

## Brand New 52

### [Brand New Life Online: Rise Of The Goddess Of Harvest](#)

#### Chapter 52: Talking It Out

"I'll bring you a meal every day then, so you can eat up and feel better. There's no way you're on a healthy diet if you just eat this for breakfast... And what do you eat for lunch?" I wondered.

"Well, we have eaten what is in here..." he said.

"Right... You eat like a sandwich?! Agh, how could I not realize this earlier?! Poor Mark, you're always eating badly!" I cried, I suddenly felt so bad for him I hugged him tightly.

"Don't worry, I'll bring you tasty food so you can eat well." I said, caressing his hair, it was very silky.

"Thanks... Elayne, you can let me go now..." he said. He seemed completely red like a tomato.

"O-Oh!" I realized I was being overly clingy even to Mark, so I quickly pulled back, I didn't want him to think I am a creep or something.

"Ah... Sorry about that." I sighed.

"It's fine. Come on, don't overthink it. We got work to do."

"A-Alright... Thanks for being so nice..." I sighed.

"Don't worry about it." said Mark. He's always a very reliable boss.

"Well then, let's get to work. Don't work so hard today, please, you overdid it yesterday, I almost feel useless when you work so hard..." said Mark.

"O-Oh, but I gotta earn my keep!" I said while nodding.

"You're really a hard worker."

"Thanks, I'm just doing my best!"

The day passed quite quickly through work, and when we had lunch, I took out the bento box I had, which was a wooden box specifically designed to hold onto food. It was slightly cold due to the temperature of the environment but warming up the food in the microwave worked quite well.

I made some rice with meatballs today, alongside some poached egg, a few veggies, cherry tomato, and those small wieners which I made into little octopus by cutting them down in a certain manner, they looked quite cute.

"Did you prepare this?" Wondered Mark.

"Yeah, it is my lunch for today... Do you want some, you always look at it," I said.

"It's just a very pretty lunch, I can't help but look at it," said Mark. "And sure, but how are you giving me some- Eh?"

I took a scoop of rice with a meatball and offered it to him.

"Here!"

"W-Wait, that's a bit... I'll go look for a spoon..." he said while blushing for some strange reason, and then Mark came back without a spoon, but a fork.

"I could only find a plastic fork." He sighed.

"Heh, that's fine, come eat with me, Mark." I said, as Mark sat at my side and we enjoyed the food together, of course eating half a bento won't fill me well, so I also had half a chicken sandwich.

"Phew, that was good... I-I can't believe you'll bring me this every day..." he said. "D-Doesn't it feel weird for you to do this for me? W-We are not related or anything after all." Mark always stuttered a lot when he got nervous, I found that rather cute.

"Huh? So what? What does that have to do with it?" I wondered. "You're my friend and boss so I like to see you happy... My mother always says that we must take care of our friends as if they were our family. When you see a family member sick, do you just ignore it? Or when you see they're eating little, do you simply not care?"

"I-I... I guess you had a very good mother," said Mark while smiling. "Thanks for being nice to me as well... Since you began working here, you've brightened the mood of everybody here, not only me."

"Eh? R-Really?" I asked.

"Yeah, I know that we can't pay you enough but I hope you can remain with us a bit longer," said Mark.

"Oh, of course! I think this is the only place where they would pay me so much for just organizing things... I don't have any title or anything, and going to college to get one would be so stressful, time consuming, and expensive... I just gave up on it... I am happy you've given me an opportunity to earn money while also having enough time to go back home and be with my daughter... I really appreciate it, Mark," I said, as I touched his hand in a sign of friendship.

"Elayne..." Mark looked at me while blushing a bit, as he moved his hand away from me, and then I realized... I did something weird again.

"Ah! S-Sorry, did I touch your hand?! Haha... I used to do that with Rita all the time, my friend! A-Aside for my husband, I never had male friends... W-Was that weird?" I asked while sighing.

"It wasn't weird, it was just a bit embarrassing, but don't worry about it," he said. "I am glad that I can help you raise your daughter. Elena seems to be quite a smart girl, I'm sure she'll have a bright future ahead..." Mark tried to change the topic a bit while averting his gaze from me, even his ears were red like a tomato by how embarrassing he looked to be.

"Yeah, my daughter is very talented..." I sighed happily. "I love her more than anything in the world, she's my pride, my greatest treasure, the thing I live for... I am sure she'll become whatever she wants to be... I... I have not really been a good mother myself but... I am happy she grew up nicely. She might be a bit expressionless and silent, but with me she's always a lovely girl."

Mark heard my words as he looked at me surprised, raising his eyebrows and raising his voice, he suddenly held my hands.

"Elayne, you're not a bad mother..." He looked at me seriously.

"Eh?"

"You're... I think you're the best mother she could get. You're working so hard for her, and you do so many things for your daughter. You work by yourself and earn money to maintain both your house and her studies. You cook so well, work so hard, your entire house is so clean too... And you're a very good person... I-In fact... I don't know if I've ever met someone as good as you... Never say that you're a bad mother..."

"Ah... T-Thanks... Mark, I think you're a bit closer..."

"Oh, sorry..." He quickly jolted back a few steps, almost falling off his chair, but I caught his arm and slowly pulled him back.

"You almost fell, dummy!" I said while reprimanding him. "But... I appreciate that you think that of me... I suppose that I look like that on a surface level..."

"Surface level?" He asked.

"It's just that... Ah, I don't know if I should tell you this... Maybe it is too much of a bother?" I asked.

"Ah, no, you can tell me anything you want." He said.

"Mark... W-Well..." I muttered. "When my husband... passed away, I entered into a big depression. The only thing I did all day was cry and cry like a baby... I ended up not being able to take care of my daughter like a parental figure would, and although I tried my best, it seems that I wasn't able to give her enough comfort..."

"I see..." Mark fell into silence for a bit.

I felt embarrassed that I confessed to him something so personal, but he had been my friend for years now, I think I can trust him.

"I can understand why you felt like that... It must have been very tough, I wouldn't really blame you for that, you're a human after all, Elayne. We have emotions that sometimes we cannot really keep them bottled up... Perhaps you were not able to be with her all the time in such situations, but I am sure that you're trying to compensate for it as much as possible. Your daughter perhaps has created some sort of shell around her heart..."

"Mark... Eh? Shell?" I asked.

"Yeah, perhaps she felt so hurt by what happened to her father that she bottled up all her emotions, and always wears a mask of expressionlessness. I've met some people that do this, some even in my own family." He said. "Maybe... She doesn't want to be hurt anymore, so she's always mature and ready for anything, covering her heart with a shell... I know this well because my father was a man like this, he went through a lot of traumatic things in his childhood, it made him someone silent, expressionless, and rather stoic. But deep down, he was a good person, and someone very gentle-hearted."

"O-Oh... Mark, you didn't have to tell me that..." I sighed. "But I appreciate that you trust me like this... I hope that you and your father are doing alright."

"Yeah, we are doing fine," he said. "I go visit my parents a few times in the month..."

"I see! It is good to have a good relationship with your parents..." I said. "But... as you said, you might be right, it is like a shell that my daughter had made, a shell that covers her emotions... her heart... But I am slowly trying to break it, to melt her icy heart, I think I am slowly managing to!"

"Yeah, you should continue doing your best. You're a person that I am sure will reach her goals," said Mark. "You give me the vibe that you're that sort of woman."

"Hehe, thank you... Uwah, I don't know what I would do without you, Mark!" I cried. "You're always there for me..."

"It is nothing. That's what friends are for," he said with a gentle smile, I felt as if I slightly skipped a beat by seeing his adorable smile, as if I was floating in clouds for a few seconds... W-What was that feeling? I had... not felt in so long I had forgotten how it felt.

Without realizing it, I blushed quite intensively, I felt all my face growing redder and hotter, and I covered my face shyly.

"Eh?! E-Elayne, did you get a fever?!" He asked.

"N-No! It is nothing, haha!" I said. "I-I'll go to the bathroom; we can resume work afterwards!"

"O-Okay..." he said, as I ran to the bathroom and washed my face with cold water. My heart stopped beating faster, as I calmed down my emotions.

Phew... I guess I got a bit emotional there, we were talking about quite a heavy topic... Perhaps talking about my husband made me like this? Or was it something else? My daughter, maybe... Ah, I missed her already... It was around... 4 PM, well, in another hour I can go back home I think, so let's do our best at work until then!

And like that, I spent the rest of the hour and a half working around the minimarket with Mark. Some other workers came as well, so we were relieved of our work for a little while. Although I still decided to mop the floor in the last 20 minutes I had to work so the floor could be left pristine.

"You really don't have to work so much..." He sighed.

"But I can't leave the floor so nasty after leaving!" I said.

"Haha, I guess you never change..." Mark giggled.