

Chapter 489 Being Attractive Is Such An Hassle

Edwin stood there, watching Laura's tears fall onto the design drafts meant for his future wife.

Each drop represented the pain she must have felt while creating them, and the strength she mustered to move past their shared history.

He realized he had never fully considered the depth of her struggle.

His desire for her, perhaps a mere male impulse, was unfair to her. When he declared it was over, he expected it to be so, yet here he was, still drawn to her.

He instinctively reached out to wipe away her tears, but then hesitated, pulling his hand back. In a gentle voice, he urged, "Please don't cry, okay?"

Laura turned away from him, her voice barely audible, asking him to leave.

Edwin remained still for a moment before he stooped to collect the scattered drafts, carefully placing them back on the coffee table. After a pause, he offered, "I'll cancel Vanessa's order for you."

"There's no need," Laura responded, barely lifting her head. "This is my job. And there won't be a next time."

Edwin, his thoughts briefly turning to Dylan's background, hesitated before asking, "Are you planning to go abroad?"

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Edwin's expression was unreadable. He couldn't discern how much love Laura still felt for him.

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This realization filled him with a sense of shame.

After what seemed like an eternity, Edwin's voice, hoarse with emotion, broke the silence. "I'm leaving!"

Laura, standing still with her back to him, offered no response.

The door opened and then closed, leaving her alone in the quiet night, her eyes brimming with unshed tears.

She wondered how she found the strength not to go to him. Seeking his warmth would have been easy, but what value was there in fleeting passion?

The next day, Laura carefully packaged the necklace and hailed a taxi to Sterling Law Firm, now under the direction of the renowned Alexis Fowler.

The receptionist at the front desk greeted her warmly, "Are you Miss Laura Thomas?"

Laura, taken aback, wondered how she was recognized.

The receptionist's smile widened. "Miss Fowler put your photo in the firm's public group chat this morning. She said you're the cutest girl she's ever met!"

Laura's cheeks flushed with a mix of surprise and embarrassment.

Alexis, despite being a woman, commanded an air that left Laura somewhat flustered.

The receptionist winked as she picked up the phone. "Miss Fowler is always available for you."

Laura's embarrassment deepened.

The receptionist arranged Laura's meeting with Alexis and offered to guide her.

"Let me show you the way."

As Laura followed, she noticed curious and knowing looks from the staff they passed, making her wish she could simply vanish.

Laura remained silent, observing her.

Alexis then lined up another shot.

"Edwin is quite good at snooker. Hasn't he played with you?"

Laura turned away, her voice soft but resolute. "It's over between us."

Their relationship had been built on deception. It was never about spending quality time together or nurturing what they had. It was just a fleeting affair.

Shaking her head, Alexis commented, "Edwin's really out of line."

She played a few more shots before sitting beside Laura, who was lost in thought.

Gently touching Laura's lustrous hair, Alexis seemed almost envious. Such fine, dense hair. Edwin is such a lucky guy. She thought.

Alexis, seemingly oblivious to Laura's unease, handed her a cup of coffee, her laughter carrying a note of helplessness. "Laura, have you never thought about fighting for it?"

Confused, Laura just looked at her, unsure of what Alexis meant.

Alexis, her gaze drifting to the window, seemed lost in thought.

Eventually, she spoke up softly. "Edwin is in a struggle. He hasn't let go of you completely. He still gets jealous, comes to you in the middle of the night, and thinks about caring for you. If you don't give him a push, how will you know if he wouldn't choose you over everything else? Once he's truly engaged, or married to Vanessa, you'll have no chance."

"I know," Laura replied, her smile tinged with sadness.

"I shouldn't have started anything with him."

Alexis turned to face her, the sunlight from the floor-to-ceiling windows creating a radiant halo around her.

Yet, Laura saw a profound loneliness in her. Compelled by this, Laura asked softly, "What about you? Don't you fight for what you want?"

Alexis reclined on the pool table, her head resting on one arm.

She let out a soft chuckle and said, "I'm tired."

She recalled being 20, full of excitement, telling Leonel over the phone that she, too, would be going abroad to study.

His response had been blunt and unexpected. "Alexis, let's end this."

The idea of an ending seemed absurd to her then.

They hadn't even truly begun anything!

Young and impulsive, Alexis had asked if he had fallen for someone else.

The silence on the other end of the line spoke volumes, though he never directly answered her question.

Despite the supposed end of their relationship, he continued to send her 200 milliliters of frozen blood every month from abroad, blood that could potentially save Alexis' life. Her father, angry yet cautious, stored this blood carefully, though Alexis never needed it.

He did return, twice a year, but during their meetings, she never questioned him about their past.

At 24, during the New Year, he came back with a beautiful mixed-race girlfriend.

The girlfriend was strikingly pretty and joined the Fowlers for dinner before leaving to spend the night at a hotel. In the middle of the night, while Alexis was reading in her bedroom, Leonel returned from the hotel with a New Year's gift for her—a small doll.

Alexis accepted it, but the next day, she relegated it to storage, where it likely remained, forgotten and gathering dust.

The year after, he returned, this time without the girlfriend.

Rumor had it they had broken up.

Alexis heard that he had other girlfriends but never again brought anyone home.

She turned her head, inviting Laura to lie down beside her.

Laura, not quite familiar with Alexis but somehow captivated by her, lay down quietly beside her.

Alexis, her voice a bit hoarse, mused, "Cecilia and Mark, despite all their ups and downs, ended up together. Laura, you seem even more hesitant than my aunt."

Laura gently shook her head, softly saying, "It's not what you think."

Alexis let out a mischievous laugh, playfully tapping Laura's nose. "Then what is it? Is it that Edwin isn't good in bed? He seems strong enough to me, and he has a pretty straight nose."

Laura's cheeks flushed a bit, signaling her reluctance to continue the conversation.

Alexis found herself liking Laura more and more.

Perhaps it was just an affinity she felt, or maybe it was because Laura was connected to Edwin, carrying a scent that Vanessa certainly did not.

Back in business mode, Alexis began dealing with her official duties before securing the necklace around Laura's neck again.

Jett, her assistant, complained about the resignation of two assistant secretaries, making the workload difficult to manage.

Alexis, taking a sip of her coffee, nonchalantly suggested, "Then recruit new ones. And try to find ones that look like Laura, easy on the eyes."

Jett couldn't help but think his boss had some unique preferences.

In that moment, Alexis' phone interrupted the silence with its ring.

It was Edwin on the other end.

Lazily picking up, Alexis greeted, "What's up?"

Edwin's voice carried a sense of urgency. "Did Laura stop by?"

Alexis, leisurely propping her legs on the desk, replied with a light chuckle,

"Yeah! We had coffee, even napped together!"

"Alexis Fowler!" Edwin's tone was filled with frustration.

"Not thrilled about it? Well, you should know, Laura seems to like me," Alexis teased.

Edwin, visibly annoyed, retorted, "Stay away from her!"

Alexis clucked her tongue playfully. "Since when did our Mr. Evans become so insecure? But you should remember, your current girlfriend is Vanessa. Worry about her, not little Laura."

With that, Edwin ended the call abruptly.

Alexis, unfazed, tossed her phone aside, shrugged at Jett, and joked, "Such a sour loser. Can't even take a joke!"

Jett couldn't help but chuckle at the exchange.

Changing the subject, Alexis picked up a file and sighed. "Being attractive is such a hassle! Women guard against me, men too!"

One day, Laura was immersed in her work at the studio, discussing details with her craftsmen for several high-value design orders.

Her assistant approached her discreetly. "Mr. Evans and Miss Smith are here to try on the wedding dress."

Laura paused, momentarily caught off guard.

The days had flown by, and she had nearly forgotten about this appointment.

Regaining her composure, she instructed, "Ask them to wait in the reception room, and prepare two cups of coffee. I'll be there shortly."

Her assistant promptly headed off to carry out the instructions.

Laura took a moment to finish up her tasks at hand and gather her emotions before heading to the reception room.

She knew a meeting like this was inevitable, and she prepared herself for the encounter.

Upon entering, she saw the wedding dress already displayed on a hanger.

Vanessa and Edwin were seated together, resembling a picture of a newlywed couple. Vanessa's smile broadened as Laura walked in. "Laura, you're here! I've just seen the dress, and it's stunning!"

Laura responded with a restrained smile, "Miss Smith, I'm glad you appreciate the design."

Vanessa, leaning into Edwin, playfully chided, "Laura, you're being too formal! Edwin mentioned you're like brother and sister, so that'll make me your sister-in-law. You should just call me Vanessa!"

Laura found herself unable to comply with such familiarity.

It wasn't just about formality.

It was a matter of emotional strength, which she felt she lacked in Vanessa's assertive presence.

Finally, gathering her composure, Laura responded to Vanessa's earlier comment. "That's very generous of Mr. Evans. However, we must acknowledge that people differ in status and worth. Not everyone can reach the heights that Mr. Evans has."

Vanessa, unrelenting, asked directly, "And do you think I am worthy of him?"

Laura, maintaining her professional demeanor, replied, "A match made in heaven."

She then shifted the conversation back to business. "Shall we try on the wedding dress? Any necessary alterations can be made within a week to ensure no delay for your special day."

As Vanessa stood and approached the dress, Laura couldn't help but notice Edwin's silence throughout the entire ordeal.

He had merely sat there, passively allowing Vanessa to assert her dominance.

With a light smile, she remarked, "This dress doesn't quite seem right for me. It's more suited for a dreamy young girl. Laura, it's almost as if you designed it imagining yourself as Mr. Evans' bride."

"I owe Laura an apology," he said softly. "I can't even bring myself to raise my voice at her, and you think you have the right to humiliate her? Vanessa, there's no second chance for you."

With a definitive slam, he shut the car door, accidentally trapping Vanessa's fingers briefly, turning them purple.

Edwin then drove off, leaving behind a trail of Vanessa's curses.

About five minutes later, Edwin received an angry call from Mark. "You idiot, do you think marriage is a game? Cancelling an engagement just like that? Get back here right now!" Mark's voice was laden with fury.

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