

## EIGHT

1932

Brooklyn, New York

"Mornin', Vena! The usual today?"

"Give me your best, Marty. By the way, have you-"

"Steve! Get back here, you punk! This isn't funny!" A teenage boy yelled and stopped in front of me out of breath. "E-Excuse me, ma'am. Have you seen a fourteen year old boy probably on the verge of an asthma attack? He's about yay-high, blonde hair, blue eyes... Always picking fights, possibly bruised."

"Bucky, have you- Oh, Vena! It's nice to see you!" Sarah smiled and hugged me. "You look as young as ever!"

"I only le for a year, Sarah. Had to visit family and all." I broke away and turned to the boy. "You mean Steve? Haven't seen him, kid. Sorry."

"If he's in an alley again, I'm losing it! I'm keeping that kid on a leash!" He hu ed before running towards the busy streets. "Rogers! Where are you!?"

"What happened now, Sarah?" I asked linking arms with her.

"That's what I've been trying to find out. One moment I was making them lunch, and the next all I hear is James yelling about Steve missing and rushed down the streets." She sighed and the boy approached us with Steve on his back. "Steven Grant Rogers! What on Earth happened!?"

"Got beat up again!"

"Here you go, Vena. Included some daisies there on the house." The florist said handing me the basket and I smiled in thanks. "Sarah, you too?"

"Not today, Marty. But thank you." Sarah sighed brushing the hair out of Steve's eyes and turned to me. "Bucky, this is Vena. She babysat you, Steve and Becca when you were younger."

"Wait! Is this little James? God, I almost didn't recognize you without the dirt on your face, kid. You're basically as tall as me now, I don't like it." I smiled and he blushed placing Steve on the ground.

"I remember... Good to see you again, Miss. You haven't aged a day." He stuttered still blushing and I chuckled ru ling his hair.

"Would you like to stay for dinner, Vena? You and Druig?" Sarah asked.

"Just me, Sarah. Husband's in Peru for a bit." I shrugged and looked at Steve. "We should get you cleaned up, kid. Looks like you took a couple of hits."

"You should see the other guy." He chuckled and winced.

"I'm sure you beat him to a pulp, Stevie."

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"Okay, you two get washed up. Vena and I will take care of dinner."

"Sarah, did you- Who's this?"

"Becca, this is Vena. She took care of you and Buck when you were younger." Sarah introduced us and I held out my hand for Rebecca to shake. "You probably don't remember because you were about four, but she used to come by all the time."

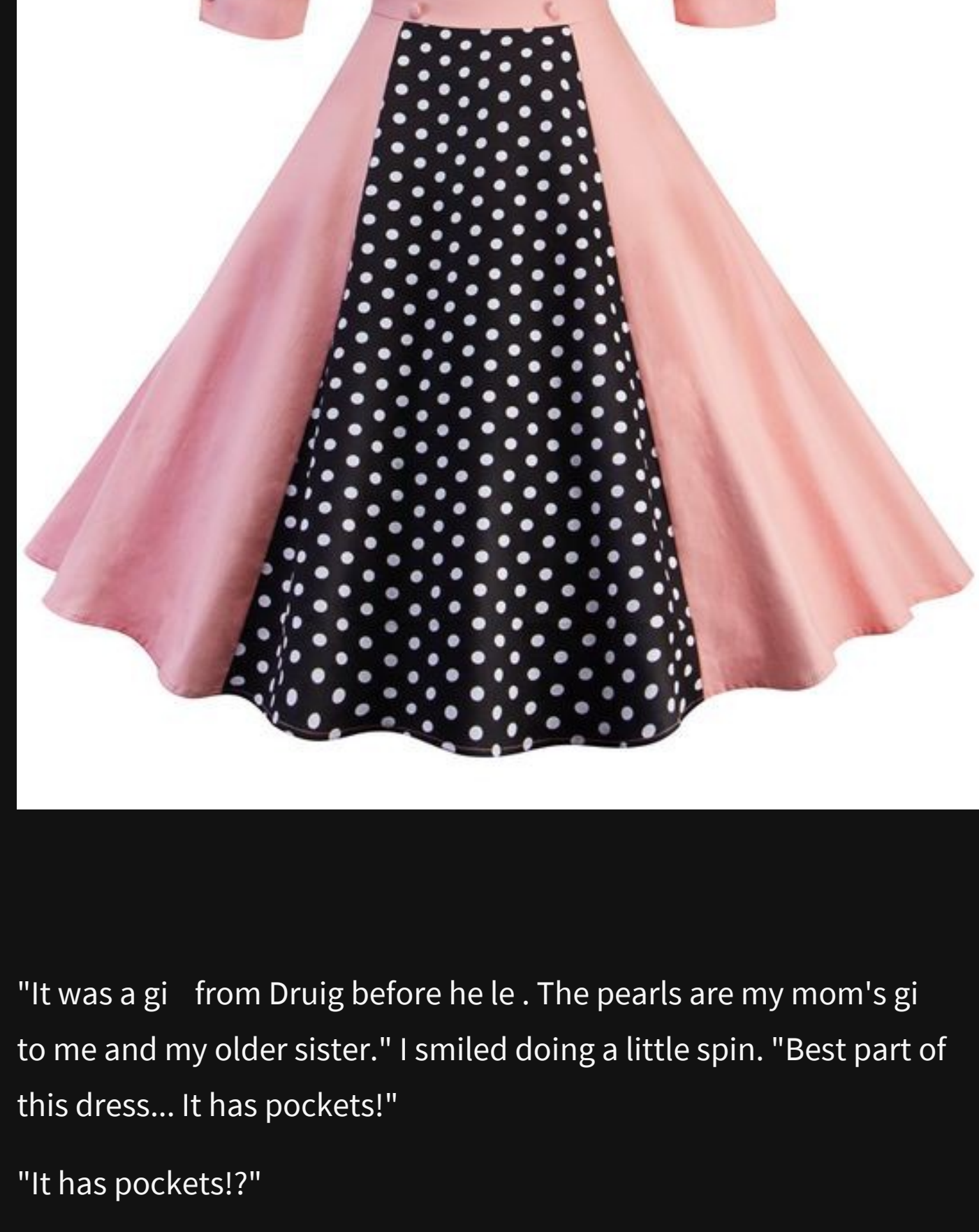
"Bucky used to have a crush on you, Vena." Rebecca said and giggled when James started screaming. "I think he still does."

"REBECCA!"

"Now Becca, it's not nice to snitch." I laughed ru ling her hair. "Go wash up for dinner, m'kay? And try not to be a tease to your brother."

Sarah laughed and handed me an apron and a glass of wine.

"Wouldn't want you to stain that gorgeous dress of yours. Where did you get it?"



"It was a gi from Druig before he le . The pearls are my mom's gi to me and my older sister." I smiled doing a little spin. "Best part of this dress... It has pockets!"

"It has pockets!?"

"It has pockets!"

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"How long are you back in Brooklyn, Vena?"

"Not long. I think I'm going back to see my parents and stay with them. Mom's worrying me."

"Is she okay?" Steve asked and I shrugged.

"She has these episodes... It's hard to explain really. But Dad says they're getting more intense. So, I'll probably go and call my sister and we'll go see them." I sighed as Sarah filled my glass with the remaining wine.

"I've never met her. What's she like?" Sarah asked and I smiled.

"Well, they can't have kids so they adopted both of us. And when Druig came into the picture, they adopted him as their son as well. Sometimes, I think my Dad likes him more than me and Karri." I laughed standing up and helped Sarah clear the table.

"I never mentioned it, but I've never heard a name like your husband's, Vena."

"He's Irish. It's common there." I replied quickly and nodded impressed by my own answer. "Yeah, that makes sense."

"I see." Sarah nodded and I looked at my watch.

"Sarah, you know I hate to leave you alone, but I really have to leave." I sighed and Sarah handed me a bag of le overs. "God knows that I love your cooking more than mine."

"That's why I made extra." She smiled and hugged me tight. "Please, at least try to write once in a while."

"I'll do my best."

## MEMES:

