

📌 PART.016 – Step One: Dream Big.

Step Two: Panic. Step Three: Eat Cake.

"New Year, New Goals... And A Cake Bribe for My
Lawyer"

A New Year, A Fresh Start (and a Little Love in the
Air)

The first morning of 2021 arrived soft and golden,
wrapped in a winter hush.

Snow covered the world like a blanket of quiet magic.
The rooftops, the parked cars, even the little café
chairs outside—all dusted in silver-white frost.

Susie woke up with a feeling.

Something new.

Something light.

Something warm.

She blinked at the ceiling, stretching.

"This year is going to be different."

She gently pressed a hand against her belly.

"We're really going to do it, little one."

A soft kick.

"See? You agree."

She smiled, curling deeper into the blankets for just a moment longer.

Outside, the world glowed in the morning sun.

Love, Toast, and a New Year's Call

The smell of toasted bread and warm strawberry jam filled her little apartment.

She buttered her toast, poured a glass of milk, and did something that felt like a small ritual of love.

She picked up her phone.

The first call? Her parents.

"Mom, Dad—Happy New Year!"

Her mom's voice immediately wrapped around her like

a hug.

"Oh, my darling! Happy New Year! Are you eating well?"

"Mom, I'm literally eating toast right now."

"Good, good. But you should eat more."

Susie grinned.

Then, she called Paul.

His voice was sleepy, deep, and warm.

"Mmm... Susie?"

"Oh dear, Happy New Year! My baby and I are here to wake you up!"

A small pause.

Then, his quiet laugh.

"You two are troublemakers."

"The best kind."

She could almost see his smile through the phone.

"I miss you."

Her heart did a little flip.

"I know. Me too."

And for a moment, the world felt smaller. Closer.

Warmer.

Bribing My Lawyer with Cake (Because Why Not?)

At noon, Susie grabbed her Goal Book, her cake, and a whole lot of determination.

Today was the day she would meet Tanya.

And she was ready.

✓ Ready to face her goals.

✓ Ready to figure out her future.

✓ Ready to bribe her lawyer with cake.

Because let's be real—a slice of pavlova could fix a lot of things.

She wrapped her thick gray coat around herself, stepped into the snowy streets, and made her way to Ken's store.

The first thing she did?

She grabbed some old paper boxes, colored pens, and handmade a big "HAPPY NEW YEAR" banner.

If the world was changing, it should at least look festive doing it.

Customers smiled at her energy, the warmth of the

shop making everything feel alive.

Then, **Grandpa Ken** arrived.

She turned to him, grinning.

"Ken! Happy New Year! I made a cake! Let's have lunch together!"

Ken raised an eyebrow, then gave her a thumbs-up.

"You're going to be a great mom, Susie."

And just like that—her heart swelled.

She hadn't felt this light, this happy, in a long time.

Enter: The Lawyer (And The Cake Bribe)

At exactly 12:00, Tanya arrived.

On time. As always.

"Susie, Happy New Year!"

She immediately felt nervous.

She had done all the homework.

She had written down her goals.

She had thought deeply about everything.

So why did it feel like a job interview?

"Susie, how was your week?" Tanya asked, eyes full of knowing.

She took a deep breath.

"Fantastic. I feel like a completely different person."

"Good," he nodded. "Did you complete the task I gave you last week?"

She smirked.

"Yes. But first—cake."

She handed him a slice of pavlova, looking at him expectantly.

He laughed.

"Bribing your lawyer? Clever. But unnecessary. Let's talk."

Facing the Hard Truths (And Still Smiling Through It)

"Alright, Susie. Tell me—what's your biggest goal for this year?"

She didn't even hesitate.

"I want Paul to come back to work."

"Good," Tanya said. "Now... what's the biggest

obstacle?"

She froze.

She hadn't prepared for that.

After a long pause, she finally admitted:

"Factories have shut down. He can't find a job here. And I don't want to move before giving birth."

Tanya nodded, thoughtful.

"That's a real challenge. But now that we know it, we can work around it."

She exhaled.

"I feel like I just walked into an exam."

Tanya smirked.

"That's because I'm good at my job."

Step Two: The Challenge Begins

"Alright," Tanya said. *"Congratulations, Susie. You've completed Step One: Defining Your Goal."*

She sat up straighter.

"Now, we move on to Step Two."

"Oh great, there's more?"

"Of course. Step Two is called—'Finding Our Problems.'"

Susie frowned.

"Wait, haven't I already found my problems?"

"Not quite. Step One was identifying what you WANT. Step Two is identifying everything that's standing in your way."

"That sounds... difficult."

"It is." Tanya smirked. "And that's exactly why we're doing it."

She sighed.

"Do I have a choice?"

"Not if you want to succeed."

She straightened her shoulders.

"Alright. Let's do it."

"Good," Tanya said. "This week, your job is to uncover EVERY reason why your goal might not happen. Think of it like detective work."

"Like a murder mystery... but the victim is my own progress?"

"Exactly."

Susie laughed.

"Alright, Tanya. Challenge accepted."

✦ END OF EPISODE 13 ✦