

Chapter 596 Marcus Received \$800,000

Marcus recalled that Melissa visited his apartment in the rain. She must be eager to see him.

However, he had forced himself on her, fueled by anger.

Melissa, misinterpreting his actions, believed Marcus had a change of heart, perhaps even contemplating a proposal when she saw the ring.

The truth dawned on her when Marcus offered two million dollars for a single intimate encounter, handing her a check with a directive to purchase morning after pills. It was then that she comprehended his regard for her as nothing more than a plaything.

Abruptly, Marcus brought the car to a halt.

The black Cullinan gleamed brightly under the city's neon lights.

But he was in a sour mood.

His mind consumed by the image of Melissa departing tearfully, Marcus found himself incapable of driving. He hadn't even suggested she take a comforting shower or change; he simply instructed her to depart after fulfilling his desires.

At that moment, it was 3:30 in the morning and it was raining.

How did she manage to get back? Did she have any money with her?

Such considerations hadn't crossed his mind, for he had relinquished any concern for her.

Marcus lifted his head, his Adam's apple moving with unease. Eventually, he dialed Sylvia, instructing "Locate her for me."

Sylvia responded in a raspy tone, "Understood."

Empowered by Marcus' directive, Sylvia leveraged the Fowler family's influence to scour every nook of Duefron, the hotel Melissa stayed included.

Sylvia, meticulous in her approach, went to the lengths of inquiring about every detail and surprisingly found the key. The receptionist mentioned a respectable gentleman's visit.

Sylvia managed to obtain access to the surveillance footage.

Upon viewing the footage, a sense of astonishment gripped Sylvia. The man in question was none other than Thomas Smith.

The connection between Thomas and Melissa left Sylvia perplexed.

At nine o'clock in the evening Marcus' car was parked by the roadside.

He had no appetite and had been anxiously awaiting news.

His phone signaled an incoming message from Sylvia.

Alongside the video, a significant revelation accompanied Sylvia's message.

"Mr. Fowler, I've uncovered that Melissa's adoptive parents visited Warsew recently. There was a confrontation between Ryan's mother and Melissa, documented at the police station. Add to that Mr. Smith's unexpected visit. I believe it's related to Melissa's true parentage. Melissa may have felt threatened, leading her to leave you at that time.

And sadly, I currently can't locate Melissa."

Pallor blanketed Marcus' countenance.

Repeatedly, he scrutinized the video and Sylvia's message.

Sylvia phoned, her tone hesitant. "Mr. Fowler, should we postpone the flight?"

"Push it back by a week," Marcus uttered, his voice coarse.

A sigh of relief escaped Sylvia's lips.

Subsequently, Marcus tapped into all his connections in an attempt to locate Melissa.

Truth be told, he had never contemplated the next steps after locating Melissa. Despite their strained situation, he felt compelled to at least ensure her well-being.

Moreover, an apology was in order.

Regret weighed heavily on him. He berated himself for mistreating her, for uttering the degrading offer of two million dollars for a night and for deeming her worthless.

She must have cried for quite a while when she returned.

It wasn't a secret that she was such a fragile soul.

Despite Marcus exhausting all his connections, Melissa remained elusive. Waylen's frustration boiled over, berating Marcus for his perceived ineffectiveness in locating Melissa and emphasizing that his only woman was left incensed.

Marcus found himself in a somber state of mind.

Opting against returning to the Fowlers' residence, Marcus revisited the apartment.

Upon entering the aroma of a prepared meal greeted him.

A momentary pause of surprise struck Marcus. Hastening to the kitchen, he instinctively called for Melissa, only to discover it was a Fowler household servant, not Melissa.

The servant offered a smile. "Your mother was concerned you might skip meals, so she instructed me to prepare a delectable dish for you. She even taught me how to make these lamb chops, cooked with red wine."

Lamb chop...

Thoughts involuntarily drifted to the time when he accompanied Melissa to grocery shopping at the supermarket.

On that day, he spent the only 300 dollars Melissa had.

She seemed distressed.

Unaware of Marcus' thoughts, the servant rubbed her hands, set the dish on the table, and quietly departed.

Removing his coat, Marcus seated himself at the table.

His gaze lingered on the lamb chop. Surprisingly surpassing Melissa's culinary skills, yet his appetite remained absent. Retrieving his phone, Marcus dialed a number in silence.

Unfortunately, Melissa's phone persisted in its powered-off state.

Marcus angrily tossed his phone onto the table and abstained from eating anything.

A week passed, and still, he couldn't locate her.

After taking a shower, he found himself in the guest room, where their last intimate encounter had transpired.

Typically, their encounters didn't unfold in the guest room.

That night, there were signs of his displeasure, but Melissa didn't pick up on them. Despite feeling hurt during their intimate encounter, she made an effort to please him and ensure his comfort.

A bitter smile played on Marcus' lips.

Leaning against the bed's headboard, Marcus caressed the pillow, detecting a lingering trace of her scent.

Resting on the bedside table, beneath the ring-containing box, lay a receipt left by Melissa at the pharmacy. It documented her purchase of morning after pills, and as per the clerk, she even consumed one within the store.

Did she harbor resentment as she ingested the contraceptive?

The desire to discuss the Smith family lingered within her, yet he failed to provide the opportunity. Her departure likely stemmed from disappointment in him.

Ultimately, he found himself abandoned in their relationship.

Melissa had severed her ties with him.

During the nocturnal hours, Marcus found himself immersed in a dream while reclined on the bed.

The dream unfolded with Melissa's return.

He dreamt about events that had occurred in the past.

"Melissa," he murmured, a plea escaping his lips in the dream.

He awoke with a sense of joy, but the room remained silent. Early summer nights were characterized by the chirping of insects outside and the hum of the air conditioner.

The following day, Marcus skipped going to the company.

Instead, he drove for five hours to Warsew and met with the owner of the breakfast shop where Melissa had once worked.

Opting against inquiries he simply left behind Duefron's specialties as a gesture.

As the black off-road vehicle departed, the proprietress observed its departure for an extended duration.

After returning to Duefron, Marcus spent hours sitting at the same cafe where he had been with Melissa before. He ordered a lemon tea and a slice of pie that Melissa had ordered for him the last time.

Though not entirely accustomed to the taste, he savored the meal at a leisurely pace.

His remarkable appearance attracted the gaze of many other patrons. A strikingly beautiful little girl inquired, "Sir, are you heartbroken?"

Marcus found himself momentarily taken aback.

After a brief pause, a smile adorned his face. "Indeed, I've suffered heartbreak. I wasn't a good partner. I lost her."

Rising from his seat, he departed the establishment.

Instead of returning to the apartment, he chose to leave it behind. The diamond ring and the receipt remained within.

Occasionally, Marcus contemplated the notion that, in an alternate space, another version of himself might be leading a blissful life in that apartment with a different Melissa.

In that alternate reality, that version of Marcus wouldn't bring her to tears.

Marcus embarked on a journey to Livebop, leaving Sylvia behind in Duefron instead.

Seasons shifted, with spring giving way to fall.

Initially anticipating a one-year stint in Livebop, Marcus found himself extending his stay unexpectedly to three years.

Concluding the first year, Marcus returned home as Alexis welcomed the arrival of her second child.

Following the arrival of the new baby, the Fowlers' house buzzed with

noise and excitement.

Battling lingering jet lag, Marcus visited Alexis at Leonel's villa, finding both mother and son in good health. Leonel's attentive care for Alexis was evident.

Named Daniel, Alexis' son exhibited robust health.

Reports suggested he remained energetic, crying from dawn until dusk.

Evelyn expressed great fondness for Daniel.

Even the family dog displayed excitement, leaping around the bed.

When it was time to breastfeed Daniel, Marcus and Leonel excused themselves. Engaging in casual conversation, the two men found solace in the living room. Abruptly, Leonel inquired "I've heard that you retained Ryan within the Fowler Group?"

Marcus suddenly recalled, offering a faint smile without explanation.

However, Leonel, being an astute man, immediately understood Marcus' intention. As long as Ryan worked in the Fowler Group, there was a possibility that Melissa might return one day.

Probing further, Leonel questioned, "If your concern for Melissa is genuine why refrain from actively searching for her?"

Approaching the window, Marcus unlatched it and retrieved a cigarette, igniting it. After consuming half, he uttered in a subdued tone, "I won't actively seek her out."

Numerous days had gone by since that fateful night.

The chapter between Marcus and Melissa remained in that apartment, just like the diamond ring and the receipt.

A multitude of Fowler Group employees awaited Marcus' financial obligations.

Time was of the essence, and Marcus couldn't afford further delay.

Acknowledging that his justifications were mere pretexts, he himself knew that the true reason lay in his awareness of Melissa's genuine desire to depart and her profound disappointment in him. Offering her peace of mind became his solitary contribution now.

Inhaling deeply from his cigarette, Marcus appeared leaner and more



seasoned. His profile bore a resemblance to that of a youthful Waylen.

Leonel hazily recalled Marcus being 28 years of age.

In a gravelly voice, Leonel queried, "What prompts you to smoke so extensively now?"

Nonchalantly, Marcus responded, "My plate is full of business matters."

He extinguished the cigarette and decided to check on Alexis and Daniel again.

In the evening Alexis extended an invitation for Marcus to join them for dinner.

Leonel had prepared lamb chops, a term Marcus preferred not to hear. Politely, he declined the invitation.

On the journey back to the Fowler residence, Marcus passed by the apartment.

The car remained stationed at the roadside, yet he lingered within it for half an hour, ultimately abstaining from ascending.

Opting for the Fowler residence, Marcus found it alive with joy, celebrating the arrival of little Daniel.

Elva joined Rena in procuring an abundance of baby essentials earlier, now meticulously organizing each item. Rena wore a serene expression, and Elva nestled beside her.

Spotting Marcus' return, Elva joyfully approached, linking her arm with his.

"Marcus, you've met Daniel, haven't you?"

He bears an uncanny resemblance to Leonel."

A faint smile graced Marcus' features, prompting Elva's countenance to darken. "You rarely laugh these days, Marcus."

Gently nudging her, Marcus quipped "Not everyone's like you, giggling all day long like a little fool."

Uttering these words, he found himself momentarily lost in thought.

Oblivious to his reverie, Elva continued inspecting baby items with Rena. However, Rena, glancing up at Marcus, advised in a gentle tone, "Head upstairs for some rest. I'll let you know when dinner's ready."

Acknowledging it with a nod, Marcus ascended the staircase.

Fatigued yet alert, he positioned himself by the window, indulging in yet another cigarette.

A soft knock reverberated through the door.

Elva entered through the partially open door, bearing an envelope. Teasingly, she whispered, "Marcus, even though you're away from Duefron, someone still sent you a love letter."

Continuing she remarked, "We're in 2022, and it's amusing people still resort to letter-writing"

With a profound gaze, Marcus requested that she hand over the letter.

"Dad wanted you to have it. It arrived in the mail last week," Elva explained. Elva still wanted to explore the baby products, so she hurried away after expressing her thoughts. After all, it wasn't surprising that her charming brother had secret admirers.

Tightening his lips, Marcus nonchalantly opened the envelope.

Enclosed within was a check amounting to eight hundred thousand dollars.

Upon seeing this series of numbers, Marcus felt a chill run through his entire body. He examined it closely. Even though Melissa wasn't the one who issued the draft, he was certain she had sent it to him.

Astonishingly, the letter bore a Duefron address.

It seemed... Melissa had returned to Duefron!



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