, the woman gave her the same disappointing helpless look just as Patty did a while ago.

However, Janet couldn’t understand why they were giving her strange looks for no reason.

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It was not until lunchtime that Janet realized that something odd was afoot at the office. She had overheard a few of the senior designers talking about her in hushed tones at the canteen.

She couldn’t, however, clearly make out what they seemed to be gossiping about.

Just then, Gerda suddenly flung open the glass doors and burst into the design department. She rushed to Janet, struggling to catch her breath all the while. She placed her hands on Janet’s table for support and said in less than a whisper, “I heard that you was rude to Ronald Williams when you had dinner with him last night? And you even went on to physically strike him? It turns out that you are extremely hot-tempered, like a raging bull. I didn’t expect that from you in the least bit!”

Janet was more confused than ever when she heard this. “What on earth are you talking about? How could I ever hit someone?”

Gerda smacked her lips and pulled Janet up to her feet. “Forget it. I don’t think I can explain properly for you to understand the gravity of the situation. Come with me and see what’s going on with your own eyes!”

After saying that, she pulled Janet towards the stairway in the office. Then she whispered in Janet’s ear, “I overheard them talking about you just moments ago.”

Janet carefully peered down the stairwell only to be met by the sight of several senior designers, the very same ones who she’d seen at the canteen.

They were complaining in a wholly unimpressed tone and clearly apportioning full blame.

“Oh, my God! How can she ever be so selfish? Now she offended the client and the result is that the project was canceled. Everyone’s bonus is in jeopardy and it is all her doing!”

“She probably did that because the man is not handsome or rich enough for her, so she doesn’t want to sleep with him. After all, she is the kind of woman who sleeps with others for benefits she can get from them.” It was not until lunchtime that Janet realized that something odd was afoot at the office. She had overheard a few of the senior designers talking about her in hushed tones at the canteen.

Janet was utterly dumbstruck for a moment. "Wasn't Patty the one who offended Ronald? Why are they saying it was me?"

Gerda seemed to have discovered a big secret. Her jaw dropped to the floor with surprise at this new information. "What did you just say? So it wasn't you that insulted the client, but Patty?"

Janet managed to keep her wits about her. She patted Gerda on the shoulder and said, "Thank you for this. I don't know what happened that it has come to this confusion. I have to talk to Tiffany about this immediately."

Tiffany was occupied in her office. When she saw Janet come in, she sighed heavily and said earnestly, "Patty has told me everything. She said that you were harassed by Ronald and you hit him in response. It's not all your fault, so she didn't put the blame squarely on you. She thought that you might feel embarrassed to talk about it, so she told me in private, first thing this morning."

After a pause, Tiffany continued, "Lind, I know you just graduated and you lack social experience, but regardless of everything, Ronald is still a major client of ours. Even if you encounter such a situation, you should deal with it in a more sophisticated, diplomatic manner. If every designer in the company took the same stance as you, and hit our clients whenever they feel offended, how can we run the company?"

Janet was so livid that her voice trembled with the inner rage. She tried her best to keep her anger under control, and said, "Miss Fisher, this matter has nothing to do with me. The person who offended Ronald is Patty!"

She had never thought that Patty was so devious, conniving and downright despicable. Last night, Patty defended herself so fiercely when Ronald had harassed her. But now she didn't want to take the responsibility for what she had done, and she even put the blame on Janet instead.

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When Tiffany saw how righteous Janet was being about her version of events, she no longer knew who to believe. With a frown, she said, "I'll ask Patty to come here right now. You can confront her, face to face."

When Patty came to the office, she pretended to be very surprised. "What's the matter?"

Tiffany gave Patty and Janet a meaningful look before she opened her mouth. "Is there any misunderstanding between you two about what transpired last night? Patty, you should keep in mind what you informed me of just this morning. But just now, Janet told me that she wasn't the one who hit Ronald. She said it was you who had conflict with Ronald and you put the blame on her intentionally."

There was no flaw in Patty's expression at all. She covered her mouth with her hands, and her eyes were wide with astonishment and mock innocence. After a few seconds, she asked in disbelief, "Janet, how can you ever try to put the blame on me for your actions? Miss Fisher, I didn't lie to you. It was Janet who hit Ronald. Perhaps it was because she had been harassed by Ike before, so she overreacted when she encountered the same situation again."

Filled with fiery fury, Janet retorted, "What happened last night was that Ronald touched you, and then you shattered the glass on his head!"

With an innocent look on her face, Patty said, "I didn't hit him. It's your fault. I tried to persuade you to keep calm during the meal, but you didn't listen to me and called me a coward. I knew you were in a

bad mood, so I didn't take it to heart. But how can you lie when the truth is simple and in black and white?!"

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Patty's words were well within reason.

It was still lunch break, and when Tiffany called Patty to her office, a bunch of senior designers came with her.

They wasted no time putting in good words for Patty. "We've been working together for a long time, and we've got to know each other very well. Patty might be a little sharp-tongued, but she is not a liar."

"That's right. Patty is always friendly and willing to help the new hires, too. She was very happy when she learned that she would be Janet's partner on this project. Who would have thought that things

would turn out like this? It seems to me that anyone who works with Janet ends up getting screwed one way or another.”

“It’s not the first time that something like this happened, either, and Janet is involved each time. It’s all your fault, Lind. Why are you blaming other people?”

Janet was trembling with rage. “It has nothing to do with me,” she said through gritted teeth. “The issue is between Patty and Ronald.”

Then she turned to Patty and said, “I have never done anything to you, so why did you set me up?”

“It’s you who set me up,” Patty countered innocently.

Seeing that it was useless to argue her side, Janet said nothing more and strode out of Tiffany’s office. Patty’s words were well within reason.

It was still lunch break, and when Tiffany called Patty to her office, a bunch of senior designers came with her.

She knew that an explanation alone wouldn’t be enough to convince her colleagues. She needed concrete evidence to back her up. Unfortunately, Ronald’s companions had gone out to smoke when the incident happened. There were no other witnesses aside from her and Patty.

Janet took a cab and went to the hotel where they had dinner last night.

“Apologies, Miss, but we have these private rooms for a reason. The term speaks for itself, so naturally, we do not have surveillance cameras in these rooms.” The receptionist was blunt and dismissive toward Janet. Her attitude mainly had to do with the fact that Janet was an average career woman such as herself, and not among the elite that she was used to cozying up to.

“I see. I’m sorry for taking up your time. In that case, did anyone from your staff happen to hear a commotion in that particular room last night?” Janet wasn’t about to give up just yet.

“I’m really sorry, Miss,” the receptionist said, sounding impatient this time. “We cater to countless guests every day. We can’t possibly keep track of anything that’s going on behind closed doors.”

Janet felt her heart sink. Without evidence, no one would believe her.

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Her last option was Ronald himself.

Janet crossed her fingers and hoped that he would give her a moment of his time.

Unfortunately, it looked like Ronald was keen on taking revenge for what had happened last night. Janet's call never went through, making her realize that he had already blacklisted her.

Left with no other choice, she decided to go over to Yoyo Fashion. She would camp outside his office if she had to.

"I'm sorry," the company's receptionist said, her face blank. "Mr. Williams has said that he will not be seeing anyone from the Larson Group."

But Janet was tenacious. She took a step in the direction of the elevator banks. "I just want to see him for a bit. I will leave once I've explained everything to him."

"Please, Miss. If you don't leave right away, I'm afraid I will have to ask security to see you out."

Even though she said this, the receptionist had already taken out her walkie-talkie and proceeded to speak to the receiver. "Come to the reception. A suspicious person is here, and she refuses to leave."

Janet gnashed her teeth together, her nostrils flaring. She eventually trudged out of Yoyo Fashion, feeling bitter and dejected.

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Dispirited, Janet went back to the company.

At this time, Gerda was busy sketching some designs. "Tiffany wanted to see you. She said you should drop by her office once you're back," she said.

Janet glanced at Tiffany's office for a few seconds, stood up, and walked over reluctantly.

"Back so soon? Seems like you didn't find any evidence." Tiffany was reading a document while speaking. She didn't even raise her head, but she knew that Janet was the one who came into her office.

Janet replied, "I'll need a few more days, but I'll get you the evidence you need."

Tiffany let out a sigh. "I'm inclined to trust you, but you each put your own spin on what really happened last night. Since there isn't any concrete evidence, as your superior, I have to stay objective about this. I can't make my judgment based on personal biases. Just try your best to find an evidence to support your claims."

Janet fell silent for a moment. 'It seems that Tiffany is saying that no action will be taken against this matter unless I find evidence.'

"Okay. I understand." Tears welled up in Janet's eyes when she left Tiffany's office.

After that interaction, Janet worked in the company like normal.

Sadly, the matter hadn't blown over yet. Because they lost the quarterly bonus, all of her coworkers in the design department held a grudge against her and they vented their anger towards her.

Though there wasn't any evidence to prove which one of them was lying, most of their coworkers were on Patty's side. Dispirited, Janet went back to the company.

At this time, Gerda was busy sketching some designs. "Tiffany wanted to see you. She said you should drop by her office once you're back," she said.

The main reason was because Patty was the girlfriend of the Larson Group's operations manager. And now, she and Janet were at odds. None of the employees dared to offend someone more influential and powerful than they were.

Patty didn't have a falling out with Janet because of this. She even acted like she was the bigger person by saying, "We're all colleagues here. I think it's better if we all be nice. I understand that there are many rumors circulating about Lind. Though I'm not surprised that she'd do something like that, let's all just let it go and move on."

Gerda sat at her own station, craning her neck to get a better look at Patty. Patty spoke so loud that everyone in the office must've heard her.

Putting, Gerda lowered her head and said to Janet, "What a hypocrite she is! I once heard her speaking ill of you behind your back. She told our coworkers that you have a screw loose and that you're too proud for your own good."

Janet, on the other hand, just continued sketching her designs at her workstation in silence.

Because of this matter, she saw Patty's true colors.

"Sooner or later, I'll find the evidence to support my claims. For now, let's just ignore them and focus on our work, shall we?" Janet replied nonchalantly.

Gerda let out a sigh. 'Janet is such a pushover,' she thought. Because of Patty, Janet had now become the most hated person in the design department.

Although the others weren't openly saying it, they really hated Janet. Even someone as carefree as Gerda could clearly see that Janet was being isolated by everybody else. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that Janet had been caught in a terrible predicament.

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Gerdo sat at her own station, craning her neck to get a better look at Potty. Potty spoke so loud that everyone in the office must've heard her.

Pouting, Gerdo lowered her head and said to Janet, "What a hypocrite she is! I once heard her speaking ill of you behind your back. She told our coworkers that you have a screw loose and that you're too proud for your own good."

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Throughout the entire design department, Gerda was the only one willing to talk to Janet now.

Janet was pretending like it didn't affect her, but in truth, it dampened her spirit.

Just as her mood soured, her phone vibrated on the table.

Janet stared at the caller ID blankly for a few seconds.

It was a call from Ella Davian, her old college classmate.

Janet pondered for a moment. She rarely had ever contacted her college classmates ever since they graduated, let alone someone she didn't get along with like Ella.

Ella used to be her roommate in college. They had some conflicts in the past, so their relationship wasn't very good.

Janet wanted to ignore this call. But out of politeness, she picked up the phone.

"Why'd you take so long to answer the phone, Janet?" Ella, as always, was short-tempered. She couldn't bear the idea of others ignoring her.

"Sorry, I was too busy to notice it right away," Janet replied insincerely.

"It's fine. I heard from another classmate that you're now working for the Larson Group. Does that mean you're doing pretty good for yourself?" Ella spoke rather warmly over the phone. "There's going to be a reunion party of our old college class on Saturday night. You should come! Don't forget it."

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"I won't be free that day. Perhaps another time," Janet said, her voice calm and devoid of emotion. She'd just had a bad day and was in no mood to attend a class reunion.

When Janet was in college, she hadn't gotten along with Ella and the others. She'd been a wallflower, so it was surprising that they invited her this time.

Ella's laughter came to an abrupt end and she was suddenly serious. "All our classmates will be there. People will notice if you're the only one absent. Do you want that? It's not that hard to take one day off. It's not every day you get an opportunity like this. Who knows when the next class reunion will be?"

Janet bit her lip, deep in thought. "I'll consider it."

Ella noticed that Janet was in a bad mood, and her tone brightened. "What's there to think about? You do sound down in the dumps though; what happened?"

"It's nothing. I'm fine." Janet sighed in frustration. "I'll go."

She decided it wasn't a bad idea to have a get-together. She did want to relax and change her mood.

Ella's cheerful laughter on the phone showed how pleased she was. "Wonderful! I'll see you at Susie's."

After the call disconnected, Janet kept thinking about the reunion. Maybe meeting her old classmates again wasn't a bad idea.

Janet had a boring college life, but it was still much better back then than the infighting she was having now at the Larson Group. Besides, she'd had some bad blood between her and Ella in college. Meeting again was a great way to get past it. "I won't be free that day. Perhaps another time," Janet said, her voice calm and devoid of emotion. She'd just had a bad day and was in no mood to attend a class reunion.

Janet told Ethan about the call from Ella that night.

"I have some matters to resolve, so I won't be home early for the next few days, Saturday included. Don't worry about me. You can have a good time with your classmates," Ethan said, pinching her cheek. He had a meeting with some foreign partners that day.

Janet nodded. Although she didn't pay much attention to it, it was strange that Ethan had suddenly become quite busy ever since he changed his job under the Lester family's pressure.

The day of the class reunion arrived and Janet arrived at the restaurant according to the address which Ella had texted to her. A whole year had passed, but it wasn't like they changed drastically. Ella was able to recognize Janet at first glance.

"Janet! Over here!" Ella waved Janet over to the table where she sat.

Ella had changed quite a bit. She was now dressed expensively. She even had a Hermes bag sitting on the table in front of her. She pulled Janet into the seat beside her and said, "Wow Janet, you haven't changed huh? Your fashion taste is still terrible. Does the Larson Group not pay you well?"

Janet smiled and stayed quiet. She'd received many messages talking about how Ella was the one funding the class reunion and that she had booked the whole restaurant for the night, even going as far as paying for everything they would eat and drink.

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The day of the class reunion arrived and Jonet arrived at the restaurant according to the address which Ello had texted to her. A whole year had passed, but it wasn't like they changed drastically. Ello was able to recognize Jonet at first glance.

"Jonet! Over here!" Ello waved Jonet over to the table where she sat.

Ello had changed quite a bit. She was now dressed expensively. She even had a Hermes bag sitting on the table in front of her. She pulled Jonet into the seat beside her and said, "Wow Jonet, you haven't changed huh? Your fashion taste is still terrible. Does the Lorson Group not pay you well?"

Jonet smiled and stayed quiet. She'd received many messages talking about how Ello was the one funding the class reunion and that she had booked the whole restaurant for the night, even going as far as paying for everything they would eat and drink.

Janet knew that Ella's family wasn't well-to-do. Back in college, she was even spotted wearing knock-offs. How was she able to act so generously now?

"Ella, I heard that your husband runs a company. Isn't he great?" Several of their old classmates surrounded Ella, buttering her up.

With an unbothered look on her face, Ella said, "My husband's grandfather runs the company. It's a family business and now my husband is in charge of it. My husband has been saying that he wants to start his own business, but his family won't hear of it. They keep saying he is the only heir. There's just so much responsibility on his shoulders."

"Wow." Envy filled the voices of those around her. "Isn't it better to have a family business to inherit? Starting a new business is risky!"

"You're so lucky! It's such a surprise! You got married quickly after graduation, so while we were struggling to get jobs, you were already a rich housewife!"

Ella smirked slightly, raising her chin proudly. Turning to Janet, amusement colored her tone. "How about you, Janet? How are you doing? You're married as well, aren't you?"

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Ella's words came as a surprise to all her classmates.

After all, nobody knew that Janet was married.

"Is it true, Janet? Are you really married? Why didn't you tell us?"

"When did you hold the wedding? You didn't invite any of us..."

Janet shot Ella a cryptic glance then smiled embarrassedly. "I got married in a hurry and we just went to the church, so I wasn't able to invite you guys."

As she spoke, it finally dawned on Janet that Ella had organized this class reunion for a reason—to show off that she had married a rich man.

When she first received Ella's enthusiastic invitation, Janet thought that meant that all Ella's previous resentment towards her was gone. Little did she know that Ella was just looking for an excuse to show off her superiority.

"Where's your husband now? It looks like you're not having a good time, Janet." Ella giggled, her slender legs crossed.

Janet looked at Ella's black silk stockings and designer-brand red dress. The Ella she had known was different now.

She looked eyes with Ella calmly and said, "Oh, I'm quite happy." Ella's words came as a surprise to all her classmates.

Resting her chin on her hand, Ella stared at Janet's side profile and asked pointedly, "What does your husband do for a living?"

Janet instantly knew what Ella was trying to do and had to resist the urge to roll her eyes.

"My husband works a part-time job," she said calmly.

Hearing this, Ella's eyes lit up in an instant. It took her great effort to restrain the complacent smile on her face. Reaching for Janet's hand, she feigned a look of concern. "Then your life must be really difficult now, right? Oh, Janet, you are so beautiful and you used to get such good grades in college. Why would you settle for such a man?"

Ella's voice wasn't loud, but everyone heard her clearly.

Janet sipped from her glass of water and shrugged nonchalantly. "My husband treats me well."

As she spoke, her expression softened as though she was thinking about something happy, and she couldn't help but smile contentedly.

The complacent smile on Ella's face froze. She thought she must be mistaken. The man that Janet married was far worse than hers. How could Janet show such a happy smile?

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"In my opinion, marrying a man with a good financial background is best. Money helps us get over ninety-nine percent of marital troubles. It's better to be a wealthy housewife than to toil all day long at work." Ella spoke with fervor and assurance like a wise sage.

Many of her classmates echoed her sentiments. "Janet, you're a beautiful young woman. Why did you get married so early? You should've spent more time looking for options. There's plenty of fish in the sea."

"Janet was indeed a little dull when she was a student. I didn't expect that she would still be like this after graduation."

Janet shook her head firmly. "I don't think there's anything wrong with my marriage."

Ella covered her mouth and pretended to be apologetic. "Sorry! We didn't mean to offend you. We just wanted to tell you how important it is to marry a man who can provide for his family."

She paused for a few seconds and looked Janet up and down, with a hint of mockery in her eyes. "Otherwise, you'll be forced to wear only cheap clothes to class reunions."

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Janet wasn't mad at all. She was clear with herself that the life she was living was the life that she wanted.

"Well, I suppose that makes sense," she offered. She didn't want to argue with Ella any further. No one could truly know whether a marriage was happy or not aside from the involved couple themselves, anyway. She couldn't care less if Ella failed to understand that.

She had only bothered with a retort because she didn't want anyone to look down on Ethan.

Despite what others might think, Ethan was the most responsible, calm, and reliable man she had ever met.

Ella continued blabbering throughout dinner, boasting about how huge her luxury mansion was, and how she had servants to help her get dressed in the morning. Now and then, she would insert minor complaints that her life had become dull and boring after she married a rich man.

It wasn't long before Janet got fed up with Ella's arrogant diatribe. She furtively gathered her purse and thought of an excuse to leave once the meal was finished.

But Ella was quick to notice her intention. She immediately clung to Janet's arm and flashed a knowing smile. "Oh, are you going to the bathroom, Janet? We're heading to a high-class club after dinner to play cards and maybe do a bit of karaoke. You're coming, right?"

One of their classmates also spoke up. "Come on, Janet, you'll be sorry if you miss this chance. Ella booked the Merry Club for us. I heard that it's exclusive for members only, and you can't apply unless you own some hundred million dollars' worth of assets."

As impressive as it sounded, Janet was not interested at all. "I'm a little tired," she said. "I'd like to go home early and get some rest."

Ironically, her words only seemed to excite Ella even more. "Aren't you sick of spending your days just working? Live a little! Look, if you're hesitating because you don't want to spend your hard-earned money, I can cover all the expenses for you. What do you say? We all finally got together after so long! Don't be such a killjoy." Janet wasn't mad at all. She was clear with herself that the life she was living was the life that she wanted.

Janet squirmed as everyone's gaze locked on her.

Before she knew it, Ella was pulling her into the car with a wide grin on her face.

Moments later, they arrived at the Merry Club, where Ella claimed to have booked a private room for their enjoyment.

However, when she approached the reception to confirm her booking, she was informed that it had been voided.

"We apologize, Miss. Someone has booked the entire club for today." The staff gave her a polite smile. "We have finished processing your refund. Please check to see that everything is in order."

"Ella, didn't you say that you booked the room in advance?" a classmate questioned as they waited in the corner like a bunch of lost refugees.

Her sharp tone grated on Ella's already fraying nerves. She tapped her long fingernails on the reception desk. "Don't you have other private rooms? I can afford whichever is available. Name your price."

"I'm sorry, Miss. Like I said, the whole club is booked. There are no rooms available."

Ella gritted her teeth and glanced at her classmates. They had been looking forward to a good time in this posh and swanky establishment, and she had bragged that she would deliver. She refused to lose face in front of them.

"But I booked the room in advance!" she insisted impatiently.

Even so, the staff remained calm. "I understand, Miss, but you still cannot go inside. The club has been booked to accommodate the Larson Group, and it was the CEO himself who made the arrangements. They will be having a business meeting here tonight."

Janet squirmed as everyone's gaze locked on her.

Before she knew it, Ella was pulling her into the car with a wide grin on her face.

Moments later, they arrived at the Merry Club, where Ello claimed to have booked a private room for their enjoyment.

However, when she approached the reception to confirm her booking, she was informed that it had been voided.

"We apologize, Miss. Someone has booked the entire club for today." The staff gave her a polite smile. "We have finished processing your refund. Please check to see that everything is in order."

"Ello, didn't you say that you booked the room in advance?" a classmate questioned as they waited in the corner like a bunch of lost refugees.

Her sharp tone grated on Ello's already fraying nerves. She tapped her long fingernails on the reception desk. "Don't you have other private rooms? I can afford whichever is available. Name your price."

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Minutes had passed, but the group was still loitering around the entrance.

Ella was upset about the whole thing, but she knew there was nothing she could do. She certainly couldn't afford to offend anyone from the Larson Group.

She took a deep breath and mustered a smile. "Let's just change venues, shall we? The staff told me that the whole club was booked by the Larson Group."

They looked at each other in disappointment. There were very few people in Seacisco who would dare to go against the Larson Group, and none of them belonged to that demographic.

Just as they were preparing to leave, several lengthened black limos cruised into the club's driveway.

The cars stopped in a single file next to the entrance, and each chauffeur alighted to open the door to the backseat.

Men in sleek business suits and hand-made Italian leather shoes emerged one by one, looking serious and dignified.

Ella's posse gawked at them, particularly at the man in the middle. He stood tall among his peers, with broad shoulders and sharp features. He posed an imposing figure, and his eyes were cold and distant.

"Look, look! That man is gorgeous. Is he the CEO of the Larson Group?"

Janet was trying to send Ethan a message, but she was jostled around by her classmates in their hushed frenzy. When she heard mention of the CEO of the Larson Group, she instantly perked up and looked over curiously.

She wasn't sure why she did it, either. It was as though a voice at the back of her mind was nagging at her to look.

And just like that, her eyes fell on a very familiar face just a few feet away.

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Janet's eyes widened in shock, and she murmured, "Ethan."

Her classmate next to her was even more surprised. "Do you know anyone over there? These people are so well-dressed! They don't look like commoners."

Pretty soon, Janet regained her composure and nodded in response.

'Of course, I know him. He's my husband! But what is Ethan doing here? Did he come here with his boss?' she wondered.

She turned her gaze to the side and saw Garrett standing next to Ethan. The man was speaking to Ethan with a stern expression, which was quite different from his usual nonchalant attitude.

"Didn't the receptionist say that Brandon Larson booked this place? They're probably from the Larson Group," her classmate whispered.

Her classmate's words pulled Janet back to her senses.

Thoughts reeled through Janet's head. For a moment, an idea formed in her head.

'Right... the only ones who can be here are senior executives of the Larson Group.'

As she stared at Ethan, her heart raced at the thought of the possibility. The people around her husband were all staring at him with admiration and caution.

Ethan was standing in the center, surrounded by lots of people.

Any man in that position must be the most powerful man in the Larson Group, even more powerful than the likes of Garrett.

There could only be one explanation. That man was actually Brandon Larson.

Janet stared in awe at the silver gray suit Ethan was wearing. It was a tailor made suit designed by a famous designer from Paris. The fabric alone cost a fortune.

Suddenly, Janet felt very confused.

She was wondering if that man donned in glamorous clothes was Ethan or Brandon.

He was only a few feet away, but Janet felt like the person before her was so distant and unreachable.

"Hey, Janet, which one of those people do you know? Do you know who that guy in the silver suit is?" Janet's classmate nudged her arm.

"I don't," Janet replied, shaking her head.

Her classmate pouted, visibly disappointed. "What a pity! I was hoping if you could tell me if that man in the middle is Brandon. He's so handsome!"

Janet smiled bitterly.

She suddenly pieced it all together.

She now understood why she had led a charmed life ever since she married Ethan. Aside from that, she no longer wondered why Brandon treated her well. The mystery of Ethan and Brandon's "special relationship" was finally solved. And most of all, she was able to understand why Brandon's figure and facial features resembled Ethan's.

It turned out that Ethan and Brandon were the same person!

All of a sudden, Janet was uncertain of how to face this realization.

'Maybe I should be happy. After all, my husband is the Larson Group's CEO,' she remarked inwardly.

But then, she felt no joy in her heart.

Her mind was clouded at this moment. 'I can't understand why Ethan had been lying to me. Is he worried that I'd ask him for money once I find out that he's actually Brandon?'

Rich people were always rational and utilitarian. They were adept at weighing pros and cons.

'Is Brandon trying to fool around with me as Ethan? What's going to happen once he's tired of playing with me? Will he toss me aside like a used napkin?'

Countless questions flooded Janet's mind. She felt like she had been a fool that Ethan had toyed with for years on end.

She turned around, intending to leave this place the soonest that she could.

"Janet?"

Suddenly, she heard someone's loud voice calling her from behind.

Her heart skipped a beat. She turned around once more.

There, she saw Garret's pale face as he looked at her through the crowd.

Now, all eyes were on her. All the senior executives, partners of the Larson Group, and Ethan looked at her. Ethan looked really tense and shocked to see her.

[Chapter 410](#)

One day ago.

When Ethan headed to the company and started his day, Garrett told him about the matter that had happened between Janet and Patty.

“Can you solve this issue?” Ethan went on to look through the document. It was inconvenient for him to deal with such a trivial matter in person, since Patty was just a senior designer after all.

Pushing his glasses up the bridge of his nose, Garrett said vaguely, “The only person who can be a witness for this is Ronald. But Ronald has made the decision to cancel the cooperation with the Larson Group. I heard that Janet visited their company, but she didn’t even get to see Ronald there.”

After closing the file and thinking it over for a few seconds, Ethan raised his eyes and said to Garrett, “The Larson Group is going to invite the companies we are cooperating with to have a meeting. Be sure you invite the CEO of their company.”

“Are you going to talk to him in person?” Garrett couldn’t believe his ears. He couldn’t help but sigh in his heart that Janet was so lucky to have a husband who went out of his way to spoil her so much.

Hearing that Brandon was inviting him, Jacob Gentry, the CEO of Yoyo Fashion, was very happy and immediately agreed to attend. Brandon happened to be the most popular new billionaire in Seacisco. It would be, of course, a good thing to be on good terms with him.

Ethan made their meeting place at the Merry Club, which was one of the best clubs in the city.

Those who showed up in this kind of place were all celebrities. Ethan didn’t think Janet would actually appear here.

While Garrett was talking to Ethan, he thought he saw a woman staring at them.

Garrett as a man was very sensitive to women. When he saw that the back of the woman who was turning around and was about to leave looked like Janet’s, he immediately called out her name to stop her.

When Janet made eye contact with Ethan, she inexplicably became flustered and afraid.

The man standing before her was Brandon Larson, the CEO of the Larson Group. He was simply wearing different clothes as Ethan’s, but she had the feeling that his temperament and expression had all changed noticeably.

Tears were welling up in Janet’s eyes. All of a sudden, she felt that the Ethan she knew, who would gently fold laundry on the sofa, was long gone. It made her sad to think that she might never get to see his gentle expression again.

Brandon was a complete stranger to her.

She took two steps back and fled the scene.

The moment Janet made her getaway, Ethan ran after her.

Everyone present was flabbergasted and many of Janet’s classmates were so shocked that their eyes were opened wide.

Ethan caught up with Janet in just a few steps. He grabbed hold of her wrist and pulled her body to him. “You must listen to me, Janet.”

Though his tone was aggressive, his eyes were filled with helplessness.

While clenching her teeth, Janet lifted her head and saw his face again at closer range this time. Needless to say, she was still shocked.

Her heart would pound faster every time when she saw Ethan standing before her even just in his tank top.

But now, the handsome man with beautiful facial features only made Janet feel inferior and helpless at the same time.

To her, he was like the stars in the sky that could only be looked at and never obtained.

“What do you want me to call you now? Mr. Larson or my husband? You kept it a secret from me for so long, Ethan... no, Mr. Larson!” Janet couldn’t help but sneer.

At this time, Garrett also quickly came over to them. He knew that it was inappropriate at the moment, but so many partners of theirs were waiting for Ethan, so he had to remind Ethan that there were people he still needed to attend to.

He looked at Janet and then whispered to Ethan, “Mr. Larson, there are so many people waiting for you.”

Ethan’s eyes darkened noticeably. “Why don’t you apologize to them on my behalf and change the time of the meeting?”

After having said that, he looked at the woman in front of him and pulled her into his arms again. “Let’s go somewhere else together and solve this problem of ours,” he said in a firm tone.