

# Meoro and July

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# Chapter 1: The Divide of Two Worlds

The sun had barely risen, casting a faint orange glow over the city, where the quiet hum of life was beginning to stir. Meoro stood on the balcony of his family's grand estate, the chill of the morning air nipping at his skin, yet it did little to stir the weight in his heart. Below, the streets of the city were already alive with movement, a stark contrast to the silence of his luxurious home.

Meoro's world was one of privilege, wealth, and power. A world where names, titles, and bloodlines dictated who you were—and who you were meant to love. But as he gazed out into the distance, something within him ached. He had everything—everything, that is, except freedom. The freedom to choose his own path, the freedom to decide whom his heart should follow.

It was the same freedom that July would never have.

In the heart of the city, far from the walls of Meoro's estate, July was waking to a different reality. Her room was small and dim, tucked into the corner of a crowded, worn-down building where the sounds of bustling people, clattering carts, and the clamor of hard labor were constant companions. Life had always been this way—tough, unyielding, and distant from the fantasies that Meoro's world seemed to hold.

For July, the boundaries were clear. She was of the common folk, the laborers, the forgotten. Her life was mapped out, an unchanging circle of work, survival, and dreams that could never touch the stars. Yet, there was something in her—a quiet hope that always whispered, despite the odds, that there had to be more to life than this. She couldn't know it yet, but that hope would soon lead her into a world where she would meet a man who could never be hers.

The two of them, bound by invisible walls of society, were destined to cross paths in a world that would never allow their love to exist. And yet, something inside of both of them knew: their hearts would beat for each other, even if the world itself refused to let them be.

## Chapter 2: A Glimpse Across the Divide

The city was a maze of sounds, scents, and sights that felt as though they belonged to two entirely different worlds. For Meoro, it was a place of control—his family's influence stretched across every corner, every stone. The streets he walked were lined with buildings of grandeur, monuments to his ancestors' power, where carriages with gilded rims glided by in a procession of elegance. He had always been surrounded by luxury—his life dictated by the whims of etiquette, the expectations of others, the weight of his name. And yet, despite all that splendor, there was something lacking.

It was during one of those endless days of walking in his world, his mind weighed down with future responsibilities and meaningless conversations, that fate decided to intervene.

Meoro was with his usual entourage, strolling through the grand marketplace. They passed by merchants hawking their goods, servants carrying baskets of food, and well-dressed ladies gossiping on the side. His every step was calculated, his gaze held firmly to the distant horizon as he pretended to listen to his companions. It wasn't until he noticed something—or rather, someone—that broke his trance.

She was standing near a stall at the edge of the square, her hands busy sorting through bundles of fresh herbs, her eyes moving with practiced speed over the displays. At first, he thought little of it, but there was something about her that made him pause. It wasn't just her beauty, though she was undeniably striking. Her hair, the color of midnight, fell in loose waves down her back, and her skin, kissed by the sun, glowed softly. It was the way she moved. There was an effortless grace to her, a kind of quiet strength that stood in contrast to the hurried, bustling lives around her.

Meoro didn't notice how his steps slowed, how his gaze lingered longer than it should have. He only realized it when he was standing still, watching her in a way he had never watched anyone before. She didn't belong to his world. He could tell by the simple, humble dress she wore—plain and unremarkable to anyone else. And yet, to him, it was the most fascinating thing he had ever seen.

Without thinking, he moved closer, his heart beating with a strange energy that he couldn't explain. As he neared her, a sudden gust of wind blew through the square, sending a swirl of dust into the air. She looked up sharply, startled by the shift in the atmosphere, and their eyes met for the first time.

In that moment, everything seemed to slow down. The noise of the marketplace faded into the background, the world narrowing to the space between them. He saw her surprise, her uncertainty—perhaps she was not used to being noticed by someone like him. But there was something else, too. Something that sparked between them—a recognition of sorts. He saw the flicker of curiosity in her eyes, a question that matched his own.

"I... I'm sorry," Meoro stammered, suddenly aware of how ridiculous he must have seemed, standing there as though he had lost his mind.

Her lips parted, and she gave him a small, polite smile, but it was distant, guarded. "It's fine. Can I help you, sir?"

Her voice was soft, but there was an edge to it that told him she didn't expect anything beyond what was necessary. He wasn't used to this, to people being so uninterested in him—his name, his title, the things that usually commanded respect. But in her eyes, he was just another face in the crowd. And that made him want to stay in her presence even more.

"I was just... passing by," Meoro muttered, feeling foolish. He tried to gather his thoughts, to find something to say, but words seemed to fail him. "I noticed... you."

She raised an eyebrow slightly, her smile turning into something a little more amused, a little more knowing. "Noticed me?" she asked, her tone gentle but with a hint of teasing. "For what?"

His throat tightened. "I... I don't know. There's something about you."

Her expression softened, but she didn't speak right away. Instead, she glanced down at her hands, busy with the herbs once again. It was as if she were reminding herself of something she already knew—people like him had nothing to offer her, no matter how intrigued he seemed to be.

Meoro could feel his heart pounding in his chest, the silence between them stretching on, suffocating him. Finally, he blurted out, "I'm Meoro."

She paused, her eyes flicking up to meet his again, this time with something else—recognition, perhaps, of the name he had given her. But she didn't react the way others did when they heard the name of the highborn son of Lord Althior. Instead, she nodded politely, as if his name meant as little to her as any other stranger in the market.

"July," she said, the name falling from her lips with a certain softness, as if it were a name she had learned to say with care, but also one she could never truly claim as her own.

"July," Meoro repeated, tasting the name on his tongue. It sounded foreign, so different from the formal names he was used to. And yet, somehow, it felt right, as though it belonged to him as much as it belonged to her.

The tension between them hung in the air like a thread, fragile and delicate. Neither of them knew it yet, but this was the moment when the divide between their worlds had already begun to crumble.

"Are you new to the city?" Meoro asked, desperate to keep the conversation going, to keep the thread of connection alive.

"No," July replied. "I've lived here all my life." She paused, and her gaze shifted to the stall she worked at, as though the task in front of her could offer an escape. "I just do what I can to survive."

Survive. The word hit Meoro like a stone thrown into a still lake, rippling through the air between them. He thought of his own life, his endless privileges, his struggles that seemed

so small in comparison. He wanted to ask her more—about her life, about her dreams—but something inside him held him back. Maybe it was the way she seemed to pull away, like the very idea of him talking to her was foreign to her.

But then, before he could say anything else, the sound of an approaching carriage filled the air, and the moment between them shattered. July immediately stepped back, her eyes dropping to the ground. It was a simple, unspoken action, but it was enough. Meoro understood. She couldn't afford this. She couldn't afford him.

As the carriage rolled past, July gave him a polite, almost mechanical nod. "It was... good to meet you, sir."

"Meoro," he said again, but she had already turned, her back to him as she returned to her task.

He stood there for a long time, watching her, knowing that he would not be able to shake the image of her face from his mind. And though she had already started to slip away into the crowd, Meoro could feel that something had shifted between them. The divide was still there, but he could no longer pretend that it was insurmountable. He had glimpsed something in her—something he had never seen in his own world. And for the first time, he wondered if he might be willing to cross that divide, no matter the cost.

## Chapter 3: Secrets in the Shadows

After that fleeting encounter, Meoro found himself unable to forget July. Her name echoed in his mind, tangled with the memory of her quiet strength and the way her eyes had met his—so full of unspoken emotion, as if the weight of her life had been written on her soul. She had been distant, almost guarded, but there was something in the way she moved, in the way she spoke, that kept pulling him back.

Days passed, but nothing felt quite the same. The world around him, the marble halls of his family's estate, the endless social events and formal dinners, seemed increasingly hollow. He couldn't shake the feeling that something important had begun to stir within him—something that could change everything.

Meoro had tried to return to his usual life. He sat at his father's table, attended the political meetings, and paraded through the streets with the air of a man who had everything under control. But behind every smile, every handshake, there was an unspoken restlessness gnawing at him. It wasn't just the weight of his family's expectations or the future that loomed before him. It was her—the memory of July—that unsettled him in ways he couldn't fully explain.

Every morning, he found himself wandering the streets, making his way to the marketplace where he had seen her. And every day, he returned empty-handed, never quite finding her. He had begun to hope that it wasn't a dream, but a chance encounter that might happen again. Still, every time he stepped into the bustling market, his heart pounded, and the fear that he might never see her again grew stronger.

One evening, when the sun dipped low and the glow of twilight bathed the city in soft gold, Meoro found himself walking the streets once again, his footsteps slow and deliberate. He hadn't planned to go to the market today, but something inside him urged him forward, as though an invisible force were guiding him. His mind buzzed with thoughts of July—of her smile, her voice, and the way she seemed to hide a deeper world beneath her quiet exterior.

As he rounded the corner near the marketplace, a familiar face caught his eye.

July.

She was standing by the same herb stall, her dark hair tied back in a simple braid, her hands once again busy with bundles of flowers and leaves. This time, she wasn't alone. Another figure stood beside her—an older man, dressed in the worn clothes of a tradesman. They seemed to be deep in conversation, but when July looked up and saw Meoro standing at the edge of the square, she froze for a moment, her expression unreadable.

Her eyes flicked away quickly, as if she didn't want him to see her, but it was too late. Meoro had already made his way toward her. This time, he didn't hesitate. The pull toward her, the magnetic force that seemed to guide him, was too strong.

"July," he said, his voice low, almost tentative. He saw her stiffen, but she didn't turn away. Instead, she gave him a brief nod.

"Meoro," she replied, her tone polite but distant. It was as if the space between them had already widened, an invisible wall between their worlds that neither could breach.

"I... I didn't expect to see you again," he said, his words awkward, betraying the unease he felt. "I've been looking for you."

Her brow furrowed slightly. "Looking for me?" she asked, her voice laced with a mix of curiosity and caution. "Why?"

Meoro opened his mouth, but the words didn't come easily. Why was he looking for her? What was it that had drawn him in so completely? He didn't have an answer. All he knew was that something about her made him feel alive in ways he couldn't explain.

"I don't know," he admitted finally, his voice quiet. "There's just something about you. Something different."

For a long moment, July didn't respond. She only glanced down at her hands, seemingly lost in thought. The older man at the stall cleared his throat, and she nodded to him, acknowledging his presence. It was clear that their conversation wasn't meant to be interrupted.

"I should go," Meoro said, feeling the weight of his words hang in the air. "But I... I wanted you to know, July. I'm not like everyone else."

Her gaze flicked up to meet his, and this time, there was a flicker of something deeper in her eyes. "What do you mean?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

Meoro stepped closer, lowering his voice so only she could hear. "I know who I am, and I know what people expect of me. But that doesn't mean I'm bound to that life." He paused, watching her closely. "I'm not like them. I don't want to be."

There was a brief silence between them, filled only by the distant sounds of the marketplace. It was as if the world had fallen away, leaving just the two of them, their words hanging in the air. But then, July took a step back, her expression changing, her walls coming back up.

"I don't know what you want from me, Meoro," she said, her voice suddenly guarded. "I'm just a girl trying to survive. I can't afford distractions. I can't afford dreams that won't come true."

The weight of her words hit him hard, like a cold splash of water. He had known, deep down, that this would be difficult—that the differences between them were not just of class, but of destiny itself. She was right. She couldn't afford to dream, to entertain anything that would pull her away from the harsh reality of her life. And yet, the longing in her eyes—the same longing he had seen in himself—made him wonder if she, too, wished for something more.

"I don't want to be a distraction," Meoro said, his voice steady despite the storm inside him. "I just want to know you. To understand what it is about you that makes me feel... alive."

Her eyes softened for the briefest of moments, but the flicker of vulnerability was quickly hidden behind a mask of resolve. She shook her head, stepping away from him.

“You don’t understand,” she said softly, almost to herself. “I can’t be what you want me to be. I’m not a part of your world.”

And with that, she turned away, leaving Meoro standing in the fading twilight, alone once again.

As he watched her disappear into the crowd, a new feeling settled within him. He had expected her to turn away, expected her to close herself off—but he hadn’t anticipated how deeply it would hurt. The reality of their separation, the barrier between them, felt more suffocating than ever. And yet, despite everything, Meoro knew one thing for certain: he couldn’t give her up. Not now, not after seeing what was between them.

The divide between their worlds was vast, but it was a divide he was willing to cross. For the first time, he truly understood what it meant to be torn between two worlds—his duty, his family, his future—and the pull of a love that could never be. The question now was whether he could survive the choice that lay ahead.



## Chapter 4: The Forces That Pull Us Apart

The days that followed their brief and painful encounter in the marketplace weighed heavily on Meoro's mind. Each morning, the rising sun brought with it the inevitable: the duties of his family, the expectations of his social standing, the endless parade of those who sought his attention. The world he had once inhabited with ease now felt suffocating, as if each step was a heavy chain pulling him further away from something he couldn't explain—something he couldn't ignore.

July.

The thought of her was always there, in the quietest moments, in the spaces between words at dinner or in the cold silence of his chambers at night. The memory of her, of her guarded eyes, the softness of her voice, and the way she had seemed so distant, yet so incredibly close, haunted him. Meoro knew that he was being reckless, that there were things in this world that simply couldn't be, but none of it seemed to matter when he thought about her. She had become the center of his thoughts, the compass that pulled him through every waking hour, and it terrified him.

His father, Lord Althior, noticed the change in his son. Meoro was no longer the sharp, calculating heir he had once been, someone who knew how to navigate the complicated dance of power. Instead, he seemed distracted, his mind often drifting in the middle of conversations, his eyes staring out windows as though searching for something—or someone—he could never reach.

One evening, after a particularly tense meeting with a group of noblemen, Lord Althior called Meoro into his study. The large, dimly lit room was filled with the scent of aged leather and ink, the walls lined with shelves of books that seemed to hold the weight of generations. His father sat behind a heavy wooden desk, the lines of his face carved with years of authority, of power, of control.

"Sit, son," Lord Althior said, his voice commanding. "We need to talk."

Meoro sat, his heart heavy, though he already knew the subject of their conversation. It had been coming for days, perhaps even weeks. His father had always been perceptive—too perceptive.

"I've been watching you, Meoro," Lord Althior continued, leaning forward slightly, his piercing eyes narrowing. "You've been distracted. Your mind is elsewhere, and I have to wonder why."

Meoro hesitated, unsure of how to respond. Should he admit it? Should he tell his father that he had been thinking about a girl—someone who was not from their world, who couldn't possibly be a part of it? The thought seemed ridiculous even as it crossed his mind.

"Is this about the politics of the court?" Lord Althior pressed. "Because if you're not ready to take the reins, I will have to consider other options. The family business—our name—cannot wait for you to figure things out."

Meoro's pulse quickened at his father's words, but he couldn't bring himself to speak. The words were trapped, caught between his desire for independence and the crushing weight of his family's expectations. Finally, he spoke, his voice barely above a whisper.

"It's not about the politics, father," he said quietly. "It's... something else. Someone else."

Lord Althior raised an eyebrow, his expression unreadable. "Someone else? What do you mean?"

Meoro's throat tightened. "It's a distraction, father. I know it is. But I can't stop thinking about her."

His father's gaze grew colder. "Her?" he repeated, as though the very idea of a woman occupying his son's thoughts was an insult.

"Her name is July," Meoro continued, his voice shaking slightly despite his best efforts to remain composed. "She's not from our world. She's a commoner. But there's something about her, something that makes me feel... alive."

Lord Althior stood abruptly, his chair scraping harshly against the stone floor. "Alive? You're wasting your time on someone who can never be yours. Do you understand the gravity of this, Meoro? The family name, the legacy we've built, is at stake. This—this fantasy—is a dangerous game."

Meoro stood as well, the intensity of his father's anger hitting him like a cold wave. "You don't understand. I know who I am. But I'm not who you want me to be." His voice was barely controlled, the words spilling out before he could stop them. "I don't want to live a life of endless obligation. I don't want to be a puppet to your name, to your power. I want to make my own choices."

"Enough," Lord Althior snapped. "You're not a child anymore, Meoro. The sooner you understand that, the better. There is no room in this world for—" he paused, searching for the right word, "—for distractions. There is only duty. The sooner you accept that, the sooner you will find peace."

A silence hung in the room, thick with tension. Meoro stood still, his hands clenched into fists at his sides. This was what it had always been about. Duty. The expectations that came with his birth. His father could never understand.

"You will marry who I choose," Lord Althior continued, his voice colder now. "You will do your part for the family, and you will not question it."

The finality in his father's voice made Meoro's stomach churn. But he held his ground, the words slipping from his lips before he could stop them.

"I don't know if I can live that life anymore."

His father's eyes darkened. "Then you're choosing a path that will lead to ruin. If you follow this, you will lose everything. And I won't have you dragging this family into disgrace."

Meoro's heart pounded, the weight of his father's words sinking deep into him. But even as the terror of losing everything threatened to overtake him, there was something else rising in his chest: defiance. The love he felt for July, the pull between them, was not something that could be easily erased. Not now. Not ever.

That night, after the conversation with his father, Meoro couldn't sleep. His mind was a storm of conflicting emotions—guilt, anger, fear, and longing. He knew what was at stake. His family's name. His future. But he couldn't bring himself to care. The power, the riches, the control—they all seemed so distant now, as if they belonged to someone else.

In his heart, he had already made his choice, even though he wasn't sure what it would cost him.

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Meanwhile, far from the opulence of Meoro's world, July's life was beginning to take a darker turn. She had always known that survival meant keeping her head down, working long hours, and never stepping outside the boundaries of her place. But as the days went on, she couldn't escape the thoughts of him. Of Meoro.

She knew their worlds were too different. She knew the consequences of crossing those lines. And yet, her heart betrayed her, longing for something she could never have. She couldn't afford this kind of desire. She had to stay focused on the things that mattered—her family, her work, the constant struggle to make ends meet.

But there were whispers in the air—rumors of a betrothal arranged for a nobleman. It was the kind of thing that happened every day, the politics of their world, where even a glance from someone of his status could ruin her. She couldn't imagine what might happen if anyone discovered the spark between them. The consequences would be far more than her family could bear.

And so, she buried the thought of him, just as she had buried everything else—deep within her heart, where it would hurt the most.

## Chapter 5: The Fractured Path

The days after Meoro's confrontation with his father felt like a blur, a haze of thoughts and decisions that swirled around him with no clear resolution. Each time he stepped into his father's shadow, he felt the weight of duty pressing down on him, each breath heavier than the last. Lord Althior's words haunted him: "If you follow this, you will lose everything."

But how could he return to a life that now seemed meaningless? His heart was no longer tethered to the cold, calculating world of politics and power that had once defined him. It was tied to something far more elusive, far more dangerous. It was tied to July.

The thought of her consumed him, every waking moment filled with her image—the way her hair had caught the sunlight, the way her eyes had softened for just a moment before she turned away. His love for her was both a gift and a curse, pulling him away from the world he knew but also igniting a spark within him he never thought possible. He had never felt alive the way he did when he thought of her, when he imagined what might be.

But that same passion was a source of torment. He knew that his love for her would never be accepted, never be understood by those who mattered most. His world and hers were separated by a chasm too deep to bridge. She was a commoner. A servant of sorts, bound to the lower echelons of society. And he—he was a man born to rule, to inherit titles and lands, to shape the future of his family. How could he choose her? How could he throw it all away?

Meoro didn't know. But what he did know was that every moment without her felt like an eternity. Each day felt like a battle between what his heart craved and what his destiny demanded.

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Across the city, July's life was a mirror of its usual monotony, each day indistinguishable from the last. She awoke before the sun, her hands rough from years of hard work, her mind always focused on survival. The weight of her family's needs hung over her like a shadow, a constant reminder of the burden she carried. She had long learned how to hide her dreams, bury them beneath the harsh realities of her world.

But the memory of Meoro lingered.

Each time she closed her eyes, she could see him—his dark eyes, his kind smile, the way he had stood there in the marketplace as though he were waiting for her. But she couldn't afford to indulge such thoughts. She couldn't risk it. Love, for people like her, was nothing more than a cruel illusion. The noblemen and women who lived in the grand estates above her—those like Meoro—would never understand the depths of her life, the sacrifice that had become second nature to her. They would never understand the loneliness that came with being trapped by circumstances beyond your control.

It wasn't just the difference in social status that kept her from him. It was the power they wielded, the expectations that weighed on him like an iron shackle. The last thing July wanted was to become another distraction for a man who had too much to lose.

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Yet, despite her resolve, the whispers of Meoro's name still reached her. She heard it in the quiet corners of the marketplace when the older women spoke of the young nobleman who was in the city again. They talked of him with reverence, of how he might soon marry into another powerful family, strengthening the bloodlines that governed the city. She had heard the rumors of his betrothal to a woman of noble birth, a union that would secure the future of the House of Althior for generations to come.

Each word felt like a needle to her heart, but she pressed on, trying to ignore the growing ache in her chest. She would not allow herself to entertain the thought of him again, to fall into that dangerous pit of yearning. She had worked too hard to stay invisible in this world. To have any hope was to invite ruin.

One afternoon, as she was walking home from the market with a basket of herbs and fruit, she passed through the city's quieter district. Her eyes were downcast, as they often were, focusing on the street ahead of her. That was when she heard a voice call her name.

"July?"

She stopped in her tracks, her heart leaping in her chest. Slowly, she turned. Meoro was standing a few steps away, his dark hair ruffling in the breeze, his eyes locked on her with an intensity she hadn't expected.

"Meoro," she said, her voice faltering. She forced herself to keep her composure, to avoid looking too closely at him. The memories, the confusion, the ache—they were all threatening to bubble up to the surface.

"I couldn't stop thinking about you," he said, stepping closer. "I know this is wrong, but I had to see you again."

July's heart hammered in her chest. She wanted to run, to retreat back into the safety of her world, to bury herself in the routine of her life where nothing could hurt her. But her feet remained rooted to the ground.

"I don't think you understand, Meoro," she said, her voice trembling. "This... whatever this is between us, it can't happen."

He took another step toward her, his expression desperate. "I know who I am, July. I know what's expected of me. But I also know that I can't ignore how I feel about you. I can't keep pretending that this isn't real."

July took a deep breath, her hands trembling as she tightened her grip on the basket in her arms. "You don't understand," she said again, her voice barely above a whisper. "You can't afford to feel this way. You don't know what it would cost you. The world you live in—the power, the wealth, the family—everything you've been raised to inherit—it would all be lost if anyone discovered you were involved with someone like me. I'm just... I'm just a commoner."

Meoro reached out, his fingers brushing the edge of her sleeve. "I don't care about that," he said fiercely. "I don't care about any of that."

She stepped back, shaking her head. "You think you don't care, but you do. You have a future to secure, a duty to your family, a life that has already been chosen for you. And I—I'm nothing more than a fleeting thought, a passing fancy. You will move on, Meoro. You will find someone who is worthy of you, and I will fade into the background like I always have."

Tears welled in her eyes, but she refused to let them fall. "Please," she whispered, turning away. "Don't make this harder than it already is."

Before he could respond, she walked away quickly, her heart shattering with every step. The thought of what might have been felt like a dream slipping through her fingers.

## Chapter 6: The Bitter Farewell

The weight of the city's silence pressed on Meoro's chest like a crushing storm. He had watched July walk away from him for what seemed like an eternity, her figure growing smaller in the fading light of the day, until she had disappeared completely. In that moment, something inside him broke—a part of him that he hadn't realized existed, a part of him that had been untouched by his family's wealth, his lineage, and the expectations that had always defined him. He had never known how fragile it could be to love someone so fiercely, so desperately, and yet know that it could never be.

He stood there for what felt like hours, unable to move, his mind tangled in a web of confusion. He could still hear her words echoing in his ears. "You will move on. You will find someone who is worthy of you."

And the hardest truth of all—"I'm nothing more than a fleeting thought, a passing fancy."

Those words haunted him as he turned away, the chasm between them widening with each passing moment. The reality of their situation was undeniable. She was right. He was bound by his family, by the bloodline that demanded so much of him. His destiny had already been written for him, a path set before his feet since the day he was born.

But that didn't stop the ache. That didn't erase the fact that his heart was still tethered to her, to the girl with the haunted eyes who had captured him in a way that no one else ever could.

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Back at the estate, Meoro could not escape the growing tension in his chest. He knew he had to face his father—he had to return to the world of titles, estates, and power—but he felt more alone than ever. His mind drifted to the vision of July, her face etched into his memory like a portrait he couldn't remove, no matter how hard he tried.

That night, the silence in the house seemed endless. Lord Althior had gone to bed early, as usual, his thoughts likely focused on the ongoing political negotiations that were slowly but surely carving a future for his son—whether Meoro wanted it or not.

The sound of Meoro's footsteps echoed through the cold corridors as he paced back and forth in his chambers. He was trapped between two worlds, unable to escape either. In his heart, he knew he had to make a choice, and that choice would come at the cost of everything he had ever known.

His fingers clenched into fists as he thought of his father's words: *You will marry who I choose*. And the anger flared inside him once more, the anger that had been building ever since that fateful day in the marketplace when he first saw July.

Meoro was not a man who had ever backed down from his duties. But now, it wasn't just about duty—it was about who he had become. He could no longer deny what his heart had chosen. He was done living in the shadow of his father's ambitions. He had made his decision, even if it meant losing everything.

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The next morning, as dawn crept over the horizon, Meoro left the estate in silence. He gathered only what he could carry—his most treasured possessions—and made his way to the one place he knew he could find solace: the little village where July lived.

It wasn't long before he arrived at the familiar path, the one that led to her small cottage. His pulse quickened as he drew closer, and the weight in his chest grew heavier with each step. He knew he was risking everything—his family's wrath, his place in society, his future—but nothing else mattered.

When he arrived at her door, he hesitated for a moment, wondering if this was truly the right thing to do. What if she refused him? What if she didn't want him to ruin her life too? But then he remembered the way she had looked at him, the way her eyes had softened just for him, if only for a moment.

He knocked softly, the sound almost imperceptible in the quiet morning air.

The door creaked open, and there she stood—her face pale, her eyes wide with surprise. She looked as if she had been expecting him in a way she hadn't yet admitted to herself.

"Meoro," she whispered, her voice trembling.

"I'm sorry," he said, his voice hoarse. "I know I shouldn't have come. But I couldn't stay away. I've made my decision, July. I can't be who I was supposed to be. Not without you."

Her eyes searched his face, her expression unreadable. "You don't understand," she said softly, almost as though she were trying to convince herself more than him. "You can't throw everything away. You're... you're Meoro. You're meant for so much more than this. Your family won't forgive you. They'll—"

"I don't care," he interrupted gently, stepping closer. "I don't care about the power, or the titles, or the money. I care about you, July. I've thought about nothing but you since the day we met. I can't live without you."

She closed her eyes, as though the weight of his words was too much to bear. When she opened them again, there was a softness in them that he hadn't seen before—a fleeting hope, a quiet surrender.

"You're willing to leave it all behind?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

"Yes," he said, his voice resolute. "I'm willing to leave it all behind for you. I've made my choice, July. You're the only future I want."

Tears welled in her eyes as she stepped back, allowing him inside. "I don't want to be the one to hold you back, Meoro. I don't want to destroy your future."

"You're not holding me back," he said firmly. "I'm choosing my future with you. We'll build it together, no matter what comes."



For the first time, Meoro felt as though he had found a path forward. No longer was he the heir to an empire he never wanted, no longer was he the dutiful son expected to conform. He was free. And it was a freedom born of love—of a love that had fought against every obstacle, against every force that sought to tear them apart.

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Later that day, they walked away from the village, side by side, leaving behind everything they had once known. Meoro's heart pounded in his chest, not out of fear, but out of exhilaration. For the first time in his life, he felt alive—alive in a way that he had never imagined possible.

But their journey would not be easy. They knew there would be consequences. His family would never accept their union. Lord Althior would stop at nothing to reclaim his son. But Meoro and July had made their choice. They had chosen each other, and that was enough.

As they moved away from the city and into the unknown, they did so with a sense of freedom—freedom that came not from wealth or titles, but from love, a love that had defied all odds and remained unbroken.

And while the world may have tried to tear them apart, their love would remain. Unseen, perhaps, by the eyes of society, but eternal in its quiet, steadfast strength.

Together, they walked into a future that was uncertain but full of possibility. And for the first time in their lives, they were free.

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**End.**