

Lost Me, Gained Regret (Jane and Bryant Ferguson)

Chapter 221

It was the first time I'd encountered someone who seemed to have "money" as every other word out of their mouth, a real-life rich kid cliché.

"Forget it, then. I'll ask around," I said, turning on my heel and heading back inside.

Just as I got home, Christine emerged from one of the private rooms, her eyes slightly red. She'd been crying.

"Let's go home," she said.

"Did you get everything sorted out?"

I put Christine's coat over her shoulders as she sniffled, her gaze clearing up. "Yeah. It's none of my business anymore whether he marries for alliance."

I admired her ability to let go so decisively.

On the drive home, Christine was at the wheel. My phone rang. It was Mark.

After a moment of hesitation, he asked, "Jane, you were with Gregory just now, weren't you?"

I was shocked but didn't deny it. "Yes, that was me. How did you know?"

Gregory had made sure to keep me under wraps. Even Bryant had only asked about my shoes, and even then, he was unsure. Yet, Mark had figured it out.

He chuckled lightly over the phone, "Wonder why Bryant couldn't guess it was you, but I could?"

"A bit," I admitted.

"He's too sure of how you feel about him," Mark said, his voice gentle. "So, at most, he'd suspect something between you and me, but he wouldn't think to guess someone like Gregory, a stranger." I agreed. "You're right."

However, there was more to it. It seemed Bryant didn't care about me. Who I was with didn't matter much to him.

After a pause, Mark's tone softened, almost probing, "You and Gregory..."

"We're practically strangers. Just met a few times," I clarified, not wanting to hide anything. Then, seizing the opportunity, I asked, "So, why haven't you mentioned Dorothy and Gregory before?" Mark relaxed, "They're from Vista Town, not part of our usual crowd. Dorothy's here on a sort of internship. The Myers family wants to set up a branch in RiverCity, and she's getting some hands-on experience."

He explained without holding back, "As for Gregory, he's the Ford family's golden boy, the sole heir. He's a bit flamboyant and unpredictable. You'd better not to get too close to him."

I couldn't help but dig deeper, "So, the Myers and the Ford families... they're a big deal?"

"More than just a big deal," Mark chuckled. "Let's put it this way. RiverCity's elite families are newcomers compared to them. Vista Town's three great families, including the Fords and the Myers, are in a league of their own."

Then, I understood why Gladys personally saw Gregory out after the banquet and why Bryant seemed wary of him. Gregory dared to challenge the Ferguson family openly.

The difference between the elite and these venerable families was stark, not just in wealth but in the intricate networks of influence built over centuries. It made me reflect on the disparities between people. Curiously, I asked, "So, if Dorothy and Gregory's families are so well-matched, why don't they just arrange a marriage?"

It seemed like a straightforward solution.

Mark couldn't help but laugh at my suggestion, "You're onto something. There was a marriage agreement between Gregory and the Myers family, but not with Dorothy. It was with another daughter, one who got kidnapped and lost when she was young."

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Mark continued, "Word on the street is that Gregory returned to RiverCity looking for clues about his childhood sweetheart."

"You wouldn't guess he's the romantic type." I was surprised. There was someone else like Mark, who held onto the memory of someone from their youth with such determination after all these years. Mark smiled, not saying much else, but added, "You'll be home tomorrow, right? I'll drop by after work with your gift."

"Gift?" It took me a moment to remember what he talked about last night. I nodded, "Sure, I'll be home for the next few days unless something comes up."

The next day, I woke up naturally, no alarm needed, and reached out to the spot next to me.

Christine wasn't there.

I grabbed my phone and saw her text, [Snuck out. If Steven loses it again, I'll come back to crash.]

Typical Christine.

I chuckled and texted back, then lazily scrolled through my phone in bed. The drama surrounding Margaret and Albert, plus the public spat between Margaret and Teresa at the town hall, had tanked the Ferguson Group's stocks. You could almost hear the collective groan from shareholders about a further drop. And Gregory? He was stirring the pot big time.

With how things were going, the Ferguson family would need to wear disguises to avoid getting mobbed on the street.

"Mrs. Ferguson! Your aunt and her husband are having a brawl in the ward!"

Late in the afternoon, the nurse from BlessedCare Medical Facility called urgently.

My heart skipped a beat as I grabbed my car keys. "What's going on? I'm on my way."

When I arrived, the police were already there, with a crowd gathered around the ward. "Relation to the patient?" a cop asked as I tried to enter.

"She's my aunt," I said quickly.

"Go on in, but try to calm them down. No need for a family dispute to turn into a brawl," the officer advised.

Allen was all apologies, "Yes, yes, I won't do it again."

I brushed past him to check on my aunt, Cheryl, and my heart sank seeing her bruised and battered. "Are you out of your mind? She's sick, and you beat her like this?"

"She wants a divorce!" Allen had just apologized, but his true colors showed again, "You must've put her up to this, bitch. Even if she leaves me, you'll be footing my bills till the end!" "Get lost!" I invoked Bryant's name, "Bryant's on his way here. Do you want to stick around?"

"Huh, I didn't realize you were so good at seducing men. One day, it's Mr. Ferguson, and another, Mr. Larson."

Allen suddenly showed his hand, missing a pinkie, glaring at me with hatred. "That Larson guy, he cut off my finger..."

The wound was still fresh, scabbed over. I recoiled in shock, stepping back.

My phone rang. I answered, trying to sound calm, "Hey, Bryant, you at the hospital? With Mark? Great, come up here."

Chapter 223

"Hey, don't you try to scare me!" After Allen shouted those words, his eyes filled with fear. He bolted away before I could respond.

"Fine, Chris, I'm a bit tied up now. I'll call you back." I hung up the phone on Christine and turned to face Leroy, acting as if he was invisible. "You were standing there and watching your dad hit your mom?" Leroy shrugged. "What could I do? I'm not as strong as him, and he never listens to what I say."

I was fuming with anger, at a loss for words.

Then, despite her pain, Cheryl spoke, "Leroy, could you step outside for a moment? I need to have a word with Jane."

Leroy nodded. "Sure."

After Leroy left, I dragged a chair over to the bedside and sat down. "Are all your injuries taken care of? Did we miss anything?"

"No. The injuries look worse than they are. The doctors and the security were there, so it didn't get too bad." Cheryl shook her head, seeming weaker than the last time I saw her, tears silently streaming down her face, "I want a divorce, but he won't agree..."

I sighed. "Don't worry, I'll figure something out."

Allen wasn't like Bryant. Getting a divorce from him shouldn't be as complicated.

But first, I had to ensure Cheryl's safety, ensuring she wouldn't get hurt again.

Cheryl looked at me, her eyes filled with guilt, as she clung to my hand, "I'm sorry, Jane, for all this trouble."

"We're family. Why talk like that?" I shook my head, then began peeling an apple for her. Seeing that she was getting sleepy, I prepared to leave.

Cheryl called out as I reached the hospital room's door, "Jane..."

I turned back. Seeing the struggle and hesitation on Cheryl's face, I approached her again, asking softly, "What is it?"

"You..." Cheryl paused, her hand clenched into a fist on the blanket, tears flowing again. After a long moment, she seemed to make a difficult decision, "I... I have something for you." Confused, I asked, "What is it?"

Instead of answering, Cheryl got out of bed with my help and lifted the mattress, retrieving a small cloth pouch.

She carefully opened it, taking out a rabbit-shaped pendant. Though the string had slightly faded, the pendant itself was clearly of considerable value, not something you'd find in recent markets. Cheryl put it around my neck carefully. "Jane, be sure not to lose this..."

I tried to turn it down. "This is too valuable. I can't accept it..."

"It's yours." Her gaze was firm yet full of unsaid words, finally saying, "Trust me. It's right."

Hesitantly, I asked, "Is this... from my parents?"

But my parents, despite being wealthy, wouldn't have easily acquired such a priceless item.

"Yes..." After struggling for a bit, Cheryl put the pendant inside my shirt, avoiding my gaze,

"Just think of it as such."

'Just think of it as such?' I thought.

Cheryl's words puzzled me, but she didn't want to elaborate, "Okay, I'm tired. You should go."

Leaving the hospital with a heart filled with questions, I kept touching the pendant while driving. Strangely, it felt familiar, as if it truly belonged to me. Even more so, I belatedly

realized the rabbit on the pendant matched my zodiac sign. Yet, I had no recollection of ever seeing this pendant before.

Meanwhile, Bryant called.

Thinking about what was weighing on my mind, I answered without hesitation, "Hello."

His voice was calm, "I heard there was trouble at the hospital?"

"Yes." I glanced at the traffic light, slowing down. "Bryant, can you do me a favor?"

I wasn't sure if he would agree. After our argument the day before and the ongoing online turmoil, he might not be inclined to help. But besides him, I didn't know who else to turn to.

He seemed to be signing something, the sound of a pen scratching paper in the background, his voice deep, "What is it? Just tell me."

I said, "I need a few bodyguards for the hospital."

I could find a lawyer on my own. But reliable bodyguards were beyond my reach. The men under Bryant were skilled. One could easily take on five guys about Allen's size without a sweat. Surprisingly, he was agreeable. "Okay."

I silently sighed with relief but had to clarify, "I wasn't the one who revealed the scandal."

"I know. It was the Ford family's doing." He spoke unhurriedly, unexpectedly apologizing, "Sorry, I misunderstood you."

I forced a smile. "It's fine. It's not the first time, anyway."

He asked again, "Do you have a moment now?"

I was curious. "What's up?"

Bryant explained, "Can you come to the office? I want to discuss something about Teresa in person. I should have come to you, but given the current situation, I really can't leave."

It seemed the video of Margaret and Teresa caught by a passerby the day before had made an impact.

I pursed my lips. "Okay, I'll come over now."

Chapter 224

On my way to the Ferguson Group, I figured I should have felt a sigh of relief. Bryant was finally beginning to harbor doubts about Teresa and Margaret. It felt like we were on the verge of unraveling the mysteries behind Timothy's and Bryant's mother's deaths.

Yet, an unsettling feeling lingered inside me, the roots of which I couldn't quite place.

As I arrived at the Ferguson Group, the atmosphere differed from what I remembered. Everyone seemed to be in a rush, their expressions painted with severity. Stepping out of the elevator on the top floor, the intensity of the ambiance peaked.

Kevin was there waiting for me, ready to escort me to the CEO's office. Sensing my curiosity, he sighed, "The stuff circulating online has hit us hard. Several deals, practically in the bag, are now up in the air." I frowned, "Is it that bad?"

Gregory's actions were causing more damage than expected, throwing the Ferguson Group into a crisis they haven't faced in years.

"Indeed, it caught us all off guard." When glancing toward the CEO's office, Kevin added, "Since the scandal, Mr. Ferguson has been burning the midnight oil."

I remained silent, unsure how to respond. Professionally, I was no longer part of the company. And I was on the verge of becoming Bryant's ex-wife.

Entering the CEO's office, I saw Bryant by the window, phone in hand, exuding an aura of determination. "Not an inch," he demanded into the phone, "Let them know we're not pushovers."

After hanging up, he noticed me, his demeanor shifting from stormy to somewhat serene, though fatigue was evident in his voice, "You're here."

"Yep," I replied, taking a seat and accepting the coffee Kevin offered before he left us alone.

Bryant approached, tugging at his tie. Then, I noticed the redness in his eyes, confirming Kevin's insights.

My heart twinged as he moved to extinguish his cigarette against his wrist before catching my gaze and opting for the ashtray instead. The burns were self-inflicted. His battle with depression appeared far from

over.

Avoiding my eyes, he briefly acknowledged, "Yeah."

Changing the subject, Bryant inquired about Cheryl's well-being. I reassured him of it and thanked him for arranging security at the hospital to keep an eye on things and prevent further harm from Allen. He checked the time. "They should be there soon."

"Already?" I was genuinely surprised. It was rare for him to show such concern for my affairs.

He offered a self-deprecating smile, "You're making me out to be some kind of bad guy."

"Not exactly," I said, trying to steer the conversation back on track. "You wanted to discuss what Margaret mentioned about Teresa being the other woman?"

A flash of pain crossed his eyes, "Yeah."

I knew his feelings for Teresa were complex, not entirely maternal but rather a form of solace. Yet, Teresa's sacrifice, leaving her in a vegetative state, had undeniably deepened his trust in her.

Chapter 225

Since Timothy passed away, it felt like Teresa was the sole source of warmth left in Bryant's life when it was about family. But if what Margaret had said were true, it would change his view on the family affection. Decades of emotion would be all breaking apart.

Growing up in a less-than-perfect family only to face this ordeal was like being dealt a devastating blow all over again.

I, for one, didn't agree with the way Gary was handling things. For some things, it was better to rip the band-aid off quickly rather than slowly.

I fixed my gaze on Bryant. "Would you believe what I'm about to tell you?"

His voice was calm. "Yes."

He must have thought it through before deciding to ask me, so his answer came without hesitation.

With that, I no longer held back, sipped my coffee, and spoke, "That day in the hospital room, what I said..."

"Bryant!" The office door burst open out of nowhere, accompanied by a crisp female voice, cutting me off mid-sentence.

The next moment, Dorothy walked in, wearing a limited edition Chanel outfit, her white high-heeled boots clicking against the floor. Her face bore a sweet and bright smile. "I've brought the contract for you!" She was the girl raised with money and affection, looking confident, bold, and a bit spoiled.

However, her smile froze when she saw an extra person in the office. That was me.

Looking at Bryant, she cooed, "Bryant, who is she?"

Bryant's brow furrowed as he introduced me in a cold tone, "My wife."

Dorothy's eyes widened, her delicate finger pointing at me. "Isn't your wife that woman from the trending searches? The less attractive one!"

Her gaze toward me was all wariness.

"That's my stepmother's daughter." Bryant effortlessly dropped this line.

Dorothy looked stunned, took a moment to process, gritted her teeth, and cursed, "That Gregory knew I got the wrong person and didn't correct me!"

"Contract," Bryant said, extending his hand.

Dorothy remembered her purpose, handed him the contract, and sat beside him, "Bryant, I heard you're getting a divorce. Is it because things aren't going well between you two?" Bryant stood up to avoid her, his attitude cold, "Anything else?"

Bryant tried to dismiss her, yet she was bold enough to say, "I want to marry you. Does that count as something?"

"Seems like the Myers family has their way of doing things." After commenting, Bryant quickly reviewed the contract and called Kevin in, "Take this to legal and show our guest out."

Feeling slighted before me, Dorothy stood up, annoyed, "The more you do this, the more I want to marry you! I have to marry you!"

With that, she stormed out, not forgetting to give me a fierce glare on her way.

It was clear how much the Myers family had spoiled her. Margaret at least knew to put on a facade in public, but Dorothy couldn't even bother with that, openly expressing her desires and demands. That was the confidence born into a wealthy and influential family can give. Wrong or not, someone would always clean up after her. I couldn't help but feel a bit envious.

When the office door closed again, Bryant brought us back to the topic, "Go on."

I was about to speak when Bryant's phone rang at the worst time.

He glanced at the caller ID, a look of disgust crossing his face, but he answered anyway, "What's up?"

Whatever he heard on the other end made him stand up abruptly, "Got it. I'm on my way."

"Teresa tried to kill herself." After hanging up, he turned to me with a grave voice.

Chapter 226

I wondered, 'Kill herself? So, is that their family's talent passed down through generations?'

I wasn't sure what drove me, but I asked, "Do you need me to come with you?"

Maybe I wanted to see if it was true.

Or maybe I was worried. God forbid something happened, and Bryant had no one else he could trust.

Bryant looked at me, surprised. "Would you?"

"Let's go." I grabbed my bag, and we headed to the hospital.

When we arrived, Teresa was still in the emergency room, with Margaret and Albert waiting outside.

The scene felt almost comical to me. But, given the seriousness of the moment, laughing seemed inappropriate. So, I forced myself to think of all the sad things I'd ever experienced to suppress my amusement.

Bryant, Margaret, Albert, and Teresa were behind the ER doors. If you were to map out their relationships, it'd look more tangled than a spider's web.

Suddenly, Margaret stormed over and shoved me, "Jane, what's so funny? My mom's in there fighting for her life, and you're here to gawk?"

Yes, I tried not to laugh but failed to hold it. I was half a step behind Bryant, so he didn't see.

Immediately, he stepped before me, his demeanor icy, "Have you lost your mind? I asked Jane to come."

"Bry..." Margaret and Albert's scandal had come to light, and she couldn't lash out at Bryant like she used to.

Tears were running down her face as she cried out, "Why'd you bring her? If Jane hadn't driven my mom to this point, my mom wouldn't have even tried to do this!"

"What are you blaming me for?" I stepped forward, "This mess is all on you. You were yelling at your mom at the town hall, not me. How is this my fault?"

"You!" Margaret was at a loss for words, especially with Bryant there. She could only glare at me resentfully.

Ever the protective partner, Albert accused, "Jane, you used to be so kind and gentle when Timothy was around. Why are you stirring up trouble, turning this house upside down?" Albert was always passing the buck.

After the scandal broke online, they faced backlash for days but somehow concluded it was all my fault. I didn't see how.

Frowning, I listened as Bryant's voice turned venomous, mocking, "This is Jane's fault? For not keeping a close eye on her father-in-law and stepsister's affair? My wife can't shoulder this blame." "I..." Already intimidated by Bryant, Albert turned red with rage but couldn't muster a comeback.

There wasn't much he could say.

With a single sentence, Bryant had put them in their place. Yet, Margaret seemed oblivious to Bryant's disdain, grabbing his sleeve, her tears pleading. "It was my fault, terribly so! But Bry, please. Albert and I were drinking that day, and someone must've spiked our drinks. That's the only reason..."

Bryant's frown deepened, and he shook her off, removing his jacket where she had touched him and tossing it into a biohazard bin.

"None of that matters now." Bryant's gaze was icy as he demanded, "What I want to know is, what's this deal with Teresa being a homewrecker? Explain yourself, clearly and completely."

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Margaret's fists clenched quietly in her lap, her face a mask of regret as she stumbled over her words, "I... I just felt so humiliated being scolded before everyone that I lost my temper and said those awful things about Mom. I was wrong, Bry..."

Her acting skills were top-notch. I might have believed her sob story if I hadn't known the truth from Timothy.

Bryant's gaze shifted to Albert, his eyes narrowing, "What do you say?"

"What should I say?" Albert stood his ground. "If Teresa was the other woman, why would we have waited five years after your mom passed away to get married?"

No sooner had Albert finished speaking than the emergency room doors swung open.

Bryant remained skeptical and turned to the doctor. "Is it serious?"

"Mr. Ferguson," The doctor emerged, removing his mask, his expression grave, "She lost much blood, but luckily, she was brought in just in time. Any later, and it might have been too late." Visibly, Bryant's tense posture relaxed slightly.

I scowled, wondering if it was really worth risking her life for this whole drama. If it weren't for BlessedCare Medical Facility, I'd suspect they had bribed the doctor.

After Teresa was moved to a room, it wasn't long before she woke up. Seeing Bryant at the foot of her bed, tears immediately welled in her eyes, worthy of an Oscar-winning performance.

"Bry, I didn't, I didn't! All these years since I married into the Ferguson family, I've devoted myself to you as if you were my own. If I were what people say, a homewrecker, how come I haven't had a child with your dad?"

The word "homewrecker" seemed to stick in her throat. I had to suppress a laugh. If Timothy hadn't forbidden it, she would have had a dozen kids to claim a stake in the Ferguson family. Yet, there she was, using her childlessness to clear her name before Bryant.

Bryant frowned. "You attempted suicide over this?"

Teresa's crying grew more intense. "I'd sacrifice anything for you, and you know that. Now, with my reputation destroyed and driving a wedge between us, I'd rather prove my innocence with my death..." That was quite the stepmother's performance.

I knew Bryant was a sucker for that sort of emotional mind game. Despite his reputation for being cold and authoritarian toward others, he had a soft spot for family, perhaps craving the affection he seldom received. Predicting how the rest of the scene would unfold, I saw no reason to stay any longer and turned to leave.

Back home, I changed clothes and headed for the kitchen to cook. Both designing and cooking allowed me a brief respite from my troubles, a moment to unwind.

As I put on a pot of mushroom soup, I started preparing the ingredients for the beef steak.

Just as I finished prepping, I heard a strange noise from the front door.

Unable to make it out clearly, I washed my hands and checked through the peephole, only to find it obscured. When opening the door, I gasped in shock.

The door and the ground were covered in blood, the metallic scent hanging in the air.

Feeling nauseous and covered in goosebumps, I was about to shut the door and call the police when a slender finger pressed against it, stopping me with a tone that was arrogant and challenging. "Ah, what's the hurry? It's just some chicken blood. Scared already?"

Chapter 228

It was Dorothy.

She stood in a puddle of what looked disturbingly like blood, her white ankle boots soaked through, as she watched me halt the action of closing the door. Slowly, she withdrew her hand and crossed her arms in front of her chest. "Jane, I'd advise you to back off. Stop messing around with Bryant."

That she found my address so quickly was alarming.

I frowned, "Whether it's you or Margaret, you'd better check yourself into a hospital or, better yet, go bother Bryant. Don't come here bothering me."

"Huh, cut the act!" She glanced inside my house with disdain. "I've done my homework. Without marrying Bryant, how could someone like you, with both parents gone and broke, afford such a place?" She lifted her chin, exuding the kind of arrogance only the wealthy possess, in full display.

My patience wore thin, and I replied coldly, "Oh, what about you? If it weren't for the luck of being adopted by the Myers family, would you even be here, speaking like this, boldly meddling in someone else's marriage?"

Everyone could hit where it hurt. Dorothy shouldn't expect me to play nice if she stepped on my toes.

"Jane!" Dorothy's haughty demeanor instantly turned vicious. She raised her hand, intending to slap me, but I pushed her away, glaring at her foot nearly stepping inside my home, my gaze filled with disgust, "Don't dirty my place."

Fuming, she clenched her teeth, glaring at me with hatred. "You'll see. "Since you don't want to take my advice or accept my good will, I'm done playing nice!"

"You think splashing blood on someone's doorstep is being nice?" I shot back sarcastically, "Ms. Myers, I really can't match your level."

Dorothy snapped, "So, you insist on clinging to the Ferguson family, huh?"

I retorted, "With Bryant's capabilities, do you think I could refuse if he wanted a divorce?"

I genuinely couldn't understand why they were all troubling me. If anyone didn't want me to have peace and refused a divorce, it was Bryant, not me. They feared Bryant too much and only dared to trouble me. Caught off guard by my retort, Dorothy suddenly laughed. "Fine, if you said that. Given the current troubles of the Ferguson Group, a marriage alliance with the Myers family is the quickest and easiest solution! When Bryant proposes divorce, you better not cling on desperately."

"I won't." I smiled, offering my sincerest blessings. "Then let me wish you a happy marriage and a quick addition to your family, maybe even twins or triplets."

With that, I moved to close the door.

"You! Stop it!" Unexpectedly, even with my non-confrontational stance, Dorothy still wasn't satisfied and arrogantly stopped me, gritting her teeth. "You think I can't do anything to you? Yeah. Here's RiverCity, unlike Vista Town, where I can do whatever I want, but dealing with you is still easy!"

I was utterly baffled, giving her a cold look. "Are you crazy or something?"

I had agreed, so what was she still venting about?

Dorothy was momentarily stunned and realized what I implied, her eyes widening in fury. "Do you even know what standing the Myers family has? If I got into it with you, not even Bryant could save you..." "Ms. Myers!" Suddenly, a voice came from the direction of the elevator. I turned to see Mark, in a sleek, matte, iron-gray suit, striding toward us.

That reminded me that he had mentioned he would come by to bring me a gift. After the afternoon's ordeal at the hospital, it slipped my mind. Dorothy turned to him, slightly stunned. "What are you doing here?"

Mark looked indifferent, his gaze fixed on Dorothy. "I'm here to drop off something for Jane. And you, what brings you here?"

Chapter 229

Dorothy's voice was as usual, but she seemed wary of Mark.

Her brash expression vanished, her lips pouting as she whined, "Mark, why are you looking at me like that? I was just here to talk with Ms. Webster. Isn't that okay?"

Mark raised an eyebrow. "So, you're done?"

"Done, yeah," Dorothy replied, guilt flashing across her eyes. Seeing Mark's unchanging expression, she suddenly lost her temper. "Why are you being such a jerk like Gregory, always picking on me? Just wait until my parents arrive in a few days, and we'll see if I'm still afraid of you guys!"

With those harsh words, she stomped off in high heels, visibly upset. The sound of her footsteps echoed as she left.

Once she was out of sight, Mark turned to the mess at my doorstep, pulling out his phone to arrange a cleaning service.

Then, he turned to me with a resigned look. "Didn't it scare you?"

"Honestly, I was a bit startled at first." I chuckled, stepping aside to let him in, fetching a pair of house slippers from the shoe cabinet. "Have you eaten? I was about to make some mushroom soup. Care to join me for a makeshift dinner?"

"Looks like I've got perfect timing." Mark joked, his voice smooth and comforting as he advised, "The Myers family is currently under the control of Dorothy's dad. She's used to

throwing her weight around in Vista Town. If I were you, I'd avoid going head-to-head with Dorothy to save yourself the trouble."

I washed my hands and handed him a glass of water. "Dorothy's family doesn't keep her in check?"

I wondered, 'Aren't families like that usually all about maintaining a good reputation?'

"If she wanted the moon, her mom would find a way to bring it down for her." Mark took the glass, smiling lightly. "So, what do you think?"

I understood then.

It's not that her family didn't discipline her, it's just that they would always back her up no matter what she did.

Suddenly, I remembered my childhood. It seemed my parents would also do anything to satisfy my whims, spoiling me. But unlike Dorothy, I wasn't so fortunate. My parents passed away too soon.

Mark rolled his sleeves neatly as I made my way to the kitchen. "Let me do it. Ladies should avoid kitchen fumes. It's not good for the skin."

"It's fine..." I felt a bit embarrassed. It wasn't customary to have a guest cook, especially since I had forgotten he was coming, and the meal I prepared was simple.

Mark looked at me. "Being formal with me now?"

"Uh..." I couldn't help but laugh. "Fine then, I've mostly prepped everything. The rest is up to you."

"That's more like it. Go sit on the couch and wait for dinner." Mark smiled graciously and headed into the kitchen.

Soon, delightful aromas wafted through the air.

After dinner, Mark wouldn't let me clean up, embodying the image of a perfect domestic partner.

Leaning against the door frame, I watched him methodically washing dishes under the warm light, teasing, "Is the husband of the girl you're crushing on even half as good as you? Is he amazing at work, easy-going, and a fantastic cook?"

He paused and smiled lightly. "Am I that good?"

"Yes," I nodded earnestly. "Honestly, looking around, I don't think I could find anyone better among the men I know."

That was the truth.

"Then, would you like to be my girlfriend?" Mark proposed.

Chapter 230

Mark suddenly turned around, his eyes shimmering as if filled with stardust, catching me entirely off guard as he asked me that question.

I was completely flustered, and my mind went blank for a moment. I had never pondered over such a question. Whether during our college days or after Mark returned from abroad, I always regarded him as a close friend.

I was entangled in a marriage that was like quicksand, unable to break free, and Mark had his long-time love interest. We seemed perfect candidates for platonic friends. No expectations, no worries. Meeting Mark's gaze, I fumbled for words. "Mark, I... um..."

"Come on." Mark chuckled teasingly, "Just kidding. Why do you look so spooked? And here I thought I was the good guy. It seems I was mistaken, huh?"

"Of course not." I sighed in relief, awkwardly touching my nose as I explained, "I just found the question surprising. That's all."

That was too surprising. After all, I hadn't even divorced yet. How could I entertain such thoughts? Besides, knowing Mark had someone he cherished, I wouldn't drift toward such ideas.

He laughed. "So, was it a genuine compliment then?"

"Absolutely." I smiled, "As genuine as gold."

"What about this, then?" He walked to the foyer, fetching a document envelope from the cabinet. "You might want to praise me even more after seeing this."

I asked, "What's it?"

"The gift of returning to its rightful owner." Saying so, he handed me the envelope.

Curiously, I opened it and took out the contents, looking over a business license and some company documents with confusion. "What are these?" I asked.

"Check the company name." His handsome finger pointed at the name.

When I saw Janedream, I froze and frantically went through the rest of the documents until tears blurred the ink on the papers.

"Honey, how about we name the new fashion label Janedream? Jane is our hope."

"Sounds great!"

"Fine, with our baby's name in it, Janedream will surely become one of the top brands!"

My parents' business was booming back then, and they decided to launch another brand. After much thought, Janedream was the chosen name. It officially launched on my seventh birthday. However, after my parents passed away, the entire company was acquired to settle debts. Some brands remained somewhat famous, but Janedream had vanished for a long time.

Choking back tears, I looked at Mark. "How... how did you find it?"

"Nothing is impossible." Mark wiped away my tears with a gentle voice, "Do you like it?"

"Yes, I love it. Absolutely!" I nodded vigorously.

It was like reclaiming a part of my parents' legacy. How could I not cherish it?

"That's all that matters. I got it back some time ago but I held back, worried it might mess with your life plans. But the day you declined my offer, I knew I had to give it to you." Mark smiled, "Perhaps it can give you a new direction."

Holding the documents tightly, without hesitation, I said, "Maybe it can."

I wanted to make my parents' dream a reality and turn Janedream into one of the top brands in the country. It was a seemingly impossible task, but it was worth a try.

Mark saw right through me. "Thinking of restarting Janedream?"