

Lost Me, Gained Regret (Jane and Bryant Ferguson)

Chapter 341

"It does." I curled my lips, mustering all my courage, "If it's the latter, I'm worried... maybe you've fallen for me."

He chuckled, "Worried? You think me liking you would keep you up at night?"

"Pretty much." I spoke openly, "You've got a good personality, come from a good family, and you're loyal. Being liked by someone like you, it's hard not to feel something. But that's exactly why we can't be."

"Can't be?"

"Yeah, can't be."

I took a deep breath, looking him straight in the eye, "I'm not a starry-eyed girl anymore. I can't knowingly walk into a situation that's doomed from the start. Your loyalty, to me, is a flaw."

"You helped me out earlier, and I'll deal with your parents for you. Beyond that, let's both keep our heads."

That night, after I got ready for bed in the guest room Ramona had set up, I lay there, wide awake.

What did Gregory say to me during the day?

He said, "Jane, don't think you're the only one who's scared."

Before I could ponder what he meant, he shoved me into his car and had his driver take me back.

As I was about to turn off the light, my phone on the nightstand buzzed. It was Gregory.

I frowned, answering, "Hello?"

His voice, lazy as usual, came through, "Come out. Hurry, it's freezing."

"Okay."

I got out of bed, grabbed a long down coat, and headed out while zipping it up.

Without looking ahead, I bumped into a solid chest, stumbling back two steps before I looked up.

Under the streetlight, Gregory leaned against his car, wincing from the collision, and grumbled, "So, being called out in the middle of the night has you looking to end it all?" He smelled faintly of alcohol.

I touched my nose. "Just wasn't watching where I was going... You do realize it's the middle of the night, right? What's up?"

"Jane." His gaze fixed on me, a subtle turmoil in his eyes, his voice cold, "I'm setting New Year's Day as the deadline. If there's no word from her by then, I'll stop waiting."

I froze. I knew what his "stop waiting" meant.

My nails dug into my palm, my whole being felt lost, awkward, and confused...

After a moment, I looked at him hesitantly, "But you said you'd never give up on her... Gregory!"

Suddenly, he pulled me into his embrace, the scent of mint mixing with the cold night air, enveloping my senses.

"Consider this a hug borrowed in advance."

Yet, he was quick to let go, his usual carefree demeanor replaced with a serious look, his words clear and profound, "I wasn't sure before, but seeing you with Bryant today, I couldn't help it. I wanted to betray my original resolve."

For the first time in front of him, I felt utterly out of my depth, a stark contrast to the embarrassment of being caught in compromising situations before. Weird, confused, and it had been a long time.

I awkwardly stepped back, asking, "What makes you so sure I'd agree?"

"I'm confident about everything."

Gregory turned to open the car door, handing me something.

Puzzled, I didn't reach for it. "What's this?"

"Just had a late-night snack with friends."

He seemed unexpectedly uncomfortable, "They were packing orders for their girlfriends, the waiter messed up, and ended up with an extra. Your gain." "You... drunk or something?"

I too wished to be lighthearted, but my senses urged me to stay composed, "You're that sure there won't be any news from her in the next few days?" Though as I said it, I didn't expect my words to be so prophetic.

His phone rang almost immediately.

Whatever was said on the other line made him stand up straight, the late-night snack nearly falling from his hand.

He asked, "Is the news reliable?"

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This was the first time I'd ever seen Gregory wear such an expression.

It wasn't exactly nervousness, excitement, or panic... But it was definitely a far cry from his usual defiant swagger.

In that moment, I couldn't help but see shades of Bryant in him.

Suddenly, I became even more composed, almost cold-hearted, as I pushed down the surge of emotions that threatened to break free and turned around sharply. "Go on," I said calmly.

Gregory hadn't hung up yet. He took a long stride toward me, wrapped me up in one arm, and held me tight, stopping me from breaking free despite my efforts.

He murmured a few words into the phone, "Careful not to get hoodwinked. I'll be there once I've smoothed things over."

Then, he ended the call and tossed his phone into his pocket. His hand cupped my cheek, squeezing it till my face was distorted, yet he spoke with a hint of resentment, "Why are you running? Did you even hear what I said earlier?"

"Let go of me."

"...Pfft."

Perhaps the sight of me trying to speak with my cheek pinched was somewhat comical, as he let out a snort of laughter and refused to let go, even giving my cheek an extra squeeze, "Answer me first. If I like your answer, I'll let go."

I slapped his hand away, forcing him to release me. I pursed my lips slightly, hiding my bitterness. "Gregory... Mr. Ford, I'm not like you. I don't want to play games, and I can't afford to."

"Games?"

His expression changed slightly, his tongue clicking against his teeth in annoyance. "Do you really think I'm playing games with you?"

"Aren't you?"

Snowflakes began to fall gently, and I shivered, wrapping my coat tighter around me. "Like you said, if there's no news from Lilliana in the next few days, you'd stop waiting. But didn't you just get a message? Yet, here you are questioning me. Do you think I'm the backup, or is she?"

In this scenario, the backup was clearly me.

In the past few days, Ramona and Molly had both tried to convince me otherwise, and I almost bought into it. But in this moment of clarity, I looked at Gregory, who seemed so untouchable.

With his background, plenty of well-to-do beauties were at his beck and call. I wasn't even in the running.

The gap between us was even wider than it had been with Bryant.

Gregory reeked of alcohol, but his eyes were disturbingly sober. He smirked, his tone as dismissive as ever, "You think I'm Bryant?"

"I don't know."

It was too cold. I sniffled, wrapping my down jacket tighter and kicked a pebble, my voice soft. "All I know is, you're both men, and the ones you really love are the ones who got away." And I was none of that.

Above me, Gregory was silent for a moment, then chuckled dismissively, "What if I told you I actually prefer the one I ran into?"

I paused, looking up in confusion, "Huh?"

"Don't 'huh' me."

He flicked my forehead and handed me the box of late-night snacks, "I can't promise much, Jane, but I'm definitely not Bryant. Now, head inside."

"I don't need your promises."

I'd heard too many promises before.

I would never believe in such fleeting, intangible things again.

Promises only prove that at the moment they're made, they might be sincere, like the sweetness of a fruit at the moment it falls from the vine.

But with time, even just a day or two, washed by rain or scorched by the sun, they decay and rot.

The next day was Christmas Eve.

The Myers Mansion was filled with festive spirit, with a sparkling Christmas tree and every window adorned with decorative cutouts. The butler was busy directing the staff in decorating.

It was a lively and joyful atmosphere.

As I came downstairs, Ramona waved at me energetically, "Jane, come quick, try the cheese board they just prepared."

The old lady treated me well, sometimes so well that I found myself daydreaming of having a grandmother of my own.

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"Sure."

I obediently made my way over and nibbled on some fruits and cheese, managing a smile towards the grandmotherly figure before me, feeling an inexplicable sense of reluctance to leave, yet found myself saying, "Ramona, I've troubled you these past few days. I'll be heading back to RiverCity soon. Let me wish you a merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year in advance."

"Why the hurry to leave? Weren't you supposed to help Greg with..."

"He..." I reined in my emotions, saying, "He probably won't need my help anymore."

His true love, the one who lights up his world, must be on her way back to him.

"What do you mean? Just because he doesn't need your help, you're going to forget about this old lady?"

She feigned anger, "I was looking forward to finally having someone close to keep me company during the holidays, and now you're leaving? Stay here for the holidays, keep this old lady company!"

"Ramona..."

Seeing her like this stirred something in me. But I also knew that staying any longer just wouldn't be right.

She took my hand, still trying to persuade me, "If you go back, you'll be on your own. Just listen to me and stay..."

"Grandma!"

Suddenly, an imperious voice broke the moment, as Dorothy and her parents made their appearance.

She strode over in her boots, clomping all the way to Ramona's side, "Grandma, if Jane wants to leave, let her go. After all, soon enough, you won't have time for her anyway!"

Ramona shot a displeased look towards Dorothy's parents, "Look at what you've raised! No manners whatsoever!"

Susan's face darkened, nudging her husband with her elbow.

Mr. Myers, caught between his mother and wife, played the peacemaker, "Mom, it's the holidays. Why must you..."

"What have I done?"

Ramona was clearly unhappy, her tone icy, "I've said it years ago, during the holidays, we each mind our own. I don't bother you, and you don't disturb my peace!"

"Grandma!" Dorothy, already embarrassed from the scolding, pouted. "You might dislike me, but would you really feel the same about your own granddaughter?"

Ramona's expression turned stern, "What nonsense are you spouting?"

"I'm saying..." Dorothy played coy, offering a cold smirk my way before continuing, "your real granddaughter will be back soon. Once she returns, you won't have any time for Jane here anyway!" "Where did you hear such a thing?"

Ramona, visibly excited and flushed, stood up with the help of her sofa!

Richard and Susan also showed shock, with Susan grabbing Dorothy's arm, eagerly pressing, "Is it true? Has Lilliana been found?!"

Seeing everyone's excitement, Dorothy clenched her fist, a complex look crossing her face before she spoke with a smile, "Yes! See it." With that, she placed the morning's newspaper on the coffee table.

I caught a glimpse of the bold headline - Gregory Ford Reunites with Long-Lost Fiancée.

The accompanying photos included one showing a woman about to throw herself into Gregory's arms, her gaze timid.

Anyone would feel a surge of protectiveness seeing it.

The second photo, however, was of Gregory blocking her advance.

Ramona put on her reading glasses, glanced at the newspaper, and huffed, "That's not my Lilliana! Just the media stirring up nonsense again!"

"You don't believe it?" Dorothy smirked, "Then we'll just have to wait for the DNA test. That'll clear everything up."

Ordinarily, finding Lilliana should have irked her.

Yet, she seemed indifferent, almost happy for the Myers family.

Susan glanced at the photos, then turned to me with a host's grace, "Ms. Webster, would you prefer to leave now or later? I'll arrange for the driver to take you."

The dismissal couldn't have been more clear-cut.

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I hadn't even gotten a chance to speak when Ramona flew into a rage.

She glared at Susan, her face a thunderstorm of fury, "And who exactly gave you the right to kick people out of my house?"

"Ramona, it's okay!"

I remembered Gregory mentioning how her health couldn't handle too much excitement, so I quickly tried to soothe her, "I was about to leave anyway. Gregory should be bringing Ms. Myers over to meet you soon."

I felt like an outsider in what was supposed to be a heartwarming family reunion.

Ramona wanted to keep me there longer, but seeing my determination, she didn't push further.

My bags were already packed from the morning. I grabbed my suitcase and came back down, Susan escorted me out of the house. Once we were out of Ramona's earshot, she started speaking with a tone laced with disdain.

"Don't bother coming back here for no reason. We aren't the kind to take in strays!"

"Mrs. Myers," I kept walking, not even turning to look at her, my response firm but respectful, "I know you can't stand me, thinking I'm some kind of threat to your precious daughter, being Bryant's ex-wife. But let me make this clear, I just happened to get along with Ramona by chance. Joining your family tree is the last of my concerns."

"Who knows what you're really after?"

She clearly didn't buy it, her eyes darting down to the bracelet on my wrist, "That bracelet, Ramona gave it to you, didn't she?"

"Yeah."

"Hmph!"

Her derisive snort was filled with contempt, "Only a beggar would act the way you do!"

I couldn't hold back my temper any longer, my tone icy, "And what about you? Have you always been acting like a haughty bully?"

"Jane Webster!!"

Perhaps she wasn't expecting such a comeback. Just those few words had her seething, her face darkening, "Don't think you can hide behind Ramona and that I can't get to you!" "What else do you plan on doing to me?!"

I glanced at the freshly fallen snow, my voice dripping with sarcasm, "Make me kneel in the snow again? Your darling daughter has quite a bit of dirt not publicized, doesn't she?"

Her eyes, heavily made up, glared at me, as she ground her teeth in anger, "So it was you behind last time's incident!"

"You guess?"

Dropping those words, I no longer kept pace with her, pushing my suitcase away briskly.

This was inspired by what Gregory said after he rescued me from the snow.

Regardless of whether it was me or not, she wouldn't show any mercy.

Might as well take the blame; it might actually make them think twice about crossing me, considering their reputation.

...

Leaving the Myers Mansion, I was about to call a cab when the butler caught up to me.

Ramona was worried and insisted he arrange for a driver to take me.

On the road out of Vista Town, my thoughts were a tangled mess.

I messaged Christine to ask if she'd landed in her holiday destination yet.

She had hoped for a romantic encounter during the getaway.

It was also because of this that I had agreed to help Gregory deal with his parents over the holidays.

Just as I sent the message, the car's radio suddenly announced, "Attention drivers on the South River Highway, a major pile-up between Vista Town and RiverCity has caused severe congestion. The road will be temporarily closed due to the snowy conditions. We urge all drivers to..."

The driver slowly pressed the brake, hesitating, "Ms. Webster..."

I understood, "Just take me to a nearby hotel, please. Thank you."

It was the holiday season, and with the snow and road closures, everyone wanted to hurry home for the holiday dinner.

Ironically, the closest hotel was the same luxury six-star hotel Gregory had booked for me before.

I didn't bother finding another place and just checked in, ending up in the same room as last time.

"Jane!! You're back in RiverCity?!" Just as I turned on the heating in my room, Christine's call came through.

"Not yet."

I sighed, a bit frustrated, "I thought I'd be back by noon, but the roads are closed."

"Thank God!" Christine breathed a sigh of relief. "Where are you? Send me your location."

I paused, "You're in Vista Town?"

"Yeah!"

Her voice was bright but slightly irritated, "I had a noon flight, but then I saw that jerk Gregory's news. I was worried he'd leave you alone for the holidays, so I drove straight to Vista Town. I just got off the highway and checked my phone."

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Tears welled up in my eyes as a mixture of laughter and sobs escaped me. I quickly sent her my location, "So, what about your getaway? No more chasing the exotic romance?"

"Which is more important, a fleeting romance or you? I wouldn't dream of letting you spend the holidays all by yourself." She brushed it off with a giggle, "Besides, I've heard Vista Town is quite the spot for a romantic encounter."

"I owe you big time."

I couldn't help but chuckle, "All I can offer is a feast of fun and games, just a small token of my appreciation."

Truth be told, money was hardly a concern between us anymore. It just didn't matter.

Upon hearing this, she played along perfectly, "Ms. Webster, living large! I'll be right there to soak up some of that generosity."

The moment Christine arrived, my spirits were instantly lifted.

She stood by the window, admiring the snowy vista of Vista Town, "That news about Gregory, what do you make of it?"

I paused, then said, "What about it? I don't see why I should bother."

"Come on, don't play dumb." Christine nudged me. "He's into you, and you're not exactly locking your heart away from him, are you?"

"There's some truth to that."

I curled up on the couch, gesturing a small distance with my fingers and blinking, "Just that sort of feeling where it could be something, but it wouldn't matter if it wasn't."

I was past the stage of letting love run wild.

Once bitten, twice shy.

"That's good enough."

Christine nodded and sat down beside me, "He's waited for Lilliana for years. If you're not careful, you'll be asking for heartbreak."

"I'm aware," I assured her.

Gregory and I were a long shot.

Unable to hold back, Christine dragged me around the old Vista Town, bustling with tourists celebrating the holiday season. The place was packed and lively. Gregory called me, but I missed it.

By the time I tried to call back, he didn't answer.

Later that night, after changing our outfits, Christine and I headed to the hotel bar.

Both of us were a mix of emotions, especially since Steven was getting married today.

Despite their breakup, we shared the same social circles. My feed was flooded with pictures of Steven's wedding, a real gut punch.

One drink after another, everything around me started to blur.

Luckily, we were in the safety of the hotel, surrounded by security.

Christine, drowning in her emotions, drank heavily. She leaned in, reeking of alcohol, "Are you... are you drunk?"

I shook my head vigorously. "No, not drunk."

"Oh... then let's keep drinking. Here's to forgetting those damn men!"

"Right!"

After burping, I reassured her, "Don't worry, Chris, Steven doesn't deserve you..."

As I tried to stand and hug her, my balance failed me, and I stumbled towards the floor.

Unexpectedly, someone caught me firmly.

I pushed them away, dizzily turning to see who it was. My head was spinning, but I managed to make out a face hovering before me.

"Greg... Gregory?"

The man remained silent.

His expression darkened. Holding me steady, he turned to Christine and spoke in a deep voice, "You okay?"

Christine waved dismissively, "Of course! Mr. Ford, please take her back to her room!"

The atmosphere turned even colder!

Standing next to him, I shivered, "Gregory, why do you seem so much like... him today?"

"Like who?"

"Bry... Bryant."

"What floor?"

"19!"

I fumbled for my room card and handed it to him.

As we exited the elevator, half-awake, I finally reacted, "Why are you here to see me?"

He led me out, "Why can't I be?"

"Didn't you find Lilliana..."

Mid-sentence, a sharp gaze caught my attention. I glanced over to see a man casually leaning against my room door, causing me to freeze in shock! Gregory?!

If he was Gregory, then...

Suddenly feeling a bit more sober, I shook my head and looked closely at the man beside me. I abruptly pulled away from him and landed with a thud on the floor.

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Even though the hallway was covered with thick-piled carpet, the sharp pain of my tailbone hitting the ground snapped me out of my daze.

The person who had brought me up was Bryant.

And I had mistaken him for someone else.

Perhaps sensing my resistance, Bryant paused for a moment, his silhouette against the light as he let out a mocking chuckle, "So, you're dead set on being with him? Waiting to play bridesmaid when he marries Lilliana?"

Gregory always had a sharp tongue, "Are you referring to yourself?"

With his long strides, Gregory was by my side in a heartbeat, helping me up from the floor, and offering Bryant a dismissive smile, "Mr. Ferguson, take care, we won't see you out."

Bryant clenched his fists, trying to suppress his rage, "You better focus on Lilliana. Jane, she'll only ever belong to me."

"She's never been anyone's possession." Gregory's voice was calm. "She belongs to herself."

Bryant's gaze turned icy as he extended a hand towards me, probably the most humble gesture he'd ever made, his version of a compromise, "Come on, stop making a scene. You and he, it's never going to work. Come back home with me."

"It doesn't matter what happens between him and me, or anyone else for that matter, it's none of your business."

My head was throbbing, but my words were clear, "You and I, we've been over for a long time. Stop saying things that could cause misunderstandings."

At that, Bryant was seething with a destructive rage, his tone terrifyingly low, "Afraid of misunderstandings? Whose?"

He glanced at Gregory, sneering, "His misunderstandings? Jane, don't tell me you've actually fallen for him. Don't use him to make me jealous."

I couldn't help but want to laugh, "And why can't I fall for him?"

Whether it was the alcohol or just a rebellious impulse, I reached for Gregory's collar, tiptoed, and brushed my lips against his cheek.

Even in my drunken state, I could almost hear heartbeats pounding furiously.

Coming from Gregory.

I turned back to Bryant, "You believe me now?"

His face was a thundercloud, but before he could react, Gregory pulled me into his embrace, facing Bryant.

"My girlfriend's not great with her liquor, my apologies."

The apology was there, but the tone was defiant.

"My girlfriend".

That caught me off guard.

Bryant's fists were tight, his anger almost palpable, he gritted his teeth, "Are you that fond of stealing from another man?"

"Steal?" Gregory chuckled casually, "It's her choice, not mine. But, feel free to use whatever means you have, just don't hold back." "Remember what you said today!"

With a cold laugh and a look that mixed pain with confidence, Bryant said, "You'll regret your choice someday."

After a last glance at me, he turned and strode away!

I knew his methods were ruthless and decisive; I didn't want him to harm others because of me.

Trying to follow him, I was instead pulled back by Gregory into the room.

As I was staggering and unsteady, he dumped me on the couch where I winced in pain, snapping, "What are you doing?!"

"What am I doing?"

Gregory's smile was tinged with a coldness, his tone dripping with sarcasm, "Why were you chasing after him? Regretting what you just said? Eager to drop the act after your attempt at playing hard to get failed?"

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My heart suddenly felt a pang, as if unexpectedly pricked by something sharp.

I pointed towards the door with a cold voice, "Get out!"

"Jane, where did you get this attitude? Can't we have a proper conversation?"

"Were you trying to have a proper conversation?"

I glared at him defiantly, "What right do you have to criticize me? What about your fiancée? Shouldn't you be with her instead of bothering me?" "Even drunk, your sharp tongue doesn't dull, does it?"

He tapped his chin thoughtfully, then chuckled lowly, as if resigning to his fate, and squatted down in front of me, his tone softening.

"Alright, I admit I was too hasty and didn't talk nicely. I'll accept the punishment."

I asked subconsciously, "What punishment?"

He raised an eyebrow, playfully suggesting, "Another kiss from you?"

Only then did I notice his ears were flushed red.

Shaking my head, trying to sober up and not let the alcohol cloud my judgment, I looked at him, "Why are you here?"

"To give you an explanation."

I frowned, asking, "Didn't we already clear things up last night?"

"You were the only one who thought things were cleared up."

Gregory poured me a glass of water and after sending a message on his phone, continued, "I've returned her to the Myers family. Jane, even before I said I'd stop waiting for her last night, I had already made up my mind. Call it falling out of love or being a jerk, but I have genuinely fallen for you. I'm not someone who can love two

people at the same time. Since I've opened up to you, I won't keep things tangled with someone else."

I clenched my hands. "What about Lilliana?" I asked him.

"Let's first confirm if she really is Lily."

Gregory's expression darkened slightly, "All signs point to her, but Ramona and I believe she's not. We're getting a DNA test done."

I pursed my lips. "And if she is?"

"Before coming to you, I had discussed calling off the engagement with Ramona."

He brushed my messy bangs behind my ear, his brown eyes locking on me, "Regardless of the result, I will call it off. Jane, can you trust me this time, hmm?"

His tone was his usual casual self.

In the silent room, an inexplicable tension spread.

I quickly avoided his gaze, "Let's talk about this later."

That person, too, had many times asked for my trust.

He never married Margaret either.

And yet, here we were.

I doubted I could surpass the cherished memory in someone's heart.

Now, it was just him having spent more time with me, a fleeting passion clouding his judgment. Once Lilliana started spending more time with him, those childhood promises and fluttering feelings would resurface.

I would just be asking for heartbreak, as Christine said.

Ding dong!

The doorbell suddenly rang. Thinking it was Christine, I went to open the door, but Gregory stopped me, "I'll get it."

He walked to the door, exchanged a few words of thanks with someone outside, and returned with a box.

He slightly lifted his chin, "Go take a shower."

I glanced at the thing in his hands, not sure what it was, my mind racing as I clutched my collar tightly.

"I said we'll talk later! And, even though I'm divorced, Gregory, I can't just sleep with you so casually..."

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He extended the box towards me, speaking softly, "Take a look."

-Arnica Cream

When I finally made out the bold letters on the box, I wished the ground would swallow me whole. Hastily getting up, I said, "Just leave the medication with me. I'll take a shower and apply it myself." If it hadn't been for him, I would have forgotten about my fall.

"Sure."

A playful smile touched his lips, his tone teasing, "I've already asked the concierge to send up Christine, in case you need help reaching those tricky spots."

From the get-go, he had considered the privacy of my injury.

It was just my imagination.

The longer I thought about it, the more embarrassed I felt, until I just got mad. I pushed him out of the room and tried to slam the door shut.

But he stopped the door with one hand and, much like the night before, suddenly pinched my face, his voice seductive, "Jane, Merry Christmas." As he spoke, the sound of fireworks burst outside.

The brilliant fireworks lit up the entire room through the floor-to-ceiling windows, making him seem all the more unrestrained.

"Don't run away this time," he added.

Bryant often made empty promises, but he followed through quickly when it came to his stern warning for Gregory.

Before the year was out, the Ferguson Group boldly snatched several projects from the Ford family.

Not to be outdone, the Ford family launched an electronic device featuring technology that the Ferguson Group was planning to unveil in the first quarter.

After a lot of promotion, they ended up making a wedding dress for someone else, suffering a significant loss.

Christine happened to schedule a meeting with some clients from Vista Town after the New Year to discuss partnerships.

So, we decided to extend our stay and treat it like a vacation.

One day, Christine was browsing the news online, puzzled, "Do you think Gregory would really keep up this rivalry with Bryant over you?"

"I don't know." I shrugged.

Since that night, I've had very little contact with Gregory. We hadn't even called each other; at most, he would occasionally send a text, asking what I was up to.

I couldn't be sure if he was doing all this for me.

My past experiences had left me with no confidence in matters of the heart.

I no longer believed that a man would go to such lengths for me.

It was just the usual business rivalry.

As Christine scrolled through her phone, she suddenly sat up straight, "Did you hear about it?"

"About what?" I asked, puzzled.

"The DNA results for the Myers family came out."

She handed me her phone, a bit concerned for me. "It's confirmed. She's the Myers family's long-lost daughter."

"That's good."

At least, Ramona could finally find some peace. Her longing to find Lilliana was palpable, even to an outsider like me.

"What about you and Gregory? Do you really believe he'll call off his engagement?"

"Whether I believe it or not doesn't matter."

I let out a light chuckle, stood up to stretch by the window, and continued, "What he does is what matters. I'm not some love-struck girl he can keep on a string." Christine persisted, "Don't you like him, even a little?"

I corrected her, "Let's just call it a fondness."

Later that day, I suddenly received a call from Ramona.

Even over the phone, I could feel Ramona's joy. "Jane, you're a blessing to the Myers family! We've been searching for so many years without any luck, and then you show up, and we find her." I smiled, saying, "I haven't had the chance to congratulate you yet. You finally found Lilliana."

"Oh, dear, all thanks to you!"

Ramona rambled on, "It's just that the poor girl seems to have gone through so much outside, always so timid. I... I want to show her care without frightening her."

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"I guess she might just be a bit shy? Time will heal it, a little more mingling and she should open up."

"There's something off, I can feel it."

Ramona sighed with a hint of regret in her voice, "Remember how feisty she was as a kid? No matter how much she's changed, she can't be this timid..."

Just as I was about to respond, Ramona sighed again, "Let's not dwell on this. After all, it's a joyous occasion. You're still in Vista Town, right?"

"Yes, I am," I confirmed.

"That's wonderful! I'll send the driver to pick you up." Her voice brightened. "We're throwing a welcome party for Lilliana tonight, and you must come. You know, Adah and I wore the dresses you designed for us over the holidays, and so many people asked about them. This is a great chance for you to network; you won't worry about business for a whole year!"

"Thank you, that's very kind of you!"

I hesitated but agreed for the sake of business. Dealing with high society was inevitable in the bespoke fashion industry. It was this or shut down shop. Such an opportunity was too good to pass up. Ramona chuckled, "I heard from Greg that a friend of yours is also in Vista Town. Ask her if she'd like to come along, it'd be lovely to have you both."

After hanging up, before I could even ask Christine, she volunteered with a sense of duty.

"Count me in. I can talk business when needed, and throw shade if necessary."

"Thank you."

We got dressed and did our makeup, and soon the hotel's front desk called. The Myers family's driver was waiting downstairs for us.

The atmosphere at the Myers' was more relaxed than usual. We were among the first to arrive, with mostly just family members around. Ramona had the butler meet us at the door and led us to her courtyard. The banquet hall was lively and festive, leaving no doubt about who the guest of honor was.

"Jane!" Seeing us enter, Ramona beamed and beckoned me over. Adah was there too. "Ramona, Adah."

I smiled, my eyes quickly finding the woman sitting next to Ramona. I remembered her from a photo in the news a few days ago. She had done herself up, wearing a scarlet cocktail dress with her hair naturally draped down, her hands nervously clutching at her skirt.

Her features were delicate and pretty but her lipstick was almost gone from constant licking, revealing pale, almost colorless lips. When our eyes met, she quickly looked away, as if I were some formidable

creature.

I led Christine over, made introductions, and she instantly clicked with Adah, chatting away like old pals. Ramona pulled me aside, nodding towards Lilliana, "Lilliana, this is Jane, you share the same birthday, can you believe it? Later, let's get your measurements for Jane to make you a few dresses."

I smiled politely. "Ms. Myers, it's a pleasure."

"...Hi..."

Lilliana's eyes flitted nervously, as if I posed a threat. Suddenly, she stood up and darted towards the entrance, softly calling, "Greg!"

My gaze instinctively followed, catching sight of Gregory striding in wearing a bomber jacket and khaki pants, a casual yet striking figure. Our eyes met, and I quickly looked away, my heart fluttering uncontrollably. After all, his fiancée was right here.

Chapter 350

Why do I feel guilty?

I haven't really done anything wrong from start to finish.

With that thought, I lifted my gaze towards them. After Lilliana threw herself into his arms, he hesitated for a moment, seemingly uncomfortable yet not wanting to hurt Lilliana's feelings.

He gently pushed her away, maintaining his usual indifferent tone, "Slow down, okay?"

"But I missed you." Lilliana's eyes blinked as she looked up at him, her pale cheeks betraying her caution, much like a delicate little bunny. "You left so early yesterday, it's been almost twenty hours since I last saw you."

Counting the hours, huh?

I reined in my thoughts, smiling slightly, just as Gregory's eyes met mine again. Seeing me calm and composed, without a hint of emotion, seemed to irritate him.

He let go of Lilliana's hand and strolled over with a roguish smile, greeting the two elder ladies before lazily taking a seat on the sofa across from me.

Adah scolded him lightly, "You rascal, could you not take a little more care of Lilliana? She just got back..."

"Oh come on, what are you saying? Lilliana's at her own home, does Greg really need to babysit her?"

Ramona chimed in with a chuckle, glancing at me with a meaningful look. "Besides, Greg should just look after Lilliana like a sister from now on. They haven't spent much time together over the years, so there's not much of a bond. We're not sticking to old-fashioned ways here. Let the kids decide for themselves when it comes to their feelings."

I was taken aback. That was quite unexpected.

Adah, catching the implication, was even more surprised, "What do you mean? Are you suggesting they break off the engagement? Greg has waited for Lilliana for so many years..."

Obviously, Gregory had discussed this with Ramona directly.

Without notifying the Ford family.

Ramona smiled, saying, "Ask the young ones themselves. Childhood bonds are special, but they might not be enough to sustain a marriage. Let's leave this significant life decision to them." Aside from Christine and me, there were no outsiders here.

Gregory put down his teacup with a rare serious look. "Yes, I've also discussed it privately with Lily, and she agrees."

"So this was your idea."

Adah glared at him but without any real blame, turning to Lilliana, "Lilliana, his word doesn't mean anything. Tell your grandmother yourself, do you agree?"

"I..." Lilliana fiddled with her fingers, glancing at Gregory's expression, her eyes suddenly reddening. "I don't want to be just Greg's sister, but if that's what Greg wants, I'll respect his decision..." Before she could finish, Adah smacked Gregory on the head, "Listen to her! I'm telling you, even if I agreed to break off the engagement, your grandfather would never allow it!" "Adah, you always know best!"

Suddenly, Mrs. Myers walked in, caressing Lilliana's cheek, "Don't worry, dear. Greg has waited for you for years, he's just teasing. There's no way he'd call off the engagement just like that." Lilliana murmured softly, "Mom..."

Gregory didn't say much, merely picking up his phone and fiddling with it.

Within minutes, I received a text from Gregory: "I'll handle this."

I didn't reply.