

**248: A Father and Son Reunite After 18 Years**

It was the young man who had almost hit her on the roadside last time.

It was actually him!

James closed his umbrella, droplets of paint dripping from the tip. His deep and magnetic voice rang out, "What do you all think you're doing?"

The woman who had thrown the paint hadn't expected to hit the wrong person. Just looking at the tall, well-dressed man in front of her, she knew she had gotten herself into trouble.

James's commanding tone made her drop the paint bucket in fright.

With an imposing presence, he pointed at the group of older women and questioned coldly, "Do you ladies even realize that what you're doing is illegal?"

"I've recorded all the evidence of your slander, and I've already called the police! Whether it's public disturbance or defamation, both are enough to get you arrested! Once the police arrive, you'll all be taken in!"

Coincidentally, a police car happened to be passing by in the distance, sirens blaring.

Terrified by James's words and the sudden sound of sirens, the women panicked, abandoning their crusade and fleeing in all directions.

With the crisis averted, Caitlin didn't forget her manners.

"Sir, I really appreciate your help just now. Thank you!"

"No problem, Miss!"

James flashed a charming smile, flicking his umbrella. Paint had splattered onto his black casual pants as well, something Caitlin quickly noticed.

"Oh no, your pants got stained! Let me buy you a new pair."

James had been looking for a way to continue the conversation, and Caitlin had just handed him the perfect excuse.

"Sounds good. Even better if you come with me to pick them out—you wouldn't want to get the wrong style, would you?"

He wasn't wrong. Caitlin nodded.

"Alright, there's a mall nearby."

Just then, Quincy pulled up in the car and stepped out.

"Caitlin, please get in."

Seeing James, Quincy's expression darkened slightly. His instincts told him to be cautious.

"Caitlin, who is this...?"

"This gentleman helped me just now, but his pants got ruined. I'm taking him to the mall to buy a new pair. Drive us there."

Quincy gave James a scrutinizing look but remained alert. Leaning closer, he whispered,

"Caitlin, we don't know where this man came from..."

"I've met him once before. It's fine, just drive."

With that, Caitlin invited James into the car, and the two headed toward

the nearby mall.

As they chatted along the way, Caitlin learned his name was James, and they exchanged contact information.

"I've got your number now. Next time, dinner's on me."

Caitlin found herself developing a favorable impression of him—perhaps because there was something about him that felt oddly familiar.

James kept his expression neutral, careful not to reveal his true intentions. To maintain a low profile, he had given her a temporary U.S. number.

Once they arrived at the menswear section, Caitlin, assessing his usual style, led him into a high-end boutique.

"How about this brand?" she asked.

"Let's check it out."

For the first time in his life, a woman was shopping for clothes with him. James smirked and stepped into the store.

"See anything you like?" Caitlin asked, following behind him.

"I'd rather hear a woman's perspective. What do you think looks good on me?" James turned to her with an easygoing smile.

Since he had asked, and she was short on time, Caitlin quickly picked out three styles and called over a sales associate.

"These three—please bring them in his size."

"Of course! Please wait a moment."

24B: A Father and Son Reunite After 18 Years

 +20 BONUS

Soon, the employee returned with the pants, handing them to James. He tried them on one by one, stepping out each time for Caitlin's opinion.

"What do you think?"

Before Caitlin could answer, the sales associate chimed in enthusiastically,

"All three styles suit your boyfriend perfectly! He looks absolutely handsome in them!"

Boyfriend?

James raised an eyebrow at the misunderstanding.

"You're mistaken. He's just a friend, not my boyfriend," Caitlin clarified. Then, she turned to James. "But I do think all of them look great on you."

James took note of her words and returned to the dressing room. When he came out, he handed all three pairs to the sales associate.

"I'll take this one. Charge it to my card."

He had no intention of letting a woman pay for his clothes. But to his surprise, the sales associate smiled and said,

"Sir, this young lady has already purchased all three pairs for you. I'll pack them up now."

James turned to Caitlin in disbelief.

"Miss, you didn't have to buy all three! One is enough."

"It's fine. They all suit you well—just take them."

Since she had already made the decision, James could only accept them

graciously.

"Well then, I guess I owe you a thank you."

After leaving the mall, Caitlin bid him farewell and promised to take him out for dinner another time. James waved her off, watching her disappear into the distance before heading toward his own destination.

For some reason, a vision of cherry blossoms in full bloom suddenly flashed through his mind.

What was that place? He needed to find the answer.

Following Sebastian's instructions, Caitlin had Quincy retrieve a replica of the secret manual.

Flipping through the book, Caitlin realized the forgery was nearly identical to the original—so much so that it would be difficult to tell them apart by eye alone.

She hoped this replica would be enough to exchange for her daughter.

Once she had it in hand, Caitlin called Sebastian.

"Sebastian, I just got the replica from Mr. Wheeler. How's it going on your end? Has your father woken up yet? When are you coming back?"

"He hasn't woken up yet. Why? You miss me?"

The man's teasing voice sent a wave of heat to Caitlin's cheeks.

"Who misses you? I'm just letting you know—I'm meeting Ximena tomorrow."

"Got it."

Neither of them spoke after that. They just listened to each other's breaths, an unspoken connection lingering between them.

After hanging up, Caitlin found herself involuntarily picturing Sebastian's striking features.

She realized something troublesome — she was thinking about him more and more each day.

---

The Obsidian Order Headquarters

Sebastian had just ended his call with Caitlin when Tyler rushed in.

"Lord, your father has woken up!"

Hearing this, Sebastian immediately made his way to the base hospital.

Inside the hospital room, Raymond had indeed regained consciousness. Looking around, he found the unfamiliar surroundings disorienting — this wasn't Black Wolf Fortress.

Where was he?

His instinct was to sit up, but —

"Dad! Don't move!"

Sebastian rushed in, steadying him.

Raymond turned to the young man in shock. Just now, he had called him ... what?

Commented [Ma1]:

Commented [Ma2R1]:

248: A Father and Son Reunite After 18 Years

 +20 BONUS

"You're..."

"Dad, it's me—Sebastian."

A lump formed in Sebastian's throat, his eyes reddening as he looked at his father.

"Sebastian?"

Raymond was utterly stunned, staring at him in disbelief.

His son. His son, Sebastian.

In his memories, Sebastian was still a seven- or eight-year-old boy. But now, standing before him was a grown man—a strong, capable young man.

"You're really... my son Sebastian? Tell me... this isn't just a dream?"