

Lost Me, Gained Regret (Jane and Bryant Ferguson)

Chapter 411

I grabbed Christine's arm and made a beeline for the exit. He already had a girlfriend; there wasn't much need for an explanation.

It wasn't until we had completely vanished around the corner that Gregory finally averted his gaze, looking at Edith with an indifferent expression.

"What's your angle?"

"My angle?"

Edith gestured towards her phone with her lips, "Just trying to snag your 'casual friend's' contact for you. How do you plan on thanking me?" Gregory replied coolly, "No need."

Edith smirked, "Then why did you stop her? All this playing hard to get, who taught you that? It's so outdated," Edith said with disdain.

Gregory was unfazed, "Edith, has anyone ever told you that you look pretty decent when you're not talking?"

She wasn't pleased with that, "Like a dog could ever speak of ivory. No wonder you've been single for two decades."

"Get lost."

Gregory licked his back teeth, swearing with a smile.

[I accepted your friend request]

Suddenly, a new message popped up on his phone. He glanced down and waited, but no further messages came.

That was her style.

Always leaving without a word, cutting ties without a second thought, without any remorse.

Maybe it was the nostalgia of their shared past that thickened over time. No matter what she did, he couldn't find it in himself to hate her.

Yet, he didn't want to let her off that easily either.

Lest she never learns her lesson.

Opening her profile, he saw her picture against the backdrop of dusk, leaning on a balcony railing, lost in thought as she gazed towards the living room.

Bathed in the twilight's afterglow, there was an indescribable loneliness about her.

For some reason, it tugged at his heart.

After a moment, he tapped to view her stories.

He was afraid, afraid of seeing her flaunting a new relationship, of her being too happy. But what scared him even more was the thought that she might still be struggling, that Bryant was still causing her pain. But there was nothing. She hadn't posted anything on her moments.

Back home, Edith suddenly snatched his phone away, "Stop obsessing, you've almost burned her picture into your retinas in just two hours."

Gregory demanded his phone back, annoyed, "My eyesight has only just recovered, and you're worried I'm ruining it with electronics?"

Edith paused, then remembered something, "She probably mistook me for your girlfriend. You better clear that up soon, or you'll push her even further away."

"Me, explain?" Gregory almost laughed in frustration. "In your dreams."

She didn't bother to explain herself to him, yet he was expected to clear the air?

He wasn't that desperate.

Just 'casual friends.'

Right, 'casual friends.'

After my shower, the summer storm hit, pelting the windows with raindrops large as soybeans.

Christine held two wine glasses in one hand and a bottle of red wine in the other.

"You okay?"

She handed me a glass.

I nodded, passing her the corkscrew, "I'm fine."

Christine cautiously gauged my mood, stating the facts, "He has a girlfriend now."

"He should."

Especially since he's still in a wheelchair, these last two years must have been his hardest.

So proud and arrogant, it must have taken him everything to accept his reality.

Having someone by his side, I should be happy for him.

Christine poured the wine, sat cross-legged on the carpet leaning against the sofa, and lightly clinked her glass against mine, "What about you?"

I chuckled, "I have you."

She looked at me with interest, laughing, "So, you won't choose love over friendship in the future?"

"No..."

I was about to respond when a message popped up on my phone.

[Lily, my leg hurts]

-Gregory.

I paused, setting down my glass, pondering a reply: [Why don't you ask your girlfriend to try a hot compress or a massage?]

[That's my cousin]

[She's out]

[Are you free?]

His replies came back instantly.

Chapter 412

Christine leaned in with curiosity sparkling in her eyes. "What's up? Who texted you?"

I turned off my phone screen. "Gregory."

"Gregory? What does he want now? Wasn't he snarky enough at the diner last night? Thinks he didn't get his point across?"

"It's not that."

I hesitated before speaking, a bit embarrassed. "He's got leg pain, probably a leftover issue from that accident last year. I should go check on him." Christine glared at me, visibly annoyed. "Just when you promised you wouldn't choose a guy over your friends, and here you are, proving me wrong."

I tried to smooth things over by offering a shoulder rub. "Come on, Chris. How could you even say that? I'm just going to check up on him. What do you feel like for late-night snacks? I'll bring you something on my way back."

"It's not about that. Doesn't he have a girlfriend? What's your role in this?"

"He doesn't have a girlfriend."

I touched my ear. "That's his cousin."

"Alright, fine. Go then."

Christine seemed to let go of her frustration, pushing me out the door with a resigned sigh.

On my way to River Villa, just as I was about to enter the parking lot, the security guard stopped me.

Apparently, there was a new rule that no outside vehicles were allowed in.

I tried calling Gregory, but got no answer.

Left with no choice, I parked my car on the street and borrowed an umbrella from the guard, walking into the complex. Despite it being summer, the pouring rain had soaked through my high heels, and the hem of my dress clung to my legs. Entering the elevator, the blast of cold air made me shiver.

"Ding-dong-"

Standing at Gregory's door, I rang the bell.

After a moment, the door opened, revealing Gregory in a wheelchair, dressed in a black t-shirt and olive cargo shorts.

Under the bright lights, he looked tired, his voice faint. "Mrs. Ferguson, visiting a man late at night might be hard to explain, don't you think?"

I was taken aback. "Didn't you text me?"

"I texted you?" He chuckled as if I'd told a joke, his smile cold and sarcastic. "Do you think it's two years ago when I'd come running whenever you called?"

I looked down. "Then, must be some glitch with the messaging app."

After a brief hesitation, I said, "If your leg is hurting..."

"Don't worry."

He cut me off with a cold, detached tone. "Even if I'm dying of pain, I wouldn't need someone else's wife to bother."

"Right... I mean, you should just rub it yourself. I'll be leaving then."

As I turned to leave, his expression turned colder, and he made a move to close the door.

But seeing me drenched, he reluctantly said, "Come in and change, or else Mr. Ferguson might come after me if you catch a cold." "It's okay..."

"Jane, you used to having me plead and pamper you, huh? Can't understand plain talk?" His voice was unusually firm.

I clenched my hands but said nothing, stepping in as he moved aside.

"Your slippers are on the top shelf."

He said curtly, then wheeled himself to the living room.

I found the slippers in the shoe cabinet, exactly where I left them two years ago after a dinner party.

That shelf only had that one pair.

Gregory watched me from a distance, his face stoic. "You can find clothes in Edith's room. Pick anything; she won't mind."

"The bathroom has clean towels," he added.

"Okay, got it," I replied, remembering the layout from my previous visits.

I didn't look too hard, just grabbed a dark green maxi dress from Edith's room and changed.

Holding my wet clothes, I found him working in his study.

Standing at the doorway, I hesitated before speaking. "Please tell Edith I'll wash and return her dress."

He didn't look up, just uttered a short, "Hmm."

"I'll be leaving then. Sorry for the intrusion."

"Hmm."

I was about to leave when I saw him struggle to massage his calf, the effort seeming to pain him. "Let me do it."

I stepped in. "I've learned some massage techniques over the past two years. Want to try?"

It was quite the serendipitous learning experience.

After moving to France, the old lady next door, of Chinese descent and skilled in traditional medicine, took a liking to me. She was always sending over delicious homemade treats. Once, she saw me struggling with neck pain and helped me out, which worked wonders. She even offered to teach me.

Gregory sneered. "Playing the devoted wife now, are you?"

I crouched down, placing my hands gently on his calf, massaging with controlled strength.

I never thought I'd actually get to use what I'd learned.

As I massaged, I cautiously asked, "What did the doctors say about your leg? Is there a chance you could stand again?" "Stand up?"

Gregory paused, then swiftly changed the subject, his words sharp. "Your technique is good. Seems you've practiced a lot." Seeing he didn't want to discuss it further, I didn't press, instead following his lead. "Only on Snowy."

"Snowy?"

"Yeah," I nodded, looking up at him with a smile. "My big dog. He's very well-behaved. Never bites when I massage him." Gregory squinted at me with a hint of danger. "Are you saying I'm worse than a dog?"

"No, you're much tougher than a dog."

"Jane." His face was a mix of emotions, finally breaking into a reluctant laugh. "You talk to Bryant like this too?"

"I divorced him."

I looked down, continuing my massage. "Gregory, I'm divorced now."

Chapter 413

The air seemed to freeze for a moment.

Gregory's eyes were fixed on me, piercing. "When did this happen?"

I told him the truth, "Yesterday."

"So you're saying..." He laughed, a sound laced with sarcasm. "So, you went back to him, spent two years realizing it's not working out, and now you're thinking of turning back to me?"

My fingers tightened involuntarily, but he seemed oblivious to the pain, his gaze mocking yet intense. His eyes were full of scrutiny and questioning.

Abruptly, I withdrew my hand and stood up hastily, instinctively denying, "That's not it."

Gregory's smile turned roguish. "Then what is it?"

I avoided his gaze. "How's your leg doing?"

"Jane, aren't you usually quite sharp with your words?" He grabbed my wrist, pulling me closer, his voice tight with emotion, "Why so silent now? Feeling guilty?"

"Gregory..."

He wasn't using much strength; I managed to pull away with a little effort, whispering, "If you have to think that way, then maybe I am guilty."

Perhaps, I was guilty after all.

He smirked. "Do you know what this sounds like?"

"What?"

"The playbook of a heartbreaker."

I pursed my lips, then I said, "It's getting late. I should go."

As I left River Villa in a hurry...

Gregory watched my retreating figure, a shadow of restraint crossing his face. Only after the sound of the door echoed did he look down, unlocking his phone to view the message thread. After a moment, he chuckled.

Edith emerged from the game room across, her mouth twitching, "Really, you're just letting her walk away?"

Gregory shrugged. "What else?"

"I heard her say she got divorced, and you're not seizing the moment? Watch out for her ex coming back for a revenge hit."

"That's your reason for sneaking my phone to message her?"

"...Let's not sweat the small stuff." Edith laughed, "If it weren't for me, would you even know your 'just friends' buddy got divorced?"

"Do you know what I hate the most?"

"People playing games with you."

Edith nodded, understanding. The Ford family's heir, revered for generations, never stumbled in any endeavor. Only two things had ever gone against his will.

One was the cunning bastard from the Ford lineage, against whom Gregory had laid a strategic trap, waiting for the right moment to exact revenge.

The other was Jane. She vanished without a word in their youth, and after two decades of searching, she returned only to smash his pride with a casual "couples fight but make up."

Now, she reappeared, announcing her divorce, yet indifferent to his feelings. This was unbearable for anyone, let alone the proud Gregory.

Edith pondered and then turned to her brother, "If you truly despise her, I can make her remember."

"?"

Gregory frowned, "When did I say I hated her?"

He didn't hate her. He just didn't want to be the fallback guy anymore, not without her clear love, instead of always being the one chasing, as if he was desperate for affection. "You said you hated..."

"I hate the game, not the player."

Edith almost burst into laughter. "Why don't you just admit, no matter what Jane does, you can't hate her? You're head over heels!"

Internally, she mocked. How did the Ford family produce such a love-struck fool?

"You're so in love, yet you let her walk out into such heavy rain?"

Edith walked to the window, glanced down, and coughed lightly, "Sorry, my bad. Looks like her ex's revenge came quicker than I thought."

The man who 'couldn't possibly stand up' suddenly threw off his blanket, rushed to the window, and saw the woman standing beside a Rolls-Royce. Gregory gritted his teeth, nodded in acknowledgment of his anger, and ended up kicking over the office's rocking chair in frustration.

Edith called a doctor overnight.

The doctor warned, returning to square one, he wouldn't be able to stand for at least half a month. A bittersweet remedy.

Beside the Rolls-Royce.

The driver held an umbrella for me as Bryant, seated inside, cracked a slight smile, his voice deep and husky, "You won't even get in my car now?"

"I just think, post-divorce, it's better to maintain some distance."

"It's about grandma."

"What about her..."

Bryant cut me off, "Get in, and I'll tell you."

Reluctantly, I climbed into the car. The interior was tainted with the smell of secondhand smoke, somewhat unpleasant. Noticing my discomfort, Bryant cracked the window slightly. As the car moved through the rain, the smell gradually faded.

I turned to him, "You were saying?"

His eyes fixed on me, his voice deepening, "I've made contact with a specialist who can treat Ramona's neurological condition."

My eyes lit up, "Really?"

"Yes." Bryant finally smiled, "He's coming to Vista Town soon. I'll introduce you. He's agreed to take on Ramona's case."

"Great!" I was surprised yet worried, "Can he really cure Ramona?"

"Relax." He laughed self-deprecatingly, "I've only ever broken my promises to you in our marriage. When have I ever lied about anything else?"

His words made me laugh, a mix of helplessness and amusement. But he was right.

In business, he was always reliable, never making promises he couldn't keep. Remembering something, I couldn't help but say, "Thanks for looking after the Myers side these past two years."

Without him, Ramona wouldn't have recovered so quickly. The Myers family business wouldn't have been left untouched, despite Dorothy's desperation to intervene.

"No need to thank me." Bryant's lashes shadowed his eyes, his voice solemn, "I haven't even begun to make up for what I owe you. 'Thanks' isn't necessary."

Chapter 414

Rain pelted the car windows relentlessly. Looking out, the world seemed draped in an otherworldly mist, bizarre and elusive.

I chuckled lightly, "So, when is this expert you mentioned arriving in Vista Town?"

Bryant replied, "Day after tomorrow, I guess."

"Alright."

I nodded, my hand reaching for the car door handle. "Then, I'll be off."

"Let me walk you out."

"No need, my car's just over there."

"I insist."

His words took me by surprise, but then I saw him reaching for an umbrella on the passenger seat and understood his intention.

With a black, long-handled umbrella, he braved the curtain of rain around the car, opening the door for me. "Let's go."

Water had pooled along the sides of the road, making our footsteps unusually distinct.

We walked side by side to my car. As I opened the door and got in, I noticed he was soaked on one side. I didn't say much, just a simple, "Thanks."

With that, I shut the door with a thud, started the car, and pressed down on the accelerator.

In the rearview mirror, I saw him standing there under the umbrella, watching the direction of my car intently. But I didn't slow down.

Maybe, in some ways, I'm someone who loves deeply yet can let go completely. When in love, I desire it to be unforgettable, earth-shattering. But when fate ends, even an extra word or glance feels unnecessary.

Watching the departing car, Bryant stood in the rain for a long time. He pondered, perhaps understanding for the first time what Jane felt each time he left her behind. A suffocating discomfort gripped his heart. A cyclist splashed by, covering him in mud, but he barely noticed. All he could focus on was the reluctance in his gaze.

Not until my car disappeared did Bryant slowly make his way back to his own vehicle. He dialed a number, his voice hoarse, "Drink?"

"Yeah, the usual spot?"

"Mhm."

"Got it."

On the other end, Steven excused himself from a drinking session and called a ride to their usual hangout. He wasn't surprised.

Over the past two years, Bryant, who used to have no vices, now indulged in smoking and drinking privately. He numbed the pain of Jane's death with alcohol and cigarettes while still on his bipolar medication. But he never dared mention it directly, remembering a friend who did and got a fierce beating from Bryant.

Jane's body was never found. Bryant refused to accept her death. He continued to prepare extravagant gifts for their anniversary and Valentine's Day as before. He visited Jane's adoptive parents' graves on every anniversary.

No matter how drunk, he insisted on being taken back to Lunar Lake Bay Villas, the house he and Jane shared. The media jested that Mr. Ferguson was henpecked. Only Steven knew, Bryant couldn't move on. When Steven arrived at their spot, the table was already laden with an assortment of drinks - foreign, domestic, beers, spirits. Bryant raised his glass in greeting, "You're here?" Then, he downed it in one go.

Steven settled next to him, clicking his tongue, "You called me over to watch you drink yourself into a hospital visit?"

Bryant cracked a wry smile, pouring another drink. "Who took you to the hospital when you and Christine broke up?" "Man, don't start with that."

Steven hadn't expected him to dig up old wounds right away and quickly changed the subject. "So, what's up? The doctor you found for her, she's not going for it?"

"It's not that."

Bryant played with his glass, the defined lines of his fingers tapping against the rim. "Can't quite put my finger on it, but something's off."

Everything felt different. She seemed distant, devoid of emotions, even lacking resistance or disdain. Only when talking about the doctor who could cure her grandmother did he see a flicker of emotion, a smile on her face. At other times, it was as if she wore a mask, creating a sense of distance he couldn't bridge.

Steven casually picked up a glass, filled it, and dropped an ice cube in, lounging back. "I told you before, your approach wouldn't work. What's with respecting and yielding to her?"

"Bro, you think you're some kind of guru with these enlightenment tactics?"

Steven was clearly skeptical. "In my opinion, love is all about the chase, making it impossible for her to escape. Once you reach the point of mutual respect and letting each other be, that's when it's truly over, no spark left."

"You seem to have all the theories down."

Bryant scoffed, then somberly added, "What about you and Christine? How did that end?"

Steven took a large gulp of his drink. The alcohol burned, but he seemed unfazed, glancing at Bryant. "How can we compare? I'm just a rich kid living off his parents, willing to sacrifice for a comfortable life. You're different. In the Ferguson family, your word is law. There shouldn't be so many obstacles between you and her."

Hearing this, something in Bryant's deep eyes flickered. Yes. The only obstacle between him and Jane had been his neglect of her feelings.

Bryant's lips tightened. "The obstacles between her and me are even more complicated than what you had with Christine."

Steven, "What obstacles?"

Bryant's voice was strained, a hint of red in his eyes. "She doesn't love me anymore."

Chapter 415

Regret and discontent mingled in Bryant's heart, but Steven seemed unfazed. "Look, man, you should've never been the one to bring up divorce first. What's critical between two people is that push and pull, you know? Love's all about that tug of war."

Bryant stayed silent for a moment before asking, "Is there still a chance to fix things?"

An idea struck Steven. "Play the sympathy card."

"Sympathy card?" Bryant was skeptical, "No use, she won't fall for that."

Steven shrugged, "If the soft approach won't cut it, guess we gotta play hardball."

Hardball, huh.

Two years back, he had watched her, driven to the brink by his own actions, losing sleep and barely eating. He'd consulted his therapist about it, who mentioned it looked a lot like depression. The severe kind. Swirling his drink, for the first time, he felt utterly helpless. He couldn't control her anymore. But to let her be with Gregory? That was something he couldn't do.

...

When I got home, Christine was lounging on the couch, deeply engrossed in a video game.

Seeing me, she looked up, surprised, "You're back?"

"What, should I not be?"

I casually hung up my coat and went over to the kitchen sink to wash my hands.

Christine, still focused on her game, teased, "Looks like Gregory didn't impress much, huh? I guess being handicapped really affects things?" "He's not exactly handicapped."

I'd thought about it on the way home. "It's more like he's still recovering from an injury."

If it were a real disability, his muscles would've atrophied by now. But Gregory's were just like anyone else's.

Christine paused her game and looked at me, her expression changing, "Wait, why did you change clothes?"

I knew she was jumping to conclusions, so I explained, "Got caught in the rain. Just borrowed a shirt from his cousin temporarily."

That reminded me, my wet clothes were still in his study. I had just tossed them there and in my haste, forgot to grab them when I left.

Christine seemed to ponder for a moment before nodding, "Does he know about your divorce yet?"

"Yeah, he knows." [SEARCH THE website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

I chuckled, grabbing a bottle of water from the fridge, "He thought I'd been happily living at the Ferguson family, playing Mrs. Ferguson for the past couple of years." "Did you set him straight?"

"Nope."

I took a sip of the cold water, soothing my throat, before kicking off my shoes and sitting cross-legged on the carpet, "How could I explain? Tell him about my depression? That I attempted suicide?" People had plenty of assumptions about me because of his depression. And him finding out would only make him feel more guilty.

"Fair enough."

Christine mumbled, "Shouldn't he feel a bit guilty, though? The more guilty he feels, the better he'd treat you."

I looked down, "That's compensation, not affection."

Besides, there was no need to drag someone else into hell with me.

The next day, I sent my initial design drafts to Bella's agent via email. The response was surprisingly swift. Only, it was from Bella herself.

She called, her voice cheerful, "Elena, I've received your designs. How about we grab lunch together?"

She never seemed like someone nearing fifty. More like someone much younger.

I paused my work, smiling, "Ms. Taylor, is there a problem with the designs?"

"No, not at all. I'm very pleased with them. Keep going with what you're doing."

Chapter 416

Bella chuckled, "I've got a flight tonight for a gig, but before I head out, I wanted to grab dinner with you. For some reason, I just feel a kind of instant kinship with you." "I'd be honored," I replied with a smile.

Truth be told, there was something about Bella that I couldn't quite put my finger on.

Comforting, somehow.

As evening approached, I wrapped up my work and, after giving Christine a heads up, I grabbed my bag and left the office.

For convenience's sake, we ended up choosing the same five-star hotel as last time.

When I arrived, there were bodyguards outside, but Bella and her agent were already waiting in the private dining room.

Bella gestured for me to sit beside her. "Order whatever you like," she said.

After settling in, I smiled and replied, "Sure thing. I'm pretty familiar with RiverCity's specialties. Any dietary restrictions I should know about?" "Nothing in particular. Just,

not too spicy. My daughter prefers milder flavors. She's upstairs packing with her assistant but will join us soon."

"Got it," I said, knowing just what to choose.

I quickly made our selections and handed the menu back to the waiter.

Suddenly, Bella's agent, Ivy, handed me her phone. "Bella, check out this property in Vista Town. Summer loves Vista Town. What about getting her a place there as a birthday gift?"

"It would be just a small token," Bella joked, her warmth evident. "I like to pick out every gift for Summer myself."

I caught on that they were discussing Bella's daughter and chimed in, "Ms. Taylor, you're so thoughtful towards your daughter."

"I owe it to her," Bella confessed, looking guilty. "I was too young back then, acted too impulsively at times."

Before I could delve any deeper, the room's door swung open.

"Mom," a sweetly dressed girl entered, beaming a smile before rushing to Bella's side.

Seeing her face, my mind went blank.

She had been known as 'Lilliana Myers' from the Myers family two years ago.

And now, she was Bella's daughter?

Bella, careful not to let her fall, gently supported her, saying softly, "Why the rush, darling? You could've tripped."

"Mom, have you and Ivy discussed my appearance on that variety show yet?" she asked, not yet having noticed me.

Bella seemed troubled, but Ivy quickly intervened, "Darling, getting into the entertainment industry is harder than you think. Sure, being your mom's daughter will get you some support in the industry, but on the internet? Words can hurt worse than any sword. Many stars have been driven to depression. With your mom's resources, you don't need to wade into these murky waters."

"Let them talk. As long as I have mom's love, I couldn't care less about outsiders..." she trailed off, her gaze inadvertently landing on me, her expression momentarily flustered. "You, why are you here?" "She's your mom's fashion designer, quite the prodigy," Bella explained, her brow furrowed slightly. "Why? Do you two know each other?"

Chapter 417

She chimed in quickly, looking quite obedient, "Yeah, we met back in Vista Town."

"Seems like it was meant to be."

Bella smiled and turned to me, "This is my daughter, Summer Taylor."

She took her mother's surname.

I wasn't sure of the backstory, but it was their personal life, so I didn't pry and just offered a polite smile.

Summer seemed to hide some emotion, then clung to Bella's arm, pleading playfully, "Mom, please let me try showbiz. I'm just curious. Let me give it a shot, and if I don't like it, I'll quit, okay?"

"Just give it some time, honey. Let me think it over," Bella soothed her patiently.

Summer pouted, murmuring softly, "Okay, then."

Bella was easygoing, making the meal quite harmonious.

Except for the occasional glances Summer threw my way.

After dinner, Bella had to catch a flight and left in a rush with her manager and assistant, leaving a bodyguard to look after Summer.

I walked to the hotel entrance, and Summer hurried after me.

"Ms. Myers..."

She looked at me timidly, "Thanks for not telling my mom about what happened before."

I frowned, "No need to thank me. I just don't like meddling in other people's business."

Being Bella's daughter, I couldn't understand why she had followed Dorothy's scheming to impersonate me two years ago.

With that thought, I couldn't help but ask, "I'm curious, being Bella's daughter is quite prestigious, why would you..."

"Ms. Myers, since you said you don't like meddling, maybe don't dive into other people's personal lives," Summer said, her lips pursed, eyes blinking, "In the Myers family, you're Ms. Myers, but here, you're just a costume designer for my mom. It's important to know your place."

"Fine."

I'm not usually nosy, and her words made me think maybe I was overstepping.

Better not get dragged into some mess again.

As I turned to leave, she called out again, "Could I ask you one more thing? About what happened two years ago at the Myers place, please never mention it to my mom."

"?"

I laughed mockingly, "Like I said, I don't meddle. So, we'll see how I feel."

Good luck getting everything you want.

The day I was to head to Vista Town, Bryant offered to pick me up.

I wanted to decline.

But since we also had to pick up a specialist from the airport, I agreed to go with him.

After all, it was about my grandmother's health; it didn't seem right to have him run back and forth alone.

On our way to Vista Town, he worked on his laptop resting on his knees.

Clearly, he was squeezing in the trip amidst a busy schedule.

When he finally closed his laptop, I looked up from my phone, "Thanks for doing this, especially when you're so busy." "It's no big deal."

Bryant took off his glasses, rubbing his nose bridge, and ventured cautiously, "You've met Gregory, haven't you?"

I was surprised, "You knew he was still alive?"

"His moves were too noticeable. Vista Town's hotshot SZ Technology last year made me suspect it was him behind it."

I paused, a bit slow to respond, "SZ Technology is his?"

SZ Technology had been around for years, never making much of a splash until a couple of years ago when it suddenly exploded onto the scene with a slew of patents, like a bolt from the blue. With the backing of some powerful forces, its growth was meteoric.

But aside from Bryant, few would have connected it to Gregory.

Plus, I had always assumed that if Gregory had survived, he'd be in France...

Turns out he was in Vista Town all along.

Arriving at Vista Town airport, after picking up the specialist and his assistant, we headed straight for the nursing home.

Ramona, seeing me, was overjoyed, grabbing my hand, "Lilliana, you came to see me?"

"Grandma, how have you been these past few days?"

"Good, everything's been good."

As Ramona tried to lead me to sit down, she noticed Bryant and Dr. Andrews, looking a bit confused, "And these two are...?" "Ramona, this is Dr. Andrews, and I'm Bryant Ferguson. Just call me Bryant."

"Bryant?"

Ramona paused, "You're Lilliana's classmate, right?"

"Ramona, I'm Lilliana's ex. But now, we're..."

"Shush."

Ramona, rarely angry, glared at him, interrupting, "Nonsense. Lilliana is Greg's fiancée, she couldn't possibly be with you."

She then pulled me further away from Bryant, as if afraid he might harm me in some way.

It was a rare sight to see Mr. Ferguson, so used to being courted and flattered, standing awkwardly by.

I couldn't help but laugh, soothingly saying, "Right, grandma, he's just joking. But he did bring Dr. Andrews from overseas to check on you. Let's cooperate with the doctor for a bit, okay?" Ramona then agreed to Dr. Andrews' examination without further complaint. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

I watched nervously from the side.

Over the past two years, I'd secretly arranged for specialists to treat Ramona, but the outcomes were always less than hopeful.

Despite Bryant's assurance, I was still anxious about receiving bad news.

Bryant suddenly approached, speaking softly, "Don't worry, trust me, okay? Dr. Andrews has been specializing in this field for over twenty years. He wouldn't commit if he wasn't confident." "Okay."

I exhaled softly.

After a while, Dr. Andrews helped Ramona sit up, turning to Bryant and me. "Mr. Ferguson, Ms. Webster, her condition isn't the worst I've seen."

I breathed a sigh of relief, "Then, can you..."

"Give it a month at most."

Chapter 418

Dr. Andrews set a strict deadline.

Gratefully, I began, "Dr. Andrews, thank you so much for looking after my grandma during this period. We really appreciate it!"

"No need to thank me."

Dr. Andrews pointed to Bryant, saying, "Thank him. This guy has been pestering me for nearly two months. I hadn't planned on coming back to the States anytime soon, but my wife finally gave in to his persistence and convinced me to come take a look."

Hearing this, I looked at Bryant in surprise.

Two months.

That meant even before I had returned to RiverCity, when he might have thought I was as good as dead, he never gave up on my grandma's condition.

I said, "Bryant, for this... I really owe you one."

"Want to really thank me? How about treating me to dinner?"

"Huh?"

I was taken aback, not expecting such a request from him.

Then, turning to Dr. Andrews, I smiled warmly, "Sure, a dinner for you and Dr. Andrews it is, to try some of Vista Town's local dishes."

Gregory had taken me to a private restaurant two years ago, and the food was excellent.

But then, Dr. Andrews waved it off, "No, no, I've got old friends to catch up with now that I'm back in town. I have plans tonight."

He tapped his assistant, chuckling, "He's coming with me. Ms. Webster, you treat Mr. Ferguson alone. After all, he's the real hero here. I'm just doing my job." .

After laying out the plans for taking over Ramona's treatment tomorrow, Dr. Andrews left with his assistant.

Bryant eyed me, "Getting cold feet about that dinner?"

"Not at all."

I owed him that much, so I said candidly, "It's just dinner, I'm not that petty."

"In that case, can I pick the restaurant?"

"Sure."

I agreed readily.

After all, it was a thank-you dinner, so naturally, he got to choose.

As he selected the restaurant, I helped Ramona into her room, "Grandma, I'm going out to treat someone to dinner for helping us find a reliable doctor. I'll come see you again tomorrow, okay?" "Alright, alright."

Ramona agreed cheerfully, then whispered a reminder, "But remember, Greg is your fiancé!"

"Okay, I remember."

Fate had a twisted sense of humor.

Had I not gone missing, my life these past twenty years would have been completely different.

Bryant chose a riverside restaurant.

The ambiance and atmosphere were top-notch.

The only downside was when the waiter, all smiles, asked, "Will it be à la carte or a set menu for you? It's Valentine's Day today, and we have three special couples' menus. Would you like to take a look?" I instinctively refused, "À la carte..."

"Let's have a look."

Bryant cut me off, completely at ease.

I frowned, "Bryant, I..."

"It's just dinner; it doesn't matter if it's a set menu or not, Jane, relax."

I was at a loss for words.

Then, he told the waiter, "We'll take the Valentine's Day Set C."

The waiter confirmed, "So, one Valentine's Day Set C, coming right up. This set comes with a pair of couple's dolls, would you like them now?"

Just as he was speaking, I felt a strange gaze upon me.

Turning instinctively, I locked eyes with Edith.

The gentleman pulling out her chair was planting a kiss on her cheek, oblivious to anything else, as she looked confusedly at me.

I was about to go over and say hello when she looked away.

Bryant managed to grab my attention. "Jane, anything else you'd like to add in?"

"Nothing more."

I sat back down.

...

Edith withdrew her gaze, inwardly cringing for her foolish brother.

The enemy was at their gates, and he was still playing hard to get.

Thinking this, Edith raised an eyebrow, pretended to take a selfie, but included the other table in the shot.

She opened WhatsApp and sent a message.

[At a couples' restaurant]

[Got the couples' menu too~]

That said it all.

...

I focused on my meal when my phone suddenly buzzed.

A friend request.

[Ms. Webster, I'm Gregory's cousin, Edith]

I glanced towards where Edith was sitting and accepted.

At another table, Edith hadn't even touched her phone on the side, but my 'Edith' had already sent two messages.

[Ms. Webster, Greg's leg is acting up again, really bad. Could you possibly come over?]

[Location attached]

After reading the messages, while still looking in Edith's direction, I deliberately replied,
[Not really convenient today]

Edith was cutting her steak, never touching her phone, yet my phone buzzed again.

[Then... no worries, let him suffer. He's been in pain so long, he's probably used to it by now.]

[Ms. Webster, go ahead with your plans.]

[Don't mind him, his dad doesn't care, and neither does his mom.]

Three messages in a row.

I couldn't help but smile, [I'm on my way now.]

I turned to Bryant, apologizing with a smile, "We're almost done, right?"

Bryant looked up, "Something came up?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

I tucked my phone into my purse, straightforward, "Gregory's leg is hurting. I need to go see him."

Chapter 419

Hearing that, Bryant seemed to freeze for a moment, a mix of shock and disappointment crossing his face.

After a brief silence, he looked at me unexpectedly. "Not even a lie?"

"You were never much of a liar," I replied with a smile, feeling at ease.

In the past, I had heard too much. He always was someone who disdained lying.

"She ran away from home, I have to find her."

"She got a divorce, I'm worried she might do something rash."

"She got into a car accident while speeding, I can't rest easy if I don't go see her."

And later on, he didn't even bother with excuses, it was just: "I'm going to see her."

It was always about his sister. He couldn't just ignore her.

It seemed that having this connection meant that if I showed even a slight concern, I was being petty. To object was unthinkable, almost akin to committing a crime.

Quite ironic. This was the boomerang effect everyone talked about online.

Bryant probably never thought this day would come. His grip on his cutlery loosened, and with a clatter, it fell onto the porcelain plate, the sound crisp and out of place in the quiet, music-filled restaurant. He rarely lost his composure, his voice hoarse, "Do you really have to go?"

As I stood up, grabbing my purse, I half-jokingly said, "This is just unfair. I never stopped you when you wanted to leave. Besides, I'm single now."

Since it's a boomerang, might as well be buy one, get one free.

I didn't look back to see his expression as I strode out of the restaurant.

My car was parked at the rehabilitation center, and today being a holiday, the traffic was a nightmare.

If I went back for my car before heading to Gregory's, it would take an extra two or three hours. Might as well go straight to Gregory's.

Even getting a ride-share took forever because of the long queue. The streets were crowded, and every now and then, young couples would share a quick kiss, then look at each other with dopey smiles. Youth is wonderful. Their love was so open and enviable.

When I arrived at the location Gregory gave me, I realized that this apartment complex was the same one he had given me a unit in two years ago.

I got out of the car and texted him.

[Edith, what's the apartment number?]

He replied instantly, [Building 6, Unit 1, 5th Floor]

Same building, same unit. Just below mine.

If it weren't for the one-apartment-per-floor setup, we'd probably be across the hall from each other.

I put my phone away and confidently made my way to the door, ringing the bell.

As if on purpose, it took several minutes before the door was pulled open, accompanied by a lazy, "Who is it?"

The man leaning lazily in his wheelchair lifted his sharp, piercing face, appearing casual but with a hint of impatience. Pretending ignorance, I played along, "Edith said your leg was hurting, asked me to check on you."

He glanced at me, "I don't need it."

"Oh, okay."

I nodded, smiling, "Then I'll be going."

As I turned to leave, a hand with distinct knuckles grabbed my wrist, pulling me into the house with a bit of force.

Stabilizing myself at the entrance, I asked, "I thought you didn't need it?"

Gregory's gaze was deep, his tone cold, "Suddenly my leg started hurting again. Is that a problem?"

"Nope." I smiled and nodded, pointing to a pair of house slippers on the floor and asking, "Can I wear these?" "They're Edith's."

Gregory maneuvered his wheelchair, opened the shoe cabinet, and handed me a new pair of slippers, "Wear these."

"Thanks."

I slipped off my high heels and changed into the slippers. As I was doing so, Gregory, with a smirk, said, "Heard you and Bryant went out for Valentine's Day?"

"Not true."

I couldn't easily explain the events of the past two years, but this was simple, I openly responded, "He brought a specialist from abroad to the rehab center today to check on Ramona. Said she'd be better in a month, tops."

"So, it was out of gratitude?" he probed.

"What else?"

I pushed his wheelchair towards the living room.

Gregory laughed mockingly, "Who shows gratitude by going to a couple's restaurant?"

I paused, "Couple's restaurant?"

I hadn't been in Vista Town long and didn't know much about its eateries, assuming that the one we went to was just a fancier French restaurant.

Gregory eyed me, "You didn't know?"

I honestly replied, "No idea. I didn't even know today was Valentine's Day until we got to the mall."

Two years single, those holidays hadn't mattered to me anymore.

Gregory's demeanor softened, though his tone remained playful, "You're as clueless as ever."

I didn't want to argue, so I removed the blanket from his legs, sat cross-legged on the carpet, and started massaging his calf. Mid-way, something felt off, "Why has your injury gotten worse?" Logically, such injuries should heal over time.

Gregory seemed to recall something, glaring at me, "It's all your fault."

"My fault?"

I frowned, "How does that have anything to do with me? Did I somehow make your injury worse?"

That seemed to hit a nerve, and he snapped, "Just shut up, will you? You're annoying."

I was going to drop it, but then remembered something crucial. "Do you remember that person Dorothy found to replace me in my identity?"

Chapter 420

"Remember that."

When it came to serious matters, he could be surprisingly straight-laced. His voice was slow and steady, "She claimed that only Dorothy and her daughter were behind it. Couldn't pin anything else on her, and it didn't seem right to keep holding her without more evidence, so we let her go. Why? What's up?"

"I saw her yesterday."

I didn't stop what I was doing but looked up at Gregory. "Remember how Bella suddenly announced last year she had a daughter? Guess who that daughter is?"

"Her?"

"Yeah, now goes by the name Summer."

I was puzzled.

Gregory's brown eyes narrowed slightly. "I'll have someone dig into it."

He never liked to drag his feet. He made a call right then and there.

And the response was quick.

Just as I finished massaging his legs, the phone rang.

Gregory answered, "Talk to me."

"Greg, there's nothing suspicious on the surface. Just Bella suddenly declaring she has a daughter, Summer. Can't find much else. Looks like someone's covered their tracks well." "Any way to find out more?"

"That'll take some time. You in a hurry?"

Gregory's voice was cold, "Just get on it."

After hanging up, he looked at me, "Done with the massage?"

"Don't want to overdo it."

I tried to stand up but my legs were too numb, and I fell back. Gregory caught me in a swift move, pulling me into his embrace.

I ended up sitting on his lap, his scent of mint filling my nostrils.

My ears burned, and I struggled to stand, but he gripped my waist. "Jane, I want to celebrate Valentine's Day too. You can't play favorites." What did he mean by playing favorites?

I glared at him. "I already told you, I didn't celebrate Valentine's Day with Bryant."

"Then let's celebrate Valentine's Day, okay?"

He tightened his hold around my waist, pulling me closer.

His intention was clear, but when I tried to speak, my words came out all twisted. "Why...why not, go celebrate if you want to. It's not like I can stop you."

"What I mean is..."

He dragged out the words, his gaze fixed on me, a smirk playing on his lips, "Celebrate Valentine's Day with you. Don't play dumb."

"So what are we now, that you want to celebrate Valentine's Day?" I asked.

He was calm, a mocking light in his eyes, but his voice turned cold, "What are we? We've been a lot of things over the years, haven't we? Childhood friends, fiancés, friends, or maybe... a backup plan, someone you ditched?"

I lowered my gaze. "I never saw you as a backup. And about ditching... what happened back then, I was in the wrong."

I shouldn't have been so presumptuous.

Thinking that by breaking it off and going back to Bryant, I was doing him a favor.

Gregory's gaze suddenly turned icy, "And yet, you've never offered an explanation for any of it?"

"Gregory, the past is the past."

My numbness was fading, and I managed to stand up, licking my lips, "Some things... Maybe it's better not to explain."

Bringing up the past could unearth more problems.

He scoffed, "And what if I insist? Jane, this might be your last chance. No explanation this time, and as you wish, we'll just be friends from here on."

"I..." I clenched my fists, took a deep breath. "Back then, what I did..."

Click

The sound of the front door interrupted us as Edith burst in, dropping bags on the nearby couch and bending to untie her fancy boots, all the while babbling.

"Gregory, aren't you going to greet your sister? I might have been out on a date, but I didn't forget to bring you some treats. And about your 'just friends' situation with your ex, I've got news..."

I stopped mid-sentence, looking over at her. Only her head was visible over a piece of furniture.

Gregory pinched the bridge of his nose, "Edith!"

"Just changing my shoes."

She continued, "You'll love what I've got to say, your friend ditched her date halfway through dinner..." Gregory gritted his teeth, "Edith!"

"Ah? What's the rush? I'm getting to it..."

As Edith straightened up and moved towards us, she finally saw Gregory and me the 'just friends.'

I pretended to be confused, "Edith, didn't you tell me Gregory needed someone to check on him because of his leg pain?"

Edith looked even more bewildered for a moment but recovered quickly.

Right. She slapped her forehead, "Oh, right. I totally forgot. Pregnancy brain, you know?"

Gregory smirked, "Try not to forget next time."

"Will do, will do."

Edith, still a bit sheepish, carried her bags over, "I'm sorry for the trouble, always coming over to look after Greg."

I shook my head, "It's no trouble."

"Oh, and,"

Suddenly remembering something, Edith smiled, "Let's exchange numbers, huh? If you need anything in Vista Town, just hit me up. As long as it's not about hiding a body or starting a fire, I can handle it." I glanced at Gregory, smiling faintly, "I thought we already exchanged numbers?"