

Regret Is Only the Beginning

Chapter 7 Handing Over the Company

Evie clung to Archie's side for a long moment before she finally found her voice. "But Archie is still a part of the Houghton family now. Even if he was adopted, so what?

"Marlene said he has every right to be involved in the family business. Don't think waving that piece of paper around means you can just take everything for yourself."

"Take everything for myself?" I repeated with a cold smile. "Now that's a fresh accusation."

Evie scoffed. "Isn't that exactly what you're doing? Men have always been the rightful heirs. Your family only adopted Archie because they didn't have a son.

"He was brought in to carry on the family name, which means the business should be his as well. And now you're clinging onto it like it's yours alone. Aren't you trying to take everything for yourself?"

I hadn't expected those words to come from a woman first, rather than a man. The belief that women should rely on men was so deeply ingrained that even another woman was reinforcing it.

I wasn't particularly angry at Evie's aggressive behavior. Instead, I turned my gaze to Archie—the brother I had raised and whose every need I had taken care of.

I had already stopped expecting much from him. But still, I asked, "Archie, is that what you think too?"

He said nothing.

But Evie wasn't done yet. She continued, "Stop pretending, Jillian. Archie is your brother, and he's getting married. You won't even give him a house, but you have no problem spending a fortune on some other man. I saw it with my own eyes, Archie.

"The other day, Jillian took a man into a luxury store and dropped hundreds of thousands like it was nothing. If this keeps up, she'll burn through your family's fortune. And you're here worrying about her when she clearly doesn't care about you at all."

She was relentless, stoking the fire with every word.

Archie remained silent, but it was clear that he had believed every single word. His expression grew darker, and his gaze toward me was filled with distrust.

He asked at last, "Jillian, is what Evie said true?"

I let out a soft laugh. "Even if I spent money, I was spending the money I earned myself."

"Your earnings still come from the company at the end of the day." Archie's face twisted in disappointment.

"Jillian, Grandma always said you'd look after the company for me, that we were the closest of family, and she trusted you more than anyone. Turns out she was wrong about you."

Looking at Archie like this, I had no idea what to say.

Taking a deep breath, I said, "Archie, for years, I've done everything for you. I cleaned up your messes, and I even negotiated for your gambling debts. This company was built by my parents, and it has always been under my name."

I pressed my aching head and said disappointedly, "But since you've been asking for so long, I'll give it to you. Consider it the last thing I do for you as your sister. You're on your own now. I'll have the lawyer draft up the transfer agreement. Now, if you don't mind, I'd like you to leave."

Seeing that I had finally given in, they left in satisfaction.

I, on the other hand, was exhausted. I felt like I had just fought a battle.

...

Once I made my decision, I had my lawyer start drafting the necessary paperwork.

However, there was one complication. The company still had an ongoing partnership with Harmon Group, and that delayed the transfer process.

During this time, neither Archie nor Grandma came to bother me.

But peace was only an illusion.

When Grandma and Archie showed up again, they weren't alone. To my surprise, the matter of the company had made its way to the media.