



# The Unspoken Weight

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Eleanor watched Mark's shoulders slump a little more each week after the layoffs, the vibrant man who loved fixing things slowly dimming. The house, once filled with the happy hum of his weekend projects, now felt heavy with unspoken worries and polite rejection emails. One evening, as the last light softened the room, Eleanor gently suggested, "What if you did handyman work, just locally?" Mark laughed, but a seed of possibility had been planted.



Soon, Mark's simple website and Craigslist posts brought the phone to life, filling the quiet house with the promise of new purpose. He returned home tired, yet lighter, his hands smelling of sawdust and accomplishment, his confidence slowly returning. He chuckled one night, recounting how a client insisted he take a slice of homemade pound cake for his effort, a small detail that made Eleanor's chest tighten with an unexpected, quiet unease.



The stories of appreciative clients, long conversations, and offers of coffee began to accumulate, stretching the boundaries of professional courtesy. Eleanor battled a growing knot of apprehension, telling herself it was just her own insecurity, that Mark loved her and would never betray their trust. Yet, each time he left with his tools to an unknown address, a heavy silence settled in her heart, a quiet question she couldn't bring herself to voice.