

Chapter 594 It Was Finally Over Between Them

The air hung heavy, a palpable tension between them.

Melissa's earlier passion, once aflame in Marcus' indifferent embrace, now felt like a distant memory. The heat of their intimacy had faded, leaving a cold, awkward silence.

Embarrassment washed over Melissa.

Her lips quivered as she struggled with the desire to reveal her true identity to Marcus, yet each time the words neared escape, they retreated unspoken.

Marcus' harsh declaration that their fleeting encounter was worth two million dollars severed any lingering ties.

In that moment, their relationship crumbled to dust.

Regret gnawed at Melissa. Perhaps her journey to Duefron was a mistake. Maybe it was better to let Marcus harbor his disdain, believing her to be superficial. Hatred, she reasoned, would eventually fade, leaving her as the sole custodian of their shared memories.

Clutching the quilt closer, Melissa removed her ring, placing it on the bedside table.

It never truly belonged to her.

Rising from the bed, she dressed unhurriedly, indifferent to her exposed skin. Her clothes, damp from the rain earlier, clung uncomfortably to her body, but her desire to leave overshadowed any discomfort.

Escape was all she yearned for now, as fervently as she had once craved his presence. Her hands trembled slightly as she fastened the last button...

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Marcus watched her, his gaze unyielding

Finally clothed, Melissa bid him farewell, a finality in her tone. This, she believed, was their last encounter.

"I'm leaving. You won't be troubled by me again."

Marcus remained still, the dim light casting shadows across his once tender, now indifferent features. His eyes, once warm, now held traces of animosity.

As Melissa approached the guest room door, Marcus' voice halted her. "Wait."

Her body tensed.

Approaching Marcus extended a check from the tea table.

It was for ten million.

He placed it in her hand with a chilling detachment. "Remember to take the pill."

Tears brimmed in Melissa's eyes, but she lifted her head slightly, refusing to let them fall.

After a moment, she steadied her voice and replied, "Mr. Fowler, I'll remember the pill. As for the check, I don't need it."

With no desire to linger, Melissa hurried away.

The check slipped from Marcus' grasp, fluttering to the floor. Marcus, taking a moment, stooped to retrieve and tear it in half.

He then moved to the bedside table, picking up the ring

His fingers traced over it, as if feeling the lingering warmth of Melissa's touch. The bed, too, seemed to retain traces of her presence.

But she was gone, driven away by his own actions.

He doubted she would return.

It marked the end of whatever they had shared.

A self-mocking laugh escaped Marcus as he mused on the folly of their relationship. It was a fantasy, a delusion he no longer wished to entertain.

Downstairs, Melissa faced the chill of early summer's dawn. Her clothes, still damp, clung to her as the rain ceased.

Taxis were scarce at this hour, and she wasn't in the mindset to seek one. Instead, she walked to a nearby 24-hour pharmacy.

Inside, she purchased a box of morning-after pills. The cashier glanced at her with a mix of concern and curiosity, seeing Melissa's disheveled appearance.

It seemed to the cashier that Melissa had probably been assaulted.

The cashier offered Melissa a glass of warm water, which she gratefully accepted. The cashier, a mother in her forties, felt a pang of sympathy as Melissa swallowed the pill.

Yet, being strangers, she held back from saying more.

As Melissa stepped outside, the sky began to lighten. She wandered the streets aimlessly, her body occasionally sprayed with mud from passing cars.

She hardly noticed.

Her aimless walk continued, not returning to the hotel until the dawn softened. Hunger and fatigue weighed on her, but sleep eluded her. Instead, she retrieved a diary and birth certificate from her luggage, poring over them repeatedly.

Then, in a decisive act, she set them alight.

Going forward, her identity would remain a mystery to everyone, Marcus included.

These burning pages ensured her identity, including her connection to Marcus, would remain a secret. Afterwards, Melissa curled up on the small bed, the quilt drawn tightly around her.

Sleep finally came, bringing with it a dream of the past. She was a cared-for child again, longing to confess her affection for Marcus.

Awakening her eyes were cool, and tear-streaked.

Melissa sat in silence, slowly wiping away her tears. She resolved not to dwell in sadness. Love was one thing, life, another.

To her, Marcus was now like a distant moon, unattainable and not to be pondered upon.

She phoned the breakfast shop owner in Warsew. The proprietress, sensing Melissa's ordeal, offered no questions. She simply welcomed Melissa back to work.

Melissa's thanks came softly, tinged with relief.

After a pause, the proprietress advised, "Don't overthink Your job awaits your return."

Melissa had planned to return to Warsew that afternoon, but her departure was unexpectedly delayed.

A knock at the door broke the silence. Opening it, she encountered a stranger, a man who appeared respectable.

He greeted her with a warm smile. "You're Melissa Brown, aren't you? I'm Thomas Smith."

The mention of 'Smith' had Melissa quickly shutting the door.

Leaning against it, her heart raced. She was puzzled and alarmed - why would the Smith family be seeking her out?

Thomas was the younger brother of that man.

Outside, Thomas remained patient. Melissa's reaction suggested she was aware of her connection to the Smiths but chose to deny it.

After another knock and a half-hour wait, Melissa finally opened the door.

Thomas greeted her with a smile. "You should call me your Uncle Thomas. Let's have a chat, Melissa."

They found themselves in a modest cafe.

Melissa's expression was blank. "I lost my parents as a child. Mr. Smith, I'm not who you think I am. Please, don't seek me out again. I don't want my life disrupted."

Thomas wasn't taken aback by her cold demeanor.

His gentle smile remained, enhancing his handsome features.

There was a resemblance to Melissa, a similarity she found irksome.

Thomas then spoke softly. "I'm aware of your involvement with Marcus. Melissa, your father and I would like you to return to the Smiths. You could rightfully claim your place in our family and then marry Marcus, bringing honor to both our houses."

Melissa was momentarily speechless.

She might have been naive, but she wasn't naive enough to misunderstand the Smith family's intentions.

They sought to leverage her relationship with the Fowler family.

Melissa lowered her gaze, a small smile playing on her lips. "You're mistaken. I've ended things with Marcus. I'm afraid I can't meet your expectations. Moreover, I have no desire to bear the Smith name. Would my father even acknowledge my place in the Smith household? And what about Vanessa?"

Thomas was taken aback.

He had assumed Melissa would be easily swayed by the allure of benefits and compliance with the Smith family's wishes. However, her was actually smarter than he expected.

Melissa, though often seeming fragile, was bolstered by her lack of attachments.

Fearless in her current state, she stated softly yet firmly, "Please, don't seek me out again. Or I won't hesitate to reveal Mr. Smith's affair and the tragic fate of his mistress."

Her words were accompanied by a slight, enigmatic smile.

This left Thomas even more astonished.

As Melissa prepared to leave, Thomas attempted to persuade her to stay. "Your father is overseas. He sent me to look after you. You should at least meet him."

"There's no need.

He neither birthed nor raised me. I see no reason for a meeting."

With that, Melissa departed without a backward glance.

Thomas reflected on her strength and the hardships she must have endured.

Pulling out his phone, he dialed a number. Soon, a commanding voice

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inquired "Thomas, how did your discussion with her go? The Smith family is relying on her cooperation."

Thomas replied with a bitter smile, "She refused."

Frustration colored the other end of the line. "Incredible. She's choosing to reject a better life, just as ungrateful as her mother," the man spat out harshly.

Thomas, unable to contain his dismay, countered, "Isn't the fault yours? If you hadn't deceived Melissa's mother about your marital status, none of this would have happened. Melissa is innocent. She looked unwell. Can't you show any compassion towards her instead of just wanting to use her? She is your daughter, after all."

The man on the phone remained silent, digesting Thomas' words.

After leaving, Thomas stopped by a pastry shop. He purchased some items and had them delivered to Melissa at her hotel, thinking it might be a kind gesture. Perhaps, he mused, he should have brought his wife with him and she could have helped pick out some other things suitable for girls as gifts.

Despite the Smith family's diminished status, they were still capable of caring for a young woman.

Thomas planned to return another day.

Upon returning to her room, Melissa received a delivery from the hotel receptionist, courtesy of a Mr. Smith.

She stared at the delivery.

Two large bags filled with delicate pastries and desserts greeted her, items that clearly weren't cheap.

The receptionist, with a friendly smile, remarked, "That gentleman seemed quite respectable, and he bears a resemblance to you. Is he a family elder?"

Melissa simply shook her head.

After a moment's thought, she took the bags to her room but didn't touch the food.

She wanted no ties with the Smith family and had no intention of seeking out Thomas to return the gifts. Her only desire was to leave Duefron, prompting her to book a train for 8:00 p.m. that evening.

Gazing at the ticket, Melissa felt a pang of reluctance to leave Duefron.

Yet, like her inevitable fate, the train awaited... She stepped out for a bowl of noodles, unaware of the tears that silently dripped into her bowl.

"Are you alright, miss?" asked a concerned waitress.

Melissa shook her head, managing a faint smile, "Nothing, I'm fine."

Internally, she struggled with leaving Marcus. Despite his animosity, she clung to memories of his kindness- the times he applied hand cream to her sleeping hands, the contrived supermarket trips, and how he spent all the money in her pocket, leaving him visibly content.

The flavor of the noodles was unappealing.

Yet, Melissa finished them, considering the hardships she might face ahead.

That evening she headed to the train station with minimal luggage.

But upon arrival, she altered her plans.

Instead of Warsew, Melissa took a taxi, and then a bus, and finally shared a ride to the southern city of Heron.

She was determined to begin anew.

She called the proprietress, expressing her apologies. "I can't return to Warsew. Thank you for everything though."

The proprietress could only respond with a sigh.

After the call, Melissa removed her phone card, replacing it with a new one not linked to her identity.

In Heron's early morning the bus stop was sparsely populated.

Stepping off the bus with her luggage, Melissa moved slowly, the morning light casting a glow on her as she blended into the crowd...

Meanwhile, at the Fowler Group, Marcus was visibly upset, casting a somber mood over the office. Sylvia, his chief secretary, treaded carefully amidst the tense atmosphere.

In the afternoon, Sylvia ascended to the rooftop to call Melissa.

With only two days left before her departure to Livebop, Sylvia needed to follow Rena's instructions promptly.

She hoped to meet and persuade Melissa to stay within the Fowler Group, believing that Melissa's reluctance to part with Marcus might motivate her to work there.

Sylvia considered the on-again, off-again nature of young relationships as she dialed Melissa's number, only to find out that Melissa's phone was powered off.

The phone was off?

Sylvia stared at her device in confusion. An hour later, she tried calling Melissa again, but there was no change – the phone remained off.

Repeated attempts yielded the same result, and a sense of unease crept over Sylvia. She used her network to discover that Melissa had departed Duefron last night, supposedly for Warsew. Sylvia felt a momentary relief, assuming Melissa needed time to cool down.

However, Sylvia felt compelled to visit Warsew personally.

Before leaving, she contacted the breakfast shop's proprietress. The news she received left her phone hanging limply in her hand. Shock coursed through her.

Melissa hadn't gone back to Warsew. She had vanished to an unknown destination.

No one knew Melissa's whereabouts.

Sylvia stood in the office, lost in thought. Eventually, she resolved to inform Marcus, despite the potential finality it might bring to his and Melissa's relationship.

Knocking on the CEO's office door, she found Marcus immersed in

paperwork.

He said without looking up, "Cancel all of today's appointments."

Sylvia remained silent. After a pause, Marcus glanced up. "What is it?"

Sylvia's voice was barely above a whisper. "Mr. Fowler, Melissa... she's left."

Left ...

Marcus' pen halted briefly before he replied, maintaining his composure. "She went back to Warsew, right? That's good. She has acquaintances there."

Sylvia fixed her gaze on Marcus.

After a significant pause, she spoke up again, her voice softer yet heavier with emotion. "No, Melissa didn't return to Warsew. I've tried calling her, and it's clear she's not there. Nobody knows where she's gone. It seems she's made a conscious choice to keep her location unknown."

Her voice trembled slightly.

"Mr. Fowler, it's possible you may never see her again.

I don't believe she'll return.

I'm not privy to the details of what transpired between you two, but I'm certain there's been some misunderstanding. Melissa isn't one for schemes... and she genuinely cares for you."

Marcus remained silent, his face turned away from the light, leaving his expression obscured. Sylvia couldn't read his thoughts.

In a gentle tone, he asked, "Do you care for her deeply?"

Sylvia didn't respond directly, instead reflecting, "My affection for her stems from yours. In truth, as a working woman, I don't often allow myself the luxury of such emotions."

A bitter smile touched Sylvia's lips. "In a way, Melissa's departure eases things for me. Yet, I can't say it brings me any joy."

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With those words, Sylvia exited the room.

The door closed softly behindher, leaving Marcus alone, his expression still inscrutable...



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