

Seduced 171

Chapter 171

“Luna, I’m not telling you this to upset you. I just want to share. I like him so much. Why can’t he see it? Especially since you appeared, he won’t even give me a second glance. Do you think I’ll never win him over in this lifetime? Should I give up?”

I was put in a difficult position. How was I supposed to respond?

If I said yes, it would inevitably hurt Helen. I didn’t want to become the Lilac of the past, nor did I want Helen to become the me of the past.

If I said no, I would only make things difficult for myself. It’d be like shooting myself in the foot.

Matthew was a suitor I wanted to give a chance to. He was a former high school classmate who grew up with me and had liked me for many years. Encouraging Helen to continue pursuing Matthew would be absurd. It would also hurt Matthew’s feelings.

“Well, I think you need to decide for yourself. It’s difficult for me to comment on this,” I

said with some difficulty but absolute sincerity.

“Hmph, what’s so hard about it? You don’t like him, yet you’re holding onto him. Either way, it’s unfair.”

I was speechless.

I hadn’t fallen for Matthew yet, but that didn’t mean I wouldn’t in the future, right?

Besides, I had agreed to consider him, which meant I was prepared to accept Matthew. The fact that he had an admirer as excellent as Helen made me feel insecure.

They said childhood friends couldn't compete with a fateful lover. But to Matthew, I was both a childhood friend and a fateful lover. I wondered what the outcome would be.

At least I was certain that once Matthew and I became a couple, I wouldn't tolerate him having a childhood friend with whom he shared such intimate moments.

Not only was Helen troubled, but I was somewhat troubled as well. What a mess!

The next day, I talked to Matthew about this. By the end, I mentioned how childhood friends were especially dangerous in romantic relationships. So-called childhood friends had ruined many couples.

Matthew seemed overjoyed. "Lulu, you're finally getting jealous over me. Looks like my

1/2

years of unrequited love weren't in vain."

There was another party in the evening. There were dazzling lights and overflowing wine. The private room was shrouded in mist and the smell of alcohol.

It was too lively for my taste. I habitually went outside for some air.

The club's private rooms had a long corridor outside. It was a separate space. I felt that leaning on the railing and breathing in fresh air was much more comfortable than staying

inside.

When I was about to return inside, I saw Matthew and a friend of his sitting on a couch near the terrace door. They were talking about me. I halted my steps.

“Matthew, are you planning to settle down?”

“Yeah, I’ve been thinking about it for many years.”

“Do you think your love life will be smooth with her background? Mr. Loxley cares so much. about your status as the heir. How could he allow you to marry a woman outside the social circle? Our lives have already been planned for us. Love is a luxury for us.

“I won’t worry about that too much. My marriage is my own. I won’t trade marriage and

love for benefits.”

“What about Helen? She has liked you for many years, and you’ve been indifferent to her. It hurts us just to watch.”

Matthew was silent for a moment before he said, “It takes two for love to work. I owe her in this matter. I’ll find a way to make it up to her later.

“The person in my heart is Luna. That will never change in this lifetime.”

“You’ve liked her for many years?”

“Yes, from the first day of high school. I like her and want to give her my best. Now, I finally have the chance to do it. I’ll never let go, not even at the cost of my life.”

Chapter 172

“Luna is indeed a great woman. She’s talented, beautiful, well-mannered, and gentle. But she’s too clear-headed and cool. Are you sure you can win her over?”

“To be honest, I’m not sure. She’s been my dream for over seven years. But I won’t give up as long as there’s a glimmer of hope.”

“Matthew, I mean no offense. I’m happy you’ve found a woman you truly like. But can you tell if what you’re feeling now is persistence or true love?”

I couldn’t make out Matthew’s response.

They returned to the table and left me to linger in the corridor for a long time.

Love across different social classes wasn’t simple. I naively thought courage would lead to results. Yet, there were so many insurmountable challenges between him and me.

It wasn’t even ten when we went back. I sat in the car, sulking and silent.

Matthew carefully observed my mood and asked why I was unhappy.

I didn’t want to hide my thoughts from him, so I asked, “Matthew, if your family doesn’t approve of us, what will you do?”

Matthew’s grip on the steering wheel tightened. His gaze on me was passionate and firm. He said, “Lulu, as long as you give me enough confidence, I’ll persevere to the end. I like you, and no one has the right to stop that.”

His words were skillfully crafted.

If he didn’t persevere to the end, it meant the confidence I gave him wasn’t enough. So, if we couldn’t overcome the obstacle his family posed to us, the responsibility was on me.

He was truly a businessman. His words were carefully chosen.

If every word between spouses had to be weighed and measured for perfection, where would happiness find its place in such a marriage?

That person said I was clear-headed. Matthew

He had disappointed me.

as clear-headed too.

I was a bit lost, unsure of my current feelings for him. I wanted to be close to him and to be with him. Yet, he disappointed me repeatedly, making me hesitant to make any promises

1/2

lightly.

“What if your family forces you to choose between being the heir and me one day? What would you choose?”

Matthew’s expression turned serious. He focused on the road ahead. After a minute, he answered, “I won’t let such a situation occur between us.”

His hesitation showed that he hadn’t made his choice between me and the position of heir. To put it further, he might have already made a choice but didn’t want to give up the other

one.

After all, everyone hoped to have the best of both worlds.

My heart grew colder.

But what truly chilled my heart was the gathering hosted by the Loxley family.

I didn't want to go at first, but later, I was glad I did.

Matthew had told me two days in advance about his father's 55th birthday banquet. He wanted me to accompany him.

We hadn't even affirmed our relationship as lovers. I felt I had no place there and declined.

But Matthew wouldn't accept that. He emphasized he just wanted me to go as his companion, with no pressure intended. After much persuasion and not wanting to see him disappointed, I agreed.

If I intended to develop a relationship with him, I needed to integrate into his world. So, attending his father's birthday banquet seemed like a good start.

After all, it was just a birthday party. No matter how rich or powerful the Loxley family was, they couldn't possibly do anything to me.

Chapter 173

Matthew came to pick me up just after one in the afternoon on the day of the birthday banquet. He stood tall and handsome outside my apartment, saying he would take me to get styled.

He handed me a long, rectangular, flat box from the back seat and urged me to open it. “This is a dress I had custom-made for you. See if you like it. If not, we still have time to buy another one.”

“Can’t I wear my own clothes? Do I have to change into a formal dress?”

Upon opening the box, I saw a pure black dress with a hint of silvery pearl luster. The knee-length dress combined conservatism with liveliness in its design. The material and style matched perfectly, making it beautiful and valuable.

I didn’t care for luxury goods and wasn’t well-versed in them. But I could tell the value of the dress was significant, just from Matthew saying it was custom-made. It couldn’t be less than 30 or 40 grand.

His actions made me a bit uncomfortable.

He kept saying he just wanted me to go as his companion, with no other implications. It seemed like a spur-of-the-moment idea to bring me into his life.

But custom-making a dress wasn’t a day or two’s affair. This meant he had planned for me to accompany him well in advance, but he just didn’t tell me about it. It was because he was certain I would agree.

I wasn’t sure if this was some kind of manipulation on his part, but it definitely made me extremely uncomfortable.

“Of course, you need to. Today is a formal occasion. The guests are reputable politicians and businessmen. It’d be rude not to wear a formal dress. Oh, and the shoes are in the trunk. I’ll

get them for you later.

“After getting styled, the stylist will help you change into the dress and shoes. After that, we can head back to the Loxley family mansion together.”

I held the dress box without speaking, wondering if it was too late to return.

I wasn't scared. I just felt I'd be out of place at such an event. I couldn't find a reason to look forward to it.

Moreover, I thought the banquet wouldn't be as simple as Matthew described. It would likely end unpleasantly.

Matthew seemed to notice my hesitation. He clenched his jaw and didn't say anything further. He just pressed the gas pedal down.

The stylist's eyes lit up when he saw me. Despite being a man, Roger Thompson giggled flirtatiously, circling me twice and exclaiming exaggeratedly, "Matthew, I thought Ms. Lockwood was the best, but this lady is divine. Such a slender waist. Oh, and such tender skin. You're a lucky man."

Being scrutinized like that made me uncomfortable. I stepped back and moved away from his cologne's reach.

Roger's gaze made me feel like an item up for auction.

It felt genuinely unpleasant to be disrespected like this.

His words clearly told me that I was just one of Matthew's many companions, no matter how attractive. Who knew who would be next?

"What nonsense are you talking about, Roger? She's my future girlfriend. We're going to my father's birthday party together."

Matthew interrupted Roger with displeasure, his explanation hurried and formal. It felt a bit like he was trying to cover something up.

I felt even more stifled, and my desire to skip the birthday banquet grew. I mulled over when

would be the best time to express my reluctance.

The thought of backing out crossed my mind again. Yet, after much deliberation, I still encouraged myself to go. I had to experience some things to let go completely without

regrets.

Before I could voice my refusal, Roger had already called over two assistants. They began to work on me without any discussion, seating me in a chair for styling.

Chapter 174

Matthew sat on the couch closest to me. He stared at me without blinking. A gentle smile graced his face. His dark eyes were brimming with anticipation.

His smile brought back memories of Matthew in high school.

We were both 17 or 18 back then, full of youth and carefreeness. Our days were filled with heavy coursework. It was hard to find time to play.

He always tried hard to follow behind me during the physically demanding laps in physical education class. Whenever I looked back, his beaming face was always there.

Back then, he was chubby. One lap would be enough to cover his forehead in sweat and leave him heavily panting. No matter how tired, he persisted in running behind me.

I was naive, always puzzled about why he insisted on following me despite barely keeping up.

I understood later, but we had gone our separate ways by then.

Watching him sit in the sunlight with a silly smile, memories of our youth halted the refusal on my lips. I found myself unable to speak.

My indecisiveness left me wondering if this was good or bad. It could potentially leave me with no way out in the future.

I was shocked when the luxury sports car stopped in front of the Loxley family mansion.

Tall walls and an exquisitely carved gate surrounded it. Luxury cars were parked on the driveway, and the garden was filled with rare plants.

The Aetherian-style villa stood majestically, with a white-haired butler standing by the door. He was welcoming guests. Well-dressed dignitaries came and went.

I felt out of place even in a custom-made dress and dream-worthy shoes, with the Loxley family's son ready to pamper me.

This was his world, not mine.

I didn't admire it, didn't like it, and didn't want to join it.

I just wanted to be a normal lady. I longed for a loving husband to provide a stable life and to have one or two kids. I dreamed of a nine-to-five job, of walking hand-in-hand with my husband after work to buy groceries and then cooking soup together at home.

1/2

The story of Cinderella marrying the prince and living happily ever after was just a story.

“Luna, this is my home. Let me take you inside.”

Matthew wrapped his arm around my waist loosely and maintained a safe distance. I didn't refuse.

“Grandpa likes quiet places. He won't be coming, but my parents are here. My uncles and cousins will also be here. I'll introduce you to them later.”

I nodded, sensing an unpleasant premonition.

“Matthew, you're back. Why are you so early?”

A petite and lively girl ran out of the villa.

Her voice was clear and cheerful.

Matthew affectionately patted her head. “Why are you running? You're old enough to know you should behave appropriately. Uncle Nathaniel is going to scold you again if he sees you like this.”

“It's Uncle Alex's birthday. I'm just happy.”

“Being happy is fine, but don't overdo it. Where are my mom and dad?”

“They're over there, chatting with the guests. Several guests have already arrived.” The girl pointed in a direction.

“Luna, this is my cousin, Samantha. Samantha, this is Luna. You can just call her Luna for now.”

Samantha Loxley warmed up to me immediately and grabbed my left arm. “Luna, you're so pretty. Prettier than any girl I've ever seen. Matthew, is she going to be my sister-in-law?”

Samantha's teasing made me blush.

Chapter 175

Samantha whispered in my ear, her breath tickling me. "Luna, I'll tell you a secret. My cousin is a very straightforward man. This is the first time he's brought a girl we don't know to a formal occasion. I really like you. Go for it. I'm looking forward to you becoming my sister-in-law."

I looked at Samantha in surprise. She nodded vigorously, confirming everything she said

was true.

Matthew was in a good mood. He shooed Samantha away. He stared at my flushed face and whispered, "Luna, you have no idea how adorable you look when you blush. It's like you have two red apples on your cheeks. I really want to take a bite."

"Stop talking nonsense. I'm not gonna listen to you anymore."

His words were tinged with inexplicable affection, which made me even more embarrassed.

He watched my cheeks redden further. His laughter was muffled, making his steps lighter.

"Dad, Mom, I'm back." Matthew brought me to the living room with a smile.

Several socialites and ladies on the couch smiled in greeting at the sound of his voice. Their smiles froze upon seeing me. Two of them were dressed lavishly. They sized me up discreetly and quickly showed disdain in their expressions.

I felt like such looks were too insulting. If it weren't for my manners, I would've turned and left.

Helen was there too. She sat next to a lavishly dressed woman in a more secluded spot. She paused when she saw me and then quickly nodded with a smile.

I couldn't be ostentatious in such a setting. I returned her smile subtly as a form of greeting.

The large living room fell into an eerie silence. The striking woman sitting in the main seat resembled Matthew. I figured that must be his mother.

She looked at me with surprise as she scrutinized me. She didn't say anything, but the contempt in her eyes was hurtful.

The tall, slightly overweight man in a black suit gave us a brief glance before turning away to talk to someone next to him.

Everyone covertly sized me up. Their looks were filled with doubt, disdain, indifference,

1/2

disgust, scorn, and curiosity.

I felt like an animal trapped in a cage, subjected to their scrutiny. The feeling was terrible.

"Dad, Mom, let me introduce you. This is Luna, the girl I—um—like."

The living room fell deathly silent. Everyone was shocked, as if Matthew's simple words were incredibly audacious.

"Matthew, why are you back so late? Check on the banquet area to see if everything is in order. It's your dad's birthday. We can't afford any breaches of etiquette."

Matthew's mom completely ignored his introduction. She lifted her chin slightly and gave orders without sparing me a smile.

I suddenly felt like I wasn't here for a birthday party but to humiliate myself.

I was extremely uncomfortable, and the thought of leaving crossed my mind again.

Although I came from an ordinary family without power or influence, at least I understood civility and having respect for others.

These opulently dressed, narrow-minded ladies had disrespected me. It felt like an insult to me.

I took a deep breath and tried to suppress the anger rising to the top of my head.

Matthew's hand was protectively behind me. He was trying to block my way to the exit. He whispered an explanation, "I've never brought a woman home before. Mom might be a bit surprised. Don't take it too seriously. After the banquet, I'll take you home. Don't just rush off. Stay with me."

But I didn't want to stay another second in such an oppressive atmosphere. "I don't seem to be welcome here. I should leave now so that I don't affect your dad's birthday party. You don't need to escort me..."

Chapter 176

Before I could finish talking, a sudden noise from the corner of the living room attracted everyone's attention.

A middle-aged woman was helping a lady with a long dress up. "Be careful. Are you hurt?"

Matthew glanced over at me and changed the topic. "Helly fell down. Lulu, we should go and take a look."

Without saying anything else, he took my hand and led me over. He stood beside the middle-aged woman and kept a distance of two steps away from Helen. It was quite a gentlemanly

move.

When his mother saw us holding hands, a look of disgust appeared on her meticulously made-up face.

The rising annoyance in my heart made me want to throw something at her annoying face.

“Helly, is it serious? We have a family doctor.” Matthew bent down slightly. His concern was expressed with impeccable manners, showing the etiquette that a host should have.

“Matthew, take Helly to the backyard for a check-up. Be careful with her,” Matthew’s mother came over and ordered Matthew while looking at Helen worriedly.

Matthew made up an excuse. “Mom, Helly is a woman. It’s not appropriate for me to take care of her. I think it’d be better if you go.”

“Nonsense. You guys grew up together. Go on quickly. I’ll take care of Ms. Lawson for you. You trust me, right?”

Brenda’s attitude took a drastic change. She actually referred to me as Ms. Lawson.

While helping Helen out, Matthew kept looking back at me. “I’ll return in a bit. Please stay here and keep my mom company for a while.”

Just like that, he left me alone under everyone’s watchful gazes.

Nobody in the living room had friendly intentions.

I stood there like a lone boat in the sea, facing the unknown storm by myself.

I wondered if I should send Matthew a message and leave. However, Matthew's mother took my hand and led me over to the couch.

Jinovy had pleasant weather in October. It was not too hot or cold. However, despite the comfortable weather, Brenda's hands were cold. It was a stark contrast to the warmth of her

smile.

"Where are you from, Ms. Lawson? From your delicate figure, you seem like you're from the north." Brenda guided me to sit on the couch and motioned the butler behind us to pour some coffee. She asked the question in a soft voice.

Beneath the gentle facade lay an air of superiority and disdain, likely nurtured by a life of privilege.

Actually, I wasn't too happy right now. However, she was still Matthew's mother and an elderly. I couldn't lose my composure just because of their attitude.

"Thank you. I live in Southsville, so I'm from the south."

"Why do I feel like you have a northern accent?"

I forced myself to smile. "I'm studying at Lincoln University."

A woman wearing a deep-blue satin dress sitting on the long couch beside me kept giving me unfriendly looks. When she heard I was studying at Lincoln University, she sneered disdainfully. Her voice was sharp and unpleasant.

“There are many barbarians from the north. How studious can they be? Look at Yanice. She’s studying at Jesselton College and is graduating next year. That’s where true ladies are cultivated. Mrs. Johnston, I remember Helly is also from there, right?”

“She’s taking her masters. It’s not easy to get into their master’s program. Helly has been smart since young, so it’s easy for her.” A mother would always be proud when talking about their daughter.

“Who doesn’t know how smart is Helly? You’re lucky to have such an intelligent and caring daughter. I’m not as lucky.” Matthew’s mother took over the conversation and engaged in small talk with the upper-class women.

Chapter 177

“Who doesn’t know how smart is Helly? You’re lucky to have such an intelligent and caring daughter. I’m not as lucky.” Matthew’s mother took over the conversation and engaged in small talk with the upper-class women.

I wondered if it was really that impressive to study at Jesselton College. Their children were just among tens of thousands of students in that college. There was nothing to boast about.

I was uncertain if they were doing it intentionally. They left me out and only talked about topics that interested them. They pretended I didn’t exist.

Being ignored like this, I felt like this was the same as being humiliated.

Although I wasn’t a daughter from a prestigious family, I was still cherished by my parents. I didn’t depend on anyone and relied on my efforts to study and earn money. Thus, I wouldn’t tolerate any disrespect from anyone.

Plus, I only came here because Matthew had begged me to.

I didn’t envy these people’s social standing or money. Thus, I didn’t want to butter anyone up to obtain anything. Nobody had the right to shame me, including Matthew’s mother.

All of them were arrogant and thought they were better than others. They wanted to trample over me. However, I didn't want to get involved in their lives no matter how grand they were. That was not something I desired, after all.

Therefore, their talk sounded downright ridiculous to me.

I felt annoyed sitting there. Thus, I sent a message to Matthew, "I'm going to leave now."

Since he brought me here, I needed to inform him if I wanted him to leave. I couldn't forget my manners, after all.

Matthew quickly ran back in less than five minutes. Without caring about what others thought, he sat on the armrest of the couch where I was seated.

As I was already seated near the edge, it seemed that I was nestled in his arms when he sat

on the couch's armrest.

The young woman seated near the woman in the dress glared at me. The jealousy in her eyes caused me to feel dizzy.

As Matthew was rich and handsome, he attracted a lot of women's attention. I would

naturally become the target of their envy since I was under his protection.

Most of the young women were there for Matthew today. It was no wonder why I was targeted since I stepped into the room.

"Why are you leaving? The banquet will start soon, and there'll be fireworks in the evening. along with the surprise 1 prepared for you. Why don't you stay for a little longer? Or do you want to go on a stroll with me?"

Sitting beside me, Matthew tucked a stray strand of hair behind my ear affectionately. This caused the young lady from earlier to stare daggers at me.

“Is Helen okay?” I asked him.

“She’s fine. The family doctor said it’s only a strained muscle in her left hand. She’ll be fine in two days. It was inappropriate of me to leave you here, Lulu. I’m sorry for not considering your feelings. I won’t do it next time.”

Matthew smiled, looking handsome in his suit. This caused my uneasiness to fade away.

Although he always said such things wouldn’t happen again, I wondered whether it was impossible. It would just hurt our relationship more when he failed to fulfill his promise repeatedly. Plus, there was no way a normal woman like me could join such a prestigious family as his.

“Oh.” Brenda elongated her reply and tilted her chin up like a queen. Then, she giggled in a

fake manner.

“So that’s what you were bothered about. No wonder you didn’t talk at all. I didn’t really think about that. Ms. Lawson, Matthew and Helly grew up together, so they’re considered childhood friends. They’ve always had a good relationship.

“When they were young, they often played house. Matthew would be the father, and Helly would be the mother. What fun it was.”

Chapter 178

I raised my eyebrows without a word.

She had casually labeled me as petty and aloof through that.

“Mom, it’s nothing like that. Don’t talk nonsense,” Matthew said in a low voice while gripping my shoulder.

Brenda glared at Matthew before saying with a smile, “What are you embarrassed about? Who doesn’t know about this? You can’t ignore Helly just because you have someone you like. Let me remind you that Helly is my goddaughter.

“No matter who you marry in the future, she’ll still be your responsibility. Thus, you’re not allowed to neglect her at any time.”

The other women praised Brenda for remembering old friendships and being broad-minded, especially Helen’s mother. She looked satisfied given how big her smile was.

Helen was a decent woman, but her mother lacked the dignity a woman from a prestigious family should have. She was too narrow-minded and lacked grandeur.

As slow as I was, I understood what was happening right now.

Brenda was telling me that the daughter-in-law she had chosen was Helen. She was warning me that there was no way Matthew could ignore her even if he married me.

In other words, Helen would have an indelible presence between Matthew and me.

Brenda was doing this to make me give up.

After all, no woman could accept a third party in their relationship.

Considering his feelings for me over the years, Matthew might fight with his parents if things didn’t go as he expected. This might tarnish the Loxley family’s reputation.

Every affluent family hoped to maintain a facade of harmony to the outside world. Thus, they would never allow a normal woman like me to disrupt their lives.

Their presumed good manners prevented them from directly asking me to leave. But they could pull tricks like this to subtly hint me to leave.

To me, it was a blatant humiliation to be driven away.

I wanted to stand up a few times, but Matthew pulled me back forcefully. He begged his

1/2

mother to stop talking while explaining to me he was only childhood friends with Helen and nothing else.

There was no way I could leave at this point.

I wasn't rich, I didn't have a good social standing, and I wasn't a socialite. However, I was a daughter of a respectable family. I was raised with strict values by my parents, and I had my dignity and pride.

The education I had didn't allow me to be trampled by them.

11

I flung away Matthew's hand and ignored his hurtful gaze. Then, I replied with a smile, Mrs. Loxley, you're right. Helen is definitely an impressive woman. I like her a lot. I noticed she seems to be injured. Would it be possible for me to visit her? I'm her roommate, so I'd like to know how she is."

"Are you also taking your master's at Jesselton College?" Georgina Johnson asked in shock.

From her look of surprise, it seemed as if she thought it was unthinkable for me to be taking my master's at Jesselton College. Perhaps I was just a plaything for the wealthy in her eyes. I was supposed to be ignorant and obedient so that I could make them look good.

There were so many people taking their master's at Jesselton College. Surely, she wouldn't think all of them weren't qualified to be there.

Or perhaps she thought deep down that her daughter was the only one qualified to study there. As for the others, they could only look up to her in awe.

Chapter 179

To be honest, I could have better career prospects if I directly pursued a PhD after my undergraduate studies at Lincoln University. However, I wanted to be closer to my parents.

Jesselton College was just my backup option. I didn't think studying there was anything to boast about either. Otherwise, I wouldn't have given up Jesselton College and chosen

Lincoln University for my undergraduate studies back then.

I didn't expect that studying at Jesselton College would make these wealthy mothers so proud.

Perhaps in these socialites' minds, Jesselton College should only be reserved for the children of high-ranking officials or the wealthy elite. At least, someone as normal as me shouldn't be studying there.

It seemed that they had been looking down at me from the start. Perhaps in their hearts, I had seduced Matthew with my looks. They didn't think I was as talented as their daughters. I

didn't deserve to study at Jesselton College, let alone date Matthew.

Well, excellence and social status didn't necessarily go hand-in-hand. In my eyes, they were only belittling me as they were jealous I was more talented and beautiful than their daughters.

Jealousy was truly an ugly trait that could make one lose one's elegance and poise.

"Mrs. Johnston, Lulu is studying watercolor. Her artwork has also won major awards. She was originally offered direct admission to Lincoln University, but she chose to apply to Jesselton College as she wanted to be closer to Southville.

"She's very talented. She got admitted to Jesselton College, top in her class."

Matthew sincerely praised me. This caused the two wealthy ladies, who were very proud of their daughters who were studying at Jesselton College, to be utterly ashamed.

However, I didn't feel joyful after seeing their embarrassed expressions. Instead, I felt even more burdened.

Today was the Loxley family's party. Matthew's parents definitely didn't want to offend their guests, especially for a nobody like me.

As expected, Matthew's parents frowned. They felt even more disdainful of me and sent scornful

gazes my way.

1/2

"What's the big deal? She can't even afford to buy decent things for herself, Matthew, you bought the dress for her, right? I knew it. Women nowadays are too materialistic."

The woman watching the show tutted and shook her head. She made it seem like I was setting a bad example for all the women out there.

Brenda glanced at me scornfully, causing me to feel angered.

The woman's words were extremely humiliating.

It was not like I couldn't afford to purchase a dress. Most of the time, I preferred to buy clothing that was comfortable and decent. I didn't think that expensive clothes were the best.

Matthew had gifted me with quite a lot of luxury products such as jewelry and luxury clothes. However, I had never accepted any of them. What I valued wasn't his money but his affection throughout the years and the sincerity he had shown me.

Matthew's family members were just demeaning their own son by doing this.

"Madam, you're mistaken. Poverty is not a sin, and I don't think a life built on wealth is perfect. I've never accepted a single gift from Matthew. Even when we dine together, we take turns paying for the bill.

"I've never spent a dime of Matthew's money. Thus, I can't accept you saying that I'm

materialistic."

The woman sneered, not expecting I would rebuke her. Her unmasked disdain for me caused my blood to boil.

"However, I must admit that this dress is a gift from Matthew. I'm only wearing it for his sake. It's my first time attending this kind of event, so I don't know what kind of clothes I should wear.

“It doesn’t matter if you believe me or not, but I’ve never thought of wearing this dress for free.” I turned toward Matthew. “Matthew, how much is this dress? I’ll pay you back for it.”

Chapter 180

I took out my phone and opened my bank account, patiently waiting for Matthew to tell me the price.

“I gifted you the dress, so I don’t want you to pay me back. Mom, everyone, Lulu is the best woman in this world. She isn’t materialistic at all. She doesn’t care how much money I have, and I can’t even dream of trying to win her heart using gifts.

“It took me days to convince her to wear this dress. You guys are just insulting her by saying that. I’m very unhappy about this.”

Matthew could barely keep the smile on his face. His expression was stiff, and he was trying to suppress his anger. His etiquette prevented him from driving people away, but he sent warning gazes to everyone in the room.

“Matthew, we watched you grow up. We’re just worried that you’ll be deceived. Young ladies nowadays seem innocent, but all of them are secretly scheming. You need to protect yourself, especially since your family is a prestigious one.”

This woman’s behavior was absolutely disgusting. I wondered what she could achieve by defaming me.

“Madam, please don’t speak if you don’t understand what’s happening. This is my business. I don’t need outsiders to intervene.” Matthew’s words carried weight, causing everyone to reluctantly fall silent. However, they were still looking at me disdainfully.

I didn’t hold a grudge against the people there. They wouldn’t have targeted me this way if it

were not for Brenda.

It could be said that they were Brenda’s pawns.

I had never coveted the Loxley family's assets. My desire to give Matthew a chance had nothing to do with his family. After all, Matthew was just a chubby kid who loved to smile when I met him. Over the years, he had remained the warm-hearted child who followed me

around.

My relationship with Matthew was pure. There were no ulterior motives at all.

Thus, it was annoying to be defamed like this.

"20 grand, is that enough?" I had lost my patience. After flinging away his hand, I transferred him 20 grand without waiting for his answer. Then, I turned around and left.

1/2

I knew it wouldn't be a peaceful party, but I didn't expect it to be this horrendous.

There was nothing worse than being publicly criticized and belittled.

Thankfully, I hadn't gotten too involved in Matthew's life and could still back out in time.

D

"Matthew, look at her attitude. She doesn't even have the most basic sense of respect. How could she think of marrying into our family? Dream on."

“Mom, stop talking!” Matthew shouted in despair. “She doesn’t wish to marry into our family. It’s me who’s begging her. Do you understand?”

He also knew that there was no way our relationship could take another step after this incident.

I stopped in my tracks and turned around. Coincidentally, I came into contact with Brenda’s gaze. She had really provoked me this time.

It was not that I was weak for tolerating them. It was just that I respected them for

Matthew’s sake.

However, they didn’t deserve my respect.

“Mrs. Loxley, I’m only polite to those who deserve it. I don’t think I’m in the wrong. Also, I’ve never cared about how prestigious your family is. I’ve never thought of marrying into your family either. I wouldn’t have come if I knew what all of you were like.

“Matthew, your invitation has caused me to be in a difficult situation. I’m sorry that I can’t attend the rest of your party. Goodbye.”

I turned around and marched out, leaving the crowd looking at me in shock.

Thankfully, I was clear-headed enough not to accept Matthew’s pursuit. Otherwise, I would’ve been done for.

I would never step foot here again.