

Lost Me, Gained Regret (Jane and Bryant Ferguson)

Chapter 511

He chuckled, "Jane, do you have any idea how much of my life you've missed?"

"How much?"

"Let's not count the years before I found you."

Gregory didn't even pause before he proudly stated, "You've been absent for 758 days. In those 758 days, I've changed; I'm not the same person I was."

I was somewhat touched, but his last sentence made me slowly type out a question mark, "Hmm?"

"I can cook now."

He lifted his chiseled jaw, pinned me to the couch with a calm demeanor, and said, "Just wait for dinner."

With that, he headed into the kitchen.

I leaned against the back of the couch, slightly worried, but seeing his smooth and practiced movements through the glass door, I relaxed.

I found a more comfortable position and watched his every move.

My heart felt full, wishing time could stop at this moment.

The man wore a hand-tailored white shirt, its sleeves casually rolled up to reveal his delicate wrists and toned forearms.

The shirt was tucked into his trousers, embracing his long legs. The clothes were a bit wrinkled from our earlier flirtation, adding a sense of disarray.

Yet, it strangely suited his aura.

The Gregory I knew had always been flamboyant and unrestrained.

He was always himself.

As I was mesmerized by him, he waved a hand in front of my face, saying with deep meaning, "If you keep looking at me like that, I won't mind adding an appetizer." "... You rogue!"

I snapped back to reality, my cheeks flushing red.

Gregory's teasing laugh rang out, "Go on, wash up for dinner."

"Okay!"

I sniffed, drawn by the delicious smell of dinner, and hurriedly washed my hands before sitting at the dining table.

The table was set with three dishes and a soup, each looking incredibly appetizing.

I looked at him in surprise, "Have you been to a cooking school these past two years?"

"...Shut up."

Gregory gave me a sidelong glance and served me a spicy shrimp, "Eat slowly; eating too fast is bad for your stomach."

"Got it."

I nodded vigorously and started eating.

After dinner, I wanted to wash the dishes.

It's easier when we share the work.

But Gregory wouldn't let me lift a finger, "I'm here; you don't need to do these things."

I chuckled. "Aren't you afraid of spoiling me? If I get used to this, you'll have to do it all in the future."

"I'd be more than happy." He pinched my cheek, smiling. "It seems you're not spoiled yet; I need to try harder."

However, this time, he didn't let me sit still but picked me up.

"We just ate; let's move around on the balcony."

"Okay." I agreed, then suddenly realized something. "Gregory, have you noticed you've become quite the worrier?"

He wasn't like this when we were kids. That wasn't his nature.

He glared at me, replying, "I'm afraid that if I'm not careful, you'll
wobble

disappear again for two years, maybe twenty. Jane, I can't do that."

I was taken aback, feeling a sharp pain in my heart.

Coming back to my senses, the man had already turned to tidy up the dishes in the kitchen.

Heeding his words, I went to the balcony.

The neon lights flickered outside, illuminating thousands of homes.

Turning back, I saw him bending over the sink washing dishes, my heart softened completely.

velvet

Without hesitation, I walked over and hugged his lean waist from behind!

Feeling his warmth, the pain slowly faded.

With my face pressed against his back through the shirt, I mumbled "Gregory, what can I do to ease your mind? I won't disappear again, I swear."

Chapter 512

Gregory's tall frame stiffened for a moment, then relaxed as a laugh escaped him. The sound of running water from the faucet filled the air as he washed the soap off his hands, dried them, and turned around to pull me into his embrace.

Lowering his head to look at me, his eyes shimmered as he pinched my cheek gently, "Jane, it's my own lack of strength that makes me uneasy. It has nothing to do with what you do or don't do."

I wrapped my arms around his neck, earnestly replying, "You're already doing so much!"

"Jane..."

His thumb softly caressed my cheek, a flicker of guilt visible in his eyes. "If I had been strong enough, you wouldn't have been kidnapped as a child. And two years ago, I wouldn't have let Hanson confront you, forcing you back to Bryant."

"How old were you when I was kidnapped?"

I looked up at him, trying to alleviate his guilt, "And Hanson... in the end, none of this is your fault."

His fingers rested lightly on the corner of my eye, his voice deepening, "But if I were strong enough, none of this would've happened."

That's just human nature.

No one dares to bully the strong.

Just like the kidnapping in our childhood, if Gregory and I could have made them pay a severe price, Susan wouldn't have dared to entertain the thought.

And two years ago, Mr. Ford only dared to threaten me because Gregory still needed the support of the Ford family.

I hugged him tighter, saying, "Then let's work on it together, Gregory. You're not alone."

Myers Mansion.

Dorothy hurled a cup at her assistant, "Are you useless? So what if Bella's the talk of the town, she's hosting her success party in Vista Town! Are we, the Myers family, not worthy of an invitation?" This time, Bella's success party had caught the attention of all the high society in Vista Town.

Everyone was waiting to see which families would receive an invitation and which wouldn't.

The Myers family might have lost some of their former glory over the past two years, but they were still a deeply rooted prestigious family. Dorothy couldn't believe that Bella, new to Vista Town, would dare to snub the Myers family. So she had let it be known early on that Bella had promised to send an invitation to the Myers family.

If they didn't get one, her rivals would have a field day behind her back!

The assistant dodged, but not quickly enough, and soon had a swelling forehead, "Miss..."

"What's going on?"

Susan emerged from the elevator, her brows furrowing slightly as she looked at Dorothy, "What's so important that you're this upset?"

Dorothy glared at the assistant then mumbled to Susan, "It's that success party. This useless person couldn't even manage to get an invitation."

Susan's expression darkened, her gaze becoming complex, "You still want to go to Bella's success party?"

"Yes!"

Dorothy stamped her foot, "If I can't make it, I'll be the laughingstock!"

"Go take care of that swelling on your head."

Susan waved the assistant off, sternly said, "What's there to be

laughed at? Is Bella so remar

Even if she sends us an invitation,

you are not to go!"

"Why?!"

Dorothy stood up abruptly, displeased, "Mom, why do you always have to be so authoritarian whenever Bella is mentioned?"

Over the years, watching Bella's movies or TV shows was forbidden in their house!

If Bella was on some show, it was sure to be missed.

Still, Dorothy was quite fond of Bella!

In middle school, she had even sneaked out to see Bella live, just for an autograph.

Susan's face hardened, "I said no, and that's final. Dorothy, have I been too indulgent with you over the years? Why don't you listen anymore?"

Dorothy retorted, "You have to give me a reason. What, did Bella seduce my dad?"

Susan seemed struck by a sore spot

and exploded, "Instead of wasting time on this nonsense, you should be worrying about when that old lady recovers and Jane is brought back Will there still be a place for you in the Myers family?"

"I..."

Mention of this deflated Dorothy like a punctured balloon. She sat back down, grabbing Susan's arm, pleading softly, "Mom... what do

do? Please, think of song With all the old and new grudges between her and me, if she gets control of the family, she'll surely kick me out!"

Chapter 513

And besides, whether or not she'd be kicked to the curb was a worry for another day. But the moment Jane returned, half of the Myers' family fortune would have to be split with her. And it was all supposed to be hers!

That witch, Jane, what right did she have to take it?

Susan watched her helplessly, "Scared now, are you?"

"Aren't you scared?"

"What good would that do?"

A hint of ruthlessness flashed in Susan's eyes, as if she had a plan all along, "Just do as you're told, and I promise, you'll end up with more than you could imagine."

Dorothy was puzzled, "More? How?"

Where could possibly more come from?

The corners of Susan's lips turned up in a knowing smile, even the wrinkles at the corners of her eyes seemed to hold a bit of cunning, "You'll find out soon enough."

Dorothy felt reassured, "You've got everything under control?"

"That sanatorium... do we need to... fix anything there?"

"No need!"

Susan poured her another cup of tea, handing it to her, "Is it really worth getting this worked up, to the point of breaking things? Minor damage aside, what if you enraged him and he turned on you? What then?"

Dorothy took a sip of tea, lifting her chin with a smirk, "Well, I'm in my own house, aren't I?"

"At least there's some sense in you!"

Susan was relieved, then cautioned, "And stop trying to scheme your way into getting that gala invitation, understand? How embarrassing!"

"Got it, I'll listen to Mom."

Dorothy agreed, her face the picture of obedience.

If she couldn't get the invitation, then so be it. She'd just wait outside, snag a photo with Bella, and that'd be enough to dazzle the few has-beens around her.

And she didn't believe for a second that Bella would actually slap the Myers family in the face. More likely, they just hadn't sorted the guest list yet, which is why her invitation was delayed.

Ivy, carrying an encrypted envelope, stepped out of the family SUV and, after facial recognition, quickly entered Bella's house.

Inside the envelope was the DNA report Bella had been anxiously awaiting for days.

Bella had just finished her morning

jog and was coming downstairs fresh from a shower when she

noticed Ivy seated on the couch, her gaze sharply shifting towards the brown paper bag on the table.

"Got it?"

"Yes, haven't looked yet."

Ivy handed over the envelope, "Better you see it yourself."

She was nervous, but watched as Bella took the envelope, smoothly opened it, and pulled out the report, her eyes immediately finding the results without a moment's hesitation.

Bella handed the report back after reading, her charming face now clouded with a dark expression, Ivy, find out who Summer was involved with before she met us. Don't miss a single detail."

This was not something a mere girl could uncover.

She was keen to see who had the reach to extend their hand this far.

Hearing this, Ivy's face showed concern, not even needing to read the report, "Okay, I'll start digging. Should I halt Summer's reality show right now?"

"No,"

Bella laughed, picking up the bird's nest soup the maid had brought over and sipped it leisurely, "She likes filming reality shows, right? Let her have her fill."

"And Ms. Webster..."

"I'll contact her myself."

Bella hesitated as she picked up her phone, a rare occurrence for someone who had been so decisive just moments before.

Ivy saw through her, "Afraid she'll blame you?"

"A bit..."

Bella offered a wry smile; her manner of sending Jane away that day had been rather blunt.

Yet, some things needed to be made clear.

Without further delay, she dialed the

number, her voice carrying a mix of warmth and an unusual

nervousness, "Jane, are you busy? You mentioned last time that you lost the only thing your mother left you. Can you tell me what it was?"

Chapter 514

Last time, after finding out about my origins, things ended on a sour note.

So, when Bella called me up and broached the topic herself, I was taken aback. After a brief hesitation, I replied truthfully, "It was a pendant, a rabbit pendant, the same as my zodiac sign." On the other end, Bella seemed to perk up, "A rabbit pendant?!"

"Yes."

I confirmed, and then shared the backstory, "I've had that pendant since I was little. Two years ago, I had an accident, and that's when the pendant went missing."

Curious, I asked, "Ms. Taylor, why are you suddenly asking about this?"

"..."

Bella seemed to be calming herself, searching for the right words. Finally, she asked, "Do you have time right now? There's something I'd like to discuss with you in person."

"...Yes."

I thought about it and agreed.

Somehow, I had a feeling that what Bella wanted to discuss was deeply connected to me.

Bella cautiously asked, "Where do you live? Can I come over, if that's alright?"

"Ah?"

I was taken aback again and quickly said, "That's fine, I'm at Elmwood Villas, though it's a bit less private than Cloud Villas. Maybe I should come to you instead?"

I had heard from Christine that celebrities like Bella often have to deal with overzealous fans, making it crucial to keep their personal plans under wraps to avoid any extreme incidents. Bella laughed a bit, "Don't worry about me, I'm heading out now. See you soon!"

"I'll send you the address over text."

While waiting for Bella to arrive, I tidied up my already spotless home a bit more.

Ike lives just downstairs and often pops in.

Though he's well-behaved, being a little kid, he can sometimes make a mess when he gets too excited.

I had just put a picture book back on the shelf when the doorbell rang.

I hurried over and opened the door to see the elegant Bella. I greeted her warmly, "Ms. Taylor!"

"Jane!"

Bella's voice trembled slightly as she lifted two bags brimming with snacks, "Knowing you liked them last time, I brought you some cookies and cakes."

I chuckled, "That's a lot for one person, but my boyfriend's nephew will be thrilled."

Ike, that little guy, has a sweet tooth.

As we talked, Bella stepped inside and paused, "You...have a boyfriend? How does he treat you? Is he good to you?"

"He's wonderful!"

Mentioning Gregory made me smile genuinely, "No one has ever treated me this well."

My foster parents were kind to me, and I'm grateful for a happy childhood with them. But Gregory's kindness felt different.

They took me in out of generosity and the need to fill the void of losing their daughter. I was lucky to fill that gap and had a happy childhood because of it. But Gregory's kindness was unconditional.

He sought me out, protected me, respected me, and genuinely loved me, accepting me completely.

With him, whether I'm Jane or Lilliana Myers, I can be entirely myself.

Hearing this, Bella fell silent for a moment, then took off her sunglasses, her eyes misting over and her smile tinged with bitterness, "In the end, it was your biological parents who failed you, making you suffer so much..."

I was at a loss, "Ms. Taylor, what's wrong?"

"Jane..."

Bella choked up, pulling out a jewelry box from her bag and showing me the contents, "Is this the pendant you lost?"

Seeing the shimmering rabbit pendant, I was both shocked and delighted, "How did this end up with you? I thought I'd never see it again..." Suddenly, Bella pulled me into a hug!

I was stunned, a realization dawning on me...

Barely daring to believe it, my eyes welled up before I could speak, "Ms. Taylor..."

"Jane, what if I told you, I am your mother, the one who failed you..."

The usually spotlight-stealing Bella was now sobbing uncontrollably struggling to speak. After a moment, she gently released me, her eyes red, "Would you...would you let me make up for all the absence and loss?"

Her words felt like a bombshell.

I glanced at the rabbit pendant on the coffee table and back at Bella, my fingers trembling, my mind swirling with questions.

I stuttered, "Ms. Taylor...you're not joking, are you?"

"Of course not..."

Bella took a tissue, her eyes soft and teary, wiping away the tears that had unknowingly started to flow, "Jane, mom is sure, you are my daughter. No wonder...no wonder I felt a connection the first time I saw you."

Chapter 515

I pinched the palm of my hand, tears flowing even more fiercely now.

Watching her shower Summer with such affection before, my heart was filled with envy. I wished that someday I too would find my birth mother, hoping she would love me just as Bella loved Summer.

And now...

Bella is actually my birth mother!

It felt like fate played a colossal joke on me, blessing me with a splendid origin only to curse me with a dreadful first half of life.

No wonder I enjoyed being around Bella so much. Designing dresses for her always sparked my creativity like nothing else.

It was a mother-daughter connection...

As my thoughts slowly untangled, I couldn't believe what I was about to say: "My locket went missing two years ago, but you announced you had a daughter last year. Could it be... Summer was the one with my locket..."

-Recognized kin!

"Pretty much."

Bella looked at me with compassion, gently brushing the hair stuck together by tear stains behind my ear, "However, there was always a doubt. After she appeared, I had DNA tests done, more than one actually."

"The DNA tests didn't show any problems?"

Bella shook her head, "No, there weren't any."

"This..."

This felt eerily familiar!

Sniffing, I shared my thoughts, "When she was first arranged by the Myers to impersonate me two years ago, the initial DNA tests didn't show any problems either."

"Later, it was Gregory, my current boyfriend, who made thorough arrangements that uncovered the truth."

Hearing this, Bella's gaze hardened, a cold light flickering through, "It seems she's still as ruthless as ever!"

"Who?"

"Pearl."

Wiping the tears from her face, Bella said guiltily, "Back then, she and I were pregnant around the same time, but she had a premature birth, so we ended up delivering on the same day."

"I was all alone back then, just wanting to quickly leave the hospital with you, to get away from the Taylor and the Myers families."

"Little did I know, her child was stillborn. To marry into the Myers smoothly, she bribed the nurse to switch our babies..."

The Pearl she spoke of was Susan.

Thinking back to Pearl's seemingly kind face towards me as a child sent shivers down my spine, "Then... what about you at that time..."

"In the dead of night, a nurse suddenly started crying out with my baby in her arms, and then the baby was whisked away for emergency treatment."

"By the time the baby was handed back to me, the locket was gone."

Bella continued, taking a deep breath, "It's my fault, I was too trusting. When I asked the nurse, she said it was lost in the chaos, and I believed her." My mind unraveled half of its questions.

But there was another half I had to ask, "What... what's your relationship with Pearl?"

I could feel Pearl's hatred towards me.

If she could, she probably wouldn't hesitate to kill me.

"She's my cousin. Initially, it was supposed to be me marrying into the Myers family."

Bella smiled bitterly, yet there was a hint of relief in her eyes, "But Victor cheated before the wedding, got together with her, and she flaunted her pregnancy test in front of me, asking me to leave."

"And you..."

I couldn't help but chuckle, "Must have agreed quite happily." That's just like her.

"Indeed." Bella exhaled slowly, "But I couldn't swallow my pride. I wanted to make the affair public, but the Taylor family wouldn't allow it. They insisted on protecting Pearl no matter what."

"No wonder..."

It clicked for me, "Even though you're from Vista Town's Taylor family, nobody could ever trace your family background."

-They had a falling out.

It made sense; her own family was protecting the person who ruined her relationship.

Bella was about to say something when suddenly, the door was knocked on, followed by a soft and squishy voice, "Jane, I'm coming in!"

With the sound, the fingerprint lock clicked open.

The door swung open, and a little toddler with short legs happily ran in. Noticing an extra person in the living room, he blinked his big eyes and cheerily called out to Bella, "Pretty lady!" Bella, seemingly aware of his identity, didn't let her dislike for the Taylor family affect her interaction with the child, softly asking, "You must be Ike Taylor, right?"

"Yes!" Just as Ike nodded, Edith

walked in her high heels clicking on

the floor as she changed shoes at the entrance, "Jane, you wouldn't believe how fast this little guy runs despite his short legs..."

Edith stopped midsentence upon seeing the additional person in the living room. She took a few steps closer, her eyes widening in shock, "You... You're Bella?" Bella examined her, "Yes, I am."

"I... I..."

Edith, unusually flustered, quickly grabbed the toddler, "Ike, say hello."

Chapter 516

Watching the angel-faced toddler in front of me, it hit me that my previous fuss over him correcting how he addressed me was utterly unnecessary, and quite frankly, I might have even complicated things. Especially considering the relation within the Taylor family, when little Ike first called me "sis," he wasn't off the mark.

By relation, I was indeed his cousin. Realizing this, I couldn't help but find the mix of humor and irony in the situation.

Ike, a true social butterfly even at his young age, looked up at Bella with those big, charming eyes and called out, "Auntie Bella!"

"Hey there."

Bella responded, patting his head gently. Once Ike scampered off to the playroom, she turned to me, "You know, despite the kid having the last name Taylor, he sure takes after you - both in looks and in that charming personality."

What she meant was, the Taylors, or more specifically, Herbert Taylor, were not exactly the most pleasant bunch.

Edith wasn't the least bit offended. If anything, she felt like she found a kindred spirit, "You got that right, Bella! Herbert's demeanor is as outdated as a relic from the Victorian era. Can you imagine if Ike ended up like him? I shudder at the thought!"

Bella chuckled, clearly familiar with the Taylor family saga, teasingly asking, "So, does this mean you're considering a reunion with him?"

"Not in a million years!"

My response was firm, perhaps even a bit heated as I thought about it, "Being with him felt like being in a cage, always doubted, always questioned."

"In what way did he doubt you?" Bella inquired, curious.

"Well..."

Edith, a grown woman, awkwardly touching her nose, "Like, whenever he was working in his study and I'd bring him a snack, he'd quickly stash away any documents he was working on. I know I shouldn't meddle in his work, but it's not a great feeling, being treated like you're about to betray your own family's secrets."

It was a woman-to-woman moment; I instantly got her point.

There's a certain discomfort in being guarded against by your own partner, regardless of the reason.

On the flip side, Gregory was the complete opposite.

Lately, he'd often bring his work over to my place, taking over my desk and mixing his documents with my manuscripts.

I've told him multiple times to keep our stuff separate, worrying I might stumble upon something confidential.

And he'd just look at me, all casual like, "If I've given you my heart, what secrets can't I share with you?"

...

But I knew Herbert's situation and temperament were worlds apart from Gregory's.

Bella poured me a cup of tea, "Is this why you left him?"

"Not solely, but it was part of the reason," Edith admitted.

"That's fair," Bella said, raising an eyebrow, "His upbringing was tough. Not many could have done better in his shoes." "Tough?" Edith frowned.

"Yes." Bella nodded, a hint of

sadness in her voice, "He was the

late blessing to our parents, who doted on him yet burdened him with high expectations from a very young age. He barely had a childhood, growing up under stringent demands."

"He carries the weight of the Taylor family's legacy, always calculating his every move, allowing no room for error."

Both Edith and I paused, absorbing this new insight.

Herbert had never shared these details with Edith, leaving her puzzled. "He never mentioned any of this to me."

Then, realizing something, she

looked. Bella, surprised, "Bella, why

are

You

defending him? I thought

you didn't like him."

She smiled softly, "He was the only one in the Taylor family who stood up for me when times were tough."

"What happened...?" She began, but then hesitated, recognizing the boundaries of their acquaintance.

Changing the subject, she asked about the day Herbert showed up at Cloud Villas, "Why didn't you let him in?"

Bella was straightforward. "Getting too close to him only brings trouble."

Edith laughed, "If Herbert knew you were looking out for him, he'd be thrilled."

Then, suddenly realizing she might

be intruding, she looked at Bella, a

bit embarrassed, "Bella, did you come here to discuss a dress fitting with Jane? I hope I'm not interrupting."

Chapter 517

"No worries."

Bella flashed me a smile, taking my hand gently. "I'm not here for a dress fitting either."

Edith, puzzled, asked, "Then why?"

"Ask Jane about it."

Glancing at the clock, Bella stood up and explained to me, "Jane, I've got a dinner planned with the brand team. How about you join us?"

"I... I'd rather not."

Previously, whenever she facilitated connections for me, I always navigated those moments with a sense of social obligation.

But now that she had suddenly become my... mother, I was still trying to wrap my head around it.

She didn't press, only tentatively asking, "How about I have Ivy pick you up for the celebration party at Cloud Villas tomorrow? Would that be okay?"

Ivy was her most trusted aide.

Having Ivy pick me up, to then head to the celebration party from Cloud Villas together, signified her intention to publicly acknowledge my background, seeking my consent in the process.

I pursed my lips, nodding in agreement, "Okay."

As I escorted her to the elevator, on impulse, I called out, "Mom, be safe."

Bella froze in her tracks, her step back into the elevator halted as she turned around in disbelief, her eyes glistening, "You... you..."

Since my foster parents passed away, calling anyone "Mom" felt incredibly difficult. When I initially thought Pearl could be my mother, I pondered countless times whether I could ever utter that word again. Turns out, I couldn't. I thought maybe the term was just too alien to me...

Now, blurting it out so unexpectedly, even I was caught off guard.

Bella was at a loss for words, pulling me into another embrace.

Feeling her choked sobs, I patted her back, fighting back tears, and managed a smile, "When that pendant got lost, I thought I'd never find you again."

"Nonsense."

Bella released me, playfully scolding before assuring me like a promise, "Jane, from now on, whatever happens, you've got Mom here."

Perhaps my sudden acknowledgment brought her some peace. She glanced towards her home's entrance, "After tomorrow's celebration party, how about moving into Cloud Villas with me?"

"I..."

I hesitated, "Can I think it over?"

"Of course."

Bella didn't rush me, her previous interactions with Summer already showcased her as a very understanding mother.

With the elevator doors about to

close, not wanting her to miss her engagement because of me, I

hurried her, "Go on, traffic gets bad around here during rush hour."

"So..."

Taking a deep breath, Bella said, "Call me about anything, okay?"

As the elevator doors closed, I turned around to find Edith staring at me in total shock.

She was still processing it all.

I waved my hand in front of her eyes, snapping her back to reality, her voice filled with disbelief, "Wait, what did Bella just say she was to you??"

I hesitated for a moment, "...Mom?"

"Bella loves you so much she's taking you as her daughter??"

"Not exactly." I smiled, still feeling like I was dreaming. "She's my real mom. It's a surprise for me too."

I hadn't fully grasped the situation myself yet.

Edith was dumbfounded.

As I sat down in the living room, she quickly shut the door and hurried over, "What does that mean? Does it mean you're now my ex-husband's niece, and my cousin has to call my ex Uncle'??"

I hadn't even thought about that. Now that she mentioned it, it sounded like a tongue twister.

After thinking it through, I nodded in agreement, "You're right."

"Then..." Suddenly, Edith burst into laughter. "I'm Gregory's elder now? Well, with that in mind, maybe I should reconsider getting back with Herbert."

What kind of thought process does the Ford family have?

Before I could respond, Edith had already whipped out her phone, making a call with a teasing tone, "Hey Gregory, how about calling me 'Auntie' for kicks?"

Chapter 518

I couldn't help but chuckle.

I wasn't sure what Gregory had said, but Edith suddenly snapped, "Who's drunk now? Fine, you'll come crawling back to me soon enough!"

With that, she abruptly ended the call, turning to me with a grin. "Jane, could you do your future aunt a favor?"

...She sure took to that role quickly.

I raised an eyebrow, "Future aunt? You really planning on remarrying Herbert just to move up a generation?"

"It's worth considering." Edith winked at me. "So, will you help me out?"

"With what?"

"Don't spill the beans about you and Bella to Gregory."

"Huh?"

"I've never seen Gregory lose his cool." Edith looked positively gleeful.

I laughed. "That's the favor?"

She nodded. "Yep. So, will you?"

"Sure." I readily agreed.

Edith was probably the closest to Gregory among the younger Fords, aside from Molly Ford. I wanted to get on her good side too.

Plus, at tomorrow's celebration party, my backstory was going to be revealed to everyone.

Even if I didn't say anything, Gregory would find out by tomorrow at the latest.

Edith pinched my cheek, looking at me with a fondness usually reserved for elders, "No wonder Gregory's fond of you. Ah, I like you too!"

I sighed in resignation.

As soon as Bella got into the SUV, Ivy took the seat beside her.

"So, Jane wasn't upset about your attitude last time, was she?"

"No."

Bella's eyelashes were still damp, her voice filled with relief and a hint of sorrow, "That kid, she doesn't hold grudges. Right when I came downstairs... she, she even called me "Mom!" Ivy shared in her happiness, "That's great, that's great! When are you planning on doing the DNA test?"

"We're not doing it."

Bella was decisive, not hesitating at all. "Ivy, you might not believe me, but when she called me, it felt completely different this time!"

I.ne

Over the years, whether it was young actors addressing her on set, or even Summer calling her before, none of it moved her like Jane's simple "Mom" did just now.

Content

When she initially thought Summer was her daughter, she was full of doubts and speculations, insisting on a precise DNA test.

But this time, it was as if some instinct guided her, making her absolutely certain that Jane was her daughter.

The daughter she had carried for ten months and given everything to bring into the world!

Though Ivy also felt that Jane resembled Bella's daughter more, being the rational person she was, she still asked, "Are you sure about this?" "Aren't you afraid of making the same mistake again?"

She was referring to the incident where Summer falsely claimed to be her daughter.

Hearing this, Bella closed her eyes

briefly, "Ivy, understand your concerns, but I truly feel that mother-daughter connection. And right now, what she needs most is unconditional maternal love

shouldn't doubt her, lest we create unnecessary barriers."

Ivy was silent for a moment, "Let's leave it at that for now, and see how things go."

Something else came to her mind, "Oh, 'Slow Life' called earlier. They're starting to edit the first episode and were asking how we'd like it done."

Slow Life was the reality show Summer was currently filming.

met

The production team asking this probably meant there were less-than-flattering moments of Summer that could stir up

controversy. Hence, they were giving Bella a heads-up.

In other words, the production team was trying to curry favor with Bella.

-We cut out your daughter's negative moments.

"How should it be edited?"

Bella scoffed, "Edit it however it should be. Tell them to focus on what makes the show look good."

Ivy nodded, "Alright, I'll let them know right now."

[Bella says to prioritize the show's quality over consulting her further.]

The producer of Slow Life was taken aback upon receiving Ivy's message.

What did that mean?

Was their attempt at winning favor turned down, and did they end up offending Bella instead? Did Bella think they were threatening her?

Chapter 519

The producer jolted awake and quickly replied on WhatsApp, "Ivy, it seems I didn't make myself clear before. What I meant was, we will ensure Miss Summer's segments are cut perfectly and match her online persona to a T."

"Was I not clear? Zane, what we mean is, make it as appealing as possible! If the audience reacts positively, Ms. Taylor might consider funding the next season. Got it?"

The producer was sharp enough to catch on this time. "Got it, got it! I'm on it!"

So, it seems Summer managed to tick off her own mother!

But deep down, he wondered, a mother allowing the show to air her daughter's dirty laundry?

How deep must their rift be?

It seems the saying "blood is thicker than water" doesn't apply in high society.

But that was none of his concern. His job was to stick close to Bella!

-Make it as appealing as possible!

He chuckled, confident he could live up to those words.

Summer's SUV pulled up on the gravel road.

Her assistant got out first, then turned to help Summer.

After dominating the trending topics on Twitter last time, offers flooded in, from scripts and reality shows to magazine shoots.

As a regular on "Slow Life," she couldn't join a film set or another show, but stepping out for a magazine shoot was no issue.

Today, she had just finished a magazine shoot, and as she stepped out of the car, a considerable number of fans were waiting by the road to cheer her on. "Summer! We love you!"

"Summer, make sure you eat well, you've lost weight!"

"Summer, rest assured, we've got the magazine sales covered!"

Unlike last time, these were all her fans.

Summer smiled sweetly, bowing slightly, her voice tender, "Thank you, everyone. I've arranged for some ice cream trucks to come by. They should be here soon, so everyone can cool off a bit!"

The assistant was momentarily stunned but said nothing.

Back at the reality show filming location and in her room, the assistant covered a camera before asking, "Did you really order ice cream, Summer?" They were in a rural area, but close enough to town for deliveries.

But she hadn't seen Summer order anything.

Summer was nonchalant, "Nope."

The assistant, puzzled, "Then why did you tell your fans you ordered them ice cream..."

Summer rolled her eyes, "Why so many questions? I didn't order, but can't you do it now? Assistant, assistant, do you even know what you're here for?" "But..." The assistant glanced out the window towards the road. "It's so hot out, if we order now, they'll have to wait a long time..."

"Ah, does it matter how long they

wait?" Summer was impatient. "Fans these days are so devoted, as long as they get their ice cream, they'll be happy. Even if they wait a long time, they just blame the vendor. How is this my problem?"

"Alright, enough chatter, or I'll replace you too."

Originally, Bella had assigned her an assistant.

But feeling like she was being monitored, she found a reason to switch assistants.

The assistant quickly apologized, "Sorry, my bad..."

Then, noticing another camera fixed in the corner, she panicked and rushed to cover it, "Wait, why is there another camera in here?"

Normally, anything recorded after a camera is covered doesn't get aired.

"Useless!" Summer glared at her. "If you keep being this careless, I'll have my mom blacklist you! You won't last a day in this industry! Go ask the director who gave them the nerve to add a camera in my room without so much as a warning?"

Chapter 520

"Alright, I'm on it."

Seeing her frustration boiling over, the assistant quickly seized the moment to leave.

The ringtone of the phone pierced the silence.

Summer glanced at the caller ID and answered in a cool tone, "Hello, Mr. Larson, what's up?"

Lately, there hadn't been any moves from Bella's end, likely she had dropped her suspicions.

With her resources flowing in, and after shooting for several magazines back to back, everyone seemed to be in her corner, showering her with praise every day.

Gradually, she started to feel a bit above it all, even Mark Larson didn't seem as important in her eyes anymore.

Mark, holding a photo just handed to him by an underling, asked coldly, "Has anyone been in your room these past few days?"

"Nope." Summer truthfully said, "I've got cameras installed, and my phone never buzzed with any alerts."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely!" Summer sounded somewhat exasperated. "Mr. Larson, you're worrying too much. If something was really wrong, do you think I'd still be here filming this show so carefree?"

After so many days without incident, she believed Bella had let go of any suspicions.

Mark scoffed coldly, "Bella went to see Jane this afternoon!"

The photo he was holding was of Bella getting in and out of her car in the Elmwood Villas underground parking lot.

Summer paused for a moment, then quickly pressed on, "And? Did Jane go back to Cloud Villas with her?"

"No." It was this uncertainty that had Mark unsure as well.

Hearing this, Summer let out a sigh of relief and became more confident, "Well, there you go. If Jane was really her daughter, why would she skip staying in a big mansion? Bella probably just went to see her about some custom dresses."

"Are you sure?"

Summer frowned, "You think they've recognized each other as mother and daughter?"

"Shouldn't I be suspicious?"

Mark's tone was icy, "For tomorrow's celebration, you better swing by Vista Town and figure out what Bella was really doing at Elmwood Villas."

"You're being too jumpy... I just called her this morning, and nothing seemed off. I don't want to run back to Vista Town right now."

Lately, all Summer had experienced was flattery. If Bella had learned the truth, she wouldn't still be allowing Summer to use her resources. Compared to verifying Mark's baseless suspicions, getting more screen time on the show was more important for her at the moment.

Mark's expression darkened, his gaze turned sharp, and he chuckled, "Fine."

"Then let me say one last thing,"

Mark pulled out an old photo from his notebook, gently caressing it, and warned in a chilling tone, "From today onwards, stop contacting me. You never knew me, got it?" "Otherwise, you know what will happen."

Without waiting for Summer to respond, Mark hung up.

Idiot.

By now, whether Bella knew who Jane really was or not, Summer was no

r useful to him.el.

ov

involvement would only risk dragging everything down with her.

He grabbed the remote to close the curtains, shrouding himself in shadows, and dialed a number not saved in his contacts, "Kane's flight lands tonight, right?"

"Yes, BOSS."

The voice on the other end was respectful, "Kane boarded this morning; I drove them to the airport."

"Got it."

Mark responded coolly, a determined and dangerous glint in his eyes, then asked, "How's the task I gave you coming along?" "Rest assured, by tomorrow, everyone will know."

...

The next day, I woke up before my alarm even went off.

No sooner had I stepped out of my room than the doorbell rang. It was Christine.

I was slightly annoyed, "Don't you have a fingerprint, why didn't you just come in?"

"Well..."

Christine gave a meaningful look towards the master bedroom, "Didn't want to interrupt you and your man."

"There's no interrupting; he's not here."

I explained quickly, then asked, "What brings you here so early?"

Last night, Gregory didn't return to Elmwood Villas and only sent me a message saying there was some urgent matter with the Ford Group that needed handling. He didn't go into details with me.

Christine suddenly remembered why she was there, urgently asking, "Is that message you sent me for real??"

"I drank too much last night, and when I woke up bleary-eyed and saw my phone this morning, it scared me awake!"

"On my way here, I kept looking at that message over and over, scared I was dreaming or seeing things."

"Ms. Taylor is really your mom???"

Her words tumbled out like

rapid-fire and faced with her utterly

shocked expression, I nodded,

pointing to the jade pendant around

my neck, "Yeah, look, my pendant's back."

"Ms. Taylor... my mom brought it over yesterday."

I hadn't fully adjusted to my relationship with Bella, sometimes slipping and nearly calling her by her name.

I pulled Christine to the couch, leaning back, "Don't mention it, I still feel like I'm dreaming."

Returning to the country, everything had been going too smoothly, almost unreal.

It felt less like I had been abroad and more like I had been reborn, now facing a life completely opposite to my past. Happiness felt almost artificial.

A wonderful partner, friends, a thriving career, and my mom turned out to be a big celebrity.