



Twice Betrayed

Author: *Markville*

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Description: Just when I thought life couldn't get crueler, it did. When my family lost everything, Jasper Hayes—the man I was engaged to—walked away without a backward glance. He didn't even hesitate before slipping a ring on Camilla Blair's finger. I was left to pick up the pieces alone.

Then came Mason Reid. He settled my debts. He arranged my father's funeral. He stood by me through every storm. For three years, I believed he was my anchor... my second chance.

But the night before our wedding, I heard the truth—words never meant for my ears.

"Are you really marrying Tessa Quin? What if she finds out you destroyed her family?"

Mason's reply cut deeper than a knife.

"She already lost Jasper to Camilla. I might as well marry her. Besides, I covered her debts and buried her father. I've done enough."

That's when it hit me: I was nothing but a consolation prize. A pawn in someone else's game. And this time, the betrayal came from the one person I trusted most.

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I stood outside the door, listening intently to Mason Reid and Jameson Clark's conversation. My body shook slightly as I held the fruit platter.

"Don't you have any regrets?" Jameson asked.

Hearing Jameson's sceptical tone, a spark of hope unexpectedly ignited in my heart.

Mason replied, "Everything was for Camilla, and I have no regrets."

When Jameson heard this, he rubbed his forehead in frustration and attempted to persuade him.

"So what if you helped Camilla secure her position in the Blair family? She still chose Jasper Hayes! Do you really want to hurt someone who loves you for the sake of someone who doesn't?"

Mason's face remained expressionless as he stared at Jameson intently. "Whoever Camilla chose is her choice; all I wanted was to help her.

"As for Tessa, she adores me so much that not marrying her would be the greatest harm. She will not be hurt as long as she does not understand the truth. "I'm protecting her here."

Mason's twisted logic left Jameson speechless, while I could not help but smile.

I smiled at my own blindness, stupidity, and the past three years of my life, during which I saw Mason as my saviour and redemption.

Only because he stood by me when the entire Marinegate City mocked me, he not only helped me pay off my debts but also arranged for my father's funeral.

Because of him, I found a new home during my downfall, and I had no resentment when Jasper abandoned me.

However, his conversation with Jameson revealed that everything was a lie: I had planned to marry the man who destroyed my family.

When I heard footsteps inside the room, I couldn't think of anything else but to flee back to my bedroom.

Mason returned to the room after Jameson had left, and he stood before me, holding my hands.

"Your hands are very cold. Are you sick?" He asked, placing his hand on my forehead to take my temperature.

"You aren't feverish. Tessa, are you feeling unwell?"

Mason's worried expression filled me with horror; he clearly didn't love me, but he could always act like he did.

I shook my head and drew my hands away from him, smiling faintly. "The window was open." Maybe it's just because of the wind."

Mason heard this and walked to the window, closing it and warning me, "You're fragile." You shouldn't keep your windows open all the time. What happens if you get sick? "It will break my heart."

In the past, Mason's words would have made me smile and cling to him, but now I

remained silent.

He noticed my low mood and crouched down to meet my gaze. “Tomorrow is our wedding day. Tessa, are you not happy to marry me?”

I was perplexed after overhearing his conversation with Jameson. I had no idea what to do.

Mason’s words reminded me that I did not want to marry him right now, and I needed to leave.

Worried he’d notice something wrong, I quickly reassured him, “Maybe it’s pre-wedding jitters?” Don’t worry; I’ll be fine.

Mason smiled. “Tessa, don’t be concerned. I will always be by your side.

He had said the same thing three years ago, and he had kept his word.

I had assumed it was because he loved me, but now I realise it is for atonement and to keep me under control.

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“Tessa, let’s go decorate our room at the new house,” Mason interrupted my thoughts, and all I could do was nod in agreement.

Our new home was a luxurious villa in the West End, which I fell in love with the moment I saw it.

Mason informed me that he had chosen the house based on my preferences; however, unlike the joy I felt the last time I visited, entering this villa now left me feeling cold all over.

The man in front of me was my enemy, the person who had destroyed my family; how could I possibly find this house welcoming?

Mason’s phone rang, and it was Camilla’s special ringtone.

I once argued with Mason about this ringtone, but he explained that it was because Camilla was his business partner.

His expression was so sincere when he said it that I had no choice but to believe him.

Despite my discomfort, I never mentioned my dissatisfaction to Mason again, afraid he would think I was being difficult; however, hearing this ringtone again felt like a lifeline.

Mason gave me an awkward look before answering the phone and walking away.

When he returned shortly after, he appeared nervous.

“Tessa, there is an issue at the company. I need to leave immediately. You start with the decorating, and we’ll finish everything together when I return.”

He walked out the door without waiting for my response, leaving me with a mix of relief and sadness as I watched him go. He never looked back.

I’d been foolish before, deliberately oblivious to what was going on.

Mason always responded quickly to Camilla’s calls, regardless of what he was doing.

He once answered Camilla’s phone call while we were having an intimate conversation, and when he heard crying on the other end, he dressed and left right away.

From beginning to end, he never looked at me or said anything to explain.

As soon as Mason left, I went to City Hospital.

Despite the fact that our family business had experienced a crisis that required my father to be hospitalised, no doctor ever told me he was in mortal danger; instead, they simply stated that he needed to rest.

Three years ago, I was too naive, and when confronted with a sudden tragedy, all I could do was panic. Now that I think about it, everything happened far too quickly.

I came here to look for Dr. Felix Warren, my father’s attending physician at the time.

“Dr. Warren, what was the exact cause of my father’s death?”I asked.

Dr. Warren looked at me, surprised, and even more perplexed when he heard my question. “You don’t know?”

I shake my head.

“Your father has committed suicide. Didn’t someone tell you?”

Dr. Warren’s words struck me like a bolt from the blue, leaving me frozen in place. I opened my mouth but couldn’t say anything.

Dr. Warren sighed and patted my shoulder. “You still haven’t accepted it?” “You must find a way to accept your loss.”

I forced a miserable smile as I said goodbye to Dr. Warren.

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On my way home from the hospital, I felt dizzy and disoriented, and I ran into several people along the way.

Mason informed me of my father's death, and I spent a lot of time in the hospital by his bedside, which caused me to lose a lot of weight.

Mason had volunteered to watch over my father so I could go home and rest for a day, but on that same day, I received the devastating news that my father had died.

Mason had held me as I sobbed uncontrollably, telling me not to approach my father's body, promising that he would always be there for me and that I should not be afraid.

It turned out he had embraced me to keep me from learning that my father had committed suicide.

When I realised this, I couldn't help but slap myself across the face. What kind of monster had I fallen in love with?!

As I was drowning in regret, I heard a voice I hadn't heard in a while.

"Tessa, it's been a while."

Camilla was confident in my garden, sitting on the swing and smiling as she looked at me.

"How did you get inside?" I asked.

I'd never liked her, especially after Jasper abandoned me for her; I couldn't bring myself to smile at her.

Camilla approached me, still smiling, "With the passcode, of course." Mason's passwords are always very predictable. It is 0717, my birthday."

My heart sank when I heard that Mason's passwords were all 0717. I had asked him about it before, and he said it was the day he made his first fortune.

As ridiculous as it may sound, I even celebrated his success with him on July 17th.

"Do you like the swing? I mentioned to Mason during one of our conversations that I'd like to have a swing installed in the yard someday. It would be tonnes of fun. "I never imagined he would remember."

Camilla spoke as she entered the house, making herself completely at home.

"Wow, is this the painting Mason returned from Mordin?" She enquired enthusiastically, pointing to the artwork hanging by the second-floor staircase.

Without waiting for my response, she said, "I can't believe he bought it. Too bad Jasper wouldn't let me keep it; otherwise, I would never have left it with Mason.

She ended with a conspiratorial wink in my direction.

I followed silently behind her, torturing myself by listening to her words and not responding.

Camilla gifted the carpet, the painting she adored, and the interior style she chose; everything in this home was designed to her specifications.

I had mistakenly assumed Mason had chosen this house specifically for me; now that Camilla and I were standing here, I felt like a visitor.

Compared to Camilla, I was much more unfamiliar with this house.

“Hi, is this your wedding photo? Your wedding dress is identical to the one I wore for my bridal photoshoot! Camilla remarked mockingly, “It appears you are my substitute,” revealing her true colours.

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When I heard this, I reached out and grabbed the wedding photo from her hands: “Give that back!”

“Who do you think you are to address me like that?! Camilla raised her hand to slap me, but when she heard the sound of an engine downstairs, she twisted and leaned backward.

Mason had returned.

Camilla screamed and tumbled down the stairs uncontrollably from the second to the first floor, crying out in pain. I had only looked away for a moment.

Mason heard her and dashed inside, kneeling down to hold Camilla in his arms.

“What did you do?!” Mason roared, his face ashen with rage. “If anything happens to Camilla, you’re done! You’ll pay for it with your life!”

He gave me a vicious glare before lifting Camilla and carrying her to the door.

“My baby, my baby...” Camilla’s voice faltered, and it was only then that I noticed the pool of blood on the floor.

Mason immediately panicked: “Camilla, I’m taking you to the hospital right away!”

“Do not blame Tessa for this. “It wasn’t intentional,” she said before passing out.

Mason did not give me a second glance as he hurried away.

After they left, I stood alone, staring at the blood on the floor and lost in thought.

Was karma finally coming around?

Despite knowing Mason didn't want to see me, I took a cab and followed his car.

I couldn't believe Camilla was pregnant; I'd only come to explain that I had nothing to do with the situation.

Mason gave me a cold stare after rushing Camilla into the operating room.

"Tessa, I never thought you could be such a vicious woman. Camilla only wanted to congratulate you on our marriage. Why would you do this to her!"

Hearing his suppressed roar of rage, I lost all desire to defend myself.

"If Camilla loses the baby, I'll give her the wedding gift I had prepared for you as compensation."

Mason had always believed that marriage should adhere to proper traditions; whatever other women received, I would have received as well, if not more.

He had offered to transfer half of his company shares to my name as a gift, but it was now clear that he would not give me anything if Camilla's baby survived.

In his mind, he had already determined that I was a vicious woman.

I laughed bitterly but stayed silent.

Mason frowned and impatiently waved me away as I didn't respond. "You should go home first. I'll stay with Camilla tonight. "The wedding car will pick you up

tomorrow.”

After saying this, he turned away from me and looked anxiously at the operating room.

I turned and left after seeing Mason’s entranced, lovesick expression; I had wanted to tell Mason that I was not responsible for what happened to Camilla’s baby, and the paternity of Camilla’s child was questionable.

Before my family went bankrupt and we still kept the arranged engagement with the Hayes, both families would get regular medical check-ups every year.

I accidentally discovered that Jasper had azoospermia.

Camilla’s plan was brilliant; she killed two birds with one stone, and Mason trusted her over me.

Realising this, I started packing my luggage and preparing to leave.

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I had intended to leave on our wedding day to humiliate Mason, the nouveau riche of Marinegate City.

But now I felt that if I didn't leave right away, I'd be ridiculed by the entire city the next day.

By the time I finished packing, it was 8:00 p.m., and Mason hadn't returned home.

My fiancé was at the hospital with another woman the night before our wedding, leaving me alone in an empty house.

After booking my flight, I closed the door and left without looking back. I had a flight scheduled for 3:00 a.m. and was waiting at the airport.

During this time, I did not receive a single text message or phone call from Mason, but I did receive several texts from Camilla, who sent photos of Mason, exhausted and barely able to keep his eyes open, watching over her IV drip. "Mason is really going out of his way. Tessa, you'll be delighted in the future to marry such a caring man."

She then sent me a dark video clip, but the conversation in it made me feel completely cold.

"Mason, you don't have to look after me." Go home quickly. You are the groom tomorrow. You should look your best."

In the video, Mason was busy with something, making rustling sounds. "It's fine.

You do not want Jasper to come, so I will stay with you. I will not leave you alone here.

“As for the wedding, we’ll see; I’ll be late tomorrow to teach Tessa a lesson!”

“I finished washing. Allow me to hang it up for you.

Camilla quickly sent a message explaining how Mason helped her wash her blood-stained pants. Don’t mind, Tessa. I recently had a miscarriage and cannot really come into contact with cold water. You understand, correct?”

I couldn’t be bothered to expose her hypocrisy and didn’t respond.

Fortunately, boarding time arrived, so I removed my SIM card, tossed it in the trash, and boarded the plane.

Looking at the clouds at 3 a.m., I realised I was leaving this place completely.

Mason was awakened at 5:00 a.m. by the makeup artist’s call, and before responding, he carefully examined Camilla’s condition.

He stepped outside to take the call after noticing her sleeping peacefully.

“What’s the matter?””

“Mr. Reid, nobody is answering the doorbell. Perhaps you could talk to the bride?”

Mason rubbed his temple in frustration and hung up before dialling my phone number.

The words of reproach for my inconsiderate behaviour were on the tip of his tongue,

and he snapped right after a single ring: “What kind of tantrum are you throwing? The makeup artist has arrived; open the door!”

”

A moment later, Mason realised what he was hearing: a mechanical, cold female voice telling the caller that the number was no longer in service.

Mason immediately decided that I was just being difficult, so he called the makeup artist back and said, “I apologise for the inconvenience, but please return to the studio. Don’t be concerned with her.”

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The makeup artist was perplexed but had no option but to comply.

After finishing the call, Mason returned to the hospital ward and discovered Camilla awake, which made him nervous. “Camilla, did I wake you? Are you feeling unwell?”

Camilla’s pale face lit up with a smile as she shook her head. “Is something wrong with Tessa?”

Mason felt both guilty and tender when he looked at the gentle Camilla in front of him. “She won’t open the door for the makeup artist. She’s having a tantrum at home.”

Camilla sighed helplessly: “Tessa was spoilt by her father. She’s so impolite. You’re already exhausted, and she’s not helping to alleviate your burden.”

Then, pretending kindness, she said, “Don’t worry about me. Go home quickly to console Tessa. How can she marry without proper makeup?”

Mason smirked as he carefully wrapped the blanket around Camilla. “I’m not going to bother with her. If she wants to look ugly at her wedding, then so be it. She has been mocked by everyone in Marinegate City before. What can I do if she has no self-respect?”

Mason felt he had gone too far when he said this, so he quickly checked Camilla’s reaction, but Camilla simply smiled and closed her eyes, content.

Finally, Mason texted me: “Tessa, stop this nonsense. Open the door. “The makeup artist is here.”

This single message was enough to ease his guilt over his harsh words.

Before the wedding, the groom was scheduled to pick up the bride at 10:00 a.m., a lucky hour determined by a professional astrologer.

Mason should have come here to punish me, but he didn’t because he was worried about leaving Camilla alone in the hospital.

The wedding party arrived at the house, but no one came to open the door; it was only then that Mason realised I might be genuinely angry.

Camilla noticed Mason’s discomfort and suggested that he go home and comfort me instead. “Women understand women best.” No matter how serious the situation, a husband’s reassurance can resolve it. “Go quickly, Mason, before you miss your own wedding.”

Mason was deeply moved by her thoughtfulness, and when he returned home, he discovered the house was completely empty.

He panicked and searched the entire house for me and any messages I might have left.

At this point, Jameson approached him and put his hand on his shoulder, “Could Tessa have left...”

“Impossible!”

Mason quickly argued, “She’s clearly angry and hiding somewhere, waiting for me to

console her. She is so irresponsible, throwing tantrums at inappropriate times!”

Hearing this, Jameson could only shake his head helplessly before gathering people to look for Tessa.

Mason slumped dejectedly on the couch, repeatedly calling my phone, which remained turned off.

Finally, Jameson noticed something unusual in the house: “Wasn’t there a teddy bear here?” Where is the plush bear?” Mason looked up and realised that the teddy bear that had occupied the centre of the living room was indeed gone. As if suddenly realising something, he ran upstairs like a madman and opened the closet, where he discovered, unsurprisingly, that all of my clothes had disappeared.

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Before leaving, I thoroughly cleaned the house and removed all of my belongings.

I had only taken a small portion; the rest had been thrown away.

After all, I should not have come to this house in the first place. Since I had decided to leave, I would do so with a clean break. Mason stared numbly at everything before him until Jameson asked, “Mason, will the wedding still take place?”

With the bride missing and the groom dejected, how could the wedding go on?

Mason intended to punish me, to remind me that he had rescued me from the contempt of Marinegate City’s residents, and to warn me not to become arrogant in my privileged position.

Yet now it appeared that he had punished himself.

Mason Reid’s wedding had been highly anticipated in Marinegate City, but this was how things had turned out. Mason straightened his posture, “We’ll proceed!” I don’t think Tessa would leave!”

Camilla called just as he had finished speaking.

Camilla said her stomach hurt and asked Mason if he could come back for a while. After much deliberation, Mason decided to leave.

Jameson sighed as he watched Mason’s retreating figure. “I suppose this is fate!”

In his haste to get to the hospital, Mason accidentally bumped into someone.

“Mr. Reid?”

Only then did Mason realise he had run into Dr. Warren, my father’s former attending physician.

Mason’s unease grew as he saw Dr. Warren, and he nodded briefly before leaving.

“Hi, isn’t Tessa with you today? How’s she doing?”

“What is wrong with Tessa?””

Mason felt anxious and concerned when he heard my name.

He started to wonder if I was sick; why had I gone to the hospital and not told him?

Dr. Warren then told Mason about my hospital visit the day before, and he concluded by advising Mason to help me overcome my grief.

Mason stood stunned after hearing that, knowing I had discovered the cause of my father’s death.

A wave of dread washed over him, and Mason quickly asked Jameson to check the safe in his study for the contract from his previous partnership with Quinn Enterprises.

The contract had ended, as expected.

Mason leaned against the wall, staring blankly at his phone; the safe’s password was Camilla’s birthday.

He knew I'd figured it out and had taken the contract, which revealed how he had set up a trap for my father.

I now understood what had happened back then.

With this realisation, he took heavy steps towards Camilla's hospital ward.

Just as he got off the lift, he overheard two young nurses gossiping.

"The woman in the VIP ward... She has already had at least two abortions, if I recall correctly!"

"Let me tell you a secret: the baby is not her husband's. And yesterday, the man who came to stay with her was Mason Reid, the financial media darling!"

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Standing nearby, Mason could clearly hear their conversation.

“That woman is the Blairs’ illegitimate daughter. She only received official recognition a few years ago, as she rose to prominence. She married into old money—the Hayes! Tsk, tsk; what a shame.”

“What is there to be ashamed about?”

“I once worked on medical reports for the Hayes heir. He has azoospermia. “He will never have children of his own.”

The two nurses continued their conversation, completely unaware of Mason behind them.

Mason remained rooted to the spot after the nurses left, his legs feeling as heavy as lead. Camilla, he thought, had been an angel on earth, ever so kind.

Mason had willingly devoted himself to Camilla, even though she had not chosen him, because he only wanted what was best for her. Despite his guilt over his actions against the Quinn family and others, Camilla’s smiles and frowns overshadowed everything else.

But now, the nurses’ conversation felt like a slap in the face: the person he had thought to be pure and beautiful was actually a promiscuous woman!

Mason clenched his fists and eventually entered Camilla’s hospital room.

“Mason, did you find Tessa?”

Mason looked at her for a long time before shaking his head.

“Oh, Tessa is quite something, going somewhere without telling you. It’s very worrying.”

Mason used to think Camilla’s concern demonstrated her thoughtfulness and goodness, but now her words irritated him.

Mason couldn’t find anything unusual about Camilla’s condition and decided to leave.

Camilla was taken aback by Mason’s sudden departure, and she had no choice but to let him go in order to maintain her image.

She assumed Mason had left, but he was standing just outside the door, overhearing everything she said next.

“Are you certain Tessa has boarded the plane?”

“Good. Then let her disappear completely in Nereida City!”

Mason’s breath caught when he heard these words. He quickly walked away and directed someone to check my flight information.

He then leaked the news of Camilla’s hospitalisation to reporters, leaving the Hayes to handle the situation on their own.

I arrived in Nereida City at noon, but as soon as I stepped off the plane, my instincts told me it was unsafe.

Perhaps it was Mason's or Camilla's. Regardless of who it was, my whereabouts had already been discovered.

So I had no choice but to drop the name Tessa, get new identification, and fly overseas.

Prior to the Quinn family's bankruptcy, I had lived abroad. Even though it had been a few years, I was able to quickly adjust.

This time, I chose a smaller country. It was sparsely populated, and both polar day and polar night occurred.

Hopefully, I will be able to see the aurora borealis there.

Standing on the thick, soft snow and feeling the biting cold wind blow past, I couldn't stop smiling.

The old affairs of Marinegate City were finally behind me.

I once told Mason about my desire to see the auroras, and he readily agreed. But he would refuse me every year, citing various excuses.

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If it wasn't his hectic work schedule, Camilla needed him for something. Whatever the reason, my dream of seeing the aurora remained unfulfilled.

Nonetheless, it didn't matter any more. I could handle it myself.

I rented an apartment and, to support myself, opened a small restaurant in the city centre.

There weren't many customers, but I did get quite a few regulars. Strangely, I had Mason to thank for this.

During those three years of being grateful for Mason's care, I learnt to cook so that I could be the ideal girlfriend.

From spicy Meridian dishes to zesty Cascade specialities, Eastern Shore seafood, and more, I learnt signature dishes from each culinary tradition.

Despite the fact that my relationship with him had ended, my culinary skills had improved to the point where I could support myself in this foreign land.

After arriving here, I kept myself busy, avoiding news from home. But when the polar night arrived, my restaurant's operating hours were reduced, forcing me into unwanted leisure.

I opened the news from home with both curiosity and reluctance. Only then did I learn Camilla had divorced Jasper.

Mason leaked the story of Camilla's hospitalisation to reporters, and they swarmed like flies at the scent of meat.

They started by looking into why Camilla was hospitalised and eventually discovered Jasper's azoospermia.

The elite's scandalous affairs have been completely exposed. With their reputation tarnished, the Hayes quickly forced Jasper and Camilla to divorce.

Camilla's child was conceived during her wedding night reception. The news also stated that Camilla sought Mason's assistance following her divorce but was turned down.

The article only briefly mentioned it, but I could picture the scene.

Camilla had secured her position in the Blair family through Mason's assistance and her marriage into the Hayes family.

Yet Hayes has rejected her. Mason, on the other hand, had become increasingly despondent since my departure, having suffered consecutive business defeats.

Without these two men, the Blair heiress, whom Camilla had previously displaced, exacted her revenge.

Camilla was kidnapped and beaten before her shares in the company were seized.

Camilla, who had become an overnight laughingstock, could not accept her fate.

In comparison to the embarrassment she had brought upon the Hayes, her deception of Mason appeared minor. So she went to Mason's house.

Mason had moved into the new house on the day of the wedding because it was going to be his marital home with me.

Jameson had questioned him about this decision, “You never loved her. Now that she’s gone, isn’t that exactly what you wanted?” Mason tried to object several times, but memories of the past flashed before his eyes, rendering him speechless.

He had destroyed my family, deceived me multiple times because of Camilla, and even spoken harshly to me.

If Mason claimed to love me, no one might believe him. However, in the days since my departure, Mason had nearly lost his will to live.

He would no longer see my smiling face when he opened the door, nor would he taste the meals I had prepared myself.

The flowers in the house had withered, and the swing in the yard was dust-covered. Only our wedding photos remained on display throughout the house, serving as a constant reminder of Mason’s loss.

Mason looked up as Camilla pushed open the door and walked in, his eyes filled with hope that this was the person he had been looking for.

But when he realised it was Camilla, he turned away impatiently. “How did you get in?”

Camilla smiled obsequiously. “All your passwords are my birthday. Of course, I know them.”

Mason was taken aback by what he had heard. He had forgotten that his passwords included Camilla’s birthday.

For years, the number 0717 had been ingrained in his bones, but he had forgotten why.

He suddenly remembered Camilla's miscarriage and looked at her with piercing eyes.

“That day, you let yourself in too, didn't you?”

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Camilla nodded, confused. “I came to congratulate Tessa. Don’t you remember?”

Mason had installed surveillance cameras in the house long ago, and the footage was permanently saved.

He had never considered reviewing the surveillance footage to determine what happened during Camilla’s miscarriage, but Camilla was no longer the Camilla he had imagined.

Mason dragged Camilla into his study and started looking for the footage from that day.

Camilla’s face changed dramatically, turning pale as she attempted to turn off the video, but Mason stopped her.

Mason found the half-hour video excruciating to watch. Mason knew the footage would shatter his beliefs from the moment Camilla entered the house and spoke her first words.

He had anticipated regret, but never imagined such anguish.

Mason wanted nothing more than to punish himself after seeing my ashen face as he berated me on video, but it was too late.

When the video ended, Camilla grabbed Mason’s sleeve and begged, “Mason, let me explain. It’s all a misunderstanding. I didn’t mean it that way...”

Her words sounded too hollow. Mason coldly removed his arm from Camilla's grasp.

"Why did you come to see me today?"

Camilla's eyes lit up instantly with hope. "Mason, I knew you wouldn't abandon me. You know my situation, I'm penniless and homeless. When do you plan to transfer those shares you promised me? I'm desperate now."

Mason gave a bitter laugh when he heard this. "Camilla, where's your sense of shame?"

Camilla was stunned by Mason's bluntness and froze in place.

"I slandered my fiancé because of you, and now, you come asking for her wedding gift? How dare you?!"

Camilla immediately objected, "You promised me! Surely, you're not going back on your word!"

His eyes darkened as he spoke with gritted teeth. "Get out. You have no right to take what belongs to Tessa."

Camilla wanted to curse him but hadn't given up hope, so she tried again.

"Mason, I know you're upset. Tessa ran away without considering the big picture. When she returns, I'll help you teach her a lesson!"

"Who are you to lecture Tessa? Are you still claiming to be the Hayes' daughter-in-law?"

"You've been thrown out, so you should know your place. I'll warn Tessa to avoid

you from now on, lest she contract a disease!”

Camilla stood frozen in the face of Mason’s piercing gaze and harsh words, believing Mason was unaware of the true reason for her divorce.

When Mason found me, I was just about to go see the aurora.

The gossip from back home was plentiful, and Mason and Camilla’s affairs were gradually forgotten.

I’d gradually learnt to let go; neither grief nor hatred should be reasons for me to t*****e myself.

As I re-embraced life, I forgave myself, stopped avoiding news from home, and even started an Instagram account where I posted photos of my culinary creations, which quickly gained a large following.

Mason was one of my followers, but I had no idea.

That day, I’d just stepped outside when I noticed Mason standing in the cold wind, rubbing his hands and looking at me.

“It’s really cold here, huh? Have you adjusted well?”

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Strangely, seeing Mason again after only a few months elicited completely different reactions.

There was no hatred or pain—only calm indifference.

I stood still, looking at him, and casually replied, “Not too bad.”

Mason could no longer contain himself and ran to me, hugging me tightly. “Tessa, I’m sorry...”

Mason’s heartbeat was heavy and thundering, and his arms were tightly wrapped around my shoulders, squeezing me so hard that I could barely breathe.

Mason appeared to be crying, and I could feel wet droplets sliding down my neck, gradually flowing down my chest and evaporating with my heartbeat.

“Mason, let go of me.”

Mason quickly released me after hearing this, wiping away his tears with a bitter smile. “I’m sorry, Tessa.” Did I hurt you? I was simply too excited. Do you know how long I have been looking for you? “I have finally found you.”

I looked at him calmly. “Why are you looking for me?”

Mason was surprised by my question, and after a long pause, he finally replied, “To marry you...”

I laughed at him and said, “Mason, I will not marry you.”

“Why? Tessa, have you stopped loving me? I know you’re angry. You can punish me however you want, okay?”

He tried to grab my hand to slap his own face, but I drew back.

“Mason, we shouldn’t even be discussing love right now. If we are being honest, why don’t you ask if I hate you?”

I threw the contract I had brought with me at him. “Mr. Reid, your love is prohibitively expensive! So expensive that it costs someone’s life as well as the blood and sweat of an entire company’s employees!

“My father, my family’s years of hard work- all destroyed by your hands. Fine, I guess the winner takes all when it comes to business. The Quinn family lost because we weren’t skilled enough. I accept that!”

I jabbed my finger at Mason’s chest to emphasise each word. “But why did you have to come after me? You do whatever Camilla tells you to do. You’re her dog. You have no right to turn around and come here to disgust me like this!”

After saying this, I turned and left.

Then Mason’s bitter and hoarse voice emerged from behind. “Tessa, do you hate me now?”

I did not respond to him, instead continuing to walk away. I couldn’t decide whether I hated him or not by myself.

Will hatred make them suffer? Will forgiveness set them free?

Such selfish people sought forgiveness from others' lips in order to absolve themselves, but they still had the audacity to feel wronged.

After that, I never saw Mason again. The next time I heard about Mason was through headlines from back home.

Camilla had been sentenced to prison.

Mason was behind it. Camilla was not a business expert. Previously, Mason or Jasper had always concealed her mistakes.

However, now that Camilla had lost Jasper, Mason revealed all of Camilla's previous transgressions.

Mason was sent to prison alongside Camilla. Mason took the contract and admitted to driving my father to suicide.

Even the Hayes were not immune to the scandal. Everyone made fun of Jasper's azoospermia, which harmed the Hayes family's reputation significantly.

Mason exposed the gaps that the Hayes had previously filled for Camilla. To protect their core interests, the Hayes were forced to give up many of their most loyal supporters.

Marinegate City's business landscape was completely transformed in a single moment.

I sat in my small restaurant, watching the distant aurora shimmer across the night sky. After I finished reading these news articles, I turned off my phone.

I whispered, "Dad, I have kept my promise to you."

Even Mason had no idea that on the day I left the hospital after staying by Dad's bedside, he had taken my hand and repeatedly told me, "Leave Marinegate City. Live the life you want to live, freely and at ease."

He had already answered my question about this ordeal.