

151- Poor Marissa

" Hello, my lifelines!" Marissa announced her presence to the kids who were busy talking to a young girl.

" Jenna. Their temporary nanny," Rafael informed her in a whisper.

The kids came running to her making noise in excitement.

" How is your stay?" She asked them, kneeling on the carpeted floor, kissing their foreheads one by one. They all were trying to talk to her at once.

" It is so good, Mommy." Abi squealed and wrapped her arms around her neck," Instead of home we should stay in the hotel. Staying here is so much fun." Marissa wished she could tell her kids that their father could easily afford their lifetime stay in this hotel.

Ariel held up a crayon drawing, " Look, Mommy. I drew something," Ariel proudly showed it to her mom, " Jenna is so good. She lets us play all the time." " We also made paper planes, Mommy," Abigail showed her the masterpieces. Alex who was standing nearby after the hug pointed towards his Lego building, "I made this with the help of Uncle Joseph." Marissa was happy to see Alex involved. The contempt that used to be evident in his eyes couldn't be seen anymore.

She kissed her son's cheek again and he wiped it with the back of his hand," Urgh! Mom!" he protested against the that their father could easily afford their lifetime stay in this hotel.

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She kissed her son's cheek again and he wiped it with the back of his hand," Urgh! Mom!" he protested against the wet kiss.

But Marissa didn't mind. Her heart was swelled with love. At least he was gradually accepting his father in his life.

" Young lady," she moved her attention to Abi, " Did you make any planes for mommy?" Abigail nodded eagerly, "I have saved the best one for you, Mommy." Rafael chuckled behind her, " They wanted to practice the whole night. Poor Joseph convinced them to sleep so they could start working on it, early morning." Marissa made a mental note to thank Joseph personally. She got up and turned back to smile warmly at Jenna, " Thank you so much for taking care of them and for keeping them entertained." Jenna gave her a shy smile, " My pleasure, ma' am. They are wonderful kids." Marissa spent some more time with them and waited for Rafael to get ready for his meeting. She needed to go down and conduct the interviews.

After seeing her kids, Rafael brought Marissa down to the meeting hall of the hotel.

Looking around, she whispered in his ear, " Why are we here?" " To interview the nannies. Of course," holding her hand, he entered the hall where an oak desk was placed with a revolving chair for her and two extra seats for the candidates.

She wasn't a fool to not realize that he must have booked this hall in the hotel.

" You booked it for the nannies" interviews?" She asked him in surprise when he made her sit on the seat, "I could easily take them upstairs to your room ... or at my place too. Why did you spend so much money on...." " Shh... Shh. Marissa. Relax!" he leaned over to pull her head to his chest," Spending money for you and our kids isn't a problem. All of it belongs to you people, woman," he kept murmuring soothing words in her ear as if she was a baby.

Marissa wasn't able to suppress the huge grin forming on her lips.

This man is spoiling me. She thought to herself.

He kissed her forehead and stepped back, still holding her hand.

" We have got two women from the hotel staff who are responsible for sending inside the candidates one by one. If you need coffee or a bathroom break, just let them know. Any problem you face, I' ll be available on the phone," He kept passing instructions and she kept staring at his handsome face.

" You want me to call you in the middle of your important meeting because my coffee wasn't hot enough?" she teased him with a playful smile, but he remained serious.

" Try me, little Greene. I' ll be here as soon as I can, to give you that perfect hot coffee," He winked, giving her a challenging look and she was impressed.

Man! Was he always this caring? Valerie never shared that.ww

After kissing her forehead again, he had left the room while she was still engrossed in her thoughts about him.

She had assumed that there would only be a few women for the interview but then the woman from the hotel staff told her that the waiting room was full.

Marissa kept interviewing them until she thought she could no longer feel her feet.

When a female candidate walked out, she leaned back a little and asked her assistant of the day to hold the rest, for a few minutes.

She needed a break.

When her phone pinged, she picked it up and smiled. The message was from Rafael.

" How is it going?" he had asked her.

She thought to type the reply and then decided to make the call.

Damn, he should be in the meeting!

" What a pleasant surprise!" she could feel happiness in his voice. Was he genuinely happy about her calling him?

" How come you decided to call?" the voice s behind him slowly died. He must be walking away from them.

" Is the meeting still going on?" she asked him and then chewed her lower lip, " if you are busy, we can talk later." " Ah! Little Greene. I can almost see you chewing your lower lip. Is that so?" she couldn't sense the mischief in his voice and looked around with wide eyes.

" You can see me? Is there any hidden camera? Jerk!" he was laughing on the other side.

"I don't need a camera to look at you, little Greene. I'm just happy that you called me." " How is the meeting going?" " Boring," he whispered in the phone, and she laughed hard.

" Why? I thought you liked staying busy. People call you a workaholic for a reason." " Yeah. I know. Guess what? I like talking to you more." She giggled.

" Rafael," she shook her head, "I feel like we are two teenage kids who are bunking our classes to talk on the phone," " You are so right. I was also thinking the same." The conversation reminded her of how they used to enjoy each other's company when they were together.

" How are your interview s going on?" he asked her casually.

" Good!" " Do you like someone?" he asked her again.

Yes. I like you!

"I think I liked every candidate until now. They all are so professional and experienced," She heard his laughter from the other side.

"I knew you would say that. Just keep collecting their info and maybe we can discuss it later at my place and shortlist them." She looked at her phone with a frown, " Your place?" " Yeah. Why don't we all stay in the hotel penthouse as a family? Enjoy board games. Kids need to see us together more often." This time... Today... Marissa felt like... he was just using kids' excuse ... it was him, who wanted her there.

But maybe she was imagining it.

" Rafael?" " Hmm?" " Is it because of kids you are asking me to stay here?" Crap! Wrong question, Marissa. Wrong question.

Why did she have to ask this question from him?

In her embarrassment, she started giving silly excuses, "I'm sorry...I shouldn't have asked this but..." She trailed off when he spoke again," Shh. You never ask any silly question, Marissa. Got it?" his voice was stern this time.

" Umm hmm." "I wasn't asking it because of the kids. I was lying. I was asking it because of... me... I WANT YOU to spend your time with me." They both were quiet now.

An odd thought crossed her mind.

Would he like to stay with her once his wife and mom would be back?

For now, he was making her believe that she was the only one for him. He did exactly that when she was married to him.

For two years, he made her feel like she was his best friend. And what did she get in return?

Insults? Distrust? And murder threats for her kids?

" Why are you suddenly so quiet, Marissa?" he asked her, and she shook her head, realizing that the tears had slipped down her cheeks.

" Nothing," she wiped her face quickly, "I...I... just got emotional," She chuckled but he stayed serious.

" You are crying. Aren't you?" she wanted to say something when he spoke again,"I'm coming!" " No! Rafael! Listen!" " What!" he snapped on the phone.

"I have got a presentation after the lunch break in the office and ... I am really looking forward to doing that. Please don't come." "I want to," he breathed into the phone," You are crying. I can't stay here when..." " Rafael!" she rolled her eyes and blew her nose into a napkin, " Don't you have a meeting to attend?" she snubbed him like he was a kid," Go back to your meeting." " That meeting is NOT more important than you, Marissa. Got it?" " Don't you dare come. We' ll meet in the evening. Maybe we can have our private dinner in the hotel dining area leaving kids behind with that temporary nanny." " You are a brat!" He knew it was a bait for him, " Fine! Go and give your presentation. Don't forget to tell me how it went!" " Sure. I will keep updated," She disconnected the call and then placed the phone against her forehead.

" You are the death of me, Rafael Sinclair," She chuckled and bumped the phone to her head.

The man seemed to be on a mission to take her heart again. No matter how much she was resisting.

Her heart wasn't listening. It was adamant that it belonged to Rafael Sinclair only.

Poor Marissa didn't know that her life was about to change within the span of a few hours.w

The biggest surprise of her life was waiting for her at MSin.