

You'll Fall for Me, Today or Tomorrow

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Their curiosity embarrassed Clarissa.

Cognizant of what Clarissa was worried about, Yael whispered softly to her, "All of them work at the studio. There's no point hiding the fact from them."

Clarissa felt the same way and hence, nodded in agreement.

Mandy was a curious girl and kept asking Clarissa about Matthew.

Clarissa simply explained that he was a businessman and nothing more.

Once Matthew had arrived, they went downstairs and prepared to leave.

Parking his car at the entrance, Matthew got down out of courtesy when he saw the group approaching.

When Mandy saw him, she gaped at how dashing Matthew was. Matthew walked straight up to Clarissa and hugged her by the waist. After that, he kissed her on her lips till she blushed bashfully. Satisfied, he then turned his attention toward her colleagues.

Obviously, Yael already knew him while the other girls were of no interest to him. His purpose today was to stake his claim over Clarissa in front of the other two men. He wanted to declare that she was his so that they would not dare have any designs on her.

That was Matthew's real reason for coming tonight.

As his cold and sharp gaze fell upon the two men, the intimidating vibe he emitted caused their knees to buckle.

Meanwhile, Mandy wondered how Clarissa interacted with her boyfriend given how terrifying he was.

Watching by the side, Yael easily saw through what Matthew was attempting to do.

Snorting in her heart, she remarked daringly, "Mr. Tyson, don't scare the kids."

Only then did Clarissa quickly introduce Matthew to them.

"This is my boyfriend, Matthew. Matthew, these are my colleagues at the studio. You have met Yael, so this is Christian, Mandy, and Rocky."

Matthew nodded politely and toned down the intimidating vibe he was emitting.

The three of them just smiled awkwardly, it was Mandy who broke the ice. "Hi, Matthew."

Realizing how tensed the situation was, Clarissa quickly pulled Matthew aside and left.

Once they were out of sight, Mandy sighed in an exaggerated manner.

"Matthew comes off as being really scary..."

Christian nodded vehemently. "Exactly. Mr. Tyson looks really smart. Yael, you seem to know him, don't you?"

"Mmm-hmm, he is my ex-boss."

"Wow, Yael's previous boss. Doesn't that make him even more impressive?"

Rocky took out his phone quietly and did a search on Matthew. And then...

He put it back into his pocket, wondering if he should tell the other two.

Given how they are gawking now. Can they be any more shocked if I told them the truth?

Meanwhile, inside the car, Clarissa pushed Matthew away after he kissed her.

"Why were you so keen to pick me up? Are you checking up on me?"

Matthew pinched her cheeks with a smile, "Am I that petty?"

"Of course not! Uncle Matthew is extremely open-minded." she praised him while cursing inside.

You are such an a*s!

Matthew brushed his thumb across her cheeks and snorted softly, "What are you thinking about? You must be cursing me in your heart, am I right?"

"Of course not," Clarissa replied convincingly while letting out a mesmerizing smile.

She put her arms around Matthew's neck and buried herself in his embrace, and yawned a few times.

"You're the best. It's simply impossible to find anyone better than you. I won't scold you because I'm not someone who does that sort of thing, let alone curse you behind your back."

Despite feeling sleepy, Clarissa's flattery knew no bounds. She blurted out whatever came to her mind. It was obvious there was zero sincerity behind her words.

Meanwhile, Matthew was tempted to tease her a little longer. But when he saw how sleepy she was from all the yawning, he couldn't bring himself to do it.

Holding her tightly in his arms, he gently stroked her back.

"Alright, you are right about everything."

In her drowsiness, Clarissa snuggled up to his chest and smiled sheepishly to herself.

By the time they reached home, she was already asleep. Matthew gently carried her upstairs and put her to bed. With a slight tumble, she wrapped herself in her own blanket. Before he knew it, she threw out all her clothes from underneath the blanket before wrapping herself up and slept.

At that moment, Matthew watched on in amusement while standing by the bed.

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The next day, Clarissa went to see her mom at the Garrett residence. Recently, her relationship with Hilary improved a lot. Hilary no longer nagged her about getting married. In the few times that she mentioned it, Clarissa would provide her a cursory response.

The reason she visited Hilary was that Catherine had mentioned that it was Hilary's birthday. And that was how she still remembered it.

She bought the latest necklace from a luxury brand and figured that Hilary would love it.

However, when she arrived, she found out that Hilary wasn't celebrating it today.

Nevertheless, Hilary was still delighted to know Clarissa remembered her birthday and to also receive such a beautiful present.

"Clary, thank you. All these years, I have not fulfilled my responsibilities as a mother. I am grateful enough for the fact that you didn't hold it against me. Really..."

Just as Hilary spoke, tears welled up in her eyes as she was on the brink of crying.

However, Clarissa was unfazed by her words. After all, only Hilary herself knew how sincere her words were.

Now that there wasn't any conflict between them, Hilary would naturally be on good terms with her. But in the event there were overlapping interests, Clarissa was likely to be abandoned again.

Clarissa was aware of the cold hard truth.

Therefore, her current efforts were just for keeping up with the show.

"Mom, don't say that. Since there's no one at home, why don't we eat out? I'll give you a treat since it's your birthday."

"There's no need for that. The maid has already cooked. When I actually have my birthday celebration, would you like to come?"

When she extended the invitation, Hilary didn't sound excited at all.

Grasping the situation, Clarissa rejected it right away. "No, it will just be awkward if I attend."

"Alright then."

Clarissa heaved a sigh of relief. Since there was no one at home in the afternoon, she accompanied Hilary for lunch.

Just when they were done, Yvonne returned home.

The moment she saw Clarissa, her expression changed drastically. Beyond the usual contempt, her eyes were also filled with hatred.

She still held a grudge against Clarissa for causing her to be taught a lesson the last time.

However, despite her animosity, Yvonne wasn't as feisty as she used to be. Perhaps, she knew better now.

"I'm surprised to see you here today. Have you not gone home yet?"

She was even interested to make small talk with Clarissa.

"Mmm-hmm, I'm here to see my mom."

"Are you planning to get married in D City?"

"No, I'm just here for work."

"Haha... that's true. After all, you're a graduate of D University. So getting a decent job shouldn't be difficult. By the way, I have just gotten engaged. Did your mom tell you about it? Anyway, you're invited to the engagement ceremony."

"Congratulations."

"Hehe..."

Amidst her giggle, there was a certain smugness in her expression.

Despite Clarissa not asking, Yvonne couldn't resist showing off.

"My fiancé is a Wynter. I suppose you don't know who they are. Hehe... why don't you do a search online and find out?"

Clarissa was speechless.

What sort of coincidence is this?

She smirked silently to herself, unable to describe what she felt.

The Wynters again?

Who is it?

Do I know him?

When she saw Clarissa's stunned expression, Yvonne was even more elated.

She snorted, "Alright, I've got to go. I just came back to change. Hilary, I'm going out tonight, so I won't be having dinner at home."

With that, she went upstairs to change before leaving.

Only then did Hilary begin to explain, "The Wynters are a prominent family in D City. Since she has invited you to the engagement ceremony, you will have to be mindful of your behavior. Don't cause any trouble by embarrassing yourself. However, I didn't expect Yvonne to find such a wonderful man after toning down her attitude. She must have had help from the maternal side of her family. Given how pretty you are, it's a pity you're not a real member of the Garretts. Or else, you will definitely find a better husband than hers."

Ignoring the topic about whether she will marry well, Clarissa asked instead, "I have heard of the Wynters. However, do you know the name of her fiancé?"

"Mason Wynter. I'm sure you don't know him. Anyway, enough talk about this. I heard Jonathan mention that both of you have been keeping in contact recently? I'm glad you enjoy a good relationship as siblings. It seems Jonathan fancies you..."

Hilary continued to ramble on.

When Clarissa returned to Zen Highlands in the afternoon, she contacted Damon to ask about Mason.

“Clare, how do you know him? Mason is my second cousin from my Grand-uncle’s side. He is a shady character. Why are you asking about him?”

Clarissa was stumped but didn’t hide anything. She related to Damon everything about Mason and Yvonne.

“Therefore, I’m worried that I’ll bump into your family at the engagement ceremony. I’m sure you know about my relationship with Matthew but they still don’t. If Shermaine happened to be there, it will definitely be awkward.”

“There’s nothing to be concerned about. Our family will definitely not be attending as that cousin is a bas*ard. He is someone we do not acknowledge as our own sibling. However, my grand-uncle pampers him a lot as Mason is his only grandson. Hence, he plans to leave all his assets to him. However, his sisters aren’t going to allow him to inherit the assets without a fight. Anyway, it’s just a mess over at their end. We will definitely not be going, let alone Shermaine.”

“Alright... that’s good to know.”

Clarissa was put at ease.

After the discussion ended, there was an awkward silence between them. Ever since Damon found out that she patched up with Matthew, both of them seldom kept in touch. Even as friends, it still felt uneasy.

After ending the call, Clarissa felt that Yvonne and Mason were really suited for each other given how unscrupulous they both were. After all, birds of the same feather flock together.

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Meanwhile, Clarissa invited Jeremy and the others to have dinner at Zen Highlands. Since it was not easy to be able to get them all together, she began preparing dinner in advance.

In the afternoon, Ellie arrived at Zen Highlands. As she seldom came here, she ranted about Matthew in an exaggerated fashion.

"I'm sure you're not aware that Zen Highlands is Uncle Matt's personal domain. Even my family has to ask for permission before coming over. It's the same for my grandparents, let alone for someone like me. Clare, I'm not exaggerating when I tell you that I don't really know how Zen Highlands looks like. On my previous visits, I only sat in the living room and would leave after they were done talking. Tell me, is he still the same person?"

Clarissa laughed, "You're just being a drama queen. There's no way your uncle will forbid you from coming over to Zen Highlands."

"It's a possibility!"

Shaking her head, Clarissa couldn't help but smile. "If you feel like coming anytime in the future, I will definitely not stop you."

Ellie replied with a smile, "Err, I'm not sure if Uncle Matt is still the same person but I definitely know you're going to be my dear Aunt Clare!"

Clarissa was embarrassed when Ellie addressed her that way.

She threw a clove of garlic in Ellie's direction. "Stop the nonsense and peel the garlic for me."

"Alright, Aunt Clare. Whatever you say, Aunt Clare."

"Shut up!"

"Yes, Aunt Clare... Hahaha."

Unable to do anything, Clarissa ignored her ramblings and focused on cooking instead.

In the evening, when Matthew returned from work, the other guests arrived one by one.

When all of them greeted Clarissa, they couldn't help but tease her.

"Mrs. Tyson, what a wonderful housewife you are. When is Matt going to marry you and tie you down?"

"Marry? Is this not enough?"

“Matt is really lucky given how pretty and capable you are. How did he managed to snag you?”

“What do you mean snag? That sounds so crude. You should ask how he won Mrs. Tyson’s heart instead?”

“I think Matt must have forced himself on her. Or else, if I were Mrs. Tyson, I wouldn’t want an old man like Matt.”

“Ahahah...”

Unlike their usually reserved selves, even Justin chipped in with a joke or two. They embarrassed Clarissa so much that she just wanted the ground to open up and swallow her whole.

Finally, they stopped teasing her after Matthew shot a glance at them.

Laughing awkwardly, they took their seats while Clarissa returned to the kitchen to continue with dinner preparations.

Soon, dinner was served. The moment they started to dig in, Yarick devoured the food just like a hurricane. While the others maintained their table manners, he was there just to enjoy the food and couldn’t care less about keeping his manners.

Meanwhile, Ellie almost got into an altercation with Yarick over the last chicken wing as she felt she deserved it for being the youngest.

Given how obnoxious the reason was, Clarissa rolled her eyes at Ellie.

Haven’t I made enough chicken wings for her in the past? Why is she still behaving this way?

As for Justin and Henry, who came for dinner out of courtesy, they didn’t dare say much other than bury their heads in the food.

After dinner, Justin couldn’t help but gave Clarissa a thumbs up.

“Clarissa, dinner was awesome. Have you ever considered running a private kitchen or something? If you do, I will definitely eat there every day.

"That's right. Me too!"

Yarick was tempted to engage Clarissa as his home chef. However, it simply remained an idea of his as he dared not even suggest it out loud.

Clarissa shook her head with a smile. "I am actually a lazy person and don't enjoy doing something as arduous as this."

Sitting beside her, Matthew grabbed her hand and quipped, "Clare's hands are only meant to cook for me."

The sudden display of affection caused everyone else to cringe.

Ellie brazenly retorted, "Uncle Matt, Clare is my best friend and she has cooked for me many times before this. Does that mean that I will have to seek your permission to taste her cooking?"

Matthew raised his eyebrow and smiled smugly. "Exactly."

When Ellie looked in Clarissa's direction, she saw her cheeks flushed red in embarrassment.

"Hahaha... Clarissa's hand is for writing better stories and not for cooking. Matt just feels bad for her."

Jeremy couldn't help but break the tension in the room, causing everyone to exchange glances with a smile.

They gave each other the knowing smile as they were all cringing at how cheesy Matthew had become.

This group of friends knew Matthew the best. Nevertheless, it was still impossible for them to imagine him acting this way after getting attached.

Despite being both possessive and easily jealous, the gentle longing he had for her in his eyes was in full display.

The group of friends had seen a lot in their lives. And yet, they were still shocked by how Matthew reacted when he was in love.

At night, they didn't overstay their welcome as the last thing they wanted to be was a bunch of third wheels.

Instead, it was Ellie who insisted on staying but was dragged out by Jeremy.

After sending the guests away, Clarissa turned around to see Matthew. He held her hand and they took a stroll in the garden.

After a while, the weather grew colder and caused Clarissa, who only had a light cardigan on, to shiver. She was puzzled as to why Matthew was suddenly in the mood for a stroll at night.

"Shall we head back? It's getting cold," she requested as she tugged Matthew's hands.

However, Matthew pulled her into his embrace instead and replied in a deep voice. "It's no longer cold this way."

Why is he suddenly flirting with me?

However, Clarissa was still charmed. She wrapped her arms around Matthew's waist and smiled.

"Do you still want to walk?"

How are we going to walk when we're embracing each other tightly?

However, Matthew continued to hold her as they walked on awkwardly. Neither of them wanting to go back in.

Fine.

Clarissa was no longer cold as she kept Matthew company, oblivious as to what he was up to.

After a short while, Matthew remarked, "Clare, look up at the stars."

Clarissa raised her head and was greeted by a few stars dotting the night sky.

As Zen Highlands was far from the city, it was dark enough for them to see the stars.

However, that wasn't the point. Clarissa wondered what Matthew was truly up to.

"There aren't that many so it's kind of boring, unlike the time when we were on holiday. The night sky then was really spectacular."

"Mmm-hmm."

Matthew sounded displeased.

After that, he solemnly suggested, "It's too cold. Let's go back."

With Clarissa in his arms, both of them went inside the house.

Shrugging her shoulders, Clarissa was puzzled by how temperamental he was. He would be cheerful for a moment before feeling glum in another.

Nonetheless, she didn't make too much of it.

A few days later, when Clarissa wanted to head to the office, Matthew finally got her to go together with him. In the car, he kept fondling her incessantly. By the time he walked her to the third floor, he even ordered her to come to his office once she was done with her work.

Clarissa had no choice but to agree as he just wouldn't stop kissing her until she did.

After entering the office, Mandy peeked over Clarissa's shoulder.

"Clarissa, has Matthew left?"

When Clarissa saw how edgy Mandy was, she couldn't help but giggle.

"Is it necessary to be that fearful of him? He might look cold most of the time, but he isn't as terrifying as you make him out to be, alright?"

Mandy shook her head instead and sighed.

"Clarissa, you don't understand. Matthew only chooses to be nice to you, that's why he isn't scary. But for us, we don't even dare look him in the eye."

"Why are you afraid of him? You are neither his subordinate nor have you done anything wrong."

"Regardless of whatever you say, I'm still scared... It's really hard to explain."

Mandy struggled to find the words to describe it.

Clarissa couldn't help but laugh as she sat down at her desk. Before a minute had passed, Mandy hurried over. After discussing her new article for a short while, she began to gossip about Matthew again.

The main reason was that Matthew made a huge impression on Mandy.

"Clarissa, I'm curious. How did you get Mr. Tyson to fall for you? How do both of you interact on a daily basis? Can you do something romantic such as sit together and look at the stars?"

"Look at the stars?"

Clarissa was suddenly stunned. "There are so many romantic activities out there, why it must be looking at the stars?"

"Huh? Didn't you suggest it yourself?"

It was Clarissa's turn to be curious.

"Since when did I mention that I enjoy looking at the stars?"

"In your first book, you said that the most romantic thing you wanted to do was to watch the stars with the man you love. Ideally, the weather would be cold so that he would hold you in his arms. It would then be a beautiful and romantic moment."

Clarissa was speechless.

Did I ever say something as childish as that?

She was reluctant to admit it.

Smiling awkwardly, she went online and found the passage which she wrote, causing her to chuckle.

Is that the reason why Matthew suddenly hugged me and wanted to watch the stars?

Loss for words momentarily, Clarissa burst into a wave of laughter out of a sudden. She laughed for such a long time that everyone in the office was curious.

“Clarissa, have you gone mad? What are you laughing at? Come share it with us!”

Clarissa shook her head, “It’s nothing really. I just thought of a fool.”

For Matthew to do something like that, he really is a fool.

Nevertheless, Clarissa admitted that it was a sweet gesture and felt the warmth of his thoughts.

Out of nowhere, she called Matthew just because she wanted to hear his voice.

Matthew answered quickly but Clarissa had left her seat and was on her way up to see him.

“Hello...” Clarissa murmured in a coquettish yet mischievous tone.

“Clare? What is it?”

“Matthew, tell me, why am I so smitten with you?”

Just as she spoke, she began to giggle.

Despite being confused, Matthew asked while laughing together, “Oh? Is that so? How deep are your feelings for me?”

“Erm... very, very deep....”

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Of course, it has to be very, very deep.

Matthew was moved when he heard her reply.

Given that Clarissa seldom said anything sweet to him, let alone openly declare her feelings for him, how could Matthew not be delighted?

With a wave of his hand, the few members of senior management with whom he was having a meeting left in shock. What they had just seen and heard was a side of the president that they had never dreamt of seeing.

They could still feel the aftershock of what they have witnessed when they replayed Matthew's expression in their minds.

Meanwhile, listening to Clarissa's voice, Matthew requested in a bassy tone, "Clare, can you say that one more time for me, please?"

Smiling smugly, Clarissa burst into crisp laughter that could be heard over the phone.

"Repeating it won't make it special anymore," she declared on purpose as she found teasing Matthew way too exhilarating.

No wonder he enjoys teasing me so much. Waiting for his response is just so exciting.

Matthew didn't say much other than sneer, "Clare..."

Pouting her lips, Clarissa exited the elevator. With no one around, she walked toward Matthew's office with a smile on her face.

She didn't make a sound as she wanted to give him a surprise.

Finally, the office door suddenly swung open and she was swept off her feet by Matthew. As she screamed in surprise, the door closed behind her. Pinning her against the door, Matthew

lifted her chin and asked in a deep voice, "Are you going to repeat it for me or not, hmm? Clare, I want to hear you say how much you want me."

Pursing her lips, Clarissa didn't respond as she tried to struggle against him.

With a glint in his eye, Matthew let out a domineering and insidious smile.

"Let's just save it for next time..."

Before he finished his sentence, he planted his lips on hers. Regardless of whether she was willing to repeat her words, a kiss was always the better option.

Knock! Knock!

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door behind them. Panicking, Clarissa wanted to struggle free but Matthew intensified his kiss instead.

"Mr. Tyson?" They heard Donnie's voice.

But with both of their lips locked, Matthew didn't bother to respond. Donnie left shortly after.

After a long while, Matthew picked Clarissa up by her thighs and wrapped them around his waist. Both of them continued to kiss passionately while their bodies tightened against each other.

Soon, Clarissa grabbed onto Matthew's hair, motioning him to let go of her.

She had no idea how long their kiss lasted, but she was sure that it was definitely more than ten minutes.

Even if she didn't suffocate, she could already feel her mouth go dry.

Luckily, Matthew finally let her go but still carried her in his arms, as if he was carrying a child. Sitting down in his office chair, he placed her on his lap.

With their foreheads leaning against one another, he gave her nose a peck before asking in a raspy voice, "Clare, you really like me, don't you?"

“Yea, yea. I like you very, very much...”

She was worried that if she didn't reply, he would kiss her again till God knows when.

Matthew chuckled softly as he hugged Clarissa and caressed her back. He loved her so much that he just couldn't keep his hands to himself.

“Good girl...”

Pouting her lips, Clarissa could feel that they were swollen. Rolling her eyes at him in her mind, she wondered what the extent of his lust was.

“Matthew, have you read my books before?”

When Matthew remained silent, Clarissa couldn't help but burst into laughter. In her first book, she had written a lot about couple relationships. It was filled with cheesy romantic lines that girls loved to read.

However, the idea of Matthew reading a story like that was hilarious by itself.

“Hahahaha...”

Finally, no longer able to hold back, Clarissa laughed so hard that she could hardly catch her breath.

Only when she saw Matthew glaring at her did she stop laughing and squirmed her lips awkwardly.

“Actually, I'm really happy that you read my book and support my work. Haha... I am so touched, very touched.”

Matthew smirked as he replied, “Clare, I did read your book. And as you have said, I'm very supportive of your work.”

“Mmm-hmm, that's good to know.”

However, she felt as if she was still missing something, enough to send a shiver down her spine.

Did I worry too much?

Matthew continued, "Other than looking at the stars, I saw what you wrote in the comments section. You were discussing with your readers how to have a good time in bed, and you sounded as if you're great at it."

Clarissa's lips twitched as she suddenly wished for the ability to turn back time. Can I do that?

Obviously, no.

Seizing upon the opportunity, Matthew casually caressed her waist with his fingers while talking about positions in bed.

"Clare, I feel that your comments in the discussion were largely theoretical and too vague. Likely because you lack practical experience. It's just too fake and not realistic at all. Isn't a good author supposed to write from experience? Therefore, Clare, in support of your work, I will sacrifice myself to provide you with the practical experience you need. What do you think?"

"Haha..."

Clarissa just felt like shutting him up.

Next, she declined his offer with a smile. "Uncle Matthew, don't you know the censorship board has been clamping down hard? I can't be too realistic or I'll be reported for breaking the rules."

"Is that so?"

"That's right! There's really no need for you to sacrifice yourself as it's better for me to keep it vague."

"That's such a pity." Matthew quipped with a disappointed expression.

Glaring coldly at her, he looked as if he was about to eat her alive.

Laughing awkwardly, Clarissa wondered if she had escaped his grasp.

However, she soon realized it was premature to think so.

Matthew dropped the methods suggested in her novel. Instead, he became more direct which suited him better.

“Clare, I want to have you...”

“Erm...”

Clarissa had no excuse to deny him.

With her cheeks blushing and eyes glistening in response, she didn't dare look Matthew in the eye.

Cognizant of her feelings, he didn't force her. Instead, he lowered his head and bit her lip forcefully, venting the frustration that he was trying hard to suppress.

Finally, Clarissa was frightened off due to Matthew's aggressive advances. Besides that, she knew he was really busy and she didn't want to take up anymore of his time.

After having a meeting downstairs, Clarissa was in no mood to do anything else. Hence, she dropped by Ellie's studio instead.

Ellie was in a video call when she saw Clarissa approach. After ending the call shortly, Ellie turned her attention toward her.

“What is it? Is something bugging you? Or did you get into an argument with Uncle Matt?”

“No.”

Clarissa shook her head. Ellie was her one and only best friend and there was no one else for her to talk to about this.

However, Ellie was also Matthew's niece, which made this topic particularly difficult to broach.

When she was still struggling with it, Ellie suddenly asked, “Problems with your sex life?”

"Err.. ahem! ahem!"

Choking, Clarissa blushed intensely.

Ellie gave her a look as she knew she had guessed correctly. Sitting down, she asked intently, "Is Uncle Matt not able to get it up?"

"Ahem... ahem..."

Clarissa coughed even louder.

Ellie's eyes opened wider in response. "He really can't?"

"No, it's not that."

With her cheeks flushed red, Clarissa mumbled, "I don't know."

"What? Clarissa, what did you say?"

"I don't... Mmm-hmm..."

"What?"

Having heard Clarissa the first time, Ellie was expressing her surprise instead. Blushing further, Clarissa covered her ears while averting her gaze.

After a moment, Ellie remarked, "Alright, alright. I didn't say anything. I'm just amazed at how Uncle Matt was able to restrain himself all this while.

Embarrassed, Clarissa's lips pouted as she was lost for words.

"Therefore, what are you conflicted about? Does Uncle Matt not want it or are you stopping him from doing so?"

"It... It's my problem. I'm a little scared."

Ellie snorted, "What are you afraid of? It's normal for a couple to be intimate with each other. What's there to even fear of?"

Clarissa sneered in response, "Haha... look who's talking. As if you have the experience."

Ellie was stumped.

Is this how best friends treat each another?

"Fine, do you lack theoretical experience? If you're worried, why don't we do some research together?"

"How do we do that?"

After pondering a moment, Ellie called for Louisa to come over. Although Louisa was young, she was already married and had children, living up to her reputation as a "sexy momma".

Ellie was upfront with her questions. "Come over here, Louisa. Given that you're married, we have an interesting topic to discuss with you."

With that, the three of them talked for the rest of the day. Louisa had shared with both girls what she knew.

In the beginning, Clarissa still felt shy about it while Ellie listened intently instead.

"Huh? Is that so? Wow... what? You can still do that? My God... even that!"

Finally, Clarissa realized that this too was a whole field of knowledge by itself.

Furthermore, Louisa had allayed all the fears Clarissa had by reassuring and educating her.

At the end of it, she even sent them some educational videos which they could watch at home.

"Ms. Tyson, Clary, these are from my secret stash. Even my husband doesn't know about it. You should watch them in detail. After that, there's a lot more to discuss..."

"Yes, definitely."

Nodding in agreement, Ellie received them excitedly.

As for Clarissa, her lips twitched while she closed her notebook. She planned to watch the videos when Matthew wasn't at home.

If she managed to allay all her concerns, she figured it would be a wonderful experience to share with Matthew.

Feeling that she had gotten a lot out of the discussion, Clarissa felt the subject was no longer as daunting as she imagined.

Back at Zen Highlands, while Matthew hadn't returned from work, Clarissa considered watching the educational videos shared by Louisa. After hesitating for a long while, she decided to lock herself in the room and watched it.

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Clarissa flipped her laptop open. But before she even managed to open that video file, the hum of a car engine could be heard from a distance. It grew louder and louder by the second. She glanced away from her screen and saw Matthew's car on the ground below.

That was exactly why she had decided to sit on the balcony that night. Even with her headphones on, she could constantly watch out for Matthew's return and cover her tracks in time before he could notice anything.

To her surprise however, he had come home much sooner than she'd expected.

Clarissa could feel her cheeks turn hot as she hurriedly put her laptop away. As Matthew looked up from where he stood, she forced an awkward smile and waved at him.

Matthew raised a brow. Wasn't she complaining about the cold weather earlier?

What is she doing on the balcony?

Brushing his thoughts and questions aside, he stepped into the house to see Clarissa had already come downstairs. She greeted him with a brief glance before seated herself on the couch and continued to fiddle with her phone.

His heart tickled at the sight of her reddened ears. Is she still thinking about how I teased her earlier?

“Clare?” he called out as he walked towards her.

Clarissa’s cheek burned even hotter when he sat down beside her and leaned over.

Her eyes remained glued to the phone. She could feel the heat within her head radiating slowly across her entire face and down to her throat.

Matthew gazed in amusement at her violently blushing cheeks and neck. He wondered if his dear little Clare’s body turned just as red beneath her clothes.

At that thought, a dim glow flickered in his dark pupils. He slouched against the backrest in a relaxing manner while crossing his legs and tilting his head slightly. His eyes fixed on Clarissa as he quietly enjoyed this satisfying yet torturing sight of her.

Unable to withstand his gaze any longer, Clarissa covered her ears in her hands and looked away.

“What are you doing? Quit staring at me and go upstairs! Dinner’s ready. The food’s gonna get cold if we don’t eat soon.”

Matthew raised a brow and smiled teasingly. “You aren’t even looking at me, Clare. How do you know if I’m staring at you?”

Still facing away from him with her ears covered, she rolled her eyes. Aren’t you being obvious enough?

“Of course, I know!” she scoffed.

“Come on, Clare. You know you’re wrong,” he chuckled. “You don’t believe me? Turn around and see for yourself. I’m not looking at you.”

Clarissa turned towards him and was about to shoot him a glare.

But the moment they locked eyes, heat began spreading through her whole body again like wildfire.

What Louisa had shared with her and Ellie earlier was still fresh in her mind. On top of that, she had been visualizing various scenes in preparation for her upcoming script. Sometimes her brain would unwittingly substitute the imaginary characters with herself and Matthew instead. Those fantasies had been tormenting her, and they'd become worse in his presence.

Now that Matthew was right in front of her, she couldn't bring herself to look him in the eyes directly. The image of them both enveloped in each other's arms passionately, feeling one another's hot breaths and heartbeat, would resurface every time she looked at him.

This is just too much!

Clarissa couldn't hold her gaze just after a few seconds. Feeling as if she would explode at any moment, she whirled her head away.

Matthew stared in silent confusion. What's with this woman today? Why is she being so shy all of a sudden?

Leaning closer towards her, he whispered into her ear with a soft chuckle, "What's wrong, Clare? Are you feeling hot?"

Thud!

Clarissa stomped her feet hard and jumped up from the couch. If she stayed there longer, she was certain that she would start running a temperature.

"Don't follow me!" she snapped and trotted out of the door.

Matthew watched quietly as she stood in the yard with her back facing him. Through the window, he could see her tiny silhouette tensing up awkwardly as she froze in her thoughts for a minute, then stomped on the ground, grabbed her head, and flung her arms in the air aggressively, as though she was mad at someone.

He let out a snicker and shook his head at the sight of her hilarious antics. What's up with her? Did something else happen today that triggered her?

Nevertheless, he dismissed his thoughts shortly and let her be. It was pointless to try figuring things out on his own if she wasn't going to tell him anything.

A long moment passed before Clarissa finally calmed herself down and walk back into the house, although she avoided looking at his eyes the whole time.

At dinner, she tried to distract herself by talking about work. She went on and on about how her colleagues in the studio had been generous towards her, helping her manage the authors and fans despite being occupied with their own programs, and how Yael busied herself with assisting in her marketing and promotional campaigns.

“What should I do if Yael leaves one day?” she sighed. “She’s so talented and such an efficient multitasker! I don’t think there’s anyone who can ever replace her.”

“There are always people with capabilities around. I’m sure things have a way of sorting themselves out. Sometimes it just depends on the benefits and remuneration you offer,” Matthew replied calmly.

She pouted. “But it’s hard to rebuild relationships from scratch! It’s gonna take a while to get used to working with someone new all over again.”

Matthew listened patiently while she rambled on. He was well aware of the way she handled things at work. Being the sincere and compassionate person she was, she’d treat any colleague like a family member or a friend. And such work dynamics were indeed beneficial for a small team like theirs.

On the other hand, Clarissa clearly understood his point of view, albeit she found it difficult to accept the reality. If the company were to expand in the future, emotional attachments should no longer be a priority. When the time came, managerial skills would be of utmost importance in keeping the team up and running.

“Nevermind, I shouldn’t be thinking too much...” she mumbled while chewing on her food. “Maybe Yael doesn’t want to leave after all. Who knows?”

She wished that she wouldn’t ever have to separate from such a great person to work with.

Matthew chuckled softly. She really takes everything so personally...

But so what if she does? Even if anything were to happen, I’ll protect her always.

Meanwhile, in the Tyson residence, Margaret had suddenly decided to have a family meal. A booking was soon made in a hotel’s restaurant.

Ellie wasn't very enthusiastic about the arrangement. As her grandparents chattered on, she only joined in their conversation occasionally while spending the rest of the time texting Clarissa on her phone.

Have you watched the "educational video," Clare? I already did. It's not bad!

On the other hand, Clarissa was just about to take a break from work when her phone buzzed at Ellie's incoming message.

At her friend's mention of the video, she remembered that it had been untouched in her computer all this while, kept away in a folder titled "Inspirational Materials."

I haven't. What do you mean by "it's not bad?"

Well, you'll know when you watch it yourself. By the way... you haven't done that with Uncle Matt, have you? What's up with you guys? Didn't you say you're not afraid about it anymore?

Oh please, Ellie. Even if I'm not scared anymore, it doesn't mean I have to do it with him right away!

Clarissa blushed slightly as she texted back. Ellie's reply came almost instantly.

I guess you're right. Louisa also said that you can't be too upfront when it's your first time. You'll have to set up the right atmosphere at the right timing. Oh, that reminds me! We should get you the right outfit too, haha... Why don't we go shopping tomorrow? Heh, I can't wait!

The girls knew clearly in their hearts what "outfit" they were referring to.

Clarissa pondered for a few seconds before responding: Alright.

Ellie: Look, Clare. I just realized Uncle Matt's birthday is coming soon. Why don't we present you as the gift itself for him on that day? It'll be a great opportunity!

Clare: Sounds like it's doable...

Her phone buzzed again as Ellie's reply came in all-capitalized letters: IT IS DEFINITELY DOABLE!

Just then, Matthew arrived at the restaurant. He walked into the lounge only to find his parents seated at the table with Ellie, who was grinning mischievously.

He had no idea why his niece was acting so weird, but he ignored her expression and sat himself down in a composed demeanor.

Soon, Matthias and Yuliana arrived. The dinner hence began.

Margaret seemed to be in an unusually good mood that day. She ate wholeheartedly, as if it was a lucky day.

In the midst of dinner, she suddenly got up and went to the washroom. Yuliana accompanied her, and it took a long while before both of them came back into the lounge.

"Oh my, we bumped into Mr. and Mrs. Reed just now! We had a bit of a chat," Yuliana spoke as she walked back to her seat.

"Mr. Reed?" Matthias widened his eyes slightly at his wife's words.

Yuliana chuckled with a smooth expression. "Guess what? I just found out that Mr. Reed happened to be the brother-in-law of that lady in our department, Sienna Grande!"

Margaret chimed along as she sat down, "What a nice young lady! She doesn't even know me, yet she saved me when I almost slipped in the washroom just now. How kind of her! She sounded very polite too."

"That's right! Sienna is very popular in our department. Everyone likes her because of how friendly she is," Yuliana added cheerfully.

As they spoke, a sudden knock came from the door. Mr. Reed and his wife showed up as the door opened. The lady whom they were referring to, Sienna, stood behind them.

Mr. Reed greeted with a smile, "George! Mrs. Tyson! What a coincidence. We're just dropping by to say hi since you're here as well..."

Before long, the two families ended up in a lively chatter as the Tysons invited the three visitors to sit together at the table.

The men talked about business and work as if they were long-time partners, while the women chatted in such a friendly manner as though they were close friends.

Margaret especially, was looking at Sienna with an unusually endearing expression.

Ellie was trying to sit out of the busy conversation when she suddenly noticed how grandmother beamed so delightfully at the lady named Sienna. She frowned as a sudden realization dawned upon her.

She glanced over at Matthew. He seemed indifferent, as though he was still in the dark about what her mother and grandmother were up to. Or perhaps he didn't even care at all.

Why bother? It doesn't matter whether this whole thing was set up or really just a pure coincidence, right?

It was Ellie's turn to excuse herself to the washroom. When she came back, she saw her mother standing outside the room with Sienna. They were whispering about something she couldn't quite hear and ended their conversation as soon as they saw Ellie walking towards them.

Sienna walked back ahead into the room. As Yuliana was about to follow, Ellie tugged on her arm.

The other night, she had walked passed her parents' room and overheard their conversation about Uncle Matt's marriage.

Ellie hadn't mentioned a word about it ever since, but she couldn't help but feel troubled from time to time.

Is Mom up to something again?

"Mom, are you trying to introduce that Sienna lady to Uncle Matt?" she asked her mother as she frowned.

Yuliana smiled rather dismissively. "You're just a kid. You don't have to know about this."

"I'm not a little kid anymore!" she retorted. "What are you up to? Don't try to pretend in front of me. You think Uncle Matt isn't aware of your intentions just because he doesn't show it on his face? Why are you doing this?"

Yuliana glanced back at the room hesitantly, as if worried if Ellie's words were heard by those inside the room.

"What do you even know? Your Grandma requested for this. I'm just doing what she wants me to," she chided with a carefully lowered voice. "Besides, what's wrong with matchmaking your uncle with someone else? It's for his own good. Let's not talk about this anymore, we should head back inside."

"It's only understandable that Grandma's concerned about Uncle Matt's love life. But what about you and Dad? Why does it have to be Mr. Reed's relative of all people? Don't you both have some personal agenda up your sleeves?"

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Yuliana froze slightly at her daughter's questioning. Unable to deny Ellie's guess yet embarrassed as a parent, she was at a loss for words to defend herself.

Just as she opened her mouth to explain, a figure emerged at the door. She turned around to see who it was, and much to her horror, it was none other than Matthew who stood staring at both of them.

Yuliana paled. Did he hear everything?

Ellie too, looked towards the door when she noticed her mother's sudden change of expression.

Her chest tightened a little. Surely it'd be embarrassing for Yuliana to be put on the spot like this, but how could her parents possibly understand the disappointment she felt?

She could never understand why Matthew always seemed to be alienated by her own parents. He was always a respectable person in her eyes. Aren't we a family?

Furthermore, he had always been so caring towards her ever since she was little. Now that her parents were trying to take advantage of Matthew in such an underhanded way, how was she supposed to face him as his beloved niece?

"Uncle Matt..." she stuttered as tears began welling up in her eyes.

On the contrary, Yuliana quickly recomposed herself and put on a pleasant smile. "Oh, Matthew! Since when did you come out here? Look at this child... She doesn't seem to like the idea of Sienna becoming her new aunt! I'm just trying to tell her that it's a misunderstanding. We just happened to bump into them after all. I hope you don't get the wrong idea too, Matthew."

"I didn't. Don't worry," Matthew answered plainly.

"That's great," Yuliana placed a hand over her chest and heaved a sigh of relief. "I should go back inside to entertain our guests. Please help me calm Ellie down. This girl never listens to anyone besides you!"

As Yuliana hurried back into the lounge, Ellie stood at the same spot and stared at Matthew with a guilty look. The corner of her lips twitched as she attempted to say something, yet she was bereft of words.

Matthew wasn't in the least bit bothered, though.

A sharp and observant person himself, of course, he had long seen through Matthias and Yuliana's true intentions.

The way his sister-in-law had spoken earlier was nothing more than a pretense to keep the peace on the surface.

"Go inside, Ellie," he said with a reassuring voice.

Ellie shook her head in defense. "Uncle Matt... you already knew about this, didn't you? Aren't you offended? I don't even know what to say on behalf of my parents. I..."

Her voice trailed off. Tears began streaming down her face and dripped quietly onto the carpeted floor.

Seeing his adorable little niece in this state, Matthew had no idea how to comfort her.

He reached out a hand and ruffled her head.

"You're overthinking. They're just a little too concerned about me."

"No, I'm not!" she refuted stubbornly, wiping her tears off with the back of her hand. "I'm sure everyone is aware of what's really going on."

Matthew looked at her in silence. This girl who used to be his cheeky little niece back then, had now grown up.

As an adult, the way she's beginning to understand things now was different from when she was younger.

And what she observed today had only added to her disappointment at the reality of life.

So what if he and Matthias were brothers? Even siblings would still settle accounts with one another. Not everyone in a family would be equally earnest and truthful towards each other.

"There, there. You're a grownup already. There are more things which you'll learn along the way."

Ellie lowered her head. She understood that some things were just beyond her control, and she could only slowly bring herself to accept them the way they were one day.

"Come on, let's head back in," Matthew added.

She looked away and folded her arms. "I don't want to. I think I'll go over to Zen Highlands instead."

Matthew nodded. "Just promise me you won't tell her anything about this."

Ellie was completely aware that he was referring to Clarissa.

Naturally, she wouldn't tell her something like this either. The fact that her own parents were the ones behind this made her feel even worse.

Nonetheless, she couldn't help feel slightly amused by how Matthew seemed to worry about Clarissa getting jealous.

She curved her lips into a playful smirk.

"Are you afraid, Uncle Matt?"

Matthew's expression hardened. But before he could say anything, she stuck her tongue out at him and ran off within a second.

He walked back to the table as Yuliana glanced at him.

"Ellie left," he said plainly as he sat.

Yuliana frowned a little although she wasn't exactly worried about her daughter. She was more concerned about Matthew's response.

Seeing that he appeared calm and undisturbed as usual, she convinced herself that there was nothing to fret over.

On the other hand, Margaret continued to fawn over Sienna and eventually directed the attention towards Matthew.

"My son Matthew is about your age, but he's still single!" she sighed on purpose. "I've been worried sick, but he doesn't even bother about looking for a wife. Oh, Sienna... What should I do?"

Sienna smiled politely. "Don't worry, Mrs. Tyson. He's an excellent man, I'm sure there are many women out there who are interested in him. You have plenty of options to choose from."

"What do you mean, sweetheart? I can't even think of anyone else," Margaret responded as she looked at Sienna hopefully.

Sienna smiled without saying a word.

On the inside, she herself was one of those women who had their eyes on Matthew Tyson.

She had heard about the failed arrangement between him and Shermaine. Matthew had upset the Smallwoods when he rejected the marriage proposal. The recent trouble that Tyson Corporation had gone through was most likely due to this, albeit Shermaine had married into the Wynter family.

Now there was one less competitor, it would be a good chance for her to test the waters. She gladly took the opportunity when Yuliana began approaching her as expected.

Although she wasn't that interested in Matthew personally, it was undeniable that he's an excellent candidate for a husband. He was a rare gem who far exceeded most other men in terms of his family background, appearance and capabilities. It would be a shame to not even try having a go at such an outstanding man like him.

Margaret's intentions were obvious enough. Even if the old lady didn't admit anything, tonight's dinner was undoubtedly arranged deliberately so that both families could test each other.

Matthew had never once spoken to her directly throughout the session. She barely managed to interact whenever the Tysons occasionally involved her in their conversation with him.

At the end of the dinner, everyone suggested that Matthew should send Sienna home.

Sienna had no objection, but Matthew declined coldly to her surprise.

"Sorry, there's something I need to tend to at the office. I'm afraid I got to go now," he responded without a second thought.

He didn't even look at anyone as he excused himself and sped off.

The others froze in an awkward silence as they were left behind so abruptly. Some looked flustered, while some scowled in displeasure.

Sienna too felt just as uneasy, but quickly regained her composure. She bid the Tysons a polite farewell as she left together with her sister and brother-in-law.

Mrs. Reed's face turned sour when they got into the car.

"What's wrong with that Matthew Tyson? He's such an obnoxious man," she scoffed. "I think it's better that you forget about him, Sienna. He doesn't look like someone who will care for his wife. Old Mrs. Tyson even said that he couldn't be bothered about marriage. If you marry him, it will only spell trouble for yourself."

"You're exaggerating," Sienna chuckled. "Maybe he really does have something urgent to deal with."

"What sort of urgent matter can it be at this hour? He's clearly giving an excuse!"

"That's okay. He seems pretty good to me."

"Good? In what way? His attitude pisses me off."

Sienna stopped convincing Mrs. Reed, though she wasn't willing to give up just yet.

"I agree with Sienna," Mr. Reed then spoke in her defense. "It's worth giving it a shot."

Though Matthias Tyson seemed to be the one trying to set everything up in his own favor, it would in fact be a win-win situation for both families if Matthew and Sienna successfully tied the knot.

Mr. Reed had more interest in Matthew than in his older brother.

He was impressed at Sienna. His sister-in-law seemed to have better taste than his own wife did.

Mrs. Reed paused for a moment at her husband's words. She knew he must have had his reasons for supporting Sienna's idea.

"But Sienna..." she looked at her sister with a slightly worried frown. "That man seemed as cold as an iceberg. Won't it be difficult for you to try to get close to him? You might just be wearing yourself out."

Sienna smiled confidently. "Don't worry about me. The more difficult the process, the more rewarding it will be. Besides, you know me. I'm not one to back down so easily."

Meanwhile at Zen Highlands.

Clarissa stared in surprise as Ellie showed up at the door. "Aren't you supposed to be at your family dinner?"

"Forget it. It's just a meal anyway, how long can it go on for?" Ellie replied and glanced aside uneasily for a moment.

She then continued, "Why haven't you watched that video? Are you shy? Come on, Clare! Let's watch it now since Uncle Matt's not around. Where's your laptop? Hurry, we shouldn't waste any time..."

Clarissa resisted in dismay as Ellie barged into her room and took her laptop.

She tried her best to stop Ellie, only to be pinned down helplessly on the bed as her friend started playing the video.

The scene was too intense. Clarissa stared in horror as the people in the video pressed their naked bodies against each other in various explicitly intimate positions, shifting around in extremely sensual postures...

Ellie blabbered on unabashedly beside her.

"Hey Clare, what do you think of this guy's body? Is he hotter than Uncle Matt?"

"Clare, you should try heighten your pitch and moan like how that girl does it! I'm sure Uncle Matt will love it!"

"Gosh, this position looks challenging! Do you want to try practicing?"

"Do you think you're going to do it this way too with Uncle Matt? Huh..."

"Ellie!" Clarissa yelled. Her face had turned bright red like a ripened tomato. "Stop talking about it. It's embarrassing!"

At the sight of Clarissa blushing so shyly, Ellie burst into laughter.

"Okay, okay... You haven't done it anyway. Let's wait until you've finally experienced it first-hand. Then, we can discuss and compare it with this video."

Clarissa was speechless. She looked away for a while before replying, "I'm not gonna talk about it even after we've done that."

How can such a thing even be discussed with someone else? Doesn't she have any shame?

Ellie chuckled and shook her head. It may be too much for her right now, but let's see what happens in the future when she gets older.

Wasn't this exactly how Louisa was like before she got married?

Ah, such is the difference between a young virgin and a married woman.

The girls continued watching in silence as continuous sounds of heavy panting while moans and groans echoed throughout the room.

At this time, Matthew had returned. Unsuspecting, he wasn't perturbed at all when Mrs. Lawson told him that Clarissa and Ellie had cooped themselves up in the room the whole time.

After a quick change of clothes, he proceeded towards Clarissa's room. A series of erotic voices came from behind the door just as he turned the handle.

He froze. A few seconds passed before he steadied himself and pushed the door ajar.

The room was completely dark. When he flipped the light switch on, Clarissa and Ellie jumped as the room lit up brightly all of a sudden.

Clarissa immediately flipped her laptop shut. At the sight of Matthew standing expressionless at the door, Ellie got off the bed with a naughty grin.

"Oh, Uncle Matt's back! Looks like I should go now!" she giggled, and threw a split second's glance at Clarissa before scurrying out of the room.

Ellie! How dare you escape on your own!

Left behind alone, Clarissa sat up in a fluster and stared at Matthew.