

Wife 52

Chapter 52

Mark said, “I can’t pinpoint the cause right now, Mr. Anderson. Could you take us to where Mr. and Mrs. McLeod are staying?”

From Ruby’s account, Allen and Bailey were very nice to Noel while her was alive but became neglectful of Ruby after his passing. *www.NoelWorm.com*

Mark was inclined to believe Clara’s hypothesis that human factors. were at play. Ruby must have done something that made Allen and Bailey resent her.

While it was common to hear about daughter–in–law and mother–in- law conflicts, Allen was Ruby’s own flesh and blood. If even he refused to care for her, the problem likely lay with Ruby herself.

No mother–in–law and daughter–in–law would start as enemies. Conflicts arose from everyday tensions and unresolved disputes, eventually leading to continuous clashes and a hostile relationship.

Ruby said, “It’s all Bailey’s fault. She’s very fierce and treats me terribly, always giving me dirty looks. She’s nicer to strangers than to me. Allen is soft and useless. He’s completely under her thumb.” *www.NoelWorm.Com*

Clara stood up and walked outside. The smell inside was overwhelming, and she needed some fresh air. She also wanted to ask the neighbors about the origins of Ruby and Bailey’s conflicts.

Seeing Clara leave, Katrina followed her. Katrina had been standing at the door, away from the worst of the smell.

“Ms. Fowler, you can’t stand it, can you? Ruby is incredibly lazy. The house is a mess, but she just doesn’t clean up. She claims it’s because of her illnesses, but I think it’s just laziness.

“With such poor hygiene, it’s no wonder she’s always sick. Back when Noel was alive, he did all the housework, keeping the place clean. It

was never this filthy.”

Katrina had many complaints about Ruby, but she didn’t voice them directly out of respect for Liam. When she stepped outside with Clara for some fresh air, she couldn’t help but vent to her.

“Were Ms. Anderson and Mrs. Mcleod always at odds?” Clara asked.

Katrina glanced back at the house, then leaned closer to Clara and whispered, “I don’t think Ruby is possessed or that there’s a

geomancy problem with the house, Mr. Fowler would have spotted that immediately.

“Liam just couldn’t stand Ruby’s constant complaints anymore and felt sorry for her. After all, she practically raised him. So, he asked Mr. Fowler to check things out.

“Allen and Bailey are reasonable people. It’s Ruby who’s at fault. Liam and his four siblings have tried to mediate countless times, but it’s no use. Bailey even said she won’t care for Ruby in life or death.”

“Mr. Anderson has five siblings?”

“Yes, it was common for older generations to have many children. Liam’s other sisters are much better off than Ruby. At least they’re

not as lazy.

“Ms. Fowler, let me tell you. Ruby is a compulsive gambler. She does nothing all day but gamble and often acts as the banker herself. Sometimes she wins, but when she loses, she can blow through her entire pension in a day.”

Clara was stunned. “Is that why Mr. and Mrs. Mcleod don’t want to

deal with her?”

No matter how substantial, a compulsive gambler could ruin a family’s finances and easily tear it apart.

“That’s a major reason. Ruby never retired from a real job. A few years

ago, she scraped together enough money to pay a lump sum into social insurance. Now, she gets around 300 dollars a month. Since the amount increases yearly, it was less when she first started receiving it.” *www.NoelWorm.COM*

Katrina continued, “If she were a responsible woman, 300 dollars a month, with no other financial burdens, would be more than enough.

“She lives in a rural area where the cost of living is lower than in the city. She even has a plot of land behind her house for a vegetable garden, where she can grow her own greens and fruits.

“All she’d need to buy is meat and oil. Do you think 300 dollars a month isn’t enough to live on?”

Clara thought about her life with Mark on the mountain. Their monthly food expenses were just over 100 dollars.

They raised chickens and ducks, so they had eggs. When they wanted meat, they would slaughter a chicken or duck. This kept their costs low. *@www.NoelWorm.(c)o®*

Their biggest expense was fuel for their two cars, but that wasn’t a part of food expenses.

Ruby did not have a car and thus had no such expense. 300 dollars a month should be more than sufficient for a single person.