

Regret Is Only the Beginning

Chapter 1 A Bitch's Provocation

I was meeting a client at a café when a waitress spilled coffee all over me. Before I could even say a word, she started sniffing and tearing up.

"I didn't mean to." She looked apologetic, but there was an unmistakable hint of arrogance in her expression.

I frowned. "Can you get me some napkins?"

She sluggishly handed me a few. "I'm just a student working part-time here. Please don't tell the manager about this."

I dabbed at the mess on my clothes, realizing the outfit was ruined.

"So, your first instinct is to avoid getting in trouble?" My patience was running thin.

She actually had the audacity to huff. "I already said I didn't mean to, and I apologized. Why are you making this so difficult?"

If she had handled it properly, I wouldn't have even considered making a fuss.

"Saying it was an accident and taking responsibility are two different things, sweetheart." I reminded her with a polite smile.

The waitress let out an impatient sigh. "It's just a piece of clothing. How much could it possibly cost? I'll pay you."

She pulled out her wallet, shed out a few hundred-dollar bills, and tossed them arrogantly onto the table like she was doing charity work.

"Is this enough?"

I shook my head.

Her smug expression faltered. She begrudgingly took out a few more bills before saying sharply, "This should be enough."

I took my time responding. "This dress is a new release. You can check the official price yourself."

Someone nearby had already done the search and gasped. "10 thousand dollars?"

The waitress' face twisted in shock. "Who are you trying to scam? No dress costs that much! I could find plenty of outfits like this on the street."

I didn't bother arguing. Instead, I picked up my phone and headed toward the manager's office.

Her face paled. "I'm sorry, miss."

Just then, my client called, so I paused.

"Answer your call, miss. You're rich anyway. Why make a big deal over a little money?"

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My meeting got canceled last minute, so I went home early.

My younger brother, Archie Houghton, was bringing his girlfriend over today. Hearing voices outside, I got up to greet them, only to hear a familiar voice.

"That crazy old hag at the café was such a psycho. I already apologized, but she wouldn't let it go. She just wanted to flaunt her wealth and bully us poor folks. Archie, your sister isn't like that, right?"

Archie patted his chest. "Relax, she isn't like that at all. Jillian?"

I went downstairs, glanced at the stunned waitress from earlier, and smiled.

Archie, oblivious to the awkwardness, held his girlfriend's hand and introduced us. "Jillian, this is my girlfriend, Evie Carter. Evie, this is my sister, Jillian Houghton."

Evie stiffened. "Jillian..."

I sat down casually. "Oh, please. Didn't you just call me an old hag?"

Archie finally pieced things together. "Evie, the woman you ran into at the café was Jillian? What are the odds?"

Evie lowered her head and pouted. "Jillian, are you still mad at me?"

I was confused by her act.

Archie quickly comforted her. "Jillian has tons of clothes. It's just one dress. Don't cry."

"I know." Evie curled into Archie's side. "I may not come from money, but I never wanted to take advantage of you. I'll pay for the dress."

Archie waved it off. "We're family. There's no need to talk about money."

Then, he turned to me and shook my arm like a kid. "Jillian, Evie's had it rough. Don't be mad at her, okay?"

He was shaking me so much that I felt dizzy. "How old are you? You're still acting like a child."

Archie beamed. "So you're not mad anymore?"

He turned to Evie. "Come on. Say thank you to Jillian."

She mumbled a reluctant, "Thanks."

Since she was someone Archie cared about, I softened my expression. "You're still young. Make sure to think things through before you act. I don't ask for much. Archie is my only brother. I just need you to treat him well."

Archie grinned. "Don't worry, Jillian. Evie's great! One day, she and I will join the family business, and you won't have to work so hard."

I nodded. "Alright. You two have fun. I have work to do."

"Okay! Don't overwork yourself!"

On my way to the garage, I realized I had forgotten something and turned back.

"Archie, your sister runs the whole company?" Evie asked.

Archie replied, "Yeah. I'm still young. I've got time to have fun. Plus, it means I can spend more time with you."

"But I read news stories about siblings fighting over family businesses. You and Jillian get along, but you should still be careful. You never know."

I didn't hear Archie's response.

I had no intention of going back inside now, so I turned to leave.