

Regret Is Only the Beginning - Chapter 23

Thanks to Logan's behind-the-scenes maneuvering, the house where Archie and Grandma lived was auctioned off, along with their cars and other assets.

However, Archie had already transferred one property to Evie, and I decided not to pursue it further.

When Logan placed the forcibly reclaimed money in front of me, it had only been about a month.

Just as I reached for it, he pulled it back.

"Give it to me. Consider it a wedding gift for me."

I rolled my eyes at him. "Dream on. Hand it over."

Logan raised his hand. As I reached for it, I lost my balance and stumbled straight into his arms.

He pressed a kiss onto my lips. "Darling, I've already given you your wedding gifts. Are you sure you don't want to make our relationship public?"

I smiled, deliberately teasing him. "You said you wanted a secret marriage, not me."

A year ago, after Archie's downfall, his debts had been too overwhelming. I had nearly been at a dead end and had no choice but to trade company shares to Logan, who had stepped in to settle everything.

Then, after an unexpected night together, Logan had insisted on marriage. He had claimed his family had been pressuring him.

In exchange, if I worked for him for two more years, he had said the company would be returned to me.

The company had been built by my parents, so I couldn't just watch it fall into someone else's hands. Marriage had meant little to me.

Since two years had been all it would take to get the company back, I had agreed without hesitation.

We had agreed from the start that it would be a secret marriage with a two-year contract, set to dissolve automatically.

No one else knew about this.

Logan kissed my fingers. "I've changed my mind."

His touch sent a tingling sensation through me.

"Too bad, old man."

Logan chuckled. "Don't be so heartless, darling. Even Mom's asking when we're having a wedding."

I still saved him some dignity. "I'll think about it."

He grinned. "I'll have someone start preparing the wedding dress right away. By the way, I found this. Take a look."

He handed me a thick file folder. I asked what was inside, but he only told me to read it myself.

As I flipped through the pages, I remained silent for a long time.

Most of the Houghton family's possessions had been auctioned off. Now, Archie and Grandma were crammed into the one property Evie owned.

With the company on the brink of collapse, Archie was desperate. He grabbed my sleeve and pleaded, "Jillian, I'm sorry. I regret everything. Please, come back to the company."

I coldly pulled my sleeve away. "The company will thrive under Harmon Group. Selling it will give you a sizable sum. It'll be enough to ensure you live comfortably for the rest of your life, as long as you don't squander it. Go home."

Archie left, devastated.

A month later, Grandma and Evie stormed into my office. Kaylee couldn't even hold them back. She gave me an apologetic look.

I waved her away.

"Guests are guests. Can I offer you something to drink?"

"Jillian, don't think I don't know you and Logan cooked up those schemes just to hoard the Houghton family's wealth! It's one thing to leave Archie and I out, but how could you be so cruel as to let your grandma suffer in destitution?"

Grandma used to indulge in royal jelly daily, surrounded by personal chefs, nutritionists, and private doctors.

Now, that she was stripped of wealth, her current living conditions were easy to imagine.

It wasn't just Grandma. Evie's skin had turned sallow, and her hair was dry and frizzy.

I let out a soft laugh. "You brought this upon yourselves."

I glanced at Evie. "From the first moment you saw me, you were jealous. You thought you hid it well, but you deliberately spilled coffee on me, didn't you?"

"When you and Archie came back and saw me, I bet you were shocked to learn I was his sister. That house in Meadowlark Heights is far from my most expensive property, but it's my favorite. You couldn't stand me, so you tried to take it."

"Evie, everything that's happened to you is because of your own deep-seated insecurities. No one else is to blame."

Evie, however, smartly avoided the harshest accusations.

"Think what you want about me, but Marlene never did anything wrong."

Even now, Grandma showed no remorse. When I looked at her, I saw nothing but undisguised contempt in her sunken eyes.

I crouched down, meeting her gaze directly.

"I never understood why you preferred an outsider like Evie over me until a few days ago, when I spoke with one of Dad's old friends."

"That's when I learned that years ago, you kicked Dad and Mom out of the family to stop Dad from being with Mom. But when they built their fortune from scratch, you shamelessly invited them back."

"You lived off their wealth, supported your younger son, and yet treated my mom with constant abuse. After forcing them to their deaths, you arranged for Archie to be adopted into our family, plotting to marry me off so he could inherit the company."

Grandma's face turned pale. "What nonsense are you talking about? I don't know what you mean!"

I tossed the folder onto her lap. "Take a good look at what's inside."

When she saw the contents, she completely lost her composure.

"Actually, if you hadn't drugged me back then, Logan and I wouldn't have ended up together so quickly."