

Chapter 2

After my shower, I replied to an email—a recommendation from my mentor a week ago for a painting instructor position at the University of the Arts Berlin.

It was a rare opportunity.

Back then, I'd chosen love over my career.

But Bennett had let me down.

I filled out the application, sent it off, and went to sleep.

When I woke, it was evening.

Bennett stood in front of the mirror, tying his tie.

He wore a black coat that he rarely wore,

with a slight smile on his lips.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

He stopped, the smile fading. "Last-minute class reunion. I couldn't cook. I ordered takeout for you. Don't forget to eat."

He grabbed his keys and left without another word.

I watched him go, stunned.

By 11 p.m., he still wasn't back.

My phone buzzed—another post from Sharlene Morrow.

"My first love drove me home, and his car broke down. Is fate trying to bring us together?"

In the photo, Bennett, in his black coat,

was on the phone before his car.

Their college friends had flooded the comments.

"Sharlene and Bennett were the ultimate power couple. Can't believe they're reconnecting after all these ten years!"

"I still remember him standing in the rain for an afternoon, begging her to stay. So intense."

"Wow, strong couples find their way back to each other."

"True love wins!"

Someone shared a Reddit link about their relationship.

I clicked the link and read about Sharlene and Bennett's three-year relationship.

They were classmates in college and initially constantly at odds, always competing for the top academic spot.

Eventually, they ended up together.

For four years, they were perfectly matched.

But after graduation, Sharlene moved abroad.

The day she left, Bennett stood in the rain outside her dorm for an entire afternoon, begging her to stay.

She didn't.

I couldn't picture it.

The Bennett they described wasn't the man I knew.

I closed my phone, my chest tight with pain.

No wonder he never talked about the past to me.

How could he ever love someone else after a romantic relationship like that?

I remembered him smiling at the mirror and thought of the saying, "If I'm seeing you at four, I'm already smiling at three."

My phone rang.

It was Xavier Turner, Bennett's best friend.

I answered. He was drunk, his words slurred.

"Congrats, Benny! You finally got Lena back. I knew you were waiting for her."

Just then, Bennett returned.

He took off his shoes and walked in. Seeing me holding the phone, he asked, "Who are you talking to?"

Expressionless, I turned on the speakerphone.

Xavier, slurring his words, continued, "All these years you didn't marry Madeline, wasn't it just because you were waiting for Lena? Now that she's back, stop waiting. Get back with her before you lose your chance again.

"I still remember our promise—when you and Lena get married, I'll be your best man!"

After he finished, I looked calmly at Bennett.

Commented [Ma1]:

Commented [Ma2R1]:

After he finished, I looked calmly at Bennett.

"Your friend was trying to reach you. He called me by mistake."