

You'll Fall for Me, Today or Tomorrow

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Despite what was going through her mind, it barely elicited an emotional response from her.

After all, there could only be one explanation.

“What are you thinking about?”

Matthew lowered his gaze at Clarissa when she fell silent.

The woman shook her head with a smile. “Nothing in particular. I’m just thinking about

where to go with Ellie and Damian. She plans to go to Snow Village, which Damian is also

keen on after being showed some pictures.”

“But I’ve been very busy recently...”

“You’re not coming with us.”

When she saw how Matthew was upset at being ostracized, Clarissa stroked his face and

coaxed him like she would a child.

“Be good. We didn’t want to disrupt your work as we’re aware of how busy you are. As long

as you work hard, we will send you updates from time to time. Before you know it, we will be

back.”

In response, Matthew lifted Clarissa’s fingers and bit them gently.

“Don’t you love me anymore? Why are you not bringing me along when you’re out enjoying

yourself?”

Pfft, he sounds like a grumpy old maid.

Clarissa teased at once, “Love? Of course I do. In fact, my love for you grows by the day...”

Despite just being flattery, Matthew enjoyed hearing them still.

Obviously, he wasn’t dumb enough to compare himself with Damian.

That would just be

looking for trouble.

Just as Clarissa was in the planning stages of the trip, many others clamored to tag along.

They included Joshua, Damon, Jeremy, Yarick, and their respective partners. Furthermore, Henry somehow managed to convince Yaala to join them too. Clarissa felt helpless as she knew it wasn't going to be easy managing such a large entourage. Therefore, after discussing with Ellie, they decided to hire someone to organize the trip for them. After all, their group was big enough to form a tour group on its own. All of them set off gloriously to the airport by bus. For some of them, it was the first time they were sitting in one. When they arrived at the airport, they were surrounded by reporters who kept taking photos of them. It was a situation Clarissa hadn't expected. Nevertheless, a group of bodyguards quickly came to manage the ruckus. Clarissa and Damian's mysterious identities were undoubtedly the prize the reporters coveted. After they boarded the plane, Yaala stated lowly, "Clarissa, the reporters likely came because of me." Shaking his head, Henry quickly defended his girl, "I don't think so. After all, your movements have always been discreet. It must probably be someone else." The next moment, Henry shot a glance at Jeremy, acting as if he was the culprit. "No, Henry. What's with the look? Despite how eligible I am, I have kept a low profile recently. Therefore, I'm not the one who attracted the paparazzi. What about Yarick? Isn't his new girlfriend an internet celebrity?" "Enough. Don't blame everything on me. She's a small-time celebrity. There's no way she could have attracted such a huge horde of reporters." "In that case, why?"

Taking out his phone, Damon scrolled through it before explaining in a sarcastic manner,

“Dear sirs, all of you have declared to the world that you’re going on a trip. How can anyone not know? Whoever is interested can quickly find out by just checking the internet.”

Henry, Yarick, and Jeremy had posted on their social media accounts that they were traveling to Snow Village. All of them sounded especially childish while doing so.

Furthermore, Yaala, too, had done the same, while Ellie had announced it to all her friends...

Therefore, it had become public knowledge.

As for Clarissa and Damian, they were the only ones innocent.

Thereafter, everyone scratched their noses awkwardly. None of them had expected the

paparazzi to appear. The paparazzi themselves had staked out the airport for many days

and were finally rewarded for their efforts.

They had managed to capture the photo of the mysterious woman and her son.

Somehow, the paparazzi had been tipped off about the appearance of Matthew’s illegitimate

son. Furthermore, everyone who appeared at the airport was either his friend or associate,

including Ellie, who was his niece. Therefore, it wasn’t difficult to deduce who the lady

carrying the child was.

However, despite having taken pictures, there was nothing more they could do other their

sharing them within their circle. Most of the pictures weren’t clear, and whatever news that

resulted was quickly censored.

Hence, the exposure didn’t result in any issues in the end.

After the group on vacation disembarked from the plane and headed to the hotel, they

encountered heavy snowfall. Sticking his face to the window, Damian watched on in awe.

“Mommy, Mommy, everywhere is being blanketed in snow... It’s beautiful.”

Amazed at his rapidly improving vocabulary, Clarissa smiled.

“That’s right. It’s gorgeous indeed. I have read you a poem about snow before. Do you still remember it?”

“Downy snowflakes fall swiftly past the glow on the streetlight...”
When Damian was done reciting the poem, Clarissa was so delighted that she got him to repeat it. She even called Matthew on video so that she could show him how smart their son was.

Meanwhile, in D City, Judy and her husband were enjoying a meal in their apartment. As the weather was too cold, they left their children with their grandparents in their hometown while both of them waited for news in the city.

Every day, all they did was splurge the money they received and nothing else. One time, Judy had coincidentally seen the news on a tabloid website.

She wasn’t aware that Clarissa was Tyson Corporation’s president’s significant other. But she had seen Clarissa before and could likely recognize her if she saw any pictures of her.

However, as the photo in front of her wasn’t clear, she took no notice of it. Instead, she

lamented, “This lady is really crafty. She has elevated her own status by bearing a son. In the

future, he will inherit a large company. Pfft, she is no different than Hilary. Didn’t Hilary do

the same so that she could marry Mr. Garrett?”

Judy rambled on, but her husband wasn’t paying attention. Instead, he was more focused on

the stock charts displayed on his screen.

“Tsk. It’s a shame that the prominent family Hilary married into isn’t that wealthy after all. I

noticed that she’s been getting increasingly stingy and has been delaying her payments to

us. I suppose she has fallen upon hard times too. Anyway, given her predicament, why did

she prevent her daughter from marrying into a prominent family? Didn't she abandon her child and do the same back then? There must be something fishy going on!"

She then directed her question to her husband sharply. "What do you think it is?"

"If her daughter is married into a prominent family, wouldn't she be able to enjoy the benefits

too? She seemed to have indicated that she was the one that stopped it.

However, it doesn't

fit her character at all," she pondered aloud.

Judy's husband finally looked up and gave the matter serious thought.

"You do have a point. Let me ask the private investigator if he can find out what's going on.

I'm sure there's definitely some dirt there. Haha, we are going to be getting more money..."

"Yes, yes. She really is asking for it."

The couple quickly called up a private investigator. Despite getting paid, the private

investigator didn't really treat their request seriously. After all, they had even tried to bargain

and ended up paying little despite asking for a lot.

After listening languidly to them, the private investigator responded to them in a cursory

manner.

When their call ended, the private investigator was feeling a little dumbfounded. Does this

couple know how difficult it is to investigate that family?

Nevertheless, the man decided to give it a go. After all, he was also interested in the secrets

of prominent families. Furthermore, he could also sell the information if he got lucky. Hence,

it was a lucrative prospect indeed.

Thereafter, the private investigator would only selectively share what he knew with Judy and

her husband. He would only do so after they paid additional for it.

This time, he told them that Hilary often visited a lady in prison three years ago, the

disgraced actress Shermaine Smallwood.

Realizing something, Judy smiled as she explained to her husband.

“Hubby, I remember

now. The name of the family then was Smallwood.”

“Really?”

Although they finally obtained information about Shermaine, they felt disappointed because

she was in prison.

How are we going to extort any sum of money from someone in prison?

Judy was visibly

dejected.

However, her husband suggested, “Although she may be in prison, her family is rich!

Besides, she used to be a famous star. I’m sure she still has a lot of money. Don’t worry; we

will definitely get something out of her. Come, let’s visit the pitiful lady. Haha!”

With their hearts set ablaze by their desire for profit, the couple braved the freezing cold and headed out.

“Shermaine, you have visitors.”

At that moment, Shermaine was reading quietly in the prison library.

When she heard the

prison guard’s words, she looked up with a smile. Following him out, she said with a smile,

“Thank you, officer.”

“You’re welcome.”

Along the way, Shermaine didn’t say a word. Instead, it was the prison guard that remarked,

“You have been behaving very well. As long as you keep this up, you will reunite with your family soon.”

Feeling dispassionate, the woman thanked him with a faint smile.

“Thank you, officer.”

“Alright, there you go.”

James and Kayla were the ones visiting. Whenever Kayla saw her daughter, she would

always burst into tears. Despite doing so for the last three years, her tears never dried up. As for Shermaine, she could now calmly face her parents whenever they visited. She was no longer as emotional as before. Whenever they asked her how she was doing, she would always tell them she was fine. Three years had changed her a lot. The anger she felt all those years was now reduced to nothing more than a relaxed smile. She no longer lost her temper easily and had become more reasonable. She had also loved to learn and help others... She was a totally different person compared to her three years ago. Given how she had changed, it only intensified the heartache her parents felt.

“Shermaine, don’t worry. Uncle Jacque tells us you will be released very soon.”

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The moment they left, Kayla cried so hard she could hardly stand.

Hugging her, James consoled her as best as he could.

“There, there. Didn’t you always promise not to cry? Crying will only make Shermaine feel sad. Besides, we brought good news today. So, there’s no need to react that way.”

After thirty years of marriage, James was already annoyed by how sensitive Kayla was.

Oddly enough, it had been this trait that caused him to fall in love with her back then.

“These are tears of joy, James. I am happy for her too! Do you know how much she has suffered over the last three years?”

“Alright... Let’s not talk about it anymore. Once she’s out, everything will be fine.”

After James drove off with Kayla, Judy and her husband arrived.

“I’m sure I wasn’t mistaken. He’s the man whom Hilary fell in love with back then. Do you

now know why Hilary wanted to commit such an unscrupulous deed?
Look at the car they're
driving! The lady also looks the same as she was ten years ago. Look at
how easily wealthy
women maintain their youth. Just as I said, they're rich!"
"Therefore, our visit isn't in vain. My hunch is correct! Given how rich
they are, why would
their daughter give up her identity and acknowledge Hilary as her
mother?"
"That's right. I would have done the same thing in her place. Isn't Hilary
something? Given
everything she has done, it seems that she loves her daughter a lot."
Despite lamenting Hilary's predicament, Judy and her husband were
unable to see
Shermaine today.
Meanwhile, Clarissa and her entourage had returned from Snow Village
after spending less
than a week there.

The group of spoilt rich men and women were unable to bear the cold.
Hence, they decided
to come back earlier to D City.
The moment they returned to D City, Clarissa was flooded with worry.
She prayed that the
paparazzi hadn't managed to get some good shots. To her relief, she
soon found out that
their trip had been overshadowed by a scandal involving a big star.
Feeling nosy, she read about the juicy details Jeremy and the others had
shared in their
group chat. After all, they had insider knowledge about what was going
on.
Clarissa was shocked to read about what happened. Pfft, that's what
caused the scandal?
I see... That's how it is...
Yarick and Jeremy had so much insider information to share that it felt
as if both of them
were actually there telling her the story.
Holding her phone, Clarissa typed: I can't believe how something like
that could have

happened given that they were married with kids. What were they even thinking? They are really weird.

Yarick hurriedly replied to her message: Hehe! Clarissa, you shouldn't be surprised. To be

honest, your relationship with Matt is the weird one.

Clarissa responded with a meme that expressed her bewilderment.

What does he mean?

Since when did being loyal in one's marriage and family make one weird?

Did I hear it wrong or has the world gone crazy?

She was genuinely stunned.

Given how blunt Yarick was, he was just being honest in his reply.

Yarick messaged: Clarissa, in truth, there are few who are faithful in their marriage

nowadays. We do not doubt that you and Matt love each other deeply.

But as to the few of

us? Pfft, marriage is just for profit and politics. It's highly likely we'll all be unfaithful in the

end. As for the celebrities, all they are looking for is excitement. To them, there's no point

just staying with one person.

Clarissa felt that the man's words were unbelievably heartfelt.

After giving it some thought, she began to understand his point of view a little. However,

since her values were different, she didn't dwell on them any further.

Why do they prefer

such excitement over living their days peacefully?

Clarissa shook her head with a sigh.

Suddenly, she was swept off her feet and fell into a warm embrace.

Grabbing Matthew by the collar, she complained coquettishly, "Why did you do that? You gave me a fright."

Wearing his bathrobe, the man was still wet after coming out of the shower. He looked sexy

with his short wet hair strewn across his forehead.

He smiled. "Why are you sighing?"

"We're just discussing some celebrity scandals."

“What kind of scandals?”

Matthew had no real interest in them, but he quietly listened as she spoke. He enjoyed the gentle sensation her breath brought as he carried her in his arms.

“That’s right. The celebrity was being unfaithful,” Clarissa explained.

The point was, her values were different from those of Yarick’s.

“That’s what I don’t understand. Yarick and Jeremy may be like that, but it doesn’t mean

everyone else is the same, does it? One can only say their circle is more complicated as it

involves marriages of convenience. To be unfaithful is a matter of one’s character, not love.

If those in love are still unfaithful, the problem lies with them. Therefore, one cannot make

such a generalization as it depends on one’s individual character.”

Combing her hair with his hand, Matthew replied casually, “Other than not being in love, the sense of responsibility is also missing.”

“Precisely!”

Clarissa nodded in agreement. The next moment, she smiled at Matthew as she adjusted

her position to one that was more comfortable.

Squinting her eyes at him, she remarked, “Matthew, you are a man of excellent character!”

The man smiled slightly, finding her cute. “Is that a compliment?”

“No, it’s not. It’s the truth. Given how handsome and filthy rich you are, you have not

embroiled yourself in any messy relationships. Furthermore, you don’t take drugs, and you

have a good temperament. If that isn’t a sign of excellent character, then what is? People

say rich men involve themselves in all sorts of vices because they are too bored. However, I

disagree. I think that they lack principles and are lazy. Just look at how busy you are. You

have no time to feel bored! Therefore, they are of questionable character, and not all rich

men are like them.”

“It seems you have a very good impression of me.”

Clarissa chuckled. “An excellent one, in fact. You seem to be perfect no matter how I see

you. You’re wise, disciplined, responsible, loyal, handsome...”

One by one, she listed out all the qualities he had.

She finally stopped praising him when she had exhausted her vocabulary.

“No matter what, I am the luckiest girl in the world! Haha!”

Matthew laughed together with her as he brushed his fingers across her lips. Leaning in, he

gave her a peck without any intention of letting go. Tasting her lips, he let her breath

gradually envelop him.

“Mmm-hmm... Me too. I’m a lucky man.”

Giggling while being kissed, Clarissa gently pushed Matthew away. As her eyes sparkled,

she looked at him in anticipation.

“I know. But, shouldn’t you describe how lucky you are?”

She wanted Matthew to flatter her in return.

Raising his eyebrows, Matthew beamed. “Let’s see. Beautiful...”

He continued kissing her after that, much to Clarissa’s annoyance. “What else?”

“Erm, beautiful... and err... beautiful...”

Despite being speechless, she patiently waited for Matthew to come up with more. After a

while, she grew tired of waiting as her eyes almost became cock-eyed from exhaustion.

Hence, she decided to push him away to express her dissatisfaction.

“Other than being beautiful, don’t I have any other qualities? Am I not smart? Or gentle? Or

sensitive? Am I not...”

Matthew listened as Clarissa listed out the positive traits she had. Finally, he nodded under

her angry gaze.

“Yes, you’re smart, gentle, sensitive...”

When he repeated everything again, Clarissa couldn’t help but furrow her eyebrows in

resignation.

“Matthew, you’re being extremely annoying.”

Getting to her feet in exasperation, she pushed him away before heading upstairs.

By the time the man entered the room, she was curled up in bed underneath her blanket, looking as if she was hiding from the world.

Matthew smiled affectionately as he walked up to the bed. Lifting the blanket, he crawled underneath with her. However, Clarissa tugged her blanket forcefully to wrap herself in it, unwilling to allow him to join her in her nest.

Unfortunately, she wasn’t strong enough. Not only did she fail, but she was also pulled into his embrace instead.

Just when she was about to lose her temper, Clarissa suddenly realized Matthew wasn’t wearing anything as he hugged her.

It was obvious that he wanted to get right down to business.

With her body heating up, Clarissa didn’t dare move a muscle. In truth, she wouldn’t be able to anyway.

“Matthew! You dirtbag! I’m angry right now. I’m not in the mood to look at you.”

Despite her angry threats, it sounded as if she was playing hard to get.

Matthew wrapped his arms around her and soon slipped them underneath her pajamas. He

began to kiss her from the forehead down to her nose and then on her lips.

In the midst of kissing her, he mumbled, “Clare, Darling, it’s not that I don’t want to praise

you. You’re simply so perfect that I don’t know where to begin.”

His words hit the spot.

Just a moment ago, the woman was still boiling with rage. But, the word “perfect” melted

her heart and caused her to surrender her body.

With blushing cheeks and sparkling eyes, she couldn’t help but smile at Matthew.

“You... Matthew, you shouldn’t have...”

She sounded extremely coquettish.

A minute ago, he was getting on her nerves. But, he quickly switched his tone to “worship”

her.

He pretended to be oblivious as he kissed her on her lips. “What did I do?”

Giggling, she pinched him on the arm as she stared at him bashfully.

“You are really a sly old fox!”

“Mmm-hmm. And you are a stunningly beautiful vixen!”

Chapter 313

Later on, Clarissa received the report from the investigations Matthew ordered on Hilary.

It detailed the relationship between Hilary and Judy. When Hilary was giving birth, she had been in the same ward as Kayla. As for Judy, she resigned not long after both of them gave birth.

After she quit, Judy spent her days lavishly. However, it didn’t take long for her to finish

spending all her money.

Thereafter, she quickly found a husband and had children. However, they returned to D City

not long after. Despite not having a job, the couple was still able to splurge, including buying

a new home. Judy shopped every day like a rich housewife, while her husband dabbled in

the stock market. Despite losing a lot of money, he was somehow able to continue investing

in it.

Over the years, Hilary had been paying Judy a lot of money.

However, their only connection was that she was Hilary’s midwife when she gave birth.

Coincidentally, she had also acted in the same capacity for Kayla then. Nevertheless, it still wasn’t clear why Hilary was paying off Judy for so many years.

Although she wasn’t able to prove it yet, Clarissa was certain that Judy was blackmailing

her mother.

When she was done, Clarissa chucked the laptop aside. Regardless of whether the truth was what she had pictured, it no longer mattered.

Feeling relieved, she felt that whatever happened was now in the past. After all, she was happy with her life right now.

“Damian, Damian, I love you to bits!”

When she suddenly cuddled her son, who was having some snacks while watching

television, he plainly replied, “Mommy, I love you too. But, you are blocking my view.”

Damian highlighted his problem to her politely, but there was a tinge of annoyance in his tone.

Chuckling, Clarissa cupped his face and gave him a delightful kiss.

“My dear, we can rewind it later. You foolish child!”

At that, Damian pouted in displeasure. “Mommy, I’m not a fool. You’re the one that’s foolish, hehe.”

The boy let out a hearty laugh after speaking.

“What are you laughing at? Who’s the one that’s foolish, hmm? It must be you, Damian.”

“Hehe... No, you are, Mommy...”

While both of them giggled gleefully, Julia’s heart warmed as she watched on.

Ever since Damian arrived, the house has been filled with life and laughter. Everyone has grown visibly happier too.

Meanwhile, after Judy and her husband left the prison, they couldn’t stop smiling. They were

unable to contain their excitement as their eyes glistened with greed.

“Hubby, I told you we could definitely get her to pay us. In fact, we have even gotten more.

The rest of our lives are now secured. By the way, we have to tell our son. He can continue to blackmail her until the day she dies.”

“You’re right. Let’s demand a hundred thousand. A hundred thousand a month. Hahaha...”

This is awesome!”

To them, it was a lot of money indeed.

However, from collecting ten thousand a month from Hilary to a hundred thousand from

Shermaine now, their appetite had obviously grown.

Given that they planned to live off Hilary and Shermaine for the rest of their lives, there was

no guarantee that they wouldn't ask for more.

Two days later, Judy received a hundred thousand in her account.

Hugging her husband in joy, both of them went out to celebrate and splurge.

After all, once they spent everything, they would be paid again.

Judy loved to shop and go for facials, while her husband had all the vices of a man on top of

speculating in the stock market.

That night, Judy's husband, Jake, went to a club to drink and womanize.

There, he made a

few friends and quickly got close to them after they treated him to drinks for a few

consecutive nights.

Once they grew close, he didn't keep any secrets from them. After getting drunk once, he

boasted to them about how he was able to live lavishly for the rest of his life through

blackmail. During his boast, he revealed all the details about why he was getting paid.

Once Donnie had his confession on tape, he handed it to Matthew.

When Matthew was done listening, the office fell unusually silent.

Donnie couldn't believe a plot worthy of trashy television dramas was happening in real life

to someone close to him.

He was simply unsettled by the information as he believed that everything was determined

by fate.

People who were fated to be together would end up being together despite how far apart

they were and vice versa.

Hence, it was fate that decided how differently Clarissa and Shermaine's lives turned out.

After a long silence, Matthew asked solemnly, "What else?"

Donnie continued, "The couple even went to prison to see Shermaine and blackmail her. A

few days later, they received a hundred thousand. I believed they are extorting a hundred thousand monthly from her."

Matthew was rhythmically tapping his fingers on the table before stopping abruptly upon hearing that sentence.

"Continue the surveillance on the couple."

"Yes, Mr. Tyson."

Matthew hadn't decided whether to tell Clarissa the shocking news.

In the evening, after returning to Zen Highlands, he carried Damian and asked him how

Clarissa's mood for the day was.

"Nothing much went on today. Mommy seems happy. She even made me egg tarts and baked chicken wings."

Matthew chuckled. I guess she really is in a good mood.

Lowering his head, he pinched his son on the nose. "Damian, you really love to eat!"

Bursting into laughter, Damian pinched his father's nose in return.

"Daddy, Mommy says I love to eat because I take after you."

"Nonsense."

"Haha..."

Damian laughed delightfully before yelling all of a sudden, "Mommy, Daddy claims what you say is nonsense! Hehe."

Matthew covered his son's mouth, but it was too late. Clarissa had already peeked her head out from the kitchen.

"What is it? Is Daddy talking bad about me behind my back?"

Matthew immediately denied, "No way! To me, you are perfect, or have you forgotten about it? Therefore, there's no way I would speak ill of you."

“Mmm... Mmm...”

When she saw that Damian’s mouth was still covered, she sneered, “In that case, let him speak.”

The young boy struggled vehemently, wanting to say his piece.

However, after Matthew whispered something in his ear, Damian stopped resisting. When

Matthew finally uncovered his son’s mouth, a smile broke out on the latter’s chubby face.

“Mommy, I heard wrong. Actually, Daddy said you’re gorgeous!”

“Hmph, you little rebel. Are you going to betray me by not telling the truth?”

Damian shook his head at once. “No, no, Mommy. I love you the most.”

“In that case, tell me what was it that you wanted to say.”

Damian hesitated for a long while, glancing in Matthew’s direction.

In the end, the boy simply cupped his chin and played dumb.

Matthew laughed at the sight. “Is dinner ready?”

“Hmph, even if it is, I’m not going to allow both of you to eat.”

After Clarissa returned to the kitchen, both Matthew and Damian

exchanged glances with

widened eyes.

“Damian, what are we going to do? Mommy doesn’t allow us to eat.”

Damian shook his head. “She will definitely let me.”

The next moment, the boy got up and ambled after Clarissa, calling out to her in his

sweetest voice.

“Mommy, Mommy, I love you. Just now, Daddy said...”

Watching Damian betray him so easily, Matthew was speechless at how shrewd his son

was.

He really is a little rebel.

Smiling wryly, the man quickly headed into the kitchen to have a chat with the little rebel. At

the same time, he also had to pacify Clarissa.

Or else, he will have to go hungry for dinner.

Late at night, after tucking Damian in, Clarissa returned to her room to find Matthew walking

out of the shower with only a towel wrapped around his waist.

His muscular chest and V-shaped torso were exposed in all their glory. She stared unashamedly at him, struck by lust. However, she managed to keep her senses and pretended not to have seen anything when he turned to face her. Nevertheless, she was cursing in her heart. It's been a long time since he has done this, given how cold winter is. Is he trying to seduce me? Despite hiding underneath her blanket, her heart was pounding furiously. After all, she couldn't deny the fact that she enjoyed being tempted like that once in a while. Hehe... Am I being salacious?

People say libido increases with age. Is that what's happening to me? At that moment, Clarissa could feel the conflict rising within her. On one side was the obedient angel, while on the other was the devil without restraints. Finally, the devil within her won the struggle. She even considered taking the initiative tonight by being on top. No... No. I can't do that. It will make me look too desperate. Perhaps, I can... Just when she was considering her strategy, her blanket was pulled away from her hands. Closing her eyes, she gritted her teeth and sprang into action. Pushing Matthew down, she quickly climbed onto him, positioning herself nicely. Just when she got into position, she realized his bottom half was tightly wrapped underneath.

Chapter 314

Clarissa lowered her gaze at Matthew. At that very moment, she asked God if He could turn back time for her. Five seconds later, just when she wanted to get off and pretend nothing ever happened, Matthew held her slender waist in place. She blushed so hard that she looked just like a lobster. Intrigued, the man raised his eyebrows with a smile.

“Clare...”

“Hehe... I’m sleepwalking! Sleepwalking!”

Closing her eyes, she played dumb and began to mumble to herself.

Matthew chuckled in response as he played along with her sleepwalking claim.

“Fine. Sleepwalking it is. It appears you must be planning to do something to me in your dream. Clare, why don’t you just tell me what is it that you wanted to do?”

At that, her lips visibly twitched.

Matthew was already caressing her with his hand. Reaching underneath her pajamas, he

leaned close to her ear and let out a warm breath on purpose.

“Clare, since you’re sleepwalking, you won’t remember what happened. Why don’t we try the position we talked about last time? If you don’t say anything, I’ll take your silence as consent.”

In the beginning, Clarissa continued her act by refusing to talk. However, when Matthew started moving into position, she finally wavered.

“Matthew, what are you doing?”

She opened her eyes slowly, acting as if she had just awoken. Pretending as if nothing had happened, she shot him a curious look.

When he saw how well she acted, Matthew felt that she deserved an award.

However, he still couldn’t help but burst into laughter.

“Hahaha...”

His laughter grew increasingly loud as he found Clarissa’s attempt at playing dumb hilarious.

As for Clarissa, she was so embarrassed that she hoped the ground would open up and swallow her whole.

At the same time, she felt equally peeved. Clenching her fists, she began to pound on his

chest. However, it was a futile effort; the man couldn't stop laughing. Finally, she had to use her ultimate weapon. After pinching him forcefully, Matthew finally stopped laughing due to the pain.

However, he maintained a grin on his face and looked as if he was on the brink of laughing again.

Clarissa glared at him so hard that her eyes grew red. She was afraid she would burst out in tears if he continued laughing.

When Matthew saw the look on her face, he finally stopped and hugged her. Laying her back on the bed, he patted her back and apologized softly.

"Clare, don't be angry. You were sleepwalking just now and weren't aware of what you have done, right? Besides, I wasn't doing anything either."

What a preposterous lie!

Clarissa opened her jaws and forcefully bit into his arm, venting her frustration and embarrassment.

Enduring the pain, the man just smiled. Finally, she realized his arm was bleeding when she tasted blood in her mouth.

Just as she began to feel bad, she saw the smile on Matthew's face. She let out a quick

snort before looking away, acting as if she didn't care.

"You deserved it!"

No matter what, it's entirely his fault.

Matthew had no choice but to accept it.

Smiling, he licked his bleeding wrist. The teeth marks are really deep.

"Clare, are you no longer angry?"

Clarissa turned away with her back facing him.

Matthew chuckled as he hugged her from behind. Caressing her hips, he whispered into her

ear on purpose to allow his warm breath to seduce her.

“Clare, I want you.”

Actually, that was what she had intended.

If only he had said it a few minutes earlier, Clarissa would have given in to him.

But, it was now too late.

She snapped, “Go away!”

However, Matthew wasn’t giving up so easily. After licking her ear, he gently bit her ear lobe.

As he continued to tease her, he pressed his body against hers, demonstrating his lust for her.

She cringed and tried to escape from his grip. However, she was quickly pulled back into his arms. When she tried fleeing again, there was so where else for her to go.

Despite having a big bed, the space within Matthew’s embrace was a lot narrower.

No matter how much she struggled, the result was still the same.

Pressed underneath Matthew, she was pleased in many different ways.

However, there was no way she was going to admit how much she enjoyed it.

After an intense and passionate session, Clarissa was panting like a fish gasping for air on

land. While she was breathing heavily, Matthew wanted to continue kissing her. However, she shoved him away instead.

Turning around, she picked up her pajamas from the floor and went into the bathroom.

She did so with such indifference that it made Matthew look pitiful despite having done all the work.

However, he quickly followed her into the bathroom. After another session inside, both of them lay in the bathtub. Having expended all her energy, she snuggled up to him in a daze.

After a brief silence, the man casually asked, “Clarissa, have you ever thought about how

things would be if you weren't raised by the Quigley family?"

At that, Clarissa replied languidly, "What do you mean?"

Matthew hesitated for a while before dismissing the entire topic.

"Nothing. I was just curious."

After kissing her on her head, he got up and carried her out. Placing her on a chair, he dried

her with a towel before carrying her back to bed.

Both of them then fell asleep in each other's arms.

The next day.

After dropping Damian off at school, Clarissa headed to her studio.

There, she held a meeting to announce the new investment the studio had secured.

Furthermore, a celebration was organized to introduce the new investor to the staff and to

motivate the staff to work harder. After the year-end holidays, she expected work to be

busier as they were going to rapidly expand the business.

Once she was done with her work, she went to Matthew's office discreetly.

She wasn't there to surprise him. In fact, she had on a serious expression when she sat in

front of his desk.

She got straight to the point.

"Last night, I seemed to have vaguely heard you mention something. Can you repeat your question again?"

Matthew wasn't expecting it at all.

Falling silent, he stared intently at her.

"Don't give me that look, alright? I still remember. It feels like you knew something when you

asked me that question. There's no need to hide anything from me. By now, you should

already know that I have a good imagination. I can more or less guess what it is, but it's

better if you can give me a definite answer."

After letting out a sigh, Matthew took out a recording pen from his drawer.

Playing it back, Clarissa could hear Jake's drunken voice.

“Haha! That old woman fell in love with a rich husband, and because she failed to seduce him, she bribed my wife to switch their babies. Not only did she raise her love rival’s daughter in poor conditions, but she also abandoned the girl when she married into a rich family later. In the end, she got her own daughter to live lavishly in a rich family. My friend, I saw for myself how vicious this woman is. Haha! But, that’s also how we get paid. After all, she and her daughter are now our benefactors. However, do you know her daughter is now in prison? Karma sure is a b*tch, isn’t she? Despite being raised by such a rich family, she still ended up in prison. However, she’s still rich enough to keep paying us endlessly. Obviously, she still wants to continue living lavishly when she is released from prison....”

Although no names were mentioned, Clarissa clearly knew who he was talking about.

After the recording ended, she fell silent as her eyes stared blankly into the air. Looking lost, she didn’t know what to make of it.

When he saw her reaction, Matthew walked over and pulled her into his embrace to comfort her.

“Clare, don’t be sad. No matter what, you still have me. It’s alright. Everything will be fine.”

He was worried that she would be devastated. After all, he couldn’t believe how ridiculous the whole matter was.

How is this even possible?

However, Hilary’s capability of abandoning her daughter and casting aside her own daughter’s love for her didn’t surprise Clarissa.

She could do it because I’m not her real daughter. After all, there’s no mother in this world who doesn’t love their own children.

Suddenly, Clarissa burst into laughter, causing Matthew to be shocked. "Haha! I still guessed wrong. I thought I was the illegitimate child between her and James. I thought the reason she hated me was because she hadn't been able to win James' affection. I didn't expect to be wrong. No, wait, I got half of it right. I am James' daughter, but I'm not Hilary's. Isn't it funny that she resorted to switching babies? Matthew, don't you think it's hilarious?"

Looking up, Clarissa smirked at how absurd the entire situation was. Beyond that, she found it laughable too.

Stroking her cheeks, Matthew replied softly, "Therefore, it's not that she doesn't love you.

She's not even your mother. Hence, there's no need for you to feel sad over her. All in all, she's nothing but a stranger."

"I have long stopped moping about it. I just feel that it's a farce, that's all."

With that, everything was now clear.

Every mother loves their child. Even a selfish one like Hilary was willing to go to great lengths for the sake of her own daughter.

At the end of the day, the reason is simple. I'm not her biological daughter.

Clarissa laughed quietly to herself as she shook her head. After doing so for a while longer,

tears began to fall, and she buried her face in Matthew's embrace.

Feeling heartbroken to see her that way, the man kissed her sympathetically on her forehead.

Chapter 315

Clarissa finally found out that Hilary switched babies back when she was born.

In truth, it wasn't hard to find out as the secret wasn't water-tight.

It was just that she hadn't thought along the lines.

Despite knowing the truth, Clarissa didn't feel like doing anything about it.

“Don’t you want to get to know your birth parents?” Matthew asked. Clarissa had never met the Smallwoods, and they were not aware that their daughter had been switched with another baby. Clarissa shook her head. “There’s no point doing so. It’s not going to make a difference anyway. Although Hilary didn’t treat me well, Dad and Grandma are still family to me. As for the Smallwoods, their love for Shermaine will not change. Therefore, revealing the truth isn’t going to change anything.”

Matthew didn’t force her to do anything, placing the decision in her hands.

However, after pondering for a moment, Clarissa looked up at him, her eyes glistening with curiosity.

“Matthew, if I wasn’t switched with Shermaine then, would she now be your wife instead?

Hmm?”

Clarissa sounded extremely upset as she spoke. She even poked Matthew’s chest while doing so.

“Hmm? Would she?”

Matthew had wondered what sort of serious question she was about to pose and didn’t expect it to be this.

Feeling helpless, he brushed his finger across her eyelid as he looked at her affectionately.

“Do you think I’m in love with your person or your name?”

Clarissa pouted. “What do you mean? What has it got to do with my name?”

Matthew smiled as he continued to brush his finger across her face. He retorted, “Isn’t that the case? Other than having your name, which part of her resembles you?”

Pouting, his words caught her by surprise. It took her a while to finally comprehend what he meant.

Suddenly, her face lit up.

“Are you saying you love everything about me other than my name?”

He had indirectly confessed his love for her. After all, he only loved Clarissa for who she

was. If it was anyone else in her place, he would not have any feelings for them.

At that moment, the woman’s eyes sparkled in joy, as if a thousand stars were glowing at

the same time. It caused Matthew’s heart to race. At that moment, he kissed her eye

affectionately. As for Clarissa, she kept her eyes shut and smiled, relishing in the warmth of

his lips.

By the time he was done, she hugged his waist and raised her gaze to smile up at him. She

looked adorable doing so.

Pinching her cheeks, Matthew placed his forehead against hers as he said in a deep voice,

“Clare, what is there to question? I love you for who you are. Isn’t it the same for you too?”

Clarissa smiled as she squirmed her lips. “For me?”

Tilting her head, she played dumb, refusing to admit to it.

Matthew kissed her on the lips again. “Don’t you love me?”

Wanting to tease him, she simply giggled without answering.

The man kissed her again as his voice resonated right between their lips.

“Do you love me?”

“Hmm?”

The more she refused to answer, the more aggressive his kisses became.

Finally, she raised

her arms to surrender.

She replied with her reddened lips, “I do. If not you, who else?”

Clarissa wasn’t sure if Matthew was satisfied with her answer. Without saying a word, he

kissed her again. Soon, the atmosphere in the office grew amorous.

If not for Donnie knocking on the door suddenly, Clarissa and Matthew would have done it

there and then.

After pushing Matthew away, Clarissa quickly hid in the break room.

While Matthew was busy outside, she sat on the bed, scrolling through the news on her phone.

Unexpectedly, the first thing she saw was news related to Hilary. The headline read: Famous screenwriter refuses to acknowledge mother. Mother decries daughter for being heartless! As Clarissa and everyone at Tyson Corporation ignored her, Hilary decided to escalate matters.

Given how famous Clarissa was, Hilary she was sure she could force her daughter's hand by making the issue a trending topic.

However, Clarissa wasn't going to stand for it.

"How shameless can she be!"

Just as she cursed, she got up and barged into the office. "Damn it, Matthew..."

Inside, a large group of people turned to look at her.

She froze at once before returning to the break room awkwardly.

Meanwhile, Matthew, who was sitting at the meeting table, grinned for a fleeting moment

before recovering his dispassionate expression.

"That's all for today. You are all dismissed."

Everyone else maintained an indifferent expression as they gradually packed up their things and left.

Once the office was empty, Matthew entered the break room. To his astonishment, he was

unable to find her, but he soon noticed a bump on the bed underneath the blanket.

Walking over, he patted her gently. "Clare, what did I do? Why were you swearing at me?"

Underneath the blanket, a guilty voice rang out. "I wasn't cursing you. I was scolding someone else."

"Who got on your nerves?"

Clarissa climbed out of the blanket and suddenly felt that the embarrassing situation a

moment ago no longer mattered.

She quickly showed Matthew the trending topic.

After reading it, the man glowered, fury visible in his features and stance.

“I’ll get Donnie to deal with it at once.”

Although the news could be easily dealt with, Hilary wasn’t going to give up easily. She

would definitely hound them until she achieved her objective.

Worried about Clarissa, Matthew stroked her head and comforted, “If you don’t feel like

meeting her, I’ll do it.”

“No. Both of us know what her agenda is for seeing either one of us.

Since Shermaine can

no longer provide her with any benefits, she now plans to extract them from me. That’s how

despicable she is. It’s not hard to guess what she desires. Since she’s desperate to meet, I’ll

give her what she wants.”

Hilary was delighted to have finally received Clarissa’s reply.

Now that Clarissa was famous, she felt she could always use this tactic going forward.

After all, celebrities were always concerned about their reputation.

Despite it being a threat, Hilary suddenly felt that she enjoyed the rush of threatening

someone.

She was supposed to meet Clarissa in a cafe near Tyson Corporation.

Despite not having seen each other for a long time, Hilary was neither distant nor awkward

to Clarissa. In fact, she acted as if she was still a caring mother.

“Clary, it’s been such a long time since I last saw you. I missed you so much. By the way,

why didn’t you bring my adorable grandson along?”

From the get-go, Hilary kept talking about Damian. She wanted to find out more about him

from Clarissa.

“Since you and Mr. Tyson are busy with work, and finding a good nanny is difficult, why don’t

you let me take care of him? After all, I'm his grandma. I would be delighted to help watch over my grandson..."

However, she was mercilessly interrupted by Clarissa.

"Forget it. Haven't you hurt me enough? And now you plan on hurting my son too?"

Hilary smiled awkwardly. "Don't say that. It was all just a misunderstanding. Besides, why would I hurt my own grandson? I only got to know about him from someone else. Why didn't you tell me?"

Remaining expressionless, Clarissa sneered, "Is this all you have to say after going through

so much trouble? If it is, there's nothing else for us to talk about."

At that, Hilary let out an exaggerated sigh. "How can you talk to me that way? Am I not

showing you concern? Now that you have a son, he will be the future heir of Tyson

Corporation. Therefore, you have to be more guarded. How is your relationship with Mr.

Tyson? If he marries someone else and has other children, I bet you won't be as calm as you

are now. Let me give you a piece of advice. You cannot allow him to have more children

unless you are the mother. That way, Tyson Corporation will be yours..."

Hilary didn't bother hiding her thoughts. She even made it sound like she was doing it for

Clarissa's own good.

However, the latter just stared at her coldly. For some reason, the feeling she got was no

longer the same as before.

She had previously thought she looked like Hilary. But come to think of it now, there wasn't

any resemblance at all. Due to her beauty, people would usually comment that she took

after her Hilary. However, no one ever described how.

Since Hilary obviously knows I'm not her biological daughter, what does she think about our

relationship?

To have used me repeatedly while claiming to do so for my own good, doesn't she ever feel

bad? Am I just a tool to her?

At that moment, Clarissa burst Hilary's bubble.

With an indifferent expression, she calmly asked, "Do you like me? No, what I want to ask is,

have you ever liked me as your daughter?"

Clarissa could remember spending a few happy years at the Quigley residence when she

was little. At that time, Hilary still treated her well.

Hilary was stunned by her sudden question. However, she quickly replied with a smile,

"Clary, what do you mean by that? Why would I not like you? You're my daughter, for

goodness sake."

Clarissa was disappointed by that answer.

But, it was within her expectations as there was no way Hilary was going to be honest.

In the face of Hilary's hypocritical smile, Clarissa declared, "I am no longer related to you in

any way. I can see through your thoughts. All you want is to extract some form of benefit

from me. However, you've got the wrong person. You should look for Shermaine instead."

With that, Clarissa got up and left. Meanwhile, Hilary sat stunned in her seat. It took her a

long time to regain her senses.

Chapter 316

By the time Hilary recovered her senses, she felt her body go cold.

What did Clarissa mean? How much does she know?

As she began to panic, Hilary shook her head as if to cast the thought away.

It's impossible. There's no way Clarissa would know about her true identity. Judy and her

family would never reveal the secret, and no one else knows about it.

Perhaps, she is just

holding a grudge over what happened three years ago when I helped Shermaine.

That's right. That must be it. She must be angry over that. It's not because she knows the truth.

Hilary calmed down after convincing herself that Clarissa didn't know about what happened.

At the moment, the woman broke into a smile before returning to the Garrett residence.

When Zach got home, Hilary finished up what she was doing in the kitchen and reported,

"Today, I met up with Clary. She's still angry at me over the mistake I made three years ago.

However, she won't be angry forever. I'm still her mother, after all. I expect that she will

forgive me soon enough. After all, I did mess things up back then."

"You saw Clary?"

Zach was delighted as all that mattered to him was the end result.

He didn't care that Hilary got the meeting by leaking the matter to a reporter and had it

publicized as a trending topic online.

Grabbing Hilary's hand, he comforted her, acting as if he was a caring husband.

"Hill, don't worry. It's as you said. Clary's animosity toward you won't last forever. Everything

will be alright. By the way, do you need me to help you talk to her?"

"No, it's better I show some sincerity by admitting my mistake. I'll meet up with her again in

a few days. Anyway, Jonathan will be back soon, and she adores him a lot. When the time

comes, I'll get him to help us make amends, and our family will be back to what it used to

be."

"That's right. When Jonathan returns, I'm sure both of them have a lot to talk about."

As Zach was talking to Hilary, his phone was ringing non-stop. He had to end the call

multiple times before the caller finally stopped.

As Hilary glanced at his phone, she smiled without a care. "Is it work? Don't you need to return the call?"

Zach shook his head. "It's not important. They're probably asking me to go out and entertain. But since it's getting late, I don't want to. I rather stay at home and talk to you..."

Hilary asked coquettishly, "What's there to talk about?"

Even if they had nothing to say to each other, there was always something they could do.

After all, they were a couple.

A few days later, Hilary met up with Clarissa again. This time, she brought Jonathan along.

Clarissa was obviously nice to him. In fact, she was even delighted to see him. However, she

pretended Hilary was invisible throughout the entire conversation.

"Jonathan, you're back!"

"Yup, it's the school holidays now. It's been a long time since I last saw you, Clare."

Both of them hugged as they had missed each other a lot.

Standing by the side, Hilary smiled as she shamelessly interrupted, "Look at how happy both

of you are to see each other. After all, we're a family. Jonathan, your sister has a son now.

Clary, you should bring your son along to meet his uncle."

Ignoring Hilary, Clarissa looked at Jonathan with a smile. "You have grown taller! You're indeed a grown man now."

Feeling awkward, Jonathan scratched his head. "Clare, do you really have a son? How does my nephew look like? Do you have a picture?"

Clarissa nodded with a smile. "I have some on my phone. Let me show you."

When Hilary leaned over, Clarissa moved to avoid her. "Jonathan and I have lots to talk

about. I have nothing to say to you, though. You can leave now."

Despite feeling upset, Hilary forced a smile. "Clary, are you still angry at me for not helping

you three years ago? Actually, I made a mistake then. I was a fan of Shermaine, you see. I trusted the wrong person because I didn't expect her to be of questionable character. Therefore, can't you forgive me just this once? I have been tormented by what I did over the last three years. Every night, I blame myself for hurting you. Luckily, you and Mr. Tyson have reconciled and are happy together now. Or else, I would never have forgiven myself for the rest of my life."

Despite Hilary crying out of guilt, Clarissa maintained her indifferent attitude toward her.

At that moment, Jonathan felt awkward. He knew what his mother was truly like, but he had no choice in the matter. As for the relationship between his sister and mother, it wasn't his place to comment despite him supporting Clarissa in his heart. Given how Clarissa was glaring at her, Hilary's hair stood on end. She warily asked, "Clary, why are you looking at me that way? I'm truly sorry for what I have done. You have to believe me."

Clarissa smirked faintly, finding Hilary ridiculous.

She must be trying her luck. Does she really not understand what I told her the last time, or is she just pretending not to? Whatever it is, it doesn't matter anymore. Even if she did understand what I meant, she wouldn't admit to it. She might even try to stir up more trouble.

In the end, Clarissa decided to ignore Hilary, not because she was worried about her causing trouble, but because Catherine would be devastated to find out the truth. Therefore, she couldn't take the risk. Hence, she asserted, "Let me repeat myself. I don't want to see you. Either you leave, or I will."

Hilary began to panic. If Clarissa left, she wouldn't be able to reconcile their relationship even with Jonathan's help. Therefore, she had no choice but to give in. After apologizing to Clarissa, she shot Jonathan a glance before she left. After Jonathan sat down, he was overwhelmed with helplessness. "Clare, I'm sorry." Clarissa smirked. "It's not your fault. I suppose she must have given you some instructions. However, when you go back, tell her that she and I no longer have anything to do with each other. She isn't worthy of being my mother and should stay away from me. If she continues to cause trouble, I am more than capable of doing something that she will definitely regret." After a brief silence, Jonathan replied, "Clare, I understand what you're saying, and I will convey your message to her. It's just that I..." "You are still my brother and will always be. I definitely can't bear to lose you." Jonathan was embarrassed by how she flattered him. Finally, he remarked, "At the end of the day, she is still our mom." Clarissa didn't acknowledge his comment as she didn't plan on telling him the truth. At least, not for now. "Let's not talk about this anymore. Come over to my place and meet your nephew. His name is Damian Quigley." "Quigley? Clare, aren't both of you..."

Clarissa smiled. "Hold your horses. We're doing fine. Matthew and I have agreed that Damian will take on my surname. Only our next child will carry the surname Tyson." Jonathan then followed Clarissa out and got into the car. When he saw how handsome and cute Damian was from the picture, he couldn't help but praise him.

“Don’t compliment him just yet. He’s really smart and naughty. You’ll know what I mean when you see him.”

When Jonathan arrived at Zen Highlands, Damian coincidentally awoke from his nap.

Therefore, he wasn’t as perky as usual when he saw a stranger in his house. All he did was stare blankly at Jonathan without saying a word.

“Damian, this is the uncle I’ve told you about. Have you forgotten? Quick, greet Uncle Jonathan.”

At that moment, Damian felt a little shy in Clarissa’s arms. Smiling bashfully, he softly greeted, “Uncle Jonathan.”

Jonathan had never interacted with such a young child before, so he felt a little lost. Clarissa

gently put Damian down and said, “Damian, I still have some work to do.

Why don’t you take

Uncle Jonathan to your playroom to play?”

“Alright, Mommy.”

Reaching out his hand, Damian looked up at Jonathan. “Uncle Jonathan, I’ll take you to see

my toys. I have lots of them, especially cars...”

With Damian rambling on, Jonathan had to arch his back to hold his hand as he followed the

young boy to his playroom.

Watching both of them, Clarissa felt that it was easier for boys to play with boys. Before she

knew it, the two of them got along very well.

With that, Clarissa left them to their devices. After getting changed, she chatted with Yael on

the phone before heading to the study to work.

By the time she came down, the sky was already dark. She saw Jonathan carrying Damian,

who looked as if he was flying in the air as he was being swung around.

Both of them were

laughing and clearly enjoying themselves.

When Damian caught sight of Clarissa, he cried out excitedly, “Mommy! Mommy, look, I’m flying!”

Jonathan swung him around for a while longer before finally putting him down. Damian then ambled toward Clarissa to hug her leg. Looking up, he was sweating so much that his hair was all wet. Clarissa stroked his forehead and smiled. “Matthew, do you like Uncle Jonathan?”

“Mmm-hmm, he is the best!”

When Jonathan walked over to pick him up, the boy laughed gleefully. He then hugged

Jonathan’s head and gave him a big sloppy kiss.

“Uncle Jonathan, you’re so handsome!”

When Jonathan raised an eyebrow at Clarissa, she slapped Damian on his butt.

“You cheeky boy!”

Damian grinned. “I’m telling the truth. Uncle Jonathan is really handsome!”

Jonathan was obviously delighted to hear such a remark. At that moment, Matthew came out of nowhere. When he heard Damian’s words, he asked, “Damian, am I more handsome, or is Uncle Jonathan more handsome?”

When he heard his father’s voice, Damian turned around and reached out his arms. “Daddy, Daddy...”

Matthew picked him up. Obviously, Damian preferred his father. Jonathan didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. However, he quickly grew nervous. After all, it was a stressful moment for him as he was a little fearful of his brother-in-law.

Sensing Jonathan’s awkwardness, Clarissa held his arm and introduced, “Erm, this is my brother, Jonathan. Jonathan, this is Matthew. Don’t be nervous; he’s just your brother-in-law and nothing more than an old man.”

While Matthew was speechless, Jonathan could only manage an awkward laugh.

Chapter 317

Matthew pinned Clarissa against the mirror inside their walk-in closet.

“Me? An old man?” he questioned.

Clarissa chuckled nervously. He had pinned her arms onto the mirror and held her captive.

Despite this, Clarissa mentally fawned over how cool he looked as he pinned her down.

She enjoyed being pinned to the wall so much that she didn’t care about the “old man” topic

that Matthew raised. Instead, her cheeks reddened as if two brilliantly red roses had

bloomed on them.

“That’s just a joke to loosen Jonathan’s nerves. Come on, don’t get upset.

Also, what’s up

with you today? Let me go...” Clarissa murmured.

However, she secretly wanted him to continue pinning her down. Her erratically beating

heart screamed in her chest. Please don’t let go!

It was like she had utterly fallen under Matthew’s charms.

Matthew was going to let Clarissa go. However, he suddenly noticed that Clarissa’s

lovestruck eyes were ogling him. She also blushed furiously as if she were some bashful

schoolgirl.

This amused Matthew, who leaned in closer to her.

Her reaction was just as he had expected; her face burned redder than a tomato as her eyes

gleamed eagerly at him.

Matthew’s lips curled slightly. At that moment, their noses were only inches away from each

other. A mischievous desire was laced in his low, taunting hum.

Then Matthew suddenly pinched Clarissa’s waist. Wanting to tease her more, his hands

roamed down to her hips and gave them a hard pinch as well.

At this, Clarissa mewled in shock.

Matthew's wicked grin curved deeper. Meanwhile, Clarissa's blushed harder as Matthew seemed to have read her mind.

"What are you doing?" Clarissa pouted and batted her eyelashes at him. Matthew tensed at this. He inched closer, pressing her tautly between his body and the mirror.

He only replied with one word, "You."

Clarissa stilled in confusion. Before she could respond, Matthew chuckled in her ear. His warm breath tingled her ear lobes.

He continued, "Didn't you ask what I was doing?"

It finally registered in Clarissa's mind. "Matthew Tyson, you old pervert!" Deep laughter rumbled from Matthew's chest as he smirked delightedly. He pulled Clarissa in for a big wet kiss. Smack! Then he grinned at her shy and helpless face.

"You love it. Don't you, Clare?"

"That's not true! Get away, you old pervert! Get off me. Let me go..."

Women, Matthew sighed inwardly. They'll never admit what they truly feel.

They deny that their feelings, saying they don't like certain things, even though they do. Then they tell you to let go, even though they want you to hold them tighter. However, Matthew hadn't pried too much into Clarissa's true feelings because it would only upset her.

Might as well give the woman what she wants!

"Mommy, Daddy, I'm hungry! Let's eat now. Mommy..." Damian suddenly called out.

At this, the tomato-faced Clarissa darted out of the closet and stopped her son from entering.

"Come on, Damian. Let's head downstairs to eat."

Matthew then casually trailed after them. At that moment, Damian was staring wide-eyed at

Matthew before looking back at Clarissa. Clarissa couldn't help but panic at the boy's

innocent gaze. She was worried that the boy had figured out what happened inside the closet.

“Ah!” the boy suddenly cried out. “Mommy, did you put on lipstick again? Your lips are so red! Why didn’t you ask me to do it for you?”

Clarissa had the habit of putting on lipstick each time she left the house. Ever since Damian noticed this, he became adamant about putting on her lipstick for her. Hence, the boy was upset that his mother’s lips were currently a bright shade of red.

She secretly put on her lipstick even though she’s not going out! The boy stomped his foot in betrayal. He whined, insisting that Clarissa remove her lipstick so that he could reapply it for her.

To this, Clarissa felt utterly embarrassed.

She soothed, “I’m not wearing any. Here, see for yourself.”

“Really? But your lips are red! You must be lying to me.”

“I’m not. Take a look. You can try and smudge it too...” Clarissa explained as she leaned towards the boy.

Damian raised his little hand and rubbed gently on her lips. After realizing that there wasn’t any pigment, he tilted his head in confusion.

“So why are your lips red, Mommy? Did you snack on something red?”

“No, I...”

Before Clarissa could come up with an explanation, Matthew picked up the little boy in one swift motion.

Then Matthew whispered as if he were sharing some juicy gossip, “Don’t go poking your nose into things, Damian. This secret is between your Mommy and me. It’s about having a little sister, but it won’t come true if we tell you about it.”

“Really? Then I won’t ask anymore,” Damian promised.

The boy covered his mouth immediately whilst casting a sparkly, rounded-eyed look at

Matthew, then at Clarissa.

Still, he couldn't help but wonder why his mother's face had turned as red as her lipstick.

Then again, he wasn't sure if it was okay to ask. Does this have to do with my little sister?

Damian gasped excitedly at the thought.

In an instant, he dropped the topic and decided to patiently wait for his little sister to arrive in their family.

Matthew's head whipped around as he smirked at Clarissa, whose ears had also turned pink from embarrassment. She glared at him before ushering everyone downstairs.

Laughter erupted from Matthew since he enjoyed seeing her so flustered. Damian, however,

was unaware of what happened and stared cluelessly at his parents.

After their meal, they had their chauffeur send Jonathan home.

Back home, Hilary and Zach had long-awaited Jonathan's return. Thus, they welcomed him

warmly when he arrived at the door.

"Jonathan, you're back. What took you so long?" Hillary asked.

Zach chimed in, "Why does it matter? He was only at Clarissa's; it's not like he went to some

stranger's home. Come sit, Jonathan!"

Jonathan knew why his parents were behaving like this; they wanted information from him.

However, he wasn't keen on telling them, so he kept silent.

"Jonathan. Why aren't you talking? Were you visiting Clarissa? Did you meet her child? And

what about Mr. Tyson?"

Jonathan simply nodded in response.

"Is the child really hers? How are they? Does Mr. Tyson love the child?"

Jonathan mentally rolled his eyes. Obviously.

However, he held back from telling his parents too much. He knew that they had ulterior

motives from the way their eyes glinted maliciously.

So he dismissed himself, "Yeah. I wasn't there for long, so I didn't pick up anything

interesting. I'm going back to my room now."

"Hang on. Why the rush, Jonathan?" Hillary relentlessly latched onto his arm.

It was clear that she wanted to prompt more information from Jonathan.

Regardless, Jonathan grew annoyed with her antics. He flung her arm off and growled, "I

don't want to talk anymore! I'm tired. I'm going to bed now."

Then, he quickly stormed off and locked himself in his room.

Hilary's face scrunched into a deep frown at his disobedience. She whipped around and

whined to her husband, "Zach, look at your son! Do you think he's going through a rebellious phase?"

To her surprise, there was not a trace of anger on Zach's face.

Instead, he shook his head amusedly at her. "It's fine if he doesn't want to talk. You don't

have to force him."

"But—"

Before Hilary could continue, Zach shook his head and motioned her to sit down. "Jonathan

probably has a good relationship with Clary, so he doesn't want to speak ill of her. That's

fine. What matters is he's on good terms with her. After all, it's only natural for our family to

get along well with one another."

Hilary was initially dumbfounded at her husband's relaxed manner. After pondering for some

time, she quickly caught on to his true intentions.

She immediately nodded to herself. Either way, we're doing all of this for Jonathan's sake.

Meanwhile, Zach hoped that Jonathan and Clarissa could be on good terms as brother and

sister. That was enough to make Zach happy. However, his intentions weren't pure either; he

saw Jonathan and Clarissa's good relationship as a fallback plan should he ever need one in

the future.

Jonathan must have said something to Hilary. Clarissa noticed that Hilary hadn't pestered her at all these days. Not that Clarissa minded; in fact, she felt that it was for the best.

Jonathan was recently on school break, so he often dropped by Zen Highlands to spend time with Damian. Clarissa was more than happy with this as it gave her time to focus on work. She took advantage of this and quickly hustled off to the studio. Clarissa had already submitted the manuscript for her children's picture book, and Joshua had also completed the book's illustrations as per her request. Flipping through his illustrations, she gaped in awe for Joshua's top-notch artistic abilities. His illustrations vividly and accurately portrayed every conceptual detail that she described to him. They were perfect. By the time she had gone through Joshua's work and praised him several times, Joshua puffed his chest complacently.

He raised his chin and bragged, "See? It's your loss for passing on a talented man like me, who's good at depicting your words and is your best friend." To this, Clarissa let out a bubbly chuckle and nodded at him. "Yeah, yeah. My loss."

"That's right," Joshua harrumphed in a joking tone.

He was satisfied that she had played along. An idea popped into his mind as he cracked a playful smile. "Why don't you dump that snobby businessman, Tyson, and be mine instead?

My family likes having you around, so you'll have a fuss-free relationship with your mother-in-law. Plus, that Tyson guy is trash. If you marry me, you won't..."

Joshua froze abruptly. However, Clarissa hadn't given this too much thought.

She only asked, "Why'd you stop talking?"

Joshua flashed a tight-lipped smile as he looked behind Clarissa and said, "A-actually, Rissa, I think that Damian's father is umm... he's a decent man." Clarissa giggled after hearing this. She turned in the direction that Joshua was looking at, already knowing what awaited there—Matthew. He stood behind her with his eyebrows twisted into a fearsomely deep frown. Shuddering and lips twitching in fear, Joshua shot onto his feet. "I'll be off now, Rissa. Don't miss me too much!" He then scurried out the door as if he were some bushy-tailed cat, running from a fight. At this, Clarissa couldn't help but burst into hearty laughter. Pfft! That rascal. Even as he flees for dear life, he just had to add that last line to taunt Matthew. Matthew then walked over. He pinched her cheek and huffed, "You seem like you're in good spirits." At that, Clarissa swatted his hand away and ushered, "Stop it. Not in my studio! Speaking of, why are you down here at this time of day?"

"Well, I wouldn't have caught someone professing their love to you if I didn't show up now, would I?" "Pfft! What do you mean by professing their love? Joshua was only messing around. What, did you seriously believe what he said?" Clarissa stood up. She tugged on Matthew's fingers and murmured, "He's just kidding. Besides, I'm your wife. No one would dare to profess their love to me." Matthew could tell that the employees around them were only pretending to work, that they were secretly eavesdropping as well as peeking at his and Clarissa's conversation. Regardless, he leaned forward and boldly nibbled on her plump lips. "Say that again. What are you to me?" he asked.

Chapter 318

“What else could I be?” Clarissa asked. She giggled softly and reached up to caress his face

before continuing in a subdued voice, “I’m your wife, alright?”

Matthew chuckled contently at Clarissa’s compliance. He gave her a quick peck and

approved, “Good.”

Although he wanted to deepen the kiss, he held himself back because this wasn’t the right

place and time for that.

So instead, he pinched her cheek and said, “I came here to tell you that I’ll be gone for a

one-week business trip. I’m leaving right after this. Don’t forget to miss me, alright?”

In an instant, Clarissa pouted dejectedly. It was clear from her soured expression that she

didn’t want him to leave. However, all she could do was nod reluctantly.

“Alright. Remember to take care of yourself! Don’t pull all-nighters, and don’t forget to eat

your meals...”

Clarissa rambled on in an anxiously fast voice. It wasn’t long before

Matthew’s phone rang,

signaling that it was time for him to go.

After walking Matthew to his car, Clarissa dragged her dispirited self back to the studio. A

gloomy expression shrouded her face as she was still hung up on

Matthew’s sudden

parting. Despite this, Mandy and the studio’s two newly-signed authors

boldly approached

her. It just so happened that the two authors were present in the studio today. Hence, they

witnessed and became insiders, like the other employees, to this ground-breaking

secret—Clarissa really was romantically involved with the President of Tyson Corporation.

“Clarissa, could you get me Mr. Tyson’s autograph when he gets back?”

The female author,

who goes by the name of Hilda, drooled whilst asking.

The male author reacted much calmer. This pudgy middle-aged man went by the penname of Oz and specialized in the mystery and crime genre. His works had also become quite a hit in recent years.

In contrast with the lovestruck Hilda, he was composed and only gave a mental

acknowledgment—Mr. Tyson is certainly a top-tier man.

Some of the employees had overheard Hilda's question and chimed in,

“Why do you need his

autograph? You're only awestruck because it's your first time seeing Mr.

Tyson. Besides,

Hilda, you should be more rational. Mr. Tyson is Clarissa's man. He's

basically family at this

point, so stop with your dramatics.”

Hilda couldn't fathom why the other employees were so unfazed.

However, she felt that their

words made sense. I'll probably be like them once I get used to seeing

Mr. Tyson in the

studio.

“Clarissa! Must you and Mr. Tyson always put on such a passionate

display in front of us

single people? It's simply too much to witness...”

“Yeah! You've got to put a leash on your man. Restrain him from being

so touchy-feely the

next time he visits...”

The studio's employees hopped into the conversation and teased her.

Being surrounded by

their bubbly personalities, Clarissa found herself cracking a few jokes

and giggling along.

She no longer felt miserable about parting with Matthew.

It's only a business trip, after all.

When Matthew was out of town, Clarissa felt bored and had no idea

how to pass the time.

She eventually decided to take Damian on a dinner date with Ellie and

Damon. It'll be a

catch-up session since I didn't see Damon at the last gathering. Plus, I

can finally introduce

my little boy, Damian, to him.

"This is your son, Damian? He's got your pretty looks!" Damon chuckled as he scanned every inch of the boy's face.

At the same time, Damian was also inquisitively checking Damon out. Then Damian suddenly retorted, "You're supposed to say I'm handsome, not pretty."

Damon threw his head back and guffawed at Damian's correction.

"You're a smart one, aren't you? Alright, my bad. I think you're a very handsome boy."

"Thank you. You're handsome too, mister!"

"Pffft!" Damian's nose scrunched as laughter burst from his chest. "I see you're quite the

sweet talker too. How are you so good with words at such a young age?"

Damon was head over heels for Damian's puffy cheeks, as well as his quick-witted

responses. It was these parts of Damian that made him so loved by everyone who laid eyes on him.

During the dinner date, the three adults mainly babbled about Damian.

It was like they could

never get bored of the charming little boy. Even watching him slurp on his soup was enough

to warm their hearts with joy.

"Since you guys are basically obsessed with my little Damian here, why don't you each settle

down and make one of your own? I've realized that life becomes complete once you have a

child."

For a moment, Ellie seemed like she was pondering something. It was uncertain if she was

considering having a child or if she thought about something else.

Regardless, Damon shook his head offered a thin-lipped smile. "There's no rush for that. It

would be wrong of me to settle with a random woman simply because I want a kid. That's

too irresponsible to both the woman and my child. Besides, I'm too busy these days. Maybe

I'll think about it when my hectic life calms down a little."
"Busy? You're just making excuses."
Damian overheard and decided to join in, "Yeah, excuses!"
Upon hearing his squeaky voice, the adults at the table burst into hysterical laughter.
Beguiled by the little fluffball of a boy, Damon warmed up to the idea of having a kid.
The rest of their meal went by slowly. Sometime later, Clarissa carried Damian and chatted with Ellie. The women walked behind Damon as he led the group out of the restaurant.
Just as Damon stepped foot outside, two couples approached him from both sides. Damon frowned after realizing that one of the couples was his uncle and aunt—Jacque and Sandra.
Damon wasn't planning on introducing Jacque and Sandra to his friends. He knew that it would only make things awkward, especially given the circumstances between Clarissa and the other couple.
Jacque and Sandra gaped at how Damon averted them. However, they quickly understood why when they noticed the little boy in Clarissa's arms. Is that the rumored son of Matthew Tyson?
Well, I'll be! Looks like the rumors are true.
"We meet again, Ms. Quigley," Sandra greeted.
Since Sandra had taken the initiative to greet first, Clarissa had no choice but exchange pleasantries for politeness' sake.
The other couple furrowed their brows in confusion. They jumped at the chance to ask,
"Sandra, who are your friends?"

A realization flickered in Sandra's eyes. She knew that the couple was acquainted with Ellie.
However, she wasn't so sure when it came to Ms. Quigley.
Nevertheless, Sandra introduced, "This is Ms. Quigley and Ms. Tyson. I'm sure you guys are already acquainted."

Ms. Quigley?

The other couple, James and Kayla, pondered where they had heard that name before. They were fairly intelligent people, so they soon realized why Ms. Quigley sounded like a familiar name.

Their faces twisted upsettingly at once.

Hatred boiled in Kayla's chest. Her daughter had been through so much hell, and it was all

because of Clarissa. She glared venomously as if she wanted Clarissa dead. Red-eyed and

tears streaming, Kayla lashed out.

"You. It's all your fault! You're the reason my daughter has fallen this low. You cruel b*tch.

Why did you hurt my daughter? Why did you seduce her man, you vile homewrecker? You'll

burn in hell for everything you've done!"

Everyone paled in shock because it was rare for Kayla to utter such vulgarities.

Sandra fumed with repulsion for her sister-in-law's maniacal outburst. How humiliating!

Next to her, Clarissa's face turned a sullen grey. She glowered at James and at Kayla, who

was bawling her eyes out uninhibitedly.

These must be Shermaine's parents.

Clarissa never intended to reclaim them as parents, nor did she have any emotional

attachment for them. However, it still hurt Clarissa to see her biological parents glaring back

at her with such hatred.

Before the others could jump in and ease the tension, Clarissa's voice boomed.

"One, I am not a homewrecker. Two, Shermaine and Matthew have never been romantically

involved. Shermaine is in jail for committing crimes, so what does that have to do with me?

Here you stand, pointing your fingers accusingly at me. You're ignorant of who the real

villain is and are unable to discern right from wrong. It's no wonder Shermaine went to prison; perhaps you failed to teach her morals. Tsk. How is any of this my fault? Did I tell her to commit a crime? Was I the one who instructed her to endanger someone else's life? No. She brought all this on herself." "Shut your rotten mouth!" James snapped. He knew that as parents, he and Kayla failed to morally educate their daughter. Now, their daughter was locked up behind bars for committing grave crimes. So it made sense that he was already drowning in disgrace and shame. However, Clarissa had mercilessly pointed his failure out, humiliating him in public. On top of that, Clarissa spoke harshly of his precious daughter, Shermaine. All this made James' heart boil with rage. He retaliated, "Speak for yourself, you wretched woman! Are your parents also responsible for your impudence towards elders?" Clarissa sniggered. Before she could manage a retort, Sandra interjected, "My sincerest apologies, Ms. Quigley..." Then Kayla interrupted with a whiny voice, "Why are you apologizing to her? This woman is evil. She..." "That's enough!" Jacque thundered. He shot a look at Damon, who immediately understood and escorted Clarissa away from the scene. Ellie paced quickly behind them with Damian in her hands. Clarissa had passed Damian to Ellie so that she could confront the couple earlier. The little boy had been gravely silent this whole time, startled by the adult's sudden crossfire. Even after they entered the car, Clarissa still looked grim as she brooded silently. Damon's voice trembled, "I'm so sorry, Clare. I swear I had no idea we would bump into them there. It's all my fault, I—"

At this, Clarissa appeared to regain calm. She cut him off, "It's not your fault. It was just a coincidence."

Suddenly, Damian's arms reached out and motioned for Clarissa's hug from the backseat.

Ellie obliged by passing Damian over. Once Clarissa held him against her chest, Damian

gently patted her hair as if comforting her.

"There, there, Mommy. Everything's okay. I got you. Don't be sad."

Clarissa felt moved by the little boy's actions. A warm, tingly feeling swelled in her heart as

she hugged Damian tighter.

Her voice cooed coquettishly, "You're such a good boy, Damian. I'm all better now. I love you

so much, Damian. So much! You're my little guardian angel."

Damian flashed a proud grin before returning his Mommy's hug. The sight of this mother

and son's affectionate embrace seemed a tad bit cheesy to Ellie.

She felt goosebumps watching them from the backseat. However, she held back from

complaining since Clarissa had been through a lot today. As Clarissa's friend, she didn't

want to upset Clarissa even more.

Meanwhile, the two couples departed for the Wynters' residence shortly after Clarissa had

left.

Kayla bawled even louder in Hannah's presence. The former whined, kicking and thrashing

her feet like she had been gravely wronged.

On the other hand, Sandra sneered at her sister-in-law's tantrum; Kayla played the victim

card and wailed as if Jacque had bullied her earlier at the restaurant.

Hannah's temples pounded furiously after looking at everyone's soured expressions as well

as her crying daughter.

She sighed, "Enough with the crying, Kayla. What's gone wrong? Is the problem that bad?"

You're a grown woman. Why are you crying like some immature child over spilled milk?"

"Mom! I'm upset because my poor Shermaine has suffered so much. She's not even released from prison yet! My daughter is definitely innocent, but that b*tch who framed her insisted otherwise and humiliated us publicly today! Mom, why are the fates so unkind to our family's lives? Why did they make my poor Shermaine's life so difficult?" Kayla bawled even louder.

Chapter 319

Hannah wasn't young anymore, so she didn't have the patience to watch her daughter kick around like some mindless child.

Her lips twisted in annoyance. "That's enough. If you have something to say, then say it outright. Stop with the waterworks because I can't hear a word you say." Despite this, Kayla's tears kept pouring as she continued to thrash around. Hannah gave up and looked over at her daughter-in-law instead.

"What happened? Didn't you guys go out for dinner? How did she end up like this?"

Sandra looked displeased. She uttered, "I'm not feeling well, so I'm heading back to my room now. You can ask Jacque what happened, Mom."

The entire Wynter family was getting on Sandra's nerves. She then turned and marched off resolutely.

At this, Hannah became furious. Even Kayla was upset as she cried out louder, "Mom!

Sandra is clearly taking the enemy's side! Mom, you have to—"

"Enough!" Jacque roared from being fed up.

Jacque's words were law in the Wynters family. Hence, everyone was startled by his sudden

instruction. Even Kayla held back her tears.

Hannah then looked calmly at Jacque as if motioning him to speak. After all, his words were

the only ones she trusted.

Jacque's tone was harsh. "Kayla, you're over fifty years old. Yet your ability to tell right from wrong is skewed to this extent? Did your brain stop growing once you graduated from school? What do Shermaine's crimes have to do with some innocent outsider? How dare you make accusations without any evidence!"

"Jacque, you know what happened. That woman caused my little Shermaine to—"

"To what? Illegally hire an assassin for murder? Did Clarissa outrightly ask her to that?"

"S-she forced Shermaine to..." Kayla mulishly denied.

Jacque's jaw clenched in disapproval at how Kayla was blind to the fact that Shermaine was in the wrong.

At this, James finally spoke up, "Kayla's just feeling sad about our daughter's current situation. Please forgive her, Jacque."

"Sad about your daughter? Your daughter is spoiled rotten by the two of you!"

Furious counter-arguments stirred James' and Kayla's minds. However, they bit down the urge to rebuke since Jacque seemed absolutely livid.

Especially since they needed Jacque's help to get Shermaine released from prison early.

The two lowered their heads and kept silent. Knowing that they were only doing so for their daughter's sake, Jacque fumed even more. He then dismissed them at once, "That's enough now. You two should leave."

"Jacque, about Shermaine..."

"Why are you still here?" Jacque shot them a cold look.

Within seconds, James and Kayla scurried off like frightened mice.

Once the two departed and his wailing sister was long gone, Jacque let out a long sigh

before explaining earlier's events to Hannah.

Even Hannah sighed after hearing everything.

“What an unfortunate coincidence! Your sister and her husband definitely overreacted. You shouldn’t—” Hannah tried to put in some good words about Kayla. Truthfully, Jacque understood why Kayla and her husband took their anger out on Clarissa; as parents, it was only normal for them to be upset at their daughter’s misfortune. Still, that’s not the right way to dote on their daughter. And shouldn’t they keep a low profile at this critical time when their daughter is still in prison? Shermaine gets granted parole if she maintains good behavior in prison. However, that is if Matthew doesn’t interfere with things. Now Kayla and James have done it! If Clarissa complains about their public outburst to Matthew, and if he suddenly remembers that Shermaine is still in prison, he’ll probably tamper with things and delay her parole. All my life, I have never once been as furious as I was with Kayla and James. Those two are already fifty or so, yet they’re inconsiderate to how their actions affect the bigger picture! Jacque broke down the entire situation. At this, Hannah instantly understood the severity of Kayla and James’ actions. She sighed helplessly, “Jacque. Shermaine is ultimately still your niece. Even if she made some grave mistakes, she’s already paid for them these past few years. You have to find a way to get her out of prison. She can’t stay in there forever; it will ruin her entire future...” Jacque disagreed inwardly. She has already ruined her future by committing those crimes. Once she gets out of prison, it will be a miracle if she can even go back to living normally. Yet, his mother’s voice was so full of desperation that he couldn’t bear refusing her request.

Hence, he agreed despondently, "Don't worry, mom. Things have already escalated this far, so I'll do whatever is in my power to get Shermaine out early. Still, please talk some sense into Kayla; she's not a little girl anymore. She should have more restraint over her immature emotions and quit being so naive and stubborn."

Hannah's chest sank. "I'm fully aware. However, she's used to being that way her whole life, so there's no point talking sense into her. But I understand what you mean. I'll talk to her about it whenever I can."

Silence engulfed them for a moment before Hannah spoke up again, "Sandra's not upset again, is she? I know that your wife doesn't get along with your sister's side of the family. I also understand what Kayla did earlier was wrong, but still, we're family. You should talk to Sandra as well; make sure she knows where her place is."

"Yeah," Jacque uttered grimly.

He felt torn knowing that his mother and wife had opposite stances on the Kayla situation.

After wrapping things up with Hannah, he went upstairs and noticed that Sandra was on the phone with their son. She boldly complained about Kayla's family, despite Jacque's presence.

Jacque frowned. "That's quite enough. What do you think you're telling our son? How could he understand?"

"How can he not? I'm asking him to be more alert and keep a distance from your sister's family. What the hell is wrong with those people anyway?"

"What do you mean those people? They are my sister and brother-in-law. Even if they went out of line today, how can I stand idly by and not do anything to help them get their daughter

back? Besides, how could you be so disrespectful to Kayla in front of my mum? You've gone too far this time."

Sandra harrumphed, "So what if I was disrespectful? I've never once made things difficult for

Mom. If it wasn't for your sister's ridiculous tantrum, do you think I would break my good streak of being a filial daughter-in-law?"

Jacque couldn't refute this, or perhaps he didn't want to anymore.

Instead, he harrumphed in response and stormed off to his study.

On the other hand, Sandra was unbothered by this. She continued to grumble about Kayla

and James to her son.

Later that night, Damon dropped by the Wynters' residence.

Hannah was initially surprised to see Damon. However, she immediately understood why he

had visited after recalling what happened earlier.

"Grandma, Uncle Jacque, Aunt Sandra. I'm sure you're all up to date about what happened.

Clarissa is my best friend. Perhaps you've misunderstood because you don't know her well,

but I can confidently say that Clarissa is a much better woman than Shermaine. Clarissa is a

kind woman, probably the best there ever is. So as her friend, I feel horrible that the

Smallwoods have publicly harassed her today. I'm sure you're all recall that Shermaine was

one-sidedly obsessed with Matthew back then. So when Matthew started dating Clarissa,

Shermaine deliberately made Clarissa's life a living hell. Shermaine's jealousy drove her into

hiring an assassin, as well as having the intent for murder. That said, uncle, I'm sure you

guys can discern who's the real villain here."

"Damon. Why do you sound like you're siding with Clarissa? Are you here to protest on

behalf of her, to give us trouble?" Hannah spat.

Her lips twitched with anger. This brat! We're supposed to be a family, so how could he show up and lecture us over some outsider? Surprisingly, Sandra went against the older woman. "Mom. Did you not understand a word he said? He was only clarifying the facts to us. I'm sure Damon's not here to cause any trouble. Besides, it's understandable that he's upset. After all, the Smallwoods hurt his friend, and to make things worse, we were the ones who brought the Smallwoods there. Now, Damon, your uncle and I had no idea that the Smallwoods would behave so uncivilly. Rest assured, we're aware that they overstepped their bounds, so please don't be upset anymore. You have to understand that your uncle and I are helpless in this matter as well. There's nothing much that we can do..." Sandra felt bitter about the whole situation. I'm stuck with in-laws like them, so what else can I do except blame my rotten luck. The message behind Sandra's words was unmistakable. It was clear that she disliked Kayla and James. At the same time, she also didn't approve of Hannah's stance on the matter. Hannah's face scrunched into a hideous frown. She felt humiliated by Sandra's disrespect. Not only that, but she also felt disgraced by Kayla's irrational outburst that started all of this.

Truthfully, Damon had no intention of causing trouble. He impulsively showed up here as a result of the overwhelming guilt he felt. Unfortunately, the Smallwoods had already departed. Otherwise, he would have called them out for their dispute earlier. Damon soon realized that he had impulsively ranted to the Wynters. Not wanting to make things worse, he quickly excused himself and scampered off in shame.

Likewise, Hannah marched back to her room with a tight frown. The same was for Sandra, who crossed her arms in a foul mood. Surrounded by everyone's anger, Jacque slumped helplessly onto the living room's sofa, not knowing what more he could do.

Elsewhere, Clarissa was down in the dumps after that awful encounter earlier with James and Kayla.

My birth parents insulted me with such cruel words the first-ever time we met. It seems like their hatred for me runs deep.

Granted, they weren't aware that Clarissa was their biological daughter. Still, even if Clarissa wasn't their daughter, they shouldn't have accused and insulted an innocent girl in public.

Needless to say, that was how they could raise a vile daughter like Shermaine.

The most important thing one could leave their child with wasn't inheritance—it was principles. What mattered most was family involvement in one's education, one's parental education. These were what shaped a person's future attitudes and integrity.

Considering the kind of person Shermaine was, it was clear that her parents had little regard for morals.

True enough, Clarissa witnessed James' and Kayla's skewed moral compasses today. She was greatly disappointed by their unreasonable dispute.

This disappointment had weighed her down the whole day. However, she felt it wasn't right

to share such negative thoughts with Ellie, much less Damian. Hence, she waited until her late-night call with Matthew to rant.

"I'm fortunate to have grown up with the Quigleys. Granted, Hilary isn't someone with great character, but my Dad and Grandma's principles have rubbed off on me. They have always

insisted on being a good, kind, and just person. I'm also fortunate that Hilary abandoned me

at a young age. Otherwise, I'd probably pick up a thing or two from her and end up as some mentally twisted person. If that happened, I'm pretty sure you wouldn't have fallen for me.

Then I wouldn't have the happy home that I have now. So clearly, God has been more than kind to me."

Although Clarissa originally intended to complain, her thoughts had somehow landed on the many things that she was grateful for in life.

That was her nature, after all. Clarissa was a warm-hearted and mild-tempered woman. She would never resort to extreme measures, no matter how disappointed or angry she was.

Because by the end of it all, her positive outlook was enough to block out any negative thing that irked her.

Matthew's lips curled as he listened to her bubbly voice on the call. How can I not fall deeper in love with this amazing woman?

Meanwhile, Clarissa continued, "So I've decided. I'm going to be a better person from this

point onwards. I'm going to be a good role model for our son. And you too! You have to be a better dad and ensure that your son becomes a fine young man."

See? How can I not love this perfect woman whose got such strong discipline and morals towards life?

Chapter 320

Matthew liked someone who was positive-minded instead of one who'd always blame

others when bad things happened. He also liked someone who would not be overwhelmed

by negative emotions but instead would view life with an optimistic attitude even during

tough times.

On the contrary, Shermaine was the total opposite. She tended to blame others for the unfortunate incidents in her life. She was born in a family with a prestigious background like the Smallwoods, yet she put herself in prison. One could only say it was a matter of her own conduct.

However, Jacque saw this coming when he heard that Shermaine's parole was postponed. Initially, Matthew wouldn't have cared when she would get out of prison. But things were different now that Shermaine's parents had crossed the line, so of course, he wouldn't let this matter go easily.

"What? She can't leave? What's the meaning of this? Jacque, I thought you said that everything would be fine? Besides, Shermaine's been very well-behaved all this while. What seems to be the problem? It's not possible for Matthew to stand in the way of the law, or would it?"

Kayla was furious when she heard the news. And of course, a woman like her would only blame others but herself.

Unlike her, James was much more rational. "Jacque, since Matthew and Shermaine were friends while Matthias and I are no strangers to each other, perhaps he'd let her off? He's obviously doing all this because of that woman, and I think he's pushing it too far this time.

Shouldn't we report him for interfering with the law?"

Jacque shook his head. "He didn't interfere with the law. Instead, he worked around it."

Shermaine was granted parole not only because of her good behavior but also because of the strings that the Smallwoods had pulled.

Of course, Matthew was able to do so as well.

"Then what do we do now?" James asked.

Jacque looked at James as his mind drifted to his thoughts.

I'm guessing your best shot would be apologizing to Clarissa. However, that'd seem like a pretty difficult task for you. But, that's the only way I could think of. "Well, it's either you wait it out and do nothing or apologize to Clarissa after this is all over. Perhaps—"

"Apologize? Why should we apologize? Jacque, have you lost your mind? She's responsible for everything that's happened, including all the suffering Shermaine's endured. Shermaine wouldn't have to go through all this if it weren't for her!" I knew you'd say that. Jacque thought as he frowned. James observed his reaction as he patted Kayla on the hand to calm her down.

"Come on. Just apologize. It's nothing but an apology. You're doing this for Shermaine.

Nothing's more important than her."

"No way—" Kayla refused, but James shook his head disapprovingly. However, she still hated the idea.

"Well, you brought her into the mess when you couldn't control your emotions. Besides, it's just an apology. Can't endure it for a little while, for Shermaine's sake? All you need to do is say a few words, and Shermaine will be released in no time. Don't you think that'll be great?"

The couple was silent when they heard those words. They refused to apologize since they hated Clarissa. It wasn't a simple apology to just anyone, but to someone they loathed.

Thus, they couldn't possibly do it.

Yet, they knew it had to be done.

They would have to do it eventually for their daughter's sake.

The couple knew it was not an easy task and decided to take a different approach. Instead

of apologizing to Clarissa directly, the Smallwoods couple wanted to give Matthias and Yuliana a try first.

They were old friends but grew apart after Shermaine's incident. Years later, they had little to no contact with one another. Both Matthias and Yuliana were rather surprised when they received the invitation, but the couple went anyway.

Surprisingly, the atmosphere was not awkward at all when they met. They sat down and began to exchange a few words. The conversation was very casual, yet Kayla and James did not come for hearty catchups of any sort. At last, Kayla could not resist but began to tear up. Both Matthias and Yuliana looked at each other when Kayla burst into tears. "Don't cry, Kayla. What happened?" Yuliana asked. "It's about our dear Shermaine. James and I are running out of ways to help her. We need your help." "James, tell me what's wrong. I'll do my best to help you." Since Matthias asked about it, James began to explain everything. "As you can see, Kayla and I are helpless regarding this matter. I can't imagine myself apologizing to a young girl. Besides, she's the reason why my daughter is in prison now, so why should I apologize? But we can't do anything at this moment to change the situation. Hence, I had no choice but to come to you." Kayla was still sobbing when James was done talking. On the other hand, Yuliana remained silent. Well, I've learned my lesson to keep my mouth shut whenever it involved Matthew's matter. So let's see what Matthias replies. Matthias pondered for a while before he spoke. "James, I'm afraid we can't be of any help in this matter. After all, it has been a while since we met Matthew, and I really have no say in their affairs."

“You...” Kayla opened her mouth to say something but held back when James gave her a warning shot. At that point, she became even more upset as tears streamed down her face.

The meeting was cut short as James and Kayla failed to achieve what they came for.

Hence, the couple left unhappily.

“They’ll resent us, you know?” Yuliana spoke as soon as they left.

“This wasn’t the first time, anyway. Or we wouldn’t have lost contact.”

“But I do think Matthew crossed the line from what I’ve heard today.

The scores are settled,

and Shermaine got what she deserved. So why can’t she be granted parole?”

Matthias shook his head. “You know how he is toward Clarissa. As soon as he knew that

she had been ill-treated, he will avenge her without hesitation.”

“Yeah, that, how could I forget?” Yuliana mocked.

Matthias shrugged his shoulders at her response.

Never in the world would Clarissa have expected James and Kayla to visit her.

Her initial thought was that they were here to pick a fight. But she quickly bounced that idea

off and thought it was impossible.

She did not allow them to enter Zen Highlands but chose to meet them somewhere else.

Furthermore, she did not meet them alone as Matthew sent Gina to keep Clarissa safe at all times.

The couple’s expression dropped when they noticed she had company.

“Ms. Quigley, I believe we agreed to meet alone, so could we have some time alone?” James

asked. Yet, Clarissa rejected his request while Gina ignored him.

“Mr. and Ms. Smallwood, what is it that you would like to meet me in person? Gina is not

allowed to leave my side at all costs, and she represents me. If you have nothing to say, then

I’ll be off.” Yet, Clarissa rejected his requests while Gina ignored him.

Clarissa could not bear to stay any longer, although they were her parents.

I wondered why they asked to meet me? After all, I could see the dissatisfaction and hatred

in their eyes. Anyone could see that they're insincere!

"Ms. Quigley, about what happened last time..." Kayla started but hesitated for a long time.

She could not bring herself to apologize.

"Ms. Quigley, I believe we had a misunderstanding during our last meeting, but I didn't

expect you to tell Matthew everything. And now look what you've done – Shermaine's parole

is delayed all of a sudden! After all, they used to go out, so how could he be that heartless?

Ms. Quigley, you should be mindful of someone who treated their ex terribly," James said.

To be honest, I think she deserved the punishment. She was the one who got herself into

this mess. But to blame it all on us? I daresay that the Smallwoods are really something

else.

Clarissa let out a cold laugh and said, "You must be mistaken, Mr. Smallwood. First off,

Shermaine and Matthew never shared a romantic relationship. Secondly, Matthew did it on

my behalf. So, why should I be cautious of him? I should be overjoyed."

"You little—" James stopped Kayla as his expression hardened. He was angered by

Clarissa's statement.

"Ms. Quigley, I wondered why Matthew didn't tell you he dated Shermaine in the past. Well,

you shouldn't believe everything a man says, although it seems like you do. But my point is,

Ms. Quigley, you're living the best life, so why bother tormenting Shermaine? She has

suffered too much, and we're heartbroken to see her in such a state.

She's our only child;

hence, could you please let her off for our sake?"

My, my... You're here to beg for mercy, yet none of your words sounded apologetic. Besides, it's obvious that you're setting a trap, waiting for me to fall into it. Well, if it was a matter that bothered me, it would have actually started a fight between us. You're also taking advantage of a parent's love for a child to gain pity, but truthfully speaking, I don't see why I should pity you.

Clarissa observed them closely and thought to herself. I can't believe you were the ones who brought me into this world. But thank goodness I did not grow up under your care. Or else I would be the one in prison.