

## Chapter 488 You're Quite A Kisser

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Dylan chuckled as he and Laura settled into their seats, his arm casually draped around her.

He let go of her hand but leaned in to whisper something in her ear.

Laura, doing her best to avoid Edwin's gaze, found it challenging.

Edwin was close, just a seat away, separated by Dylan. She could even catch the familiar scent of his cologne.

Dylan, sensing her distraction, looked down at her.

Laura had made an effort with her makeup tonight.

Her face appeared clear and radiant, her thick lashes making her more like a doll, adding to her tender look.

Dylan reached out, taking her hand gently. "We can leave if you're uncomfortable here," he whispered.

Laura shook her head.

There was no need to flee.

She and Edwin shared a past, true, but it was history now. Encountering each other in Duefron, which was neither too large nor too small a city, was inevitable.

She couldn't hide every time their paths crossed.

Dylan, understanding her stance, didn't press further. He continued to hold her hand, noticing it was cold.

Without a word, he removed his jacket and draped it over her shoulders.

Laura offered him a soft smile, their eyes meeting Edwin's for a brief moment.

Edwin watched her, and then averted his gaze as Vanessa leaned in,

commenting on the next auction item.

"It's Laura's design! Edwin, you should support her; you're almost like a younger brother to her after all," Vanessa said with a light smile, looking at the delicate and beautiful conch shell pendant created by Laura.

Edwin, however, was not fond of such comparisons.

Edwin, patting his trousers, remarked, "Her designs are always in demand. Remember, you wanted her to design your wedding dress half a year ago. Or have you forgotten?"

Vanessa, feeling a bit embarrassed, fell silent.

Edwin continued, asserting his place in Laura's life, "If she does call me, it would only be as her older brother, nothing less."

Vanessa, deciding not to embarrass herself further, clenched her fingers and remained quiet.

At that moment, the auctioneer introduced the pendant, starting the bidding at 1.2 million.

The pendant was exceptional, featuring a striking purplish-pink conch shell at its center, surrounded by small diamonds dazzling like stars in the sky, creating a fascinating vibe.

As the bids began, someone offered 1.3 million, but Edwin quickly upped it to 1.5 million. That bidder countered with 1.8 million, likely motivated by his wife's admiration for the piece.

Edwin, who typically would have stepped back in such situations, surprisingly bid 3 million this time.

The auctioneer was thrilled. Designer pieces often fetched high prices, and they had only expected 2 million at most for this piece.

Now, it was at a staggering 3 million and climbing.

Dylan then casually raised his bid to 5 million, causing a stir among the attendees.

Edwin, not to be outdone, immediately countered with 10 million.

Unfazed, Dylan casually offered 20 million.

Edwin, determined not to back down, was about to increase his bid again when Vanessa began to show signs of unease. Vanessa hoped Edwin

would secure the bid for her, yet she was wary of Laura drawing too much attention. Just as she was about to tug at Edwin's arm, a new bid interrupted the scene.

"20 million and one dollar," a female voice declared.

The crowd turned to identify the bidder, all surprised.

The room fell silent upon seeing the speaker.

It was Alexis Fowler, a rising star in the legal field and rapidly gaining a reputation comparable to her father, Waylen Fowler.

Alexis, seemingly having arrived during a break, stood in her formal attire. She gracefully walked towards the front row, the sound of her high heels echoing.

Edwin looked up, acknowledging her. "Alexis."

Alexis, with a smile, said, "I see you're with your girlfriend. I really like this piece. You wouldn't compete against me, right?"

Edwin, familiar with Alexis's ways of handling things, responded with slight irritation, "Of course not."

Alexis then turned to Vanessa with the same smile. "Vanessa, you don't mind, do you?"

Vanessa, though a formidable woman herself, wouldn't dare oppose Alexis.

Miss Fowler here was known for her shrewdness, and in Duefron, it was common knowledge to avoid crossing her.

Successfully outbidding everyone, Alexis walked up to the stage to collect the necklace. She then approached Laura, delicately fastened the necklace around her neck, and chuckled at the stunned crowd, "It looks best on Laura!"

With a wink at Edwin, she left an unspoken message hanging in the air.

Edwin could only roll his eyes in response to her playful gesture.

Alexis stood tall, beckoning, "Maria, bring the checkbook."

Her secretary, Maria, quickly obliged.

With a swift motion, Alexis wrote out a check, handed it over, and made

her exit.

Edwin, intrigued by her actions, followed her into the quiet corridor.

"Alexis Fowler!" he called, catching up with her.

Leaning casually against the wall, Alexis stretched out her hand.

"The check," she demanded playfully.

Edwin feigned confusion, to which Alexis responded with a light hum.

"20 million, Edwin. Don't play dumb. Would Laura really accept it if you bought it for her?"

Realizing his pretense was futile, Edwin handed her a blank check to fill out herself.

Alexis flicked it with a smirk.

Adjusting his collar, Edwin inquired, "How did you know about Laura and me?"

With a teasing gesture, Alexis rubbed the check against his face. "I have a client who lives across from Laura. One day, I saw you two in a passionate smooch right outside her door. You're quite the kisser, Mr. Evans."

Edwin's cheeks flushed, his fair skin accentuating his embarrassment.

Alexis wrapped her arms around his neck and planted a kiss on his forehead. "Keep at it, Edwin! You won't earn my respect if you don't win Laura over."

She winked. "Don't worry, Granduncle Mark will handle Aunt Cecilia."

Edwin's smile was tinged with bitterness.

Alexis gave him a soft nudge. "Just kidding. Laura's had it tough. If you can't make her truly happy, leave her be. Don't stir up drama like today. Dylan was just playing you."

Edwin knew deep down, but his judgment had been clouded by the heat of the moment.

Alexis blew him a playful kiss. "I'm off now!"

As she walked away, Edwin called out, "Lexi! Do you hate Leonel?"

She paused, then turned back with a light smile. "If you really care about me, find me a man who's both good-looking and strong."

Edwin remained silent.

He lingered in thought for a while before slowly approaching Alexis and enveloping her in a gentle embrace.

"I'm sorry."

He pondered if their paths would have been different had he not left with Leonel back then. Perhaps they would still be together, content and united.

Alexis responded with a reassuring pat.

In a whisper, she said, "Some people, no matter how hard you try, just can't be held on to. But I'm doing okay now."

Edwin chose not to dwell on the subject any further.

He accompanied Alexis to her Bentley, watching her gaze up at the building one last time. "Go back inside. Vanessa is still your girlfriend. Try not to make things too messy."

"I understand," Edwin replied, as Alexis drove off.

Instead of heading back inside, Edwin stood outside in the chilling night air, lighting a cigarette.

He needed a moment to think, despite the cold.

Soon, Dylan and Laura emerged.

Edwin's eyes met Laura's in the night, a silent exchange of emotions passing between them. Laura eventually lowered her gaze and got into Dylan's car.

Edwin, with a cigarette between his fingers, inhaled slowly, lost in thought.

Dylan got into the car and they drove away.

Edwin watched their departure, recalling his father's comments about Laura having a boyfriend. "Is she really with Dylan now?" he wondered, contemplating if they had become intimate.

Vanessa appeared, shivering in the cold night.

She saw Edwin, his attention fixed in one direction.

After a long pause, she called out, "Edwin!"

Edwin turned his gaze to her, his expression somewhat distant and cool.

Vanessa, struggling to contain her emotions, confronted Edwin. "Did you come here just for her?"

Edwin's reply was tinged with indifference. "Didn't you already know?"

"You bastard, Edwin!" Vanessa exclaimed, frustration evident in her voice.

Edwin's frown deepened as he responded coldly, "Vanessa, if you could just be a little more rational, we could maintain some peace. But clearly, that's too much to ask of you."

"I can be rational!" Vanessa asserted, clenching her teeth. "Rest assured, Mr. Evans."

She straightened up, a hint of mockery in her tone. "About our engagement dress, you know I've chosen Laura to design it. She's committed and can't back out. How about we go together this Friday to see the dress? Mr. Evans, you wouldn't be afraid, would you? Afraid to witness their affection?"

Edwin replied curtly, "Set it up with my secretary."

He then opened the car door and slid inside.

Vanessa, caught off guard, asked, "Aren't you going to give me a ride?"

From within the car, Edwin adjusted his shirt collar in the rearview mirror and remarked nonchalantly, "I thought a strong, independent woman like yourself wouldn't appreciate a man's courtesies. And frankly, I'm not inclined to offer them either."

With that, he started the car.

Vanessa, seething with anger, lashed out with a kick at the car door. "You bastard, Edwin!" she yelled.

Inside the car, Edwin drove off, his thoughts turning inward. Perhaps Vanessa wasn't the kind of wife he truly desired. She was far from rational, and it wasn't lost on him that she had set her sights on him

early, even knowing about his relationship with Laura. To Edwin, such affection felt insincere and opportunistic.

Yet, he hadn't completely distanced himself from Vanessa.

In some ways, he still needed her—as a facade.

His longing to be with Laura persisted, and Vanessa, craving his attention, continued to fulfill his desires. In his eyes, both he and Vanessa were pathetic souls.

Meanwhile, Laura sat quietly beside Dylan in his car.

She had already taken off the necklace and planned to return it to Alexis later.

Laura wasn't particularly close to Alexis.

As Laura pondered, Dylan broke the silence. "Edwin is shameless, and his sister, even more so. With the way she flaunts her wealth, she could easily charm young girls."

He paused, adding, "She's tall, almost 5.6 feet, the kind many young girls nowadays find attractive—beautiful and cool. It'd be hard for anyone not to be attracted."

Laura responded quietly, "My mom once told me about Miss Fowler. She was in love with a childhood friend, but he and Edwin went abroad for study and he never really came back. Their relationship just—ended."

This memory, still vivid from a few years back, seemed more relevant now with Edwin in her life.

The thought of him made Laura lose her desire to continue the conversation.

Dylan sensed her mood shift and chose not to delve further.

After dropping Laura off at her apartment, he called out to her as she was about to head up the stairs. "Laura!"

She turned to face him.

Dylan sat in his car, the night wind playing with his hair, giving him an effortlessly attractive look.

He asked softly, "Next year, I might go back to North America. Would you like to come with me?"

reached into her pocket for the keys. "Edwin!" she protested, biting her lip.

Silently, Edwin opened the door, gesturing for her to enter.

"Let's talk inside."

Reluctantly, Laura stepped into her apartment.

Edwin followed, observing as she turned on the heater and then quietly headed to the kitchen to make coffee.

The scene reminded him of their past life together.

She was such a coffee enthusiast and the aroma of coffee always present in their shared home.

Edwin joined her in the kitchen, standing close behind. He murmured, "Do you still remember much about the past?"

"There's no need to remember anything anymore," Laura replied, handing him a cup of coffee. Her gaze met his. "It's over, Edwin. You have a girlfriend, and I have a boyfriend. There's no reason for us to keep in touch. Please drink your coffee and leave."

Edwin set the coffee aside, his gaze fixed on her.

Close to her, he noticed her discomfort as she turned her head away.

"Can Dylan really be called your boyfriend? If he is, why doesn't he live with you, and why does he leave right after dropping you off? Laura, you're lying."

Laura responded with a faint smile, moving back to the living room.

Edwin, following her, grabbed her shoulders, offering, "Let me take care of you."

Laura gently shrugged off his hands and confronted him.

"What kind of care are we talking about here? Buying me a house, a car, and giving me endless money? Edwin, isn't that just keeping me as your mistress? What if you come to me for comfort one day after having an argument with your wife, and I refuse? Will you then hold your financial support over me? Why should I have to pretend to be virtuous?"

She felt saddened by the thought.

Once, they had been a genuine couple, albeit with some deception.



Now, he was with someone else yet still sought her out.

Lowering her voice, she pleaded, "Edwin, can you please let me go?"

After saying this, she walked to the window, looking out at the snow-laden night.

Edwin watched her, feeling the distance between them.

After a prolonged silence, he finally managed to say, "Okay."

But as he was about to leave, he impulsively embraced her, his lips meeting hers.

His touch wasn't aggressive, just heavy breaths against her neck and gentle strokes on her back as he murmured, "Laura, it's not that I hadn't been serious with this relationship. If only—"

But there were no 'ifs.'

Laura, devoid of hope, wrapped her arms around herself, trembling. "Get out!" she choked out.

Edwin remained motionless.

In response, Laura dashed into the study, grabbed a stack of design drafts, and threw them at Edwin's feet.

"Edwin! Do I need to make it clearer for you?" she demanded.

"These are your fiancée's wedding dress designs. You're about to get married. What does it mean for you to hold and kiss me now? What am I in all this?"

Crying softly, Laura continued, "How much more do you want to degrade me? Your feelings are your feelings, but what about mine? I've left your world as you wished. Why do you still bother me, why?"

Her face was pale with emotion. "Don't make me hate you!"