

Lost Me Gained Regret

#Chapter 141 - Read Lost Me Gained Regret Chapter 141

Chapter 141

"Jane."

His gaze was locked on me, his eyes swirling with an emotion I couldn't quite place, "I regret the papers."

"Huh?"

"I can't stand the thought of divorcing you."

His voice was low, as if shrouded in a mist.

I licked my lips, pointing towards the elevator we were about reach, "I'll head out first."

Everything that needed to be said, had been said. Continuing this tug of war was just adding to the annoyance.

"I said, I'd take you..."

'Bry!"

The elevator doors slid open, and to my surprise, it was Margaret Her face lit up with joy, "I thought you said you were busy this afternoon? Couldn't stay away from me, could you?"

I didn't look back, stepping past her into the elevator. After pressing the button for my floor, I didn't even bother to see what expression Bryant was making.

Whether his face showed helplessness, irritation, or indulgence, it didn't matter to me anymore.

What I needed to learn now was to let go. Let go of the person I had chased for eight years and still couldn't keep up with.

On my way home, Mark called.

I answered with a smile, "What's up, Mark?"

"Did anyone else see your design submission? His tone was serious.

A bad feeling began to grow inside me. Slowing down, I thought carefully, "Just Chris. No one else."

Besides leaving it at the office overnight, the design had never left my house.

There was a brief silence on the other end before I couldn't help but ask, "Is something wrong?"

"Let's meet in person. Should I come to you?"

1/2

10:03

Chapter 141

"It's fine, I'm already out. I'll head over. How about I meet you at the coffee shop downstairs?"

He agreed immediately.

About twenty minutes later, I arrived at the Starbucks below the office building. Through the large glass windows, I spotted Mark.

He was dressed in a beige shirt and khaki trousers, looking effortlessly elegant yet unapproachable.

As I approached, the distance between us seemed to vanish. He smiled, handing me a hot drink, "Have something warm."

"Thanks."

I'm not picky about what I drink, but after taking a sip, I looked at him in surprise. It was my favorite.

Mark always seemed to understand me well.

Yet, I couldn't figure out when he had taken the time to know me so well.

After a few sips, I went straight to the point, "Something's wrong, isn't it?"

"Yeah." He nodded, searching for the right words, "Your design... it's been plagiarized. But don't worry too much. It's your work; nobody can take that away from you."

"How is that possible?" I sat up straight, in disbelief.

His eyes narrowed slightly, his expression serious, "

I was stunned, "Can you tell me who it is? Or do we have to wait for the company's decision?"

This wasn't an official competition, but it was organized by a major company, and it carried a lot of influence.

If this issue wasn't handled properly, someone's reputation in the design world could be ruined.

Mark didn't beat around the bush, "It's Margaret."

"What?"

"This is her design submission, take a look." He said, handing his phone over to me.

2/2

22

Chapter 142

I took the smartphone from his hand, and almost instantly, I was sure it was my design.

More specifically, it was my initial draft, a few details still rough around the edges, yet someone had copied it verbatim.

But it was exactly this unfinished state that clued me in on how my design ended up with Margaret, sending a chill down my spine.

"Don't worry." Mark's voice was soothing, like a balm to my worries, "Before you figure out how to prove it's your design, I'll keep this under wraps."

"No need to hide it."

I brushed my hair behind my ear, offering a wry smile, "Let's air his dirty laundry- the more fuss it causes, the better."

I hadn't anticipated Margaret would be so bold as to swipe so much from me. Since she'd thrown down the gauntlet, I was not opposed to teaching her a lesson.

Mark's eyes, clear and serene, crinkled with a smile, "I was worried these consecutive issues would get you down, but it seems you've already got a plan?"

"Yep."

I nodded, "Back in college, our professor always said, in our line of work, to protect your designs, you must always be ready to prove they're yours."

Joy danced in Mark's eyes, "Three years on, you've only gotten better and more adept at safeguarding what's yours."

I chuckled, puzzled, "Mark, how come you're so sure this design is mine? Didn't you ever doubt, even for a second, that I might have copied Margaret?"

"The Jane I know isn't someone who'd ever rip off someone else's work." He was confident, then added with a light laugh, "Besides, ever heard of backing up your friends, right or wrong?"

"Huh?"

"We're friends, aren't we?"

He teased, half-joking, "Whatever you do, I've got your back."

I couldn't help but laugh, "Is that how you treat all your friends?"

"Yep." He shrugged nonchalantly, a mysterious smirk playing on his lips, "But, I don't have many friends."

That was the truth. Having known him for years, though he mingled with folks like Steven

1/2

10.04

www Chapter 142

and Bryant, it seemed he was only close with them.

And now, it felt like he and Bryant had drifted apart.

Seemed like his circle had shrunk to just me and Steven.

I couldn't help but offer some consolation, "I don't have many friends either, aside from you and Christine. Not much interaction beyond that."

"That's fine by me."

His smile was warm, his eyes slightly upturned, creating a captivating look, his lashes casting shadows as if hiding his thoughts.

I warmed my hands around my coffee when Mark's phone suddenly rang. He shot me an apologetic look, "Let me take this call."

He headed outside, phone in hand.

Glancing at the time, I decided to head out too, giving him a wave from a distance before leaving.

But I saw him, his expression stern, the warmth and gentleness gone as he spoke into the phone.

From a distance, I couldn't make out his words.

Suddenly, he seemed to feel my gaze, looking up at me, his expression softening as he approached, "Got it, we'll leave it at that."

After hanging up, he gestured towards my car, "Leaving now?"

I figured he was dealing with some work hassle, nodding, "Yeah, got some errands to run. You better head on to work too."

"Sure. Need help with the plagiarism issue?"

"Actually, yes."

I smiled lightly, "Margaret won't let this go easily. How about we meet tomorrow? I'll prove the design is mine, clear the air for your company."

2/2

10:04

Chapter 143

He grinned and asked, "Are you thinking of being low-key or going big?"

"Go big." I didn't hesitate for a second.

"Leave it to me." Mark nodded, guiding me to the car, "Stay safe. Call if you need anything." His voice was clear and soothing, almost magically calming.

As I drove out of the parking lot and stopped to pay, a glance in the rearview mirror showed him still standing there, tall and distinguished, his gaze lingering in the direction I was leaving. Had I not known about the woman he'd been for of for years, I might have wondered if he had a crush on me.

I headed straight to the Ferguson Group, dialing Linda's number en route. "Meet me in the underground parking in ten."

"Jane," Linda sounded like she was knocked for a loop, "I'm... up to my eyes in work right now."

My tone turned icy. "Or should I come up to see you?"

Jane said quickly, "Uh... I'll come down."

Deep down, I harbored a sliver of hope it wasn't her. Maybe I overlooked something else.

But her guilt was too evident.

Linda was waiting at my usual parking spot, looking pale.

As I got off, I went straight to the point. "Why did you do this?"

I couldn't understand. By all accounts, I was a decent boss, always willing to help and ignore minor issues.

"What do you mean?" Linda avoided my gaze, clearly uncomfortable.

I shot back, "Do I have to spell it out for you?"

"Jane..." She lowered her head, embarrassed.

I frowned slightly. "You said you were airing out the office but were photographing my design draft?"

I couldn't think of any other slip-up.

Linda had been my intern since college, handpicked by me. She was the person I trusted most at Ferguson Group.

It turned out that not just marriages and men could be unreliable.

1/2

10:04

Chapter 143

? What did Linda feel silent, and I understood. "You hate Margaret, don't she offer you? A promotion or a raise?"

"Neither." Linda suddenly looked up, desperation in her eyes. "She said she'd introduce me to my idol. She admitted they weren't close but was willing to make the connection."

I couldn't believe it. "Just for that?"

I knew she idolized Mark, but I hadn't realized her obsession ran this deep.

"I've admired him for so long!" Linda was furious, resenting me, "You knew I liked him, yet you kept it from me, Went to the concert with him, and never thought of introducing us!"

I plan to "Linda," I couldn't help but scowl, icily responding. "Even if I did I mention it, I introduce you when the time was right. He's my friend. It's up to me whether I introduce you to him. I don't owe you a thing!"

"This is Ferguson Group's project proposal. Corporate espionage is no small charge. Think about how you want to handle this!" With that, I got back into my car, ready to

leave.

Unexpectedly, Linda chuckled. "As your assistant these past years, let me offer some friendly advice. Think about how you'll survive in the design world."

"Why wouldn't I survive?" I rolled down the window, showing her the recording app on my phone. "Linda, if you decide to go against me, won't pull any punches."

10:04

I Chapter 144

Everything unfolded as I had anticipated. No sooner had I left the Ferguson Group than whispers began to spread like wildfire through the industry circles.

I called Mark, who hadn't made a move. It was clear Margaret had been the one to set the rumor mill churning. [The Ferguson Group's Assistant Director, accused of plagiarism.]

And, as expected, the majority jumped on the bandwagon. After all, Margaret was the first to submit her design proposal.

The disdain for such acts ran deep, and the accusations hurled my way were vile.

[Copycat! You don't deserve to be in this field. Get out of the design world!]

[Stealing someone else's hard work. Hope your whole family rots.]

[Shameless! You'd dare steal from your own company. What a piece of work this Jane is]

Just as I was about to shut off my phone, the company's official account posted a notice. It stated that Margaret and I would present ourselves at the headquarters the next day to settle this plagiarism dispute, inviting industry peers to join the spectacle.

The next day, I got up early, ensured my makeup was flawless, and stepped out in my heels.

When I arrived, a crowd of onlookers, and Mark, who was waiting for me, had already gathered at the entrance.

Carrying my bag, I walked over and greeted him with a smile. "Hey, Mark."

His voice was warm. "All set?"

"Absolutely!" I grinned, about to head to the elevator, with him when a commotion at the entrance caught my attention.

I turned around instinctively, just in time to see a sleek Bentley pull up. The driver stepped out and opened the door for Margaret, who emerged in a stunning white dress!

The gesture was touching, indeed sending a car to bring Margaret over.

"Jane?" Noticing my distraction, Mark called out softly.

Suppressing the emotions within me, I forced a smile. "Yeah, let's head up."

"Jane." Right in front of everyone there, Margaret suddenly called out to me, her tone full of feigned confusion. "You were once so talented in design. Why stoop to copying mine?" I scoffed. "Who's the copycat is still up in the air."

1/3

10:04

Chapter 144

"You've done what you've done, yet refuse to admit it." Playing the understanding card, Margaret said, "We didn't have to escalate it to this. Just apologize to me, and neither Bry nor I will pursue this further."

ME I snorted, "Margaret, do you think that, by submitting your design first, the other side's got no chance to fight back?"

She was taken aback for a second before asking. "What are you getting at?".

"You know what I mean." I didn't bother with her any further, joining Mark as we headed upstairs.

The meeting was in a large conference room, attended by man from our field. Even if not there for the drama, networking was always a plus. Opportunities like that were rare. And no ambitious designer would let it slip by.

Before entering, I caught bits of conversation sealing the verdict:

"Did you see the car Margaret arrived in? That's one of Mr. Ferguson's rides from the Ferguson Group!"

"I've heard from friends in the Ferguson Group that Margaret's supposedly Mr. Ferguson's secret wife."

"Most likely! In my opinion, she's the victim. Why would the wife of the CEO stoop to plagiarism over something so trivial?"

"Exactly, and she was the head of the Design Department before. Surely, skills surpass an assistant director's!"

Bryant wasn't present, but his influence was implicitly backing Margaret. I didn't know if Margaret asked for this, or Bryant just went ahead and did it on his own.

Suddenly, Mark strode into the room, and his presence commanded a chilly respect. The room, previously abuzz, fell silent as if fearing him.

"Mr. Larson!"

"Mr. Larson, it's an honor to meet you!"

And then, they couldn't wait to shower him with flattery.

Though Mark and I hadn't crossed paths much professionally these om years, I knew of his formidable I

reputation in our field. Yet, it was the first time I'd witnessed firsthand his stature in the circle.

Unexpectedly, he didn't rush to bask in the adulation. Instead, he turned to me. "Let me introduce you all. My mentor's favorite student and my junior, Jane Webster."

I was stunned, completely surprised. Was Mark standing up for me? His complete trust in my innocence was already more than I could ask for, but I never imagined he would

2/3

10:04

Chapter 144

publicly defend me.

As the CEO, his introduction was a clear stance. Suddenly the way he changed becoming more reserved.

As everyone looked at me

10.04

Chapter 145

Grateful, I glanced at him before stepping into the room with a poised demeanor. "Good morning, everyone. I'm Jane Webster. I'm here today to explain everything clearly and thoroughly."

Margaret followed closely behind, challenging. "You want to prove your innocence, don't you? Start then."

Her confidence seemed unshakeable. Had I not always been one to keep an ace up my sleeve, I would have been at a loss for words, following her script.

"First, I'd like everyone to listen to a recording." I took out my phone and played the conversation between me and Linda the day before.

The room's atmosphere shifted as faces registered surprise and skepticism. Seemingly prepared, Margaret dismissively said, "And what's that supposed to prove? Linda is your assistant, isn't she? How do we know you didn't stage this whole thing?"

"That's a fair point," I conceded and nodded, pulling out my design drafts from my bag. "Take a look at these. You can tell from these revisions that Margaret has submitted my second version of the design draft, not the final one."

Having some knowledge of design, Margaret was quick to counter. "Are you trying to fool us? Who copies something without making changes? Making changes is to be expected."

I stood up and smiled, pointing out the details in the second draft. Then, may I ask if you are secretly in love with me? Why else would you leave my initials on the design draft "What?" Margaret tensed up, hastily standing to see where I was pointing, only to scoff, "It's just a few minor finishing touches..."

"JW," I said firmly, meeting her gaze. "you mean your minor finishing touch is my initials?" It was a habit I developed in college, discreetly adding my initials in an inconspicuous spot on my drafts before the final submission. I would have them erased before I turned in the final version.

"Impossible!" Margaret's face drained of color. When she wanted a closer look, the drafts were already being passed around, and the glances thrown her way were full of doubt.

Yet, no one dared to speak up against her due to her status as "Mrs. Ferguson" except for one outspoken individual who couldn't help but laugh. "Look who's calling the thief! Mrs. Ferguson herself, the esteemed wife of the Ferguson Group's CEO, stooping to plagiarize her designer and then playing the victim? Talk about a scandal reaching the Atlantic."

"Shut up!" Furious and embarrassed, Margaret stood up. "Knowing that I'm Mrs. Ferguson, you still have the guts to talk like that. Do you not want to work in RiverCity anymore?" With that, she shot me a malicious look and stormed out.

1/2

10:04

Chapter 145

Right and wrong were now clear as day.

I had no more to say. Mark looked at me and said gently. "Jane, could you wait outside for a moment?"

"Sure." I left the room, and Mark came out about two minutes later.

Mark asked, "How about a coffee in my office?"

I smiled. Thanks, but no. You have things to do. I won't keep you any longer."

Mark had helped me more than enough, and I didn't want to impose further. It was a hell of a job to be the CEO.

As I waited for the elevator, several colleagues from the meetin approached.

"Ms. Webster, we misunderstood you. Our apologies."

"And please, if you could, put in a good word for us with Mr. Larson."

"And about Margaret, don't worry. We know what to do. She won't last long in the design world after this."

I was puzzled, wondering what Mark had told them to change their m attitudes so quickly. Regardless, I merely smiled politely. "Sure."

As I headed to my car, Margaret suddenly appeared out of nowhere. "Jane!

Wait!"

"What more do you have to say?" I faced her coldly, the pain of losing ve my child hardening- my tone.

She advanced, and her expression twisted in anger. "You did this on purpose, didn't you?

Jane, you ou set me up to take the fall!"

Chapter 146

"I'm not a drama queen like you." With those words, I wanted nothing but to end the pointless argument and walk away.

"You're not going anywhere! You owe me an explanation today!" Margaret suddenly charged at me, twisting her foot and lunging straight toward me deliberately.

Next to me was a large fountain!

She fell on me so hard that we both tumbled into the fountain, but I grabbed her arm,. dragging her down with me! She wanted us to go down together, so be it.

The icy water soaked us through instantly, filling my nose and wasn't deep. Frantically searching for something to grab onto, gripped mine. "Jane!"

outh! Luckily, the water strong hand suddenly In a flash, I was pulled out, wrapped in a coat, and pulled into a varm embrace.

I coughed violently, struggling to catch my breath, only to hear Mrk shouting toward the fountain, echoing Margaret's struggles. "Don't rescue her! Let her climb out on her own!"

His voice was harsh and menacing, like a demon from hell.

The security personnel didn't dare move closer Against the light, I couldn't see Mark's expression. A chill wind made me shiver, and the arms around me nearly sprinted!

The elevator took us straight to the executive office, where he carried me through the door, instructing his secretary as he walked, "Get a set of clothes, inside and out, and hurry!"

"Yes, Mr. Larson." The secretary glanced at me before rushing off.

Mark went straight to the office's restroom, gently setting me down and turning on the shower quickly, handing me a disposable towel.

His demeanor had softened. "Are you okay? Do you want to take a hot shower?"

"Yes." Shivering, I waited for him to leave before stepping into the shower, letting the hot water revive me.

Compared to Bryant, I thought Margaret was the one who was unbearably disturbed, almost paranoid. She plagiarized me and then had the nerve to confront me.

After the hot shower, someone knocked on the bathroom door while I was thinking what to do next. "Ms. Webster, Mr. Larson had me bring you some clothes."

"Thank you." I cracked the door to take the clothes, everything provided from head to toe.

1/3

10:04

Chapter 146

As I finished drying my hair and was about to leave, the door suddenly swung open, and Bryant advanced, his tall frame casting a shadow, his expression dark, and his gaze sharp as a blade! He seemed to radiate a terrifying anger as he approached.

Before I could react, Bryant scanned the room and harshly gripped my chin, his voice squeezed through clenched teeth. "You two weren't together?"

His grip caused me pain.

"Who?"

A mocking smile appeared on his lips.

"Your lover!"

"Bryant, you asshole!" I was stunned, then furious, pushing him away!

He dropped the cold smile, suddenly tightening his grip on my against the wall, his tone cold and harsh. "I'm the asshole? Jan down, and Mark said not to rescue her. What were you thinking.

ck and pinning me you pulled Margaret I hit the wall hard, the pain searing. But inside, it felt like a deeper agony. I looked up, shocked at the man I'd loved for eight years, questioning me so fiercely over another woman as if an icy blade had stabbed through my heart.

A bitter smile crossed my lips, my voice hoarse. "Yeah, I was up to no good.. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! So what?"

"Jane! It wasn't her fault today!" His eyes flashed with a bloodthirsty light, his grip tightening as if wishing to strangle me "That cold water! You knew she had just had a miscarriage a few days ago. Did you want her dead?"

Breathing became difficult, and my efforts to free myself were futile. Yet, I refused to give in, each word a struggle. "Did Margaret die? If she did, I'd throw a party right now....

Even if Margaret had died, I had no regrets! She killed my baby, and that was merely an eye for an eye.

Bryant's brows furrowed, and he said coldly. "When did you become like this? Or did I never really see you?"

I gritted my teeth. "I've always been this way. If you want to avenge her so badly, kill me!" "You think I won't?" His fury seemed to grow, his icy gaze fixed on me, his teeth clenched. "You better pray she's fine! Otherwise, I'll ensure you..."

YOU Knock. "Ms. Webster, Mr. Larson has to attend a meeting. He told me to ensure have something to warm you up after your miscarriage. Would hot cocoa be okay?"

Outside, Mark's secretary's voice inquired.

My mind buzzed!

As I came to my senses, I saw Bryant freeze, his entire demeanor shocked, then filled with a devastating rage, his eyes narrowing, his tone chilling. "You had a miscarriage?

Whose

2/3

10:04

Chapter 146

child?"

He suspected I carried another man's child. I felt my already battered heart shatter further. At that moment, I couldn't keep it inside any longer!

Holding back tears, I met his gaze.

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It."

And Mark had only been back in town for a short while.

Bryant froze, seeming to shrink in the silence, his eyes welling up. When he spoke again, his voice was gravelly. "Our... our baby?"

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3/3

Chapter 147

Watching his reaction, a rush of indescribable pleasure surged through me. The thrill urged me to say more. I felt dizzy, and my body seemed burning, but my spirit was wildly excited. I couldn't care about anything else. I just wanted to vent, desperate to let it all out. Facing his eyes, I forced a smile and spoke with utmost cruelty, "Yes, I just found out back then. It was only five weeks along, tiny, with no heartbeat yet. There was even a threat of miscarriage. I kept having stomach pains all because I was pregnant."

Bryant looked at me, disheveled, his lips quivering. "Why... didn't you tell me?"

"It was our third wedding anniversary when I found out. I was to share the exciting news with you. I prepared a candlelit dinner and hid the ultrasound in a homemade cake, hoping to surprise you. Bryant muttered, "I didn't see the cake..."

happy and couldn't wait for our anniversary and

"You didn't care about me at all that day!" I chuckled, "You were with Margaret, putting the long time around her neck. You forgot our anniversary, necklace I had been fond of for only celebrating her divorce!"

"A few days later, I wanted you to accompany me for a follow-up visit to the hospital, hoping you'd hold the ultrasound report in your hands."

Watching him fall apart bit by bit, I said faintly. But when I woke up that morning, you had gone to be with Margaret. You told me to go to the hospital alone! Oh, and the day of the check-up, I was planning to tell you then..."

Bryant apologized, "I'm sorry. I.."

"Don't rush your apologies." I wiped away the falling tears on my cheeks and blinked, "That day, the doctor said the baby was developing well, already had hands and feet, a very healthy baby... But then, on the day Margaret dragged me into that car accident, our child turned into a pool of blood and left us."

The more I spoke, the more I realized that only he could share my pain. Seeing him hurt seemed to offer me some relief!

I kept on hurting him on purpose. "The baby might have been saved. But as you ran past me, I stretched my hand out to you with all my strength, and you didn't pull me up. Bryant, you chose to let him go with your own hands."

"Stop, please stop." Bryant suddenly pleaded, his usually cold demeanor then showing traces of moisture at the corners of his eyes. He reached out, wanting to pull me into his

arms.

But these hands, just minutes ago, were choking me for another woman. I shook my head and stepped back, gouging at his heart. "I have to say it! Bryant, it was you and Margaret."

Chapter 148

It felt like my anger hadn't fully vented yet, so with a forced smile, I continued, "Bryant, when I was losing our baby, you were off comforting someone else. When I came out of

the OR, you slapped me, demanding to know why I didn't stop her. I was pregnant, too. I was scared of getting hurt. I was terrified! Are you satisfied with that answer now?"

Bryant called out to me. "Jane..."

to It was the first time I had seen such a bewildered look on his face. He stretched out his hand, trying to grasp mine.

But before he could, another pair of hands unexpectedly intervened!

Mark had returned, his demeanor calm yet sharp. "You're here to settle scores for Margaret, right? Blame me for it. Leave Jane out of this."

Bryant instantly reverted to his usual cold demeanor, scoffing. "We'll settle our another day. No need to rush your downfall."

Scores I knew how Bryant operated and couldn't help but intervene, "Mark was just trying to help me. Don't take your anger out on him. If you're looking to stand up for your sweetheart, you should be dealing with me."

Bryant seemed annoyed by my defense but restrained by his guilt, holding onto my wrist. "Come home with me."

"We're through!" I shook off his hand, but the room started spinning, and I steadied myself against the desk, holding back tears. "There's no 'home' for us anymore."

Mark frowned, lightly touching my cheek with his hand back, earning a defensive glare from Bryant.

Just as Bryant was about to react, Mark felt my forehead, his voice laced with concern, "You have a fever. I'm taking you to the hospital!"

"No need." Bryant forcefully pulled me into his embrace, his lips barely parting. "This is a family matter. You'd better stay out of it. Or, people might think she's got no husband."

I

"Let go of me." Unwell, my voice was much weaker as I turned to Mark. "Mark, could you take me to the hospital or call Christine to come over?"

Mark's expression softened, quickly agreeing, "I'll take you..."

"Mr. Larson..." Mark's secretary hesitated before interrupting, "You have a meeting later, with all the senior executives already notified."

Mark glanced down, a hint of coldness in his tone. "Can't it be delayed to tomorrow?" Surprised by his consideration for me, the secretary immediately agreed, "Yes."

1/2

"Mark, I said it's inappropriate for you to go." dropped the line and led me out at the domineering presence, Bryant I struggled against his grip, but his long fingers held my shoulder firmly.

Mark stepped forward, blocking our path, his gaze icy. "Didn't you hear what Jane said? Or do you always completely disregard her wishes?"

Bryant's lips curved into a chilling smile. "What goes on between my wife and me ain't concern."

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"Wife? You don't deserve to call her that. Are you even a decent om na husband?" It was the first time Mark didn't hold back his words.

Bryant glared at him, his voice cold yet furious, "It is not your pict speak. Move!

"What about me?" I gathered my strength and looked at him, "Can I say it, Bryant?"

"I don't want to forgive you this time, and I don't choose you anymore.n After all, you've given up on me so many times. It's only fair!"

I thought painfully, 'Bryant, now it's my turn to walk away from you.'

2/2

10:04

Chapter 149

On the way to the hospital, I leaned heavily against the passenger seat, my mind foggy with fever.

I couldn't shake off the image of Bryant's grief-stricken face before I left, as if someone had squeezed lemon juice right into my heart, sour and unbearable. Yet, the outburst seemed to have cleared the bad feelings in my chest by a considerable margin.

Yes, it was our baby we lost. Why should I bear this pain alone? Bryant should suffer, too. We should share our misery.

With one hand on the steering wheel, Mark reached to feel my forehead, his expression laced with concern, "You're running quite the fever."

"It's no big deal, just a bit under the weather. A rest of one day or two will fix me up." I shrugged it off nonchalantly.

After all, a cold or fever seemed trivial without my baby to worry about anymore. Just pop some pills and get some rest, and I will be healthy again.

BlessedCare Medical Facility was the nearest, and worried about wasting time, Mark didn't opt for another hospital. And frankly, I didn't care, either.

In such a large hospital, unless by design, it was unlikely to run into anyone you knew.

However, when we parked and opened the car door, the hospital director rushed to greet us with a doctor and two nurses.

"Mrs. Ferguson," the hospital director signaled for a nurse to support me, cleared his throat, and warmly said, "Mr. Ferguson had called earlier, concerned. He mentioned your special health condition and said that you had a fever, insisting that we take no chances with your care."

I initially wanted to refuse but then thought better of it. "Okay."

It would indeed save some trouble. Besides, the divorce papers weren't in my hands yet. Utilizing the Ferguson family resources was only fair.

To my surprise, the director led us directly to the patient rooms.

I frowned. "Aren't these all occupied?"

Even the room that Cheryl was staying in took me considerable effort to secure.

The director smiled. "You are Mrs. Ferguson. If you need a room, others should make way for you."

Others? There were only three patient rooms, Housing Margaret, Teresa, and Cheryl.

At that crucial moment, with Bryant still feeling guilty toward me, he certainly wouldn't ask

11:40)

Chapter 149

my Aunt Cheryl to move out. And Margaret and Teresa were too important to him.

Before I could sort through my thoughts, I saw several bodyguards standing outside the room that Margaret had occupied. And Margaret herself was barred from entering, visibly furious.

"Well, well, looks like you've taken my room!" Upon seeing me, she stormed over, hand raised as if to slap me.

Mark's eyes narrowed, and he swiftly caught her arm. "Ms. Ferguson, I'm not the kind who never lays a hand on a lady."

Mark, usually so gentle, seemed intimidating when he spoke like that.

It wasn't just Margaret who was shocked, I was blown away too.

Margaret forcibly withdrew her hand, but her anger didn't subside. She glared at me with teeth clenched. "What did you say to Bry? Why is he suddenly angry with me, even telling me to move out?"

I replied coldly, "Is it any of your business?"

"Jane!" Margaret's face was a picture of icy command. "I'm warning you. Don't push your luck. Tell Bry right now you don't need the room."

"Why wouldn't I need it?" I deliberately pissed her off. "I want it, and I want it now."

Then, turning to the hospital director, I said, "Would you mind having m someone disinfect the room again? I don't fancy staying in a room used by some dirty woman!"

"Rest assured. It's already been taken care of! Mr. Ferguson made sure to mention that you like cleanliness."

When the hospital director finished speaking, a few cleaners came out with their tools. One of them looked to the director. "Sir, we've finished disinfecting. We didn't miss a single spot."

Margaret's face turned red with anger, disbelief etched all over her face as she looked at the hospital director, "Are you sure it's Bryant's order?"

"Absolutely." The hospital director led me inside, closing the door on Margaret, who was left fuming helplessly outside..

"Mrs. Ferguson, please take a seat. Let Professor Franklin have a look at you."

11:49

Chapter 150

Following the lead of the hospital director, Professor Franklin stepped forward to inquire about my symptoms. Without even bothering with a blood draw, he prescribed medication on the spot and had a nurse fetch it for me to start an IV drip.

As the needle pierced my skin, I instinctively flinched, attempting to pull my hand away. Suddenly, a pair of comforting hands covered my eyes. "Don't worry. It's already in," a voice assured me.

Feeling slightly more at ease, and just as I began to relax, the needle slid into my vein.

With the hands removed, I looked up helplessly at Mark. "Mark, you lied, too?"

"A white lie," he said with a light chuckle.

After the nurse helped me onto the bed and applied a cold pack to my forehead, the hospital director and his entourage left the room. The cold pack brought instant relief, cooling me down and making me feel much better.

Mark sat beside my bed, gesturing outside with a hesitant and cautious look. "Did I scare you just now?"

"Huh?" I was momentarily puzzled and realized he was referring to when he had snapped at Margaret. I shook my head. "Not scared, just a bit surprised."

Mark smiled. "Surprised that I could get mad?"

I thought it over. "Not exactly. It's just that I'm used to seeing you so calm. But we're not puppets. It's normal to show anger."

"Right." Mark seemed suddenly relaxed, his amber eyes sparkling as a small smile played on his lips. "I used to be passive, but then I realized that wouldn't help me protect the people I care about."

"Trying to protect that girl?" I teased.

He shot me a look and smiled. "Yeah, now I am. But that girl protected me when we were kids, always so bright and a bit of a spoiled princess. Initially, the person I wanted to protect was my mom."

"Mrs. Larson? Who would dare to bully her?" I blurted out without thinking.

Mark's eyelashes fluttered down, a touch of sadness in his smile. "She should have been," he murmured.

"What?" I asked.

Mark's voice was low. And I couldn't catch his words in my dizzy state.

Suddenly, Christine's urgent voice broke the silence. "Jane!"

11:50)

Chapter 150

The next moment, she burst through the door.

Surprised, I asked, "How did you know I was here?"

After inquiring about my condition thoroughly, Christine eased up and explained, "Stevent told me. He gave me the room number and all, and just told me to get my butt over here quick."

It was clear Bryant was behind that. Mark accompanied me to the hospital, and Bryant was already worried about us being alone.

His dealings with Margaret were always on his terms, never needing to explain himself to me. That was quite ironic, After Mark took a work call, he smoothly handed things over to Christine.

Christine was too preoccupied to chat. Instead, she stood at the door with her hands on her hips, fiercely cursing Margaret until she stormed off.

"Finally, she's gone. What a relief." Christine then returned, tucking me in. "Get some rest. I'll keep an eye on the IV."

I

"Okay." Whether it was the fever or the medication, I fell into a deep sleep. Christine woke me up for a light meal in the evening, and then I drifted off again.

It was the best sleep I'd had in a long time. Yet, in the middle of the night, caught between sleep and wakefulness, I thought I heard familiar footsteps.

Then, two warm, dry hands gently wrapped around mine, Imine Bressingh against my forehead

forehead

Cold lips brushed my forehead, nose, and eyes as a husky choked voice whispered " sorry. I'm sorry..."

A chill woke me up, and I found myself alone, reaching to touch my face, finding it dar

11:50