

The Revenge of the Mute Wife [Completed]

Chapter 341-350

Mom. don't be such a killjoy.'''''

I'm not. I just remember the look of hatred in my brother-in-law's eyes and the threat he made years ago.

At the memory, both Roger and Cassandra grimaced.

Don't worry, Mom. You'll see, this time things will be different. This party is to celebrate my engagement because he got an Invitation to the party.

That's true, dear, Roger agreed.

I suppose you're right about that.

Cassandra's mother still had her doubts, but even so, they began preparing to attend the party, which was supposed to be a luncheon.

Meanwhile, the Cooper family was at the school.

Everyone was dressed in formal attire and seated in the school auditorium alongside other families. At that moment, the graduation ceremony for the architecture program was taking place.

James and his classmates were listening to congratulatory speeches from their coordinator and the principal, who wished them luck in their new life paths and reminded them to face the new challenges of their professional journey with wisdom.

Well, that's enough blah blah blah. Let's get to the most important part, the awarding of degrees for the class of 2024-2029. Wow, I still remember how many of you started, and now only the strongest and most determined remain, the principal said, looking at the 15 students graduating, noting that about 40

had started.

Everyone laughed, seeing the principal getting sentimental.

When I call your name, please come forward, said the secretary, taking the microphone to start reading

the list.

When it was James's turn, the whole family applauded, and Elizabeth didn't waste a second, taking lots of photos of her older brother.

*James, wait a moment," the principal called out, stopping him from returning to his seat. "Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honor for me to present this award for excellence to Mr. James Cooper, the first in five generations to graduate with honors, having achieved perfect grades," he announced, handing him a plaque. "Thank you, Principal Joel," James said, shaking his hand and posing for Elizabeth to snap a picture. Jayden and Deborah had tears in their eyes, proudly watching their son graduate in his chosen profession.

Wow, now I have something new to brag to my friends about, Eric joked as his grandson came over to

James, we're so proud of you, said Samantha..

Wow... my little genius, Deborah added, hugging him.

Yay, we have a certified nerd as a brother, Michael teased, laughing.

Hey, James protested.

But you're our nerd, Nicole said, hugging him.

And a very handsome one, Elizabeth added.

James laughed at everyone's congratulations, then noticed his father approaching.

Son, Jayden began, feeling his voice catch in his throat. He simply hugged James tightly. "I'm so proud of you. Congratulations."

By the way, it's too bad Grandpa Nicholas Isn't here. He'd be crying his eyes out, Nicole said with a playful grin.

The grandparents went to handle something really important, Michael pointed out.

But I recorded everything so they can see it later, Elizabeth said, winking and waving her camera. "Now, everyone, get together for a family photo."

Need a hand? A beautiful brunette approached them

Yes, thanks, Elizabeth said, handing her the camera so she could get into the picture with her family.

After that, James met up with his friends to chat for a while. After exchanging a few words and jokes, they all went their separate ways to celebrate with their respective families. However, they agreed to meet up another day to have drinks and celebrate this significant achievement together.

All set, son? Deborah asked as James returned to them.

"Yeah.

Aren't you going out for drinks or something?" Jayden asked."

Another day, Dad. Everyone's going to celebrate with their families today.

Oh, well, in that case, let's celebrate on our own, Eric suggested.

Yes, let's go, James began to say, but...

Before we go celebrate, come here, handsome, you need to be blindfolded, Elizabeth announced, pulling a scarf from her purse.

What? Why? James protested.

Come on, brother, it's for the surprise, Michael chimed in.

James... your siblings are right, Deborah said, trying to persuade him.

James just sighed, realizing they had planned something. He bent down a bit to let Elizabeth tie the scarf over his eyes, covering his vision.

Once they were sure he couldn't see anything, Deborah took his hand to guide him back to the car while Eric used his phone to let everyone know they were on their way.

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Extra 33: James and Howard

Meanwhile, the grand hall where the party would be held was gradually filling up with guests.

To enter the venue, all guests had to present their invitations for the security team to allow them in. Since it was an event that had drawn attention, it was logical that there would be people trying to sneak into the party.

Among those people were Roger and his family, who were denied entry because they didn't present any invitations when they attempted to get in, so security politely escorted them away. "Damn it! You'll regret this," Cassandra fumed.

I told you, you're confusing things, her mother said.

Roger, just forget about it. Let's go back home... They told you back then that they're not your family anymore, so I doubt this party is for our daughter, Cassandra's mother insisted. "Don't say that, Mom."

Ugh... You know what? I'm done with this. Do whatever you want... I'm going back home, she said, turning to walk away from the venue. "No.. Mom."

"Let her go, honey. We'll show her she was wrong later Roger said, taking his daughter's hand and returning to the venue, looking for a way to sneak into the party without an invitation. Meanwhile, inside the hall, everyone watched as George positioned himself in the center of the room.

Good afternoon, everyone. Haha, thank you for joining us this lovely afternoon,"" George said, using a jovial tone. ""Thank you all for coming and joining us for this magical celebration."" ""Come on, old man, just tell us why we're here!"" one of the guests called out, already enjoying a glass of champagne."

Yes, spill it already and tell us who this party is for, another guest said with amusement.

Well, I think some of you only know half the story, George said, looking at his grandsons' classmates.

We're here for James, one of the brunette's classmates called out.

No, we're here for Howard, an excited teenager declared.

You're both right. This is a joint party to celebrate both of my grandsons, George stated, his words filled with pride. "But shh... as you know, it's a surprise for them, and they're about to enter the venue now, so I need everyone to help me surprise them," he said, as the guests smiled and tried to stay quiet.

Then the waiters approached the guests, offering confetti cannons and noisemakers to use when given the signal.

Nicholas and Tatiana moved to the center of the room, waiting for the entrance of James and Howard,

while she handed George a confetti cannon so he could join in the fun.

Just then, Elliot and his family entered from the right, while James and the Coopers entered from the left.

The organizer signaled to turn off the lights, so they wouldn't suspect anything.

Are we there yet? James asked, leaning on Elizabeth to walk.

Almost, but don't talk, his sister ordered.

"Mom, where are we? Howard asked, also blindfolded)

It's a surprise,"" his little sister said, laughing."

That's right, it's a surprise, so just wait a bit longer, Erika said.

Carefully, they were placed in the center of the room.

On the count of three, take off your blindfolds.

Take them off? they both said, noticing the other's voice.

One two... three! Erika and Elizabeth shouted simultaneously.

James and Howard took off their scarves and were greeted by a shower of confetti.

Wow... what's this? Howard asked.

Surprise! all the guests shouted as the lights suddenly came back on.

But.. James saw his friends, who were already holding bottles of beer. "Ah you jerks, you tricked me."

Surprise! We told you we had plans to celebrate, didn't we? a blond boy said, laughing.

Guys! Howard greeted as he saw his classmates at the party too.

Happy birthday, Howie! some of them said, firing their confetti cannons.

James, Howard, George called out. "Congratulations to both of you.

The two smiled and went over to hug their grandfather

We deserve a hug too, Eric and Nicholas complained.

James laughed and hugged his grandfathers as well, knowing they had planned this joint party.

Well, George said, turning to the guests, "here's the big reveal for everyone who's been asking: we're here for two reasons. The first is to celebrate that fifteen years ago today, a little redhead was born." "Wow Grandpa," the teenage Howard blushed a bit, hearing his grandfather refer to him in such a sentimental way.

Aww... my baby is already 15, Erika said, stepping forward to kiss him on the cheek.

Ugh. Mom, no, we're in public, Howard complained, moving away from the maternal affection.

Mommy, I'm the baby, his little brunette sister protested, running to hug her, much to Elliot's amusement.

I agree with Fiona; she's the baby, not me, Howard said, embarrassed, making the guests laugh.

"And he also graduated with an excellent grade point average, 9.4, Elliot declared proudly, ruffling his

son's hair.

Oh, but you know, Elliot, when it comes to being proud, I win,” Jayden said, pulling out James’s plaque for everyone to see.”

Whoa... Dad, no... James said, blushing deeply.

Oh yes, my baby graduated with a perfect GPA, and he even got an award at school for being the first to achieve it in five generations, declared Deborah, hugging him. “Really?” asked George, taking the plaque to read it.

James turned as red as a tomato at that moment, listening to his friends’ teasing and the applause of the other guests.

Congratulations, James, said Elliot, coming over to see the award.

Thanks, Uncle, he replied, embarrassed.

Well, and the second reason we’re here is to celebrate that today my first grandson graduated with his architecture degree, announced George. “He’s a full-grown man now.”

With that said, a bit more confetti fell from the ceiling, making way for a big banner that read: Congratulations James and Howard.

After that, the kids and families mingled with the guests to chat for a while. It was also a good time to hand out gifts to the honorees.

It’s such a joy to see them like this, said George, watching his grandchildren talk and laugh with their friends.

I know, Dad, said Elliot. “Though, you know what’s ironic?”

That James is like a taller, buffer, brown-haired version of your brother.

Yeah... and it bothers me that he just rejected James for no reason.

But we didn’t reject him, and that’s what matters. Besides, Jayden really is his father, he said, looking at Jayden chatting with his friends, proudly showing off the plaque his son had received. “You can tell he raised him well without treating him any differently from his other kids.”

I’m grateful for that since, for a moment, that was my biggest fear. But it was unfounded.

Grandpa, Uncle, come on! What are you doing just standing there? Elizabeth called out to them, approaching with two glasses. "We're about to toast to them."

Let's go, said George and Elliot, taking the glasses and joining the party.

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Extra 34: Gifts

James, you're being mean to me, Howard complained, pouting.

Huh? Me? James replied. "Why?"

"Because you've set the bar too high with your award.

Son, take your studies at your own pace," said Elliot. "You don't need to compare yourself."

But, Howard, I've got bad news for you. At this rate, I'll probably get an award for my GPA next year too, Elizabeth announced. "So the bar will be twice as high

What? Howard looked at his cousin in shock.

"That's right because Ellie also has perfect grades in her business administration course, commented Samantha.

Congratulations," said George."

Thanks, Grandpa."

We're so proud of her, and we're going to give her all the support for her new company, said Jayden. When his daughter turned 17, she surprised everyone by announcing that she wanted to start her own clothing company. So, in addition to her tailoring courses, she enrolled in the business administration program.

I guess you'll be busy setting up the company this year," Erika commented.

Yes, but it won't be too hard because, thanks to my daughter's plans, we already have the initial capital to start it, began Nicholas. "Still, since a lot of money will be needed, I've been

making some extra investments and moving more of that money around so that when she graduates, she'll have a solid base to start with."

And I'm so grateful for that, Grandpa, Elizabeth said, hugging him and giving him a kiss on the cheek.

We're also helping Grandpa, said the twins.

What? Really? asked Howard.

Yep, we're helping him find good places to invest Ellie's money so she'll have a lot of money, declared Nicole.

I imagine that help comes with a price, Elliot said.

Obviously! Ellie promised she'd make our clothes until we're old, Michael replied, sticking his tongue out.

I'd say that's a fair price," Elizabeth said, doting on her little siblings.

Wow, you've got a bunch of geniuses in the family, said Erika, noticing that Jayden and Deborah were very proud of their four kids.

Thanks, Grandpas, you've really surprised me with all this, James said while enjoying another sip of his soda, as he wasn't much of a drinker.

And there's still something very important left, Eric commented.

Shall we? Nicholas asked.

Yes, said George.

Their grandchildren were a bit confused as they watched the three of them stand up and go to the center of the room, taking the microphones a waiter handed them. "Ladies and gentlemen," Nicholas called out.

If we could have your attention for a moment, Eric requested.

James, Howard, come to the center, said George.

The boys smiled and stood up, heading over to their grandfathers with the whole family accompanying them.

As you all know, at a party, the guests of honor receive gifts. So, first, George began, as one of the waiters approached, carrying a wooden box to give to Howard, "Howard, this is for you." Howard took the box, looking a bit confused until he opened it, and a big smile spread across his face. "Is it like yours?" he asked, looking at his dad.

Yep, said Elliot.

James smiled when he saw the box because he knew what it contained, having received the same gift

when he turned fifteen.

These tools have been gifted to all members of the Peterson family. They'll help you create jewelry and will also be useful to you in the future, George said. "Thank you, Grandpa," he said, running over to hug him with a big smile since Howard loved making jewelry with his dad.

Well, that gift is special to the family, but the next one is something the three of us wanted to give you, said Nicholas, signaling for the next gift to be brought in.

Howard turned around and saw three waiters coming in with boxes. He ran over to see them, tearing off the wrapping and shouting with excitement as he revealed his gifts.

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Erika was recording her son's reactions, who, despite saying he was all grown up, still behaved like a little kid when it came to his hobby.

Yes! Thank you, Grandparents! he shouted, running to hug all three of them. They had gifted him a state-of-the-art gaming PC, complete with a special chair, sound system, and other accessories so he could enjoy his videos in his free time. Howard's friends were excited to see the high-end gaming equipment, which was quite an expensive gift, but it was clear that the grandparents thought more about Howard's happiness than the material value.

Now you can't complain about lag anymore, said James, who sometimes played with him.

Yeah! said Howard happily, jumping up and down with excitement. "As soon as we get home, I'll start setting it up in my room."

Me too!

Yes, Fiona, we can both play, Howard said, picking up his little sister.

And now, son, Eric called out to James, "don't be jealous of your cousin because your gift is just as special."

Your gift is more suited to your age, Nicholas mentioned.

Guys, bring out the other gift, George ordered.

At that, the lights dimmed so everyone would look at the entrance. Special music started playing to build suspense, and a smoke effect was activated as the main doors swung wide open. In the background, a loud roar could be heard. James was in awe as a big smile slowly spread across his face. All the guests watched in amazement as a luxurious black sports car drove into the room.

This... James approached the vehicle as it came to a stop, seeing that the event organizer was stepping out, extending his hand to offer him the keys. "Congratulations on your graduation," the organizer said, handing him the keys.

I James was thrilled.

Congratulations, son, you deserve it, George said.

Is it mine?"

All yours, champ, Nicholas joked.

And while you're riding this high, let me inform you that you'll start preparing to take over my position next year, said Jayden.

Wow... thank you so much! James jumped like a little kid, eager to get into his car, but a yellow blur beat him to it and jumped in the car.

Oh yes, I have a new car with a driver included. Thanks. Elizabeth declared playfully

Elizabeth, Deborah called out, seeing that she was having fun.

What? I'm just stating the truth, she said sweetly. "Right, brother? You'll be my driver sometimes, won't you?"

Let me think about it, he said, a little annoyed, seeing her get more comfortable in the driver's seat and pretend to drive. "But get out, I want to get in."

The family laughed at the sibling fight. It was clear they were just playing around, but...

Get out of my car! Suddenly, a black-haired woman approached the vehicle and, without hesitation, pushed James aside to grab Elizabeth by the hair and force her out of the car.

Ah... damn it! Elizabeth complained, trying to get free

Let go of my sister! James frowned and, without a second thought, stepped in to protect Elizabeth, grabbing Cassandra's arm, not caring if he hurt her, and shoved her to the ground while pulling his sister into a protective hug. Elizabeth had a few tears in her eyes from the pain of having her hair pulled, but now she was angry at the

woman who dared to attack her for no reason.

Ah... Cassandra whimpered, tears forming in her eyes

The whole family was furious, but the women held back the men, who were ready to pounce on the intruder.

Cassie! Roger rushed over to help his daughter.

What are you doing here?! Elliot asked, stepping closer to James and Elizabeth before glaring at his brother.

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Extra 35: Total Break

Elliot was furious to see Roger and his daughter at the party.

Why did you hurt my daughter? Roger hadn't recognized James and just wanted to help his princess. Who do you think you are...?" Then he saw James and, how could he not recognize him? He was Roger's spitting image, giving the latter the same hateful look Roger himself wore.

I should ask you the same thing, sir. Who do you think you are, crashing a private event? James asked.

Roger was about to respond, but

What's the meaning of this? George asked, approaching them.

"Grandpa, they attacked me, and Cassandra started to say.

Miss, don't call my grandpa 'Grandpa,'" declared Howard."

Tom, call security, Eric ordered. "Get these two out of the party."

Among the guests, a blond young man recognized Cassandra but didn't go to help her because his parents didn't allow it. They didn't want to end up caught in the middle of the problem and become collateral damage, nor did they want to fall out with these influential families.

And who do you think you are to say we should be thrown out? Cassandra asked. "This is a party my grandfather threw for me, isn't it?"

Girl, I think you're not right in the head, but we three organized this party to celebrate our grandsons, James and Howard, Nicholas declared. "This has nothing to do with you because we don't even know you." "What..." Cassandra said, confused.

And Roger, don't you remember what I told you? We're not family anymore, Elliot declared. "So how dare you show up to a party where you weren't even invited?"

But Uncle, this party is to celebrate my engagement, isn't it?

We didn't even know you were engaged, Erika said.

You know, I feel sorry for the poor guy who proposed to you, Elizabeth remarked, glaring at Cassandra as she pulled away a little from her brother's embrace

What did you just say? Cassandra hissed through gritted teeth.

Hey, James, keep your sister quiet because she has no say in this place, Roger said arrogantly.

You will respect my daughter, Jayden declared, stepping closer to his children.

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"Daughter Roger repeated, now looking closely at Elizabeth, noticing she had several features similar to Deborah.

I'm calling the police, Michael announced.."

And I'm recording this, so either leave or face the consequences, Nicole added.

Roger and his daughter were getting anxious, realizing that nobody was on their side. Cassandra was scared, noticing that no one was coming to her defense, so she began searching for her fiancé with her eyes. "But Grandpa... this party is for my engagement.... that's why you invited my fiancé, right?" she said, trying to find support from George.

Your fiancé? George asked. "I didn't know we invited him. Who is he?"

Well, he's... ah, there you are, darling! She ran excitedly to fetch him, taking his hand to lead him to George so she could introduce him. "Come on, honey. "Cassandra, no..." he said, distressed and trying to resist, but he ended up being dragged by her.

I'll introduce you to my family, she said excitedly, bringing him to stand before the others.

"Rachael's brother? Howard asked, recognizing him.

Uh... hi, little bro,"" he greeted awkwardly, having had no idea of that connection until now, and realizing his sister looked worried since she was dating Howard."

Little bro? Cassandra asked, looking from her fiancé to Howard.

Looks like we'll need to have a talk later, son, Erika said, frowning as she stood beside her son..

Cassandra's fiance looked worried about those words, knowing his little sister had now lost her boyfriend.

*Kid, let me give you a piece of advice: open your eyes and think hard about what you're doing, because that family is nothing but trouble and only cares about money and status," Jayden warned. Rachael's brother, Brandon seemed slightly more concerned hearing those words.

Honestly, I don't care what you do or don't do, George said. "Just leave already, because you're ruining the mood of the party."

hat... are you really going to keep this up?" Roger looked at his father in disbelief.

Grandpa hasn't forgotten how you attacked him... do you seriously think everything's fine without you ever apologizing to him? Howard said angrily, remembering how that incident had traumatized him as a child. "That's right, so please just leave and stop harassing me," George requested again.

Roger was about to speak, seeing his father looking tired and sad, but the guards grabbed him and forced him to leave.

The three of them were thrown out, and to their misfortune, Brandon's family was also asked to leave.

They were all shoved and tossed out.

Damn it... Cassandra muttered, but then she was slapped in the face. "Ow!" she yelled, seeing that it was her future mother-in-law who had hit her and was now glaring furiously at her.

You stupid girl! Do you know what you've done?

"Mother-in-law, why

How dare you lay a hand on my daughter?" Roger demanded."

The same way you just ruined everything for us, declared Brandon's father. "My daughter had a bright future alongside the heir to the Peterson Group... but now it's obvious they'll force Howard to break up with my daughter." "Howard's going to hate me because of you!" Rachael complained.

Cassandra, it's best if we break up, Brandon said.

What... Cassandra was hurt now.

Please give me back the ring. Brandon said, moving closer to take it back. "It's best if we go our separate ways."

"Brandon, wait... no... Despite Cassandra's screams, what would have been her family turned and walked away, abandoning her.

She looked at her father and saw that he was

What have I done..." Roger whispered in fear."

in bad shape too, affected by what had just happened.

Don't touch me, Roger said, pulling away, seeing his father so fragile and wounded shook him to his

core.

It made him think about everything that had happened in his life... and sadly, he now understood that he had screwed up everything... from his relationship with his little brother to his first marriage... to his son. Thinking of James, he saw his reflection and noticed that James was looking at him with hatred and disdain the same way Roger had once looked at him. Now he understood everything valuable he had lost.

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Extra 36: Late Regrets Part 1

Roger didn't return home for the rest of the night. He ignored the cries of his 'daughter' as he headed to the nearest bar to have a drink and try to clear his mind.

Seeing his father defeated and exhausted had made him stop and think.

While sipping his third beer, he raised his gaze and saw his reflection in the mirror behind the bar, realizing that an old man was staring back at him... which scared him. He now looked at his hands, which had more wrinkles than he remembered. When had he changed so much?

His once beautiful hair was now streaked with gray, his face showed his age, and he had dark circles under his dull eyes.

When had he gotten so old?

And why did he look like this?

He was supposed to age gracefully, but that wasn't the case... because what he saw in that mirror was a shell of the successful man he once was.

He thought back to James. That boy had surpassed him in height; he was the version of himself Roger had always wanted to be: tall, handsome, and slightly muscular.

Honestly, James would be any father's pride.

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And now that he remembered, he supposed that the party they had crashed was to celebrate his graduation.

What have I done? he asked himself because he realized that this life was not what he had imagined in his youth.

He had never thought he'd be exiled from his own family. He remembered how he had lost his position as CEO, and worst of all... he let Cooper steal his son without putting up a fight...all because of his damn pride that got him nowhere.

He pulled out his phone to do a quick internet search, discovering that James was a certified architect, and there were already reports of his remarkable achievement of graduating with a perfect GPA. This left him somewhat confused, as he assumed James had studied and prepared to take over his role as CEO in the family's jewelry business, but everything indicated that he was to become the CEO of Jayden's

company.

If he were honest, he hadn't just lost Deborah, who had supported him since she had been by his side... but he had never valued her because he remembered his mother's words about how Deborah was worthless for being a dumb mute... something he later found out wasn't true because, with a simple operation, she regained her speech.

For that reason, he tried to help her to prevent his mother, in her madness, from harming James. She had gone completely insane, and he obviously didn't agree with that.

With that help, he thought everything was fine and sought to ignore the baby because he didn't feel it was his... especially after everything that happened with Deborah.

But ever since he saw James that one time, he was amazed to see that even though he hadn't raised him, James was so much like him in character and appearance.

In fact, he thought that now that James knew the truth.. he would eventually seek him out to get to know him and ask him to be present in his life for support and advice because he was his father... he even imagined having a conversation with his teenage son where James would complain about his mother for giving him a stepfather.

Unfortunately, that never happened, and now he couldn't stand the girl he had adopted because sometimes she was so demanding and a bit annoying. That's why he felt terrible knowing her engagement was ruined, and she wouldn't be leaving the house anymore.... at this point in his life, he just wanted to live alone with his wife and enjoy his future retirement.

He let out a sigh, feeling so frustrated, and now he noticed that he had gone from being a young, successful CEO to an old failure.

After paying for his drinks, he returned home, where he only wanted to lie down and sleep.

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Extra 36: Late Regrets Part 2

The next morning, during breakfast, Roger was focused on his phone, determined to reach out to James and be the one to make the first contact.

Hey, Dad, Cassandra called out, trying to get his attention, noticing he was more focused on his phone than his breakfast.

What is it? Roger asked, looking up.

Well... hey, what are we going to do about last night?

What? he said with a frown.

Come on, Dad, aren't you going to do something about Grandpa and-

Cassandra, enough... I think whatever happened last night should have made the situation clear.

They no longer see me as family, and they never recognized you as such, so just forget about it because it's only the three of us, no one else.

"No

Cassandra, enough," her mother scolded, "I told you yesterday not to go, and all you did was humiliate yourselves in public," she said, looking her daughter in the eyes. "Grow up already. You lost that boy because you chased something that wasn't yours." Cassandra grimaced and started to cry because she had tried calling him, but he had already blocked her everywhere. "Mom, you're so mean," she complained, standing up to go cry in her room."

Ugh... Cassandra's mother sighed and then saw what her husband was doing. "It seems like last night got to you too."

Does it show?

Yeah, so are you going to look for him? she asked, seeing that he was searching for information on James.

I want to, but it sounds pathetic that I'm only just now finding out about all his academic and sports achievements, he said, noticing that James had won some competitions as a student and had received several awards for his participation in sports activities. "Well, my love, it's never too late to regret your actions," she said, taking his hand. "Go find him and talk to him, because, you know, he's the spitting image of you, and I must admit, he reminds me of that sexy young appraiser I met years ago," she added in a flirtatious tone as she leaned in to kiss his lips.

Roger smiled at those words, setting the phone aside to kiss his beloved wife again. She had become his anchor to reality, standing by his side, enduring and overcoming all their problems together. "I was surprised to see him yesterday, actually. He's changed a lot." With his wife's encouragement, he went looking for him at Cooper Construction.

When he arrived, he saw the company looked different from what he remembered; it seemed to have expanded, but that didn't matter to him. He was debating whether to go inside the company and ask for him or wait outside. That question was soon answered, though, because...

What are you doing here? Roger jumped a little in surprise and turned to see his son standing in front of

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Extra 37: A Late Talk Part 1

I'll ask you again. What are you doing here? James questioned, frowning slightly.

James... I... Roger stammered nervously, his words catching in his throat and refusing to come out.

Are you here to apologize on behalf of your daughter?

Something like that, he said, finally managing to speak, though he made a face. "Would you let me talk to you?"

To me? James asked, confused, pointing to himself. "About what?"

Can I invite you for a drink so we can talk?

What do you want with my son? At that moment, Roger saw his longtime rival approaching and standing next to the young man.

Jayden, please let me talk to James, Roger pleaded.

The now platinum-blond looked confused at his rival. It was the first time Roger had called him by his name, and he could see that Roger seemed genuinely sorry and defeated. Jayden let out a sigh. "James, go with him."

What? James looked at him, surprised and confused.

Are you serious? Roger said, a note of hope in his voice.

You're an adult now, son, and I think your mom would agree that you should talk to Roger, listen to his apologies, and then decide what you want to do," Jayden said, patting his son on the shoulder before slowly walking back into the company.

James watched these actions in confusion, but as he thought about his father's words, he understood what he meant. He let out a sigh. "Come on, there's a place across the street that serves good coffee," he said, looking Roger in the eyes and pointing to one of the shops across from the company.

Roger nodded and followed him to the place.

It was a typical coffee shop, quite busy at that time of day since it was still early and many people were having breakfast.

Hi, James, greeted a redheaded waitress upon seeing the young man walk in. "The usual for you and your dad?" she asked with a slightly flirtatious tone.

Hey, no, Lorey. Could you get us a table for two? James replied, smiling at the girl.

Oh, sure, right this way, she said, leading them to a table and leaving them the menu. "I'll be back in a few minutes to take your order."

Thanks, James said, watching her walk away.

You seem to be quite popular, Roger commented, noticing what was clearly happening.

I let her flirt with me because I like her, James said, amused as he watched her attend to another table.

Does Deborah know?

Uh... nope. Mom's really overprotective with me, but I think she suspects.

Roger laughed, imagining Deborah getting jealous and hugging her son protectively from any woman who wanted to steal him away.

After ordering their drinks, they both fell into silence... rather uncomfortable silence.

So...? James said, trying to break the silence.

Well... I... I want to start by apologizing.

For what?

Well... for being an absent father, and...

You don't need to apologize for that, James interrupted him. "You're just the one who fathered me, but I've never seen you as my dad."

These words hurt Roger, but he understood he deserved them.

Maybe when I first found out the truth, I was a bit confused about it, but Dad and Mom explained everything to me and spoiled me so that the truth wouldn't affect me or change who I am. "I see. Did you find out the first time we saw each other at the park?"

Yes, I learned about it from your fight with Uncle at that party. In fact, Elizabeth and I misunderstood those words at the time; we thought we were both your kids.

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Extra 37: A Late Talk Part 2

Wow, sorry for the confusion.

why we had

Don't worry about it. My family supported me, and thanks to learning the truth, I understood why three grandfathers.

I imagine you became an architect because of Jayden,

That's right. My motivation was seeing how his drawings came to life... it excited me to the point where I wanted to do the same, and as the days went by, that desire grew stronger, so I decided to make it a reality, he said, his excitement evident in his words. "Though I also saw that Uncle did something similar by turning his sketches into beautiful jewelry, but that didn't impress me as much."

I see, but didn't my dad teach you the basics of the company?

Yes, Grandpa showed me the trade, James said with a smile. "In fact, I'm a good appraiser, and I know how to make jewelry because Uncle also taught me the basics of jewelry design and creation. But I see that as a hobby because the only jewelry I've made has been for my mom, my sisters, and my grandmothers."

I imagine they're thrilled to have the James collection, Roger joked, giving a name to his son's jewelry

Yes, it's Mom's favorite piece, James confessed, remembering his mother's excitement when she received that little necklace on her 35th birthday. "But I really see making jewelry as a hobby, although whenever I can, I help Uncle with his collections or give him a critical perspective on his designs."

That's good to hear. I'm just a good appraiser.

And where do you work?

I'm at a pawn shop, and I'm just a few years away from retirement.

Congratulations on that.

Yeah... although to be honest, I thought this year Cassandra would leave the house, but her fiancé called off the engagement.

Wow... I'm sorry to hear that, but I think it was for the best.

Why do you say that? Roger asked, frowning slightly.

Because if he broke it off so easily, he didn't really love her as much as he said he did.

Roger was surprised by those mature words. "You know, I think you're right, son, and, uh... you know, your sister looks a lot like Deborah," he said, recalling the blonde.

Well, Grandpa Nicholas says she looks more like my late grandmother.

Hmm... I see, well, I don't remember much about that.

Just then, the waitress arrived with their coffees.

So, is that what you wanted to tell me?

Well.. technically, yes, Roger said with a grimace. "Because I want to apologize for everything I did and how cruel I was to you...."

To me or to my mother?

Because, strictly speaking, this is the first time I've interacted with you, and you haven't treated me badly, so I have nothing to forgive you for.

Yes... I guess you're right about that, Roger said, grimacing. "I'll talk to her later, but, you know... if you let me, I'd like to..."

Don't you think it's a bit late to want to bond with your biological son? James asked, raising an eyebrow. "Maybe yes... maybe no," Roger replied sadly. "But it wouldn't be too late if you let me..."

I suppose I'll give you my answer after talking to my mom because I don't want to upset or hurt her by getting closer to you.

Of course, I respect that, and I hope that if the opportunity arises, we can continue talking about whatever you want or just spend some time together, Roger said hopefully.

If it doesn't bother her, we could meet up once a week or every two weeks, James suggested, seeing how excited Roger was about the idea of spending time together. "What do you think?"

Yes, Roger declared, happy to know it wasn't too late to have a relationship with his son.

With that, they finished their coffee while Roger asked James about his student life.

Chapter 350

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Extra 38: A Father's Fears

Honestly, it was a strange conversation for James, one he never thought he'd have... in fact, not even in his wildest dreams did he imagine having this kind of interaction with the man who was supposedly his biological father.

After telling him a bit about his school life, James paid the bill and said goodbye to Roger, as he had to get back to the office; he didn't want to be away from work for too long.

When he entered the conference room, he saw his father talking to some other architects.

Great, we're all set then, Jayden said, dismissing them. "Son, how did it go?" he asked as James approached him.

Fine, but it was weird.

So... has he started to feel his age?

I think so, James replied, making a face.

And what did he want?

Well, he just started talking to me, apologizing for being absent, and now he wants us to meet up to talk because he wants to get to know me, James said, scratching his head. "I don't know it seemed odd that he wants to know me now."

Well, son, as your mom says: we're not perfect, and it seems Roger is finally realizing what he lost, so he, approached you to try to make up for lost time and be a part of your life, even if only in a meaningful way.

How convenient... now that I'm a grown man, James complained, rolling his eyes.

What can I say... some people only realize what they've done wrong toward the end of their days. But you're the one who decides if you want to deal with him or not, son. I'm not going to force you into anything... though to be honest, I don't want you near him. "I know, Dad, and thanks for your support," James said, giving his father a hug.

And what did you tell him in the end? Are you going to meet up to talk with him?

I told him that before making any decision, I'd talk to Mom because I know she's the one who suffered the most because of him, and I don't want her to think I'm betraying her or anything like that.

Don't worry, son. She's not affected by that past anymore, but it's good that you're considering her in this matter.

Hmm...

Well, enough talking. Let's get to work.

With that, they began reviewing the plans for the company's next big project.

Seeing his son focused on the work, Jayden let out a sigh, feeling relieved and satisfied with the outcome.

For a moment, he had regretted letting his son go off with Roger... but he knew that sooner or later, that meeting had to happen, and he was grateful it was now and not before.

For a moment, he wished he were young again so he could go punch Roger and take back his son, but his secretary calmed him down and gave him words of encouragement, reminding him to trust in James, assuring him that James wouldn't abandon him after a conversation with his biological father.

He also called Deborah to inform her of what was happening and to ask for her advice because he didn't want to go from being Dad to stepdad... but his beloved had the right words to calm his insecurities and give him the strength he needed to continue working and wait for James to return on his own.

When lunchtime came, the father and son returned home.
