



As the sun rose over the eastern mountains, the roosters of Cedar Hollow began their morning chorus, their crowing echoing through the valley. The temperature was just right, and even the roosters had been subdued by the thirty-minute delay Janet and Kent had orchestrated.



Janet marveled at one of the new homestead’s features—a deep corner tub reminiscent of those she’d admired since growing up in Palmetto Bay near the ocean. In her mind, she already envisioned adding Epsom salts or even a mud blend for a rejuvenating wellness moment. This is exactly what I need to kick off my day, she mused. Meanwhile, Kent opted for the traditional shower, and over breakfast and coffee the two savored the quiet intimacy of their morning, deepening their connection before the day’s demands began.

After Janet left for work as a field assistant and Kent had changed and tackled a load of laundry, the mail carrier arrived. Among the deliveries were several loan invoice statements for Janet, yet there was no word from the university’s admission office. Kent frowned as he recalled having sent the dean’s office his guidance counselor’s letter, his 2.80 GPA transcript from Silver Creek High School, an essay about his dream of attending Waterford University, and college entrance examination scores that flirted with a 4.0 GPA. Why hasn’t anyone replied yet? he wondered, a knot of anxiety tightening in his chest.



This uncertainty soon grew into a deeper concern, gnawing at Kent’s pride in his achievements at Silver Creek. What if everything I’ve worked for is crumbling right now? he fretted. Desperate for clarity, he pulled out his smartphone and arranged a visit with a therapist. The session was an emotional whirlwind: a psychiatric evaluation revealed his partial dyslexia. During the evaluation, Kent was abruptly transported back to junior high—a memory of a disastrous day in “Introduction to Carpentry” when he had misunderstood the instructions for a table saw. I never knew my parents even realized these struggles existed, he recalled bitterly. The therapist recommended weekly sessions and even suggested occupational therapy.

Determined to transform his inner turmoil into positivity, Kent made a detour to the local jeweler. I have enough Simoleons in savings to predict that this day can still be great, he reassured himself. Returning to the homestead changing into his freshly pressed suit, tie, dress pants, and loafers, he waited eagerly for Janet’s return.





Before Janet could tend to the garden, Kent pulled her aside outside. His palms were sweating as his heart pounded in his ears. Dropping to one knee, he looked deeply into her eyes and said, “Janet, ever since I met you at the city youth summit in Silver Creek, something inside me has yearned to know you better. Now that we’re here – on this homestead – I want to begin a whole new chapter with you. Will you marry me?” His voice trembled with raw emotion.

Janet, startled by the passionate declaration—especially after knowing him for only three years and barely a week of living together—felt her heart leap. Logic may try to protest, but my heart knows the truth, she thought, and without hesitation replied, “Yes, Kent, I do.” She slid the ring onto her left hand and admired it in the late afternoon sunlight, as Kent rose to meet her with a tender kiss.



After that kiss, Janet’s surprise turned playful; she leaped into Kent’s arms with excitement, both of them basking in the warmth of their shared joy. Soon, they went their separate ways – Kent using his therapy advice to tackle the upgrade of the homestead’s water heater, and Janet addressing the persistent bugs and weeds in the garden. At supper that evening, they agreed to reserve a chapel twenty miles from Palmetto Bay for a private wedding set for Wednesday after work.

Later the next night after another long day, Janet headed to the basement swimming pool for her physical training. Kent joined her poolside, hesitating before broaching the subject of his diagnosis. How will she take this? What if I’m not the perfect husband she imagined? he worried silently. Reading her reassuring expression, he was relieved when Janet said softly, “It’s acceptable not to be perfect—I still want to marry you.” Their mutual acceptance brought a quiet calm as they later moved upstairs; Janet on the treadmill and Kent lifting weights in the home office gym, each lost in their thoughts about the future.







The next Wednesday morning, after Janet left for work, Kent’s mind was awash with thoughts of their upcoming trip to Corood for the wedding. A phone call from Waterford University’s dean’s office soon brightened his mood—he was officially recognized as a freshman and expected to enroll immediately. Brimming with cautious optimism, he declared his major in History with an emphasis in Politics on the university’s website. He enrolled in courses on Historical Perspectives, Cultural Milestones and Movements, and The Politics of Leadership, though he still had an elective to choose—a decision to be made in the coming days.



That evening, after work, Janet and Kent drove over one hundred miles to Corood. After changing into their formals — Janet with her immaculate makeup and Kent in his tailored suit—they met in the chapel. With no scripture, music, or officiant to guide them, they exchanged vows that had been carefully nurtured since Monday night. It wasn’t law but the purity of their love that bound them. After a tender kiss, Janet became Janet (Flowers) Wolfbeck, and the night burst into celebration as fireworks lit up the sky outside the chapel.



The drive back to Cedar Hollow seemed surprisingly short, buoyed by their shared elation. Once home, Kent lit a fire to fend off the chill of the cooling autumn evening, and they sat in companionable silence, warming themselves before finally retiring for the night.



The next day, after Janet had left for work, Kent immersed himself in homework for his primary courses at Waterford.

Meanwhile, at her jobsite, Janet began to feel an unusual nausea—what she initially brushed off as mere nerves. At lunch, concerned for her well-being, she visited a pharmacy to purchase a pregnancy test. In the privacy of a Port-A-Potty, she carefully followed the instructions. As she looked down, hand pressed to her mouth, a whisper escaped her, Could it be? Could this be Kent’s little secret? The test confirmed that she was expecting twins. Later that afternoon, Janet found Kent in the office and shared the unexpected twist of news, adding another layer of excitement to their already eventful week.



By the end of the week, as life on the homestead hummed with change, Janet received a promotion to Land Surveyor—her wage increasing from \$18 to \$25 an hour. This raise promised to ease the burden of the outstanding loans for the homestead and the house they were building. Kent, determined to support his academic ambitions, applied for a bank loan focused solely on his education, ensuring it would not affect Janet, despite their joint checking account. In a final, hopeful nod to their future, Kent even secured an elective course in parenting, embracing his new role not just as a husband, but as a soon-to-be dad.

