

You'll Fall for Me, Today or Tomorrow

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Blushing violently, Clarissa's fingers fidgeted around as her eyes darted around in a panic.

Oh no... Did he see that video just now?

But I was quick enough... He shouldn't be able to see it, right?

"Oh, you're back..." she chuckled pretentiously while cupping her own cheeks in both hands. "It's so hot in here, I should go get some fresh air out there."

Clutching her laptop tightly, she rose and walked towards the door.

But Matthew was quick to block and wouldn't budge no matter how she tried to duck around and sneak out from underneath his long arms.

He peered into her eyes with a sharp gaze on Clarissa's blushed face as she was all embarrassed. Then, he slowly inched his face closer towards hers.

"What were you watching just now, Clare?"

"N-nothing much... I-it's just a random movie!" she stammered.

Raising a brow in amusement, his lips curved up into a taunting smirk.

"What movie was that? Why don't we watch it together?"

Clarissa shook her head fervently.

"No... We've finished watching when you came in! Besides, you won't even be interested..."

Before she could explain further, Matthew snatched her laptop with a swift movement. "Give it back to me!" she shouted and reached out her hands in a frenzy.

She hopped around him, extending and waving her arms in vain.

Alas, their height difference was too great. She gasped in dread as Matthew held the laptop in high in the air, far out of her reach, and began looking through her files.

“Matthew! Stop fooling around already. No, don’t open anything! Give it back...”

“Mmm.... Ah...”

Clarissa froze in horror as steamy, lecherous voices resounded from her laptop. I’m doomed...

Matthew stared for a few seconds. He then shut the laptop and flung it casually onto the bed.

He turned towards the tiny woman who stood in front of him with a pitiful, defeated look on her face.

She blinked in awkward silence, not quite sure what to make of his expression. All she could tell was that the glow in his eyes looked somewhat cold.

“Tell me, Clare. What is this about?” he questioned with a slight hint of intimidation.

Without answering, she sprinted past him and ran out of the house.

Matthew didn’t stop her this time. He pinched his brows for a second but soon let out a small burst of chuckle. Why is she even running away? Where does she think she can go?

He headed towards the door and suddenly stopped in his tracks. Realizing something, he turned back and flipped Clarissa’s laptop open once again. His finger glided on the mouse pad in a nimble movement, and deleted the video file with a quick tap.

He scrolled through the screen, wondering if there were more of those dodgy things in her computer. Suddenly, his eyes lit up as he discovered the photos that Ellie had taken of her back in her studio.

It was a pleasant surprise. His eyes bored into the pictures longingly. She looked so enchanting in the various styles and poses. Some were sweet and innocent-looking; some were quite seductive...

His eyes lingered for a minute on a few photos of Clarissa in the lingerie that Ellie had gotten for her. It was obvious these photos were only meant for her eyes only.

Matthew could feel his breath getting increasingly heavy. With a few smooth taps, he quickly gathered all the photos and e-mailed them into his inbox.

Once he was sure that there was nothing else that needed to be erased, he walked out into the living room.

Clarissa was nowhere to be found. He sat on the couch, opened his mobile mailbox, and downloaded the photos onto his phone. While waiting for her to return, he began browsing through the photos again, savoring every detail.

In the meantime, Clarissa stood in the yard and took a few deep breaths. It didn't take long before she cooled down. Besides, the air outside was cold.

A chill ran down her spine after being out for some time. She had forgotten to grab a jacket while escaping.

Unable to withstand the cold yet too embarrassed to enter the house, she pulled out her phone and sent a quick text to Matthew.

I'll go back inside if you promise that you won't mention what happened earlier.

She couldn't care less even if it wasn't his fault to begin with.

Her phone vibrated within the next second as his reply came in almost immediately.

Okay, I won't.

She texted back angrily: Don't you dare try doing that with me either.

Hahahaha...

Matthew burst into laughter at her response. She really knew him after all.

Then, why did you even watch that kind of film? Isn't it because you want to do it with me?

Clarissa's fingers stiffened as she read his message.

Her answer came in only after a good few minutes.

Yes... But now isn't the time yet.

Matthew straightened himself in excitement. Has she finally agreed?

With a grin on his face, he texted eagerly: Then, when will it be?

He had been dying to hear this answer from her.

It took another while before she replied: Don't ask! It won't be long anyway. Just don't bring it up when I go back in. I might consider dropping that idea if you try making fun of me. Do you understand?

Matthew smiled. He didn't need to see her facial expression to know that this was a threat from her.

Alright.

He couldn't help but wondered how long she intended to make him wait before the day would finally come.

Soon after he succumbed to her request, the door clicked open. Clarissa stepped into the living room hesitantly.

His heart wrenched at the sight of her shivering from the cold. He quickly walked towards her and pulled her into his embrace.

"Are you stupid? Why didn't you grab a coat or something before going outside? And of all places, why did you even have to hide outdoors?"

Despite criticizing her outwardly, he rubbed her tiny hands in between his palms in an effort to warm her up. He then lifted her off her feet and carried her upstairs.

"W-what are you doing?" she squealed and struggled in his arms. "Put me down! You promised me not to..."

"Keep screaming and I'll do it for real," he interrupted with a sober look.

At his threat, Clarissa held her tongue.

She stared at him with wide, glimmering eyes, like a little kitten in distress. Matthew's couldn't keep his stern facade up any longer. His heart melted right away at her adorably pampered act.

"I'm just getting you into the shower. You should take a hot bath after standing out there for such a long time." He smiled affectionately and continued, "What? Do you really think I'm the kind of person who doesn't keep my words?"

He then put her down gently at the door to the bathroom and ruffled her head.

"Alright, go warm yourself up."

Clarissa felt somewhat guilty of her distrust against him earlier. Just as he turned to leave, she reached out and tugged on his arm.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have doubted you," she said softly with a pout.

Matthew chuckled softly. "That's it?"

At that, she tiptoed and planted a light kiss on his lips. "Is this enough?"

He shook his head and gave her a playful yet tender smile.

Clarissa frowned jokingly, but was of course willing to give what he wished for.

Clinging onto his neck, she leaned in and pressed her lips deeply into his.

With a muffled chuckle, Matthew wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her in tightly. He placed a hand on the back of her head and pressed in for a deeper kiss. As their kisses intensified, they could feel their hearts pounding faster and harder against each other's chest.

Eventually, Clarissa found herself pressed against the bathroom wall. The tiles felt cold against her back, but her body felt hotter and hotter as he showered kisses upon her.

He's going to lose control at this rate...

She jabbed a finger at his muscular waist. Matthew stiffened and pulled back a little, but his arms still enveloped around her tightly as he panted. They gazed into each other's eyes, and Clarissa could see a faint blush across his cheeks too.

Resting his head on her shoulder, his hot breath grazed her ears as he murmured softly, "When is it going to be, Clare?"

"It'll be soon like I said. Don't worry, I won't bail out," she answered coyly.

After all, his birthday was coming up in less than two weeks' time.

She wondered if he had thought of her promise to be sooner than she meant.

Whatever. I've already agreed anyway. He should try to be more patient.

She pushed him out of the bathroom and proceeded to take a hot bath. As she thought about the day, a wave of mixed feelings rose within her. Her face lit up with a silly smile as she was both excited but shy at the same time.

The next day, Ellie kept her words and came dragging Clarissa out for shopping.

As they strolled around the mall, Ellie couldn't hold her curiosity back and bombarded her with a flurry of questions about the night before.

"So, what happened after I left last night? Did Uncle Matt get too worked up about you looking at another man's body, and pushed you down on the bed? Did you guys end up doing it in advance?"

Clarissa rolled her eyes. "Please, Ellie... are you trying to imagine us in some cheesy Mary Sue drama?"

"Come on, there isn't that much different!" Ellie sneered. "Just tell me now. What happened after that?"

"If it was really like what you imagined, I doubt I'd even be able to get out of bed this early..."

“Oh gosh, Clare! You and Uncle Matt are really good at holding it in, huh? I can’t even imagine...” she scoffed.

What’s with this girl, seriously? Clarissa was utterly speechless at how nosy her friend was.

“Oh well, I guess I can only wait until when it finally happens...” Ellie mumbled to herself.

“Come on, Ellie. Didn’t we agree earlier that it’ll be on his birthday? I told him to wait a little longer.”

“You’re really rigid, aren’t you? Can’t you just go with the flow and enjoy the process? To think that you’re really sticking to a particular day, you are really going by the book...”

Ellie was amazed at how her friend could be so taut and adamant about something like this.

“I need to give myself some time too!” Clarissa exclaimed. “I can’t just go ahead and do that kind of thing impromptu without preparing myself mentally.”

Ellie surrendered in the end. “Alright, up to you. I’ll wait for the good news when Uncle Matt’s birthday comes.”

She paused briefly and continued, “Let’s just focus on getting your ‘armor’ today. The set I gave you last time looks good, but I think it’s lacking a little bit of... fun. You can save that for next time. We should get you something more interesting for the special occasion.”

Ellie blurted her thoughts out loud as they walked towards the shop that Louisa had recommended earlier. The moment they entered, Clarissa blushed slightly at the array of fancy lingerie on the display.

She gawked at the variety of styles and themes. What’s all this? They’re so revealing! It’s not like I’m preparing for a real war...

But then again, it does seem like they can help make things more interesting on that day, right?

She mustered her courage and began browsing through the aisles. When she finally purchased a set of outfit for herself, Ellie quickly picked out two more sets and piled them onto the payment counter. She shot a wink at Clarissa. “These are on me,” she said with a grin as she took her card out and made her payment. “For my dear Uncle Matt’s sake.”

Clarissa hence returned home with a fully loaded bag of clothes. She hurried back into her room and stowed the three sets of “battle outfits” away in the deepest part of her wardrobe before anyone could notice. She smiled cheekily to herself, imagining how they would be of use in the days to come.

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After thinking about it for some time, she settled on hiding the three pieces of clothing inside the drawer with her undergarment.

Matthew would not rummage through these anyway.

Although she was no longer worried, every time she changed she would see them. Clarissa could not help but blush bashfully each time.

She got used to it after a few times. She was still confused about these three pieces of clothing.

Why is it sexy to wear clothes like these?

I don’t see anything sexy about it.

Isn’t sexiness something you’re born with? One is sexy as long as one has a good figure. Wearing skimpy clothes can’t change your figure.

This little scrap of material just doesn’t look good.

Clarissa did not concern herself with the size of her chest. She was not the one who got to enjoy them after all.

Once she stepped out of the shower and changed into pajamas, she went downstairs. She had gone for a photoshoot at Ellie’s company again earlier that day. For that, her best friend even wanted to split the bonus with her.]

As far as Clarissa was concerned, she was only doing her a small favor. However, Ellie was a stubborn girl and she was very insistent on giving it to Clarissa, which put her in a tough spot. Somehow, she felt that there was another reason but Ellie was not telling her about it.

Hence, she went downstairs to see Matthew. He was checking his phone and Clarissa did not think much of it as she assumed that he was checking his mailbox.

She took a seat next to Matthew. She frowned in confusion and raised her head to ask, "Uncle Matthew, today Ellie... What are you looking at?"

The picture looks familiar and it looked like a woman's photo.

Clarissa's face fell. I can't believe Matthew is interested in such things.

She was extremely upset.

Matthew turned his head and looked at her crestfallen expression. He laughed inwardly and his eyes twinkled with amusement.

"Yep. I'm looking at some pretty girl."

Clarissa's brows drew even tighter together.

She wanted to say something, but she did not have a good reason to make an argument.

They say that all men like things like that, both in photo and video form. But how can he be so self-righteous about it even after I caught him red-handed?

He already has me. Why does he need to look at other women?

Am I not good enough?

A wave of sadness and hurt washed over her. Tears welled up in Clarissa's eyes but she tried to keep them from falling. She suppressed the anger within her.

Her tone was flat as she asked Matthew, "Is she as pretty as me?"

Matthew put on a mask of mock sincerity and said, "She is very pretty. Much prettier than you."

The skimpily dressed Clarissa was definitely better looking than the modestly dressed Clarissa!

Clarissa choked on his answer and glared at Matthew. Her fiery gaze conveyed her fury.

"Is she really that pretty? Let me take a look too."

She wanted to see for herself the beauty that Matthew was feasting his eyes on.

Matthew chuckled and handed his phone over to her.

"Let me know what you think too."

Clarissa received the phone, squeezing it tightly in her hand. If she was stronger, she would have crushed it in her grip.

When she opened the photos...

"Ahhhh... Matthew, you jerk... How did you get these photos? You..."

While Clarissa was shrieking, Matthew had snatched the phone back for fear that she would delete the photos.

He smiled an easy smile. His behavior was a stark contrast from Clarissa's exaggerated and awkward panic.

She had screamed so much that her neck had turned red. Matthew reached out and tugged on her arm. Clarissa sat back down again, enveloped in Matthew's embrace.

It was not a loving position. Matthew's collar was soon grabbed by Clarissa as she started to interrogate him, "Did you look in my computer without my permission? Or did Ellie give them to you?"

Matthew smiled helplessly. He covered her small hand with his larger one and extracted it from his collar. "After you ran out that day, I deleted all the inappropriate photos from your

laptop and saw these photos by coincidence. I thought you took such seductive photos for my enjoyment," explained Matthew.

"You a*s..."

Matthew raised an eyebrow. Clarissa plowed on and said, "These photos were meant for me only. Who gave you permission to look at them?"

"What's the point of you enjoying them all by yourself? Why not let me take a look too? It's a win-win."

"What win-win?"

She realized what he meant right after the last word fell from her lips. She gazed at his obsidian eyes and slapped her hand over his mouth.

"Don't say it. I don't want to hear or know about your win-win. Just delete the photos. I'm forbidding you from looking at them."

Matthew blinked and Clarissa removed her hand.

"You're being difficult, Clare."

"Yes, I am! Delete them now!"

"What don't I keep them as part of my benefits?"

"No way."

"Then, when will you let me do it?"

How did we land on this topic?

Clarissa's face flushed and she glared at Matthew. "If you want to do it, delete the photos first."

"If I delete it now, can we do it now?"

"No. But if you don't delete them, we're never doing it."

Matthew stared deeply into Clarissa's eyes. She sure is stubborn. I guess I have no choice but to do what she wants.

"Fine. I'll delete them."

Matthew deleted the photos. Clarissa checked to make sure that he did not have any duplicates. She only relaxed once she was assured that the photo would never be recovered.

Sebastian pressed Clarissa down on the sofa. "Are you happy now?"

Clarissa smiled and touched his face.

"Good boy..."

Matthew scoffed and bit her lip. Is she treating me like a dog?

Although it was true that there were no duplicates in his phone, there were some in his inbox. He could look at the photos whenever he wanted.

Matthew kissed Clarissa forcefully. She is a little green.

After some time, Clarissa mentioned how Ellie was insistent on compensating her.

"I'm only helping her with those photos. Plus, we're such good friends too. I think she's too generous. Although her store is earning good profits, it's not all because of me. I'm really uncomfortable with this. However, she knows my bank account number and directly transferred me a large sum. I only found out later on. I can't shake the feeling that she feels guilt towards me."

Matthew immediately understood Ellie's actions.

She was feeling uneasy because of her parents.

Thus, she came up with a plan for Clarissa to help out at her store. That way, she could compensate her. Moreover, Clarissa was Matthew's partner now.

She was trying to ease her guilt by compensating Clarissa. Ellie had come up with a subtle yet tortuous method.

Matthew chuckled. "Since she wants to give it to you, you should just accept it. Even siblings should separate money matters from private affairs. She paid you with the hope that you'll continue to do good work for her. You don't need to hesitate to keep it."

Clarissa pouted, but she nodded and accepted the money.

Matthew walked into the meeting room with Donnie. He took a seat after greeting a few of the elderly chairmen.

After a two-hour meeting, there was also a business meal. Since the meeting was organized by the government, a lot of businessmen showed up.

Although Sienna attended the business meal as a member of the government, she actually came because of Matthew.

She did not subscribe to the idea that women needed to hold back and wait to be courted by men. If she wanted something, she would put in the effort to fight for it. Thus, she was going all out to get Matthew. Moreover, Matthew was worth her effort and time fighting for. She saw him to be extremely valuable and she had prepared herself to put in the massive amount of work in order to succeed.

Sienna's outfit was business-appropriate but still showcased her feminine beauty. As a proper lady, she had her own beauty despite lacking Clarissa and Shermaine's stunning looks. Hence, many men turned heads when she walked past.

She walked to Matthew's side and smiled a fitting smile.

"What a coincidence, Matt."

Matthew's eyes shifted but he maintained his haughty countenance.

"Ms. Grande."

"Just call me Sienna, Matt."

Instead of replying her, Matthew continued talking to Donnie and discussed business with the other elderly chairmen.

Sienna remained calm and steady. She was extremely composed and capable, so she was acquainted with some of the elderly chairmen and could chat easily with them. She gave off an air of intelligence, and they were only full of praises for her.

Someone mentioned that Matthew and Sienna seemed rather compatible. Sienna smiled and did not protest, which only drew further interest.

In contrast, Matthew rebuked in a standoffish manner, "No way. Ms. Grande is too impressive and I'm not worthy of her. Moreover, my heart already belongs to someone else."

Warm smiles followed the initial shock. They started to tease Matthew about who his beloved was and asked when the wedding was going to take place. He dismissed them by saying that it would be soon.

He made it look that it was real.

Sienna stood by the side holding a glass of wine. She shook her head inwardly.

I can't believe Matthew came up with such an excuse just to reject me.

Fine. The harder the journey, the sweeter the prize. Sienna smiled and returned to mingling. She did not interact with Matthew for the rest of the event.

When the event ended, Sienna personally sent all the giants of the business world out. She performed her job perfectly, which made them all feel comfortable.

When she saw Matthew, she suddenly blurted, "It's the weekend tomorrow. Are you free, Matt? How about meeting up for a meal?"

Matthew's eyes flashed.

"Please don't waste your time on me, Ms. Grande. I already said that my heart belongs to someone else."

Sienna was unbothered. She smiled and asked, "The Tysons aren't aware of your beloved. It is safe for me to say that this beloved of yours either doesn't exist or your family doesn't approve of her?"

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Sienna's question cut deep.

However, she was leaning more towards the assumption that the woman in question did not exist.

Otherwise, it might be Shermaine.

Even so, it won't be a problem.

Frankly, the Tysons did not approve of Shermaine either.

"If you're single, why not give me a try? How do you know that you won't like me if you don't give it a shot first? If you're really in love with someone, how can the both of you last if your family is against her? You should take a chance on me. You'll be able to appease your family and give me a chance to fairly compete with your beloved."

Matthew's expression turned grim. Sienna appeared proper and was not forceful. She was eloquent and appropriate.

Any other man would consider her proposal.

However, this was Matthew.

Matthew rejected her outright. Derision flashed across his obsidian gaze.

"I must reject you, Ms. Grande."

Matthew immediately sped away in his car.

Sienna was left standing there and watching his disappearing car. She smiled as her resolution intensified.

How cold is that. But I really want him.

Sienna guffawed with what was seemingly delight.

On the other hand, Clarissa was troubled with something else.

She was cracking her head with what to get Matthew on his birthday present.

Although she had planned on giving herself to him, it seemed too direct. It's not like I can tie a bow around myself and present myself to him in a gift box.

I need an actual present.

She had thought about it long and hard but still could not decide on what to give him. A watch is definitely out of the question. A tie is too lame. Then, there are the standard gifts like books, along with bags and belts. But, I can't afford any of them which are to his taste.

In the end, she had no choice but to turn to her good friend.

"A gift? Aren't you already one?"

Ellie was very straightforward. Clarissa blushed furiously.

Thankfully, they were on a video call. If they were next to each other, Clarissa would be at the mercy of Ellie's teasing.

"No, Ellie. I can't just wake up and tell your Uncle Matt that I'm giving myself to him as a birthday gift. The timing needs to be right. It seems weird to do it in the morning."

Ellie burst into laughter, which went on for a while. "That's even better. I guarantee that Uncle Matt will be more than willing. Spend the day in bed. He'll never be able to forget such a special and memorable birthday. Why don't you give it a try?" urged Ellie.

"Ellie!"

Clarissa shrieked. What a lousy idea!

Ellie was still laughing, and it looked like she was incapable of stopping.

Finally, Clarissa scoffed in frustration and hung up.

There's no point in asking Ellie for help. I'm better off roaming the mall on my own. I might be able to find a good gift there.

One could not go into a regular mall to buy a gift for Matthew Tyson. Sienna walked into a mall that was catered for designers' brands. There were not many people inside. Perhaps it was due to the fact that it was a weekday. It is expensive to shop here after all. Ordinary people don't have pockets deep enough to shop here.

She shopped around on her own. After making one round, she still had not found anything suitable. Instead, she had bought a bag for herself. She would be skimping on meals for the rest of the month.

Although she was not poor, she still needed to be careful about her spending after splurging on the bag. At the end of the day, buying bags was her only hobby and she was careful not to go overboard.

After walking around aimlessly, she ended up buying an expensive tie at the suggestion of a friendly sales lady.

Fine. It might be a bit lame, but the lady said that it's the most practical way to tie a man down. Who cares if it's lame then?

"Please wait while I wrap up your tie, Ms. Quigley."

Clarissa nodded and smiled. She sat down and allowed her eyes to drift. While she was waiting, two women walked in.

One of them was middle-aged, while the other was younger.

"He's so aloof yet you insist on chasing after him. I had no idea that my sister would go to such lengths for a man."

The younger woman smiled and responded, "But he's worth it!"

The two women approached and stumbled upon Clarissa. They could not help but glance at the gorgeous woman before they continued shopping.

“Your stubborn personality comes from Dad. All I can do is wish you success. I hope he falls in love with you soon.”

“Thanks.”

“What are sisters for? I took leave from work today to accompany you. Everything will be fine as long as you succeed. By the way, is he going to have a birthday party?”

“Yuliana said that his mother wants to have one.”

“Is she trying to set up some huge blind date using this birthday?”

“I’m not sure. So what if she is? I’m not afraid of those other women.”

“Wow, look at that confidence of yours.”

“What do you think of this, sis?”

“A tie? Not bad. It has good symbolism.”

Clarissa was not intentionally trying to listen in on their conversation. However, the store was empty except for them and the saleslady. The sisters were also not talking in hushed tones. Hence, Clarissa was still able to hear most of their conversation while she scrolled through her phone.

By the time the sisters were done picking the tie, Clarissa’s gift was wrapped. She glanced at their tie. It was nice and was a deep color. The man she likes is probably not the friendliest person.

Clarissa smiled, nodded at the saleslady, and walked out of the store with her present.

Soon, the ladies’ tie was also wrapped.

Clarissa walked to the car park. She did not usually drive, but it was during office hours. It was easier for her to familiarise herself with the roads in D City this way, and it was not crowded. She drove one of Matthew’s cars out.

Clarissa had just driven away when the sisters walked out.

Mrs. Reed said to Sienna, "All the young and pretty girls nowadays are rich! Why are men so generous to throw their money at these girls?"

Mrs. Reed's tone was veiling scorn.

Sienna smiled. "How can you be certain that that girl is like that? Her family might be rich, or she might be capable and earned the money using her own merit."

Mrs. Reed shook her head. "You give people too much credit. No girl her age can afford the car she's driving, her branded bag, and the tie she bought. I'm just guessing. Who knows?"

Even if it was just a guess, Mrs. Reed was certain the pretty girl was living off a man's wealth.

Sienna shook her head and chuckled. "Let's go."

Clarissa returned to the Zen Highlands and hid the tie away. It seems like recently, all I'm doing is sneaking around. It makes me feel like a thief.

But this is the process of gift-giving. I can't help but feel excited.

A few days later, Old Mrs. Tyson brought up Matthew's birthday when he returned to the Tyson residence.

"You've been busy the last couple of years and even spent your birthdays very casually. I'm taking charge this year. I'm going to do it up. No one has come to visit me recently. The house is too empty and I don't like it."

Old Mrs. Tyson's comments were directed at Matthew.

Shermaine used to visit her often, and the house was full of life. But now that Shermaine was filming overseas, there was no one left to accompany Old Mrs. Tyson. It was natural that the house felt empty.

Who could rebuke this reason?

It was useless for the person in question, Matthew, to protest.

Old Mrs. Tyson had already decided. Regardless of Matthew's refusal, he would need to spend his birthday at home.

An elaborate birthday banquet awaited him on that day.

"If you don't show up on that day, I will sever all ties with you."

After hearing that threat, Matthew gave up.

Since Matthew did not oppose her, Old Mrs. Tyson smiled calmly and said, "Okay, enough about this. I heard Yuliana mention that Sienna told her directly about her plans to court you. That girl sure is interesting. I like a straightforward girl. People should just be open. I like her. Do you really feel nothing for her?"

Matthew did not reply. He fished out a cigarette and started smoking.

"Why are you smoking?"

Old Mrs. Tyson was not happy. "Fine. Can't you take a little nagging? I'll stop. Having you as a son is definitely some sort of punishment I'm serving for my bad karma."

"Don't be angry, Mom. What are we going to do for the birthday banquet?"

Yuliana took her husband's hint and rushed to soothe Old Mrs. Tyson. She was afraid that Matthew would really erupt if this went on.

While Old Mrs. Tyson was distracted, Matthias said to his brother, "Mom is old now. She needs some excitement. It's just a birthday banquet. You can leave after showing your face here for a little bit. It won't take much time."

Matthew made a sound of acknowledgment after some time.

Matthias patted Matthew's shoulder with relief.

The two brothers fell silent. Matthew left after he was done smoking.

When he arrived at Zen Highlands, he found Clarissa sitting on the sofa with her legs crossed. A wool blanket was draped over her legs. She looked up and smiled at him when she saw him. The beautiful sight thawed Matthew's frozen heart.

“Why are you back so early?”

She knew Matthew had gone to the Tyson residence for a meal. However, he was home earlier than usual.

Matthew did not reply. He walked up to her and lifted her up. Clarissa yelped and her limbs instinctively wrapped around his body.

Clarissa smiled coyly. “What’s up with you?”

Matthew replied in a low and magnetic voice, “I miss you.”

He planted his lips on hers.

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Clarissa started preparing the food for Matthew’s birthday party a few days in advance.

She did not know how many people would come, or whether Matthew would invite his best buddies. Either way, eight dishes should do it. She had even gotten some wine ready. It was more than enough even if it was just the two of them.

Of course, if it really was just the two of them, she could prepare the candles early on. She had never done a candlelight dinner before, but she was sure it would go really well with her cooking.

Matthew’s birthday was on Friday. He still had to go to work that day.

Usually, Clarissa would sleep in until nine or ten in the morning, but on that day, she had quietly set an alarm. While Matthew was off on his morning run, she got out of bed and went to make pasta.

Every year for Clarissa’s birthday, her grandmother would make her tagliatelle in the morning.

It had become a habit, and Clarissa figured that this was how it should be for birthdays.

When Matthew came back from his run, Clarissa, donned in an apron, was already waiting for him at the kitchen door, a broad grin plastered on her face.

“Happy birthday, dear Uncle Matthew.”

Matthew’s lips curved upwards into a smirk. He moved closer to her, pinched her on the chin, and gently pecked her on the lips.

“Yes. Very happy, indeed.”

With a pretty lady like you by my side every day, how can I not be happy?

Clarissa giggled, hands on Matthew’s chest, coyly rejecting his invitation to a deep kiss. “No, we’re not having that,” she said. “Go take a shower, change your clothes, and then come down for pasta.”

“Pasta?”

Clarissa smiled at him. “Yes, I’m making tagliatelle. Should be almost done.”

She slipped into the kitchen, ready to boil the tagliatelle strips which she had made from pasta dough that morning. Clarissa seldom made her own pasta, so she had no idea how it would turn out.

Matthew chuckled softly and headed upstairs to shower.

Sometime later, when he got downstairs, Clarissa came out with a bowl of pasta in her hands. She seemed quite excited. She walked over to him, held his hand, led him to his seat, and then handed him a fork.

“Go on. Take a big bite.”

Using the fork, he spun the tagliatelle until it resembled a giant ball before popping it into his mouth. Under his lover’s gaze, he chewed with all his might and eventually swallowed everything.

Fortunately, the amount of pasta he had gathered in one mouthful was not too big. Otherwise, he would have made a pig of himself.

“Haha... That’s wonderful, Uncle Matthew. Happy birthday! This is my gift to you.”

Clarissa wished him a happy birthday again. At the same time, from behind her, she revealed the tie which she got for him as a present.

Matthew arched his brows while Clarissa beamed at him. “Shall I put it on for you?” she offered.

“Sure.”

She undid the tie Matthew was wearing and replaced it with the present. Her technique was clumsy, and the end product did not look very nice, but Clarissa was an expert at self-consolation.

She had practiced many times and this was her official trial. It was quite impressive already.

Clarissa lifted her head and stood in front of Matthew, admiring her handiwork with great satisfaction as it complemented Matthew perfectly.

She could not help but smile sweetly as she looked at her lover. Pride and smugness were written all over his face. He looked so cute that she wanted so much to launch herself into his arms and indulge in intimacy.

And that was exactly what Matthew did. He wrapped his arms around the woman’s waist, allowing their bodies to get closer. Clarissa smiled skittishly as she placed her hands on his chest, her body pressing onto his.

“What’s this?”

Matthew smirked. “Are you that happy?”

Clarissa was indeed happy. She felt that the tie around his neck meant that he was currently tied down by her.

She nodded, her hand stroking Matthew’s tie.

“Of course. That’s because...”

Because of what, she did not say immediately.

There was a long, pregnant pause before she giggled. Then, standing on tiptoe, she wrapped her arms around his neck and whispered suggestively in his ear.

“That’s because... you’re tied down by me now.”

After that, Clarissa gazed into Matthew’s dark eyes—one twinkling with glee, the other filled with tenderness.

Matthew finally acted on it. Lowering his head, he kissed the woman heavily on the lips. As they were entangled in each other, Matthew wondered what it would be like to devour her whole.

Much later, Clarissa registered some sounds coming from the kitchen. It was only then that she realized Mrs. Lawson was making breakfast there.

Blushing with embarrassment, Clarissa gently shoved Matthew away, whispering shyly, “Mrs. Lawson’s still here. You should sit down for breakfast. I’ll have dinner ready In the evening, so you better leave some room for that and not eat too much at your family home, alright?”

It was a given that Matthew had to celebrate his birthday with his family.

She was aware of that. Matthew had told her. What he failed to mention was that his mother would be in charge of his birthday party.

In other words, he would have to stay at the Tyson residence for some time before coming back to her.

And that was the reason why Clarissa said what she said.

Matthew gave her a peck on the lips again before leaving the house.

After seeing him off, Clarissa got herself busy.

First, she would head out with Mrs. Lawson to personally purchase fresh ingredients she needed, including baking supplies. This was her first time baking a cake, so she would have to experiment first in case it might not go well.

She had lots to do that day.

In the afternoon, Clarissa's second cake looked good enough. She tried her newly beaten cream and, confident that the third time would be the charm, she started doing it all over again.

Right about the same time, Ellie drove back to the Tyson residence, where she was welcomed by a lively setup. She gaped in confusion at its magnificence.

"Grandma, what's all this? It's Uncle Matt's birthday, not some anniversary! You're literally putting on a show by making it so grand!"

The housemaids looked like they had their work cut out for them.

Margaret merely laughed it off. "Ellie, this is nothing. It's just a birthday party. I've invited some friends over."

Ellie's face turned stone-cold upon hearing that.

She had a pretty good idea what sort of 'friends' her grandmother had invited to Uncle Matt's birthday.

Ellie was not pleased with that, but she suppressed her fury. She looked over to her mother who was helping out elsewhere. She hated all of this.

Throwing courtesy out the window, she talked back at the old woman, "Grandma, you shouldn't have done this. If Uncle Matt's willing to go ahead with whatever you have planned, pigs will fly! He's not going to like this, and when he finds out, that little bit of patience and affection he has left will be completely wiped out, no thanks to you and Mom. I bet you'll be so happy."

"My child, what are you saying? How could you talk to your grandmother like that?"

Yuliana, who overheard her daughter, snapped.

Young lady, you've been acting so strange lately.

Margaret was cross with her as well. "Ellie, I'm your elder. I'm just planning a birthday party for your Uncle Matt, what's so wrong with that? Who do you think I'm doing this for? I'm doing it for him, and for this family!"

Margaret felt hurt to have been wronged by her kin. She was doing the best she could so that her son could get married one day. But her son would not listen, and now her granddaughter was being so rude to her!

Ellie furrowed her brows upon receiving her mother's sharp, warning glare. She turned away from them.

Indeed, they were doing all this for Uncle Matt's own good, but that was solely based on their own opinions.

They had never thought about it from Uncle Matt's perspective. They had never considered what he wanted. Most importantly, the family's obsession with privileges and 'good matches' was the reason why the romance between Uncle Matt and Clare could not come to light.

Ellie hated that the most.

"It's okay, Mom. You don't have to get angry over Ellie's childish temper. She's always been close to her uncle. She probably can't accept that after Matthew takes a wife, she won't be the focus of his affection anymore. She's just jealous."

Yuliana explained in order to appease Margaret. Ellie wanted to deny all that, but once again she was confronted by her mother's warning gaze. So, she swallowed her indignation instead.

After some thought, she simply left the scene and went into her room.

She called Clarissa. During the video call, Clarissa seemed to be busy, albeit brimming with excitement. Sweat lined her forehead but her cheeks were a healthy pink.

"What are you doing?"

Clarissa grinned. "What am I going? Preparing dinner, of course. It's your uncle's birthday, isn't it?"

"Dinner? But Uncle Matt's coming home for dinner tonight!"

"I know. He told me. He's going back for a while but will save some room for dinner with me. I'm baking him a cake! I'm getting quite proud of myself, actually. If I want something done, I can definitely do it well. If you want, I can bake you a cake for your birthday. No need to thank me!"

Ellie's chest tightened as she began to panic.

She had just learned that Clare was busy making preparations to celebrate with Uncle Matt. But, on the other hand, her side of the family had arranged for her uncle to meet a whole host of women once he arrived home.

This is outrageous!

Ellie did not look so good, and Clarissa spotted that when she happened to look at her screen. "Ellie, what's going on? You don't seem too happy."

"Oh, it's nothing. I was just wondering about when the time would be for you and Uncle Matt to disclose your relationship."

Clarissa chuckled softly. "What's the rush? I'm not going anywhere."

She liked it this way. Sure, they did not make their relationship public, but they were free to do whatever they want this way. They did not have to face pressure from the public or the Tysons.

Anyway, they were currently in their little love bubble, and all she wanted was to have a private relationship with Matthew and enjoy the bliss for as long as possible.

As for the future, she would not want to dwell too much on it.

Elli could not help but ask, "Aren't you worried... that something might go wrong?"

"Like what?"

“Like, what if other women come into the picture? Aren’t you afraid of that?”

“Of course I am. I even worry there might be other men. Haha...”

Clarissa chuckled. She only meant it as a joke.

Ellie nodded at her statement. “I think so too. You have so many outstanding qualities, Clare. I’m sure there are hordes of men lining up for you. Humph, if my uncle sets his sights on other women, I’ll definitely introduce more young and handsome men to you. We’ll see who wins the race!”

Clarissa laughed at the idea. Ellie also felt a little better.

They talked for a little while more before Ellie hung up and headed downstairs.

In just a short moment, a crowd of visitors had already arrived at the manor.

Among them were Margaret’s friends, but those old women had each brought along with them a young lady. Ellie’s eyes twitched at the sight of all those women. It’s almost like they’re arranging concubines for the emperor to choose from.

You’ll Fall for Me, Today or Tomorrow Chapter 160

“Ellie! I was about to call you to come downstairs. Come, let me introduce you to some friends.”

Yuliana introduced the women to her daughter. “Young people like yourselves should have lots of things to talk about. Enjoy!”

Apparently, her mother had put her in charge of accompanying the guests.

Ellie reluctantly walked over to the group of young women and sat down with them.

As they sat together, the women never seemed to stop talking about Matthew.

Ellie, burying her annoyance, casually responded to their chat.

Eventually, she got tired of it and simply scrolled on her phone, ignoring them. Those women seemed to have noticed Ellie's mood as well. They stopped interacting with her.

Some of the smarter ones went ahead to entertain Margaret, while others sought out Yuliana. They merely saw Ellie as their junior and believed Matthew's niece was of no help to them.

In return, Ellie got the peace she wanted.

It was already getting dark outside, since the days were shorter in the winter. Nevertheless, the Tysons had their house brightly lit inside and out.

Sienna and Matthew made their entrance one after another. When Yuliana saw them, she quickly abandoned the other women. She was obviously more hospitable towards Sienna compared to the rest.

"Sienna, what a surprise to see you with Matthew! Did he pick you up himself?"

Yuliana's comment had been suggestive on purpose.

Sienna responded quite generously. "We ran into each other at the gate, that's all. Yuliana, I hope I'm not late."

"No, of course you're not. Come in, come in. Matthew, I'll leave Sienna in your care. I have to tend to other guests."

Yuliana shoved Sienna towards Matthew. Her attempt to set them up was too obvious.

The other women were not happy with what they saw. They knew about Sienna, being from the same circle after all and having met on several occasions. They never thought they would meet such a strong competitor here.

Ellie looked on apathetically. Sienna seemed to be much more cunning than Shermaine.

Sienna did not show a single trace of smugness just because she 'seemed' close to Matthew. Her expression, her smile, and her attitude remained casual and appropriate, and she did not let herself seem too intimate or too distant.

“Matt, happy birthday.”

Sienna presented her gift to Matthew, who did not even give it as much as a glimpse. He accepted the item and thanked her with little emotion.

“Thanks.”

The other women at the scene caught on. They hurried over to Matthew with their gifts and wished him a happy birthday.

Ellie chose this time to play the part of a generous host. “Come, ladies. I’ll be safeguarding your presents on my uncle’s behalf. You can leave them to me.”

She took all the gifts and then set them aside, providing Matthew some relief.

He took the opportunity to head upstairs.

The women could not hide their flushed cheeks as their hearts threatened to pop out. They felt honored to have been in such close contact with Matthew. Each of them desperately wished that the man would fall in love with them. Somehow, everyone was confident that they had shown their best side, and had even made themselves believe that Matthew must be watching and observing them from the shadows.

They gradually sat down with hints of bashfulness and reserve on their faces. When another round of conversation started, they were in such desperate need to display their intelligence that they dropped their trivial talk about jewelry and luxury handbags altogether.

Ellie listened to their conversation from the sidelines. The women began to discuss current events, business, and then eventually Faulkner, Hemingway, Van Gogh...

Ugh...

Ellie sneered. She then glanced at Sienna, who sat there scrolling on her phone, adding nothing to the conversation. Shortly after that, she rose from her seat and went to look for Yuliana. The two of them seemed to have a lot more in common to talk about.

Their behavior was certainly getting on Ellie’s nerves.

Uncle Matt is just one man, right? He's a good man, but does that mean all the good men in the world belong to them? Uncle Matt is so obviously uninterested in any of those women. Do they even realize that they don't stand a chance?

Ellie snorted and made her way upstairs too.

Matthew happened to be in the study, playing chess with George. Ellie popped in, made herself comfortable, and proceeded to complain about the women downstairs.

"I swear, those women downstairs are so desperate, it almost seems laughable. Have all the men in the world gone extinct? They never take their eyes off you, Uncle Matt. I mean it, they're just one step away from ripping your clothes off!"

George coughed once as his eyes flitted to his granddaughter, clearly not in favor of her manner of speech.

But Ellie curled her lips. "Grandpa, you can cough, but I'm just telling it like it is. Do you really think Uncle Matt can't find the right woman? Honestly, the way you all rush into things is embarrassing. The women out there are going to think that Uncle Matt is going to be single for life. If this goes on, Uncle Matt will become a man of second quality."

"I'm not in a rush. Your grandmother is."

George never intervened in matters like this. He preferred to let others make a fuss over it.

He was the one least bothered by these worldly affairs. After retirement, he had been living a life of leisure, never worrying about anything and never needing to. He enjoyed a quiet life.

Even when his wife flew off the wall, he did not care.

"But can't you talk some sense into Grandma? She doesn't understand Uncle Matt at all. He's just not looking for a girlfriend at the moment, otherwise... do they really think he needs their help to get a girl?"

Ellie turned to face her uncle. "Isn't that right, Uncle Matt?"

Matthew agreed with her, "Yup."

"See, Grandpa? You can't just stand by and let them run the show. It'll be bad if both sides go head to head with each other."

George examined the chessboard carefully and, after pondering for some time, moved a black pawn forward. He lifted his head and faced Ellie. "Is there a secret between the two of you that I should know about?"

"No, Grandpa. We don't have any secrets. What makes you think that?"

Ellie eagerly denied it at first, but the fact that she overdid it made her seem guilty.

So, she shifted her tone. "Grandpa, even if there's a secret between Uncle Matt and I, that's our secret. You shouldn't ask about it. I have lots of secrets growing up. Why do you ask?"

"Right..."

The old man mulled over it before asking another question. "You've been acting quite strangely when it comes to your uncle's marriage. Are you hiding something from us?"

Ellie pursed her lips. "I see you all forcing Uncle Matt into these arrangements, and I can't stand it. I have always admired Uncle Matt. For someone of his great stature to be forced by his own family to get married, with so little freedom... I just can't stand it."

Indeed, that was exactly what had been on her mind.

Even without Clarissa in the picture, she really thought that way.

The old man glanced at Matthew. "So, is there a woman I don't know about?"

Matthew gazed intently at the chessboard, not at all shaken by his father's question.

He lifted his eyes ever so slightly and replied, "Whether I have one or not, I'll take charge of my own marriage."

The old man grew silent.

"Fine. After tonight, I'll have a talk with your mother."

“Oh, that’s great to hear, Grandpa. If you do that, I’m sure Grandma will listen. Grandpa, you’re wonderful! I love you so much!”

Ellie, fueled by excitement, pulled her grandfather into a hug and gave him an affectionate kiss as an expression of gratitude.

Her actions tickled George, but the old man pretended to be disgusted by intimacy. “For goodness’ sake, Ellie. You’re a grown woman now. This is inappropriate.”

“Oh, let me have my way, Grandpa. I love you too much. You’re the best. Haha…”

Matthew could not stay in his peaceful bubble for long either. They could not hide up there all night. Eventually, they had to get back downstairs.

Once they returned to the world below, the guests huddled around the man of the hour with a birthday cake. They lit the candles and asked that he make a wish.

Matthew would never do any of those.

It was Ellie who did them on his behalf. She blew the candles and cut the cake, apparently in a much better mood.

Matthew was surrounded by several women. Their enthusiasm and his indifference formed a sharp contrast, so much so that even Margaret’s attempts to mediate were proven ineffective, leading to an awkward silence.

Because of that, some of the guests had gotten upset and decided to leave early.

In the end, not many people remained, but Sienna still stuck around.

She had yet to feel defeated. She had already expected Matthew would turn out like this.

She waited until there was no one else around the man, when he was finally alone, before approaching him.

Some time in between, she managed to retrieve her gift and presented it to Matthew in person once again.

"Matt, I want to personally give you my present again. It'd be such a shame if it were left in a pile together with the others."

Sienna tried to ease the tension with a joke.

At the same time, she also opened the box and showed her present to Matthew. It was a tie.

Yuliana cut in out of the blue. A smile had crept up her face. "Matthew, Sienna certainly has a good eye for presents. That tie suits you just nicely. Why don't you put it on? The one you're wearing right now doesn't match you at all. Gosh, a man like you is hopeless without a woman around to take care of you. Go on, Matthew, hurry up and get rid of that nasty tie. Sienna, why don't you help Matthew put on that tie you have there?"

Yuliana's teasing suddenly received a stern glare from Matthew.

For a moment, she was taken aback, not knowing why the young man had shot her such a scary look.

Naturally, Sienna would never do what Matthew disapproved of.

She chuckled. "Oh, it's not my place."

Yet Margaret volunteered. "I'll do it, then. Matthew, you should know that I was the one who helped you into your first tie. Don't you remember?"

Margaret took the new tie from Sienna's hands and proceeded to put it around her son's neck.

But Matthew avoided her like the plague.

"No. That's enough. Thank you."

Matthew snatched the tie from his mother's grasp to stop her from constantly pestering him.

"Fine. You'd better keep it nicely. It's a very precious gift."

Matthew grew impatient. He checked the time on his wristwatch and announced, "I'm leaving."

“What? So soon? But the night’s still young.”

“There’s work to take care of...”

He headed out after giving an excuse.

The anxious old lady quickly shot a look at Yuliana who, without saying a word, ran after her brother-in-law with Sienna in tow.

She managed to stop Matthew before he sped off in his car.

“Matthew, now’s not the time to argue. Be a dear and give Sienna a ride home, will you? She came to the party alone. It wouldn’t be right to let her go back unaccompanied, don’t you agree?”

With that said, Yuliana opened the door for Sienna to get into the front passenger seat.

Matthew was forced into the situation too quickly. His sister-in-law’s intention was too obvious.

Matthew cast a dubious gaze at Yuliana. He said nothing, but the way he looked at her sent shivers down her spine.