

Chapter 579 Melissa, Have You Ever Loved Me

Marcus' gaze was distant and detached.

He seemed unapproachable, leaving Sophia, who trailed behind him, completely taken aback.

She couldn't help but reflect on the recent events.

Marcus' eyes landed on the girl who had dropped the plates in the cafe. In his gaze, there was a mix of tenderness, longing nostalgia, and unmistakably, a hint of hatred.

Sophia recognized that girl.

Or, it could be more accurate to say Sophia was familiar with her story.

Melissa was a well-known figure in the Fowler Group, rumored to captivate Marcus effortlessly.

Sophia had joined the Fowler Group with a specific goal in mind.

She shared Melissa's last name and also had a sweet appearance. Sophia prided herself on being more level-headed than Melissa.

So, Sophia believed she stood a chance at winning Marcus' affection.

But Marcus' frankness took her by surprise.

Despite feeling unsettled, Sophia knew better than to make a scene. She quickly left the elevator and headed to the front desk to arrange a new room for herself. The others who witnessed this understood one thing clearly.

Marcus was not interested in Sophia.

Indeed, many had also seen Melissa in the cafe. No one had expected her to end up working as a waitress in this small town.

Marcus couldn't seem to shake Melissa from his thoughts.

He remained alone in the elevator, his eyes fixed on the red numbers

climbing the wall. He reached the presidential suite at the top floor. It was a place both lavish and eerily empty.

Dropping his luggage, he felt too distracted to unpack. He just collapsed on the sofa, staring blankly at Warsaw's night sky.

Images of Melissa's distressed face lingered in his mind...

Late into the night he retrieved a fresh set of clothes from his luggage and freshened up with a shower.

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Melissa finished her shift at the cafe at ten in the evening. She quickly changed out of her work clothes and left the upscale hotel where the cafe was located.

Walking through the bustling city, her slender figure seemed to almost disappear into the night.

Despite it being an early summer evening, Melissa felt a chill in the air.

She wrapped her collar tighter around her neck and bought a couple of bread rolls from a street vendor, munching on them as she walked.

After taking a few turns and finishing her dinner, Melissa arrived at a restaurant.

The owner, spotting Melissa, greeted her warmly, "Ah, there you are, Melissa. The dirty dishes are waiting in the kitchen. Looks like you have a busy night ahead."

Melissa replied with a slight smile, "No problem at all. I've got plenty of energy."

The owner appreciated Melissa's hard work. Getting the dishes cleaned at a professional facility would cost her twice as much. Being a small business owner, she was always looking for ways to save money. She just wondered why such a young and sweet girl would take such a grueling job.

It was tough and dirty work after all.

Trusting Melissa to manage, the owner left.

Melissa crouched in the dimly lit kitchen, tirelessly scrubbing the stack of greasy bowls and plates. If she finished these, she'd earn \$100, adding up to \$3,000 for a month's work. With her other two jobs, her monthly



earnings could soar to nearly \$20,000. She was determined to pay off her debts as quickly as possible.

She often thought about clearing her debt to Marcus, believing it would bring her some peace when facing him.

The thought of their relationship, however, was something she dared not entertain.

The events of that night in her rented apartment seemed like a distant dream to her.

A dream she felt she should forget.

And she almost did forget, like a child who relishes a sweet cake only to have the taste fade over time. Yet, whenever it crossed her mind, a tinge of sadness still lingered.

Her focus was broken by a sharp pain. She realized her cut finger had been soaking in the dirty dishwater, now swollen and throbbing with discomfort.

Melissa extended her hand, her gaze fixed on her calloused fingers.

She was deep in thought, yet she knew she couldn't afford to daydream for long.

She realized it would be past one in the morning by the time she finished.

And she had an early start at the breakfast shop at six.

As she washed the dishes with intense focus, the pain in her hands seemed to fade away. In the dimly lit, cramped restaurant, a man of elegance stood. His silhouette stretched in the faint light.

Melissa only looked up when the light wisps of smoke cleared.

Her eyes met his.

He was impeccably dressed as always, maintaining his poise even in such a shabby setting. Yet his eyes were cold, impersonal, as if he were looking at a stranger.

Melissa's lips parted slightly, a hint of awkwardness on her face.

She felt more self-conscious than she had been at the cafe, unsure of what to do with her hands.

Marcus, with a cigarette between his lips, said slowly, "Do you love him so much that you'd go to any lengths for him?"

He was a man whose pride wouldn't let him easily discuss Ryan's scandal.

Marcus gazed at Melissa, puzzled about what she might say.

He hoped she would plead with him, admit her feelings, and ask him to take her back to Duefron.

In his mind, Marcus thought if Melissa begged, he might consider helping her. He planned to help her. She couldn't expect more.

Finally, Melissa said softly, "Yes. I do love him a lot."

Marcus' expression turned sour.

He mocked her, "Great. You two are made for each other. Then why do you want to end things with him?"

Melissa found herself at a loss for words with Marcus.

She couldn't confess to him that her heart belonged to someone it shouldn't. She could deceive Marcus, pretend to be with him, but they were so different, plus she already had a boyfriend back then.

It was too awkward for her.

Unable to find the right words, Melissa remained silent.

Marcus watched her silently. After a while, he finished his cigarette and walked away.

In the dimly lit kitchen, the light struggled to shine through.

Melissa blinked, bowing her head as she continued to scrub the greasy plates.

Tears rolled down her cheeks, mingling with the oily water.

Late into the night, she didn't stop washing until her fingers pruned and her back ached. She picked up the 100-dollar bill the owner had left on the table and trudged away, exhausted.

Outside, a black car halted in front of the diner.

Marcus lounged in the driver's seat, his arm out the window, a cigarette

perched between his slender fingers.

He looked effortlessly cool.

Melissa stood silently, her gaze fixed on him in the car.

After a long pause, she approached and murmured, "I'll repay the 800,000 dollars."

Marcus tapped the cigarette, ash falling away.

His brow furrowed slightly. "You took so long to think, just to say that to me? That bracelet was actually worth nearly ten million... but forget the debt. I retrieved the bracelet and dumped it. We're even now."

His words were harsh. It was a first for him, especially towards a woman.

"You owe me nothing. That night we spent together was enough payment for me."

Melissa's throat tightened, making it hard to speak.

In her mind, she desperately tried to deny it. It wasn't like that between them.

She was the only one to blame.

Fighting back tears, she looked down and murmured, "I'll repay the 800 thousand dollars. You didn't smoke much before. It's bad for your health."

Her voice dropped even lower. "I've got 40 thousand at home. I can give you that first."

Marcus looked at her with a cold gaze and asked, "Are you inviting me over?"

"No, not like that. I just want to settle my debt."

Melissa adjusted her clothes, still shivering. She pointed ahead and said, "My place is a five-minute walk from here. Just follow me..."

"Get in the car."

Melissa hesitated to enter the car, conscious of her dirty clothes and not wanting to stain his car.

Marcus was known for his tidiness. She was aware of his obsession with cleanliness.

"Get in the car," he said, his voice colder than usual.

Melissa remained still, seemingly clinging to something. She pointed ahead and then dashed off on her own.

The street was empty at midnight

Her slender figure moved along the road, appearing isolated. Marcus sat silently in the car.

His eyes felt warm.

He struggled to understand his emotions. He resented her, even despised her. He thought about that she had been with another man when she let him touch her.

To him, it didn't matter whether they had sex or not in the end. What was the difference?

They had been together for nearly six months. He was sure anyone could tell he had feelings for her. She had plenty of time to disclose her past and reject him, but she never did.

Even after they made out on that small bed of hers, she didn't push him away.

With a bite on his finger, Marcus switched on the headlights and began to drive slowly behind her.

Melissa's current home was more rundown than her previous one.

The room barely had space beyond a makeshift bed and a small, shaky table.

Feeling awkward, Melissa hesitated to invite Marcus to sit, realizing there was nowhere to sit but the bed.

She bit her lip, reached under the bed, and pulled out a stone plate. After digging a bit, she retrieved several bundles of old money from a hole in the wall.

Carefully, she placed the money on the small table.

Melissa whispered softly, "That's all I've managed to save. I want you to keep it."

Marcus quietly observed her hand. It wasn't as delicate as before. She used to pamper her hands with a light green hand cream she always

carried. Now, she was even cutting back on hand cream.

He felt a tightness in his throat and asked, "Do you really love him that much?"

"Yes," Melissa replied without a second thought.

She had an inkling of what he might be thinking but she knew she didn't deserve him.

Then, looking down, she said something she had thought of countless times. "Mr. Fowler, we're from two different worlds."

Marcus played with the two bundles of money, deep in thought.

No one could tell what was on his mind.

Finally, after a long silence, he said, "Keep the money. Just cook me something to eat and we'll call it even."

Melissa looked up, tears forming in her eyes.

"Mr. Fowler, you don't need to be this kind to me," she said, her voice quivering.

Marcus gave a wry smile. "Like I said, cook me something and we're even."

The kitchen was modest, with just a simple pot and no fridge.

Under the bed, there was a box of instant noodles and two cans of luncheon meat.

Marcus appeared unaffected.

He casually leaned against the headboard of her bed, pulling out another cigarette and lighting it. He took his time, inhaling the smoke as he observed her preparing the small pot, plugging it in, and filling it with water.

She had a knack for cooking.

Even the simple instant noodles, enhanced with luncheon meat and vegetables, emitted an appetizing aroma.

Soon, she served two bowls of the noodles on the modest table. After a moment of hesitation, she gathered her courage and removed the cigarette from his lips, saying, "Don't smoke. It's bad for you."

Marcus simply gazed at her, his eyes holding depth.

In the blink of an eye, he grasped her slender wrist and swiftly pinned her beneath him.

The situation mirrored one from two months prior. It was romantic then, but now, things were different.

Tears welling in her eyes, Melissa pleaded, "Get off me."

Marcus slowly released her hand, noticing a cut on her finger. She whimpered in pain, "That hurts."

"Do you realize it hurts? You're a liar, aren't you? Tell me, does it hurt?"

Marcus seemed to transform into someone else. He intrusively slid his finger beneath her clothes, handling her roughly.

Her faint cries echoed through the small rental.

The pain was intense.

His deliberate harshness caused her agony. He had never been intimate with a woman, yet he seemed well-versed in their sensitivities.

"I really want to fuck you up. Then everything would quiet down."

Marcus' face flushed with emotion. His demeanor towards her was a blend of icy detachment and intense desire. He stripped her of her composure, toying with her emotions.

Melissa let out a soft cry, not daring to raise her voice. In a hushed tone, she pleaded with him to stop.

Marcus whispered in her ear.

He watched her closely, catching every nuance of her expression.

"Do you like this? That I fuck you with my fingers?"

He had spoken so rudely to belittle Melissa. Her breath was short under his touch... Yet, as a woman inexperienced with men, she found herself unexpectedly stirred by him.

When she instinctively wrapped her arms around his neck, longing for a kiss, Marcus, with a frosty tone, questioned, "Melissa, have you ever truly loved me?"

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