

"You didn't know?" The old lady immediately caught on that something was off, her tone prickling with irritation. "I booked a two-day getaway for you and Jarrod at Mount Serene just a couple of days ago. Yesterday, I asked Jarrod about it and he said he already gave you the tickets."

Elodie blinked in surprise-Jarrod hadn't mentioned any of this to her.

It couldn't be more obvious: he had no intention of going on a trip with her and had simply lied to appease his grandmother.

"Grandma, it's just that I have something urgent to take care of, so—"

"It's the weekend! What could possibly be so important?" Her grandmother wasn't having it. "Don't you cover for that rascal. Here's what's going to happen: you're going, and I'll call that boy and make sure he gets there too. I've planned everything, so just get a move on."

Elodie tried to protest. "Grandma, actually, Jarrod and I already—"

"What about you two?" The old lady's tone softened, concern replacing annoyance.

It was clear she still didn't know about the divorce. Apparently, Jarrod hadn't told the Silverstein family yet. Otherwise, why would his grandmother bother arranging something like this for the two of them?

Elodie felt a wave of frustration. With Grandma's high blood pressure and weak heart, maybe Jarrod was waiting for the right moment to break the news gently. If Elodie let the truth slip and Grandma couldn't handle it, she'd be the villain.

The papers were signed; the divorce would be official soon enough. There'd be time to let Grandma adjust.

After a moment of deliberation, she caved. "It's nothing, Grandma. I'll head over now. Jarrod told me about it."

As long as she could reassure Grandma, that was all that mattered. She had no intention of actually going.

But Grandma was one step ahead: "I'll send a car to pick you up. The driver knows the way."

"Couples need a little adventure together. You two enjoy yourselves and try to give me a chubby great-grandchild by the end of the year!" Grandma's words were bright with hope.

Before Elodie could decline, the old lady hung up and started making arrangements.

Elodie pressed her fingers to her forehead, feeling a headache coming on.

She knew exactly what Grandma was thinking. Everyone could see that after three years of marriage, she and Jarrod's relationship was lukewarm at best—especially with no baby, which was a hard pill for traditional elders to swallow. That was why, for three years, she dutifully tried to "grow the Silverstein family tree," spending every ovulation period with Jarrod.

The rest of the time, he had zero interest in touching her.

Jarrood was perfectly healthy; during that week, he'd come to her every night, three times a night, sometimes until dawn. She could barely keep up.

Still, nothing happened.

She'd always thought it was because of an old injury that made it hard for her to conceive. She figured with treatment, it might work out.

Now, with a diagnosis of uterine cancer, even that faint hope had been extinguished.

Grandma was nothing if not efficient the driver called her soon after. Elodie simply gave the address of a nearby supermarket, concealing the fact that she and Jarrood no longer lived together. She didn't know what Jarrood's plan was for handling the divorce, but for now, she'd play it safe.

She got into the car without contacting Jarrood.

She figured, if he hadn't told her, he clearly didn't want her there. No way he'd actually show up to spend the weekend with her. She might as well go by herself, put in an appearance for Grandma, and maybe even enjoy a little peace and quiet.

Mount Serene sat atop a high ridge, dotted with cozy lodges. There was a ski resort nearby and, if you woke up early, you could watch the sunrise turn the mountains gold.

Elodie checked in, wheeled her suitcase to her room, and was startled to run into two people returning from outside.

Jarrood and Sylvie walked side by side, deep in conversation. Sylvie's eyes sparkled as she smiled at him.

Elodie's heart skipped; the scene hit her like a slap.

Jarrood's gaze darkened when he spotted her, his handsome face unreadable.

Sylvie just smiled faintly, as if she found the situation amusing.

A flush of humiliation crept up Elodie's neck.

What were they thinking about her?

"Jarrod, do you have the room key?" Sylvie didn't acknowledge Elodie at all, nor did she need to.

Jarrod handed her the keycard. Sylvie entered the room next door, leaving the door ajar-clearly, she was waiting for Jarrod to join her.

They were sharing a room?

Jarrod turned to Elodie. "Did Grandma call you?"

"Yes," she managed.

"Maybe you should switch rooms," he said, his tone icy, though phrased like a suggestion.

Elodie instantly understood: he and Sylvie were staying next door, and if they wanted to be "close," having his not-quite-ex-wife in the next room was a real buzzkill.

So, by coming here, was she just being a nuisance?