

Chapter 46

Chapter 46 dives deeper into the personal and professional complexities of Evelyn's life, particularly regarding her infamous role in a film that both catapulted her career and nearly destroyed her reputation. Despite the movie being a commercial success, the impact it had on Evelyn's public image was far from positive. Her portrayal of a woman with unapologetic sexual desires ignited public outrage, especially given the film's explicit nature and its controversial X rating. The backlash was swift and brutal, with critics labeling her as promiscuous, while ignoring the brilliance of her performance. The public's reaction to her role as Patricia—who boldly expressed her sexual desires—was seen as scandalous and morally offensive to many, even though the role itself was groundbreaking and powerful. Evelyn found herself at the center of a moral panic, where the boundaries of art and personal integrity were blurred, and she became a scapegoat for society's discomfort with female sexual empowerment.

In spite of the film's massive success, Evelyn explains how this controversy cost her more than just an Oscar nomination—it robbed her of her dignity in the eyes of many. Don Adler, a man with a notorious reputation, won the Oscar for his performance, while Evelyn was overlooked, despite delivering what many considered an exceptional performance. This injustice stung deeply for Evelyn, especially since she knew how groundbreaking her portrayal was. Yet, instead of being applauded for pushing boundaries, she was condemned and reduced to a stereotype of the "sexpot" that the media could easily vilify. Her portrayal of a woman who openly desired sex became a point of fixation for the public, while her true acting skill and dedication to the role were ignored. The hypocrisy of the situation—where the same people who clamored to see the film were the ones chastising her for it—was something Evelyn could never fully reconcile.

The conversation turns inward as Evelyn reflects on the personal costs of her career, especially in her relationship with Celia. She admits, with deep regret, that her obsession with fame and the sacrifices she made for her career ultimately drove a wedge between her and the woman she loved. Evelyn's bisexuality, often sensationalized by the press, was not the source of their breakup, though it played a role in the complexity of their relationship. The true issue, Evelyn acknowledges, was her inability to fully commit to Celia, as she balanced her love for her with an insatiable hunger for success. She used her relationships with men as stepping stones, leveraging her sexuality to advance in the industry, while keeping her true desires—those for Celia—locked away. This disloyalty, Evelyn recognizes, was not one of physical infidelity, but emotional betrayal. She used her body to gain power, not realizing that by doing so, she was distancing herself from the one person who truly understood her.

Evelyn admits to using her body in ways that felt empowering in the moment but ultimately left her feeling empty and regretful. She acknowledges that, at the time, using her sexuality was the only currency she had, and she didn't know how to stop once it had become a means to an end. She slept with men like Mick to protect her career, making choices that, in retrospect, she realizes were selfish and short-sighted. She slept with Harry because she wanted a child, thinking that her marriage to Celia would be scrutinized if they adopted. These decisions, she confesses, were made with a sense of urgency and fear that she might lose everything she had worked so hard to achieve. The tragedy, Evelyn says, is that she continued to use her body even after she no longer needed to. Instead of stepping away from this behavior, she kept using it, even knowing it would hurt Celia and ultimately lead to the unraveling of their relationship.

The guilt Evelyn carries isn't just about the choices she made with men; it's about how those choices affected Celia, the woman who truly held her heart. She deeply regrets how her selfishness made Celia complicit in her actions, forcing her to approve of decisions that were harmful to their relationship. The weight of this realization is

profound: Celia may have left her in anger, but it was the culmination of years of small betrayals and emotional neglect that led to the final break. Evelyn's actions, while born out of fear and ambition, left wounds too deep to heal, even though she never physically cheated on Celia. Her greatest sorrow is that she couldn't fully give herself to Celia, couldn't honor their love the way she should have. Instead, she used her body for everything except the one thing it was meant for: true intimacy with the person she loved most.

In her reflections, Evelyn admits that her tragedy was not just about fame, but about the choices she made at the expense of her relationship. She used her sexuality for power, for protection, and for validation, all while knowing deep down that it was hurting the one person who had always been there for her. This internal conflict, her desire for success juxtaposed with her need for love, ultimately destroyed what could have been the most meaningful relationship of her life. The complexity of her feelings—her love for Celia, her ambition, and her fear of losing everything—created a tragic cycle that she couldn't break. It wasn't just the men she slept with or the roles she played that caused the pain; it was the way she neglected the emotional truth of who she was and who she loved. In the end, Evelyn's true tragedy is not her fame or her sexuality, but the emotional distance she allowed to grow between herself and Celia, and the irreparable damage that distance caused to their love.