

Lost Me, Gained Regret (Jane and Bryant Ferguson)

Chapter 321

"Could be worse." I grabbed a towel to dry my hair. Once my body warmed up, I turned to Gregory. "Something going down on the internet?"

He shot back. "You did it?"

"What?" I was puzzled and bounced the question back to him.

He looked at me for a while and raised an eyebrow. "Guess I gave you too much credit."

After saying that, he pulled his phone from his pocket and handed it over. "See for yourself."

I asked, "Password?"

"Your birthday." he replied.

I paused, taken aback.

He smirked slightly, saying, "Daydreaming much? You share a birthday with her."

I sighed. "Right. You could've mentioned that earlier."

It must've been the cold, so I didn't catch that immediately.

After unlocking the phone, I quickly found the issue Susan was talking about. Dorothy was outed as a homewrecker, using dirty tricks to force the wife into a divorce and even kidnapped the wife. There were videos released from River Villa's underground parking lot, showing her people kidnapping me, footage that the Myers family had tried to erase.

The public backlash against her was fierce. But Bryant wasn't spared, either.

[Jeez... turns out being born into the right family does let you get away with murder.]

[The Myers heiress, top homewrecker of the century, wow! Taking 'power tripping' to a whole new level!]

[So, they announced their engagement while the wife hadn't even signed the divorce papers. That was just brutal.]

[Bryant's image is shattered for me. Wasn't he supposed to be this doting husband? How is this any different from cheating?]

[Yeah. I thought Bryant and his wife had an amicable separation but didn't expect such a mess.]

[Wait, have you considered that maybe Bryant didn't want any of this? I have a friend who's slightly connected to their circle, and I heard that during the kidnapping, Dorothy had herself kidnapped, too, forcing Bryant to choose. That's threatening him with his wife's life, right?]

[Who knows for sure, but what we're seeing here is one cheater and one homewrecker!]

[I don't buy that narrative. The rich's life is not something we can understand. There might be more to the story. The Myers family has been prominent for centuries, and with Timothy's recent passing stirring up the scandal, Bryant's got his hands full. Probably, he has to tread carefully on a lot of matters.]

I returned the phone to Gregory, still trying to piece everything together.

The person who leaked it knew everything inside out. It wasn't me. It was not Dorothy. That only left...

While I hesitated to jump to conclusions, Gregory calmly spoke, "Your ex went the distance for you, dragging himself through the mud to get the Myers family to let you go."

I hadn't sorted my thoughts yet. "Hmm?"

"There were only two ways to save you today." Gregory held up two fingers, laying it out for me, "One, do it as I did, walking right into the Myers place and taking you. Bryant couldn't do that. There are too many complications.

"Two, use something else to force the Myers family's hand, like public pressure. With the scandal, the Myers family can't afford to touch you, not today, and they'll have to ensure you're safe for a while." Hearing that, my grip on the towel tightened.

Ignoring the nagging doubts, I looked straight at Gregory. "And you, why did you come to save me today? And why the patience explaining all this to me?"

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The questions were sharp, no doubt about it. But Gregory didn't seem flustered at all. He gestured for me to come closer with a hook of his finger. "Lean in. I'll tell you."

I moved a few inches. "Go ahead."

Given the limited space in the car and with no one else around except the driver, all the secrecy seemed a bit over the top.

He moved a bit closer, a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, testing the limits of annoyance. "I just can't stand people who are too slow on the uptake."

I straightened up, glaring at him. "So, should I be thanking you for enlightening me?"

"I wouldn't mind," he said with a polite smile.

He always held a cheeky demeanor like that. But I couldn't discount his assistance earlier. I lowered my gaze. "Thanks for what you did back there."

His fingers tapped casually against the windowsill. "Even if I hadn't shown up, they would've let you go eventually."

I smiled bitterly. "But not without making me suffer a bit more."

The Myers family wouldn't let things slide so easily. With the scandal blowing up online, Dorothy would vent all her fury on me. And afterward, I'd barely breathe.

"It won't come to that." Gregory's smile was faint as if he had seen through it all. "The longer you stay with the Myers family, the more they expose themselves online. Dorothy and Susan may be clueless, but Richard is sharp."

"Is he now..."

Poor Bryant got caught between a rock and a hard place. On one hand, he was linked to the Myers family by marriage. On the other, he was stirring trouble with them to save me.

Gregory shot me a sidelong glance. "Worried about your ex, are you?"

The sarcasm was unmistakable.

I looked at him. "Do you think Bryant would go to any lengths for me?"

"That guy is always playing it safe, way too cautious," Gregory lounged back in his seat, his voice lazy, "So, no."

I shrugged. "Then why worry?"

Bryant was always aware of the burdens he carried. Ever since Timothy's passing, the entire future of the Ferguson Group rested on his shoulders. How could he, and why would he, risk it all for someone as insignificant as me?

Gregory looked surprised by my response. "Didn't peg you for someone who's not love-struck."

"You're the one who's love-struck." I shot back, mimicking his earlier tone.

He chuckled but with a hint of threat. "What was that?"

He sounded as if daring me to repeat any disparaging word, ready to cast me back out into the cold.

Under his roof, I had no choice but to bow my head. I smiled, trying to sound sincere. "I was saying you're a once-in-a-lifetime kind of guy. Staying faithful to a fiancée lost for over two decades, that's dedication."

He raised an eyebrow, pleased. "Go on. I'm all ears."

He sure knew how to climb the ladder of compliments.

My gaze drifted outside to an alley nearby, sparking a memory. I turned to Gregory and asked, "Can we stop by that alley for a moment?"

He gave me a puzzled look.

I explained, "Just need to pick something up."

Without another word, he instructed the driver. "Sir, could you pull over here, please?"

Once the car stopped, I hopped out, bracing against the biting wind. I intended to dash into the alley, but my knee was slightly wounded, making my movement awkward. Thankfully, the streets were nearly empty at the hour.

I found a pottery studio where the artisan recognized me and quickly handed me two ceramic pieces. "Ms. Webster, this one, you made yourself, and this one, I crafted from the photo you provided." I said, "Thanks, that's perfect."

The artisan asked, "Do you need them wrapped?"

"Just a bag will do." Leaving the studio, I clutched the eco-friendly paper bag and returned to the car.

"Greg..." I was about to speak when I realized he had dozed off, sprawling lazily. I settled back quietly, only to hear a murmured, "Hmm?" emanating from his chest.

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Gregory hadn't fallen asleep yet.

Licking my lips, I began earnestly, "Sorry I broke your piggy bank that day."

At the mention of that, he yanked off his sleep mask, a hint of annoyance flickering in his weary eyes. "Jane, you're a pushover outside, aren't you? The only place you know how to rub someone the wrong way is here with me, right?"

"That's not it." I hurriedly said, pulling out a little rabbit figurine made by a potter, trying to calm his irritation. "Here's a replica of that rabbit, made to look just like it. I hope this makes up for my mistake that day.' In all fairness, I had no right to touch his piggy bank. But then, I'd acted impulsively, and later, I couldn't understand why I would have meddled with someone else's belongings.

I'd spent some days visiting a pottery studio, intending to craft an exact duplicate for him, but my lack of skill was evident, and the result was far from similar.

In the end, I had to ask the potter for help.

Gregory was stunned for a moment, his gaze landing on the rabbit in my hand, and he glanced inside the bag, his expression softening. "What's in that bag?" I answered, "I made it."

It was not much to look at, honestly embarrassing to show, but considering it was my first attempt at pottery, I hadn't tossed it in the bin.

I said gently, "But it's not a good match."

He took the rabbit from my hands, placed it into the bag, and reached out. "Give them to me. Two for one."

I hesitated. "Okay."

I was in the wrong, after all. I handed the bag to Gregory.

He set the bag aside and looked at me, sending shivers down my spine. He smirked, but his eyes stayed cold. "You remind me of someone sometimes."

I was confused. "Hmm? Ms. Myers?"

"Yeah." He closed his eyes, his voice tightening. "Standing at the Myers' doorstep earlier, when you looked up with tears, you had the same eyes as hers."

I dared not overthink it and smiled. "Only the eyes are similar.."

"That's right." He took a deep breath. "Only the eyes are similar. She never had that lost, hopeless look."

He reminisced with a hint of fondness. "Lilliana would only get mad, act spoiled, and complain about my tardiness."

Perhaps it was because we'd had experiences of loving someone unconditionally. I couldn't help but comfort. "You'll find Ms. Myers. You definitely will." And then, lovers would eventually get married.

When arriving at River Villa, we went our separate ways after exiting the elevator.

Shortly after, the doorbell rang again.

Molly stood at the door, holding a steaming cup of something, looking adorable. "Jane, this can prevent a cold. My brother asked me to bring it over."

It surprised me. "Gregory?"

"Yeah!" She nodded vigorously, and her smile was cheeky. "You didn't know, did you? Grandma wasn't feeling well, so we returned to Vista Town last night to see her. He immediately rushed back when he heard the Myers family had taken you."

I hesitated, "Is that so..."

He hadn't mentioned a word about it during the car ride. Given his personality, he'd typically take the opportunity to boast.

Molly handed me the soup and cheekily entered, sticking out her tongue. "You better drink it, though he warned me not to let you know he was the one who sent it."

I gripped the cup, the smell hitting me, and I grimaced before slowly drinking.

I wondered, "Why did you tell me, then?"

"Because you need to know the truth." Molly blinked, confused. "But why wouldn't he want me to tell you? Especially since both of you are single..."

I walked to the kitchen to rinse the cup, smiling. "Because the person he truly wants to look after isn't me."

He always wanted Lilliana. I was fortunate, bearing a slight resemblance to Lilliana, to receive his care.

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The following morning, the sun rose as usual, and the internet was still buzzing with rumors. Even the younger folks at the office were throwing curious glances my way.

Christine had swung by my place the night before, returning my bag and phone with a hefty dose of self-blame. She had rushed to file a report but hit a wall when she mentioned the Myers family. In essence, without concrete evidence, we could do nothing. She confessed it was her first real taste of the power of influence and the helplessness of the average Joe. She regretted breaking up with Steven, musing that even as a mistress, she wouldn't have been so helpless when I was in trouble. Utterly foolish.

She walked into the office with two steaming cups of coffee, set one before me, and pulled up a chair. Her demeanor was almost identical to the night before.

I was sketching out a custom design for Adah, puzzled. "What's up? Who's bothering you now?"

After a moment, she dropped a bombshell. "The Ferguson Group just declared bankruptcy."

My pen slipped, drawing an unintended line across the paper. I was stunned. "Bankruptcy?" Weren't they celebrating an engagement with the Myers family the day before? How did they crash without warning?

"Yeah, their funding just vanished." Christine nodded, "The news broke five minutes ago. The Myers family must be reeling. There's already a feeding frenzy over their shares. Bryant is probably going to lose everything."

I grabbed my phone to find the news she mentioned.

In a short time, the internet was ablaze. The bankruptcy of Ferguson Group signified a seismic shift in RiverCity. It was like the city was getting a new ruler. And Bryant? He was used to being on top. To fall from grace so suddenly...

I frowned, suspecting there was more to the story. "How did the Ferguson Group suddenly go bankrupt?"

"It looks like a research project ate up a big chunk of their funds without any returns, plus a series of failed partnerships. Their financial backbone just snapped," Christine explained.

"Still odd." My trust in Bryant, on a personal level, was long gone. But I knew his business acumen. It wasn't him to get caught off guard. He was always cautious and always had a contingency plan. Bankruptcy without a murmur didn't fit his style.

"What's there to be surprised about? He's getting what he deserves," Christine mused, propping her chin in her hands as she continued to share the juicy details. "Guess who's most likely to buy his shares?" I was curious. "Who?"

"RF Group." She showed me the scoop she'd found online. "Turns out he's been in secret talks with York recently."

She seemed almost gleefully vindictive, "Imagine that. Your ex ended up not so different from us after all."

RF Group was already a behemoth. Swallowing Ferguson Group would instantly elevate them to the top spot in RiverCity. Their ambition was unmistakable, and their move into the domestic market was bold. After Christine left, I stared out the window at the towering buildings reaching into the sky. The thought that such a longstanding monument would soon bear a new name was surreal.

My phone suddenly rang, snapping me back to reality. It was Mark. I greeted him with a smile. "Hey, Mark."

"Jane..." There was a tremble in his voice, quickly suppressed, "Are you okay? I heard Gregory came to your rescue?"

I confirmed, "Yeah, it was him. I'm fine. But you sound off. What's wrong?"

"Oh, just stepped outside. It's chilly." Mark's voice was warm and gentle, "The Myers family hasn't given you any trouble, have they?"

"None at all!" I denied it immediately, well aware of the good he had done me and the tight spot he was in.

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Every reckless thing he did came with a price. The Myers clan was notoriously tough to deal with, and I had no intention of dragging him into muddy waters alongside me.

He fell silent for a moment before replying, "That's good to hear." His voice was as soft and soothing as ever, yet it seemed to carry a hint of disappointment.

Before we could hang up, a composed and mature woman suddenly appeared at my office door. Feeling a bit on edge, I nodded at her to acknowledge her presence, while listening to Mark continue speaking on the phone.

"Jane, one day, I'm going to be able to protect you really well."

It sounded like a promise, a vow. If it weren't for the woman standing before me, I might have felt my heart flutter at that moment. But life is devoid of 'ifs'.

After a brief silence, I softly replied, "I'll grow stronger, Mark. One day, no one will be able to bully me anymore."

He seemed to detect the unspoken message in my words, "Jane..."

The woman outside, however, grew impatient and pushed the door open. I had to cut Mark off, trying to keep the mood light, "A client just walked in, gotta hang up now."

Unwilling to hear the disappointment in his voice, I hung up first.

Then, I turned to Kathy and got straight to the point, "Ms. Larson, what can I do for you?"

Her gaze was steady, cutting straight to the chase, "You were on the phone with Mark just now, weren't you?"

I couldn't hide it from her.

"What's Violet done to him now?" I asked, directly addressing the issue.

Kathy's demeanor was impeccable, her tone calm, "It's not my mother this time; it's my grandmother. My mother wouldn't dare to touch him now. From your incident yesterday to the minute before he called you, he's been locked in the chapel for a full day and night."

I frowned deeply, "In the middle of winter!"

The Larson family's chapel had an old-school design, complete with wood-carved windows that were drafty.

No wonder his voice was trembling just now.

"This is the price he pays for his affection for you."

Kathy's rationality was chilling, as if discussing someone of no consequence, "If you can't make him give up soon, he'll pay even steeper prices."

During my silent pause, she spoke evenly, "Ms. Webster, woman to woman, I don't want to say anything unpleasant, but you can't enter the Larson family. His feelings for you are futile." "Unless you're willing to be a secret lover," she added.

I lowered my gaze, chuckled, then looked up at her, "You've liked him for many years, haven't you?"

I had felt it during my last visit to the Larson family. She harbored a cautious, hidden affection for Mark.

A rare moment of surprise flashed across her composed face. Eventually, she didn't deny it, only offering a bitter smile, "Yes, but like you, I can only be his friend; I can only be his sister." Mark's marriage was destined to be a trade for benefits. It could not involve her or me.

"Ms. Webster, there's no other choice. So, you should make him give up, the sooner the better."

Kathy didn't stay long, not even waiting for my response before grabbing her bag and leaving. She was certain of the choice I would make.

Whether it was Mark, her, or myself, none of us had a say in our fates.

In the evening, Molly hitched a ride home with me. The snow from yesterday was piled on both sides of the road, mixed with dirty water, far from its pristine white state. "Bye, Jane!" Molly waved as she exited the elevator.

I smiled and headed to my apartment when a familiar, upright figure caught my eye. He was facing away from me, a cigarette between his fingers, its ember glowing intermittently. Beyond the window in front of him were the lights of countless homes. Hearing my approach, he turned around, his handsome features relaxed yet cautious, "You're back?"

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I froze all over.

It was unexpected, somewhat bewildering.

Perhaps it was because our separation had been so graceless, marked by too many embarrassments, that the thought of having a calm conversation with him post-divorce seemed impossible.

To me, the final chapter of our relationship was simple: we went our separate ways. No more complicating each other's lives.

Gathering my composure, I looked at him emotionlessly. "What brings you here?"

"I..." Bryant flicked the ash from his cigarette, a rare hint of warmth breaking through his usual cold demeanor. "I came to see you."

"Why?" I was genuinely puzzled.

Had he gone bankrupt and now remembered me?

His gaze was intense, unwavering, his voice deep. "To make amends. Jane, there's nothing holding us back anymore. You can go back to being Mrs. Ferguson without worry."

I was taken aback at first, then filled with disbelief.

What did he take me for? Did he think things were the same as before, back when I saw him as my beacon of light?

That with a wave of his hand, I'd go away, and with another, I'd return?

This thought sparked anger in me, and my reply was sharp. "So you're remembering me now that you're bankrupt and Dorothy refused to get married?"

He paused, trying to explain with patience, "Jane, I did what I did because..."

"It doesn't matter."

I couldn't help but interrupt him, blurting out, "Do you really think our issues began when you got engaged to Dorothy? That her showing up is what caused our divorce?" Bryant's eyes slightly drooped. The usually proud man was now speaking softly, "I know, I misunderstood your feelings before, thinking you liked Mark, not me..."

"It wasn't a misunderstanding."

I laughed bitterly, knowing exactly where to strike for the greatest pain, "If I had known from the start that it was Mark who helped me, I might not have fallen for him, but I definitely wouldn't have fallen for you." That mistake fooled me into thinking he had a soft heart. It made me brave enough to go after what seemed impossible.

Bryant stiffened, his deep eyes locking onto me, visibly shaken. "So, your feelings for me were solely because of that incident?"

I clenched my fist. "Yes!"

Without that incident, he and I would have remained strangers forever.

At most, he'd be the untouchable moon, and I, just one of many gazing up from the mire.

There might have been admiration, but never love.

After saying my piece, I reached for the door lock, turning it open.

I thought I made myself clear, that he would know it was time for him to leave.

But as soon as I turned on the light, his cold presence enveloped me from behind, spinning me around to steal a kiss.

His actions were forceful, desperate, as if he was eager to prove something.

I felt humiliated, unable to push him away, my hands trapped by his. In a panic, I lifted my knee sharply into his groin!

He stopped dead, pain written all over his face!

He gasped, a dangerous look crossing his eyes, his words as cutting as ever, "Can't I even touch you now? Or is it that Gregory has been looking out for you, stirring up feelings? You better be clear about who he is..."

"Bryant, I've never been more clear!"

Anger surged through me, my chest heaving with every breath, my eyes blazing with resentment.

"What right do you have to question me? Even when we were married, things were messy between you and Margaret. Now that we're divorced, even if there's something between Gregory and me, it's none of your business!"

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"Sorry..." He froze for a moment, as if suddenly snapping back to reality. "My apologies, I just... I want to make things right with us."

"On what grounds?" I looked at him coldly. "Bryant, seriously, why? Deep down, why do you want to start over?"

I used to hang on to every word he said, believing him wholeheartedly.

Only to end up battered and bruised.

But now, I'd woken up from that dream, and there was no way I was going down that road again.

His lips tightened slightly. "Because..."

I cut him off with a cold, mocking smile. "Because you're used to winning. You just can't stand losing."

I'd never believed in those stories where people realize they're hopelessly in love only after they've parted ways.

"That's not it." Bryant's denial was firm, his deep eyes swirling as if trying to draw me in. "I can't live without you. Jane, I'm used to having you around the house, used to hearing you call out my name suddenly, used to you waiting up for me, no matter how late..."

It was all just habit, nothing but habit.

Like losing a teddy bear you've had by your pillow for years and experiencing withdrawal.

I took a deep breath to calm my anger, my words cutting deep. "So, just because you're uncomfortable, I'm supposed to start over with you? Bryant, I've had enough! And as for being Mrs. Ferguson, it was fun while it lasted, but now that you're bankrupt, what's in it for me?"

His brows furrowed slightly. "Me, bankrupt?"

I scoffed, sparing no effort to hurt him. "They all left you, and you think I'm just a trash bin, waiting here forever?"

He looked away, and when his eyes met mine again, they were colder, rimmed with red, his voice laced with irony and obsession.

"So, if one day I become the celebrated Mr. Ferguson again, you'd consider being with me?"

"Maybe!" I tossed the words out carelessly.

When a building is about to fall, you don't just talk about going back to its glory days.

Regardless, all I wanted was a clean break.

Bryant fell silent, but then he suddenly smirked, lifting his hand to caress my cheek almost obsessively. "Jane, remember your answer."

Then, he pulled his hand back smoothly and walked away with confident strides.

After the elevator dinged upon arrival, the hallway and elevator lobby returned to silence.

It was as if everything that had just happened was nothing but a dream.

Leaning against the door, I took a moment to catch my breath, straightening the clothes he had ruffled...

But as I did, something felt off. Instinctively, I glanced towards the other end of the lobby.

Gregory was leaning lazily against the doorway, arms crossed, as if he had just watched a fascinating drama unfold.

When our eyes met, he showed no sign of shame for eavesdropping, instead raising an eyebrow in amusement. "Looks like your knee's doing better? That kick had quite the power."

I closed my eyes momentarily, then glared at him. "Gregory, can't you go a day without eavesdropping?"

"I'm on my own doorstep," he coolly defended himself. "You're the ones lacking in privacy."

He sure had a way of bending logic.

I couldn't be bothered with him and was about to close the door when he suddenly spoke up. "I have a way to help you cut ties completely."

I paused. "What way?"

The words Bryant left me with were unsettling, as if something else was bound to happen.

He grinned, a mix of mischief and seriousness in his tone, "Be with me."

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My head buzzed, and then I chuckled, "You've got your eye on my eyes, huh?"

A stand-in.

Whoever's interested can do it. It's just not my thing.

"Nah, it's not that."

He was still leaning against the door frame, casually saying, "Just a fake girlfriend. I can help you deal with Bryant."

I understood immediately and looked at him, "And what's in it for me?"

"No such thing as a free lunch" was his motto.

Sure enough, he looked at me appreciatively, "Smart. Come home with me for Christmas, help me deal with my folks."

I kept my silence.

"You won't be at a loss."

Gregory smirked, confidently saying, "You alone can't handle him."

"He", of course, was referring to Bryant.

"I'll think about it," I said nonchalantly, then closed the door behind me.

The bankruptcy of the Ferguson Group had turned RiverCity's social scene into a complete mess. Everyone was looking to grab whatever benefits they could.

That day, after a meeting when I returned to my office, Christine suddenly asked, "Hey, did anyone come looking to buy your shares?"

"What shares?" I asked, puzzled.

"When you guys divorced, didn't Bryant force ten percent on you?" she asked curiously, then added, "Although the buyout price is low now, it's better than holding onto them."

"No one came," I shook my head.

I had intended to find an opportunity to return the shares to him, but never found the right moment.

After last night's ugly scene, I'd forgotten all about it.

But what was strange was, RF hadn't inquired about my shares at all.

Entering the office, I asked, "Did Bryant sell his own shares?"

"Long ago."

Christine pursed her lips, "He got rid of them the fastest. Otherwise, as long as he was involved, the shareholders would have held onto their shares. After all, the Ferguson Group is what it is today largely because of him; a lot of people blindly trusted him."

That was the truth. I hadn't really believed that Bryant would just give up on the Ferguson Group.

But the recent financial news was almost dominated by the Ferguson Group, getting closer to bankruptcy by the day.

Until today, when RF Group's CEO, York Carlson, officially stepped into the Ferguson Group, starting a major shakeup at the top.

Christine nudged my arm, "How about I talk to York for you? You might as well sell your shares."

I pursed my lips. "Okay."

After all, Bryant had sold his too.

After Christine agreed, she suddenly realized, "You're not planning to sell them and then give the money to Bryant, are you?"

"I am."

Walking away from this marriage, Bryant didn't do me wrong; he actually left my pockets full.

Those shares were originally the Ferguson family's, it wouldn't be right to get greedy.

I had accepted them at the time just so as not to delay the divorce proceedings.

I picked up my phone and was about to say something when Christine spoke up first:

"Holy smokes, the Myers family called off the engagement? They clung to him like glue before, and now that the Ferguson Group is bankrupt, they cut ties so fast..."

"I saw that too."

I smiled wryly, tossed my phone onto the desk, feeling rather indifferent.

Dorothy had always been about forming alliances through marriage.

After watching for so many days, it was natural for her to cut her losses and avoid danger.

And Bryant, coming to me that night, seemed to have anticipated this.

The more things unfolded, the more I felt he had other plans, as if everything was under his control.

After Christine finished her sigh, she called York.

"Hey, Mr. Carlson, got a moment?"

York must have given a positive response, as Christine put him on speaker for me to hear, her voice filled with cheer, "So, RF has been busy buying up shares of the Ferguson Group lately, right? My friend... you know, Jane, she's got ten percent of the shares."

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I had thought York would jump at the offer. But what I got instead was a dead silence on the other end of the line.

After a moment, he cleared his throat as if under some immense pressure and said, "Ms. Webster... you're thinking of selling your shares? Wouldn't you consider holding onto them?" "I'm selling."

Christine chuckled lightly, "Why keep something from an ex? Better to turn it into cash."

"Cough, cough, cough..."

York choked, launching into a fit of coughing followed by a distinct crash. Either something had slipped from his grip or someone was throwing a tantrum.

Gritting his teeth, York managed to say, "It's like this, we're currently halting our share acquisitions. My advice? Hold onto those shares. In less than three months, their market value will double, even surpass the peak times of the Ferguson Group!"

Christine was skeptical, "Double in such a short time?"

"Absolutely, maybe even more."

York sounded very sure. "Really, persuade Ms. Webster not to sell to anyone."

"Alright, got it."

A glint of excitement flashed in Christine's eyes as she ended the call with a flurry of polite thank-yous.

She turned to me, puzzled. "Do you think he was bluffing?"

I shook my head, replying, "Doesn't seem like it."

Taking over this mess, RF had a solid chance, not a sure thing, but their odds were good. After all, the Ferguson Group wasn't lacking in anything but cash. With enough funds, they could turn everything around.

But why was York being so generous? Not only refraining from buying my shares but also going out of his way to advise me? It was strange. This was like handing me money on a platter. For a businessman, that's overly generous.

After wrapping up the spring collection with Jeff, as well as Adah and Ramona's custom orders, I was finally ready for some downtime after spinning non-stop for half a month.

That day, I slept in until I woke up naturally. I hadn't even had breakfast when Christine called.

"Jane, no rest for you today."

"What's happened?" I poured myself a glass of warm water as I asked.

Christine replied, "RF just informed me their big boss has some free time now and wants to inspect the companies RF has invested in domestically." "We're the first stop."

"An inspection?" I paused, "Now?"

As the year was wrapping up and things were slowing down, doing an inspection wasn't out of the question, but it felt like a pointless hassle.

Christine sounded helpless. "Tell me about it... You better come in."

I glanced at the clock, "What time will they arrive?"

"They were already leaving RF when they called me."

"...I'll be right there."

This sudden ambush caught me completely off guard. Skipping breakfast, I rushed to get ready and dashed out the door.

When I arrived at Janedream around eleven, the company was buzzing with an air of emergency, likely due to Christine's heads-up.

I had just dropped my bag off when Christine knocked on my door, "Jane, they're in the elevator!"

"Okay."

I was fairly relaxed until then, but suddenly, I felt anxious. An uneasy premonition crept up on me.

As Christine and I reached the elevator, the leading man caught my eye. Dressed in a black tailored suit, he handed his overcoat to an assistant, moving with the natural authority and chilly elegance of a born leader.

When his deep eyes met mine, it felt as if he was peering straight into my soul!

Chapter 330

I was stunned for a moment.

Almost instantly, I pieced together Bryant's current situation, but I couldn't quite believe it. Wasn't he bankrupt? Turned out, he had just pulled a Houdini... And, after all that maneuvering, he ended up holding more power and influence than ever before.

As I came to grips with the situation, my first instinct was panic... I thought I had cut ties with him, and now he turns out to be the biggest shareholder in my company? I still held onto a sliver of hope, maybe he was just chummy with York and decided to tag along for a visit.

York introduced him with a smile, "Ms. Webster, Ms. Jackson, meet the new... new Vice President of RF Group, Mr. Ferguson."

The position announced was a step below York's. But York was always a step behind Bryant, and his body language while speaking was telling. However, they were the major stakeholders of Janedream now, and I didn't want to cause a scene. I offered a faint, noncommittal smile, "Oh? I heard your big boss was coming. Where is he?"

York chuckled it off, "Well, he got tied up with some last-minute business..."

"Alright then."

I didn't press further, and Christine caught on to the tension. Years of understanding each other meant a single look was enough to agree on keeping up appearances for now.

We made our way into the meeting room, holding what felt like a pointless meeting before York dismissed the others. Then, turning to Christine, he asked, "Ms. Jackson, would you mind showing me your Design Department?"

It couldn't be more obvious.

"Mr. Carlson, Jane is actually the head of the Design Department. She'd be more familiar..."

Christine was hesitant to leave me alone with Bryant, almost refusing on the spot.

Seeing Bryant's calm demeanor, I interjected, "Chris, you head off with Mr. Carlson. I actually need to ask Mr. Ferguson a few questions."

Some things just needed to be cleared up; I couldn't put it off any longer.

"Jane..."

Christine hesitated for a moment, but seeing my determination, she didn't insist any further and led York away.

Suddenly, it was just Bryant and me in the office. His gaze was fixed on me, waiting for me to break the silence. I felt an annoying sense of him having the upper hand.

Annoyed and not in the mood for beating around the bush, I got straight to the point, "You're the man behind RF Group, aren't you?"

"Yes."

Bryant didn't avoid the question or show any signs of discomfort, his voice deep, "So, is reconciliation on the table now?"

"Reconciliation?" I couldn't grasp how he could so lightly throw around that word.

He stood up, propping himself on the desk with one hand, slightly leaning forward, his brows slightly furrowed, "You were the one who said that, remember? That evening at your doorstep, I asked if we could reconcile once I became the old Mr. Ferguson again. Did you forget?"

His question jogged my memory. He was referring to that evening when he had asked if we could reconcile once he regained his previous status, and I had nonchalantly agreed. I had brushed it off right after, but he remembered.

I stared at him, a mix of frustration and resignation on my face, "Bryant, are you patting yourself on the back right now?" [Search The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

He was taken aback, "Hmm?"

"With all your scheming, playing your cards close to the chest. Everyone thought RiverCity was under new management, but it was you all along. Even the Myers family was left in the dark."

I looked at the man I had once longed for and spoke slowly, "Playing both sides, getting engaged to Dorothy while secretly investing in me. You must think you're quite the devoted lover huh?"