

Lost Me, Gained Regret (Jane and Bryant Ferguson)

Chapter 371

I had asked Aunt Cheryl about my origins a few times, but it always ended nowhere. Even if I asked again, Aunt Cheryl would still keep her mouth shut.

Christine agreed, lounging back on the couch, lost in thought. Then, she turned her head toward me, her eyes sparkling. "Doesn't that make you and Gregory childhood sweethearts, the legendary fiancée?" "Pfft, cough, cough..." I was mid-sip of water when she blurted that out, causing me to spit it out and choke. The fit of coughing lasted for a moment.

She laughed, handing me a bunch of napkins. "What got you so flustered?"

I smiled shyly. "Shut it."

"Looks like Gregory's childhood sweetheart is," she said, shaking her head with a grin.

For two days straight, I was distracted. The thought that a single DNA test could not only decide my future but also deny my twenty-six years of past. It could erase the loving moments with my parents that I held onto in my memories. I felt utterly lost, just like I had gone from being someone grounded to a leaf adrift in the vast ocean.

Thankfully, as each agonizing second ticked by, the day to receive the DNA results finally arrived. Gregory picked me up from the hotel.

On the way to the Myers Mansion, although it was just the beginning of spring, my palms were clammy with sweat. I was nervous.

What if Richard and Susan were my parents? How would I face that? Especially Susan, the woman who had locked me in a dark room and made me kneel in the snow, my mother? Driving with one hand, Gregory wrapped his other around mine. "Scared?"

"Yeah." I nodded, glancing at him, "Aren't you?"

He must be scared, too. After waiting for Lilliana for so many years, always believing it was me, the outcome was perhaps one of the most crucial moments of our lives for both him and me.

"I'm good." He flashed a half-smile, overtaking a car before stepping on the gas. "But no matter what happens today, you must trust me."

I asked, "What do you mean?"

"Lilliana, staying with the Myers family, I looked into her again these past few days." Gregory spoke indifferently, his voice slightly cold, "Her background, as I found before, is consistent. She grew up in an orphanage. She couldn't have set up today's scenario just by herself."

I couldn't help asking, "Do you know who did?"

"More or less." His fingers tapped rhythmically on the steering wheel, and he added, "But it's likely complicated, with a high chance that others are involved."

I frowned slightly. "What are the motives?"

"Going after my charm?" He joked with a smirk.

I rolled my eyes at him. "Full of yourself."

Gregory raised an eyebrow. "Perhaps everyone has their reasons."

When we got to Myers Mansion, Ramona was there to receive us. The three of us went inside. We didn't head to Ramona's yard but to the Myers family's council hall. Besides the three of us, Richard, Susan, Dorothy, and Lilliana were there.

Two days had passed, and Lilliana looked paler, with dark circles under her eyes. She hadn't slept well. Seeing us enter, she visibly shuddered.

Gregory guided me to a chair before Richard started, "Greg, this is no child's play. You better not be messing around."

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Susan's face, etched with concern and fury the other night, now had just a playful, mocking smile.

"The report was supposed to come out today. Where is it?"

"Any minute now." That was all Gregory offered in response.

Susan turned to me with a sneer, "Ms. Webster, once the report is out, I have only one request for you. Never set foot in the Myers family again! You've caused enough

chaos!" "Shut up!" Ramona's voice was sharp as she scolded, and she gave me a reassuring look, "Jane, don't worry, I'm here."

"Okay." Hearing those words, I inexplicably breathed a sigh of relief.

It felt like I wouldn't be facing it alone, no matter what happened. Even if I were Lilliana, returning to the Myers family, I'd still have my grandma.

Susan scoffed in disdain, "Ramona, save your energy. There's no way she's Lilliana."

"Are you so sure because you already know the results?" Gregory's tone carried a hint of confusion.

Susan hurriedly denied, "How could I possibly know!"

"Oh, I was just wondering how you'd be more informed than I am about a test conducted at the Ford family's hospital." Gregory's smile was casual, yet it seemed he held all the cards. Fearing she'd get caught out on another slip, Susan urged, "Has the report arrived yet?"

As she finished her sentence, a young man entered. He handed two documents to Gregory, "Gregory, the doctor gave the documents to me himself. They didn't pass through anyone else's hands." With that, the atmosphere in the room grew even tenser.

Susan didn't immediately pounce to see the results but patiently waited for Gregory to take a look. [Search the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Gregory's expression didn't change as he read the first document, but his face turned cold upon reading the second. Always laid-back, his stern face was particularly intimidating.

Subconsciously, I spoke up, "Gregory..."

"What?" He placed a hand on my shoulder, squeezing reassuringly.

Meanwhile, a message popped up on his phone. He glanced at it, and a faint smile played on his lips.

"Greg, why the silence?" Seeing him with his head down, Susan mistook his quiet for acceptance, and her smile deepened. "You probably don't know what a mother's intuition is. If Ms. Webster were my daughter, wouldn't I feel it?"

Gregory looked up at her with a cold smile. "I was just wondering how you managed to tamper with the results."

Susan's composure flickered before she regained control. "Excuse me? What are you talking about?"

"Susan," Always proud, Gregory tossed the two DNA reports on the table. "I don't make the same mistake twice."

"What do you mean?" Susan asked.

"I forgot to mention," Gregory said calmly, "This time, we did two DNA tests, one by the Ford family's hospital, and the other was sent abroad by private plane the night before last, to an international institution." "What?" The revelation unsettled both Susan and Dorothy.

Dorothy stood up abruptly. "Are you saying the results from abroad differ from what we got today?"

"Ask your mom." Gregory's voice carried a casual defiance. Those three words seemed both an answer and an insult.

Ramona gestured, and the butler picked up the two reports from the table, handing them to Ramona. After reading, she looked sharply at 'Lilliana' and instructed the butler. "Take her to the guest house and keep an eye on her! Clean Lilliana's room thoroughly and disinfect everything. Lilliana likes cleanliness and doesn't want strangers touching her things."

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"Affirmative," the butler responded promptly.

It was clear as daylight that this 'Lilliana' was an impostor.

Panic struck 'Lilliana' as her eyes shimmered with tears. She glanced at me, then at Susan and Dorothy, before finally collapsing to her knees before Gregory. "Mr. Ford, please, have mercy on me! I should've never harbored such foolish dreams, never tried to pass off as something I'm not..."

Known for his short patience with others, Gregory furrowed his brows. "Whoever sent you, go beg them, not me."

"I..." Susan interjected sharply as Lilliana's gaze drifted away, "Farley, what are you waiting for? Get her out of here! Ramona, frankly, we shouldn't even keep her around. Just send her back where she came from."

Ramona's eyes narrowed, piercing, but she didn't catch on to Susan's words. Instead, she turned to Gregory. "Greg, the DNA results from abroad must have come in by now, right?"

"Yes, they're due any minute." Gregory nodded and glanced at his watch, "Five minutes."

"Good." Ramona breathed a sigh of relief.

While waiting, the quiet in the hall was so deep.

I watched Gregory's expression, guessing at the outcome. My heart pounded like a drum, and my palms were sweaty over and over.

Susan and Dorothy visibly grew more anxious as time ticked by. Susan kept an eye on the clock. With two minutes left, Susan couldn't sit still any longer. She turned to Gregory and said, "Even if the reports from the two institutions differ, what does it prove? Are the foreign results infallible? Who's to say you didn't tamper with them to suit your ends..."

Gregory scoffed, "You worry too much. They got the foreign tests finished under constant surveillance. I even had them send over the video footage."

Susan clenched her teeth, trying to maintain her composure. "Well, you've certainly covered all bases. Fine, I'm curious to see the outcome myself."

I sat across from Susan, silently observing. The more I watched, the more melancholy overcame me. That was her rejection of me. And my aversion to her was just as strong, if not stronger. Could there be such animosity between a mother and her daughter?

Meanwhile, Gregory stepped out to take a call. Through the glass, I could see his lips press together slightly.

As soon as he hung up, someone handed him a report. He returned, holding the report, and gave it to Ramona. "Ramona, I already know the result. Please, see for yourself."

His words said it all.

As I turned to look at Ramona, it was as if our minds were linked.

She looked back at me, her eyes filled with warmth and affection. The last time someone looked at me like that was Timothy.

Trembling, Ramona was about to open the report when she suddenly convulsed, coughing up blood.

I couldn't be sure, but almost meanwhile, out of the corner of my eye, I thought I saw Dorothy's clenched hands relax.

Without a second thought, I rushed over. "Ramona!"

"Jane..." With her last ounce of strength, Ramona clutched my arm, racked with guilt. Her voice faded to a whisper, so soft that only I could hear, "I was wrong. I couldn't recognize you as Greg did..." And then, the hand gripping my arm slackened. Ramona had passed out!

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Gregory quickly caught Ramona as she fell, swiftly instructing the butler, "Farley, is there an ambulance on its way?"

"Yes, it's already at the front gate." Farley had seen Ramona collapse and immediately sent a servant to call for a medical team.

It was all in preparation for 'Lilliana's' frail health, just in case of an emergency. Little did they know it would come in handy so soon.

Ramona got loaded into the ambulance, and I followed in Gregory's car, rushing to the hospital. By the time we arrived, Ramona had been in the emergency room.

My emotions were a whirlwind. I wanted to cry, yet I couldn't. Mostly, I was panicked and scared.

The sound of hurried footsteps approached. The Myers family had also arrived.

Dorothy came running and pushed me aside with a disgusted look. "Jane, what are you doing here? You're nothing but bad luck!"

I steadied myself, looking at her coldly. "My grandmother is ill. What I do is none of your business."

I might have had my doubts before. But right then, I had no time to ponder. I just wanted to know how my grandmother was doing.

"Your grandmother?" Dorothy's face broke into a smirk, "You've got some nerve. Even the tests at the Ford family's hospital were questionable, and you think a foreign document will get you through the Myers family's door?"

I frowned, asking, "What are you trying to say?"

"Greg always favored you, but who knows what samples were sent abroad for testing? Your hair or someone else's?" Dorothy challenged.

"Dorothy has a point." Susan was against my presence, determined not to acknowledge me, "Ms. Webster, it's better you understand your place as an outsider."

It was as if I was not her daughter but rather the child of an enemy.

Almost reflexively, I turned to Richard, my lips twitching, "Mr. Myers, do you feel the same?"

Richard looked visibly troubled and was about to speak when Susan took his arm, "Honey, you've thought it through, haven't you? When Lilliana went missing, the situation was so complicated. How could we possibly find her again? And now, to bring another impostor home?"

Somehow, a shadow passed over Richard's eyes before he looked at me distantly, "Ms. Webster, you know, we need to be cautious!"

Gregory covered the inquiry in his eyes and, before I could speak, put his arm around my shoulder, saying softly, "Let's focus on Ramona's condition for now."

His words seemed to settle the matter.

Neither Richard nor Susan said anything more, though Dorothy looked displeased. "What do you mean? Does she get to stay? Grandma might not have ended up like this if it weren't for her!"

"What's meant to happen will happen." Gregory spoke lightly, dismissing her accusation before glaring at her, "Since you're so sure she isn't Lilliana, why the rush to send her away?"

Dorothy faltered, then retorted, "Who's rushing?"

"Enough!" Fearing a confrontation between Dorothy and Gregory would end poorly, Susan interjected, "Dorothy, stop arguing. Once your grandmother comes out of the emergency room alive, whoever needs to leave will leave."

I clenched my fists, feeling Gregory's hand on my shoulder press a bit harder as if he were telling me to stay calm.

Thinking about how Ramona was still in danger made me even more nervous.

Gregory had mentioned Ramona's poor health before. But coughing up blood must be a sign of something serious. Ramona always seemed so lively, not at all like someone gravely ill.

Every second was more agonizing than waiting for the DNA test results. About an hour later, the door to the emergency room finally opened.

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It was the Myers family's hospital, and the doctor made a beeline for Richard. "Mr. Myers, your mother didn't suffer a relapse of her old illness. She's been poisoned." "Poisoned?" Richard's face went pale.

Mine and Gregory's expressions darkened as well.

Ramona had hardly left the Myers Mansion these past few days, waiting anxiously for news.

And within the confines of the Myers estate, she had been poisoned.

Gregory asked, "What kind of poison? How is Ramona doing now?"

"The tests are still ongoing. We can only confirm the presence of toxins that rapidly deteriorate neurological functions and damage the liver and kidneys," the doctor replied. "Moreover, the senior experts in the lab mentioned that if she had the antidote within half an hour, there shouldn't be any serious issues. But Ramona has exceeded this timeframe. You brought her in on time to save her life, but she is still unconscious. It's hard to tell when she'll wake up."

I clenched my fists tightly.

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My gaze shifted toward Dorothy, but before I could speak, she preempted me, eyes blazing with anger. "Jane, did you do this? Grandma has always been so kind to you. How could you be so heartless..." Snap! I slapped Dorothy across the face. "You know better than anyone who stands to gain from Ramona's poisoning!"

It had to be Dorothy! She must have known about my true identity all along. The poisoning was a calculated move, awaiting an outcome.

If Gregory didn't have a backup plan and the report from the Ford family's hospital had fooled Ramona, she would have secretly administered the antidote without raising suspicion. But things didn't go as planned. The poison took effect.

"How dare you hit me? You think you're the real Ms. Myers now?" Dorothy clutched her face, teeth clenched, ready to lunge at me, but I grabbed her arm and flung her away!

I sneered, "Is it me who sees herself as Ms. Myers, or is it you?"

"Jane!" Seeing the red mark on Dorothy's face, Susan snapped at me, "Are you out of your mind? If Greg wasn't around, you'd be in deep trouble!"

At that moment, I doubted the authenticity of the paternity test report more than ever.

Was this woman my birth mother? Life sure is full of mysteries.

Gregory stepped before me, his posture relaxed but his voice tinged with a cold edge, "The Myers family is truly rotten to the core."

He then glanced at me, "Let's go. We should check on Ramona."

"Okay." I had no desire to linger any longer.

At Gregory's word, they didn't stop me from entering the hospital room. Just as the doctor had said, Ramona was still unconscious.

After a while, Gregory suggested we leave to grab some food.

Once we were in the elevator, I finally asked, "Are we just leaving? What if something happens to Grandma?"

"It won't." Gregory seemed to understand, explaining, "Officially, Richard might seem to be in charge of the family's business, but the real owner has always been Ramona. She's passionate about philanthropy and often talks about donating most of her wealth. Plus, there's a will with the contents unknown to anyone. So, at least, until the contents are clear, no one would dare let anything happen to her."

In other words, a single misstep could wash away most of their fortune.

I pursed my lips, gathering the courage to ask him, "I am Lilliana, right?"

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Hearing that, Gregory smiled slightly, his hazel eyes fixed on me as he spoke softly but clearly, "Yes, you're Lily, my fiancée." It was a confirmation, a proclamation.

"Gregory..." My thoughts were a whirlwind of emotions, yet relief washed over me. "Thank you for never, ever giving up on me."

Every time I needed help, Gregory was there, right on time. Even when someone else took my place, he schemed and plotted. Everyone else had given up on me, but not him.

Gregory took me to a cozy diner near the Myers Mansion. The waiter led us to a private booth. Only then did I realize it wasn't just me and him. Farley was there, too.

Seeing us enter, Farley immediately stood up, his gaze fixed on me. The man, nearly sixty, suddenly started to cry. In his hands, he held the report from an international institute. Farley must have read it. Farley addressed me, "Miss Lilliana!"

That title startled me, not because it was unexpected, but because it felt all too familiar.

It felt like I had heard that countless times before.

All the emotions I had held back all morning suddenly crumbled, and tears rolled down my cheeks. "Farley..."

"Oh God!" Farley choked up, hastily wiping away his tears. "Thank goodness you're safe and have grown. It's good, really good!"

"Farley, take a seat. She's hungry." Gregory pulled me to sit down.

Soon, we ordered food.

After the waiter left, Farley got straight to the point, handing Gregory two sealed powder packets. "We did find something, but it wasn't in Dorothy's room. It was in Susan's..." Hearing that, I sharply asked, "Is this... poison?"

"It seems so." Farley nodded with resentment. "Thank goodness, when you went to the hospital, Greg stopped me and told me to search the house. If I had gone to the hospital, this would have been destroyed."

Gregory took the packets. "Did you catch the person?"

Farley answered calmly, "We did. We've locked her up at the address you provided."

Gregory nodded. "Good."

Farley asked, "Do I need to continue watching her?"

"No, you need to return to the Myers family." Gregory served me some salad. "Eat while you listen."

Then, he continued to Farley, "Ramona is still unconscious. It's not my place to get involved in the Myers family matters now. As for Lily, you've probably guessed she can't return to the Myers family just yet. We have to wait until Ramona wakes up."

Farley hesitated, "But with me searching the house and catching someone today, the surveillance caught something..."

Gregory reassured him, "Don't worry about going back there. I've had someone wipe the surveillance."

Farley asked again, "What do you need me to do next?"

"Just keep an eye on the imposter still at the Myers family. Try to find out if anyone else is in besides Dorothy and Susan." Gregory methodically instructed. .

I was somewhat surprised.

There hadn't been much time from Ramona's collapse to the meal. But Gregory had arranged everything before Dorothy and her cronies could react.

While eating, I couldn't help but ask Farley, "Farley, Lilliana, I mean me. Am I Susan's biological child?"

I learned how chaotic affluent families could be when I was with the Ferguson family. Families like the Ford and the Myers families probably weren't much better.

I wouldn't deny when I first considered the question, the answer I hoped for most was a no.

Unfortunately, the truth didn't grant me my wish.

Farley sighed, "When you were born, Lady Ramona was waiting outside the delivery room. There shouldn't be a mistake. It's just that, over the years, Susan might have invested too much emotion in Dorothy, leading to the current situation..."

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I let my gaze drop, struggling to accept the harsh reality. Even the thought of it sent shivers down my spine. To think Susan would go as far as poisoning Ramona to keep me away from the Myers family. Compared to her and Richard, I cherished the memories of my childhood, when my parents held me dear in their hearts. Yet, fate had its cruel twists, and I was nothing more than someone else's stand-in. Out of nowhere, Gregory asked, "Is there any chance the hospital still has maternity records from back then? Is it possible that any friends or acquaintances of the Myers family had a baby around the same time?"

Farley shook his head. "That's way back. It's too hard to track down now."

After dinner, I wanted to return to the hospital.

Gregory objected, "There's no need. That's the Myers family's territory. Ramona has a top-notch medical team looking after her. If you go there, you won't be able to help, and you'll end up clashing with Dorothy again."

"But..." I was in turmoil.

Somehow, staying by Ramona's side seemed the only way to find peace.

Gregory seemed worried about Ramona, too, but he pinched my cheek reassuringly and promised, "Nothing will happen to her. And I'll let you know right away if she wakes up."

I doubted it. "Would the Myers family even inform you if she woke up?"

Gregory replied without hesitation. "No."

I was curious. "Then how..."

He smirked. "I have my ways."

"Okay then."

"So, focus on your job at the hotel." He ushered me into the car and drove toward the hotel.

I thought I'd head back to RiverCity once the ordeal was over. After all, the holiday was finishing, and Janedream was about to start up again. But I got caught up in the mess. When Ramona would wake up was still uncertain.

With that thought, I decided, "I want to return to RiverCity this afternoon."

Susan's attitude toward me always felt off. As a mother, no matter how resentful, she would show some hesitation, right? But I saw none of that in Susan.

Gregory saw right through me. "Planning to ask your aunt about your origins?"

I admitted, "Right."

He nodded, "That's a good idea. Ramona never figured out who kidnapped you back then. Maybe you can uncover something."

I sighed, "I hope so."

Gregory said softly, "I've got a meeting with Farley this afternoon to interrogate the suspect he caught. I can't come with you, but I'll arrange for someone to take you."

I turned down his kindness. "No need! Christine drove here. It's close by. We can manage on our own."

Back at the hotel, Christine rushed over as soon as I walked in, eager to hear about the day. I shared everything, leaving her shocked. Then, remembering something, she asked, "Why was your phone turned off when I tried calling?"

"Ran out of battery." After explaining, I inquired, "What's up?"

All I could think about the previous night was the paternity test, so I had no energy to worry about my phone's battery. And today, I was too busy to even look at my phone.

Christine sighed, replying, "Your ex-husband Bryant was looking for you! He even came to the hotel."

I was puzzled. "What for?"

Christine added, "He didn't say, but he seemed upset. Probably, it was something important. Turn on your phone and give him a call."

"Okay." After charging my phone, a barrage of missed calls from Bryant popped up.

A sinking feeling grew in my stomach. I immediately called back, and Bryant answered quickly in a stern and commanding tone, "Done meddling with the Myers family's mess? Back at the hotel?" I answered, "Yes."

Bryant's icy voice came through again. "Meet me downstairs in five minutes. We're heading back to RiverCity."

I was trying to say no. "Bryant, I don't..."

"Your aunt's doctor issued a critical condition notice."

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"I'll be right down." Upon hearing that, my heart skipped a beat, and I agreed quickly.

Seeing my troubled expression, Christine asked, "What happened on his end?"

I was hastily packing my things as I replied, "My aunt's critically ill. I need to rush back to RiverCity."

Thinking about Dorothy's tactics, I even started to doubt whether it was the illness that worsened or it was because of my getting involved.

"Critically ill?" Christine decided on the spot. "Bryant's coming to pick you up, right? Stop packing. Just leave it to me. I'll wrap things up here this afternoon. You go back first, and when I return, I'll bring your stuff with me."

In my desperation, I didn't hesitate. "Okay, Chris, I owe you one."

Christine handed me my power bank and phone, pushing me out the door. "Don't mention it. It is part of my job as the Head of the Marketing Department. Besides, I'm a shareholder. I'm essentially helping myself."

I had brought Christine into the partnership, giving her a share of the business.

I nodded. "Then I'm off!"

While I was going downstairs, Bryant's car gracefully pulled up to the curb. The driver came out to open the door for me. As I settled into the backseat, I saw him resting with his eyes closed. I was more than happy to keep to myself, turning to look out the window. The silence in the car was eerie.

As my thoughts began to drift, Bryant's voice broke the silence. "Stay out of the mess in Vista Town."

"You can't tell me what to do." I didn't even turn my head, my tone frosty.

Annoyed, Bryant continued, "You think just because of a paternity test, you can be with Gregory and become part of the Ford family?"

"How do you know about it?" I spun around, facing him with surprise and suspicion in my eyes.

That had only happened this morning, and very few people knew about it. Gregory wouldn't talk, and the Myers family, more than anyone, would want it buried, fearing I might return to their family. Bryant looked at me, his lips barely moving. "I also know that you and he stand no chance."

I clenched my fists, withdrawing my gaze. "I stand even less of a chance with you."

"Jane..." He suddenly softened his tone. "We've had our moments in the past three years, haven't we?"

"If you say so." I looked down with a faint smile.

I didn't feel like arguing if Bryant saw my unrequited feelings and his lukewarm gestures as our special moments.

For the first time, I realized how exhausting it could be when to argue after completely giving up on someone. Bryant gave a cold laugh. "Gregory's that good, huh?"

Without hesitation, I answered, "Yes."

I hadn't spent much time thinking about my future with Gregory over the past few days. My focus had been on unraveling my past. But no matter what the future might hold for us, he was good to me. He protected and respected me more than anyone else.

If I had to describe it, in Bryant's eyes, I was once a weed, neglected and exposed to the storms. Later, he treated me like a rose in a greenhouse, seemingly doing everything for my sake but utterly disregarding my wishes and thoughts.

But with Gregory, I was a sunflower. He thoughtfully considered my needs, respected my desires, analyzed the pros and cons, and allowed me to grow toward the sun with all my might. That was what I always wanted to be, not a weed or a rose.

Upon hearing my straightforward and definite answer, Bryant's gaze dimmed a bit. His lips formed a straight line, and after a moment of silence, he spoke softly, "If I became like him, would we stand a chance?"

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I was momentarily stunned. "What?"

He shook his head gently, his voice soft. "Nothing."

But the resolve in his eyes ran deep.

When we arrived at the BlessedCare Medical Facility, the medical staff had just emerged from the emergency room.

The director approached us, shaking his head in resignation. "Mr. Ferguson, Mrs. Ferguson, we did everything we could, but the illness progressed too rapidly. There was nothing more the doctors could do."

I needed confirmation, "So, it was just the illness getting worse?"

The director nodded. "Yes."

My heart sank, tears welling up in my eyes. "Isn't there anything else that can be done? Any method, no matter the cost..."

Even though I found out I was a Myers and not really related to my aunt by blood, she was still the one who was always there for me.

The director sighed. "All possible methods have already been attempted. Mr. Ferguson has taken care of the medical expenses thus far."

"Thank you for everything..."

I said, my gaze inadvertently drifting towards Bryant. "And... thank you."

I had noticed there was still money in my aunt Cheryl's medical account and the hospital hadn't prompted for payment, so I assumed it was sufficient.

Little did I know, Bryant was the one covering the costs.

Bryant spoke softly, "Let's go see your aunt now."

"Yeah!"

Right then, the nurse wheeled my aunt out of the emergency room.

Back in her room, it wasn't long before Cheryl woke up.

Seeing me, a smile spread across her pale face, "Jane, you're here..."

I felt guilty; I had been so caught up in my own affairs that I had neglected her. "Auntie, you were in such poor health, why did you lie to me over the phone during the holidays, saying you were fine?"

"I didn't want to worry you over the holidays." She patted my hand, "Besides, I've lived a full life. Whether I live or die, I'm at peace."

I turned away, tears falling, and quickly wiped them off. "What about Leroy Brown? Why isn't he here?"

"Well..." Cheryl gave a bitter smile, "It's been a long time since he visited. If it weren't for you and Bryant, I might have already passed away."

"Auntie..."

Seeing her weak state, I stood up. "I'll call him, make him come."

Cheryl stopped me, a look of utter disappointment on her face. "Jane, let it be. I've come to terms with not having him in my life. The bonds between parents and children can be fickle, and if it's time to let go, then so be it."

I held her hand, "It's okay, you still have me."

"Yes, thankfully I have you."

Cheryl sighed, glancing at Bryant standing behind me, advising, "Silly girl, I can tell Bryant cares a lot about you. Cherish the people in your life so you don't end up alone on a hospital bed like me." "Don't worry."

Bryant, who had been silent, suddenly spoke up with conviction, "No matter what happens, I will take care of Jane."

I didn't want to upset Cheryl any further, so I didn't argue or respond.

"That's all I needed to hear," she said with a gentle smile, her strength seemingly fading. She then looked at my neck, "Are you wearing the locket?"

"Yes, I am. See, I've been wearing it all along," I reassured her, pulling out the locket from under my shirt and showing it to her. Finally, with hesitation, I asked, "Auntie, Uncle wasn't just speaking out of anger, was he? I'm... not really a Webster, am I?"

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Cheryl's demeanor stiffened, "Who told you that?"

"Auntie, please don't hide it from me."

I pressed my lips together, "I had to be sure before I came to you. I already know that I belong to the Myers family of Vista Town."

"Myers? Your biological father is a Myers?"

Cheryl became visibly tense. Despite her frail voice, she bombarded me with questions, driven by her emotions, "Did they come for you? What happened? Have they treated you poorly?"

Her reaction confirmed my suspicions. Cheryl knew something about the past.

I pressed on, "How did I end up with the Websters in the first place?"

"Back then..." Cheryl pondered for a moment, then looked at me with pity, "Your parents lost their beloved daughter, and the doctor said your mother couldn't have any more children. Later, they went to Vista Town for business and, by a strange twist of fate, ended up bringing you back."

"And then? The Myers family has been saying I was kidnapped all these years. Was I really kidnapped?"

"Indeed, you were."

Her tone grew grave, "At the time, your parents were entertaining in Vista Town. Your dad went to the car to fetch some wine and found you sneaking into the vehicle, pleading for help... You were covered in bruises, and knowing your dad's kind heart, he couldn't just leave you there."

"He decided to rescue you right then and there. But people were searching for you everywhere, so he had to lock you in the car. He acted as if nothing happened and returned to the restaurant."

"You were smart, staying quiet and hidden under the backseat with a blanket over you, avoiding detection."

"Those men even searched the restaurant later. Your parents overheard them mentioning a name... Susan..."

"Susan?"

My heart tightened.

Even the 'kidnapping' and 'loss' were orchestrated by Mrs. Myers... my mother?

"Yes, but for years... we thought the Myers were your biological parents' enemies."

Cheryl nodded, "Those people were cautious, not revealing much before they continued their search elsewhere. Fearing for your safety, your parents took you back to River City that very night to heal. Initially, they planned to send you to an orphanage, but they couldn't bear to let you go. Fearing those people would trace you, they erased all records of 'Jane's' death, moved houses, and had you assume her identity."

"So that's what happened..."

My thoughts were a jumble as I fingered the pendant, "And this pendant... was it on me at that time?"

"Yes."

Cheryl looked puzzled, "Your dad did some digging. In all of Vista Town, there's only one Myers family, but among so many Myers, none bore the surname Taylor."

"Taylor? What does that have to do with anything?"

"Your pendant..." She looked at me, replying, "There's an inscription on the bottom, a 'Taylor'. Your dad found it by accident and needed a magnifying glass to see it clearly." "Taylor?"

I immediately looked down, touching the bottom of the pendant. There was indeed a subtle indentation, but it wasn't obvious.

I had thought this was a Myers family heirloom... but it seems I was wrong.

Doubts swirled in my mind.

Cheryl sighed, "Beyond that, I don't know."

I calmed my emotions, saying, "Auntie, thank you for telling me all this."

This only deepened my suspicions.

Susan... was likely not my biological mother after all.

Cheryl shook her head, tucking the pendant back under my shirt, "Babe, if you can forgive me, that's all I need. I didn't mean to hide your origins. Your parents, before they passed, made me promise countless times, fearing the truth would endanger you. Including this pendant, I wouldn't have revealed it if I weren't already so ill."

