

Chapter 17 - Betrayal At The Altar Novel by Dolores Delia (Rachel Grey & Louis Smith)

It was known to everyone that the daughter of the richest family in Seaxas, the Johnson family, was adored by her family although no outsiders knew her exact name.

Old Mr. Johnson loved her so much that he would like to fulfill all her wishes. The two young masters of the Johnson family also treated her as their hearts.

Perhaps it was because Adrian was only 11 years older than Rachel, Rachel was more relaxed and reckless in front of Adrian than Tom.

She held and shook Adrian's arm like a spoiled child before saying softly, "Well, Adrian, I know I was wrong. Please don't get angry..."

"Rachel, you are not foolish. Why did you take the bull by the horns on marrying that man?" Adrian couldn't help blaming Rachel at the thought of Louis's philandering appearance. "Ask yourself. How could that scum of the Smith family be worthy of you? I have no idea how that guy enchanted you!"

Thinking that Rachel had cut off contact with the Johnson family for such scum, Adrian was filled with bitterness and pulled a long face.

He played with the glass in his hand. A trace of mixed emotions flashed in his dark eyes as he said casually, "It is thanks to you that the Smith Group succeeded in overcoming its crisis and is rising rapidly, right?"

"Don't be nervous. With Mr. Johnson, one of the top 10 outstanding lawyers in the world, as my family, I know the law well and will never break it. So, don't worry about me." Rachel knew that Adrian was annoyed to see her bullied by the Smith family and wanted to seek revenge for her.

But Adrian was obviously overqualified. If Rachel intended to retaliate against the Smith family, she could even make it without Adrian's assistance.

Adrian raised his hand and pinched Rachel's face, but her previously chubby face was pale and thin now. His heart ached at that, and he said with concern flashing in his eyes, "You brute, I am trying to help you!"

Adrian learned from the previous phone call with his elder brother Tom that Rachel had devoted herself to the Smith family all these years but was

abandoned by the scum Louis Smith. It was much more annoying than being defeated by his opponent.

“Uncle Adrian, I’ve thought it over. I won’t get married for the rest of my life.” Rachel leaned on Adrian’s shoulder and added, “From now on, I will stay by your side and won’t go anywhere.”

After her failed relationship with Louis, Rachel learned not to cater to indifferent people and also not to disregard others’ kindness.

Smiling indulgently, Adrian ruffled Rachel’s hair and said with a gentle tone, “Whether to get married or not solely depends on you. The Johnson family doesn’t need to sacrifice your marriage to gain their wealth.”

After saying a few words, Adrian made his exit early due to work.

Before leaving, he turned to remind Rachel, saying, “Don’t forget to attend the board meeting next Monday.”

“Got it.” Rachel nodded her head.

After seeing Adrian off, Rachel glanced at the clock and found it was almost time for her appointment with David.

She took a shower and changed into a clean dress.

Not long after Rachel finished dressing up, there was a knock at the door.

At the sight of David’s assistant Eddie, Rachel was slightly stunned, and her heart pounded inexplicably.

Her lips then curled into a polite smile. “Thank you, Mr. Brook.”

“Miss Grey, you are welcome.” Observing Rachel’s smile, Eddie inadvertently mentioned David, saying, “Mr. Jones is occupied for the time being, so he asked me to take you there.”

Since perceiving David’s affection for Rachel, Eddie had been treating Rachel more respectfully and cautiously, as if Rachel were his boss.

Rachel showed a half smile and replied softly, “Thank you for telling me about this.”

After getting into the car, Eddie explained, "Old Mrs. Jones was discharged from the hospital three days ago. I'm sending you to the mansion now."

"Thank you," answered Rachel.

The car finally halted in front of a tranquil villa.

The black and white villa was surrounded by lush greenery, looking as beautiful as a landscape painting. People seeing it could clearly sense the tranquility and peace of being remote from the madding crowd.

The whole mansion owned four courtyards. They were square and exquisite, showing off their sheer majesty.

There was a lake in the middle of the courtyards, and the stream meandered through the flowers and trees, passing under the corridor like a curved moon encircling half of the mansion. The koi hidden under the lotus leaves were faintly visible through the shimmering surface of the lake.

Old Mrs. Jones's house was located on the east side of the mansion. A breeze blew over the beautiful flowers and trees nearby, and Rachel could smell their faint yet refreshing fragrance.

At this moment, the maids were working in an orderly manner. Eddie walked into Old Mrs. Jones's house and spoke, "Old Mrs. Jones, Miss Grey is here."

"Lead her in, please!" Old Mrs. Jones answered without hesitation.

Rachel walked inside and greeted Old Mrs. Jones, "Sorry for my unexpected arrival, Old Mrs. Jones."

"Please don't say that." With beaming eyes, Old Mrs. Jones held Rachel's hand and led her to the sofa. "I am really glad that you visited me."

Old Mrs. Jones looked carefully at Rachel's fair little face. Rachel looked much better, but she remained frail. "How are you doing?"

Rachel replied gently, "Thanks for your concern, Old Mrs. Jones. I'm already better. What about you? I didn't know that you were discharged from the hospital..."

“It’s nothing serious. It’s an old weakness of mine.” Old Mrs. Jones looked at the well-behaved and sensible Rachel and found her more adorable. “David said that he was responsible for your hospitalization. Is it true?”

Rachel shook her head slightly and answered, “No. It’s my own problem.”

She knew that even without David’s presence, she would have suffered that serious illness.

After all, she had been physically and mentally overwhelmed.

Rachel thought the trauma she suffered in childhood had made her tough and unbeatable, but she still found it very hard to endure the pain when she was betrayed by the man she loved.

Noticing the despondent look on Rachel’s face, Old Mrs. Jones held Rachel’s hand tightly and said, “People are always greedy. They discard the old as soon as they have something new, and they never get satisfied. Therefore, they are instinctively fickle in their affection, but we can choose to be consistent in love. What belongs to you will not leave you even if you let go of your hands. And you should let go of things that do not belong to you. The choice is yours.”

Rachel stayed quiet with her head low. She was lost in thought while recalling what Old Mrs. Jones had said.

Marriage was never a restriction, much less a shackle that bound the other person to be loyal to someone forever.

“Love is like beautiful scenery. The couple travels hand in hand, but both of them have the choice to get off midway. You will eventually meet your Mr. Right, who can go to the same destination with you.” Old Mrs. Jones reached out and stroked Rachel’s thin cheeks. “Good girl, people live for themselves, not for others. Being trapped by love will only make you lose your true self.”

Rachel gazed at Old Mrs. Jones, and her fragile face broke into a smile. “Thank you for your enlightening words.”

“Thank you for coming and chatting with me.” Old Mrs. Jones burst out laughing cheerfully.

Time flew. Old Mrs. Jones uncontrollably yawned.

Rachel saw the scene and said, with a touch of apology on her face, "I'm sorry. I forgot the time. You just got out of the hospital, so you should have a good rest."

With that, Rachel rose to her feet and was about to leave.

But Old Mrs. Jones took Rachel's hand and stopped her. "It's rare for to talk with me. What about having dinner here before leaving?"

"Old Mrs. Jones, I..."

Before Rachel declined Old Mrs. Jones's invitation, Old Mrs. Jones hurriedly interrupted, "I know I am an old lady, and young people like you dislike me. You always have your hands full, and you don't even have time to have a meal with me."

After saying that, Old Mrs. Jones glanced at Rachel, dropped her head disappointingly, and sighed. "Since you want to leave, then leave now. Anyway, I'm used to being alone all these years."

"I..." Rachel didn't have the heart to reject Old Mrs. Jones. She remembered her maternal grandfather had once complained to her about her busy life. All these years. Rachel had spent little time accompanying her maternal grandfather. Would he feel lonely in the spacious mansion of the Johnson family?

Thinking about this, Rachel compromised and quietly let out a sigh. "I can stay here, but you need to get some rest now."

"Well, I promise you." Afraid that Rachel would backtrack, Old Mrs. Jones hastily responded, "You can't coax me and go back on your words."

Seeing Old Mrs. Jones act like a spoiled child, Rachel chuckled and replied, "Don't worry. I won't lie to you."

After sending Old Mrs. Jones back to her bedroom, Rachel was led by the maid to a guest room.

It was a black-and-white room, revealing a cold atmosphere and its luxury.

Rachel looked around the room's furnishings. The scent of fir permeated the air.

She then stepped on the soft wool rug and went to the window.

The window provided an awesome view, displaying everything outside. Rachel had a wonderful time gazing at the garden.

The amazing scenery of the garden demonstrated the owner's good taste in architecture.

As Rachel was immersed in her thoughts, her phone on the bed rang. Rachel knew who would call her at this time without looking at it.

Rachel's slender fingertips swiped across the screen, and she picked up the call.

"Rachel, why aren't you in the hospital?" Mary's voice was heard through the phone.

Rachel curled her lips. "I'm outside. I won't be coming there for the time being. I need you to help me talk to the doctor."

"I'm glad that you're okay." Mary quietly sighed on the other end of the line. "I talked to the doctor just now. We can proceed with the discharge papers tomorrow."

Rachel replied, "Great."

"Also..." Mary hesitated for a moment before she said with a chuckle, "My studio recently received a new order, and the other party is from the Shain family. She specifically requested you to be her designer, so..."

Although Mary was the eldest daughter of the Green family and also the heiress, her mind was not set on inheriting the family business. Instead, she was more inclined to the design industry.

Five years ago, Mary decided to invest in her hobby and opened a high-end custom dress studio called "Redamancg". It took half a year for the studio to become famous before it finally became the darling of the fashion industry.

These days, the studio was not only a brand highly sought after by famous women, but it also had a brand value of over 20 million dollars.

One of the studio's designers named "Queen" was particularly sought after. The clothes she designed were rare to come by, and they became fashion pieces that many celebrities competed for.

Because of this, many fashion brands recognized designer Queen's value and wanted to poach her. But she kept her identity a secret and did not give anyone clues, so gradually, people lost their drive to uncover her identity.

Rachel pondered for a moment before saying lightly, "Sure. But there are many things I need to deal with after returning to the Johnson family. So, it will take longer than usual."

"It's alright. The other party said that as long as you agree, she can wait for no matter how long it takes. She also said that her biggest dream in life is to be able to wear a dress designed by you on her wedding day," Mary said. She could not conceal the excitement in her voice. "Babe, I look forward to you returning to us and leading us to the top."

Rachel smiled. "Alright, wait for me. We'll be back at the top in no time at all."

After the phone call ended, Rachel thought of the reason why she started designing wedding dresses in the first place, and her smile unknowingly faded.

At that time, she had fantasized about every wedding dress she touched. She had dreamed of walking toward Louis while wearing a dress that she designed by herself, but the reality turned out to be completely different. She thought to herself, "There is nothing sadder than trying to touch the heart of a person who has never reciprocated my feelings."

Before Rachel had time to dwell on her sadness, a loud clang was heard outside the door.

Clang!

It sounded like something breaking.

The loud noise startled Rachel, and she rushed outside to see what had happened.

"Miss Grey." Rosie was bending over to pick up some ceramic shards on the ground. When she heard Rachel, Rosie looked up at her with an apologetic

smile. "Look at me. I've become so clumsy due to my old age. I accidentally broke this because I didn't get a good grip on the flower pot. Did I scare you?"

"No," Rachel replied. She bent down and helped Rosie to pick up the remaining pieces. "Let me help."

"Oh," Rosie cried out softly. "No, no. Let me do it myself. Be careful not to hurt yourself."

Rachel smiled sweetly. "Don't worry. I'll be careful."

Rosie's heart melted when she saw the sight of Rachel kneeling on the ground and picking up the broken pieces.

She finally understood why Rachel was so well-liked by Old Mrs. Jones.

Rosie had been with Old Mrs. Jones for a long time, and she had seen all kinds of people. All she needed was to take one look, and she could tell if someone had ulterior motives.

But Rachel was clearly different from the other women who had tried their best to marry into the Jones family.

Rachel was not scheming like other women.

She had a quality of innocence that had become almost impossible to find in most people.

When Rosie saw that the mess was almost cleared, she took the broken pieces from Rachel's hands and asked politely, "Miss Grey, do you have any food preferences?"

"I'm good with anything," Rachel replied sweetly.

A gentle smile appeared on Rosie's face. "Miss Grey, please make yourself at home. Don't be too polite, or the old lady of the house might think that we didn't do a good job at making you feel comfortable."

At that moment, they heard people exclaim from outside, "Hey, the weather changed so suddenly!"

"Oh, no!" Rosie's face changed drastically, and she rushed outside quickly. "The old lady's favorite orchid is still outside. Don't let it get wet!"

Old Mrs. Jones had green fingers and enjoyed taking care of plants to pass her time. These plants were her favorites.

When Rachel saw Rosie leaving in such a hurry, she subconsciously followed her.

There were many potted plants placed along the corridor. The most eye-catching one was an orchid which Rosie must have been referring to earlier.

When Rachel was young, she was ignorant and accidentally knocked over her grandfather's potted orchid plant. Instead of reprimanding her, her grandfather was only concerned about whether she was scared or injured.

Later, she learned from her Uncle Tom that the orchid plant she had knocked over was a very expensive one that had cost her grandfather 3

million dollars.

As Rachel spotted the orchid, she grew curious about the identity of the old lady for the first time.

She also wondered about what David was like.

When Rachel spotted the dark clouds forming, she did not have time to continue pondering. She picked up a pot of moth orchids and ran toward the greenhouse which was nearby.

Miss Grey, you should just rest, Rosie said as she looked at Rachel's slender arms and legs. "Leave the rough work to us."

Rachel replied, "It's no trouble."

It had started drizzling, and the rain was becoming heavier. Rachel hugged the pot of moth orchids in her hands and subconsciously picked up her pace.

The cobblestones along the garden path were a bit slippery. Rachel's shoes were drenched, and she suddenly slipped as she ran along the cobblestones. It was too late for her to regain balance, and she stumbled.

Rosie, who was standing not far behind her, exclaimed, "Miss Grey!"

Rachel was so frightened that her face turned pale. She closed her eyes and subconsciously hugged the potted plant in her arms.

In the blink of an eye, a strong arm wrapped around her waist, and she was pulled into a tight embrace.

Everything happened so suddenly that Rachel could not react in time.

The pain that she was expecting from the fall never came. She wondered to herself, "What is happening?"

When Rachel slowly opened her eyes, she saw David in close proximity. It turned out that he had caught her just in time to break her fall.

The man's jawline was extremely sharp, and his protruding Adam's apple looked vaguely sexy. He had a long and slender neck. One could feel an elegant aura emitting from him. He was a very attractive man indeed.

Their bodies fit together perfectly. Rachel was instantly enveloped by the man's large frame, leaving her with no space to escape.

Their gazes met without warning. Rachel could see her own reflection in the man's eyes, and it was so intoxicating.

Her heart skipped a beat. Then, it started pounding. Soon, a tinge of pink appeared on her fair cheeks.

"Have you always been so clumsy?" David's deep and mesmerizing voice rang in her ears. It was as if the man was teasing her.

His warm breath fanned across Rachel's face. It instantly felt like an electric current passing through her body, making her skin tingle and causing her to tense up involuntarily.

At this time, Rachel noticed that David's arms around her had loosened. She hastily pulled away and retorted in a low voice, "It's not that I'm clumsy. It's just that the path was too slippery..."

David caught a glimpse of the blush on her face. He suddenly thought about teasing her. With a low laugh, he said, "If we go with your logic, the cobblestones on this path should be removed."

Rachel pursed her lips and did not speak.

She squatted down and carefully picked up the moth orchid plants from

the broken flowerpot. She then gently wiped off the dirt on the roots with her fingertips. Smiling subconsciously, she said, "I'm glad the roots of the orchids are not damaged. Otherwise, it would be terrible."

David squatted down and looked at Rachel quietly. There was a tenderness in his gaze that had never been seen before.

But when his gaze shifted to Rachel's slender hands, he frowned and grabbed them.

Rachel was startled by his actions. She followed his gaze and realized there was a small cut on her wrist.

She must have accidentally injured herself earlier when she dropped the flowerpot. It was just a light scratch and not a big deal at all.

"I'm fine," Rachel said and wiped her wound with her shirt without thinking too much.

But David picked up Rachel without a word and walked toward the living room with large strides.

"The orchids!" Rachel exclaimed in shock as her arms instinctively wrapped around the man's neck. At the same time, her forehead brushed against his lips inadvertently.

David's body stiffened, but his pace did not slow down.

He entered the living room and placed Rachel on the couch. Then, he quickly found the first-aid kit and soaked some cotton balls in an antiseptic solution.

"Let me do it." Truthfully, Rachel was not bothered by her injury. If David had not brought it to her attention, she would have left the wound to scab on its own. It simply was not something to be concerned about.

However, by kicking up a big fuss over nothing, it revealed just how worried David was about her. This touched Rachel deeply, and she was unable to reject his attention.

David turned a deaf ear to Rachel's words. Holding the tweezers, he squatted before her and said, "This might sting a little. Bear with it." Then, he dabbed at her wound gently with a cotton ball that had been soaked in antiseptic.

After cleaning up the mess outside, Rosie rushed into the house. Eddie, who had just arrived, was right behind her.

Eddie saw David kneeling on one knee and carefully disinfecting the wound on Rachel's hand.

It was at that moment that Eddie realized just how special Rachel was to David. He thought to himself, "I don't think there is anyone else like her in this world."

He had never seen David kneel for anyone in his life.

Not long after, Old Mrs. Jones woke up from her slumber.

When she saw the gauze wrapped around Rachel's hand, she asked in surprise, "Are you okay? How did you get hurt?"

While speaking, Old Mrs. Jones glanced at David. There was a complicated look in her eyes.

She thought to herself, "Don't tell me that he was too forceful with her and accidentally hurt her in the process?"

Rachel smiled. "I got a scratch when I accidentally broke a flowerpot earlier. Mrs. Jones, please don't worry. It's just a minor injury."

"I'm glad you're fine." Old Mrs. Jones nodded thoughtfully. She suddenly grabbed Rachel's hand and said with a kind smile, "Since you're hurt, you should stay here tonight."

David raised his eyebrows. He chimed in, "Yeah, and it's raining outside. I don't think it's going to stop anytime soon, or at least not tonight."

"Rachel, your body is not fully recovered yet. You must not expose yourself to the rain. Since you're also injured, it would be terrible for you to get drenched," Old Mrs. Jones said seriously.

David handed a cup of tea to Old Mrs. Jones. With a small smile, he said, "Grandma's words make sense."

Rachel, who didn't have a chance to speak, was speechless. Old Mrs. Jones's proposal was out of the blue, catching her off guard. She did not know how to respond to the old woman's kindness.

Just like that, Rachel was forced to spend the night at their place. It had all happened so suddenly.

When dinner was ready, the three of them sat down at the table to eat.

Old Mrs. Jones looked at Rachel, who had an elegant dining etiquette. Her eyes sparkled as she said, "Rachel, are your parents both in Seaxas?"

At the mention of her parents, Rachel lowered her gaze. She shook her head and said softly, "My mother passed away when I was very young."

As for her father... It was better not to think about him at all.

A trace of coldness appeared in Rachel's eyes. She thought to herself, "He's as good as dead to me."

Old Mrs. Jones frowned slightly. She looked at Rachel with distress and said, "Then, are you living on your own? If you are, why don't you move in here with me? It's not safe for a young girl to live alone. If you move here, at least I can take care of you. Also, I'll get to see you whenever I miss you."

"Grandma, you shouldn't talk when you're eating. That's your own rule." David gave his grandmother a look and interrupted their conversation.

"Rules are meant to be broken!" Old Mrs. Jones snorted softly before pouting. "You're trying so hard to thwart my plans instead of helping me," she said.

David was speechless.

Rachel pursed her lips awkwardly. She then lowered her head and ate in silence.

At this moment, a hand reached toward her.

The man's hand was very pretty. His skin was smooth like porcelain. Rachel watched with fascination as he gracefully picked up a shrimp with his chopsticks.

With great skill, he peeled the shell of the shrimp in a matter of seconds.

Rachel had never seen someone who could peel a shrimp so gracefully and quickly. She had caught sight of his hand by accident, but now, her attention was fixed on his actions.

She thought, "With such beautiful hands, everything he does seems graceful."

She blushed when she thought about that exact pair of hands touching her.

David noticed Rachel's gaze on him, and a small smile appeared on his usually stern face. It was as if he could read her mind.

It was not until David placed a plate of peeled shrimps before Rachel that she returned to her senses. She gazed at David gratefully.

"Try them," David said as he looked at the dazed Rachel. His smile grew wider, reaching his eyes.

Rachel's response was delayed. She said softly, "Thank you."

She picked up her chopsticks and put one shrimp in her mouth. The sweet taste of the shrimp meat traveled from the tip of her tongue to her taste buds and finally spread to her heart.

Old Mrs. Jones raised her eyebrows and glanced meaningfully at David.

She thought to herself, "It seems that he's not as ignorant as I thought. Maybe he does understand how to pursue women."

"But..."

She looked down at her own shrimps which still had their shells and suddenly lost her appetite. David had not peeled them for her.

Old Mrs. Jones pushed the shrimps aside and asked again, "Rachel, when do you plan to come and stay with me?"

Rachel put down her chopsticks and replied sweetly, "Grandma, I'm actually staying with my grandfather."

"I see," Old Mrs. Jones said. There was a look of understanding on her face, but a trace of regret could be seen in the depths of her eyes.

Before this, Old Mrs. Jones thought that she could have David and Rachel live under the same roof. She hadn't expected Rachel to be staying with her grandfather.

When the dinner was over, David brought Eddie to the study to take care of some work affairs. After the matters had been dealt with and they left the study, they walked out into the living room and were greeted by a heartwarming sight.

Rachel was sitting right beside Old Mrs. Jones and chatting with her. The warm light in the living room illuminated her beautiful face, highlighting her sweet smile as she listened patiently to Old Mrs. Jones.

At that moment, David finally understood what home felt like.

“David,” said Old Mrs. Jones when she caught sight of David, who was in a daze at the staircase. She beckoned him over with a wave. “Since you’re done with work, you should go for a walk with Rachel. I’m tired, and I’m going to rest.”

“Alright,” David said. Then, he looked at Rachel as though he wanted her permission.

Rachel stood up. With a small smile, she said, “Grandma, please rest well.”

A wide smile grew on Old Mrs. Jones’s face as she watched the young couple leave together. Then, as if she was reminded of something, she heaved a long sigh. “I hope that rascal knows what he’s doing and succeeds in making Rachel fall for him,” she muttered to herself.

“Don’t worry,” Rosie said beside her. On the other hand, she felt that Old Mrs. Jones was worrying about nothing. Rosie looked at the disappearing back views of the well-matched couple. Smiling, she said, “Mr. Jones is an outstanding man. How could Miss Grey not fall for him?”

Upon hearing this, Old Mrs. Jones raised her eyebrows. With an intriguing smile, she said, “Do you think Rachel is any inferior compared to him?”