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The bride is corseted and cosseted in her high-necked, hand-appliquéd Italian lace wedding dress on the grounds of an 18th-century brick villa outside of Milan. "I'm gonna cry!" says the soon-to-be Lauren Sánchez Bezos. "I'm gonna be a mess on the day, but the best kind of mess." "Today is a shoot for Vogue. The day before, Sánchez and Bezos were at the Dolce & Gabbana atelier in central Milan for their final fittings. In a few weeks and 170 miles away, they will marry in front of some 200 family and friends in Venice. "It was more powerful than I thought," Sánchez says of yesterday's fitting. Bezos begged to see the dress. "I almost gave in!" she admits. "But I want it to be a surprise. As you get a little older, not many things surprise you. I can't wait to see his face." "She is now posing, hands on hips and leaning forward—Fellini-esque in the mermaid-line gown—framed by an allée of cypress poplars. "I feel like a princess," she says. "You look like a princess!" the eager chorus of onlookers—glam team, seamstresses, production crew—parries back. A team of Dolce tailors, dressed in crisp white work coats with black crochet Peter Pan collars and grosgrain ribbon belts, unfolds a tulle and lace veil with the precision of surgeons. When a winged ant gets caught in the delicate fabric, a frenzy of hushed, urgent Italian ensues before the ant is carefully, gingerly dislodged. The veil is applied to Sánchez's head like a crown. A man on a scooter toadies past the property line and a momentary panic sets in. "The wedding has been chosen to avoid any chance of Milanese paparazzi. Was the man wearing a GoPro? No, the Italian shoot-out was over. The man was just a maize farmer headed to the neighboring property. No GoPro.FINAL FITTINGS "I'm a different person than I was five years ago," says Sánchez Bezos, here with a team of tailors from Dolce & Gabbana. The Bezos-Sánchez nuptials have stirred up a kind of mania. Major news organizations have filed on-the-ground reports and published robust write-arounds (including at least one pocketed delightfully titled "Jeff in Venice"). Tabloids have breathlessly covered all things bride and wedding, including the extravagant Parisian bachelorette party. The attention has had an edge of judgment, if not outright criticism, and protests have erupted in Venice over Bezos's wealth and expectations that the event will overwhelm the city (rocket-illustrated signs read "No Space For Bezos"). Yet, "the wedding is extremely intimate," Sánchez tells me. Of the 200 guests, some 70 are family. "She wants to do a very classic and elegant wedding," says Stefano Gabbana when I reach him by phone in Milan. "She didn't want to do something very flashy or bling bling. This will be the second marriage for both Bezos and Sánchez, who have seven children between them. Famously, the two were engaged in May of 2023 on their three-masted, 417-foot sailing yacht, Koru—its name a Maori symbol for new beginnings. Sánchez is wearing the cushion-cut pink engagement diamond she found under her pillow on Koru, but she won't at the ceremony. She will, however, wear the Dolce & Gabbana Alta Gioielleria Miracolo earrings, four diamonds cut from a single stone and inlaid in white gold, which arrived by armored van for the shoot, and which have a guard standing ominously on a nearby hillcock. "We don't have a lot of traditions that we're keeping," she explains. "I mean, I love traditions, but for a 55-year-old woman, it's a little different." There are, however, a few conventions that will be honored, including the one about the groom not seeing the bride before the wedding day. Also, the Dolce earrings will be her something borrowed. Her something blue? "Well, Blue Origin," Sánchez says. "It's something from my space flight." She explains she carried a secret "something blue" in her rocket to the moon for Bezos, "because it was literally one of the most profound experiences I've ever had in my life. Seeing Earth from space, I can't describe it. It was the greatest experience I've ever had. Jeff said, 'It's gonna change your more than you think,' and it completely has, visually and spiritually." That 11-minute journey to the Kármán line, the delineation between Earth's atmosphere and outer space, changed her thinking about the dress. She shifted away from the modern, strapless silhouette she tends to favor for red carpets, toward a more timeless and referential idea—based on the high-necked lace wedding dress Sophia Loren wore to marry Cary Grant in the 1958 film *Houseboat*. "It went from 'I want a simple, sexy modern dress' to 'I want something that evokes a moment,' and where I am right now. I am a different person than I was five years ago," she says. She touches her phone, face down on the table. Its case is covered in charms—a rocket, a lipstick, a purse—affixed with Gorilla Glue by the 12-year-old daughter of designer Stacey Bendet Eisner, a friend. "I went into a lot of therapy and it's changed me a bunch of ways. But it's really Jeff." She pauses. "Jeff hasn't changed me. Jeff has revealed me. I feel safe. I feel seen." Sánchez Bezos wears a Dolce & Gabbana tuxedo shirt, similar to the one Bezos would be wearing at the ceremony. Sánchez began planning the dress a year and a half ago, while at dinner at Domenico Dolce's New York City condo overlooking the Hudson River. The couple had met the Italian designers a few summers before, when both parties had yachts anchored in Portofino. (Dolce's boyfriend, Gù Siquera, had met Sánchez once at Nobu Malibu, with mutual friend Kris Jenner.) One captain radio-ed the other and a drink date was set; then, over gin and tonics, the group chatted until midnight, becoming fast and easy friends. It felt natural to ask them to design her wedding dress, Sánchez says. And where did Sophia Loren come in? "I researched pictures of brides in the 1950s," she says. "I wanted to reflect back, and I saw Sophia Loren and her hands were like this"—she imitates a prayer position—"and she was in a high lace, up to the neck, and I said, 'That's it. That's the dress.' Sánchez claims it will be the first formal dress she's ever worn that so covered up across the chest. "It's a departure from what people expect," she says, "from what I expect—but it's very much me." Will Bezos be surprised? She dips her head in an emphatic nod. "Yes, I think he will be pleasantly surprised. I think he's going to be so happy. I mean, it's so elegant, it's timeless." For the wedding dinner, she will change into a sweetheart neck, corseted gown inspired by the Rita Hayworth film *Gilda*; and for the party afterwards, a cocktail dress by Oscar de la Renta featuring 600 yards of hand-sewn chain and 175,000 crystals. After the shoot, Sánchez and I sit on wrought iron patio furniture with glasses of Champagne provided by the shoot caterer. She has changed into the outfit she arrived in: a sleeveless white eyelet Dolce & Gabbana mid-dress, leather Chanel sneakers, and diamond studs the size of quarters. "Chloe, the last time we talked I was just engaged, about to go to space, and now it's all happening!" It's true: 18 months ago, when I interviewed the couple in the foothills of Texas's Sierra Diablo mountains for *Vogue*, Bezos made us margaritas in a rocket-shaped cocktail mixer and when asked if he was getting involved in wedding planning, said, "Do I look that dumb?" Sánchez laughs when I remind her of this. "He's more involved than you might think," she says. "He's actually more artistic than people think." She describes him as very engaged with how the wedding should look. "He's really good at it." Events include two welcome dinners, to which she'll wear a 2003 Alexander McQueen one-shouldered black column dress and a Schiaparelli couture off-the-shoulder dress with hand-embroidered flowers and a corset covered in gold bugle beads (celebrity stylist Jamie Mizrahi consulted on her pre-wedding looks); the ceremony; and then a post-wedding pajama-themed party (Atelier Versace strapless georgette dress with crystal mesh embroidery and matching dressing gown). "We have incredible music planned," Sánchez says, noting that everyone playing at the wedding is a friend. Phones will not be allowed. Sánchez has paid special attention to the goody bags awaiting guests in their hotel rooms, too, only telling me that each will include a sampling of Venetian fare. At the reception men will be given Vihl Venezia blue velvet Venetian. Women, who lives in a palace on the Grand Canal, offered to host a welcome dinner at the weekend. The decision was made. "I called Venice 'it' and Diane corrected me and said, 'Venice is a she!'" explains Sánchez, initiating von Fürstenberg's authoritative purr. "So now I always refer to Venice as she." "It's important the clothes have with the location," explains Dolce. "You stay in harmonia like a movie." This means that one of the dresses for the weekend, a draped, deep-V, burgundy velvet look, was inspired by the Doges of Venice—though only in color, says Gabbana. (Historically, Doges, the medieval magistrates who ruled the Venetian oligarchy, wore loose, high-necked crimson robes.) Another option features a print of the Canaletto painting *The Return of the Bucintoro on Ascension Day* on double-faced duchess silk, embellished with shimmering Swarovski crystals and seed and bugle beads. At the Vogue shoot, Sánchez wears the Canaletto dress against a wall of not-yet-flowering jasmine studded by a prop stylist with pale pink English roses. Cobblestones present a challenge underfoot. "I'm an expert in heels," Sánchez says. "I think I was born in stiletto!" When Sánchez was a little girl in Albuquerque, New Mexico, she used to make veils with extra lace from her mother's sewing supplies. "I always wanted to be a bride," she recalls. Her aunt would send her copies of *Vogue* Spain and she would find dresses she liked and buy the fabric to make them with her mom, like a red puff-sleeve one for high school prom. "I mean, that's the closest thing I've ever had to something like this," she says. Her first wedding dress was something she bought when she saw it in a shop window while driving through Century City. "I've never had a dress designed for me like this—something so personal." During the fitting in Milan the day before the shoot, Dolce took a pair of fabric shears and snipped the sleeve off of the bodice. "I couldn't believe it!" marvels Sánchez. "He literally just cut it off!" He then reapplied it, slightly adjusted. The dress, which took 900 hours of atelier work, also features a little, little, little button. Known as priest buttons, the motif is continued down the skirt, with 180 buttons in all. "The whole thing was like a dream," Sánchez says. "More than the dress, I'm happy that I'm going to marry and I get to spend my life with my best friend, someone who sees me, someone who adores me, someone who I adore. I am the luckiest woman on the planet." She picks up her black crocodile Hermès Kelly bag. "To be honest, I don't want after this, I can't wait to go back and tell him about my day. "In this story, I think they're Rick Hecker, the CEO of Amazon, Laura Ann Mele, mactenzie, ryan shelton, DSG Tailors, Claudia Longaretti, Lorenzo Giacometti, and Mohamed Laghlid. Produced by Kitten Production. Set design: Carlo Maria Filippelli. Special thanks to Viola Poggio. Jeff Bezos founded e-commerce giant Amazon in 1994 out of his Seattle garage. Bezos stepped down as CEO to become executive chairman in 2021. He owns 9% of the company. He and his wife MacKenzie divorced in 2019 after 25 years of marriage and he transferred a quarter of his then-16% Amazon stake to her. In 2020, Bezos committed to donate \$10 billion to climate causes by 2030 through his Bezos Earth Fund; he has granted \$2 billion so far. He owns The Washington Post and Blue Origin, an aerospace company developing rockets; he briefly flew to space in one in July 2021. Bezos said in a November 2022 interview with CNN that he plans to give away the majority of his wealth in his lifetime, without disclosing specific details. Wealth HistoryOVER TO REVEAL: NET WORTH BY YEARPersonal StatusAge61Source of WealthAmazon, Self MadeSelf-Made Score8Philanthropy Score2ResidenceMiami, FloridaCitizenshipUnited StatesMarital StatusEngagedChildren4EducationBachelor of Arts/Science, Princeton UniversityDid you knowGrowing up, Bezos worked summers on his grandfather's ranch repairing Caterpillar tractors. Bezos met Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin in 1998 and managed to become one of the company's first angel investors, putting in an estimated \$250,000. In Their Own WordsI don't think I'd regret trying and failing. And I suspected I would always be haunted by a decision to not try at all.Jeff BezosRelated People & CompaniesView ProfileView ProfileView ProfileView ProfileView ProfileView Profile 1964-presentBillionaireJeff Bezos is set to marry former televangelist Lauren Sánchez in a three-day wedding in Venice, Italy, this week. Around 200 people are expected to attend the festivities, including celebrities like Oprah Winfrey, Leonardo DiCaprio, Orlando Bloom, Fisher, Bill Gates, and First Lady Ivanka Trump. The 11-year-old Amazon founder will reportedly wear 55-year-old Sanchez on June 27 in a black-tie ceremony on the private island of San Giorgio Maggiore. The main wedding reception will take place the following day at the Arsenal, a complex of former shipyards surrounded by walls on the outskirts of Venice. The reception venue was apparently changed at the last minute amid Venetians' "No Space for Bezos" protests across the city. According to Luca Zia, the president of the Veneto region, the wedding is expected to cost around \$50 million. Bezos and Sanchez first went public with their relationship in January 2019 following the entrepreneur's divorce from MacKenzie Scott. Sanchez also left her former husband Patrick Whitesell around that time. A month later, a National Enquirer exposé alleged the pair had been involved in an extramarital affair for eight months prior to their respective divorces. In response, Bezos accused the tabloid's parent company, American Media Inc., of trying to blackmail him. The couple made their first public appearance together at Wimbledon that July and eventually got engaged in May 2023.Jump to:Entrepreneur and e-commerce pioneer Jeff Bezos is the founder and executive chair of Amazon, owner of The Washington Post, and founder of the space exploration company Blue Origin. Born in 1964 in New Mexico, Bezos had an early love of computers and studied computer science and electrical engineering at Princeton University. After graduation, he worked on Wall Street, and in 1990, he became the youngest senior vice president at the investment firm D.E. Shaw. Four years later, Bezos quit his lucrative job to open Amazon.com, an online bookstore that has become a retail juggernaut. He started Blue Origin in 2000, then in 2013, Bezos purchased The Washington Post. In 2017, Amazon acquired Whole Foods, and the company purchased MGM Studios in 2022. Bezos' successful business ventures have made him one of the richest people in the world; his estimated net worth is at least \$233 billion as of June 2025.FULL NAME: Jeffrey Preston BezosBORN: January 12, 1964BIRTHPLACE: Albuquerque, New MexicoSPOUSES: MacKenzie Scott (1993–2019) and Lauren Sánchez (2025–present)CHILDREN: 3 sons and 1 daughterASTROLOGICAL SIGN: CapricornJeff Bezos was born Jeffrey Preston Jorgensen on January 12, 1964, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His parents, Jacklyn "Jackie" Jorgensen and the late Ted Jorgensen, were both teenagers when Jeff was born, and their marriage lasted about two years. Ted sporadically saw his son after that but soon lost touch entirely (Ted didn't even know Jeff had become a billionaire until 2012 when journalist Brad Stone reached out to the bike shop owner while writing his book *The Everything Store*: Jeff Bezos and the Age of Amazon). When Jeff was 4 years old, his mother remarried Miguel "Mike" Bezos, a Cuban immigrant who became an engineer at Exxon. Jackie and Jeff took Bezos as their new last name, and Mike adopted the young boy. "The reality, as far as I'm concerned, is that my dad [Mike] is my natural father," Jeff later told *Wired*. "The only time I ever think about it, genuinely, is when a doctor asks me to fill out a form." "The Bezos family lived in Houston for a time to accommodate Mike's job. Jackie and Mike went on to have a daughter and another son together, making Jeff the oldest of their three children. Although Mike was raised in the Roman Catholic Church, it's unknown if Jeff and his siblings share their father's religious affiliation. EducationJeff showed an early interest in how things work, turning his parents' garage into a laboratory and rigging electrical contraptions around his house as a child. He moved to Miami with his family as a teenager, where he developed a love for computers and started his first business. Jeff opened an educational summer camp called the Dream Institute for fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. In 1982, the bright, ambitious Jeff graduated as valedictorian of Miami Palmetto Senior High School. He then attended Princeton University, where he studied computer science and electrical engineering. He graduated summa cum laude in 1986. Finance CareerAfter graduating from Princeton, Jeff worked at several companies on Wall Street, including Fitel, Bankers Trust, and the relatively new hedge fund D.E. Shaw. In 1990, when he was 26, Jeff became D.E. Shaw's youngest vice president. His career in finance was extremely lucrative, yet Jeff chose to make a risky move into the nascent world of e-commerce. He quit his job in 1994, moved to Seattle, and targeted the untapped potential of the internet market by opening an online bookstore. Bezos was 31 when he opened Amazon.com, named after the meandering South American river, to the public on July 16, 1995. In the months leading up to launch, a few employees had been developing software with Bezos in his garage, and the pioneering internet entrepreneur enlisted 300 friends to beta test his site. Eventually, the startup expanded its operations into a two-bedroom house equipped with three Sun Microsystems. The initial success of the company was meteoric. With no press promotion, Amazon.com sold books across the United States and in 45 foreign countries within 30 days. In two months, sales reached \$20,000 a week, growing faster than Bezos and his team had envisioned. Amazon became a publicly traded company on May 15, 1997, with an IPO price of \$18 per share. Many market analysts questioned whether the company could hold its own when traditional retailers launched their own e-commerce sites. Two years later, Amazon not only kept up, but also outpaced competitors to become an e-commerce leader. Bezos continued to diversify Amazon's offerings with the sale of CDs and videos in 1998 and later clothes, electronics, toys, and more through major retail partnerships. Today, the company sells practically all types of goods from third-party retailers and a swath of products under its Amazon Basics line as it operates the online payment service Amazon Pay. Although many dot.coms of the early '90s went bust, Amazon has flourished with yearly sales that jumped from \$510,000 in 1995 to \$638 billion in 2024. According to consumer research, almost half of all U.S. households in 2016—54 million—were Prime members and spent on average \$1,100 per year with Amazon. Bezos reported in his 2018 annual shareholder letter that the company had surpassed 100 million paid subscribers for Amazon Prime. That number doubled by the 2021 shareholder letter from Andy Jassy, who took over as CEO when Bezos stepped down. Ultimately, Amazon has grown to become one of the most valuable public companies in the world. It was the second business to reach the record worth of \$1 trillion in September 2018, just a few weeks after Apple. In November 2022, Amazon logged a major milestone as the world's first public company to lose its \$1 trillion market value; however, the e-commerce business was still valued at \$879 billion. Its value has rebounded significantly, and as of June 2025, Amazon is valued above \$2.3 trillion. Bezos' company has also been successful in launching Amazon Prime Video, Amazon's streaming service, which offers customers to purchase the 2-day delivery or eligible purchases. The company has since added to its membership benefits with faster delivery options, including same-day, movie and TV show streaming; Prime Pantry for non-perishable household item delivery; Prime Photos, allowing unlimited photo storage on its app; access to e-books, audiobooks, and magazines; Prime Wardrobe, which allows customers to try on clothes before paying; a members-only credit card; exclusive deals; and more. To commemorate Amazon's 20th anniversary in July 2015, the company launched Amazon Prime Day, an online shopping sale for members similar to Black Friday. The following year, the company recorded its highest single-day sales to date when global orders increased 60 percent during Amazon Prime Day. The annual sale now spans several days. Flexing its e-commerce dominance even beyond its own website, Amazon announced Buy With Prime in 2022. The feature allows Prime members to place Amazon orders directly from other merchants' sites. In 2008, Amazon acquired the digital audiobook company Audible Inc. for \$300 million. Customers can purchase or stream audiobooks via subscription or individual purchase. Audible also provides access to podcasts. Audible dates back to 1995 and, in its early years, improved its products and technology after attracting major investors like Microsoft. Before purchasing the company outright, Amazon bought a 5 percent stake in Audible in 2000. In 2016, Audible introduced original content featuring narration by famous actors, such as Colin Firth, Anne Hathaway, Dustin Hoffman, and Samuel L. Jackson. Amazon is now the largest audiobook producer and retailer in the United States, producing 10,000 original titles, as well as offering audiobooks and text-to-speech capabilities to publishers, broadcasters, entertainers, magazines, newspapers, books, and radio stations. In 2006, Amazon launched its video streaming service, initially known as Amazon Prime Video. In 2013, it was eventually rebranded as Amazon Prime Video. Bezos premiered several original programs with the launch of Amazon Studios in 2013. The company hit it big in 2014 with the critically-acclaimed *Transparent* and *Mozart in the Jungle*. The company produced and released its first original movie, *Spike Lee's Chi-Raq*, in 2015. In April 2016, Amazon split Prime Video from Amazon Prime in the United States, allowing customers to purchase the 2-day delivery service as a standalone subscription or as part of Amazon Prime membership. That December, Amazon released Prime Video worldwide—except in mainland China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Syria—expanding the company's reach way beyond America. The internet company's interest in movies and cinema continues beyond Prime Video. In 2021, Amazon entered a multi-year deal with Universal Pictures to bring their films to Amazon's platform. Launched in November 2014, Alexa is Amazon's voice-operated virtual assistant built into the company's Echo smart speaker line. In addition to playing music, setting alarms, streaming podcasts and audiobooks, and providing real-time weather, traffic, sports, and news, Echo users can direct Alexa to control smart devices in their homes, such as TVs, lighting, and security cameras. Amazon has invested heavily in cloud computing. Individuals, companies, and governments use Amazon Web Services for networking, computer storage, processing capacity, and software tools, over the internet via Amazon's AWS server farms located around the world. AWS is Amazon's most profitable division. Notable customers include the U.S. Navy, NASA, Netflix, and the Obama presidential campaign of 2012. In 2022, Amazon Web Services reported \$80 billion of revenue. Amazon released the Kindle, a handheld digital book reader that allowed users to buy, download, read, and store their personal libraries, in 2007. Bezos entered Amazon into the tablet marketplace with the unveiling of the Kindle Fire in 2011. The following September, he announced the new Kindle Fire HD, the company's next-generation tablet designed to give Apple's iPad a run for its money. "We haven't built the best tablet at a given price. We built the one that's available at any price," he said, according to *Art & News*. In July 2013, Bezos made headlines when Amazon launched a patent lawsuit against Apple, claiming that the iPhone 5 infringed on Amazon's patent for a method of displaying content on a screen. The lawsuit was eventually dismissed by a federal judge in 2015. In 2016, Bezos and his wife MacKenzie Scott launched the Bezos Day One Fund, which focuses on "funding existing nonprofits that help homeless families, and creating a network of new, nonprofit tier-one preschools and low-income communities." The announcement came a year after Bezos had asked his Twitter followers how to donate part of his fortune. Bezos gave away \$2 billion of his personal fortune to fund the nonprofit. In February 7, 2020, Bezos announced that he was launching the Bezos Earth Fund to combat the potentially devastating effects of climate change. Along with committing \$10 billion to the initiative, Bezos said he would begin issuing grants to call for scientists, activists, NGOs—to support that offers a real possibility to help preserve and protect the natural world." Following his return from space, whose cost was widely criticized, Bezos announced that he was giving away two \$100 million awards. The first *Courage and Civility Awards* were given in 2021 to Van Jones, the activist and TV personality, and Jose Andres, chef and founder of World Central Kitchen. Bezos has given away \$2.1 billion, which is 1.2 percent of his wealth. Bezos met MacKenzie Scott (then MacKenzie Tuttle) when they both worked at D.E. Shaw: he as a senior vice president and she as an administrative assistant to pay the bills to fund her writing career. The couple dated for three months before getting engaged and married shortly thereafter in 1993. Bezos and Scott have four children together: three sons and a daughter adopted from China. Scott was an integral part of the founding and success of Amazon, helping create Amazon's first business plan and serving as the company's first accountant. Although quiet and bookish, she publicly supported Amazon and her husband. A novelist by trade, training under Toni Morrison during her college years at Princeton University, Scott published her first book, *The Testing* of Luther Albright, in 2005, and her second novel, *Traps*, in 2013. After more than 25 years of marriage, Bezos and Scott divorced in 2019. As part of the divorce settlement, Bezos' stake in Amazon was cut from 16 percent to 12 percent, putting his stake at nearly \$110 billion and Scott's at more than \$37 billion. Scott announced that she planned to give away at least half of her wealth to charity. Right after Bezos announced his divorce from MacKenzie in January 2019, The National Enquirer published an 11-page exposé of the business mogul's extramarital affair with television host Lauren Sánchez. Bezos subsequently launched an investigation into the motives of The National Enquirer and its parent company, American Media Inc., in a lengthy post on Medium. Bezos accused "a 6M of our company to publish explicit photos of me based on a 10-minute investigation." He also suggested that the magazine's "editorial board" didn't want personal photos published. He also would participate in their well-known practice of blackmail, political hacks, and blackmail. Bezos stated, "I prefer to start up a new thing, rather than start up an old one." The article suggested that Bezos had a "possible link between his 6M of our company to publish explicit photos of me based on a 10-minute investigation." Bezos said he would begin issuing grants to call for scientists, activists, NGOs—to support that offers a real possibility to help preserve and protect the natural world." Following his return from space, whose cost was widely criticized, Bezos announced that he was giving away two \$100 million awards. The first *Courage and Civility Awards* were given in 2021 to Van Jones, the activist and TV personality, and Jose Andres, chef and founder of World Central Kitchen. Bezos has given away \$2.1 billion, which is 1.2 percent of his wealth. Bezos met MacKenzie Scott (then MacKenzie Tuttle) when they both worked at D.E. Shaw: he as a senior vice president and she as an administrative assistant to pay the bills to fund her writing career. 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