



# Reborn To Let Go

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**Category:** Mystery, Horror

**Description:** In my second life, I chose freedom.

Instead of chasing the love that once broke me, I handed it over—to my sister. When the marriage application came, I didn't hesitate to write her name beside Silas Carrington's. I planned every moment they shared: the ring on her finger, the wedding dress she wore, the story they would live.

And when Silas took her to the capital, I walked away without a backward glance, enrolling at Eastmoor University to start a life that was finally mine.

In my previous life, love was a cage. Even at fifty, Silas and our son were still begging for a divorce I should've granted years ago.

But not this time.

This time, I'm not the girl who waited for love to change. I'm the woman who let it go—and chose herself instead.

**Total Pages (Source):** 11

## Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 7:18 am*

“Just fill in your name and give it to me.”

Silas Carrington impatiently taps the table. I stared at the marriage application, my fingertips gently rubbing the rough edges of the paper as my thoughts wandered.

In my previous life, I solemnly entered my own name as if it were a sacred decree, then excitedly dragged Silas to buy our wedding supplies.

All I got was a harsh reprimand from him because he was rushing back to take care of Juliette Ainsley during her period.

Now I simply replied dismissively, “I got it.”

I looked up at his anxious expression and the hand that was constantly checking his watch. He wore a white shirt today, with the sleeves rolled up to his elbows, revealing his well-defined forearms.

I remembered Juliette’s favourite look on him. She said it made him appear clean and fresh.

“If you have something urgent to handle, go ahead,” I said, suppressing the bitterness that was rising in my heart while pretending to be unconcerned.

“I’ll submit it myself after filling it out.”

He was visibly relieved, and his tone softened slightly. “Don’t worry, because we’re getting married, I’ll be responsible for you.

“But stop being jealous of Juliette from now on-if others find out, it’ll damage her reputation.”

I stayed silent.

I had explained myself numerous times in my previous life, but in his eyes, I was simply a jealous and petty sister who couldn’t stand her gentle and kind younger sister.

He didn’t say anything else and turned to leave. I took a deep breath to try to calm my erratic heartbeat, but my mind couldn’t stop replaying scenes from my past life.

He disappeared on our wedding night, claiming to be caring for my sick sister.

Later, when his military posting required relocation, he only brought Juliette along, claiming she had never been to the capital before.

Even on the day our son was born, Silas was unavailable because he was busy comforting Juliette during her divorce. Until my deathbed, our son, Soren Carrington, would earnestly plead, “Mom, just divorce Dad.” You are completely inferior to Aunt Juliette. Dad has suffered from being with you all these years, so let him go.”

I lay in the hospital bed, staring at my uninterested husband beside me. He said nothing, and the deathly silence confirmed his agreement with my thoughts.

I bit down hard on my lower lip until I tasted blood, then slowly released it. I would not make the same mistakes again in this lifetime.

I took up the pen and slowly wrote two words in the applicant column: Juliette Ainsley.

Because Silas adored Juliette, he should have his way.

I handed the clerk the completed application, took the marriage certificate, and left the city clerk's office with an indescribable sense of liberation, rather than sadness.

In my previous life, Juliette and I were adopted by the Carrington family after our parents died in the line of duty. Juliette had a silver tongue and knew exactly how to charm people, and she won over Silas' parents so completely that they treated her better than their own daughter.

Evelyn Prescott, Silas' mother, had early hopes of having Juliette marry Silas.

However, with just one simple statement from Juliette: "I don't want to compete with my sister," she was able to convince Silas to choose me instead.

In reality, Juliette was simply stringing Silas along; after all, Silas was only a captain at the time, and she preferred to wait for someone better.

I went to the school to enquire about everything required for university enrolment, including living expenses, before returning home with peace of mind.

When I returned to Silas' military housing, I was greeted by Juliette's charming voice.

## Page 2

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“Silas, you rushed back to keep me company rather than staying with my sister. Will she not be angry?”

“I can spend time with her at any time, but you are always in pain when you have your period. I’m worried about leaving you alone at home.”

Juliette laughed happily, then put on a dejected face: “Silas, will you still treat me well after marrying my sister?”

“Of course.” Silas’ tone was firm. “Who else would I treat well? If your sister mistreats you, I will divorce her.”

Even with a second chance at life, hearing my own husband speak so coldly about me hurt. I clenched my fists tightly to suppress the heartache that welled up inside.

I collected myself and walked into the house as if nothing had happened, while Silas emerged from Juliette’s room with a hint of embarrassment.

“I-I’m just checking on Juliette because she wasn’t feeling well.”

I hummed indifferently and turned to go to my room; in my previous life, I had fought with him numerous times over their inappropriate intimacy, but in this life, I refused to waste my time and energy.

He approached me and said, “Elara, how about we buy some wedding favours and distribute them to the other military wives in the housing complex?”

I looked at him, surprised, and realised he was probably trying to compensate for my unusual silence. “No need. There is no point in such formalities.

He was taken aback, probably finding it difficult to believe I would refuse such a proposal.

“Elara, are you angry because Silas took care of me?” Juliette emerged from her room, her face filled with grief and innocence.

She was wearing the dress I had specifically purchased for our wedding photos—something I had previously saved up for for half a year but had never dared to wear even once.

Juliette, noticing my gaze, frantically explained, “I saw this beautiful outfit by your bedside today and wanted to try it on. “I forgot to change out of it.”

She lowered her head and wrung her fingers, like a child who had done something wrong.

Silas immediately began, “Elara, don’t—”

I calmly interrupted him, “It looks great on you.” Keep it. I’ve never worn it, anyway.”

I still remembered the faint odour of blood and sweat on that dress, and how I ran home crying in the middle of the night, which disgusted me now.

Under their stunned gazes, I returned to my room, locked the door, and took out the folder containing my acceptance letter from Eastmoor University.

In my previous life, I wanted to live in Eastmoor, particularly at Eastmoor University,

which offered my dream major in finance and economy.

In my previous life, I gave up my education to support Silas and willingly stayed at home to care for his parents; this time, I had a chance, so I wanted to live solely for myself.

I flipped through the calendar, and there were only ten more days until I could leave this place. Time was limited, but I needed to make the most of every moment.

A sudden knock interrupted my thoughts, and I pushed open the door impatiently.

Silas stood there holding a bowl of noodles, saying softly, “You must be hungry.” “I made you some instant noodles.”

I was dazed for a moment; in my previous life, he was either cold as ice or only spoke harshly to me.

I hadn’t seen Silas act this tender and affectionate in a long time.

“There’s no need. I’ve already eaten outside.

“How is that possible?” Are you always hesitant to spend money?”

His words hurt because I used to be hesitant to spend money, living frugally and spending the majority of my part-time earnings to buy him things.

## Page 3

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Now that I was going to university, there would be a lot of expenses, so every penny needed to be carefully planned.

I looked up at him and said calmly, “I remember a few days ago, I gave you money to buy wedding supplies. You didn’t seem to purchase anything. Give me my money back.

He froze before awkwardly explaining, “That money... I’ve already bought leather shoes for Juliette with it.”

I couldn’t help but curl my lip; the story was so predictable.

“Well, if there’s nothing else, I’ll close the door. “I want to sleep.”

“I’ll give you the money tomorrow.” His tone was irritated. “We’re husband and wife. Do you really have to be so petty?”

I couldn’t help but snort coldly: “So, after you spend my hard-earned money on something else, I can’t even be annoyed?”

Despite knowing he was in the wrong, he stubbornly muttered, “You’re so unreasonable.”

I couldn’t be bothered to argue anymore and slammed the door shut.

Over the next few days, I sold some worthless possessions, mementos from my previous life that had once held meaning but now appeared to be nothing more than



cheap junk.

I packed everything up and sold it to a scrap dealer for a pittance.

That afternoon, while I was still packing, Silas appeared in front of me with some money.

He stiffly replied, "Here's your money."

I accepted the money and nodded, "Thanks."

He looked at me with mixed emotions, his gaze falling on my packed luggage. "I plan to bring Juliette with me to the capital. "You don't have to pack."

I didn't stop packing and just nodded; he seemed surprised by my attitude and appeared uneasy. "What's wrong with you lately? "You are like a completely different person."

I turned around impatiently, wanting to avoid any complications.

Silas didn't love me, but if he discovered Juliette's name on the marriage licence, he might divorce her and marry me for her sake. I didn't want to be involved with this despicable couple anymore.

"Nothing. I just want to organise my belongings so I can return to the countryside after you visit the capital."

He sighed with relief and explained, "It's not that I don't want you to come along. Juliette has never seen the capital and wishes to visit. "I'll get you there in a few months."

In my previous life, he never sent for me for eight years, and it wasn't until Juliette married a high-ranking general's son in the capital that he brought me there in despair.

He seemed uneasy as he watched me. Normally, when we were alone, I would talk his ear off about anything and everything, but now that I was barely speaking, he appeared on edge.

"Haven't you always wanted to take wedding photos? Let's go to the photography studio tomorrow."

That would not work for me because I had planned to buy university supplies tomorrow. Just as I was about to make an excuse, Juliette walked in and hugged Silas' arm.

"Silas, which photo studio? I also want to take pictures."

Silas smiled and patted Juliette's head. "Sure, we'll all go together tomorrow."

"You two, go ahead. I have something to do tomorrow."

Silas frowned, "What could be more important than photographing weddings?"

"Let's take the photos first, and then I'll go shopping with you." His tone was firm, leaving no room for refusal.

Juliette pouted playfully. "Exactly! Elara, you're not avoiding this because of me, right?"

I didn't want to argue further and agreed to leave.

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Early the next morning, I heard Silas gently coax Juliette out of bed in pleading tones from her room, and the circle on the calendar reminded me that there were only four days left in which I could completely escape this life.

Silas carefully took some water and washed Juliette's face, just as my patience was running out.

I must have been blind in my previous life to think that marrying him would make him treat me the same way.

Lost in thought, I watched Silas approach me awkwardly, clutching a ring. "Mrs. Alfred reminded me to get you a wedding ring. "Here it is."

I did not accept it; this ring had never existed in my previous life.

Juliette pouted as soon as she saw it. "It's so beautiful! I want one, too!"

I generously offered, "Then take it."

Silas' face darkened instantly. "Stop fooling around. This is our wedding ring."

Juliette grabbed the ring and slipped it onto her finger, waving it at Silas. "Silas, does it look good on me?"

Silas looked at Juliette with adoration, nodding foolishly, before turning to me guiltily and whispering, "I- I'll buy you another one next time."

I nodded indifferently; I'd heard his promises numerous times, but he never kept them.

At the photo studio, Juliette went first, even taking several couple shots with Silas. When it was my turn with Silas, the photographer raised his camera but then awkwardly lowered it.

"Oh dear, I apologise. "I'm out of film."

I secretly rejoiced while keeping a neutral expression: "Oh well, forget it then."

Silas pulled a train ticket from his pocket and handed it to me outside the studio; it was a standing-room ticket to the capital that would depart in four days.

"I did not intend to abandon you. I'll get settled first, then wait for you in the capital."

The journey to the capital would take three days and nights, and I couldn't understand how he expected me to stand the whole time, especially since there was only one military dependent slot available.

Where would I live once there?

However, asking now would not provide satisfactory answers.

Silas relaxed visibly as he saw me accept the ticket. "Don't worry—even if you don't live in military family housing, you're still my only wife." I will treat you well from now on. "I only see Juliette as a sister."

My expression softened slightly; when had he ever spoken so gently before?

Suddenly, a car appeared around the corner, heading straight for us; Silas drew

Juliette into his arms and ducked to safety; in the confusion, someone pushed me.

The car was approaching me, but my body froze in terror as it swerved sharply and hit me, sending me flying and dragging me along the pavement.

Pain consumed me as darkness crept into my vision, and cold sweat streamed down my face.

The driver rushed out, stammering incoherently, “Miss, how are you? Are you OK?”

As a crowd gathered, pointing and whispering, my gaze remained fixed on Silas.

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He was still holding Juliette and comforting her, completely unaware of my situation.

Perhaps Silas noticed, or maybe he didn't care.

So this was what he meant when he said, 'I'll treat you well from now on.' I smiled bitterly, and the last trace of doubt in my heart vanished completely.

The driver took me to the hospital, and after a thorough examination, I discovered that I had only minor internal displacement and external injuries. I lay in the hospital bed, aching all over, but my heart felt oddly calm.

Silas walked in late at night, weary, and panicked when he saw I was awake.

"Elara, how do you feel? Is it any better?"

I looked at him coldly and didn't say anything. He rubbed his hands together and explained, hesitantly, "Juliette was traumatised by the shock. I have been staying with her, so..."

He fell silent under my gaze.

"Listen to me, Elara." The situation was urgent, and Juliette was closer to me. My instincts... I didn't realise you'd be hit." He paused, seemingly looking for the right words.

I interrupted him: "When are you leaving for the capital?"

He cautiously replied, “Tomorrow.”

“I see. I’d like to rest now. “Please leave.”

I closed my eyes, dismissing him. Silas wanted to say more, but he eventually had the foresight to leave.

Our mother, Evelyn, came to see us the next day, carrying a thermos and beaming with a smile. “Elara, dear, Silas asked me to take care of you.” Do you feel better?”

“It’s much better. “Thank you, Mom.”

While ladling soup for me, she remarked, “Silas is very clumsy. I’m not sure if he can take proper care of Juliette.”

Halfway through, she appeared to realise something and awkwardly closed her mouth.

“Mom, Juliette’s name is on the marriage licence to Silas.”

Evelyn froze, taking a long time to process this. “What did you say?”

“I submitted a marriage application with Juliette’s name on it. Of course, the marriage licence belongs to them.

Evelyn’s face expressed shock before transforming into pure joy.

“Elara, you are such a good girl! I knew you were the most sensible person!”

She excitedly gripped my hand and said, “Elara, thank you! Thank you for ensuring their happiness!”

I smiled faintly without responding; making their happiness possible? I was only ensuring my own freedom.

In my previous life, despite my devoted care for her, she left her entire inheritance to Juliette in her old age.

“Mom, don’t tell Silas and Juliette about this yet.”

Evelyn smiled. “Of course! I understand!”

“So... What are your plans now?”

“I’ll be leaving in a few days as well,” I said, not revealing my specific destination.

Evelyn wanted to ask more, but her mind was preoccupied with their wedding, so I just closed my eyes and pretended to sleep.



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I did not notify anyone when I was discharged, but I did write a letter to Silas before leaving.

[Silas, by the time you read this letter, I'll already be on a train heading east. I know you've always loved Juliette, so I'm making your dreams come true. Our fate together has run its course, and I wish you both happiness.

I sealed the letter in an envelope and mailed it to his address in the capital, along with the train ticket and marriage certificate.

I dragged my suitcase straight to the train station.

The air in Eastmoor was humid and warm, and I felt dazed as I stood in front of Eastmoor University.

Walking through campus, I felt a genuine sense of rebirth.

During the day, I sat in classrooms, listening intently and absorbing knowledge; at night, I worked at a small restaurant, serving tables and washing dishes until my back ached and my limbs hurt.

Even so, the exhaustion felt reassuring.

After a month, I had gradually adjusted to this hectic but rewarding lifestyle, until I saw Silas downstairs in my dormitory. "Elara! Why did you do it? Why did you include Juliette's name on the marriage application? Why didn't you visit the capital?"

His voice was full of rage and confusion.

I stared at him coldly. “I don’t want a husband whose heart belongs to someone else. It’s disgusting and unbearable!”

He looked at me in disbelief. “How can you talk like this? You weren’t like this before.”

I turned away as waves of nausea washed over me. I didn’t want to look at him for one more second.

“Silas, I just want to study hard and start a new life. Juliette is the one you’ve always wanted, isn’t she? You should treasure each other and stop bothering me.”

He ran his hands through his hair, frustrated. “What are you talking about? I’ve always treated Juliette like a sister!” I cracked a joke. “What kind of siblings embrace and steal kisses from each other?”

I once caught him stealing a kiss from Juliette while she was sleeping, and that tender expression will never leave me.

A flash of shame crossed his face, and he exploded in embarrassed anger, “Elara, stop talking nonsense! Juliette and I are completely innocent!”

“Your so-called ‘sibling affection’ disgusts me to my core. Let me go, and let yourself go too.”

His face turned ashen, and he appeared at a loss for words.

I remember when I first visited the Carringtons as a child. I was afraid to eat enough because I was afraid of becoming dependent on the generosity of others.

When my hunger became unbearable at night, I would sneak into the garden and eat the leaves. Silas had caught me once.

He shared his snacks with me and comforted me, saying, “Don’t be afraid, Elara. I’ll protect you from now on.”

That moment of warmth caused me to fall deeper and deeper. That was why I was willing to marry him in my previous life, despite the fact that Silas did not love me at first.

Silas spent the next few days lurking around campus. I deliberately avoided him, refusing to make any further contact.

However, I never expected him to approach the dean about getting me expelled.

When I was summoned to the dean’s office, Silas was sitting there, straight and formal.

Fury consumed me as I demanded, “Silas, what exactly do you want? What gives you the right to demand my expulsion?”

“I want you to come back with me.”

He stood up and approached me, reaching out to take my hand.

However, I stepped back sharply to avoid his touch.

“Go back? Go back to continue watching you and Juliette being all lovey-dovey?”

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His face stiffened, then he exploded in embarrassment, “Elara, stop talking nonsense. We are husband and wife, after all. What’s the point of you running off to Eastmoor like this, making us live apart indefinitely?”

I was almost amused by his brazenness.

“Silas, Juliette is your wife! Her name is on the marriage certificate, and she’s the one you love!”

His face became enraged as he gritted his teeth and said, “That was a mistake! Mistakes should be corrected!”

“You misunderstood me because of my past behaviour. “I won’t act like that anymore.”

My heart sank; those familiar words... He’d said the same thing in my previous life, but he still turned around and continued intimately with Juliette.

I turned to the dean and said earnestly, “Mr. Holloway, I truly want to continue my studies here. Please do not make me withdraw.”

Peter Holloway looked at me, then at Silas, paused for a moment before saying, “Mr. Carrington, you are unable to process Elara’s withdrawal because you have no relationship with her.

I finally sighed in relief.

Silas wanted to say more, but Peter interrupted him. “Mr. Carrington, if there is nothing else, please leave. “I have work to do.”

Silas continued to haunt me like a persistent ghost in the days that followed; his harassment was unbearable and had a negative impact on my study efficiency, and Juliette had also arrived.

“Silas, let us go back and get divorced! I do not want this. I do not want to steal my sister’s husband. “I-I am a terrible person...”

She sobbed uncontrollably, tugging at Silas’ sleeve, and Silas held her tenderly in his arms, gently patting her back. “Juliette, sweetheart, don’t cry. This is not your fault. We’ll go back now. It’s my fault that you’re suffering...”

Juliette sobbed and knelt in front of me. “Elara, I apologise. Please do not get angry with Silas. I know you misunderstood my relationship with him.

“Do not kneel. It’s my fault for causing you to suffer. We’ll go back right now.

He glared at me, as if accusing me of being ‘unreasonable’.

As more students gathered around, pointing and whispering, I could no longer bear to watch this farce and turned away.

Let them perform if they want; I will not be their audience.

Juliette was quite capable, as Silas had stopped coming that day.

I threw myself into my studies, joined the school’s maths club, and met Marcus Sandwood, who was tall and lean with black-rimmed glasses and a bright smile.

He was an excellent mathematician who frequently tutored me, and we grew close over time.

Just when I thought my life was getting back on track, Silas' letters arrived one after the other, persistent and relentless.

[Elara, are you still angry with me? I know I was wrong; please come back.]

[Elara, Juliette is pregnant, and the child is mine. I know this is difficult for you to accept, but please believe me; you are the only one I love!]

[Elara, surely there is a limit to sulking; what must I do for you to forgive me?]

I tore his letters to shreds and threw them in the trash. I had no idea what gave him the audacity to think I would change my mind; it was most likely just thick skin.

As I cleared tables in the restaurant where I worked part-time, I noticed Marcus sitting in a corner booth. The air was thick with cooking fumes.

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He smiled gently at me, but I avoided his gaze and kept working; when my shift ended, he was still sitting there, with several untouched dishes in front of him.

“Let’s eat together.” He motioned to the seat across from him.

“There’s no need. “I have already eaten.”

I tried to decline, but my stomach responded with an audible growl.

He chuckled softly: “Being shy will not help. “Come sit down.

I sat across from him, unable to refuse his kindness; the hearty stew bubbled in the pot, its warmth removing the chill from my body.

I ate ravenously, abandoning all pretence of manners.

“Eat slowly. “No one is competing with you.”

Halfway through the meal, I felt something tickle my nose and looked up to see Marcus watching me with amusement, holding a small piece of carrot between his fingers.

“Does your face want to eat, too?”He teased.

My cheeks flushed as I lowered my head in embarrassment; I knew he liked me—his eyes said it all—but right now, all I wanted to do was study.

Everything else could wait.

When Christmas break arrived, Evelyn called me one after the other, urging me to return home for the holidays.

After all, the Carringtons had raised me; I couldn't be completely heartless to them.

After much deliberation, I purchased a train ticket and returned to SnowCity with bags filled with gifts.

When I walked through the Carrington family's front door, I heard sharp, harsh shouting.

"Silas, what do you mean by this?" I'm carrying your child. I did not come here to be mistreated!"

I froze when I saw Juliette, with a protruding belly, screaming at Silas. Silas' face was ashen, but he didn't dare to argue back, instead trying to placate her in low, submissive tones.

"Calm down, Juliette. The doctor said you shouldn't get too emotional right now. It is bad for the baby."

"I want that coat, and you're going to buy it for me right away!"

"Juliette, I will buy it for you next time, okay? We've already spent this month's allowance."

Silas carefully assisted Juliette in sitting down.

"It's because you are useless! Even after all this time, you are still only a captain.



You did not give the money to my sister, did you?"

Silas' expression changed: "Juliette, stop talking nonsense. "I ended things with her a long time ago."

"Cut things off? Do you think I am stupid? You write to her every few days. Do you think I don't know?"

"You don't have me in your heart at all! You only think about her!"

Juliette cried and screamed, pounding Silas' chest. Silas looked irritated as he roared, "I told you I don't!

Standing in the doorway, I found this scene absurdly funny: in my previous life, he secretly contacted Juliette behind my back; in this life, he secretly wrote to me behind Juliette's back.

He wanted to have it both ways, and he was fundamentally unfaithful to himself.

Evelyn was the first to notice me. "Elara, you've returned! Come quickly and talk sense into Juliette. Her temper is getting progressively worse."

She pulled on my hand with a flattering tone, and I withdrew it, saying coolly, "I'm tired. I'd like to rest in my room first.

Evelyn's face stiffened slightly, but she said nothing else, returning to continue placating Juliette in hushed, submissive tones.

She wasn't like the imperious mother I remembered

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Back in my room, I took Marcus's Christmas gift from my luggage, a red cashmere scarf, wrapped it around my neck, and looked in the mirror, unconsciously smiling.

That evening, there was a knock on my door, and I opened it to find Silas standing outside, looking haggard and anxious. "Elara, we need to talk."

I stepped aside to let him in; he rubbed his hands together and mustered the courage to say, "Elara, you're the wife I've always desired. I have been waiting for you."

"Juliette's temper is getting worse and worse, and she spends money recklessly. I..."

I couldn't help but laugh, mockingly. "Waiting for me? Silas, do you really believe what you're saying?"

"Are you waiting for me while you get Juliette pregnant with your child?" What are you taking me for?"

His face flushed red, and his eyes were filled with panic. "Elara, let me explain..."

I interrupted him and said, "There's nothing to explain. You and Juliette already have a child, so what else is there to say? I hope you both have a long and happy marriage. "May you be blessed with numerous children."

He remained silent for a few seconds, as if remembering something.

"I've been having dreams that you're the one I marry. You were gentle and virtuous, staying at home to care for my parents."

He paused, his tone tinged with pain: “But in the dream, all I saw was Juliette. I neglected and harmed you... I was a terrible person. “I even forced you to divorce me and give up our son.”

I was astounded to discover that he was dreaming about our previous lives.

He covered his face in anguish, “I wronged you so badly, and now I want to make amends.”

My voice became ice-cold as I said, “If you truly want to make amends, live well with Juliette and stop bothering me.” That is the best option for both of us sisters.”

Silas’ eyes dimmed, his voice tinged with reluctance. “But I always feel like you’re the one who should be my wife.”

My patience finally ran out, and I issued a direct dismissal: “Silas, you must leave. These aren’t the words you should be using, and this isn’t the location you should be visiting.”

He rose dejectedly and walked out of my room with heavy steps, and as I watched him leave, I felt no ripple in my heart.

In both lives, he had always been torn between two women, greedily wanting to own everything.

I began to believe that since Silas and Juliette were already living here, there was no reason for me to stay; the Carringtons’ house had never truly been my home.

The next morning, I packed my belongings and knocked on Evelyn’s door. I pressed

a bank card into her hands and said calmly, “Evelyn, thank you for looking after me all these years. The money on this card is what I’ve saved over the years; consider it repayment for raising me.”

Evelyn froze for a moment, attempting to refuse: “Elara, this won’t do...”

“Take it.” I picked up my luggage and said flatly, “I have things to do at school. “I’m leaving now.”

With that, I left the house without looking back, feeling no attachment at all.

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There was a long line at the ticket window. When I finally reached the front, there were no tickets to Eastmoor available. The earliest ticket would not be until the day after tomorrow.

I ran my hands through my hair in frustration, wondering where I could go now that I couldn't sleep on the streets.

Marcus appeared in front of me, carrying bags and packages, just as I was about to give up.

“Elara!”

His face lit up with a delighted smile as he hurried over; I was surprised and greeted him with a smile, “Marcus!” What a coincidence. Are you from SnowCity, too?”

“Yes! What is this? Have you got nowhere to go?”

Marcus' tone was one of concern: “Why don't you spend Christmas Eve at my house?””

I froze for a moment before quickly waving my hands. “That wouldn't be appropriate.”

“Oh, what makes it inappropriate?”It's just my grandmother and me at home, so it's pretty quiet,” he said with a laugh. Having you there would brighten things up.

“Besides, it's Christmas Eve. I'd worry about you being all alone.”

He took a breath and said, “Please, Elara, just think of it as keeping my poor grandmother company. The old lady gets so bored at home by herself.”

His pitiful expression made me laugh, despite myself. I was unable to refuse such kindness and eventually agreed.

As we exited the station, a cold wind blew, and I couldn’t help but pull my coat tighter. When Marcus noticed this, he immediately removed his own coat and draped it over my shoulders. A faint woody fragrance enveloped me.

“Cold, isn’t it? SnowCity is much colder than Eastmoor.”

I shook my head, but warmth flowed through my heart.

Marcus lived in the city’s old district. It was a charming, two-story structure with traditional architecture. As soon as we walked into the courtyard, I smelt the delicious aroma of roasted chicken from the oven.

An elderly lady with silver hair stood at the kitchen door, smiling as we approached.

“Marcus, you’re back! And who is this?”

The old lady looked at me and said happily, “Oh my, you’ve brought home a beautiful young lady this year!”

I felt embarrassed and lowered my head, my cheeks warming slightly.

“Grandma, this is my friend, Elara,” Marcus said, smiling.

“How wonderful! Come inside and warm up.”

Marcus' grandmother was busy cooking while Marcus helped me carry my suitcase to the guest room.

The guest room was small but clean and tidy, with bedding that smelt like sunshine.

"Rest for a while. "Dinner will be ready soon," Marcus said softly as he set down my suitcase.

I nodded and sat on the edge of the bed, watching the snowflakes drift past the window, feeling an unrivalled sense of calm and tranquilly.

Perhaps this is how home felt.

That evening, we sat around the dinner table, enjoying a steaming hot Christmas Eve meal.

Mrs. Sandwood continued to serve me food while saying, "Elara dear, you must visit frequently. "My door is always open to you."

I smiled and nodded, feeling warmth in my heart.

After dinner, Marcus suggested we go for a walk in the nearby winter park, which was nearly empty, with only a few couples huddled together, enjoying the rare silence.

We strolled along the lake, neither of us speaking; snowflakes fell gently, settling on us like a thin veil.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 7:18 am*

“Thank you, Marcus.” I broke the silence by speaking softly.

“For what?”

“For taking me in and giving me a warm sanctuary.”

Marcus smiled and teased me, saying, “How about repaying me with your hand in marriage?”

I froze for a moment before huffing with mock arrogance. “In your dreams!”

I felt ripples in my heart as I said this.

“Then tell me: how will you repay me? I’m the hero who rescued you from your predicament at the train station.

His exaggerated tone made me laugh, and I put on a stern expression. “Hero?” I believe you’re trying to extort me.”

He pretended to think deeply before saying with mock seriousness, “Let me think... How about you cook me one meal per day until school begins?”

I couldn’t help but roll my eyes: “No way!” “My cooking is terrible.”

He smiled at me and said, “That’s fine; I’m not picky. Besides, even if your cooking is terrible, I will eat every bite.”



Despite my annoyance, I found myself laughing at his shameless attitude.

“Is this how you seek thanks? You are clearly trying to take advantage of me!”

“Alas, it seems my charm isn’t enough.”

He sighed, faking disappointment, and leaned in closer. “Maybe I should try harder?””

I took a quick step back as my cheeks burned. “Don’t get any ideas!”

He couldn’t help but laugh when he saw how upset I was.

“Just teasing you.” He reached out and gently ruffled my hair. “Come on, let’s go back. “Grandma will be worried.”

Mrs. Sandwood had prepared hot tea to help Marcus fight off the cold.

Holding the warm cup and feeling the cosy atmosphere of the Sandwood home, I felt some hope for the future for the first time.

Maybe letting go of the past and starting over was not such a bad idea.

On Christmas Eve, fireworks exploded outside the window, illuminating the entire night sky. The deafening sound of firecrackers rose and fell in waves, and I felt like I was in another lifetime.

“Merry Christmas, Elara.”

Marcus stood very close, his warm breath brushing against my ear and making me tingly.

I turned my head and met his deep gaze; time seemed to stand still, and my heart skipped a beat.

“Merry Christmas, Marcus.”

He leaned in close to my ear and whispered, “I love you, Elara.”

Outside the window, fireworks continued to bloom, their brilliant colours reflecting on both my face and Marcus’.