

Chapter 140 Talk In Private

Without warning, Melissa accidentally slipped and fell, hurting her old injury. She couldn't help but wince from the pain.

She might have gotten rid of the wheelchair, but she sure was quick to get into another accident.

Everett hurried over and helped her up. "Are you hurt?" he asked anxiously.

"Are you okay, Dr. Sherman?" A bunch of nurses had come over as well, concerned about Melissa.

As per hospital regulations, the floors were disinfected and mopped several times throughout the day. Melissa had been distracted and failed to notice that the floor was still wet. It was no one's fault but hers.

Melissa gritted her teeth and endured the pain. Her arm instinctively pushed Everett away. "I'm fine," she said to the nurses. "You can get back to work."

Everett was miffed that Melissa had refused his help. But then a memory suddenly flashed in his mind. Not long after they had gotten married, Melissa had a similar accident where she fell and couldn't get up. She had begged for his help, but Everett was so displeased at her at the time that he never bothered to reach for her. Now, it seemed that the tables had turned.

His lips curled into a bitter, wry smile. Alas, there was nothing he could do about it. It was the first time in his life that he felt at an utter loss.

The nurses dispersed, only to huddle a few feet away. They engaged in a whispered discussion as they watched Melissa and Everett.

"Look, Dr. Sherman and Mr. Mayfield are a perfect match, don't you think?"

"I agree. A handsome man and a gorgeous woman make for an attractive pair."

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"You'd better stop saying those things. I heard that Mr. Mayfield is already engaged."

"Yes, but isn't his fiancée that woman in the tabloids? With all that scandal surrounding her, who knows what might happen in the future?"

They speculated some more before finally leaving the hall.

Everett shuffled behind Melissa, racking his brains for a topic of conversation. Then he remembered how happy she had been while she was on the phone just now. "Who were you talking to earlier?" he asked before he could stop himself.

From what little he had overheard, he could tell that it was a man.

Melissa had never shown that kind of familiarity or tenderness toward him.

"Mr. Mayfield," Melissa retorted, her brows furrowed. "Don't you think you're being too nosy?"

She had cared so much about him in the past, but he disregarded her affections and threw her aside.

The knot of unease in Everett's chest tightened when she refused to answer his question. Just as they were about to reach Arielle's ward, he grabbed Melissa's arm and pulled her back. "I just want to know what his relationship with you is."

He wanted to know what that man was to her, for her to look so delighted over a conversation with him.

Irritated, Melissa pushed him away again. As she did so, her other arm bumped against the unlocked door, throwing it open. The people inside the ward turned to look at her and Everett.

Arielle's face darkened as she took in the sight of Melissa and Everett seemingly locked in an embrace. Her hands balled into fists under the blanket, but she had learned to be cool and level-headed. She wouldn't give in to hysterics as she normally would before.

"Hello, Melissa."

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Arielle's voice was weak and feeble, and her lips were pale.

If Melissa hadn't known just how vicious Arielle was, she might have felt sorry for the latter.

"I heard that you refused to get an injection and insisted on seeing me first," Melissa said bluntly.

She was curious to see what this scheming woman was up to this time.

"I want to talk to you in private. Is that okay?" Arielle said in a beseeching tone, her eyes wide and pitiful. "Just a few minutes."

The doctors in the room seemed to take that as their cue, and one of them spoke up. "Dr. Sherman, the patient is emotionally unstable at the moment. It looks like you're the only one who can remedy that. She has been asking for you."

Melissa sneered. She was the one who got hurt, the one who had almost died many times. And yet, here the culprit was, lying in bed and spilling out a few tears to get people's sympathy. In contrast, people only saw Melissa's strength and immediately thought that she should be the bigger person and expected her to compromise. How laughable.

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Everyone left the ward, but Everett stayed.

Melissa couldn't help but sneer at him. "Don't worry, Mr. Mayfield. I'm not going to hurt her."

It was an intentional jab at Everett, who had always accused her of hurting Arielle multiple times in the past.

His face darkened, though he bit back the words that he was about to say. There was no point in trying to persuade her now. He knew that Melissa hated him. And so, he wordlessly got out as well.

Still, her words remained with him, like tiny needles lodged into his heart, pricking him with every breath he took.

Everett seated himself on one of the chairs lined up in the hall and lit a cigarette. His hair flopped over his forehead, making him look slightly disheveled and utterly dispirited.

Back inside the ward, Melissa took the chair on the far side of the room and waited for Arielle to speak.

"Melissa, what should I do to make you forgive me?"

"We're the only ones here," Melissa said in a harsh tone. "Is it really necessary for you to keep up with your act?"

Arielle gritted her teeth. Melissa had indeed changed a lot. It used to be so easy to fool her. Arielle only needed to appear weak, and Melissa would immediately cave. Now, things were no longer that easy.

She needed to calm down and persevere.

Arielle took a deep breath and continued, "I know I wronged you in the past, but that's all over now, and... And I also got punished, didn't I? Will you only be satisfied with my death?"

Arielle loathed the fact that she had to act humble in front of Melissa, but she knew that she must see this through to the end.

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Melissa scoffed and waved her hand. "Oh, please. Stop saying that. I'm not the one orchestrating someone else's death."

In fact, it was the other way around.

Seeing that mere words were not working, Arielle lowered her head and rubbed her palms together. Then she let out a sob.

"If I see one tear on your face, I'm stepping out immediately," Melissa said in a flat voice.

"No, wait." Arielle jerked her head up. Sure enough, her eyes were already rimmed red.

Melissa had seen her like this countless times before. She would be a fool to fall for the same trick again.

"My mother has doted on me all my life. I do admit that our parents treat me much better than you, and that is why I became a little arrogant and willful. I now realize how wrong I have been. Please, I'm willing to do anything as long as you forgive me."

Melissa was slightly taken aback. It was true that Arielle had been spoiled by her parents, and she was incredibly arrogant, but she was actually admitting her mistakes?

Surely, this could count as a miracle!

Then again, Melissa was not stupid.

"Do anything?" she echoed. She cocked her head to the side, her eyes flashing playfully.

"Yes."

"In that case..." Melissa narrowed her eyes and pretended to give it some thought. When she spoke again, her words came out slowly. "If I ask you to leave Everett, do you think you can do that?"

She said it on purpose to test Arielle.

There was no way Melissa would forgive her that easily.

Arielle's face visibly soured with resentment, but it was gone in the next second. She agreed, all while her fists clenched tightly

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under the blanket. "Of course, as long as you forgive me, I will leave him."

Melissa blinked in mild surprise. She wasn't expecting Arielle to agree.

She couldn't help but chuckle. Things were getting more and more interesting. "I don't understand why you need my forgiveness so much. What is it that you want, hmm? For us to forget the past and sit together like we've been close all our lives? Yeah, that's never going to happen."

"I just want to ease my guilt," Arielle mumbled pitifully. "I don't want anything else."

Melissa snorted and rolled her eyes.

She knew that Arielle was simply putting on a show. Everything she had done today was all an act.

But Melissa played along with her anyway.

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"It's not impossible for me to forgive you," Melissa began, a devious smile flashing in her eyes. "As long as you stop pestering me," she continued, practically spitting the words out.

"Okay," Arielle answered through gritted teeth as she tried to suppress her own anger.

Like hell, she would stop! She would never stop until Melissa disappeared for good!

Unable to stomach Arielle's hypocritical display for much longer, Melissa silently got to her feet and left. The moment she closed the door behind her, Arielle's mournful expression was replaced by a malicious one.

Melissa walked down the hall and found Everett sitting in one of the chairs lined up against the wall. The cigarette between his fingers was about to burn off. The distinct exhaustion in his features tugged at Melissa's sympathy.

"You're not allowed to smoke here," she couldn't help but point out. "The hospital has a designated smoking area."

Everett returned to his senses and immediately put out the cigarette. "Sorry, I forgot all about that."

He had apologized to Melissa twice now. He must be preoccupied with his worry for Arielle. "You should go in. Don't worry, I didn't hurt her in any way."

There was a sarcastic bite to her words.

Everett's face darkened at once. "I believe you," he declared, staring straight at Melissa.

She had to stifle the urge to scoff. The man really knew how to twist the knife he had stabbed into someone's back. Believe, he said? Now he claimed to trust her. Why couldn't he have believed her five years ago, when she needed his faith the

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most?

Their little exchange only served to unearth the pains she had locked away over the years. Melissa felt the telltale prickle on her nose, and her eyes started to feel hot with unshed tears. She turned on her heel and made to leave.

But Everett grabbed her arm to stop her. "Wait!"

"Mr. Mayfield, please behave yourself," Melissa said coldly. "This is the hospital. I would appreciate it if you didn't disturb me in my workplace."

Her indifference caught him off-guard, and his hold on her slackened. "Don't be so uptight all the time," he mumbled awkwardly. "You should smile more."

Melissa took a deep breath and faced him. "I used to smile a lot, do you remember? But you hated to look at me with a smile on my face, didn't you?"

Everett remained standing there in a daze long after Melissa had left. Yes, she used to smile constantly. She had been so naive and earnest, but he failed to cherish that light in her...

His hands clenched into fists at the thought. There was nothing he could do to change the past, but that didn't matter. Everett was resolved to never leave Melissa's side from now on.

"Everett," Arielle called out from inside her ward.

Everett trudged in with a sigh, not caring to hide the impatience on his face.

Arielle grew more irritable when she noticed this, but she still tried to rein in her emotions.

"You still like Melissa, don't you?"

Everett sat on a chair at the far side of the room, away from the light. Although his expression was hidden from view, there was no mistaking the menacing aura he exuded.

He had such a piercing gaze that daunted everyone he looked at. Although they had been together in the last five years, not even Arielle could look straight into his eyes for longer than a second. She knew that at that moment, Everett had that

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familiar, intimidating look in his eyes.

"What are you trying to say?" he asked in a lukewarm voice.

Arielle made a show of taking a deep breath, as if to brace herself for what she was about to say. "If you really want to be with Melissa, I'm willing to give up on you so that you can be together again."

Everett began tapping his fingers on his knee. Arielle could almost see him narrow his eyes as he studied her. The longer the silence dragged out, the more tense she became.

"What do you think, Everett?" she finally asked.

Everett got up and stalked over to the bed. He loomed over her and demanded, "Who taught you to say those things?"

Arielle was instantly flustered. She turned her face away and waved her hand. "It's not like that. No one taught me anything. Listen, Everett. I love you, I really do. But... But since you don't love me anymore, then I don't wish to force you. I know I can't. Your happiness is all that matters to me. I only have one small request."

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"What request?" Everett asked.

"Give me two months. In that time, you will belong only to me. It will be just like before, when you still loved me," Arielle said.

Everett's mood grew even more menacing with every word she spoke.

"I love you so much, Everett. You know it's impossible for me to let you go just like that. Stay with me for the next two months, or I can't promise you I won't do anything reckless. I promise, once the period is over, I won't interfere with your relationship again."

Arielle painted the picture of a weak and delicate young woman.

"Are you threatening me?" Everett asked in a chilling voice. He slowly leaned closer. "You know very well that I can make you disappear from Andeport right this minute. In fact, I could have done that long before you got the nerve to spout those words."

It wasn't until that moment that Arielle finally understood how utterly ruthless this man could be. He might have tolerated her in the past, but he was clearly done with her now.

"It's not like that, Everett. I'm not threatening you." Arielle burst into tears. She wasn't pretending this time; she was really terrified of him. "We've been together for five years, after all. Please understand. It's not easy for me to give up on you. Everett, if you leave me now, I really don't know how I can carry on living. At least give me these two months to prepare myself. I also need to convince my parents to let you go..."

Everett frowned. It was true that the Sherman family still held some power and influence over Andeport. One wrong move on his part, and he might endanger Melissa and the twins.

Two months should be enough for him to settle everything.

"Fine."

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Arielle breathed a sigh of relief when Everett finally agreed. Her eyes flashed with vicious triumph, but it was gone in a second.

She only needed to keep him by her side, and she was certain that she could seduce him into falling in love with her again. As for Melissa, they would make sure to get rid of her for good, once and for all!

The hospital was bustling that afternoon. Melissa herself was very busy after several critically ill patients were wheeled in. She barely had the time to glance at her watch and realized that she would have to work overtime tonight. Worried about the children, she called them up to inform them that she would be home late.

She was truly blessed with her babies. Not only were they calm about her absence, they were also sensible enough to comfort her.

"It's okay, Mommy. Don't forget to eat dinner, okay? Merrick and I will stay home." Lindsey's voice was soft and sweet. It enveloped Melissa in a warm glow, and all her fatigue seemed to disappear into thin air.

"Of course, Lindsey. You and your brother have a good meal, okay? Don't stay up too late."

"Don't worry about us and just focus on work, Mommy. I will take care of my sister." Merrick's voice was just as adorable as his sister's, though it carried a hint of prudence that was beyond his age.

"Good."

Melissa hung up and stretched her muscles before diving back to work. By the time she returned to her office, it was already dark outside. To her surprise, she was suddenly accosted by two kids. "Mommy!" They pounced on her and clung to her legs.

Melissa laughed in disbelief. "What are you doing here?" she asked, ruffling their hair.

Lindsey looked up at her with her big, bright eyes.

"Mrs. Mayfield said you're probably too busy to eat properly, so she brought us here to make sure that you have a decent meal."

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Lindsey grinned and fluttered her eyelashes.

Melissa turned to Vivienne with a helpless look on her face. "Thank you."

Vivienne was a great help in taking care of the children, and she never missed a chance to take care of her, too. Melissa was touched.

Vivienne waved her off with a smile. "Here, I made these dishes myself. I wasn't sure whether your taste has changed over the years or not, though."

Melissa sat down and gazed at the spread on the table. These were her favorite dishes. She couldn't help but tear up.