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# Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1972

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"Come now. Your mom made these baked ribs herself, so make sure to have plenty, okay?" Delilah cooed at Lucius.

"Okay! Thanks, Mom and Grandma, for the food!" Lucius said in a salute-like voice.

Without a word, Joan flashed an awkward smile at Larry.

"Uh..." Lucius suddenly made a distressed sound.

"What's wrong, Lucius?" Joan immediately rushed before the boy.

"Mom, your baked ribs..." Lucius faltered.

"Hmm...?" Joan's eyes shot suspiciously at the dish she made.

Is something wrong with it?

She immediately picked a chunk of the meat and placed it in her mouth.

Arrgh! She spat out the entire chewed-up chunk of meat. Her face warmed with embarrassment as she apologized profusely, "I'm so sorry. I mistook the salt for sugar. It's way too salty to eat. I'll get rid of it now."

Joan paced off without hesitation, ready to dispose of the dish.

"Hang on." Larry ran and blocked her with his arms. He blurted out, "Let's not waste it. I like salty foods, and salty ribs sound great to me."

Seeing this, a pleased grin spread across Delilah's face.

Good on Larry for being so quick-witted!

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“N-No, quit playing around. This is literally inedible. I’ll make it again for you tomorrow if you really like it that much,” Joan muttered nervously.

However, Larry refused to let her go.

“It will be fine. Lucius, your teacher taught you not to waste precious food, right?” Larry eyed the boy.

To his delight, Lucius responded accordingly, “Mm-hmm! Dad’s right, we shouldn’t waste precious food.”

Attaboy!

Larry raised a thumbs up at Lucius.

In the end, Joan placed the baked ribs back onto the dining table. The rest of the meal went on in silence. They would only play along by cracking a laugh or two whenever Lucius made a joke.

Then, everyone finished up some house chores before returning to their respective rooms for the night. Joan lay on her bed, staring wide-eyed out the window in deep thought.

She wasn’t sure how to ask Larry for a divorce. At the same time, she didn’t understand why he still hadn’t told her the truth about Gabriella.

But some things have to be dealt with, eventually.

How long is planning to hide it from me!

A trace of melancholy blurred her eyes.

“Larry!”

“Joan!”

The two called out each other’s names simultaneously.

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"You go first."

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They said the same thing at the same time again.

"It's alright. You can go first," Joan suggested softly.

If he comes clean about Gabriella, then at least I married the right man who faces his problems head-on.

"I heard about what happened at the hospital today, and there's something I need to tell you." Anxiety and helplessness showed on his scrunched-up, frowning face.

"Back when you suddenly went missing, I found out that you and Dustin actually went overseas. That made me bitter inside. So I kept going to the bar, and one day, Gabriella appeared. She smelled of your usual perfume scent... I thought you had returned to me..." Larry's explanation trailed off as he felt guiltier by the second.

So it really did happen in a bar!

And Gabriella didn't lie!

It was as if something snapped in Joan. Her eyes blurred with even more sorrow than before.

"So what now? Is the child in Gabriella's tummy yours?" Joan's words struck onto him like a whip.

"I don't know. I remember nothing from that night. The next day, I..." Larry's voice grew quieter.

He didn't want to say any more.

It was painfully obvious what had happened between him and Gabriella.

"That's enough." Joan turned so that her back was facing him.

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“Joan, I know I messed up. You can punish me however you see fit.” Larry inched closer and wrapped his arms tightly around her.

What’s the use of punishing him? Joan mentally scowled. Will punishing him remove the baby in Gabriella’s tummy? Will it undo everything that he did with Gabriella that night?

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