

# Lost Me, Gained Regret (Jane and Bryant Ferguson)

## Chapter 481

The air hung still for a moment.

Mark didn't seem surprised, his face still adorned with a gentle smile. "Heard the news, congrats."

Then, he turned to Gregory, "Jane's been through a lot. I hope that with you, she won't have to face any more hardships."

"Otherwise, I, as her family, won't let it slide."

I half-expected the atmosphere to turn awkward. Even though Mark had promised to remain just friends, as adults, you can sense whether someone has truly moved on. Over the past couple of years, he avoided any romantic topics, but his day-to-day attentiveness was unmistakable.

But since he never brought it up, I felt it improper to stress the point needlessly. Now that the air was cleared without any fuss from him, I felt a huge weight lifted off my shoulders.

Christine playfully punched Gregory in the arm. "Count me in, Mr. Ford. Jane is my best and only friend. If you ever mistreat her, I won't care if you're Mr. Ford or just some Mr. Nobody."

"If I ever mistreat her," Gregory looked down at me, "I'll be the first to apologize with a peace offering."

Acting all huffy, I warned, "You better not dare!"

Later, Mark had to leave early for some business, and Gregory also had to head to work at SZ Technology.

Christine immediately came over, giving me a mischievous grin. "Spill the beans, what happened last night? What did you guys do?"

I smiled, replying, "Nothing at all."

We just held each other and slept, that's all.

Christine didn't buy it. "Really?"

I couldn't help but laugh. "I'm on my period, what could we possibly do?"

Christine's attempt at gossip flopped, mumbling, "Your timing is just impeccable."

Summer arrived at the small village where the variety show was being filmed, nestled in the neighboring province by the mountains and rivers. The serene and peaceful

environment was a stark contrast to the bustling city life.

As mealtime approached, smoke curled up from the chimneys of nearby homes, filling the air with a homely scent.

This season's cast included both high-profile celebrities and seasoned actors, attracting hordes of fans who camped out early just to catch a glimpse of their favorites. Summer got off at the road, pulling her suitcase towards the direction indicated by the signs, her face beaming with a sweet smile that caught many fans' attention. "Who's that?"

"Don't know her, but she came in the show's car, must be a guest?"

"Ah! It's that newcomer added last minute. I heard she's Ms. Taylor's daughter!"

"Lucky birth, but she seems so down-to-earth..."

As Summer passed by them, her smile remained unchanged, and she gestured towards the blazing sun. "It's quite hot today, be careful not to get heatstroke, okay?" "Uh-huh! You're so pretty!"

The young fans nodded vigorously, and after she walked a bit further, they couldn't help but admire, "She's so petite and her voice so gentle, not snobby at all, and she even cares about us! Damn, I'm gonna stan her, go for the nurturing vibe!"

"Seriously... Such good manners, no wonder she's Ms. Taylor's daughter."

Listening to the murmurs slowly fading behind her, Summer's smile deepened. In today's entertainment industry, everyone's playing a role both on and off screen. She might not be the best actress on set, but when it comes to playing the game off camera, she was a natural.

## Chapter 482

She had been scraping by in the underbelly of society for over two decades, so she knew all too well what kind of person appealed to grassroots fans.

Stepping into the yard where the latest episode was being filmed, she greeted all the veterans with a warm smile. Being Bella's daughter, she was met with open arms by nearly everyone. The place was swarming with fixed cameras and producers, making Summer seem a bit out of her element, yet she managed to maintain her girl-next-door charm in front of her seniors. She even brought gifts for everyone, including the production team. It was easy to predict that once the show aired, she would be showered with praise.

It wasn't until she retreated to her room for the night, covering the camera with a piece of clothing, that her facade dropped. She quickly grabbed her phone and locked herself in the bathroom to call Mark. She was anxious to know how things were going on his end.

Mark sat in the dark, irked by the incessant ringing of his phone. But on the other end, persistence paid off as he finally answered, only to be greeted with, "Are you out of your mind?"

"Mr. Larson!"

Finally getting through to him, Summer took a deep breath, her voice tinged with desperation, "What's your plan for sorting this out?" She had been on edge all day. And still had to play her part in front of the

cameras.

Mark massaged his temples, feeling the headache intensify, "Just wait a bit longer."

He had gone to Vista Town today, planning to replicate his old trick of collecting a few strands of hair from the bathroom to appease Summer and be done with it. But upon opening the door, he was met with Christine instead of Jane. All he found was Christine's hair, those chestnut waves. Unable to help himself, he asked, "Where's Jane?"

"Jane..." Christine, aware of his

feelings for Jane, stumbled over her words, "She, she hasn't come back

d.net

yet." Was it just a quick outing, or had she not returned all night? Before he could probe further, saw Jane and Gregory chasing each other into the house. Jane looked so vibrant, so radiant. Mark hadn't seen her like that in a long time. The answer to the question he hadn't asked was suddenly clear.

"How much longer should we wait?"

Hearing this, Summer lost her patience. "If we keep dragging our feet, I might as well leave now before Bella finds out and comes after me!" "Try it, I dare you!"

Mark's voice was ice cold, "If you screw up my plans, I'll ruin you right now."

Truth be told, he couldn't care less if Bella exposed Summer. His concern was that Bella's suspicion could lead to Jane being recognized as her biological daughter. If that happened, everything would be over. Whether it was Bella's daughter, Ms. Myers, or any other

acknowledgment, it would be enough for Jane to marry into the Ford family. He would not allow it. As long as Jane's identity remained a secret, the Fords would never approve Gregory's marriage. With the Ford family's resources, it would only be a matter of time before Jane was crushed. That meant Jane...

would eventually be his! All he

needed was a little more time, just a

few days.

Despite her fear of Mark, Summer's hand trembled. "Then... then you better come up with something fast!"

As long as she could prevent anyone

from sneaking into her room to

collect her hair, she could keep

stalling. After hanging up, she installed a discreet camera in a blind

spot of the surveillance Soom,

Now, if anyone entered her room, her phone would alert her immediately!

## Chapter 483

After my shower one evening, I was in the middle of my skincare routine when I started nudging Ike towards bed.

Out of nowhere, Christine barged in, her eyes wide with disbelief. "Summer's trending on Twitter!!"

As I patted my face with toner, I couldn't help but reply, "It'd be weird if she wasn't."

Being Bella's daughter, Summer was born into a whirlwind of public attention.

Most folks didn't know about Summer's mysterious disappearance years ago. They just figured Bella had been keeping her tucked away, hiding her from the public for more than twenty years.

Now, with Summer making her debut on a reality show, curiosity about her was skyrocketing.

"But the trend's content is bizarre, you know?"

Christine handed me her phone. The screen was filled with praises: "Beautiful inside and out," "Adorably clueless beauty." It seemed like the internet had placed Summer on a pedestal, unreachable by mere mortals.

-Summer Warms Hearts

-Summer Gains Followers

-Bella's Daughter, World's Sweetheart

Glancing through, I saw several trending tags, almost rivaling those of A-list celebrities, all showering her with undiluted praise.

"It's all just empty talk," I said, handing back the phone. "It doesn't concern us."

After Bella discovered my true background yesterday, I figured our paths would likely never cross again.

And as for Summer, our worlds were even less likely to intersect.

Christine rolled her eyes in frustration. "Don't people see? She's no angel."

Christine was well aware of Summer's past misdeeds against me and harbored a deep resentment.

I laughed softly, "We're not living with her day in, day out. How would strangers know any better? Don't stress about it. I've had this hunch lately."

"A hunch about what?"

"That Summer isn't Bella's biological daughter."

Initially, I never questioned it.

But Summer's repeated attempts to hide her impersonation of Ms. Myers from two years ago in front of Bella made me suspicious.

If she truly was Bella's flesh and blood, what fear would she have?

Given Bella's affection, she would've likely understood Summer's predicament back then.

Yet, Summer was terrified.

Terrified of me getting close to Bella.

That led me to one big possibility...

She wasn't Bella's daughter at all.

If Bella uncovered the truth about

question everything about Summer's identity. And Summer's act wouldn't hold up under another close look.

two years ago, she met

Christine perked up at this, "Really? Why do you think that?"

I laid out my suspicions, concluding, "If it's true, no matter how perfect a front she puts up, Bella will see right through her." Bella didn't climb to her current status by being naive or soft-hearted.

Loving her daughter was one thing, but being manipulated under the guise of that love was something she wouldn't tolerate.

"This makes me feel a bit better," Christine said, settling onto my bed. "Eventually, someone will reveal her true colors."

Our conversation then shifted to

more pressing matters. "The

contract with Clarence is all set. Wanna check out the location for our shop tomorrow?"

"Absolutely," I agreed without hesitation.

This was going to be Janedream's first ck-and-mortar store. It was a  
us,

big deal for both Janedream and marking a significant milestone.

The next day, just as Christine and I were about to leave, the doorbell rang.

## Chapter 484

As soon as I opened the door, a man I didn't recognize was standing outside. He was dressed in a finely tailored suit and vest, tall and dignified, with a dark coat casually draped over one arm. He appeared to

be in his early thirties, yet there was an air of deep, inscrutable authority about him... like an elder.

I didn't recall ever meeting this man, so I was momentarily taken aback. "Hello, who are you looking for?"

"Hello." He nodded slightly, "I'm looking for Ike Taylor."

"Ike?" My brain froze for a moment, then it clicked, and I asked with a smile, "You mean Ike?"

"Yes."

"And you are...?"

"I'm his father, Herbert Taylor."

"...Alright."

His blunt manner of speaking instantly reminded me of the few times Ike had mentioned his dad-calling him an old-fashioned guy. Herbert didn't rudely peer past me into the house but maintained eye contact "Today is the Taylor family's dinner gathering. I've come to take him back with me."

From what I knew, the Taylor family was one of the three most influential families in the area, alongside the Ford and Myers families. They were known for being both low-key and deeply connected. Yet, Herbert didn't come off as overly assertive, which I found quite likable.

I gave him a friendly smile, "Would you mind if I call Edith first, just to check in?"

"Of course." After saying this, he stepped aside towards the elevator lobby to wait, giving me space to make my call.

I pulled out my phone and dialed Edith Ford, "Edith, Ike's dad is here. He says there's a family dinner and he wants to take Ike with him, is that okay?"

"That relic of feudalism showed up?" Edith sounded annoyed, "Hand him the phone!"

"...Alright." Feeling a blow-up brewing, I went over to Herbert. "Mr. Taylor, Edith wants to have a word with you."

I hadn't even stepped away when I heard Edith start to go off on the other end. However, Herbert's tone was softer than when he'd spoken to me.

"I called before I came over, but you didn't answer."

"Alright, my bad. I should've kept calling until you picked up."

"Let's not get angry now."

Dressed to the nines, but acting entirely whipped. I chuckled to myself and went back to scoop up Ike, who had just finished getting dressed, "Buddy, looks like you can't go to your uncle's company today."

Originally, the location of our little shop was quite close to SZ Technology. We were having lunch-four dishes and a

soup-when Ike suddenly became overly sympathetic towards his uncle Gregory, insisting on delivering a homemade lunch. He claimed today's seaweed and soybean pork rib soup was one of Gregory's favorites. I had agreed. The soup was already packed in a thermal container.

Ike furrowed his little brows, "Ah... why not?"

"Your dad's here." I gestured towards the elevator lobby.

Ike peeked out and indeed spotted Herbert, his face lighting up with joy. He was about to dash over when he suddenly stopped, turned back to me with those big eyes of his, and said in a troubled tone, "But what about Uncle Gregory's soup? Uncle is so pitiful, often skipping tunch. If I don't deliver it, he'll be so hungry."

Such a little schemer. Playing the sympathy card for Gregory.

I pinched his soft cheek, "I'll deliver it, okay?"



## Chapter 485

Ike jumped up excitedly and planted a swift kiss on my cheek, "Auntie, you're the best!"

Then he dashed off towards the elevator, leaping into his dad's arms.

Herbert, holding his little guy, came over, handed back my phone, and nodded politely, "I've explained everything to Ike, so I'll be taking him now." "Auntie! Ike's leaving now!"

Ike blew me a kiss, his voice sweet and soft, "But don't worry, I'll be back before it gets dark."

I looked at him in surprise, and Herbert's brow furrowed subtly, but he didn't comment.

I ruffled Ike's hair, "Listen to your mom and dad."

"Okay!" The little munchkin nodded vigorously.

Herbert said, "Ms. Webster, we'll be off. Sorry for the intrusion."

"It's... it's fine!"

For some reason, Herbert gave me a strong impression of an elder.

It wasn't just his personality, but also something indescribable.

Herbert, carrying the little munchkin, entered the elevator, his tone steady, "You're not staying at home tonight, but you still want to come back?" "Yeah!" Ike, hanging from his dad's neck, blinked his big eyes, "Dad, you'll bring me back, right?"

Herbert looked at him, "Your grandparents miss you."

"Um...I miss grandma and grandpa too..."

Ike seemed torn, pondering for a moment before deciding, "But, Ike has important things to do!"

Herbert chuckled at the little guy, "Important things?"

He's just a little kid. His whole day is filled with eating, playing and sleeping. What important things could he possibly have?

Ike, sensing his dad's skepticism, huffed, "Yep! It's about whether Ike will get a brother or sister."

He was getting bored on his own.

If he didn't help out, when would his uncle and aunt decide to have a little baby for him to play with?

Herbert's expression darkened, "Brother or sister? Your mom's dating someone new?"

Since the divorce, in the Taylor family, Edith had been quite the free spirit, dating several men who all looked like pretty boys. And she flaunted each one on social media. As if she was trying to provoke him. Now she was planning to have more kids?

"...No..." Ike instinctively wanted to explain, but then he had an idea and nodded vigorously. "Yep, Dad, Mom went abroad to have fun with her boyfriend!"

...He didn't need to say it.

Edith could fill a novel with her social media posts.

Herbert thought she knew better, at most just fooling around.

But now she was thinking of having kids? She never grew up.

Herbert sighed, "Why didn't you go with her?"

"I..."

He thought, "I'm here to help Uncle score points! If not for me, how could he become Jane's official boyfriend so quickly?"

But... seeing his dad's serious face Ike, with his clear eyes, lied without blushing, "Mom said... she said I'd slow down her progress of getting me a brother or sister."

That should be right, right? He'd seen something about it on a video.

Herbert nearly ground his teeth to dust.

Edith really was getting out of hand, saying such things to a child.

After strapping Ike into his child seat, Herbert called his assistant, "Book me a ticket to Barcelona."

"Sure, when would you like to leave?"

"As soon as possible."

Ike, listening from the side, pressed his lips together, suppressing his excitement.

Dad's going to find mom!

As long as dad tries hard, no one else can become his stepdad.

On the set of the variety show.

The production team had rented fields from the villagers, planting crops like rice and corn.

After lunch, the PD handed out the task cards- it was time to harvest the rice.

The task was urgent and demanding.

All the guests needed to pitch in.

Summer was bewildered and turned to Becky in a low voice, "Becky, can I, maybe, not go?"

The rice fields were a good distance from the houses.

She feared someone might sneak into her room while she was gone.

Becky, an experienced figure in the entertainment industry, could easily get Summer permission to stay back without question.

Becky simply patted h

"What's wrong? Feeling

e a drive to the Crinner

I can ask the crew to elg

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"...No... No need!"

That would only take her further away. And risk painting a fragile image of her online.

Nowadays, many people admired flawless personas and wouldn't tolerate even a minor flaw.

Being physically weak could become a reason for criticism.

Just as her career was beginning to take off, she didn't want to sabotage it.

Facing Becky's concerned look, she couldn't well refuse, playfully

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sticking out her tongue, "I'm fine, just haven't harvested rice in a long while. I'm worried I'll slow everyone down."

Might as well go.

There were cameras everywhere.

If someone did sneak in, she could rush back in time.

"You're overthinking it."

Becky smiled. "We might be even slower than you. Don't worry! Let's go together!"

## Chapter 486

The moment the celebrities grabbed their tools and donned their straw hats, they headed out to the fields under the blazing sun.

Little did they know, the moment they left, the power went out.

As soon as Herbert and Ike left, I grabbed the insulated lunch box and headed out with Christine.

When Herbert arrived, Christine was busy in the bedroom, getting dolled up.

On our way, after I told her about what had happened, she asked, out of the blue, "Herbert and Bella... they both have the last name Taylor. You don't think they could be related, do you?" "Nah, that's unlikely," I mused. "I haven't heard Gregory or anyone mention it."

Logically, considering Edith married into the Taylor family years ago and Herbert is now the head of the Taylor family, there shouldn't be anyone in the family she doesn't know.

Plus, if Bella was really one of the Taylors, it's hard to imagine she didn't even have a place to stay in Vista Town before. Christine nodded in agreement, "Right, and if she were a Taylor, Bella wouldn't have had such a tough start in her career." With the Taylor family's connections and resources, propelling someone like Bella to stardom wouldn't have been an issue.

However, these prestigious families seem to have an unwritten rule.

-Their children are forbidden from entering the entertainment industry.

They look down on the entertainment industry from the bottom of their hearts.

Bella is an exception, having made a name for herself in the business world, earning a seat at the table. Most others struggle for years in the industry, only to be viewed as mere entertainers by these elite circles.

After passing a couple of traffic lights, Christine pointed ahead, "Just drop me off at the corner up ahead. I've got a meeting with the interior decorator at the shop."

With a teasing glance at me, she added, "After you deliver the charity meals, come straight over."

"Got it."

After she got out, I drove towards SZ Technology.

It was a short ride, only taking a few minutes.

Upon arriving and approaching the reception, I said, "Hi, I'm here to see Mr. Ford."

"Do you have an appointment?"

"No." I smiled, not wanting to make it difficult for her, and said, "Give me a moment, I'll call him."

Just as I turned to pull out my phone, a voice rang out, "What's going on here?"

The receptionist replied, "Ms. Ophelia, she's here to see Mr. Ford but doesn't have an appointment."

"Looking for Mr. Ford?"

The curiosity in her voice was evident as she looked me over. Before I could catch it, an emotion flickered across her face, too quick to identify, "And you are? I thought I knew all of Mr. Ford's acquaintances. How come I've never seen you before?"

Her words rubbed me the wrong way, chilling my tone as I responded, "I'm Jane. Since when does Mr. Ford need to run his guest list by you for approval?"

"No, you got me wrong. It's just that Mr. Ford has never mentioned you," she explained, her attire and tone professional yet the way she referred to Gregory was noticeably intimate. "As one of the people Mr. Ford trusts most, I was just curious. I hope you don't mind."

"Is that so?"

I laughed it off, unbothered, "Maybe he prefers to keep his personal and professional lives separate, not keen on introducing his girlfriend to his subordinates."

Ophelia's expression shifted subtly, "Girlfriend?"

I smiled, "Yes, girlfriend."

She quickly composed herself, "Mr. Ford isn't in the office right now."

"Not here?"

I was taken aback.

Before leaving, I had texted Gregory, and he mentioned being in the office after a meeting.

Ophelia confirmed, "Yes, he's not. Didn't he tell you?"

I clenched my fist, forcing a smile, "Silly me, thinking of surprising him, only to find he's not here."

"Go on with your work; I'll head out," I said, turning to leave without looking back.

Oh, Gregory, you've got some explaining to do!

Once in my car, I dialed Gregory's number. He picked up quickly, his voice warm, "Miss me?"

I kept my tone controlled, "Where are you?"

"At the office," he replied, puzzled. "Didn't you just ask?"

I replied with a nonchalant photo sent to his phone, "Check your messages."

After a brief silence, he spoke up, "You're at SZ Technology?"

"And?"

"I'm not at SZ Technology."

Gregory, sensing my irritation,

clarified Jane, I wasn't lying. I

at the office, just at Fonet

not SZ."

My heart skipped, "You went to Ford Group?"

That name, Palmer, was like a ticking time bomb in my mind.

"Yes."

Confused, Gregory asked, "You went to SZ Technology and nobody told you?"

"Who would have? After announcing

myself, I was met with skepticism. Your 'most trusted' person claimed she's never heard of me. Apparently, I'm not on your list of

ver

acquaintances," I retorted, my voice laced with sarcasm.

Initially feeling guilty, I quickly justified my tone.

On the other end, Gregory immediately refuted, "Impossible. Who said that?"

I recalled the name, "Someone named Ophelia."

"Ophelia?"

## **Chapter 487**

I nodded, "Yeah."

"I got it."

Gregory's voice paused slightly, tinged with a smile, he teased, "Should I come pick you up?"

I was still a bit upset, but hearing this, my mood lightened, and I said, "No need, I drove here. But, I have to check with Chris first, might need to stop by the shop before meeting you."

No sooner had I finished speaking, Christine's call came through, and I quickly told Gregory, "Hang on, gotta take Chris's call."

As soon as I answered, Christine's voice was bright, "Jane, on your way yet?"

I smiled, "Just about to head out."

She teased playfully, "Why don't you head back up, spend a little more time cuddling with your man?"

I chuckled, "What's up?"

Christine sighed, "The newly arrived decoration company did not perform well, I've rescheduled with another company. You'd be bored waiting here." "Alright."

I replied crisply, "So... thanks for handling it?"

"Thanks for what? My salary and shares are the envy of many."

Christine laughed, then suddenly realized something, "Jane! Don't tell me you were planning to come later all along?"

I started the car, coughed lightly, "A true friend sees the first tear, catches the second, and stops the third."

"Bullcrap!"

Christine feigned anger, "You're all about your man now, of course, I have to call you out."

I laughed, "Come on, it's the honeymoon phase. Cut me some slack?"

"Fine, fine!"

Christine dramatically sighed, "It's rough being single!"

She and Steven hadn't been apart long when we started Janedream together.



In the early years, as the company was finding its footing, she was stretched thin, busy as a bee.

There was no time or energy left for dating.

This year, with the business booming and expanding, she finally caught a break but still showed no interest in dating.

I hesitated, then ventured, "Have you met anyone these past years who piqued your interest?"

"Why do you ask all of a sudden?"

She hesitated, then laughed, "You don't think I'm still hung up on Steven, do you?"

Hearing her relax, I breathed a sigh of relief, "I sort of did."

"You think I'm like you, needing my heart broken so many times before I give up."

Christine spoke lightly, "Jane, we're different. I was born heartless. The moment I said goodbye to him, I moved

ba

So, for me, that chapter was closed ages ago. I'm single now simply because I haven't met someone as great as your Gregory."

"I don't buy it."

I glanced at the traffic light, adding, "I just don't buy the first part."

Christine chuckled, "Well, of course, except for you."

"Ugh."

Her teasing made me laugh too, "Enough grossing me out, I'm driving."

Knowing she wasn't hung up on Steven anymore, I felt at ease.

After all, a married man wasn't worth her time.

Dailey swore he wasn't eavesdropping on purpose.

It was Clarence who, hearing Christine was coming to the shop today, had dragged him along to check it out.

Approaching the shop, Clarence

sudden

decided to grab a kshake from the mall's outskirts,

leaving Dailey by the t

After hanging up, Christine turned around and saw Dailey.

Unlike Dailey's awkwardness from overhearing a conversation, she showed no embarrassment at her privacy being intruded, her lips curving into a smile, "Mr. Pool,

checking on your empire?"

Christine found out on the day of signing the contract that this mall was part of Dailey's family assets. That day, Clarence was just flaunting his closeness to Dailey, trying to intimidate on Gregory's behalf.

But Dailey just stood by without a word, leaving Christine with a... rather neutral impression of him.

## Chapter 488

Dailey's moment of discomfort was fleeting, soon replaced by a casual demeanor, devoid of any notable emotion. "Yeah, came over with Clarence. Just checking things out." Christine, dressed in a red dress that made her fair skin stand out even more, lazily glanced outside and asked, "Where's Clarence?"

Ever since that night at Gregory's birthday party, Clarence had taken to bombarding her with texts.

-Do you like this handbag?

-Isn't this necklace pretty?

-Wanna grab a drink?

It was as clear as day what he was after, and Christine wasn't some naive girl fresh out of high school. She could read the signs from a mile away.

"Christine,"

Dailey, usually the type to stay out of others' business, found himself giving a word of caution, "Clarence fancies you, but he's not the right fit for you."

Christine raised an eyebrow, somewhat surprised.

"He's not the right fit for you," and "You're not the right fit for him."

At first glance, they might seem to convey the same idea, but fundamentally, they're worlds apart. At least, that's how Christine heard it, without the usual air of superiority.

She couldn't help but chuckle, "Isn't it a bit harsh to undermine your friend like that?"

Dailey remained unbothered, "He won't know if you don't tell him."

It wasn't that he didn't wish his friend well, but knowing too well what was on Clarence's mind was the issue.

Clarence was merely captivated by Christine's beauty, seeking novelty.

Had Dailey not overheard that phone call earlier, he wouldn't have bothered to meddle.

She claims to be able to hold and let go, but in reality, she is truly emotional and heartfelt.

Christine, looking at the serious man and suddenly developed a hint of wicked amusement, playfully asked, looking straight at Dailey, "So if he's not the right one for me, who is? You, Mr. Dailey?" Dailey's brow furrowed, his expression cooling. "Please, show some self-respect."

His words might have been too harsh for a lady.

Yet Christine didn't take offense, her smile growing wider as she waved her phone, "How about we exchange numbers?"

Dailey was used to women vying for his attention, but rarely as boldly as Christine.

Running out of patience, he turned to leave.

Just then, Clarence, the

Co-So-clueless friend, returned with e you off to?" Content th

In hand, calling out, "

"Mr. Johnson,"

Christine greeted him with a drawn-out, melodious tone, "Mr. Dailey was just telling me..."

Dailey shot her a warning glance but eventually pulled out his phone, "Ms. Jackson, how about exchanging contacts?"

Offering a dignified reason, "In case something comes up with your shop, you can reach out to me."

Driving to the Ford Group building, I spotted Gregory lounging by the entrance as I pulled up.

Leaning

he

sa lazily against the c

e lower my window a on park the car for her et

towards a security

the car for her. Cet

The security guy hurriedly complied, "Yes, Mr. Ford."

I handed over my keys, "Thanks."

"Go

The security guy stood tall, his voice deep, "No thanks needed! Mrs. Ford!"

I shuddered in shock.

It was still lunchtime, and his loud announcement turned several heads my way.

I was so embarrassed.

Catching Gregory's

schadenfreude-filled gaze, I

to settle scores and

him away from the scene.

Along the way, employees who recognized me greeted uniformly, "Good day, Mrs. Ford!"

...

How utterly embarrassing!!

It wasn't until we reached his office that I finally turned to glare at him, "You did that on purpose!"

He was practically shaking with laughter, "Still mad I haven't introduced you yet?"

"...Get lost."

I cursed under my breath, "How do they all know me?"

"I just sent out an email to every department."

"What?"

"It had your photo attached."

## Chapter 489

I was fuming, ready to give Gregory a piece of my mind, "Are you trying to embarrass me to death?"

Gregory couldn't help but laugh, but seeing my frustration, he quickly wrapped his arms around my waist to calm me down. "Come on, they were bound to meet you sooner or later." "This way, you'll have no trouble entering or leaving the Ford Group."

Hearing this, I couldn't help but soften like a cat being petted in the right direction. "Couldn't you have found a better way to introduce me?"

He stood his ground, "This is the most efficient way."

Silence fell between us, and I suddenly realized I'd been played. "Shameless! We're just dating, who said anything about being your wife!"

"Don't you want to marry me?"

Gregory's lips curved into a teasing smile. "Should I marry someone else then?"

"Don't you dare!"

As I spoke, I looked up into his bright eyes, and he caught a glimpse of something I'd been hiding behind my back. "What are you hiding?" "Dog treats."

He chuckled at that, then quickly snatched the insulated lunch box from my hand, his surprise evident as he opened it. "Jane, you've really got a heart of gold, don't you?" "... You're just noticing now."

I muttered, taking a seat on the couch.

I really had changed, completely different from the girl I used to be..

No wonder he was surprised.

During the time I was regaining my memories, I often marveled at how experiences could utterly transform a person.

Gregory paused for a moment, then with a raised eyebrow, admitted, "I really am just noticing."

He then casually sat down, legs sprawled, and began to earnestly enjoy the soup.

However, I had a nagging feeling that something was off with his mood, even though he tried to hide it.

Trying to make conversation, I asked, "So, who's Ophelia?"

"A colleague."

Gregory explained without much concern, "Don't worry about it."

I nodded, trying to hide my unease, but thankfully, it didn't last long.

Soon, my phone rang. Christine was calling, urging me to hurry over.

I left in a hurry.

Yes, in a hurry.

On my way, I realized more and more that I wasn't as good at handling close relationships as I thought. At the slightest hint of trouble, my first instinct was to run.

The shop Christine and I were

planning to open was located right. next to the busiest entrance of the shopping center. Not the prime spot, but good enough for our boutique, "Janedream." The two-story layout was perfect for separating the men's and women's sections.

By the time we finished discussing the initial plans with the contractor, it was already getting dark. Distracted, I handed my car keys to Christine to drive.

After several attempts to start a conversation, Christine finally burst out, "What's wrong? You've been off since you left Gregory's. Did you catch him flirting with someone?"

"...No."

Ophelia hardly counted as flirting. At most, it was an unrequited crush on her boss.

Christine was puzzled, "Then what is it? Are you questioning his feelings for you?"

Without thinking, I blurted out, "No!"

"If it's not this and it's not that..."

Christine gave me a look, "Then quit worrying about nothing. You're too sensitive. It's rare for two people to be as sure about each other's love as you two are." "Love can conquer all," she added, her attempt at being profound making even herself cringe.

But her words struck a chord with me.

Right, with Gregory's feelings for me, there was nothing to fear.

Gregory sat in his office, staring at the now empty lunch box, lost in thought. He glanced at his watch, impatiently calling his assistant. "When exactly is Lucius getting to Vista Town?"

Sensing his boss's mood, the assistant treaded carefully, "Mr. Ford, he's just arrived at the company's entrance!"

After hanging up, the assistant immediately messaged Lucius.

[Bro, you'd better run over here. If you don't show up soon, I'm done for.]

The assistant was on the verge of a breakdown. Lucius's trip had been planned well in advance, and his sudden recall by Gregory had thrown everything into chaos.

When Lucius finally appeared, the assistant sighed in relief, rushing to greet him. "Mr. Ford, Lucius is here!"

The cold look Gregory gave Lucius was chilling, devoid of any warmth.

Lucius, feeling the tension, quickly reviewed his recent actions, trying to figure out what could have upset Gregory so deeply.

"Greg, what's wrong?"

Gregory's gaze on him was icy as he finally spoke. "Lucius, how long have you been with me?"

"Eighteen years," At the same time, he realized that there was absolutely no mistake at work.

Gregory is a boss who allows his subordinates to make mistakes. When Lucius was just starting out, he messed up millions of projects, and Gregory never got angry with him.

At that time, Gregory, who was only in his early twenties, shouldered the consequences and only told Lucius that making mistakes was the norm.

Lucius answered automatically, his mind racing to that one incident that might have triggered Gregory's anger.

But why would Gregory bring that up now?

Gregory's smile was devoid of humor. "Figured it out yet?"

## **Chapter 490**

Greg had a storm cloud hanging over him all day, which was a rare sight.

When she mentioned what Ophelia had said outside the Ford Group's towering building, Greg couldn't hide his surprise. Ophelia claimed she didn't know Jane?

But checking up on Jane's background was partly their job.

They knew as much about Jane as Greg himself did, if not more.

Connecting the dots, Greg thought back to the misunderstanding with Jane caused by Lucius' delayed information.

Was it truly a delay, or was it deliberate?

Ophelia was in charge of that investigation.



Of course, Lucius, or Ophelia, for that matter, had been by his side for over a decade...

Had they grown too comfortable, bold enough to mess with his woman?

Empowering them had apparently led to them taking liberties!

Lucius, growing more convinced of his own suspicions and despite a moment's hesitation, finally spoke up, albeit reluctantly: "About checking on Ms. Webster, I was unsure about some of the information initially, so I omitted it."

He had no idea why Greg was bringing this up now but chose to take the fall for Ophelia.

After all, they had history.

And Ophelia, proud as she was, would be ruined if Greg found out she did it on purpose.

They could make countless mistakes, but loyalty was their baseline.

Greg's gaze turned colder, clearly not buying a word. Without any patience left, he cut to the chase: "Do you know why, despite knowing you had feelings for Ophelia, I let you two work together on official matters?"

"Greg..."

Lucius was shocked, not expecting that his slight affection for Ophelia was so transparent to Greg.

Yet he found no words to deny it.

The office was chilling, but sweat formed on Lucius' forehead. Before the man everyone called "Mr. George," he knelt, pleading.

"Greg, it's my fault, I shouldn't have..."

-shouldn't have covered for Ophelia, not once but twice!

But the words choked in his throat.

This would throw Ophelia to the wolves.

At best, she'd be outcast; at worst... Greg had never been merciful to traitors.

Greg, leaning against his desk, absentmindedly tapped his fingers on the surface, locking eyes with Lucius for a few seconds before reaching for the phone. He dialed a number.

The reception at SZ Technology picked up promptly, "Mr. George!"

"Let Ophelia answer the phone," instructed Greg in a calm voice.

"Right away, Mr. George."

Shortly after, Ophelia came on the line, her voice as neutral as ever, betraying none of the tension, "Greg, what's up?"

"I need you at the Ford Group."

"...Okay."

Sensing something off in his tone, Ophelia immediately stood up, "I'll be right there."

As she made her way to the Ford Group, her mind was unsettled.

On arriving, still uneasy, she called Lucius hoping for some insights.

Lucius' phone vibrated incessantly in his pocket. He glanced at the caller ID,

GS and trembling slightly. Under

Greg's watchful eye, he dared not decline the call.

Greg watched him, amused, "Hiding something else from me? Put it on speaker."

"Nothing!"

Lucius reluctantly answered, "Hey, I'm at..."

He tried to hint at something but was cut off by Ophelia, "Lucius, whatever you're doing, just tell me, did something happen to Greg?"

Her tone was far from pleasant;

since Lucius had passed her information to Greg then turned his back on her, she had been harboring resentment.

"Nothing happened to Greg."

"Really?"

"Really."

"That's odd..."

Ophelia's suspicion grew, "...Where are you?"

"...The Ford Group."

"Weren't you on a business trip? How come you're back early?"

As she spoke, her tone shifted abruptly, "Did you fucking go behind my back to Greg about that thing again??"

Lucius felt a cold sweat, at a loss for words.

He had done his best.

Ophelia wanted to say more, but the call was abruptly ended.

Entering the CEO's office, what she saw first was Lucius on his knees.

Her heart sank.

Greg, leaning against his desk, glanced at her disappointingly but spared her the humiliation, instead he simply stated, "SZ Technology's Nordic branch needs a deputy head. Finish up here and head there as soon as you can."

Ophelia's legs gave way.

Heading to the Nordic meant she was out of Greg's inner circle.

She paused, her eyes brimming behind her glasses, "You're sending me away? Why?"

Just because she went against that woman once?

For a few remarks that weren't even that harsh at lunch?

Greg's expression remained stoic, his words heavy, "I don't need someone who can't weigh their actions around me."

"I..."

Ophelia, always proud, had never been spoken to like this. Around Greg, she was used to flattery, not condemnation.

Feeling a cold dread, her lips trembling, she suddenly couldn't keep up the facade, her voice filled with emotion, "What did I do??" Lucius was petrified, fearing she'd pushed Greg too far, he reached out to her.