

Chapter 599 Farewells And Reunions

Melissa?

She was... here in town?

The phone in Marcus' hand fell to the floor, but he paid it no mind. He turned to look, his emotions going haywire and wreaking havoc in his chest.

Fear and anticipation coursed through him.

It was a feeling he had never felt before.

For the first time, he found himself at the mercy of his emotions.

There were a lot of people at the other end of the escalator, but there was no longer any sign of Melissa. Marcus' eyelids twitched slightly, then he did something that he had never done in his life.

"Excuse me, please."

Murmuring apologies, he ran in the opposite direction, pushing his way through the crowd. A moment later, he found himself upstairs once again. Faces flooded his vision as they passed by, his eyes anxiously darting from one to another. But none of them was Melissa.

Marcus swallowed, his throat bobbing slightly. In his desperation, he considered pulling strings.

Just then, a face he recognized came out of the aisle on the other side.

It was the newly-married Vanessa with her husband.

From the curve of her stomach, it was easy to tell that she was pregnant. The man beside her stood by protectively, but Vanessa's face remained indifferent, as if she didn't care about him in the slightest.

Marcus stared at Vanessa.

Perhaps he had heard it wrong.

Perhaps the name he heard people call earlier wasn't Melissa, but something similar, like Vanessa. Or maybe it was indeed Melissa, just not the one he knew.

Right, of course. In the first place, it didn't make sense. Melissa wouldn't have any reason to visit the obstetrics and gynecology department. The pharmacy clerk confirmed Melissa bought and took morning-after pills that night right after the last time she and Marcus had slept together. There was no way she was pregnant.

He couldn't believe he was even considering that possibility. It was almost as if he was hoping for it.

He was being pathetic.

He was the one who said all those nasty things to her face — that she was worthless, and that she didn't deserve to be Mrs. Fowler. No woman in her right mind would want to give him children after how he demeaned her like that.

Marcus felt cold, his face turning pale.

A sense of loss flooded over him, his eyes filled with dull shadows.

This had taken Vanessa by surprise. Marcus was notorious for being the most difficult person to deal with in the business world. She had never thought the day would come when she would see desperation on his proud face. It was quite a refreshing sight.

Vanessa smiled in greeting. "Mr. Fowler."

Marcus came back to his senses, his expression turning more complicated when he saw Vanessa. Melissa's identity had not been made public but the Fowlers and the Smiths both knew.

Vanessa, however, clearly didn't know about it.

Marcus just coldly nodded his head in answer. Turning to her husband, Vanessa said, "I'm a little tired. Let's go downstairs."

With that, the two of them left.

Marcus stood quietly at the entrance of the elevator alone, uncaring about the gazes of the people coming and going. He remained still and motionless as a familiar scent wafted through the air.

It was the distinct scent of a hand cream.

He had bought it himself for Melissa and rubbed it on her hands. He wouldn't mistake the scent for anything else.

Marcus took a deep breath and greedily inhaled the remaining traces.

He took in lungfuls of air, his feelings slowly cooling until they died down. There was no longer any burning from hearing her name, and he convinced himself not to look for her.

After what had seemed an eternity, Marcus stepped inside the elevator.

He went downstairs to retrieve his broken phone, absentmindedly looking at the pieces.

There was only one photo of Melissa in it.

And now even that was gone. He couldn't piece it back to the way it was before.

Above him, a figure stood on the second floor near the corner of the elevator. Melissa stared at Marcus from the shadows.

He had lost a lot of weight.

He seemed different from how he used to be. Somehow, he carried himself with more seriousness, but she felt no fear toward him.

Perhaps her own affection had been the reason why she used to be afraid of him.

But things might be different now.

Lowering her eyes, she placed a hand over her stomach. The baby was an unexpected development.

Despite having taken the pill, she still got pregnant.

When Melissa first found out, she hesitated to tell him. She was afraid that if she told Marcus that she had gotten pregnant, he would probably accuse her of pulling a trick to deceive him.

Not once had she forgotten his words.

He said right to her face that she didn't deserve to be his wife.

As if sensing her melancholy, the baby in her womb wriggled around. Melissa felt the movements and kicks under her palm. A gentle smile curved on her lips. Now that she had a child, she would never be alone.

again.

She raised her head and took one last look at Marcus.

Melissa bid farewell to him in her heart. "Goodbye, Marcus. We'll never see each other again."

Without going through the prenatal checkup, Melissa quietly entered the elevator and left.

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Alexis' postpartum examination went without a hitch. Both she and her child were in perfect health.

When she got into the car, she saw a small bag with a broken phone inside.

Alexis looked down at her baby and cooed. In a gentle voice, she asked, "Marcus, what happened to your phone? Why were you so angry?"

"I dropped it. It was an accident," Marcus replied flatly.

"Accident? That's uncharacteristic of you."

Alexis speculated that his sour mood had something to do with Melissa. However, it was pretty obvious that he didn't want to talk about it, so she quickly changed the topic. "Are you going back to Livebop soon? Why not just stay for a few more days?"

Marcus gripped the steering wheel with his slender fingers.

For a while, he just stared at the rearview mirror with a faint smile. Then he answered, "There's too much going on there. I'm not going to sit through all that."

There was nothing else Alexis could say to that.

It had snowed that day, and the road was covered with ice. Fortunately, Marcus' driving skills were top-notch.

He changed to another road where there was less snow and the car moved along steadily. When he took a turn, his eyes caught a woman standing with her back to him at a bus stop across the street.

She was just the right height, and her hair was just the right color.

Even from a distance, Marcus could see the curve of the woman's round

stomach. She was pregnant.

The woman raised her head to check the bus sign, as if thinking about which bus to take.

She had to be around seven or eight months pregnant. Why was she taking the bus alone on such a snowy day?

What was her husband doing?

Marcus caught himself in a rare moment of distraction, but he couldn't afford to let his thoughts wander. Alexis and Daniel were in the back seat, and he had to pay attention to the road. He looked away quickly, and the black off-road vehicle brushed past the woman.

At the same moment, she turned around.

It was Melissa.

Once again, the two missed each other.

A bus slowly rolled to a stop in front of her, and Melissa got on. When she sat down, she saw that she had received a call from Julie, the proprietress of the small diner in Warsaw where she once worked. Julie Wilson's husband had lost all his money to gambling and he was neck-deep in debt. His creditors often came to harass his family, which eventually forced them to close the diner.

It was only a matter of time before Julie's husband was taken to prison.

Coincidentally, Melissa was currently in a good place, financially. She worked as a secretary for the Watson Group in Heron.

Last month, she was transferred to the branch on Duefron.

She hesitated about the move at first, but in the end, she agreed. The Watson Group compensated well. Melissa didn't want to lose such an opportunity because she was being held back by the past.

She returned to Duefron and rented a decent apartment.

It had more than enough space, and she invited Julie to live with her.

Julie had just arrived in Duefron and Melissa wanted to pick her up, but Julie refused. "You're pregnant. You shouldn't be running around all over the place. Just wait at home. You gave me the address, and I'll manage."

Melissa smiled fondly and didn't argue anymore. "Okay, I'll go back first."

Forty minutes later, she returned to her place.

The community she lived in was old, but it was clean and well-managed.

Just as Melissa arrived at the apartment building she saw Julie and her many bags downstairs.

"Julie!" Melissa called, giving her a smile.

Despite the warmth of her greeting sadness made her eyes dull.

After everything that had happened to her, Julie was no stranger to the ups and downs of life. It would take a lot to surprise her. Putting down her things, she grabbed Melissa's hand. Julie looked her up and down, her eyes finally settling on her stomach. "It must be so hard to be pregnant while managing things all on your own."

Julie asked no questions about the father.

There was no need to ask.

Melissa shook her head slightly. She offered to help Julie carry her things, but Julie would have none of it. She went upstairs, easily carrying her bags with her. "I'm used to this," Julie said cheerily. "This much is nothing"

Melissa held her belly and led the way.

When they arrived inside, Julie looked around and hummed with satisfaction. "Your baby's arriving at a pretty nice place."

Then, she opened her luggage and took her things out one by one.

Apart from some clothes, all the bag contained were supplements for Melissa.

Julie said, "I'll spend the next two years taking care of your baby while you go back to work. When the little one's old enough to go to kindergarten, I'll find a place and open a small diner. With that, I'd be able to save some college funds for our little angel."

Melissa's eyes watered. "Julie..." she said, her voice trembling with emotion.

Julie came to her and wiped her tears. "What are you crying for?" Julie asked softly. "Twenty years ago I had nothing too, and I'm just starting over now. You don't have to worry. We'll be able to take care of your child."

A bittersweet smile appeared on Melissa's lips.

Julie had said the words with confidence, but her certainty brought a pang of sadness to Melissa. Julie's husband was in jail, and her own son didn't take her in. In the end, she had no one else but Melissa.

Julie kept drying Melissa's tears. "From now on, we have each other. You can count on me, and I'll be counting on you too."

Then, she brought up another topic. "How was the prenatal check-up today? Can I have a look?"

Melissa answered with silence.

Julie knew her enough to be able to guess what it meant. "You didn't have the check-up?" she asked curiously. "Or is there anything wrong with the baby? You can tell me, Melissa. I've gone through what you're going through now. I might be able to offer some advice."

Melissa shook her head.

There was a long pause before she finally spoke. "I didn't have the prenatal check-up today. I ran into Marcus at the hospital."

"Did he see you?" Julie asked, surprise evident on her face.

Melissa answered calmly, "No. Vanessa was also there. He probably thought he misheard or it was her that others were calling."

Julie carefully watched Melissa's face.

After a long while, Julie whispered. "When you left, Mr. Fowler had gone to see me once in Warsew. He didn't say anything he just left me some gifts that looked really expensive Melissa... are you sure you don't want to give you two another chance? From how I see it, he really loves you."

With a bitter smile, Melissa said, "We're not right for each other."

Julie kept her eyes fixed on Melissa's belly.

Melissa held Julie's arm gently. "Didn't you say it yourself? We'll be taking care of the child together. He can't know. You can't tell him."

Julie let out a resigned sigh. "I can't win over you. Okay. We will do it ourselves."

Melissa leaned gently on Julie's shoulder.

The doorbell rang, and Julie gave a light pat to Melissa. "I'll go open the door."

She had not expected the man standing outside.

It was Ryan.

From the bags in his hand that contained things suitable for expecting mothers, he seemed to have come to check on Melissa. His eyes went wide at the sight of Julie, and he asked in a low voice, "Is Melissa here?"

Julie recognized Ryan. She knew he was a jerk.

Narrowing her eyes at him, she asked, "What are you doing here?"

Ryan ignored her and instead called out loudly, "Melissa."

Hearing her name, she walked over. She hadn't even contacted Ryan since she left. She just met him by accident one time. Melissa didn't know what had gotten into him. He had sold his parents' house and gave her the 400 thousand dollars he got from it. She took the money and combined with her own savings, gave it back to Marcus.

She didn't want anything to do with Ryan anymore.

But he thought differently. Ryan was aware of his condition, and he knew that he would likely never be able to have his own child.

The life growing inside Melissa's womb gave him hope.

The baby in her stomach was Marcus' child. It was a descendant of the Fowlers. If Melissa would be willing to marry Ryan, he could raise the child as his own. Marcus would never know, as he had no intention of ever telling him.

Nor did he plan on letting him know Melissa's whereabouts.

Along with his dramatic entrance, it was easy to guess what his intentions were. He was practically volunteering to be the child's father. His audacity enraged Julie. She picked up the broom and went to hit him.

"You bastard! Don't even think about coming back here. Or I'll kill you!"

Ryan had always been one to abuse the weak and fear the strong.

He took a few steps backward, both angry and embarrassed. "You'll regret this, Melissa."

Melissa just ignored him.

She said in a cold tone, "Ryan, all I want is a quiet life. If you keep pestering me, you can't blame me for what I might do. For example, your precious job... Think it over and choose wisely."

Ryan stared at her for a long time.

Then, he let out a cruel laugh. "Haha, I see you've become much fiercer in the half a year that I hadn't seen you. What? Did Marcus rub off on you? Maybe you got it from sleeping with him too much."

Julie sneered. "So what? It's none of your business. At the very least, he is leagues better than someone like you!"

Her words hit a nerve.

Ryan scoffed at her. "Watch your mouth. Anyway, Marcus is done with you. He won't ever want you. From what I heard, the Fowler family is setting him up with someone. There will be no shortage of beautiful, upper-class women around him. Women you could never be. Give up, Melissa. You have no chance."

With those words, he stormed off.

Julie closed the door after him and said. "I'm sure of it now. That asshole is unable to have a child. Why else would he be so persistent? Ignore him. He won't be able to do anything with me here."

Melissa gave her a calm smile.

Julie paused, remembering Ryan's words. "Melissa, are you sure you're fine with this? Mr. Fowler might really settle down with another woman."

Melissa lowered her head and touched her stomach.

She had already known when she left that there would be a woman who would be taking her place by Marcus' side and one day become Mrs. Fowler. It was only a matter of time. There was no point in agonizing over something she had long accepted as truth.

Melissa's calmness was a small relief to Julie.

Melissa was two months away from giving birth.

And yet, she was still working

One day, she accompanied Albert to the airport to pick up an important

client. There had been no need for her to go, had it not been for the fact that the client was from abroad, they couldn't find a proper translator in time and Melissa was the only one in the entire secretariat division who could speak the language.

Because of these circumstances, Albert had to bring her with him.

He was considerate enough to let her sit in the back seat and talk to her from time to time.

Albert was over 40 years old, and he had always been single. Melissa heard from the employees of the Watson Group that he had once met an amazing woman when he was young and he couldn't bring himself to love anyone else after.

Melissa wasn't one to pry into other people's private lives.

She respected Albert. He was a good boss.

An hour later, they arrived at the airport. As soon as the car stopped, Melissa saw a group of people get out of the black limo across from them. Walking at the very front was Marcus, with a woman beside him. Melissa recognized her. She remembered the woman as the daughter of a rich family from that night.

Her name was Jessie.

At that moment, she was holding on to Marcus' arm intimately.

Melissa looked at them quietly, her long eyelashes trembling.

Albert looked at her, and then at Marcus. He gave Melissa a gentle smile and asked, "What is it? Do you know him?"

Melissa forced a smile and answered, "He's my former boss."

Albert's smile didn't falter. "I see. Then, let's go and say hello."