

Lost Me, Gained Regret (Jane and Bryant Ferguson)

Chapter 521

Christine took a long breath before she finally came to terms with the news, "You know what I say, it's all about the silver lining. You've had your share of tough times, and now even the universe seems to be making it up to you."

"Fingers crossed!"

I let out a sigh, "Dr. Thompson's assistant also texted me, Grandma's recovering faster than we expected. She might be ready to leave the hospital in a couple of days."

"Isn't that great? Why do you sound so unenthusiastic?"

"It's just... too much good news all at once."

I cracked a smile. "Makes me worry if it's too good to be true."

I suppose I've never been the optimist.

Growing up, I was used to not having much. Now that things are looking up, I can't help but feel anxious about it.

Christine, on the other hand, has always had a better outlook than me. She poked my forehead, "No use worrying about things that haven't happened yet." "You're right."

I nodded, agreeing that I should adjust my attitude. But the unease in my heart didn't fade away.

Luckily, Ivy came to pick me up not long after, successfully distracting me.

Christine was about to make me over when Ivy laughed, "It's still early, no need to fuss. Your mom arranged for a stylist to come to Cloud Villas this afternoon to get you ready." I was startled, "That sounds... really unnecessary."

"It's not." Ivy chuckled. "Besides, this is just a regular day for your mom. So, you really shouldn't feel any pressure over it."

I couldn't argue, so I just gratefully said, "Okay, thanks, Ivy."

Before we left, Ivy, knowing Christine was my best friend, invited her to Cloud Villas as well, to join the dinner party.

Christine quickly declined. "I'll pass."

I looked at her, thinking she was just being shy, "Why? Come with me, Chris..."

"One of my best friend's most important moments, I wouldn't miss it for the world."
Christine smiled mysteriously, "But, I have other plans."

A realization struck me, "You're planning to go with Mr. Richards, aren't you?"

The Richards family was another prominent name in Maplewood, and Derek Richards would definitely be on the guest list.

Christine dodged the question, pushing me out the door, "Stop dawdling, go meet Ms. Tayler!"

On the way to Cloud Villas, I noticed my last message to Gregory was still from last night. I couldn't resist texting him. "Did you have breakfast? How's everything going?"

No reply.

Worried, I was about to call him when a news alert popped up.

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Johnson Enterprises' latest M398 chip, launched, two months ago, was accused of patent infringement by the patent, holder, demanding an immediate halt. This chip was a major investment for Johnson. Enterprises, and halting now.could mean a huge financial loss and potential cash flow issues.

The timing was too coincidental, hitting right as Gregory returned to the helm of Johnson Enterprises.

My heart sank, and I stopped myself from calling, not wanting to distract him.

He needed to focus on resolving these issues.

Arriving at Cloud Villas, Bella noticed my distraction, "Jane, is it about Johnson Enterprises' news?"

"Yeah." I clenched my hands. "Mom... I'm worried about him."

Gregory was just finding his footing at Johnson Enterprises, and this could be a huge setback.

Bella suggested, "Have you tried calling him?"

"No..."

I bit my lip. "I don't want to disturb him."

"With everything going on, he's probably in back-to-back meetings. If he's too busy, he won't answer, and you're not disturbing him. But if he does answer, hearing his voice might reassure you. Better than worrying here."

That made sense. "I'll give him a call then."

"Go ahead."

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Bella smiled knowingly, patting my head, "I'll go get your soup; it should be ready."

"Thanks, Mom!"

I dialed Gregory's number, half-expecting it to go unanswered, but to my surprise, he picked up.

His voice, slightly hoarse and weary, came through, "Jane, missed me?"

Bella wasn't far, and though she couldn't hear, I felt my cheeks heat up, diving straight into the reason I

called, "Did you see my tonere

okay?"

you

Chapter 522

"Let me see."

Gregory seemed to be glancing at his phone while explaining to me, "Had a marathon meeting, left my phone with Lucius. He saw it was your call and brought it into the meeting room for me." "Every cloud has a silver lining, don't worry."

Despite his reassurance, I couldn't help but feel uneasy, "This is targeted at you, right? Is Palmer Ford behind this?"

"You got the first part right."

Gregory took a sip of something, his voice a bit clearer, "But Palmer isn't that foolish. He's the type to cut off his nose to spite his face, not the kind to 'shoot himself in the foot.'"" Gregory's logic made sense.

Before he returned to the Ford Group, the new chip had already hit the market, and Palmer had been in charge on paper. Ultimately, this was Palmer's responsibility.

Palmer stirring things up now could indeed make Gregory's life difficult, but it would also completely ruin any chance of him returning to the Ford Group.

But if it wasn't Palmer...

I frowned, asking, "Then who could it be?"

Take it easy, all in due time. Sneaky folks will slip up eventually.

After saying this, Gregory seemed to remember something, "About the celebration dinner tonight, I might be a bit late."

At that moment, I remembered he still didn't know Bella was my biological mother.

One, because I had promised Edith Ford, and two, because he hadn't come home last night.

Now wasn't the time to distract him with this, so I nodded, "No worries, focus on the group's issues. If you can't make it, it's okay." "By the way, if you need some cash, I can help tide you over."

"Trying to smother me with your wealth again?"

A pleased chuckle escaped Gregory's throat as he lazily responded, "That won't do. Your money's only good for keeping me."

This guy really knows how to make mooching off others sound like a noble act.

Yet, in that moment, I somehow felt reassured. If he could joke, it meant things weren't beyond repair, "Alright, Greg, I've saved up a lot." "All for keeping you."

"Mrs. Ford is dead set on feeding me, huh?"

RiverCity, the Ferguson Group.

Bryant Ferguson left the shareholder meeting with a stormy expression.

Kevin caught up in time, glancing at the clock, "Mr. President, it's about time to head to Vista Town."

The celebration dinner was starting at six, and they were already cutting it close.

"Yeah."

Bryant returned to his office, changed into a dark suit, grabbed his coat, and strode towards the elevator.

Accustomed to reading the room,

Kevin followed a step behind, sensing an even colder aura than

usual, "This time, the Ferguson

Group got dragged into the mesonet

because of the Ford Group's

scandal. But if we terminate our

contracts in time, it won't affect us. You didn't have to go through all that with the shareholders."

Due to a recent agreement with SZ Technology, and with Gregory now in charge of both SZ and the Ford Group, the chip scandal had

implicated both SZ and the

Ferguson Group.

The Ferguson Group's electronic products were also under scrutiny for potential copyright issues.

This maneuver had inevitably caused their stock to take a hit, affecting the shareholders' interests, and Bryant had to provide explanations.

The shareholders, astute from years under Bryant's reign, weren't going to let go of any misstep easily.

Hearing this, Bryant glanced at him, his tone icy, "Cut the chatter."

"Is it really me who's talking too much, or are you just not letting go?"

Kevin muttered under his breath, barely audible.

Yet, the man walking ahead stiffened for a moment, then resumed his usual cold demeanor without a pause in his stride, heading straight for the elevator. Stepping out at the ground floor, Bryant walked into an employee carrying several coffee cups!

Bryant stepped back, his face darkening, but as the person looked up, a flicker of surprise crossed his face.

"Sorry, sorry!"

Nadine apologized profusely, her guilt deepening as she recognized Bryant, "I'm so sorry, Mr. Ferguson, I..." Bryant's gaze fell on her ID badge, his eyes narrowing slightly, "You got hired?"

"...Yes."

"Design Department Assistant Director..."

Bryant's voice dripped with sarcasm, "Reduced to fetching coffee?"

When Jane was the Assistant Director of the Design Department, she had her team well under control.

Never had she been so belittled.

His words might not have been harsh, but Bryant's presence was suffocating. Nadine took a deep breath, forcing herself to stay composed, "I'm new here, it's normal for them not to accept me right away. This coffee run is just part of getting along."

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"Really?" Bryant's cutting remark halted at his lips as he gazed into her shivering eyelashes and the cool depths beneath them. Something stirred in his heart. "Come with me." "What?" Nadine was caught off guard, only to see Bryant striding away.

She hesitantly looked back at Kevin, who was still waiting for her. "Mr. Ferguson..."

"You heard me right." Kevin glanced in the direction their boss had gone, a hint of melancholy in his tone.

Trying to make amends for his ex-wife, Mrs. Ferguson, was one thing, but now it seemed he was projecting onto someone who merely resembled her.

Still, Kevin wondered if this was a stroke of luck or a curse for the young woman before him.

Nadine glanced at the coffee cups in her hand, feeling a bit stuck, when she saw Kevin signal the front desk. "Could you deliver these to the Design Department? Compliments of Ms. White."

Once in the car, Nadine barely dared to breathe, struggling to calm her racing heart.

Bryant didn't spare her a glance, simply instructing Kevin, "Head back to Lunar Lake Bay Villas."

"... Yes." Kevin was puzzled but kept his thoughts to himself.

Lately, their boss had been staying at the Lunar Lake Bay Villas, but why return now?

Especially after he had just changed clothes before coming downstairs!

The car ride was tense, quiet until they reached the villas and slowed to a stop.

Bryant got out first, leading Nadine upstairs before stopping in front of a room and leaving her with two words, "Wait here."

Then he entered alone, returning shortly with a brand-new, pure-white evening gown.

It was a halter-neck design, elegantly simple yet sophisticated.

Clearly, it was worth a small fortune.

Nadine hesitated to take it. "Mr. Ferguson, what do you need me to do?"

"Put this on. We're attending a dinner."

"What dinner..." She cut herself off under his stern gaze, taking the gown. "Okay."

As she moved to change, he abruptly stopped her, his eyes cold as ice, "What do you think you're doing?"

"I...I was going to change..."

His voice was heavy, "Go downstairs, let Emma help you."

It was as if the room behind him was off-limits to outsiders.

Nadine nodded and went back downstairs where Emma, already aware of the situation, led her to a guest room. "You can change here." "Alright."

Even the guest room's grandeur was beyond Nadine's imagination.

There were no personal belongings, yet the room was tastefully arranged, with an expensive-looking diffuser on the nightstand blending floral, fruity, and woody scents a testament to the owner's refined taste. .

Mindful of Bryant's intimidating presence, Nadine quickly changed into the gown and adjusted her makeup and hair.

Looking at her reflection in the expensive dress, she felt as if something had fundamentally changed.

"Ms. White, are you ready to go?" Kevin called from outside the door.

Nadine snapped back to reality, "Yes, I'll be right out."

She hastily gathered her things, leaving the room with her own clothes in hand.

Bryant was already in the car,

feigning sleep. He opened his eyes

briefly to glance at her, his

expression darken

et et

before settling

back to a calm façade.

Nadine sensed his mood shift, relieved it wasn't anger but still feeling tense.

Seeing him close his eyes again, she quietly took out her phone to pass the time.

Her boss had sent several messages while she was changing.

[Heard you left with Mr. Ferguson?]

[Ever since his divorce, he's kept to himself. How did you manage...]

[Nadine, we're all colleagues here. I trust you know what to say and what not to say to Mr. Ferguson.]

[If anyone in the department gives you trouble, come straight to me.]

Nadine looked at the messages, finding them ironic.

If it weren't for the director's intentions, who would dare trouble a deputy director like her?

Now, he was playing the good guy.

She clenched her phone, replying ambiguously: [Director, please keep this between us. Wouldn't want Mr. Ferguson got out.]

to be upset if it was kept

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After finishing my soup, I noticed the time was still early, and Bella seemed like she had something on her mind, but hesitated to speak. I couldn't help but smile.

"Is there something you want to talk to me about or ask me?"

Truth be told, in the roles of being a daughter and a mother, both Bella and I were treading new ground.

It was inevitably a bit awkward and unfamiliar, but her desire to give me the best of everything was something I could deeply feel.

Bella's eyes were filled with love as she softly began, "It's nothing major, just thought since you'll eventually move in, why not pick a room while we have the time? That way, I can decorate your bedroom according to your preferences in advance."

A wave of emotion I had never felt before surged within me, and I replied with a smile, "No need to pick, I trust your choice."

"Really?"

Bella was worried I was just being polite. "You don't have to be formal with me, you're my only daughter..."

"There's no formality!" I interrupted, a bit exasperated, and snuggled closer into her arms, softly saying, "I just know that whatever you arrange for me will be the best. So, I can lazily rely on you."

Bella lightly raised an eyebrow, "Well then, how about I turn the study next to the master bedroom into your room? That way, we can be close, how does that sound?"

"Sounds great!" I quickly agreed, laughing, "Then I won't hold back in taking what's loved by someone else?"

It was probably because I knew the person in front of me was my birth mother, the one I had the deepest connection with in this world, so I was completely open and honest.

My quick agreement was simply because I wanted to be closer to her.

"Take what's loved? Everything I have is also yours."

Seeing that I wasn't acting distant, she gradually relaxed and switched back to more serious topics, "How about Gregory? Everything okay on that front?"

"Should be no problem."

"That's good to hear."

Bella chuckled, "If he can't even handle this, he can't be my son-in-law."

"You're right!"

I laughed along, "But, Mom, I think you'll really like him once you get to know him better."

Bella teased, "Already defending him, and I was just about to give him a chance to prove himself."

"It's not that, he's truly a wonderful person."

"What makes him so wonderful?"

I thought for a moment, then with a smile, I said, "He might seem indifferent to many things, but once he cares about someone, he's committed for life." "I've heard something like that."

Bella smiled, "He's waited for you for over twenty years, right?"

"Yeah."

Over twenty years...And I was just in my twenties now.

Bella patted my head, "If you two end up together, I'll be very happy for you."

I raised my eyebrows lightly, "That will definitely happen, you can start being happy now."

"Silly child."

Bella couldn't help but laugh, then changed the subject, "Ivy checked on the Myers family situation these days Is Ramona still in the rehab center?"

"Yes."

I nodded, feeling a bit happy at the mention, "Grandma will be out of the rehab center soon."

Bella inquired, "What are your plans regarding the Myers family?"

"I'll see after Grandma gets out."

I said firmly, looking at Bella, "But if Grandma wants me to take over the Myers family, I won't refuse."

"I don't want you getting involved with them."

"But, Grandma has been very kind to me."

I took a sip of my tea, "Victor, Pearl, and their adopted daughter, Dorothy Myers, they won't treat Grandma well."

"Dorothy, the daughter they adopted later?"

"Yes." I nodded, "Pearl adores her, treats her like her own."

Bella frowned slightly, "Is she two years younger than you?"

"How did you know?"

Hearing my response, Bella's eyes softened with a touch of sympathy, "Victor is probably raising his wife's old flame's daughter."

Caught off-guard by this revelation, I was shocked, "What do you mean? Dorothy is Pearl's old lover's daughter?"

"It's my guess."

Bella chuckled, explaining, "Pearl's

first love was a troublemaker from

Vista Town named Josiah. After getting into trouble and ending up in jail, Pearl moved on to Victor."

"Josiah got married after coming out, but his wife died giving birth Not long after, he committed murder, a serious one that could cost him his life, and fled, leaving behind a newborn."

"Rumor has it he fled abroad, and there's been no word of him for years."

I was dumbfounded, taking a moment to process before saying, "So, you suspect Dorothy is that child?"

"But, how could Pearl treat the child of her first love and another woman so well?"

With Pearl's personality, she'd more likely wish the child harm.

Bella laughed, "Do you know who Josiah killed for?"

I was taken aback, "...For Pearl?"

Bella didn't answer, just gave me a "what do you think?" look.

I was suddenly chilled to the bone.

The doorbell rang, and the maid went to answer it. A group of casually dressed people, carrying various items, walked in.

Chapter 525

"Don't worry about it now."

Glancing at the clock, Bella boasted with pride: "Time to get ready. Tonight, my darling daughter will be the belle of the ball."

The celebration was set in a six-star hotel in Vista Town.

The ballroom was lavish and spacious, glittering with lights, a high-class affair indeed, attended by the who's who of society.

By this time, guests had begun to arrive, entering in small groups with their invitations in hand.

Just as we reached the entrance of the ballroom, Gregory called to say he was on his way.

I hung up with a laugh, and Bella, seeing right through me, teased, "My future son-in-law is done with work?"

"Mom!" I blushed, protesting, "You just said you needed to vet him more."

Bella chuckled softly. "With how pleased you are, what's there to vet? I trust your choice. I believe the man you bring home is one in a million."

"Bella, one in a million? Future son-in-law?" Suddenly, a crisp voice came from behind.

Turning around, I saw Edith, arm in arm with Herbert, and holding Ike's hand, coming from the direction of the elevator. They made a striking pair, hard to believe they were a divorced couple.

Seeing Herbert arrive with Edith caught Bella by surprise. Before she could speak, Ike rushed towards me, exclaiming, "Auntie, I've missed you!"

"There, there."

My dress for today, chosen by Bella, departed from my usual simple style, incorporating floral elements and a one-shoulder neckline that bloomed like a flower, adorned with exquisite embroidery. It was too delicate to hug Ike, but he obediently held my hand, standing quietly by my side.

Herbert, reserved and impeccably dressed in a suit, seemed a bit stiff and formal.

He seemed nervous addressing Bella, "Sis, I came uninvited, but there are things I need to say to you in person."

Without waiting for Bella to reply, and ignoring the passing guests, he declared, "You don't have to worry about dragging me down anymore. The Taylor family is under my charge now. I can take care of you!" Touched by his declaration, knowing this man was my uncle and the woman beside me was my mother, their familial bond moved me deeply.

Turning to see Bella struggling to hold back tears, she mockingly retorted, "Back when you couldn't even change your diapers without crying for me, and now you're protecting me?"

Edith burst into laughter, almost choking on her drink.

Herbert coughed slightly, not embarrassed by the mention of his past, but instead looked earnestly at Bella, "Are you still mad at me?"

As Bella and I shifted our gaze back to Herbert, I smiled. "Uncle, mom has never been mad at you."

Herbert was taken aback, "What did you call me?"

Seeing his confused expression, Edith couldn't help but laugh again, "Let's go to the lounge to talk. It's too crowded here."

With the guests still sparse, many who wished to network with Bella hesitated upon seeing Herbert, a figure of authority, and did not dare to interrupt. We headed straight to the lounge.

Edith quickly explained mine and Bella's relationship to Herbert.

Herbert, upon understanding, the formidable head of the Taylor family, was overwhelmed with emotion and handed me a black card, "I didn't prepare a welcome gift for you; feel free to use this card as you wish."

Holding the card, I was speechless.

Even though he's a bit old-fashioned... he sure knows how to give a gift. This black card alone could easily cover a luxury villa in Cloud Villas. Seeing Bella nod at me, I smiled, "Then... thank you, Uncle?"

"What are you thanking me for?"

Herbert cleared his throat, his voice firm, "The Taylor family was always meant to include your mother and you. This is nothing. From now on, the Taylor family will be your support."

The atmosphere in the lounge was warm and congenial.

It was clear that Herbert and Bella had a strong bond; as they opened up, any sense of distance vanished.

"Knock, knock-"

The door was suddenly rapped on.

As I made to get up, Herbert gestured for me to stay seated and went to open the door, nodding slightly to the person outside, "You're here?"

"Mr. Taylor," Gregory's laid-back voice came through the slightly ajar door. He paused, glancing at Edith. "You've cleared up those rumors with my sister?"

"All cleared."

"That's good."

Leaning against the doorframe,

Gregory looked exhausted, as if he

hadn't slept in days, "If you're serious

about getting back together, you better treat her right. Otherwise, I

won't

approve as her little brother."

"Okay." Herbert nodded, then suddenly added, "And you better treat my niece right, too. Otherwise, I won't let her marry into the Ford family pit." Gregory frowned, slightly amused. "Me? Marry your niece?"

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Edith leaned in, teasing him with a playful raise of her eyebrow, "What's the matter, not interested in marriage?"

"I have someone in mind I'd like to marry, not really into arranged marriages." Gregory responded coolly, his gaze briefly flickering inside. "Is Jane in there?"

I was standing behind the door, out of his line of sight.

Seeing the triumphant smile on Edith's face, I couldn't help but chuckle, about to speak up when Edith looked my way, "My dear niece, come here. My brother is looking for you."

I could almost see the confusion spreading across Gregory's face.

Standing up and walking over, Gregory's cool, dry hand took mine. He glanced at Edith, his tongue pressed against his cheek before he suddenly smiled, "Since when did my Jane become your niece?" Before I could reply, Bella wrapped an arm around my

shoulder. Seeing through the teasing between Edith and Herbert, she couldn't help but laugh. "Because Jane is my daughter, what do you say?" Gregory straightened up instantly, his usually nonchalant demeanor faltering as he addressed Bella seriously, "Ms. Taylor, you're not joking, are you?"

"It's true, Greg."

I squeezed his hand, explaining, "It happened yesterday, but you didn't come back to Elmwood Villas last night, and I hadn't found the right moment to tell you."

-Though, even if I had the chance, I probably wouldn't have told him. After all, I was sworn to secrecy to win over his cousin.

Bella, amused by his adaptability, smiled. "So, from now on, you don't have to call me Ms. Taylor, you can call me..."

Gregory was quick to correct himself, "Mom."

Me, Bella, and both Herbert and Edith were all flabbergasted.

Herbert, from an angle Bella couldn't see, gave him a thumbs up.

I quickly tugged at his hand.

"...Cough." Gregory, trying to maintain his composure, said, "No worries, our relationship is so steady, calling her 'Mom' is just a matter of time."

Edith, enjoying his attempt to ingratiate himself with his future mother-in-law, laughed, "Why not go ahead and call me 'Auntie' while you're at it?" Gregory gave her a sidelong glance, "You first reconcile with Herbert...ahem, I mean, my uncle, then we'll talk."

Mid-sentence, he cleared his throat, awkwardly changing his wording.

Edith, arms crossed, watched him with amusement, "Oh, so now you're rooting for us to get back together? You used to be so worried he'd mistreat me." Gregory chuckled, "Well, you wanted me to call you 'Auntie'."

After a while, Herbert brought up the dinner Bella planned to announce Jane's true identity.

He was skeptical, "Sis, Jane is the

daughter you've finally found,

shouldn't we host a separate, more formal dinner? In the name of the Taylor family, or in your name, either works. It'll show everyone how much we value Jane, ensuring no one dares to mistreat her in the future."

"I've considered that."

Bella, gripping my hand earnestly, said, "I just can't wait to tell everyone who my real daughter is. I don't want her to suffer in silence anymore." Herbert, seated in a leather chair, his normally serious demeanor softened by his affection for his niece, "Jane, what do you think?"

Listening to my family discussing

what was best for me, feeling their consideration and care, was a new and profoundly comforting experience. It was a different kind of emotion than what a lover could

-

provide the unique magic of blood relations.

When he asked for my opinion, I smiled softly, "I'll go with what you think is best. Whether it's sooner or later, it doesn't change the fact that I'm my mother's daughter, and that's all that matters."

"Bella," Gregory continued smoothly, "As far as I know, Summer Taylor is still filming *Slow Life*, and you haven't announced your relationship with her to the public yet..."

He speculated, "Including her, she probably doesn't know yet, does she?"

"You're right." Bella nodded, curious about his angle, "Go on."

"Why not..."

Gregory glanced at me before suggesting, "Play the long game."

"Summer's background, I looked into it two years ago, an orphan with no significant connections. How did she come to know you were looking for your daughter and manage to present herself to you?"

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Bella nodded, her determination clear as she spoke, "I've already had someone look into who she's been in contact with before."

"It's not easy to trace," Gregory asserted confidently, continuing, "When you went to see Jane yesterday, someone with an agenda probably spotted you. They'd want to erase any trace of their past, moving faster than us in covering their tracks."

"Instead of chasing shadows, the best move is to lay low for now. Let the dust settle, and once their guard is down, we can start connecting the dots."

"But the contact I've had with my mom yesterday and today goes way beyond the normal interactions between a designer and a client."

I raised my concern, "Wouldn't it be hard to shake off their suspicion?"

This shadowy figure's tactics bore a striking resemblance to another from two years ago, both adept at staying concealed. Deeply cunning, they wouldn't easily let their guard down.

Herbert squinted thoughtfully, "Sis, how about we publicly announce Jane as your goddaughter?"

"That way, we have a legitimate reason for your recent frequent interactions with Jane, offering her protection in plain sight."

"Then, about Jane..."

Bella was eager to reveal my background tonight, but the thought of the unseen adversary remaining at large left her worried.

She looked at me, concern in her eyes, fearing I might be upset.

I offered a reassuring smile, agreeing with Gregory and Herbert's plan, "Mom, I think Gregory and Uncle Herbert are right. Compared to living a peaceful life in the future, how and when my background is revealed isn't really that important."

The adversary's reach was too far and wide.

Yet, we were still clueless about their motives.

Despite their efforts, they hadn't gained anything from their meddling, with only my background being affected.

Bella took a deep breath, "Alright, then. I'll announce you as my goddaughter tonight!"

"That'll give me plenty to boast about for a while," I joked.

Just then, my phone rang. It was Christine, saying she had arrived at the hotel.

After the call, I got up to meet her, giving Gregory an encouraging look before heading out.

Gregory, usually so relaxed, sat up straight on the couch, his demeanor unexpectedly... obedient.

Edith teased him, "Looks like he's finally met his match."

Stepping out of the lounge, I headed towards the elevator.

By now, more guests had arrived, and as I emerged from Bella's lounge in my eye-catching outfit, I definitely turned some heads.

A few young men approached, asking for my contact details, which I politely declined.

As I was about to leave the banquet hall, an uninvited guest caught my eye - Dorothy!

I was certain Ivy hadn't sent an invitation to the Myers family.

Just then, a pop idol with millions of followers came over to chat, "You look stunning, and your aura would be unique even in our entertainment industry."

"Are you the hotshot designer, Elena? You must be quite close to Ms. Taylor?"

Despite knowing his angle, I remained polite, "Thank you, yes, I am. And Ms. Taylor... we're quite close, yes..."

--Does being mother and daughter count as close?

Before I could finish, a mocking voice interjected, "Tsk, Jane Webster, trying to elevate your status much? Acting all important... just a designer, thinking you're the main course?"

Standing beside Dorothy, a lady from some wealthy family, her arm linked with Dorothy's, asked, "Dorothy, you know her?"

"Barely," Dorothy replied indifferently,

her eyes hiding jealousy as she scoffed, "Just someone without a

father's love or a mother's care, a

nobody. Two years ago, she even tricked my grandmother into treating her like a granddaughter. And now she's aiming for Ms. Taylor? She's not in our league!"

"So manipulative?" The lady eyed me dismissively. "You think you can aim for Ms. Taylor? Even the Harvey family had to show full sincerity to get a chance to work with Ms.

Taylor, and you think you're on the same level?"

Chapter 528

Dorothy chuckled, feigning a block, "Come on, Judie, don't underestimate her. Who knows, she might have snagged herself a real catch, a millionaire perhaps. And someone might just come to back her up in a bit."

"Dorothy, you're literally Myers family royalty! You're not really scared of her, are you? I mean, you said it yourself, she's an orphan. Even if she does land some rich guy, do you really think they'd bring her home?"

Judie Harvey scoffed with disdain, "Anyone invited by Ms. Taylor to this dinner party is from a well-matched family. At best, they'd just toy with her. They wouldn't seriously risk their reputation over some scandalous affair, would they?"

The younger brother who had tried to strike up a conversation earlier couldn't stand it anymore and started to defend her, "No, actually, she was just with Ms. Taylor..."

"Enough,"

People of this social circle simply didn't regard common entertainers highly, no matter how famous or successful they were. In the end, wasn't it all about the money?

Dorothy cut him off, "I know you're going to say she knows Ms. Taylor..."

"What?" Judie suddenly panicked. "She knows Ms. Taylor? Why didn't you say so earlier..."

"It's not what you think."

Dorothy pretended to clarify but was actually stirring the pot, "She just designed some clothes for Ms. Taylor, that's all. She's probably just here to deliver them. And you know, she's been divorced. Dressing all fancy now, probably trying to land a second husband. Ms. Taylor surely wouldn't stick her neck out for a small-time designer. But if you're scared of her, we don't have to bother..."

Judie, probably spoiled rotten at home, immediately felt emboldened again and sneered, "A divorced woman? Who here do you think she could possibly match?"

The brother frowned, "Why do you have to talk like that?"

"It's okay."

I smiled at the brother, calmly watching Judie, and said softly, "Match with Gregory, what do you think?"

"Gregory?!" Judie was taken aback,

as if she'd heard the joke of the

century, laughing out loud and

attracting quite a few guests' attention. She asked the

surrounding people, "Did you hear that? This divorced woman thinks she can snag Gregory Ford, the heir of the Ford family! That's hilarious!"

"Before trying to snag Gregory, you might want to check out his track record!"

Jealousy flashed across Judie's

face as she disdainfully enlightened me, "He's been waiting for his childhood sweetheart, who went missing over twenty years ago,

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not the type to be swayed by Ne's

women! Otherwise, with all the high Society dames in Vista Town, how could you even dare to dream?"

Some guests, probably also having a crush on Gregory, chimed in, "Exactly, hey, we've never seen you at any social gatherings before. How did you even get in here?"

"In that case, we should just kick her out! We wouldn't want to offend someone important. Everyone here could get dragged into it!"

"Right!" Some who hadn't spoken up, hearing this, joined in the chorus.

Dorothy's triumphant smirk was so pronounced, it was almost bursting at the seams!

I smirked coldly, ignoring them, and went straight to a security officer, pointing at Dorothy and Judie. "Those two are making too much noise. Could you please ask them to leave?" "Yes, Ms. Webster!"

The security officer immediately complied.

Just how affectionate I was with Bella when we entered, how long we spent in Bella's lounge, and the importance of tonight's guest list were all well known to the security team. Thus, they knew very well who could be offended and who couldn't!

Dorothy wasn't even on the guest list to begin with. As for the Harvey family, they were a last-minute addition, apparently because they had a business partner with a slight connection to Ivy. They had given their partner a whopping five percent discount to secure this invitation.

Chapter 529

After I had my say, I couldn't be bothered to stick around. All I wanted was to go find Christine.

"Why should I leave??"

Judie, taken aback by the security guard's blunt eviction notice, glanced over at me in confusion. "Her, who is she..."

Dorothy glared at me viciously, then turned to the security guard and said, "Oh! Now I get it. That explains why a designer like her has been hanging around. She's having an affair with you, isn't she?!"

"Mind your language!" The security guard frowned. "Ms. Webster is a distinguished guest. Your insults..."

"Distinguished guest?" Judie grew even more anxious. "She's whose guest? Could it be... Ms. Taylor?"

But as soon as she said it, she seemed doubtful.

Dorothy was even more incredulous and, feeling humiliated by the whispers of the onlooking guests, turned red with rage. She stormed over to me, teeth gritted, and hissed, "Jane, what tricks are you playing now? Grandma may defend you, but Bella has her own daughter. What right do you have to be at such an important event..."

"Am I not enough?" A cold voice came from behind me!

It was so familiar.

I turned around and, sure enough, saw Bryant's impassive face!

Why was he sticking up for me?

This is going to be hard to explain to that green-eyed monster!

But the effect at the moment was remarkable.

Though Bryant's power base was in RiverCity, his influence was immense, and many in Vista Town sought his favor. After all, a tiny leak from his wealth could sustain these so-called elite families. Like the Harvey family.

Judie was stunned, whispering to Dorothy, "Why didn't you say she knew Mr. Ferguson!!"

The others who had just been eager to see me leave also turned away, looking guilty.

Afraid of being implicated.

I looked at Bryant. "Thanks for the offer, Mr. Ferguson, but I can handle this."

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Bryant looked slightly taken aback by my response, his lips tightening, "After all, you're my ex-wife. If these they're

people bully you, it's like tent

slapping me in the face."

His voice was moderate, but it landed like a bombshell, leaving everyone dumbfounded.

Wow.

Married for three years and never made it public, but the divorce was announced?

That was unnecessary.

Judie's face turned a palette of colors, realizing Dorothy had used her to target me. She quickly tried to make amends, "Mr. Ferguson, I didn't recognize..."

"It's fine." Bryant said coldly, then

turned to Kevin, who was half a step

behind, and ordered, "Release the

news. Any company still collaborating with the Ho's from tomorrow on will never do business with RF and the Ferguson Group!"

This statement, though delivered without emotion, was thunderous!

The onlookers were stunned!

They must be thinking that Bryant's reputation for doting on his wife wasn't unfounded, seeing as he still held me in such high regard even after our divorce.

Judie went pale, her legs turning to jelly...

"Mr. Ferguson!"

Gregory came over from the direction of the lounge, wearing a forced smile on his face.

"Thanks for defending my fiancée, Mr. Ferguson, but cutting ties with the Ho's seems a bit roundabout."

He stretched out an arm, pulling me into a possessive embrace, and said nonchalantly, "If you ask me, driving them to bankruptcy would be simpler."

Chapter 530

The room was thick with tension, eyes darting around in disbelief, some mouths gaping wide open in shock.

After all, Gregory and Bryant were giants in their own right, titans that commanded respect and fear in equal measure. It was clear to everyone present: the Harvey family was in deep trouble.

Judie was visibly shaken, glancing between Gregory and Bryant like they were the grim reapers themselves. Barely able to muster the courage, she turned to me, her face pale as a ghost, desperation clear in her voice, "Ms. Webster...I'm so sorry!! I shouldn't have judged a book by its cover, I shouldn't have insulted you... Can you, maybe, slap me instead? Would that work?"

Her voice was close to breaking, all pretenses of dignity lost, "I truly realize my mistake. Please, I'm begging you, ask Mr. Ford and Mr. Ferguson to spare my family... I came here hoping to partner with Ms. Taylor, but instead, I've doomed us. My dad will kill me!!"

And I knew she wasn't exaggerating.

In families like hers, where privilege and power were handed down, a heavy price was expected in return. Failing to be an asset, and instead dragging the family name through the mud, well, the consequences were unimaginable.

Gregory glanced at me, perhaps sensing my soft spot, and then smirked at Judie, "Ms. Harvey, trying to guilt-trip my fiancée, really? Did you think someone as ruthless as me would settle for anyone less formidable?"

I was taken aback. Was that really necessary?!

Sure, people say birds of a feather flock together, but opposites attract too, right?

Judie, realizing her fate was sealed, was trembling.

Her phone rang, and the look on her face upon seeing the caller ID was one of sheer terror, "Hello, Dad..."

"Get back here now!"

It seemed someone who knew Larkin Harvey had already filled him in, his voice booming with fury through the phone.

Judie left in disgrace, leaving Dorothy, who seemed unfazed, chuckling, "What, you're going to bankrupt the Myers family next? I'm not scared!"

Of course, she wasn't. Gregory and Bryant, for all their might, weren't the type to take such drastic measures.

Gregory's gaze hardened, his tone biting, "You've been a disgrace to the Myers family for over twenty years, no better than a street thug."

Dorothy clenched her teeth, "Gregory!"

"Ms. Myers, is it?"

One of Gregory's security approached, "Ms. Taylor has asked you to leave immediately. Otherwise, we'll have no choice but to call the police."

The room's gaze shifted to Dorothy, now with a hint of disdain.

As Dorothy passed by me, she hissed, "Watch your back, Jane. My mom says she has ways to deal with you. Don't think you and Gregory will last forever. Cherish the time you have now."

I was momentarily stunned, but by the time I collected myself, she was already walking away.

Watching her leave, a sense of unease settled in my heart...

Pearl Myers was no pushover.

But what could she possibly have up her sleeve now?

Gregory furrowed his brow, "What did she say to you?" "Nothing important."

I masked my concerns with a smile, "Just some harsh words."

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evenly on him, there was

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to burden him on

this unresolved matter.

Bryant seemed to notice my discomfort, "Jane, are you alright?"

"I'm fine, thanks for stepping in, Mr. Ferguson!"

I shook my head and maintained a polite distance as I thanked him. Then I noticed a woman standing by his side.

She wore an elegant white dress, hugging her figure perfectly, her features delicate yet distant.

Something about her dress seemed familiar.

As she caught my gaze, she looked momentarily flustered, moving closer to Bryant for comfort.

