

Her Billionaire Husband Chapter 369-374

Chapter 369 Lovey-Dovey

Although Veronica saw the woman once, she could clearly remember her face. “I don’t know what you are talking about.” Veronica glanced elsewhere and avoided Matthew’s question.

“She is Olivia Reyes, a friend of Skyler and I,” Matthew stood before Veronica and explained. Am I really explaining things?

It’s been years since I patiently explained my actions to someone. “You are angry because you care about me, right?”

Matthew realized Veronica was in a bad mood. Before he returned to Destor, he had received Skyler’s call.

On the phone, Skyler explained to Matthew about the situation in the hospital that day.

Matthew immediately realized that was the reason Veronica rejected his calls.

“I’m not.” Veronica frowned. “Don’t think highly of yourself.”

However, Matthew couldn’t help laughing. “Your expression says it all.”

“That’s ridiculous.”

Veronica took the poker and swept some firewood in Matthew’s direction. She coldly snorted. “I just don’t think we are compatible. That’s all.”

Matthew looked at the hay leaves on the black leather shoes and revealed a small smile. “We will talk about that after three months. I’ll repeat myself—Olivia and I are just friends, and will always be friends.”

Although Matthew was unhappy because Veronica had ignored him for days, he understood that she was jealous.

As such, his mood instantly improved.

It’s worth putting down the big project in Castron and making a trip back.

Veronica lowered her head. She held a poker in her hand and poked at the dry grass on the ground, not saying anything.

Are they really just friends?

Then, why did Matthew lie that day?

“I didn’t tell you that day because I was afraid you would misunderstand.” Then, Matthew added, “You should know if I really have a messy private life, I can easily flirt all day as there are many women around me. Why should I go to Castron just to get a woman?”

It was very convincing.

Veronica had to admit many women liked Matthew.

If he wanted to hang out with other women, he wouldn’t need to do that in Castron.

However...

“Who knows? Maybe you care for that woman,” Veronica muttered.

After she said those thoughtless words, she immediately stopped. She then turned her head to the side and covered her face in embarrassment.

Are you stupid?!

How can you say your thoughts out loud?!

Matthew found her embarrassed appearance so playful and cute that he couldn’t tear his eyes away from her. Then, he stepped forward, gently ruffling her hair and said, “Roni, I rarely promise one thing. However, listen to me carefully—if I don’t love you anymore, I will tell you instead of going to someone else behind your back.”

“Are you saying you won’t love me one day?”

Veronica turned back and stared at Matthew coldly, a look of sadness and anger on her face.

Matthew was at a loss for words.

Then, he shook his head. “I just wanted to show that I’m not going to cheat on you during a relationship or marriage.”

When the duo were talking, a fragrance came out of the oven.

Veronica glanced at the oven. “Oh—it’s ready.”

She immediately put down the poker. Standing up, she walked around Matthew to get the quiche. “Ouch!”

The oven surface was hot because of the fire.

She accidentally touched the surface with her bare skin, so she couldn’t help gasping in pain.

Matthew immediately grabbed her burnt hand and blew it with his mouth. “Stupid girl! Don’t be hasty.” he muttered, then used the peel to remove the quiche from the oven as he blew on Veronica’s hand.

Afterward, he released Veronica and put another unbaked quiche into the oven.

Veronica put her finger to her lips and bit it lightly. "You know how to use a masonry oven?" she asked with confusion.

"It's common sense."

Matthew said as he poured a bowl of cold water and put Veronica's fingers in the water. "You should feel better after cooling down."

"Okay."

She was getting soft as they cleared out the misunderstanding.

Daniella happened to watch the scene at the entrance.

Initially, she was worried they would burn the quiche, so she came over to have a look. However, they were displaying their affection instead.

Yesterday, Daniella heard Veronica say that Matthew's family was well-off and influential, which was why she was not suitable for him.

However, Daniella didn't like to see them being lovey-dovey.

"Come on, you can't even take care of yourself, so how can I be at ease?"

Matthew held Veronica's hand. He then took out a limited-edition handkerchief from his windbreaker and wiped the water from her fingers.

"I don't need your care. You'd better hang out with your best friend in Castron," Veronica mumbled while she pulled her hand away.

Matthew stood there and sniffed. "Hey, why is there such a strong sour smell? Has the vinegar bottle toppled?"

"What? The vinegar leaked?" Veronica immediately sniffed. "I can't smell it."

As she was saying, she walked to the side and looked at the neatly arranged seasonings. "No, the vinegar didn't—"

Before she could finish her words, she suddenly understood.

Then, she turned her head in shame and anger. Her bright eyes were rage-filled and she shouted, "Matthew Kings, get out of here!"

She pointed at him, a blush staining her fair cheeks.

Matthew grabbed Veronica's hand. He then pulled her into his embrace and wrapped his right arm around her waist. "It took me a lot of effort to get my silly girl. I won't leave easily."

Veronica's tiny fists slammed hard on his chest a few times as she growled, "Your fault for lying to me."

"I swear I didn't mean to lie to you."

"You still did it."

"Well, I lied. It's my fault. I am willing to accept any punishment." Matthew self-reflects and admitted his fault with sincerity.

"Then, I should think carefully about how to punish you." Veronica had a bright smile on her face as she said that.

When they were flirting, they heard a dry cough behind them.

The two looked back and saw Caleb and Skyler standing at the entrance.

"Tsk! We don't need quiche for breakfast anymore. I feel full from all the PDA." Skyler crossed his arms and leaned against the door frame as he looked at the two teasingly.

On the other hand, Caleb smiled without saying a word.

Matthew shot a cold glance at them as he was unhappy being interrupted. Then, he said, "You have been single since birth, so you are only worthy of PDA."

"Haha! Matt is right." Caleb, who was dressed in a leather jacket and trousers, nodded in agreement.

Chapter 370 Confess on the Spot

"Both of you are bullying me. It's no fun." Skyler snorted coldly and turned away. "Come back here!" Seeing that he was leaving, Matthew stopped him and pointed to the quiches. "The quiches are ready. Take it out."

"Can't you do it yourself?" Skyler said. As he said that, he received a sullen look from Matthew, which was full of warning. And so, Skyler immediately gave up and entered the kitchen. He then cut the quiche to serve on a plate. "I had never worked since I was young," he muttered. "Why should I do chores here?" "It's your honor," Matthew said calmly.

"It's alright. I'll do it. We should not bully a young master who has never experienced suffering."

Veronica spoke ironically and joked.

Then, she reached out to take the knife from Skyler. However, Matthew was a step ahead of her. He snatched the knife and held Skyler by the collar, thereafter throwing him aside.

"H-Hey!"

Skyler staggered as he held the door with his hands and stood firm.

He turned his head to glance at Matthew. When Skyler was about to say something, he found Matthew and Veronica looking at each other affectionately. Then, Matthew took a fork, cut a small piece of quiche and fed Veronica. "Here you go."

Skyler swallowed the words that came to his mouth, as if they were uncomfortably tight in his throat.

"I can't stand the PDA anymore!"

At that point, he stomped his foot, turned around, and left.

When he walked by the entrance, Skyler stopped and looked at Caleb. "You're smiling at them. One would think you have a girlfriend."

Skyler had to pull Caleb down.

After being teased, Caleb calmly replied. "I had a girlfriend until recently. However, you have been single since birth. There's a difference there, no?"

Skyler stayed silent.

He looked at Caleb sharply as the corners of his mouth twitched wildly. "You're ruthless!"

He angrily returned to the living room. Caleb then turned around, looked at Matthew and Veronica meaningfully, and left.

"Come back here."

Matthew suddenly stopped Caleb and pointed at the quiches on the counter. "Take the food to the living room."

"Let's do it together."

Veronica put out the fire and prepared to serve the quiche. However, Matthew held her hand. "You just got hurt. Let Caleb and I do it."

Although Caleb didn't say anything, he still glanced at Matthew and sighed helplessly.

Well, I am single, after all.

I deserved to be exposed to PDA.

The two left with two plates of quiche. Although Matthew told Veronica not to do chores, she still brought a plate of quiche to the living room.

"Oh—why is Young Master Matthew personally serving quiche?"

Daniella immediately greeted Matthew and tried to take the plate from him.

She was worried he wouldn't do the job well as he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

"It's alright."

Matthew placed the plate on the table. Turning around, he intended to return to the kitchen to get another plate of quiche, only to see Veronica come over with a plate.

"I told you to not do it."

Matthew huffed and forcefully took the plate. He then put it on the table.

Although they exchanged only one sentence, everyone could feel the intense atmosphere of love.

At that moment, they all had an inkling of what was going on. However, they kept silent. "Come on, let's eat now!"

Daniella brought over another plate of quiche. Then, the eight of them sat around the square table to eat together.

Since the misunderstanding between Veronica and Matthew was resolved, the atmosphere was livelier.

Moreover, with Skyler being talkative, the atmosphere would never turn awkward.

After breakfast, Matthew helped to collect the plates attentively.

As Tony was born in the countryside, he believed in masculinity, so he stopped Matthew. "Don't do it. Let Veronica and Daniella clean the table."

"That's right. Just sit down, Matthew." Crayson also agreed.

Still, Matthew kept a decent smile. "I have nothing to do, so let me help."

Then, he snatched the plate from Veronica's hand and went straight to the kitchen with a pile of plates.

Daniella followed behind and muttered, "Hey, you're the young master of the Kings Family. I can't let you do chores. Let me do it."

"Mom, just let him be."

As Veronica was used to Matthew's cold and arrogant side, she felt nice when she saw him being down-to-earth, friendly and gentle, much like a boy next door.

Although they were flirting in public, Veronica still explained, "He wants to experience rural life, so let's fulfill his wish."

“Little brat, what are you talking about? Shouldn’t you go wash the plates now?” Tony scolded as he frowned. Then, he whispered, “He is a guest; it isn’t proper to let him help with chores.”

“It’s alright, Mr. Murphy. Matt has been diligent since he was a child. Just let him know if you have any chores. He is more than happy to do it.”

Skyler babbled nonsense.

After speaking, he lowered his head and whispered to Miguel, “If it wasn’t for Roni, I don’t think I can ever see him wash plates.”

“That’s right.” Miguel nodded confidently.

Seeing that Tony was having difficulty believing Skyler’s words, Caleb chimed in, “Mr. Murphy, what Skyler said was true.”

“Stop the nonsense. Matthew was born in a wealthy family; how could he have done any chores?” Tony waved his hand with disbelief.

Miguel, who had never spoken this whole time, looked serious and maintained a mature and prudent demeanor. Then, he said calmly, “It is because he has been living in a city that he yearns for rural life. On the way here, he said he must experience rural life during the trip.”

“Haha! That’s right!”

Hearing Miguel’s words, Skyler laughed really hard.

He never thought Miguel would be so evil.

At the same time, Matthew insisted on washing the dishes. Even if Daniella tried to stop him, Veronica happily tied the apron on Matthew, then patted his shoulder. “I’ve fastened the apron. You can wash now.”

“Stop fooling around, little brat!”

Daniella blamed Veronica for being impolite.

However, Matthew smiled happily. “Mrs. Murphy, you have been busy all morning. You should take a rest and leave it to me.”

He then turned on the water and started washing the plates.

“It’s alright; just let me do it.” Daniella was going to grab a sponge before stopping by Veronica.

“Mom, just let him be.”

She gestured at Daniella with a meaningful look.

As she had raised Veronica for more than twenty years, Daniella instantly understood Veronica. Then, she observed Matthew washing plates and his every move.

Suddenly, she thought of what Veronica had said before, so she asked, "Matthew, do rich kids need to find those rich ladies to marry?"

Chapter 371 Let Roni Marry Me

Daniella's question caught Matthew off-guard. He stopped scrubbing the dishes in his hand and turned to give Veronica a bemused look.

Veronica quickly tugged on Daniella's arm as she asked through gritted teeth, "Mom, you can't just ask questions like that."

"It's only natural to make a wife out of someone I love." Matthew straightened up and answered Daniella solemnly, "I don't know how others do it, but my status in the Kingses has yet to compel me to consider an arranged marriage for business alliance."

He had heard what Daniella implied earlier, given how tactless she had gone about it. Right now, she understood what he meant as well. "We can quibble over your intentions," she began. "But it won't change the fact that you rich folks always have tricks up your sleeves. What if you get bored one day and decide to move on to the next shiny new toy?"

Daniella kept her gaze on him, but she was clutching Veronica's hand the entire time.

Upon hearing what Daniella said, Veronica could not help feeling the tension condensing in the air. An honest and thoroughbred farm worker would not understand the implications of boredom in a relationship, at least not under normal circumstances, but for Daniella to have brought it to the forefront of her argument only went to show how worried she was. Veronica was admittedly moved by this.

Presently, Matthew did not break eye contact with Daniella as he dried his hands on a rag. Then, he walked up to her and glanced at Veronica, who was next to her. He decided that there were some things better left out in the open than unsaid, and this was one of them. "Maybe we haven't met enough times for you to get a real grasp of my character, Mrs. Murphy, but I can assure you that I'm never one to mingle around just because I stand to gain something from it."

"Then what's going on between you and Tiffany?" Daniella asked directly, not at all caring for subtlety.

Veronica froze. She had been swaying Daniella's arm like how a child might with a parent, but the moment she heard her mother's question, she did a double take. "M-Mom, you know about that, too?"

Veronica was under the impression that slow news days were a common occurrence in small towns like these, and this was particularly true in cases of middle-aged folk who did not have social media. Logically, they should never have found out about the gossip surrounding Matthew and Tiffany.

However, Daniella surprised her, and she was starting to realize that there was nothing she could hide from her mother dearest.

Matthew was unaffected all the same as he started to explain patiently, “The stories are misleading at best. I was in an accident half a year ago and Roni was the one who saved me, but Tiffany stepped in and took the credit instead—”

Worried that Matthew might worsen the situation, Veronica cut him off and said, “Let’s just say that Tiffany took the credit for my work in saving Matthew so that she could get close to him. After that, she got him drunk and pretended that they had slept together, then claimed that he knocked her up to force her into marrying her. When the truth came out in the end, Matthew ended things with her and called off the engagement.”

All in all, what Tiffany did was downright despicable, and Veronica didn’t want Daniella to think badly of Matthew.

Much to her surprise, Daniella and Matthew stared at her like she had grown another head. Veronica pursed her lips self-consciously. Did I say something wrong?

A smile tugged on Matthew’s lips as relief and gratitude flooded through him after seeing that Veronica cared about him enough to speak up for him.

Daniella shared the same sentiment as well when she noted how her daughter had anxiously come to this man’s defense. Veronica could never hide anything from her; they were not biologically related but they might as well be, given how close their bond was.

“Do you really like Matthew?” Daniella asked now, eyeing Veronica steadily. Seeing how the latter was already of age, there seemed little point in avoiding a conversation on marriage.

Daniella owed Matthew a solid favor after he had pulled strings and hired a medical team from abroad to treat Tony at Saint Hospital in Bloomstead. Without him, Tony would still be unconscious now. As such, Daniella was more than grateful for Matthew, and she would be lying if she said she wasn’t fond of him.

“Huh? Oh... Uh—I... I...” Blushing, Veronica struggled to come up with an answer. She did not expect her mother to be so forthright, and having Matthew here only embarrassed her even more.

“Mrs. Murphy, Roni set a three-month trial period for me, which I personally take as probation. If she thinks that things will work out well between us after that, then we’ll start dating officially,” Matthew interjected, sparing no details even though he kept it succinct. “I know how much Roni means to you and Mr. Murphy, so you can consider observing my behavior for these three months if you’d like.”

Matthew was a straightforward person who liked clear-cut solutions, and he was never one to beat around the bush or cover things up. It was precisely because of this that Daniella found him all the more admirable.

“What the hell, Matthew? I didn’t even agree to the three-month probation thing, and you’re here blabbering about it to my mom?” Veronica rolled her eyes at him in disbelief. This jerk is taking a preemptive strike and leaving me out of the decision altogether, she thought.

Now that he had put on such a lovely façade in front of Daniella, Veronica had a feeling that she would bear the brunt if she were to change her mind about him. Her parents would not let her hear the end of it.

In fact, Daniella prodded Veronica’s temple right now in mock belligerence as she said, “I can’t believe you’re trying to hide this from your father and I, you brat! I hope some of Matthew’s honesty rubs off on you; we’d be all the better for it!”

“Wait a minute! First of all, I haven’t even agreed to date him and you’re already siding with him? And you call yourself my mother? Hmph!” Veronica quirked her lips in dismay. She then scoffed once and turned to walk away. Truth be told, it might be more appropriate to say she was running away from an unwinnable situation.

After leaving the kitchen, Veronica headed out into the yard out front and buried her face in her hands. Her cheeks were so flushed that they felt hot to the touch.

For heaven’s sake, this isn’t supposed to happen! She had made up her mind to break up with Matthew, but by some twist of fate or other, he ended up having a meal at her place, and now he was talking to her mother about marriage!

Veronica pressed a palm to her forehead as she tiptoed her way to the kitchen door, then hid around the corner to eavesdrop on the conversation. She didn’t want Daniella to be outsmarted or persuaded by that diabolical man. I might be pawned off if that were to happen! she thought grimly.

In the kitchen, Daniella clasped Matthew’s hands and said affably, “I know you’re a good kid, Matthew, but you’ve seen for yourself what our family is like. We’re humble townfolk with little fortune to our names, and Veronica has been rough around the edges since she was a baby. You, on the other hand, grew up in the city; the world is your oyster. You’re far too good for our Veronica, and if she marries you, your family will only look down their noses at her all the time. I can’t risk her being unhappy for the rest of her life just because of a fleeting moment of love.”

Veronica was touched upon hearing that. There are mothers out there who can’t wait to marry their daughters off into wealthy families, and here’s mine who wants nothing more than to see me happy.

“Don’t worry, Mrs. Murphy. I won’t ever let Veronica get bullied as long as I’m around,” Matthew promised.

“I believe you, Matthew, I really do, but none of us can predict the future. It’s a long road up ahead, you know.” Daniella patted his hand and heaved a sigh. “She’s my daughter, and all I want is for her to be happy. I can’t give her much, but I would still do all I can to give her the happiness she deserves.”

“I’m sorry I can’t give you full assurance on this, Mrs. Murphy, but as long as Roni agrees to be with me, I’d be more than happy to provide a billion in bridewealth and ten villas. I’ll also put it on paper that I’ll give up on my fortune if I ever hurt her or cheat on her.”

Chapter 372 Matthew the Lumberjack

Give up his fortune? The four words seemed to linger heavily in the air, shocking both Daniella and Veronica, who was eavesdropping around the corner. Even Matthew was stunned by what he had said.

He wasn't sure at which point of time he actually fell in love with Veronica, but after getting to know her for the past seven or eight months, he had come to love her enough to put his fortune at stake. This was the first time in his twenty-eight years of life that he knew what it was like to love someone so deeply that he was willing to give up everything to be with her.

Perhaps this was what they meant by falling head-over-heels for someone.

He had been aloof and reserved before he met her but now, that icy heart of his was finally thawing.

"You—"

"You've known the brat for less than a year; it's a little too early for you to make grand proclamations about giving up your fortune for her!" Crayson interjected as he unknowingly showed up in the kitchen, cutting Daniella off and putting Matthew in his place.

Veronica had been so focused on what Matthew was saying that she did not sense Crayson's appearance as well. She straightened up and turned around to look at him. She pursed her lips and said nothing.

Crayson went on to say, "The brat is too young to be thinking about marriage. If you really like her, then you'll have no qualms waiting for her for another year or two. That ought to give you both enough time to think things through before moving onto the next step together."

"Makes sense," Daniella said approvingly as she glanced over at the old man. Now that she thought about it, he made a fair point. "Veronica isn't even twenty-two yet, so marriage shouldn't be on the top of her list at the moment."

To one side, Veronica stayed silent as she listened to what Crayson and Daniella said.

"Very well," Matthew replied after a moment of thought. He ought to give Veronica's family some time to get used to having him around before he brought up the issue of marriage. "Whatever you say is fine by me." After that, his face lit up with a bright smile as he said to Daniella, "Mrs. Murphy, I'll be doing the dishes, so you can go out and garden or something if you'd like." "Oh! Uh—alright," Daniella stammered. She stayed in the kitchen for a bit just to watch Matthew work, and she found herself musing that men who were good-looking and useful in the kitchen were rare finds that they had practically turned mythological over the last few years. Roni will be a fool to let such a catch go, Daniella thought anxiously.

Meanwhile, Matthew went about cleaning the kitchen and giving the stove a thorough wipe-down. Before long, the kitchen was spotless.

“My, my, who would’ve thought that you’d turn out to be such an ideal househusband?” Miguel mused in a singsong voice when he traipsed through the entryway and saw Matthew buzzing around the kitchen with an apron on and a rag in hand. With a sigh, Miguel added, “Seeing as you’re so good with house chores, why don’t you just hand Spinfluence Group to your Uncle Conrad and move in with the Murphys? Pretty good option, if you ask me.”

“How much did Uncle Conrad pay you to say that?” Matthew cast a sideways glance at Miguel as a smirk played on his lips.

Even while Matthew was doing humble house chores, there was no hiding the elegance that he possessed. He looked positively regal as he undid his apron and hung it on the side.

“I bet you’re fantasizing about life being like this one day.” Miguel shoved his hands into the pockets of his trousers and sighed. “Love makes a man go crazy, I guess. I’ve never seen you lift a finger to clean up anything anywhere, but here you are scrubbing dishes in your future-mother-in-law’s kitchen. I’m telling you, if word of this gets back to Bloomstead, all the women who have their eyes set on you will be devastated, not to mention become extremely jealous of Veronica.”

“Shut your trap,” Matthew drawled. He washed his hands and spun on his heels to leave the kitchen.

However, he had only just reached the living room when Skyler stood up and flashed a mischievous grin at him, saying, “There you are, Matt! Veronica’s father was just saying how we could use more firewood in this weather. Could you run out to the front yard and chop up the pile of wood there? Thanks.”

“Hey, I did not—”

Tony was about to deny this when Caleb interrupted him, “Yeah, I heard Master Crayson mention that there isn’t enough firewood, too.”

Thermostats were uncommon in small towns like these, so to keep out the cold, most houses here had closed furnaces installed with a pipe that vented out the smoke through a hole in the wall.

“Works for me,” Master Crayson said nonchalantly as he took a long drag of his cigarette. He looked at Matthew steadily and added, “Your buddies were telling me how much you wanted to experience life in a small town, so here’s your big chance. Go out to the yard and chop up some firewood.”

“Huh?” Veronica gaped at Crayson in astonishment. No matter how she looked at it, the old man was picking on Matthew for the sake of amusement. She immediately stood up and said, “Master Crayson, you can’t possibly have a guest do the work, can you? Dad wouldn’t like it.”

It was hard to imagine someone like Matthew, who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, chopping up firewood. The thought of it was absurd, and more importantly, Veronica couldn’t bear to have him go through the labor.

“He might be a guest, but you’re my disciple, you brat! He’ll have to go through me if he really likes you. I have no plans on letting the both of you see each other if he can’t do a simple job such as chopping up

firewood!” Crayson huffed as he waved his hand dismissively, then looked away without saying anything else.

He had made his intentions clear, and even Daniella did not bother countering him. She knew how much Veronica meant to him and that he saw her as his own daughter. Thus, it was only normal that he would try to gauge just how far Matthew was willing to go to prove his feelings for Veronica.

Daniella had to agree that this was a clever way of going about assessing someone.

“What? He likes Roni?” Tony was the only one in the house who had no idea of this, and it showed. He shot a blank look in Crayson’s direction, then at his wife. Finally, he gazed at Veronica and Matthew in confusion, then asked, “Why didn’t I know about this?”

“Because all you ever care about is food,” Daniella pointed out in mock exasperation as she glowered at him.

“Master Crasyon, you—”

Veronica began to protest, but Crayson snapped, “Keep quiet and stay out of this!”

“It’s fine. I’m always up for a little exercise, anyway.” Matthew suddenly spoke up, not at all bothered. He asked Veronica, “Where do you keep the ax?”

“I...” She wanted to dissuade him from going through with this ridiculous demand. She was only too aware of the discrepancy between her social status and his. If he was the one who was out of her league, then there seemed little point in testing him this way.

“Could you show me where you guys keep it?” Matthew went on to ask, sounding completely unfazed. As courteous as he was, she did not miss the authoritative tone underlying his words.

“Okay, come with me,” she said, finally caving in.

She led him out of the living room and into the store room, then found the ax. She passed it to him, but when he grabbed the hilt, she did not let go. Instead, she eyed him gravely and said, ‘You don’t have to listen to Master Crayson, you know. My parents would never let you do something like this, so why are you going through with this just because he asked you to?’

Matthew’s obsidian eyes glittered with amusement as he reached out and tousled her hair gently. “Because I want to be with you and I want your family’s blessings, including Master Crayson’s.”

Crayson had seen Veronica grow up, and he had trained her in martial arts as well. He deserved every bit of respect as a parent would.

“That’s fine and all, but you’ve never worked a day in your life. How are you going to chop up firewood? You don’t even know how exhausting it is.”

“Yeah, well, there’s a first time for everything, right?” Matthew pried her fingers off the hilt of the ax and walked out toward the fence at the front yard.

There was a huge stretch of concrete land to the left of the entrance, but to the right was earthy ground where a pile of thick logs were laid. On top of these was a canvas tarp weighed down by snow.

Matthew found a level spot and propped up a chopping block. He placed a log on it, then swung his ax down and split the wood.

Chapter 373 Jealous Matthew

Only a muffled hum was heard and with a creak, the log instantly split in half. He took another log and repeated his actions. He first properly placed the piece of wood before he swung the axe, riving the log in half all in one go.

Matthew's company and Veronica's family stood by the door as they watched his every move.

Veronica soon shifted her eyes to glare at Crayson with a displeased gaze, and she angrily reached over and tugged on his goatee. "Don't you think this is a little too much, Master Crayson?"

In any case, Matthew was the richest and one of the most powerful men in Bloomstead.

And that exact superior man is now chopping wood at my house? How is this any different from a demotion? she fumed.

"What is this? You are already siding with an outsider whom you aren't even married to yet?" The old man huffed in annoyance and knocked Veronica on the head with his tobacco pipe. "You don't know chalk from cheese, you brat."

"Your master is right, Veronica. He is only doing this for your own good," Daniella joined in with the nagging.

"Hmph!" Tony snorted. "Aren't you all keeping the secret too well? I am the only one who doesn't know anything." He then turned around and headed to the yard.

"What are you getting angry at, Tony? I also only just found out," Daniella explained as she hurried after him.

After Crayson went with them as well, only Caleb, Skyler, Miguel and Veronica were left standing by the door.

As he did not take the situation seriously, Skyler joined in the fun by taking out his phone and pointed it at Matthew for a video. "Tsk! What an interesting day today is. I must take some photos for memory's sake."

"You are trying to get yourself killed again," Caleb, who was leaning against the door frame with his arms crossed, said with a half-smile.

Miguel brought his hand up and pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. "Even the toughest of men can turn soft in front of a woman," he mused. Matthew would always have that haughty and cold

demeanor that kept people away, but he still had to do anything he was told to do once he had stepped into his in-laws' house."

"Haha! You are a wise man, Miggy!" Skyler started laughing at the top of his lungs while pressing one hand on his abdomen as he took the video with one hand.

Veronica was at a loss for words. What a bunch of crappy friends, she thought.

Honk! Honk! Right at this moment, a white Cadillac sedan drove over and stopped in front of Veronica's house.

"Who is that? Roni, you have a guest," Skyler informed Veronica while putting away his phone.

Not knowing who it was herself, she walked over to the car.

A man in a gray trench coat came out as soon as the door opened, and it was only then that Veronica realized it was Hendrey.

"Merry Christmas, Veronica."

He alighted from the car and greeted her before spreading out his arms to give her a hug. He was probably used to how foreigners greeted each other after staying abroad for an extended amount of time.

She accepted the hug rather naturally and out of courtesy, gave him a brief friendly hug. "Merry Christmas! Why didn't you tell me before coming over?"

"Of course it is because I wanted to surprise you." As he spoke, his gaze moved to look at the few people standing at the door. "You got company?"

"Mhm. It is Matthew and his... friends. They came here together." Veronica glanced behind her, and the trio came over immediately.

She proceeded to introduce them one by one. "This is Skyler Robins. That one is Caleb Shaw, and that is Miguel Lynch."

"Oh—Young Master Skyler, Young Master Caleb and Young Master Miguel, I have heard a lot about all three of you. It is an honor for me to finally meet." Skyler greeted them politely as he stepped forward and shook hands with them.

Even though Hendrey had just returned to Bloomstead, he had indeed known about them long ago that they came from wealthy backgrounds, had high social statuses and extraordinary abilities, and they were good friends with Matthew.

"Hendrey Johnson? D*mn... You are one good-looking man. I am sure you have tons of girlfriends," Skyler smilingly teased with his eyebrows raised.

“You flatter me, Young Master Sykler.” Hendrey’s formal smile remained plastered on his face as he moved to shake hands with Caleb. Caleb kept being the enigma he was and only indifferently greeted, “Hey, man.”

Miguel also shook hands with Hendrey after that. “As far as I know, you have just returned to the country, haven’t you, Mr. Johnson? How do you know so much about us?”

The seemingly normal conversation felt prickly for some reason.

“You all are famous people in Bloomstead. I can’t not know even if I don’t want to.” Hendrey laughed with his chin raised.

He swiftly tilted his head to look at Matthew, who was putting his all into chopping the wood at the side. “Is that... Young Master Matthew?” Hendrey asked despite already knowing the answer.

“Sure is. I am sure you know that Matt confessed to Roni. Roni’s parents have been treating Matt like one of their own, so they asked him to chop up some wood just to exercise his muscles.”

Skyler might be a bad influence of a friend at usual times, but he can be loyal in the face of an enemy.

He had picked up the sarcasm in Hendrey’s voice when Hendrey spoke earlier, and Skyler quickly retaliated by offering an explanation that also reminded Hendrey of the relationship between Matthew and Veronica.

It would be better to make Hendrey realize how he was behaving now.

Just as Skyler had expected, Hendrey’s smile gradually disappeared after he said those words. Even the man’s pitch black eyes seemed to grow dimmer by the second.

However, all of that change in emotion seemed to last for only a second.

“Is that so?” Hendrey let out a warm and bright smile again. “Look at how much you have grown. You are at that age where you will soon be talking about marriage.”

At that moment, Hendrey raised his hand to caress Veronica on the head, only to stop when Matthew’s voice rang out.

“Roni?”

Hearing that, the group of people tilted their heads to look at him. He was standing there with his windbreaker jacket removed, and he was holding it in his hand instead as he hooked his fingers at Veronica, signaling her to come over.

“Matthew Kings, what are you doing on such a cold day?! Are you giving up on warmth just so you can look good?” Veronica boomed at him while stomping her way to him.

Hendrey’s fingers froze in mid-air, and he retracted his hand bashfully to slip it into the pocket of his suit pants.

“Worried that I would feel cold?”

Even though Matthew was asking her, his eyes were fixated on Hendrey as he threw Hendrey a knowing look.

After she got close to him, Matthew unhesitantly held Veronica’s hand, but he ended up frowning. “Huh! Won’t you look at this? You said that I would rather look good than feel warm, but just feel how cold your hands are.”

As he said that, he walked behind her and draped his jacket over her torso. “Come on, now. You have a guest. Don’t just stand there. Hurry up and bring him into the house. What if rumors spread about how we aren’t hospitable?”

There was nothing wrong with the impressive words he said, but Veronica couldn’t help but feel there was something strange going on.

With a frown on her face, she scrutinized Matthew and hissed softly, “What are you doing? I told you that Hendrey doesn’t like me.”

Does he think of me as an idiot who can’t pick up what he is implying? The man leaned over and when his lips were next to her ear, he replied in a low voice. “I have no choice. It is your fault for being such a charming woman, Roni. You make me feel so... insecure.”

His magnetic voice was comparable to that of famous voice actors. It sounded so good that Veronica thought all her limbs were weakening.

They were practically in each other’s faces as they whispered to each other. That made them look so intimate that one might think they were joined at the hip.

“Can you please be normal, Matthew? I almost threw up my meal from yesterday,” Veronica barked at him before swiftly turning her head to look behind. She was somehow greeted by the sight of the four men staring at the couple unblinkingly.

Their sharp gazes made her feel as though she was sitting on pins and needles, and she immediately explained to Matthew quietly, “The one Hendrey likes is Tiffany. They are already together.”

Chapter 374 To Set up the Five Men With the Ladies

After Veronica revealed the secret to Matthew, she shushed him before she turned around and walked toward Hendrey. “It is cold outside, Hendrey. Let’s go in.”

“Alright.” Hendrey lightly nodded, but he started to head in the direction of his car’s trunk. “Let me go get something first.” “Oh—I am just happy that you are here. You didn’t have to bring anything,” Veronica politely protested while following him.

As the trunk opened, it coincidentally gave them the privacy from being seen by others.

While carrying one thing after another, Hendrey suddenly asked, “Are you the ‘man’ that Matthew likes that made news a while ago?”

This was merely a guess on his part at first.

But now that he unexpectedly met Matthew during his visit to Veronica’s house, all the pieces of the puzzle seem to finally fit together.

“Ha! Clever boy.” Veronica bashfully giggled without any intention to hide the truth.

She couldn’t help the blood rush to her face whenever she thought of how what happened between her and Matthew in the fitting room was exposed on the news.

Even though that incident was only verbally made known to the media by the shop assistant, who had later come forward to ‘apologize’ by saying that she was only talking nonsense for the publicity, everyone knew that the shop assistant was merely covering up the truth.

“Veronica, do you really trust Matthew Kings so much? You and him are polar opposites. You will be the one who ends up being crushed to pieces in the end,” Hendrey said worriedly.

For some reason, Veronica suddenly felt that Hendrey’s attitude toward her from the moment he got out of the car had been somewhat unusual.

Especially that gaze of his. His eyes almost seemed like they were on fire when they looked at her. It almost felt like he... liked her.

On top of that, she didn’t seem to be the only one who thought so. Even Matthew was treating Hendrey like a love rival.

No, it is impossible, Veronica quietly denied. I saw with my own eyes Hendrey and Tiffany being together. He must be extra caring toward me because he’s my first love.

“What about Tiffany? Do you trust her that much?” Veronica gradually lost her smile, and she solemnly added, “Have you ever thought that you will be the one getting the short end of the stick when it all ends?”

Even though the two who cared for each other had asked the same question, one of them had asked out of sincerity as a friend, while the other was blatantly throwing out a challenge due to greed.

“Oh—Mr. Johnson. How many gifts did you buy that you are still not done carrying them all?”

Seeing that Veronica and Hendrey were chatting the whole time they stood behind the car, Matthew rested his elbow on the handle of the axe while he quietly took puffs from the cigarette in his other hand.

His eyes, however, stayed on the duo standing at the rear of the car the whole time.

It was only when his view was blocked by the trunk lid that Matthew gave Skyler a knowing look and Skyler, in turn, joked about Hendrey's gifts when he understood what Matthew wanted.

After Hendrey closed the trunk with his hands full of gifts, Veronica turned to glare at Skyler. "I bet you got rid of your ex-girlfriend with your endless rambling," she complained.

"Pfft!" Caleb couldn't stop himself from laughing when he heard her words. He then gave her a thumbs-up. "You really are clever."

"You taciturn prick, are you sick of living?!" Skyler angrily yelled. He then walked off to one side and leaned over to grab a handful of snow, thereafter squeezing it into a snowball and hurling it at Caleb.

The agile Caleb tilted his head slightly and easily avoided the snowball. Miguel, who was behind him, had unfortunately taken the attack for him when the snowball soundly landed and burst on his face, turning his face white and cold the next instance.

"Skyler Robins!"

In pain, Miguel glared at Skyler angrily as the corners of his mouth twitched. He was sprinting in Skyler's direction the next second.

"Oh—sh*t! Bro, I didn't do it on purpose."

Knowing that he was in danger, Skyler turned around and ran to hide behind Matthew. "You have to back me up, Matt."

Wispy smoke came out from between Matthew's thin lips as he calmly said, "Of course."

He then passed the axe in his hand to Skyler. "Here. Take it. I am lending it to you. Go ahead and take a few swings. Don't hold back."

Skyler didn't say anything the first few seconds, but he soon flashed Matthew a thumbs-up and praised, "You cold-hearted man." Veronica was watching then when she shook her head out of resignation. "Come on. Let's head inside," she said to Hendrey.

"Alright."

The two of them entered the courtyard together and headed to the living room, where Hendrey greeted Veronica's parents and wished them a merry Christmas. They then started to have a chat over hot tea.

It didn't take long before the people from the village came one after another to give the Murphys their Christmas greetings, resulting in an endless stream of people in Veronica's house.

Everyone's eyes seemed to glint when they saw the five handsome men there.

"Golly, Veronica! Aren't you a capable one? It has only been a year since you started working and yet, you made so many new friends!"

“Your friends sure are handsome. Do they have a partner? Let me tell you. My cousin’s second niece’s distant cousin is still single. Should I introduce her to your friend?”

“That second aunt? Don’t even bring up that relative of yours who is a million miles away. Roni, does that lad who is chopping wood have a girlfriend? How about I introduce my daughter to him?”

“Do any of you young men want to give me your contact? My daughter is still single. Does anyone want to give her a try?”

...

Veronica’s home usually had only a few visitors because it was located at the very end of the village.

It had, however, gathered a crowd just because Matthew and the rest were here. Everyone wanted to join in and enjoy the sight of the five men with distinctly different styles.

Many even brought their daughters along with them.

Matthew, Hendrey, Caleb, Miguel and Skyler felt like they had turned into circus monkeys in that instant their spectators came.

Veronica was going to step forward to stop the villagers and explain to them at first. It was until there was too big a crowd that she simply went home and sat beside the heater to watch the replay of the Christmas Concert. She didn’t see a point in giving an explanation.

Because of her lack of initiative, Daniella and Tony were the ones who ended up spending their Christmas busy offering their neighbors drinks and cigarettes and candies. They couldn’t even take a break in between.

Matthew was still engrossed with violently swinging his ax to chop firewood. A few people had surrounded him to watch him, but they stood some distance away as they feared they would get hurt by accident.

They tried to make conversation with him, only to be ignored. Hence, they started to leave him by himself.

Skyler, who was a chatterbox, stood in the middle of a crowd as he boasted about himself, and made his three close friends the supporting characters in his story.

On the other hand, Caleb didn’t enjoy the noise at all. He snuck away from there and followed along Veronica’s house until he reached the small reservoir at the right side of her house to have a peaceful moment to himself.

Wham! Wham!

He heard a noise as he was standing by the reservoir to smoke a cigarette.

He then went in the direction the sound came from and after a while, he came across a slender girl in an aqua coat made of cotton. Her hair was tied into two braids as she sat in front of a slabstone by the reservoir as she beat a piece of laundry in her hand with a mallet.

Seeing how red her hands had turned from the cold, he naturally asked, "It is such a cold day today, not to mention it is Christmas! Why are you here doing laundry?"

The girl only lifted her head to look at Caleb when he spoke.

He took a good look at her then. With her dark eyebrows, big eyes, fair skin, and the mole under one of her eyes, she looked like a proper, pure village girl.

She immediately gave him a smile as sweet and beautiful as she was when she saw him.

Only...

Instead of answering him, she shook her hands to dry them, and then started making a few gestures.

Caleb let out a frown then.

Is she a mute?