

Chapter 1565 Always Stay Close

"Brandon..." Audrey's voice wavered, and her lower lip caught between her teeth in an anxious plea. "Considering my mother was the sister of yours, can't you help me? Do it for her final wish."

Though Audrey might not dazzle with beauty, she had an undeniable charm. Tear-streaked, her vulnerable appearance was enough to melt most hearts. But Brandon? He remained stone-faced, his eyes piercing through her, devoid of any discernible emotion.

A palpable tension hung in the living room air. The silence grew heavy, and as the seconds stretched, Audrey's anxiety ratcheted higher. "Brandon?"

Observing this, Janet sighed softly. Amnesia had made her a stranger in her own life. The intricacies between Brandon, his mother, and this extended family remained an enigma. She felt like a bystander—continuing to stay might only trap Audrey in discomfort and Brandon in

indecision.

With that thought, she rose gracefully, her voice as soft as a summer breeze. "Why don't I let you two talk? I'll just head to the kitchen and fetch some fresh fruit for us."

Audrey's posture subtly shifted, a glint of relief and excitement masked beneath her bowed head.

Alone with Brandon, she believed things might turn in her favor. Without Janet, she mused, perhaps Brandon's frigid demeanor would thaw. The humiliation she felt might even melt away. But Janet, oblivious to the undercurrents, mistook Audrey's silence as lingering sorrow. Offering a comforting smile, she moved towards the kitchen.

Yet, as she took a step, Brandon's hand darted out, grasping her wrist and anchoring her to the spot.

He drew her close, wrapping her in a protective embrace. The familiar aroma of him made her cheeks warm. "I thought leaving might ease the tension," she murmured. "Let me just head to the kitchen."

Brandon's fingers intertwined with hers, his gaze locking onto her eyes, steadfast and

reassuring. "You're my wife, the daughter-in-law of my mother. Her affairs concern you, too. Stay."

A wave of warmth flooded Janet. Brandon's words, simple yet profound, bolstered her fragmented sense of self, soothing the unease of her fractured memories.

Janet's eyes shimmered with gratitude. Gripping Brandon's hand, she gave a heartfelt nod, deeply moved by his words.

Feeling the warmth of Janet's face, Brandon tenderly pinched her cheek, whispering with uncharacteristic softness, "Always stay close."

Their intimate moment, playing out on the sofa, felt like a thorn in Audrey's side. She discreetly clenched her fists, her head bowing in an effort to shield the flickers of envy and bitterness threatening to betray her.

Feeling the reassuring squeeze of Janet's hand, Brandon's mood seemed to lighten considerably. With an air of newfound assertiveness, he cast his once detached gaze upon Audrey. "Where did you keep your mother's ashes? I'll arrange for them to be transported to Barnes."

A shadow crossed Audrey's face, hinting at some painful memories. "I... I didn't have enough money for a burial plot," she confessed,

pain evident in her voice. "Her ashes are currently at the crematory."

Brandon's eyes sharpened, a hint of impatience coloring his tone. "Which crematory?"

The weight of shame seemed to bear down on Audrey. With a hesitant bite of her lip, she whispered the name of a distant town overseas.

Acknowledging her with a curt nod, Brandon stated matter-of-factly, "I'll have someone retrieve the ashes. If that's all, you may leave now."

"Brandon..." Audrey hesitated, wrestling with words that seemed stuck in her throat. She stole a fleeting glance at him, searching for some sign, then demurely cast her eyes downward, swallowed by uncertainty.

Sensing her struggle, Brandon's frown deepened, impatience evident. "If you have something on your mind, out with it."

Tears rimmed her eyes, and Audrey hesitated for just a moment longer. "Might I personally collect my mother's ashes?"