

You'll Fall for Me, Today or Tomorrow

Chapter 31 - 35

Hearing this, Clarissa was so frightened that she nearly turned and ran out of the room immediately.

Shermaine's eyes grew even colder. "Matt, do the both of you know each other?"

Clarissa coughed nervously. "I didn't think you would remember me, Mr. Tyson. Ms. Smallwood, I'm friends with Ellie. I've met Mr. Tyson a few times before in D City."

Clarissa was calm and collected as she explained this to Shermaine.

However, Ryler knew Clarissa like the palm of his hand. He could see that her nails were digging into her palms so hard that her fingers had turned white.

From what she said, it sounded as though she and Matthew Tyson were merely acquaintances.

During the press conference last time, Ryler had bumped into Matthew in the elevator. He remembered the strange expression in Matthew's eyes as he looked over at Ryler—and it wasn't because Ryler was a celebrity.

He had looked at Ryler as though he was a threat—a rival.

Thinking about it, he realized that it was probably because of Clarissa.

However, what sort of relationship did Clare share with Mr. Tyson?

"Ellie's friend, you say?"

Shermaine nodded slowly, as though she were deliberating whether to believe Clarissa or not. When she looked at Clarissa, there was still a hint of iciness in her eyes.

Shermaine turned and looked at Matthew with a gentle smile. "Matt, it's been a long time since I saw Ellie. Is it true that she has opened her own studio? She asked me to be the

spokesperson for her new company. Dear me, she might start pestering me again once I return to D City! Do you remember how she used to tag along everywhere with us when we were children..."

Shermaine steered the conversation to a topic that obviously excluded Clarissa. She stood next to them awkwardly, unsure of what to do.

Clarissa smiled uncomfortably and placed the cup back in front of Ryler. She snuck a look at him, indicating that it was best if she left first.

This time, Matthew didn't try to stop her from leaving. However, as his dark eyes grazed over Clarissa again, a dark look appeared on Shermaine's face. She had been observing him closely since just now.

"Matt, why don't we get going first? I'm feeling a little sick. Do you mind driving me home?"

In a low voice, Matthew replied, "Alright."

The two of them got up to leave, and everyone rose to send them off. Shermaine looped her hand around Matthew's arm again, and they left the room looking very affectionate.

When they finally got into Matthew's car, Shermaine realized that Matthew was cold and aloof. He seemed completely different from how he had been back in the restaurant. Actually, this standoffish attitude was the one with which he usually regarded her.

Cold, indifferent, and aloof—Matthew seemed even more frightening than he usually was. Shermaine didn't dare to open her mouth.

Shermaine had known him for more than twenty years, and she had loved him for the same amount of time. However, she still had to tiptoe around Matthew as though she were afraid of him.

Today, she had been very happy indeed. Matthew probably had some feelings for her—otherwise, why would he make the trip down to visit her?

"Matt, I'm so happy today. If you had told me you were going to come over earlier, I would have canceled filming today to meet you!"

She leaned even closer to him, trying to snuggle against his chest. However, Matthew shoved her away roughly.

His voice was cold as he said, "I'm here for work matters."

He hadn't come here to visit her at all.

Shermaine's smile froze on her face as she fell quiet immediately.

She suddenly recalled something and asked timidly, "Matt, you know Ms. Quigley, that screenwriter, don't you? She's really pretty. With that face of hers, she's bound to succeed in the entertainment industry if she gives it a go."

Matthew refused to respond to her comment. He shut his eyes and leaned back against his seat to rest.

Shermaine didn't dare to say anything more. Instead, she gazed at Matthew's defined side profile, her eyes filled with foolish love.

The car pulled up outside Shermaine's hotel. She felt a little sad to leave Matthew just like that.

"Matt, it's still early, isn't it? Why don't you come upstairs and rest for a while?"

Matthew gazed at her with his dark eyes. His gaze was so intense that Shermaine started to feel a little intimidated.

Tucking a loose strand of hair behind her ear, she smiled and asked, "Matt, what are you staring at?"

Matt finally looked away. "No, thanks. You should go."

Shermaine felt a little disappointed, but she threw one last smile at Matthew before obeying his orders. However, she couldn't help but turn around to look at him every few steps.

Of course, this little interaction was captured by the paparazzi, who had stationed themselves in front of the hotel a long time ago. Although Shermaine and Matthew hadn't done anything intimate, this was enough for tomorrow's tabloid headlines.

Shermaine returned to her room. A while later, her manager, Lizzie, popped by.

“Shermaine, are you going to carry on like this?”

Lizzie looked a little perturbed. Shermaine yanked her accessories off and slammed them down on her vanity table angrily.

“What about it? Keep your nose out of my private life.”

Lizzie swallowed her dissatisfaction with much difficulty, although the expression on her face looked rather nasty.

Shermaine didn't care how she felt. She turned to Lizzie and demanded, “Hey, does that screenwriter have a sugar daddy?”

“How—how's that possible? Ms. Quigley is a screenwriter. Many directors offered to buy the rights to her original works because of how well they were written. She's been gaining quite a lot of attention lately, but I didn't expect her to be so beautiful.”

“Exactly. What a pity that she doesn't have a sugar daddy.”

“Shermaine, what do you mean by that?”

“Haha...nothing. Go and investigate her family background for me.”

“Alright. But what do you want that information for?”

“Just go and look it up for me! Stop asking me so many questions!” Shermaine roared. Lizzie huffed and turned to leave the room.

Just as she reached the door, Shermaine said blandly, “Oh, by the way, fire that assistant for me and get a new one.”

Lizzie was used to this scenario, so she didn't ask any questions. Shermaine had changed her assistants so many times that it was quite obvious the problem lay with Shermaine herself.

“Got it. I'll leave first, then.”

When Lizzie left, Shermaine sat in front of her table and thought for a while. She made a call to someone, but that person hung up on her immediately.

Shermaine's face took on an expression of displeasure. She flung the phone against the wall viciously and hissed, "Just you wait, Ellie Tyson!"

Meanwhile, Ellie, who was being cursed out by Shermaine, was on a video call with Clarissa.

"Who was that? You didn't even pick up the phone before hanging up on her."

Ellie sniffed with contempt. "The most annoying woman I've ever known, that's who. That was Shermaine Smallwood. By the way, I was just going to ask you—is it true that she's the female lead for your new drama?"

"Yes."

"Blow! I absolutely adore that female lead in your novel. Getting her to act the role of the female lead has got to be the worst decision the directors have ever made. I'm going to pester my Uncle Matt about this. Why did it have to be that witch of all people?"

"How did you know your uncle's company is sponsoring this drama?"

"I didn't know about that before, but I figured it out after Shermaine's scandal. Uncle Matt probably recommended her as the female lead in order to boost her popularity. The frustrating thing is that it's probably going to work because of the number of fans you have. Ugh! What a mess."

Ellie continued complaining, but Clarissa didn't respond at all.

"Clare? Clare? What's with you? What are you thinking about?"

Clarissa forced a smile onto her face and said, "They're in a relationship, aren't they? Of course your uncle would support her that way."

Ellie snorted loudly. "What utter rubbish! Uncle Matt doesn't even like her at all—our families joked about a marriage pact between them when they were still toddlers, that's all. However, since he's very reluctant to have anything to do with her now, this entire matter has been called off. Otherwise, my grandmother would have accepted Shermaine into our family long

ago. However, that witch just doesn't know when she's not wanted—her skin is thicker than the roof of a house! Do you know she keeps acting like she's my aunt? How disgusting.”

Clarissa smiled wanly. “Well, your uncle still hasn't rejected her outright, hasn't he? He's probably just bad at expressing himself.”

“Ha! If he ever intends to marry her, I'll be the first one to oppose their union!”

Clarissa laughed and shook her head. Just as she was going to say something, someone knocked on her door.

She felt a little stunned. She hung up the video call immediately and went to open the door.

The moment she saw who was standing outside, she lunged to close the door immediately. However, Matthew stretched out a hand to stop her. As the door swung open again, Clarissa stumbled backward, and Matthew took the opportunity to stride into the room, kicking the door shut behind him.

Clarissa found herself being pressed against the wall. As Matthew leaned even closer to her, she found that she wasn't able to move her limbs at all.

She lifted her head to gaze angrily at him. Her beautiful eyes were filled with sparks of fury.

“Matthew, let go of me.”

Matthew had already been annoyed at Clarissa's aloof attitude towards him for the past few days.

Tonight, when he saw how she pretended as though she didn't recognize him and flirted with that Ryler guy instead, he had to grit his teeth to prevent himself from exploding.

At first, he had decided to let her off because she was just a weak woman.

However, this woman had somehow managed to find her way deep inside his heart. If he didn't discipline her now, he wouldn't be able to get rid of that ball of fire within him.

Seeing how much Clarissa resembled an angry cat, Matthew suddenly found the entire situation rather amusing.

He tightened his grip on her thrashing arm and grabbed hold of her chin, leaning in towards her as he did.

“You’ve become so brave, haven’t you? Look how impolite you are these days.”

“Well, do you think you’re very polite, then? How dare you barge into my room in the middle of the night and...”

Clarissa’s face reddened slightly. After a short pause, she finished lamely, “...you’re the one with no manners.”

“Yeah, well, I can be even more impolite. Want to have a taste of it?”

Clarissa’s heart sank a little. “No, I really don’t...hmm!”

He didn’t care if she wanted to or not!

Matthew pressed a kiss to her lips, preventing her from verbalizing the curses she was just about to spew out at him. She thrashed even more wildly, looking like a cat that was being tossed about by a maniac.

When he tasted how sweet her lips were, Matthew started to kiss her even more intensely, taking the opportunity to release the complicated emotions he had kept pent up for the past few days.

As he pressed her against his chest, Matthew wrapped an arm around her and hugged her even more tightly. His kisses fell on her face even more viciously.

A long while later, Clarissa leaned her forehead against his shoulder, her cheeks completely scarlet as she tried to breathe properly again. Meanwhile, Matthew’s hand raked over her body lightly, as though he was very satisfied.

However, this warm, gentle atmosphere didn’t last very long.

Coming back to her senses quickly, Clarissa shoved him away from herself.

She turned around and walked straight into the room. As she straightened out her messy clothes, she noticed that her skin was still tingling with the heat of Matthew’s body. She suddenly felt her cheeks warm with embarrassment, as her heart raced even faster.

However, she couldn't give in to him just like that.

Behind her, Matthew didn't try to touch her again. Instead, he tugged at his tie and walked into the room leisurely, his dark eyes watching the changing expressions on Clarissa's face.

He lit a cigarette for himself and placed it between his lips, his eyes smoldering slightly. After Clarissa seemed to have calmed down a little, he finally opened his mouth and said in a slightly mocking tone, "Ms. Quigley, how did you like my manner?"

"You..."

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Chapter 32

At his question, Clarissa froze. Everything she had planned to say got lodged in her throat unexpectedly.

How had she never realized how shameless this man was?

He carried that monk-like look of extreme calm everywhere he went. However, when it came to her, he felt it appropriate to unleash his brutish nature.

"Uncle Matthew, Mr. Tyson, what are you trying to do?"

Matthew's lips curled into a smile. His eyes flickered with amusement, but that disappeared too quickly for Clarissa to notice.

However, as he lazed around in his chair, he seemed to be in a rather good mood.

He swept another look at Clarissa's body. She was wearing a set of short pajamas—he wished he had taken the chance to caress her legs more just now.

His fingers shifted slightly as his eyes took on a steely glint, making Clarissa feel extremely uneasy.

She sat down on the sofa opposite him, waiting for him to give her an explanation.

Indeed, after he blew out a ring of smoke, he said in a low voice, "You know exactly what I'm trying to do."

Clarissa felt a wave of anger rise in her again. What sort of answer was that?

She retorted stubbornly, "No, I really don't."

"Oh, is that so? Why don't I show you again..."

The moment he said this, Clarissa jumped up and ran into another corner of the room, putting as much distance between them as she could. She was afraid that he might actually make good on his threat.

Angrily, she said, "You...hold up!"

Matthew raised an eyebrow and gazed at her intently.

Clarissa frowned. Suspicion and displeasure were written all over her little face.

"I've told you this before—we're not compatible with each other. Not only are we too far apart in age, but we have a different perspective on love too. You already have the beautiful Shermaine Smallwood, so who am I to you? I can't be bothered to play games with you anymore—I never did. To put it simply for you, Matthew, I absolutely refuse to be a third party to your relationship. I will not be your mistress."

By the time she finished speaking, her expression had turned cold and aloof again.

She gazed disdainfully at the man before her. To think she had respected him so much before! He had turned out to be nothing more than a lustful jerk.

Were all rich men as hard to satisfy as him? Matthew already had the most beautiful woman in D City, but he seemed to be combing the streets for a mistress, too.

Clarissa didn't understand him, but she didn't really want to, anyway.

Aside from disdain, her expression now took on shades of annoyance and disgust.

Matthew's eyes narrowed into a thin line as he motioned her over with his fingers. However, Clarissa shook her head in refusal.

Did he think she was a dog or something? How could he try and call her over in that demeaning way?

Matthew's eyes darkened as he realized that they were locked in a stalemate.

"Is this because of Shermaine?"

"I'm not going to answer that. Just know that I will never submit to you."

Never submit to him?

By her logic, Matthew was the oppressor, and she was oppressed.

"Trust me, I'm not in a relationship with Shermaine. I just know her because our families are on good terms," Matthew explained.

However, Clarissa pursed her lips in annoyance. "Your families arranged a marriage between the two of you when you were kids. What sort of relationship do you have with her, then?"

Matthew smiled deviously. "Are you jealous?"

"Jealous? Ha, you wish! I just..."

At that moment, she met Matthew's dark eyes. Clarissa shivered and nearly bit down on her own tongue by accident. In the end, she decided to keep those awful words to herself.

Matthew continued to explain. "By the time she was born, I was already twelve years old. My relatives teased me all because I held her for a few seconds, that's all. I wouldn't call it an arranged marriage. Anyway, I'm much too old compared to her."

Matthew regretted saying this almost as soon as he did.

As expected, Clarissa noticed his slip as well. She laughed mockingly and said, "Haha, what a coincidence! I'm the same age as Shermaine, in case you haven't noticed."

Matthew looked a little embarrassed. He put out the cigarette and fell silent.

Clarissa couldn't help but feel that, cold as he was, Matthew was rather amusing to watch right now.

However, she didn't dare to laugh. All she wanted was for him to leave right now and let her off the hook.

"You said it yourself! Our age gap is way too big."

I didn't say it, you did!

"So I think it's best if you leave now."

Matthew stood up. However, he didn't turn to leave—instead, he walked even closer to her, cornering her straight into his arms.

Clarissa looked like a prey surrounded by a hungry pack of wolves. Left without a way to escape, she had no choice but to twist her neck away as a last line of defense.

"You...don't you dare come over, or I'm going to scream..."

Matthew burst into laughter at the expression on her face.

"Go on, scream."

Clarissa suddenly remembered that this cliched phrase that always appeared in the movies. Scream as much as you like, no one is going to hear you anyway.

Abruptly, her anxiety disappeared, and she suddenly wanted to laugh instead.

Her lips twitched. She looked up and tried to say something, but Matthew quickly pressed his lips against hers. However, he didn't kiss her deeply this time—instead, he grazed his lips gently against hers, growling softly as he did.

"I'm not going anywhere. Tonight, I'm going to stay right here in your room."

"You can't do that...hmm!"

He pressed his lips against hers again before she could protest.

Clarissa felt as though she was getting more light-headed by the minute. As Matthew carried her over to the bed, she felt as though she might faint.

However, Matthew got up immediately. Feeling a sudden rush of cold, Clarissa looked up to realize that he had disappeared into the bathroom. She buried her head in her pillow and threw herself around the bed in humiliation, wishing that she could die right now.

How could she ever look him in the face again after today? She had insisted on chasing him away, but one kiss from him had made her forget her previous convictions almost immediately.

Clarissa hated herself to death.

Most of all, however, she hated that guy who was currently showering in her bathroom.

He had already made up his mind to sleep with her that night. Was she supposed to find another room for herself?

Just as she was going to flee the room, there was a knock on the door.

Clarissa jumped in shock and nearly rolled off the bed. Feeling rather panicked, she wondered if she should open the door to the person standing outside.

However, the person seemed to have a great deal of patience. After a while, they knocked loudly on the door again.

Clarissa walked over to the door and cracked it open slowly.

“You...”

Donnie was standing outside with a bland smile on his face and a bag of clothes in his arms.

“Ms. Quigley, these are Mr. Tyson’s clothes.”

Clarissa denied his presence immediately. “What—what do you mean? Mr. Tyson isn’t in my room at all. You—you must have sent it to the wrong place. Take it somewhere else, please...”

However, Donnie continued to smile gently at her. He pressed the bag of clothes into her arms.

“Mr. Sheldon, you’re completely mistaken. Your boss isn’t in my room...”

Here, an arm reached around her and grabbed the bag of clothes from her hands.

Donnie would never forget the expression on Clarissa’s face for as long as he lived.

Holding back his laughter, he shot a look at Mr. Tyson and Clarissa.

Matthew ordered, “Wait for me downstairs at six o’clock tomorrow morning.”

“Yes, Mr. Tyson.”

Donnie turned around and left. Behind him, Clarissa looked as though she had been caught in the act. Feeling rather guilty, she muttered, “You can stay here for tonight. I’ll find another room for myself...”

With a loud bang, the door shut behind her, and Donnie could no longer hear their conversation.

Back in the room, Clarissa had given up explaining to him. Instead, she gazed angrily at Matthew. However, he didn’t pay her any attention—instead, he walked around the room with a towel around his hips. Clarissa’s head spun as he swaggered around with his tall, muscular body.

She didn’t know where to look. Instead, she stared at the bed and huffed loudly. She grabbed a blanket and pillow and flung them onto the sofa. With that, she buried herself under her blanket, wishing that there was bleach so she could wash her eyes out.

Matthew raised his brows and laughed lightly.

Didn’t Clarissa realize how childish she was being?

Matthew walked over to the sofa. Without even throwing her blankets aside, he picked Clarissa up as she was still wrapped within her blankets and flung her onto the bed.

As she yelped and tried to free herself, he threw himself onto her.

In a low, threatening voice, he said, "If you don't want to sleep, we can do something else more fun."

That did the trick immediately.

Clarissa wrapped her blankets tightly around her, looking like an unmoving cocoon. Beside her, Matthew refused to go to sleep. Instead, he opened and shut his eyes slowly, gazing at Clarissa, whose eyelids were twitching horribly. He thought she looked rather funny. Eventually, he turned off the lights and lay back down to rest.

Clarissa breathed more easily in the dark. After a while, when she guessed that Matthew had fallen asleep, she tried wriggling off the bed little by little...

She finally came into contact with the edge of the bed. Getting up silently, she tried to make her way towards the door.

"Ah!"

To her chagrin, she was pulled back onto the bed. Matthew lay flat on top of her, his eyes smoldering like charcoal in a fire.

Clarissa explained in a small voice, "I'm going to the toilet."

Matthew glared at her for a while before rolling off her.

Like a mouse, Clarissa scurried into the toilet as quickly as she could. When she finally locked the door behind her, she let out a sigh of relief.

A long while later, she finally made her way out of the bathroom again. The man on her bed had both his hands behind his head. As she came out of the bedroom, he turned to look darkly at her.

Clarissa lay back onto the bed quietly, putting as much distance between them as possible. She looked as though she might fall off the bed any moment.

Matthew's face grew colder. He pulled her straight into his arms and rested his hand on her hip. It was a very dangerous position to be in.

"Go to sleep."

“Sure, but you should let go of me first. I’m not used to sleeping like that. I can’t fall asleep.”

“Is that so? Why don’t we...”

“Wait a minute, wait a minute! Yes, I can fall asleep.”

Clarissa corrected herself hastily. Too afraid to say anything else, she closed her eyes obediently and tried to make herself comfortable.

Matthew’s lips curled into a smile. Although she was the one in his arms, he was the one who was having trouble falling asleep.

The ball of softness and fragrance in his arms was almost too much for him to bear. Suddenly, he felt all the blood in his body rushing south...

His fingers curled a little as a rather outrageous image appeared in his mind...he had forced Clarissa under him, and was entering her slowly and continuously...

His breathing got heavier and more ragged, causing Clarissa to freeze in his arms.

Suddenly, Matthew got up and walked towards the sofa. In the dark, the glowing light of his cigarette shone brightly for a long time.

Clarissa forced herself to stay awake. However, she couldn’t resist it in the end, and fell into a deep sleep.

When she woke up the next morning, her breathing was a little ragged. Her mouth opened to take in more air, but she found that her lips were blocked. Feeling more suffocated by the minute, she opened her eyes, only to find Matthew’s face just inches away from hers. Pushing him away in shock, she finally managed to break free from his arms.

Matthew was wearing a tidy set of clothes. He bent down and kissed her on the forehead.

In a low voice, he said, “I’m going now. I’ll call you later. When your work here wraps up, return to D City immediately, do you understand?”

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Chapter 33

By then, Clarissa had already woken up. Gazing at the quiet room with not a single soul in sight, it seemed like Matthew's arrival the previous night was as surreal as a dream.

She crawled out of bed and washed up. After eating breakfast, she remembered that he had said something to her before he departed.

What did he say? Ugh, I'll just forget it.

"Ms. Quigley, Ms. Smallwood has called for you."

A member of the crew suddenly interrupted Clarissa's train of thoughts.

"Me?"

Has she made a discovery?

Clarissa made a beeline to Shermaine's personal dressing room. Other than the make-up artist and her assistant, there was no one else in the room.

After knocking on the door, she met Shermaine's gaze through the reflection of the mirror and smiled.

"Are you looking for me, Ms. Smallwood?"

"Don't be so formal, Ms. Quigley! Since you're Ellie's friend, you're my friend too. Take a seat! I have a few scenes that I don't really understand, so I'd really appreciate it if you could explain them to me."

"Haha... You're welcome!"

Shermaine's attitude was courteous to a fault. She asked a few questions about the female lead's inner thoughts and discussed them with Clarissa, who explained them to her meticulously.

"You're truly amazing, Ms. Quigley! We're around the same age, but you've managed to write such an impressive script! Not only have you excelled in your career at such a young age, rather, you're also really pretty. That's unlike me, who's only an actress without any other talents."

"You're being too polite, Ms. Smallwood. Your acting skills are top-notch and you'd even won an international best actress award! That's much more impressive than me."

"Haha... That's just a stroke of luck."

"No, I always believe that luck is nothing more than constant diligence. It's the reason that you are able to grasp an opportunity the moment it arrives. Due diligence has a key role to play in it. You've managed to become an international award-winning actress because of your excellent acting skills and hard work. Otherwise, no matter how amazing the script is, you can't exemplify the essence of the movie if your acting skills are subpar. In short, it's all because of your talent."

These were Clarissa's genuine sentiments. After she spoke, Shermaine turned around and stared at her.

"Are you being truthful right now?"

"Of course!"

"Haha... Ms. Quigley, you're a really adorable and honest person. I really like you! It's no surprise that you're Ellie's friend. She has such good taste in people, after all!"

"Thank you."

"Alright, let's go out together. When the filming officially starts, please monitor it, Ms. Quigley. As it's my first time acting in a period show, I might be slightly unused to it. If there's anything lacking, tell me honestly. I wish to display my fullest potential too. Let's do a good job for this amazing show, okay?"

"Okay!"

When they left, Shermaine was even clinging to Clarissa's arm intimately as if they were best pals. Truthfully, Clarissa felt slightly uneasy by her actions.

The others were surprised to see their interaction too, not expecting the normally aloof Ms. Smallwood to be so close to Ms. Quigley.

When Max, the director, saw both of them arriving side by side, he laughed and joked, "Shermaine, have you become sisters with Ms. Quigley?"

Clarissa laughed awkwardly at his teasing comment. However, Shermaine replied matter-of-factly, "That's right! It's my first time acting in a period show. When Ms. Quigley saw that I didn't really quite understand, she was kind enough to guide me and explain the scenes to me. I'm really grateful to her!"

"Haha... That's great! Come on, we're going to start soon."

Clarissa discreetly inched away from her, feeling rather uncomfortable. For some inexplicable reason, Shermaine's words seemed a tad bit odd.

However, after the filming started, she was too preoccupied to mull over it. Instead, she focused on Shermaine's performance attentively.

She had to admit that Shermaine's acting skills were impressive. As expected of an actress who clinched an international award, she was exceptional. When she acted alongside Jamie, an amateur actress, her charisma completely overshadowed the latter. Hence, unable to keep up with Shermaine's pace, Jamie continuously messed up her lines.

Clarissa was rather irked, to her surprise, as Shermaine would often make a beeline to her to ask some questions.

"Ms. Quigley, is my acting alright? How did I do? Does she resemble your idea of Stephanie?"

She asked Clarissa about it so many times that the others who were present kept sneaking glances at them.

From their gazes, it felt like they were currently viewing her in a different light.

Ryler arrived in the afternoon because his role was not needed for filming in the morning. After he arrived, he was instantly notified about Shermaine's actions.

When he was discussing the script with Clarissa during his break, he took the opportunity to ask her about it.

He whispered softly, "Is Shermaine doing it on purpose?"

Clarissa mulled over it for a while. "Perhaps."

"Do you know why?"

"Nope."

Could she be doing this because of Matthew? Probably not. He came really late and left early in the morning. It's impossible for anyone to find out.

What other reason can it be then? I don't even know anymore.

"I heard a rumor from a friend." Shooting a quick glance at Shermaine, who was resting with her eyes closed, Ryler lowered his voice. "Shermaine is not as nice as she seems on the surface. Whenever she filmed a movie, she would detest it if there were other prettier women stealing her spotlight. Her jealousy is not to be underestimated. Perhaps, she thinks that you are pretty and talented."

Frowning, Clarissa shook her head and chuckled. "That's impossible, isn't it? Stop joking."

"Do I look like I'm joking?"

Ryler's expression was extremely grave. "I didn't believe it previously, but it seems to be highly possible now. You've witnessed her behavior today. It's glaringly obvious that she's humbling herself while elevating you, thus placing you in an awkward position. Rumors might spread that you are a pretentious and arrogant person, one who looks down on everyone else, even daring to criticize a top actress' acting skills. Think about your current situation. Before you can even make a name for yourself in this industry, you have to shoulder the burden of such a heavy stereotype."

"I... I don't even want to make a name in this industry!"

"Although you don't want to stir up any trouble, the fact remains that she is blocking your path. Clare, stay away from her to avoid getting embroiled in a mess."

"I know that. I am fully aware of it despite you telling me."

Clarissa did not expect someone to be so vicious.

Her perspective of the world was very innocent, devoid of any manipulation and pretenses. Never had she expected herself to be betrayed by her mother when she went to D City, nor to be set up by Shermaine here.

Isn't it really tiring for them?

No longer in a good mood, Clarissa didn't want to stay in the studio anymore. Anyway, as a screenwriter, she did not play such a huge role there.

Hence, she tossed her backpack over her shoulder, secretly waved goodbye to Ryler, and took her departure.

Before she could even leave the studio, her phone rang.

She was already in a foul mood. When she noticed that it was a call from that particular person, she was reminded of Shermaine and instantly rejected the call.

However, a second call came immediately. As her phone rang incessantly, she quickly picked it up and hid in a corner.

She asked in an annoyed tone, "What do you want to do? Are you that free?"

Matthew was sitting at his desk. Twirling around on his chair, he peered out of the window and stared at the towering skyscrapers outside.

When the only scenery he had were these cold and mundane objects, he missed the woman's liveliness even more.

Furthermore, as he returned early in the morning, a day had already passed by then. Still, Clarissa had yet to call him—not even once.

That was really cruel of her.

"Yeah, you!"

A tone of impatience crept into her voice. "What do you mean, me? I..."

She came to a sudden realization.

"Y-You..."

With her fury slowly morphing into embarrassment, she blushed and stuttered, not knowing how to rebuke him.

Matthew chuckled in a deep voice. Didn't she ask me what I wanted to do?

The answer is obviously her.

"I hope you die from laughter!"

She instantly hung up the call.

However, her phone rang again, which annoyed her so much that she was becoming increasingly impatient. By the time she picked up the call again, her patience had already run out.

"Matthew!" snapped Clarissa furiously as she briskly strode out of the studio.

"Here."

"What are you..."

She wanted to ask him what he wanted to do, but she quickly stopped herself mid-sentence. If she lost her temper, Matthew would possibly be overjoyed.

Hence, she sighed and fell silent.

On the other end, Matthew stood up and paced by the window. He shoved his hand into a pocket while holding his phone to his ear with the other. As he listened to her soft breathing, his grip subconsciously tightened.

"Are you that reluctant to speak to me?"

He received an eerie silence in response.

A cold expression flitted across Matthew's expression as both of them entered a stalemate.

After a long while, Clarissa finally spoke.

"Are you actually serious?"

Matthew replied in a deep voice, "Yes."

"I don't even know what you like about me. My youth? My beauty?"

"I can't really explain why. Perhaps, it's how you look like when you're seducing me as you pretend to innocent."

"You..."

Clarissa was enraged again. "Since when have I seduced you?"

"When you were drugged at the hotel? When you were wearing those revealing clothes at the Tysons?"

"That's... That's a coincidence. I didn't have an ulterior motive at all!"

"Yeah, they aren't yours. They're mine."

Clarissa was at a momentary loss for words. Pouting, she snorted indignantly.

Chuckling, Matthew could almost imagine her expression at that moment. There would be a hint of stubbornness on her beautiful face while she glared at him with her large and expressive eyes.

When she gazed at him, he would often have an urge to fall into the depths of her eyes, regardless of whether she was pretending to be obedient, innocent, or furious.

"What else do you want to ask?"

Matthew had a vague inkling that she was asking these questions because her resolve was swaying.

"I... I've never thought of relationships before."

"Then, you should seriously start to think about them now."

"Isn't that what I'm doing now?"

Lowering her head, Clarissa subconsciously shuffled her feet on the floor and uttered hesitatingly, "Uncle Matthew, there's an age gap between us. Just a disclaimer, I'm not complaining that you're old! An attractive bachelor like you is certainly an ideal husband for many women. What I'm trying to say is that you should give me some time to adjust and consider. After all, I'm friends with Ellie. Also, you shouldn't be so domineering by forcing me to agree, right?"

At the mention of his age, Matthew's cold expression darkened further.

His face was filled with a grim look by the time she finished speaking. He waited to hear what else she had to say.

"Truthfully, I like to be prepared for all of the things that I do; that includes dating. My initial plan was to start a relationship at twenty-eight and marry a man who's similar to me at thirty. I wish to date with the intention of marrying, but you..."

Matthew smirked coldly. "Are you saying that you want me to marry you before we date?"

"No, no, no! That's not what I meant. I just need some time to... to accept you."

"How long?"

He sounded like he was running out of patience.

Clarissa pouted. "Do you even know what you're supposed to do? Is this how you behaved when you dated someone in the past? Anyone whom you've taken a liking to automatically becomes yours, huh? Does everyone else agree so quickly?"

Matthew fell silent.

Sighing softly, she continued, "Alright, you probably don't need to pursue other women. They can't wait to jump into your arms."

There was no hint of jealousy in her words.

"The point is, how long would you need to further consider it? Give me a rough estimation."

Clarissa's lips twitched in slight annoyance. "A month."

"No, that's too long. I'll give you one day!"

"You... I'll need a minimum of two weeks."

"Three days."

"One week. That should be acceptable, right? I'll only finish my current work after a week."

"Fine!"

After much persuasion, he finally agreed. Clarissa felt inexplicably exhausted.

She was the one being pursued now, but she still had to bargain and bicker with him.

"Move in with me a week later!"

Clarissa was rendered utterly speechless. In fact, she was so furious that all she could do was laugh at how ridiculous it was.

"How can you be so sure that I'll agree one week forward? What if I reject you instead?"

"You'll agree. You didn't reject my kiss, did you?"

Clarissa protested, "I was being forced!"

"Haha!"

"What's the meaning behind that laugh?" "Nothing."

“Matthew! Your mouth is simply too...”

Too vicious.

“Hahaha... I’ll rely on it to kiss you. You’ll learn to grow on it in the future.”

You’ll Fall for Me, Today or Tomorrow

Chapter 34

Who will like it?

When Clarissa hung up the call, her cheeks were already blushing. It would seem obvious to anyone who witnessed her shy look that her heart was fluttering at this moment.

She felt slightly nervous after returning to the hotel, with her heart racing rapidly. All she could think about was Matthew’s face and his charmingly charismatic voice...

Shit!

Even Clarissa could not help but giggle shyly.

Truthfully, she knew very well that it was simply too easy to fall in love with Matthew.

If he was serious about what he had said, it would be impossible for her to refuse.

The reason that she kept delaying it was that she had wanted to calm herself down. After all, she had yet to do something as rash as this, without having any consideration of the possible consequences.

If she were to calm down in a week’s duration, she would possibly have different feelings in regard to the matter.

However, she had a feeling that she would end up succumbing to Matthew’s advances. In other words, she had already admitted defeat but was just trying to act all melodramatic.

Her phone’s urgent ringing tone suddenly interrupted Clarissa’s shy thoughts.

When she saw that it was a call from Ellie, she felt embarrassed. Ellie's furious voice came blaring the moment she answered the phone.

"Clare, Shermaine is a crazy woman. Stay away from her! Why didn't you heed my advice?"

"What's wrong?"

She did not expect Ellie to know about Shermaine's deliberate acts from that morning.

"What's wrong? You are on the trending searches right now, with everyone hurling insults at you. It's all over social media that an ignorant screenwriter had dared to go through a scene with Shermaine, a top actress. Those insults are downright disgusting. Go and take a look at them... Never mind, don't look at them. They're all left by her fanatic fans. There's nothing to see there."

Although Ellie had informed Clarissa to steer away from the comments, she could not help herself from doing it.

While still on the call, she quickly turned on her laptop and immediately saw the trending searches.

A Screenwriter Goes Through A Scene With Shermaine.

A "Diva-like" Screenwriter.

Shermaine Remains Humble Amidst The Amateur Screenwriter's Pretentious Act.

These were considered the more neutral headlines out in the mix. On the opposite spectrum, her social media account, with the username @clarissa.quigley, was already flooded with criticisms.

Of the one million followers she had, some of them were scolding her alongside Shermaine's fans. Yet, there was also a portion of her loyal book fans trying their best to defend her. They thought that everything was a huge misunderstanding that featured a cordial discussion between an actress and a screenwriter.

However, these rational comments were soon overwhelmed by criticisms. Within a short span of time, a plethora of negative scandals about Clarissa was exposed.

Someone who claimed to be in the same editorial team as Clarissa said that her novels only got raving reviews because she bribed the editors. Her follower count, her likes, and other results were all due to her deliberate manipulation. The reason that she never showed up in public—not even to attend the annual meetings—was that she was an ugly and vicious old woman, who was afraid of losing followers if she was exposed to the public eye.

The whistleblower even claimed that Clarissa only managed to sell the film rights and secure investments after sleeping with the owner of the film company.

Another member of the crew revealed that Clarissa was an extremely arrogant person, while Shermaine had always been humble. It was shocking to see Clarissa thinking so highly of herself and insisting on going through the scenes with other actors. She even doubted the director's opinion and bossed everyone in the studio around. If that was not shameless enough, she tried to seduce the main male lead, Ryler...

In conclusion, all sorts of insults and scandals were heaped onto Clarissa simultaneously.

Why hasn't an ugly b*tch like you died yet?

This woman is disgusting. I hope that her entire family dies!

She just plagiarizes the shit out of everything. Not only that, but she's also a sl*t who has slept with many men. A piece of crap like her is downright disgusting...

Reading these insults, Clarissa was so furious that she began to tremble in anger.

She had never borne the brunt of such aggressive attacks. In fact, there were even comments that were more vicious than those.

When she first became popular, she had encountered other authors trying to sway the readers by criticizing and insulting her. However, those were nothing compared to the insults that she was receiving now.

This was Clarissa's first time being a victim of cyberbullying.

She gripped her phone tightly as if she was going to shatter it with her brute force. Driven by an impulse, she had the urge to read more of the comments, the more upset and furious she got. She wanted to see how evil humanity was and how vicious the keyboard warriors could be.

“Clare, Clare...”

Ellie was extremely worried. When Clarissa did not respond to her for a long while, she knew that something was amiss.

“Stop reading the comments. Those are all irrelevant people who have nothing better to do. Why should you care about their opinions?”

“I... I’m fine.”

Clarissa’s voice trembled as she finally turned her laptop off. The notification sounds on her phone rang incessantly, prompting her to glance at the messages. They were from her readers and the editorial team.

“You’re still claiming to be fine? Are you crying? Don’t be scared, Clare. I’ll help you. Shermaine must be the culprit behind this. I’ll settle the score with her.” “Don’t, Ellie. It might not be her. There were a lot of people present in the studio, so many of them have witnessed me going through the scenes with Shermaine. Someone else might have leaked it instead. Don’t confront her without any evidence. Plus, we might have wrongfully accused her.”

“We can’t just leave it like this, can we?”

“Forget it.”

After calming down for a while, Clarissa’s rationality returned. “Ellie, this matter only blew up because of Shermaine’s fame and influence. There is always trending news like this popping up every day. Soon, everything will be settled and left in the dust. Let’s not do anything about it. I’ll take a break from social media too. It’s better if I refrain from tainting my eyes with those nasty comments. I’ll just stay further away from Shermaine from now on. If I don’t provoke her, she can’t possibly seek trouble with me, right? I’ll be leaving in a few days too. Let’s just keep it as it is.”

“But...”

“Forget it, my conscience is clear. I’m not part of the entertainment industry anyway, so it doesn’t matter if others criticize me. I just need to continue writing my novels seriously. I’m a bit tired today, so I’ll go and rest first.”

After hanging up the call, Clarissa wallowed in her sadness. She read the consoling messages that her kind readers left her, saying that they trusted her no matter the circumstance. Her editor had also informed her that the company would release a statement and announce that they would take legal actions against the ones who had spread the malicious rumor. Her team unanimously sided with her.

This touched Clarissa greatly, dissipating the anguish that had been tormenting her earlier. There are still a lot of kind people in this world, huh?

However, Ellie was still filled with indignation.

Her instincts told her that this certainly had something to do with Shermaine. After all, she had seen through Shermaine's hypocrisy since young and detested her greatly. The duplicitous woman always hated to see someone who was better or prettier than her. It was evident that her aim was to defame Clarissa.

Hence, Ellie called Damon immediately and asked him to investigate the identity of the person who made the first post.

In fact, he had already started his investigation. Even though Clarissa had rejected him, he could not bear the sight of her getting bullied.

When Ellie returned home, her grandmother and her mother were chatting happily, as though something joyous had occurred.

When they saw how unhappy Ellie was, they could not help but ask, "What's wrong, Ellie? Did something happen?"

"Mom, Grandma, Clarissa has gotten bullied."

"Who bullied her?"

Ellie relayed the entire incident to them, not forgetting to criticize Shermaine whenever there was an opening.

"Clare told me that Shermaine was acting weirdly. She looked for Clare all of a sudden to discuss the script and even deliberately asked her to guide her with her acting in front of so many people. In the end, this mess happened. That b*tch must have hired someone to defame Clare."

"That's... That's impossible. Shermaine is a good girl. There must have been a misunderstanding."

Esther did not believe that Shermaine would do such a thing.

However, Ellie had already expected her reaction. "Grandma, why can't see through her yet? Shermaine is a manipulative woman who can act really well. Don't you believe what I've just said?"

"It's not that I don't trust you, rather, there might have been a misunderstanding. It's possible that someone else in the crew deliberately spread the rumor instead. There are all sorts of ridiculous things across the Internet, so why should you care about it? Since Clare has already chosen to let it be, you should stop harping on it too."

"I..."

Ellie's mother tried to stop her from speaking, but Esther continued, "I actually like Shermaine a lot. Plus, she really fancies Matthew. Didn't he go to the film studio to visit her a few days ago? There are some hopes of them getting together, right?"

When Ellie heard that her grandmother was not only refusing to suspect Shermaine but also hinting that she might become her future sister-in-law, she erupted into a fury.

Bolting up, she stormed out of the house furiously, ignoring her mother's calls from behind her.

She took a flight and headed straight to the film studio. The first thing she did when she landed was to look for Clarissa, embracing her warmly as she consoled her.

Hugging Ellie, Clarissa coaxed, "Truthfully, one cannot put on an act for eternity. If there really is a flaw in her character, it'll be revealed sooner or later. I truly believe that no one can keep up a facade forever. Furthermore, Shermaine won't even know how angry you are right now. Even if she does, she'll definitely be over the moon for successfully provoking you, right? Instead of fuming over it, why don't you take a good rest and replenish your energy? You can think about the matter afterward, okay?"

"Yeah, you're right. I must not torment myself. If that b*tch knows how furious I am now, she'll certainly be overjoyed. I will not be angry! Just wait, I'll definitely rip her deceptive facade off! Let's sleep now."

Clarissa laughed as she lay down, while Ellie wrapped her arms around her tightly.

Smiling exasperatedly, she switched off the bedside lamp and fell asleep.

As both of them slept really late the previous night, they were still lazing around in bed, unable to wake up even though it was already late morning.

The doorbell woke both of them up eventually. Clarissa gently nudged Ellie, who got out of bed in a daze, and opened the door.

“Who’s there?”

When she caught sight of the man who was standing outside, she was stunned.

“Uncle Matt? Why are you here?”

At the mention of his name, Clarissa abruptly sat up straight from her bed. The immense fright that she got completely jolted her awake.

She scrambled out of bed and dashed to the door unhesitatingly.

“I informed Uncle Matthew that you were here. Since you came here without informing your family, I was afraid that they would be worried about you.”

Ellie frowned when she saw how anxious Clarissa was.

On the other hand, Matthew raised his eyebrows teasingly as his gaze swept across Clarissa’s body. This woman was so scared that she got out of the bed before realizing what she’s wearing right now.

You’ll Fall for Me, Today or Tomorrow Chapter 35

“Clare, you...”

A strange expression crossed Ellie’s face as she pointed at Clarissa’s body.

Puzzled, she lowered her head before she let out a loud shriek.

“Argh!”

Clarissa screamed as she dashed into the bedroom and slammed the door shut.

Ellie could not help but chuckle softly. When she met Matthew’s dark eyes, her heart skipped a beat.

“Don’t mind her, Uncle Matt. Clare is always in a daze when she wakes up.”

Why would I mind?

Matthew strode into the room and sat on the sofa. While his slender fingers fidgeted, the image of the woman’s snowy and long legs kept appearing in his mind. Her fair skin was enough to make one’s heart race.

“Uncle Matt, I’m already an adult, so I’m fine on my own. I’m just here to visit Clare because I’m afraid that she’ll be sad.”

Matthew remained silent. He only learned about that incident in the morning when Donnie had informed him about it.

As Clarissa did not answer his calls, he flew here the first thing in the morning.

He did not expect his niece to be here too.

“Uncle Matt, about this matter, Shermaine is definitely...”

“Ellie!”

Clarissa had just come out after changing her clothes. When she overheard what Ellie was saying, she quickly interrupted in time.

“I’m fine. Since Uncle Matthew is here, you should go back with him too. I’m totally alright. Those nasty comments were only left by the netizens who were oblivious to the truth. It’s not worth it to be bothered by them.”

"I won't go back. I'm afraid that you'll be bullied by Shermaine again!"

"I didn't get bullied. It was merely a misunderstanding."

Clarissa shot a look at Ellie. Although she was still angry, it was inappropriate for her to say anything else in front of Matthew.

Snorting unhappily, Ellie relented. "Fine. Your temper is as good as usual. Anyway, just remember to stay away from that woman."

"I know."

Ellie glanced at Matthew. "Wait for me, Uncle Matt. I'll change my clothes first."

When she walked into the bedroom, Matthew turned his gaze to Clarissa.

Still nervous, she lowered her voice and whispered, "Why are you here?"

He abruptly extended his hand as he grabbed Clarissa's wrist. When he tugged her firmly, she collapsed onto the sofa beside him.

"Don't..."

Clarissa tried to dodge his face, which was inching toward her. She averted her gaze and threw a glance at the door, breaking out into cold sweat.

"Matthew, don't let Ellie see this."

He did not kiss her either. Instead, he stared at Clarissa's face intently.

"Aren't you upset?"

Clarissa was stunned. Did Matthew rush all the way here because he was worried that I'll be upset?

Feeling touched, a grateful look crept into her gaze. There were tears brimming in her eyes as if she was on the verge of crying.

How can I possibly reject a man like him?

She was about to say something when Ellie's voice rang out.

Quickly pushing Matthew aside, Clarissa stood up in time for Ellie to come out of the door.

"Clare, let's have a meal together first. Uncle Matt, you haven't eaten too, right? Let's eat together and leave afterward."

Matthew sounded his agreement and the three of them headed downstairs to eat.

Clarissa was completely distracted throughout the meal. Sometimes, she had an urge to peek at Matthew but she was afraid that Ellie would possibly notice that something was amiss.

Hence, she had to forcefully restrain herself.

"Clare, if there's nothing left for you to do here, just leave as soon as possible. Going back to D City or your hometown is better than staying with Shermaine. If she plays any more tricks, inform me instantly. As your best friend, I promise that I'll always be there for you, understand?" whispered Ellie before she left; she was truly the epitome of a loyal friend.

Clarissa gave Ellie a warm embrace as she exclaimed with a bright grin, "Yep!"

Standing beside the car, she watched as Ellie boarded the car. She also waved to Matthew, who was inside as well.

"Have a safe trip, Uncle Matthew."

Matthew's eyes gleamed brightly. His gaze was unfathomable and deep, causing Clarissa's heart to skip a beat.

When they finally left, she felt a tinge of disappointment as she returned to her room.

However, soon afterward, someone knocked on her door again.

"Who is it?"

Who can it possibly be this time?

Clarissa had just opened the door and poked her head out when the man from outside suddenly barged in. Slamming the door behind him, he grabbed her waist and pinned her against the door.

Without a single word, he embraced her right off the bat, lowering his head as he kissed her lips. His tongue invaded her mouth domineeringly, muffling any noise that she tried to make. The only sound echoing through the silent room was that of their passionate panting.

Although only a short while had passed, the kiss seemed to have lasted for an eternity.

Only then did Matthew move away from her lips as he muttered hoarsely, "I'm leaving now."

Despite saying that, he remained rooted to the ground.

As he was grabbing her waist, Clarissa could not budge at all. Her rosy lips parted slightly as she panted, trying to catch her breath. Her hands clung onto the hems of Matthew's shirt as she mumbled softly, "Thank you."

He visited her because he was worried that she would be upset by the incident that had occurred online.

No matter the circumstance, she still needed to express her gratitude.

"Haha..."

A gentle chuckle escaped Matthew's mouth. It sounded extremely alluring, causing Clarissa's heart to race. It was then that she realized—she had fallen in love.

More importantly, her legs had already lost all of their strength. If Matthew had not been hugging her, she would have already collapsed onto the ground.

"You're welcome."

His lips pressed against Clarissa's earlobes as he nibbled on it gently.

A word of thanks was not enough—he wanted more than that.

“Do you want me to help you to solve that?”

“No. It’s going to pass quickly so there’s nothing that needs to be solved. The netizens are merely repeating the rumors that they’ve heard. It’ll pass after a few days.” Since Clarissa refused his offer, he would not do anything either.

Upon placing a lingering kiss on her neck, he finally released her.

“I’m leaving now.”

He was being serious this time. After all, the car was still waiting downstairs.

Clarissa mumbled in acknowledgment obediently. After she managed to stand on her two feet, Matthew opened the door and left.

Turning back, he saw Clarissa’s watery eyes and her pitiful look, as if she was begging for him to take pity on him. He could barely suppress his urge to throw the woman onto the bed and kiss her passionately.

Instead, he pinched her chin and stared into her eyes with a deep gaze. After five seconds, he spun around and left.

Clarissa stood at the entrance and gazed at him as he strode away. Even his tall and broad back looked flawless.

Clarissa joined the production crew again. The staff members who initially shared a good relationship with her suddenly evaded her.

Perhaps, they actually knew that she was innocent. However, due to certain inhibitions that they had against Shermaine, they did not dare to act too intimately with Clarissa.

She was just a screenwriter who was going to leave soon, anyway. It was completely unnecessary to offend Shermaine because of someone like her.

On the other hand, Max’s attitude was rather satisfactory in comparison.

However, it was not because he wanted to defend Clarissa. He merely yearned for peace.

“Clarissa, this is probably just a misunderstanding. There are a lot of people in the crew, after all. It’s inevitable that some with bad intentions might have accidentally made some unnecessary posts. Don’t take it to heart. Popularity has always been a magnet for trouble. You’ve only received all these criticisms because you’ve become popular, right?”

Although no one had evidence to prove that Shermaine was the perpetrator, they all had a vague inkling as to the events that had played out.

As Shermaine did not openly denounce this accusation or say anything, it meant that she was implicitly affirming Clarissa’s mistake.

In all honesty, Clarissa was still quite affected by it. She could not bring herself to smile at the director’s attempted words of consolation. After all, who was generous enough to dismiss such a huge incident as a mere joke?

“Mr. Brown, you don’t need me here anymore, right? I think that it’s better if I leave sooner.”

“Well...”

Max thought about it for a while before replying, “Yeah, you can go back first. I’ll contact you if I have any questions about the script.”

“What’s happening? Is Ms. Quigley leaving?”

Shermaine sauntered over. Dressed in a period costume, she looked extremely charming and beautiful.

She flashed Clarissa a smile and asked, “Are you angry at me, Ms. Quigley? I swear that I was completely oblivious about the incident. It was only after coming to the set and hearing about it from the rest that I learned about it. I’m sorry, Ms. Quigley. I never expected something so horrible to happen. I’m partly at fault too. I only wanted to discuss the plot with you, but some people deliberately tried to stir up trouble.”

“Nah, it isn’t your fault.”

Since Shermaine had already apologized, Clarissa could not possibly harp over it persistently. Hence, she smiled and shook her head.

“Why don’t we take a friendly photo and post it as a clarification?”

"It's fine. It's really fine. This is just a misunderstanding, so there's no need for all of that. It'll fade from the public eye within a few days. Thank you, Shermaine. I appreciate your kind gesture."

Clarissa's rejection caused Shermaine's smile to appear slightly forced.

"Ms. Quigley, are you truly not angry at me?"

"Yeah, I'm not."

Although Clarissa did not know why Shermaine continuously tried to mess around with her, all she could do was stay far away.

Afraid that Shermaine would resume pestering her, she quickly found an excuse as she snuck away.

If she continued spending time with Shermaine, she would possibly stir up an increasing amount of trouble. Hence, keeping her distance was the best solution.

However, instead of leaving immediately, she hung around for a while as she watched the next scene, which featured both Jamie and Shermaine.

After it ended, she wanted to bid farewell to Jamie.

Unexpectedly, the scene had to be filmed a couple of times, while Jamie was slapped so many times by Shermaine that her cheek had begun to swell.

Each time that Shermaine slapped her, she would always find an excuse to film the scene again. More infuriatingly, a smug expression constantly hung on her face.

After a few attempts, Jamie headed off to take a rest. Clutching her cheek, she looked like she was in a great amount of pain.

Worried, Clarissa frowned.

"Are you alright, Jamie?"

Jamie glared at Shermaine resentfully before she glanced at her with an aggrieved gaze.

“Is she treating me like this because I’m just a side character? What right does she have to do that?”

Although it was blatantly evident that Shermaine was doing it on purpose, no one intervened to help Jamie. Even the director remained passive, with only a frown on his face. Since Shermaine insisted that she had acted poorly and demanded to film it again, he could not possibly reject her request.

“Don’t cry, Jamie. You mustn’t cry in front of your bully.”

“Yeah, just wait and see! Even if I’m not popular now, it doesn’t mean that I’ll never be popular. I’ll definitely take my revenge in the future.”

On the other side, Shermaine cast a glance at them as she broke into a grin.

Her smile was filled with provocation and mockery.

Once again, the filming started. To no one’s surprise, Shermaine deliberately demanded to refilm it, even though she slapped Jamie so harshly that her lips had bled. It was not a theatrical effect—her lips were actually bleeding.

Jamie gritted her teeth as she strived to endure it. Glaring at Shermaine, her eyes gleamed with deep hatred.

Slap!

As Shermaine struck Jamie across her cheek again, she smiled embarrassedly. “I’m sorry, director, but the emotions aren’t there. Why don’t we do it again?”

“Shermaine, I think that it’s good enough. You don’t need to repeat it.”

It was not the director who spoke; rather, it was Clarissa.

She walked over and helped Jamie up before eyeing Shermaine. “I’m the original author and screenwriter of this show. Hence, I understand the characters the best. Your performance earlier was very accurate, having flawlessly displayed the sense of fury and ruthlessness you were feeling. I like it a lot, so there’s no need to repeat it.”

She coldly met Shermaine’s eyes, her attitude firm and unwavering.

