

Regret Is Only the Beginning - Chapter 8

Evie stood in front of the media, crying her heart out. She claimed that she and Archie were deeply in love and that I was the wicked sister tearing them apart.

According to her, I was so desperate to stop their marriage that I was even trying to drive Archie out of the Houghton family, all so I could keep the family fortune for myself.

If it had just been Evie, a woman with no real ties to the Houghton family, people might not have believed her so easily.

But then Grandma stepped in, adding fuel to the fire.

The media storm immediately swallowed me whole.

“I can’t believe there’s a sister like this in the world!”

“A woman hoarding her family’s fortune? Does she have no shame?”

“Daughters shouldn’t have the right to inherit family assets. She grew up eating her brother’s food, living under his roof, and now she’s trying to steal his money too? What kind of person does that?”

I calmly scrolled through the comments, reading them from beginning to end.

Grandma’s usual smile had vanished. “Jillian, Archie was adopted into this family so the Houghton name wouldn’t die out. Everything in the family belongs to him. As the head of this household, I’m ordering you to hand over the company.”

She then added cryptically, “Otherwise, in a little while, there might not be a company left to hand over.”

I frowned. “What do you mean by that?”

“You know exactly what I mean,” she said, her tone filled with disdain. “Evie already told me everything. You’ve been keeping a freeloader and throwing money on him. Do you think the Houghton family’s wealth fell from the sky?”

Annoyed, I snapped, “I earn my own money and spend it however I want. Who does that bother? How can you believe whatever nonsense Evie feeds you? The so-called ‘freeloader’ you’re talking about is the CEO of Harmon Group.”

Grandma shot a sharp glare at Evie.

“You have connections with the Harmon family? Since when?”

“That’s none of your business,” I replied

“You may be beyond my control,” Grandma said coldly, “but I still have the final say over this company.”

Archie had fully accepted that he wasn’t my biological brother, yet he still saw himself as the rightful heir of the Houghton family. Naturally, he agreed with Grandma without hesitation.

“Funny,” I said, my voice dripping with sarcasm. “When the company was struggling, not a single one of you stepped forward to help. But now that it’s thriving, suddenly everyone’s eager to take charge.”

I looked directly at Archie before asking, “Is that what you think too?”

Archie frowned slightly. “Jillian, to me, you’ll always be my sister. But Grandma is right. Everything in this family belongs to me. But don’t worry. Even after I take over, you’ll always have a place in this home.”

“Oh, Archie.” My heart sank in disappointment. “I gave you everything. We lost our parents, so I treated you as my only family. But you still let me down.”

Evie came forward and said, “If you hadn’t abandoned Archie first, he wouldn’t have had to go this far! You brought this on yourself!”

“Fine.” I inhaled deeply. “Tell me one thing, Archie. Was it you who leaked the story to the media?”

I had already agreed to give up the company, but it seemed they couldn’t even wait a few days. If that was the case, why should I keep trying?

Archie remained silent. But his silence spoke volumes. I had already reached my limit.

Evie stepped forward again. “Jillian, if you hadn’t gone back on your word, we wouldn’t have had to do this. Now you’re being criticized by the public, but that’s just the consequence of your own actions!”

Archie added, “Jillian, the sooner you hand over the company, the sooner you can stop exhausting yourself. Didn’t you always say you wished I could help you?”

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Next

I said coldly, "I'm not your sister. My parents only had one child. Since you can't even wait a single day, let's just get it over with today."

I had Kaylee notify the lawyer and the board of directors. I had made preparations for this a long time ago, so within an hour, almost everyone had arrived.

The lawyer formally stated my decision.

The board's response was unanimous. It all went so smoothly it felt almost surreal.

By the time the meeting ended, Archie was still caught up in his excitement. Grandma's smile was equally obvious.

Back in my office, I packed up my things. My resignation had already been submitted to HR.

Just then, the door swung open. Evie helped Grandma inside, with Archie following behind them.

The excitement on his face had yet to fade.

I had long lost any expectations for these people, so I had no intention of being polite. "What do you want now?"

Now that the company was in their hands, even Grandma's tone toward me had softened. "Jillian, why don't you vacate this office for Archie?"

I scoffed. They really never showed up unless they needed something.

"Don't worry, Grandma. This office will be empty by tomorrow."

Grandma finally noticed the boxes I had packed. Her smile grew even wider. "That's good. Don't worry, Jillian. I'll have Archie pick out a bigger and better office for you. You won't be mistreated."

“That won’t be necessary,” I said flatly. “I already submitted my resignation.”

Archie was stunned. “You’re leaving?”

“Yeah.”

He hesitated. “But-”

Evie quickly grabbed his arm, as if afraid I would change my mind. “Archie, since Jillian wants to leave, let’s not stop her. Maybe she just doesn’t want to interfere with you as you get used to running the company. If she stayed and kept making decisions for you, how would you ever grow?”

Her words were carefully chosen, subtly implying that if I stayed, I might try to take the company back. After all, there could only be one king. How could a company possibly have two people in charge?

Just as expected, Archie said nothing after that.

I smiled. “If you keep standing around and delay me from packing, don’t blame me if the office isn’t empty by tomorrow.”

“We’ll leave now,” Archie said.

Once the door shut behind them, I leaned back in my chair, exhausted.

Kaylee came in, her eyes red with frustration. “Ms. Houghton, this is so unfair! This company only got to where it is today because of your hard work, and now they’re just taking it away from you like this?”

Her concern warmed my heart.

“Silly, are you worried I’m not exhausted enough? Now I finally have a chance to take a break. I haven’t had a proper vacation in forever.”

It took some effort to calm her down and send her away. Then, someone even more troublesome walked in.

Logan strolled in wearing a casual suit with his sleeves rolled up. He picked up a book from my hands, glancing at my wrist as he did. Casually, he asked, “Why aren’t you wearing the bangle?”

Logan started packing up the rest of my things while I stopped bothering altogether.

“Wearing it means I have to be careful all the time to avoid scratching it. That’s too much trouble.”

He chuckled. “You’re still as stubborn as ever.”

Then, he swiftly packed everything into boxes and called for people to move them. A few moments later, a group of men arrived and carried everything away.

From start to finish, he didn’t even ask me where I wanted my things taken.

I turned to him and said, “Don’t let them take the things to where I’m living now—”

I hadn’t even finished saying “Take them to Meadowlark Heights” when Logan nodded seriously.

“Yeah, they’re taking them to my place.”

1. Chapter 10 - A Moment of Warmth

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I stood up, half-smiling. “Logan.”

Leaning against the desk, Logan looked deep in thought. “They’ve already left, darling. I’m not sure if I can still catch up if I run after them now.”

“Then why aren’t you running?”

Instead of answering, he poured me a cup of coffee and handed it over. “Darling, don’t be mad. I booked tickets to Atruarea for tomorrow. Let’s take a trip abroad and get away from all this. Out of sight, out of mind.”

Seeing this man—normally a dignified CEO—putting on an aggrieved expression almost made me laugh.

“Doesn’t your company need you? You can just leave?”

Honestly, I didn’t mind having company on a trip. Especially if that company was Logan.

In the Houghton family, I was Archie’s sister, which meant I had to play the role of an elder, constantly worrying about everything. I never had anyone to lean on.

But with Logan, I could be willful. I didn’t have to think about anything at all.

Logan toyed with my hair. “My dad heard I was pursuing his daughter-in-law, so he came out of retirement. The company’s covered. Come on. We finally got a break. Stop thinking about work.”

With no responsibilities holding me back, I already felt lighter.

That night, after much coaxing from Logan, I ended up at his place.

The apartment was huge, around 5,000 square feet, and decorated in a style I loved.

Logan pulled me excitedly toward the bedroom. "I've got something to show you." His expression held an air of mystery.

Curious, I asked, "What is it?"

"You'll see when we get there."

Logan covered my eyes and only let go when we reached the bedroom. As soon as I opened them, I saw rose petals spread across the bed, carefully arranged into a heart shape.

My eyes stung, but I wasn't about to cry. "Why is it a little crooked?"

Logan frowned. "Is it? I checked it a few times."

Then, noticing my reddened eyes, he gently wiped them with his hand. His voice was firm as he said, "Even if it's crooked, you still have to like it."

I hit him lightly. "You're so overbearing."

Logan smirked playfully. "That's just because you like me that way."

After saying that, he pushed me down and kissed me—deeply, hungrily.

When he was in bed, he was a whole different person. He turned into a complete wolf.

The consequence of the previous night's indulgence? We were late for our flight.

It was actually an afternoon flight, but we still managed to be late. This was a first in my personal history.

But the true culprit wasn't even the least bit guilty.

“Darling, we’re already late. We might as well go back to sleep.”

If I stayed in bed any longer, I doubted we would make it tomorrow either. I decisively got up and started dressing.

“I need to grab something from home. You go rebook our tickets.”

Logan cast a deep, lingering gaze my way. “Women really are fickle. You were so gentle in bed, and now all the tenderness is gone.”

I shot him a look.

He grinned shamelessly. “Alright, darling, I’ll book the tickets right away!”

By the time I returned home, it was evening.

After parking, I opened the door and walked inside, only to see Evie sitting in the living room.

The moment she saw me, she smiled. “Oh, Jillian. I thought you didn’t want to see us anymore and would never come back.”

I frowned. “This is my home. Why wouldn’t I come back?”

I had no interest in chatting with her and headed upstairs.

Just then, Evie suddenly stepped forward, holding a cup in her hands. And, as if by coincidence, the entire cup of coffee spilled onto me—exactly like the first time we met. Evie covered her mouth in feigned shock.

“Oh no! Sorry, Jillian. I was just about to ask if you wanted some coffee, but I accidentally spilled it on you instead.”

