

Chapter 40 The Trial

In the room, sunlight fell on Melanie's pale face. She waited silently for Jose's answer. As long as he said yes, she was willing to follow him anywhere. She was willing to be his wife, forget everything in the past, and try to love him.

Jose looked deeply at her, complex emotions rising from his heart. "Mela, after this lawsuit is over, I can accompany you to any place you want to go."

A hint of disappointment flashed in Melanie's eyes, and she spoke in a hoarse voice, "okay."

Jose gently hugged her in arms, but the light in his eyes dimmed. 'Mela, don't blame me for being cruel, I just don't want you to have any more ties with him.'

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The court date came quickly. This marriage was being handled as a non-public trial as requested, and almost everyone was waiting for the outcome.

In court, Jose, as Melanie's attorney, questioned the defendant, Everett.

"Did the defendant have an affair with my client's cousin while my client was suffering from brain cancer?"

"Yes." Everett replied calmly.

"Did the defendant hit my client during her severe illness, causing her to lose hearing in her right ear?"

"Yes."

"Did the defendant force my client to have sexual relations during marriage, causing my client's illness to worsen..."

Everett's expression changed slightly, "...yes."

On the other side, Melanie's heart skipped a beat as she

looked incredulously at Jose, who stood facing away from her in a suit, looking calm and collected. He did have done a lot of investigations. Restless, she clenched her fist tighter and tighter.

“Did the defendant fabricate the fact and forced my client to admit that she had affairs with me, during a shareholders' meeting of Earley Corporate?” Jose continued. As a top lawyer, he would definitely make Everett lose miserably.

Seeing Melanie's increasingly pale face across from him, Everett's eyes flashed with anxiety, and he yelled at Jose, “stop your questions, I...admit to everything.”

“The defendant must respect the order of the court.” The judge banged the table.

Everett forced himself to calm down and replied, “yes.”

Jose's lips curved slightly. “Did the defendant, during my client's surgery, demolish her only remaining property, the building of Earley Corporate, to force her to appear?”

“Yes.” Everett replied without expression, without explanation. At the time, he thought Melanie was faking her death, so he wanted to force her to show up.

He was wrong...

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“Just recently, the defendant kidnapped my client and kept her locked in Elgin Villa for a day and a night. This is the certificate issued by the investigating officer at the time.” Jose handed the certificate to the judge. “I have finished my questioning.”

After finishing his statement, Jose stood beside Melanie, intending to hold her hand. Melanie's hand slightly recoiled, but he firmly clasped it. Her palm was slightly sweaty, and he

didn't know why.

When it was the opposing lawyer's turn to present evidence and question Melanie, Everett directly stopped him. For Everett, the lawyer was a mere formality, and he didn't want the lawyer to interrogate Mela.

"Adjourn the court." The judge and jury were puzzled, but they temporarily adjourned and prepared to reconvene in the afternoon for the second half of the trial. After all, this was not a simple divorce case, as it involved significant asset distribution.

Jose held Mela's hand all the way and took her to the restaurant to have a meal. He ordered her favorite dishes. "Are you tired? The afternoon session will be over soon, and then you can rest properly."

Melanie looked at his tender face and her eyes inexplicably became slightly red. She shook her head and lowered her gaze. "I'm not tired, you are the one who should have a rest."

Chapter 41 A Tough Decision

In the restaurant.

Jose glanced at Melanie's distressed countenance, sensing there was more to her words. He feigned ignorance and stood up. "I'd like to go to the restroom."

Melanie nodded in response.

Jose made his way to the sink and, as he extended his hand, noticed the dark, dried bloodstains on his palm. His eyes widened with shock and nervousness. In a rush, he darted back, seizing Melanie's hand firmly. Her palm bore the imprint of pinched fingertips. It was because she clenched her fist so tightly that the sharp nails pierced her skin.

In an instant, his eyes reddened. Disregarding Melanie's resistance, he fetched water and gently cleansed the bloodstains from her hand.

"Why would you inflict harm upon yourself?" He scolded, his tone tinged with both frustration and anger.

Melanie's pallid lips parted slightly. "I didn't... I just..." She was merely unable to find solace, uncertain how to contain the anguish within her heart.

Veins pulsated on Jose's forehead as he gazed at her tender countenance, softly pressing his lips against the back of her hand. After a prolonged silence, he finally spoke, "I'll withdraw the lawsuit..."

Ultimately, he gave in for the sake of her happiness.

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The afternoon trial was canceled since the plaintiff withdrew the case.

Jose proceeded to handle the necessary formalities.

The individual in charge, recognizing Jose, inquired with

bewilderment, “why relinquish a lawsuit with assured victory? You must be aware that triumphing in this case would propel you to new heights within the legal profession. After all, Everett Connors is no ordinary person.”

Jose offered a bitter smile. “Regardless of the case's outcome, I remain the one who loses.”

In these past few days, he had realized that Melanie had never truly let go of Everett. Perhaps he would forever remain shut out of her heart. He pondered that if only Mela harbored even a trace of affection for him, he would readily face any peril on her behalf, even if it meant embracing death itself.

...yet, she did not love him, not even in the slightest.

He comprehended the arduousness of loving someone and the burning desire to possess that person, even by any means necessary. However, he also understood that loving someone entailed wishing for their happiness, hoping they would smile rather than weep...

After completing the formalities, Jose phoned Everett to arrange a meeting.

As adversaries, jealousy colored their encounter. Nevertheless, today both men conducted themselves as gentlemen. Before Jose could speak, Everett handed him a contract. “Deliver this to Mela, and also, please take good care of her.”

It was the first time Everett had entrusted someone in such a begging tone.

Jose scrutinized the contents of the contract. Everett had transferred all of his company's shares to Melanie, alike the moment when Melanie had surrendered Earley Corporate to him.

Suddenly, a sense of relief washed over Jose. Now he could entrust Mela back to Everett without reservation. "I will safeguard this contract, and should you ever mistreat Mela, I shall ensure you lose everything." Jose declared.

An enigmatic glimmer shimmered in Everett's eyes. "What do you mean?"

"Her memories have resurfaced recently. The person she has always held affection for remains unchanged. I hope you will cherish her this time." Jose stated sternly.

A surge of excitement surged through Everett's chest as he inquired, "why? Why are you willing to return Mela to me?"

"It's not about returning her to you. I simply wish for her to find her happiness..."

What Jose had always cherished was her radiant and carefree spirit. He vividly recalls the moment he first encountered Mela at Earley Corporate. She exuded warmth and joy, standing before him, playfully saying, "Jose, you're so aloof. It's hard for anyone to be smitten with you!" She teasingly remarked.

Curious, he inquired, "then what kind of person captures others' hearts?"

With little hesitation, Melanie responded, "certainly someone refined, gracious, and genteel."

The memory of her answer evokes a profound sense of melancholy within Jose. So, Mela, what kind of soul truly captures your heart?