

The More the Merrier Chapter 546

Chapter 546 Why Did You Not Pick Up

Arissa rolled her eyes with a smile. "You did well too. Thank you, Mr. Graham!"

When he saw the mischievous look in her eyes and how it glistened with the light, Benjamin was briefly shaken.

He pinched her cheeks. "You're welcome. I did it on the account of the children."

With a twitch of her lips, Arissa turned away to look out the car window.

Is it so hard to admit that he cares for me?

When Benjamin saw her turning her back toward him, he assumed that she was hurt by his words. Hence, he leaned closer and whispered into her ear, "I was worried about you too."

His deep magnetic voice sounded especially alluring.

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Arissa's heart skip a beat before it began to pound furiously.

Breaking into a smile, she turned to look at him.

When his lips brush across her face, Arissa recoiled to avoid it as her cheeks began to burn.

Benjamin gazed longingly at her.

When he saw how adorable she was when blushing, he tousled her hair.

"Why is the York family here?"

Arissa's eyes sparkled. "Northstream is her hometown."

Nodding in response, Benjamin instructed, "If there's anything you want to buy, just get Ethen or the bodyguards to get them."

"Mmm-hmm."

Arissa nodded and reassured him, "I'm fine, as they barely harmed a hair on my head. Instead, I managed to get on their nerves."

Benjamin chortled. "But all I saw was you standing cluelessly there."

Arissa was stumped. "If you hadn't appeared, I would have dodged, all right?"

Previously, she didn't dare resist out of respect for her elders. But now, things were different.

She was no longer the old Arissa who would let everyone walk over her. She would respond in kind to whoever bullied her.

Benjamin grunted in acknowledgment. His concerns were eased when he saw that Arissa wasn't as glum as before.

"Why didn't you answer when I called your phone?"

Arissa giggled in response to his question. "Wasn't I facing off with them? How would I have time to pick it up?"

Benjamin responded with a snort.

Taking out her phone to check, Arissa realized that she had two missed calls.

"I need to call Old Mr. Graham back." She didn't want him to worry.

"Don't call him!"

When Benjamin snatched her phone away from her, Arissa was shocked and just looked at him. "What's with you?"

"If you call him, he'll definitely ask where we are."

Benjamin was cognizant of the reason why Darius called Arissa in the first place.

Arissa was amused. "I can choose not to tell him."

Benjamin snorted to express his disbelief.

"Can you promise that you won't waver?"

Pursing her lips, Arissa rebutted, "I'm not sure if I can, but it's not a big deal if Old Mr. Graham comes over. He just wants to see Tim."

“He’ll see him when we take them back. Besides, it’s pointless for him to come here. Going back and forth is just too much trouble,” Benjamin objected in a deep voice.

“However, we can’t go back now, can we?” Arissa empathized with how anxious Darius was to see Tim.

“Just do as I say. He will be nothing but a nuisance if he comes,” Benjamin warned with a frown.

Arissa was amused. “I got it. I won’t tell him.”

Benjamin let out a smug grunt.

Smiling in response, Arissa ordered the driver to drop her at the tailor when she saw that they were about to arrive at the hospital entrance.

“You should head back first. I need to pick up the clothes.”

Just as she spoke, she alighted after the car came to a stop. When she was about to close the door, she saw Benjamin coming down with her.

“Are you going with me?”

“Mmm-hmm!” Benjamin nodded as he alighted.

“To make sure you won’t run off without warning.”

Benjamin then held her hand. “Lead the way!”

Beaming in response, Arissa reminded him, “It’s dirty there. Are you sure you want to follow me?”

When Benjamin gave her the side-eye, she chuckled at the thought of how he was a clean freak.

“It’s not that dirty. It just isn’t as clean as Dellmoor. That’s all.”

When they arrived, Benjamin knitted his brows and reprimanded her, “Can’t you find some place cleaner? Why would you even come to such a dirty place?”

Arissa was dumbfounded.

Even though the other streets were cleaner, this particular one was dirtier due to the mass left by vendors selling supper the night before.

Unlike Benjamin, she had a greater tolerance for dirty surroundings.

“Why don’t you wait for me here?”

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Chapter 547 Benjamin Accompanies Arissa To The Tailor

Benjamin stared at her with a frown. “Where is it? I’ll get my men to pick them up.”

Stumped, Arissa pointed to a spot that was just ten meters away.

“There. I’ll go get it myself. You should just wait here.”

Not wanting to dwell on the matter further, she hurried over at once.

Tim’s clothes were ready to be picked up. After conducting a quick check, she paid for them and returned to Benjamin.

Throughout the entire episode, Benjamin’s gaze never left her at all.

When Arissa walked up to him and saw that his brows were still furrowed, she teased, “Mr. Graham, do you want me to keep a distance from you?”

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As Benjamin’s expression darkened, he held her hand before walking back out.

Arissa giggled under her breath.

“If his clothes don’t fit, you should just buy new ones. What’s the point of altering them?”

Looking at the grouchy expression on Benjamin’s face, Arissa replied with a smile, “Tim likes these clothes. Hence, altering them will make them fit better.”

She had initially planned to keep the clothes till he was older. Nevertheless, she was worried that Tim would wear them on his own accord, together with his shoes.

Benjamin cocked a brow. “You have a pretty good eye when it comes to choosing children’s clothing.”

The children like them a lot.

Arissa grinned. “Well, kids always like clothes that make them look cool.”

Narrowing his gaze, Benjamin gave her the side-eye.

“In that case, why don’t you buy something cool for Jesse? Why does she have to wear pink prints?”

His sudden admonishment aggrieved Arissa.

Despite her urge to explain, she swallowed her words in the face of Benjamin’s intimidating look and decided not to tell him.

“My sweetheart can wear whatever she wants. If you don’t like it, you can always look away!”

“What a witty remark!” Benjamin snapped.

Zippering her mouth, Arissa followed Benjamin back to their car.

“You should get in. I want to walk back and buy some food along the way.”

Benjamin protested, “But it’s still some distance away!”

Arissa scanned the surroundings. “I’ll go buy something to eat.”

Nevertheless, Benjamin pulled her back into the car. “Whatever you feel like eating, I’ll get Ethen to buy them.”

After being forced into the car, Arissa explained, “It’s not me. I just want to buy some for the children.”

Benjamin scrutinized the shops outside. “They are not clean!”

Arissa was speechless.

Huh, I shouldn’t have told him.

Subsequently, their car drove back to the hospital without stopping for Arissa to buy any food. When they arrived, they returned to Mary’s ward.

Watching Arissa strut off, Benjamin frowned.

Is she angry because I didn’t allow her to buy food earlier?

He gestured for Ethen to come over.

“Go out and buy some local snacks.”

“Right away!”

Ethen hurried off to do as he was told.

When Arissa entered the ward, she beamed when she saw the six children telling Mary stories while sitting around the latter's bed.

"Mdm. Mary, it's time to get some rest."

"I'm fine. I was just listening to their stories. Issa, why were you out for so long?" Mary expressed her concern with a narrowed gaze.

"I was out shopping for some clothes. Come, Mdm. Mary, why don't you try them on."

After putting down the shopping bags, Arissa took out Mary's clothes to measure against the latter's body.

"You bought clothes for me? You shouldn't have."

Mary was surprised by the gesture.

"Don't worry about it. Since you'll be staying in the hospital for a while, it would be better to have more clothes that you change into," Arissa reassured Mary.

"There's no such concern as I'm wearing the hospital gown all the time." Mary was deeply touched.

"It's all right. You can wear them once you're discharged."

After Arissa measured the clothes against Mary's body and was satisfied with the fit, she put them back in the bag.

"Mommy, you bought a lot of clothes!"

When Jesse peeked into the bag, her eyes lit up.

Arissa glanced at her. "These are for Tim. I didn't get anything for you, and will do so next time."

"Okay."

Filled with delight, Jesse gestured to Tim. "Tim, come quickly. Mommy bought you a lot of clothes. Look, there's even a pair of shoes!"

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“Tim, come here!” Arissa called her son in a soft voice.

“Why you didn’t tell us that you were going to the mall, Mommy? Do you shop in secret?”

Jasper’s feet swung irritably as he voiced his displeasure.

Arissa laughed. “I just went running a quick errand of getting some clothes. We’d take all day if I were to bring you kids with me.”

Oliver grinned. “We’re not slowing you down, are we? We just wanted to come with you, that’s all!”

Arissa knocked Oliver on the head playfully as she beckoned Tim to come over.

“Come try these on, Tim. Let’s see if they fit.”

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“You should have brought Tim to shop for his clothes, Mommy.” Zachary pulled Tim forward as he spoke. “That way, you wouldn’t have to worry about whether or not they fit. What a hassle it would be if you had to return to the shop to get them changed if they didn’t fit Tim!”

“It was a last-minute plan, all right?”

Arissa smiled helplessly at his indignance as she pulled Tim over and pulled a shirt over his head.

“Is it a good fit?” she asked, gazing at her son with a twinkle in her eye as she smoothed the front of his shirt.

Tim chanced a sheepish glance at Arissa before hurrying away.

Stunned by his sudden movement, Arissa’s eyes followed Tim.

The child ran to the coffee table to procure something she could not see before jogging back again.

When he returned, she saw a hot egg, freshly boiled, in his little hand as he handed it to her.

“Here, Ms. York!”

Arissa was deeply moved as she hurriedly took it from him. Putting the egg down, she held both the boy's hands in hers and blew into them. "Did you burn yourself?"

"Not at all. My skin is extraordinarily thick! Put it over your eye, Ms. York. The heat will help!"

Arissa wrinkled her nose. "I will. Thank you, Sweetheart!"

Overwhelmed with emotion, she hugged Tim and kissed him on the cheek. "Help yourself to your new clothes while I dab my eyes, will you?"

Tim nodded.

Gavin and the other four smiled fondly at the scene.

"Sit over here, Mommy. I'll massage your eyes!"

Jasper made sure she was comfortable, leading her into a seat near him before he ran the warm egg over her closed eyelids.

"I'll help you, Tim!"

Gavin came over and took out the new clothes.

Zachary, too, stepped forward to help.

Tim took off his shirt and tried on the pants again.

Oliver took out his shoes from the shopping bag in the meantime. Jesse stood to the side and happily watched her brother try on some new clothes.

"You look so handsome, Tim!"

Tim blushed. "Thank you!"

"Try on those shoes, Tim," suggested Oliver as he crouched down to loosen the shoelaces.

"Coming!"

Tim sat on the ground and took his time putting them on.

Even Mary beamed at the sight before her.

Benjamin entered and smiled ever so slightly at the sight of the children flocked around Tim before announcing his arrival.

“Tim, have you tried on all the new clothes?”

Tim leaped obediently to his feet. “Yes. I’ve tried on everything Ms. York bought.”

Benjamin tousled the boy’s head. “Do they fit?”

Tim nodded. “They do!”

“Try on the altered ones again.”

Gavin had already taken them out of the bag at Benjamin’s words and was holding it out for Tim.

Benjamin glanced at the children before addressing Arissa, “Ethen will drop by with food in a few minutes.”

Arissa jumped as she took the egg before glancing at him.

Then, she closed her eyes so Tim could continue rubbing the egg over her eye sockets.

Benjamin raised his brows before sauntering over. Along the way, he motioned for the boy to step aside.

Jasper did not cooperate. “I’ll do Mommy’s eyes!”

With a displeased frown, Benjamin shoved the boy aside casually and snatched the egg from his chubby little hand.

Jasper’s face contorted with anger. “Bandit!”

Arissa opened her eyes at the commotion and was surprised to see Benjamin seated next to her.

“Keep them shut!” he ordered.

“I can do this on my own,” she said hastily.

Oh God, so many people are watching.

Arissa touched her neck, feeling a tad warm at the moment.

Tired of having his orders defied, Benjamin leaned into Arissa intrusively and startled her so much that she squeezed her eyes shut.

His thin lips curled upward in triumph, Benjamin turned his attention toward the task at hand.

“Why are your eyes are swollen? Did you not sleep well?”

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Chapter 549 The Fight

“No! Mommy has been crying!”

Jasper’s quick retort at Benjamin earned him a frown of disapproval from the latter.

Arissa jumped out of her reverie and pushed Benjamin’s hand away. “I was? How was I not aware?”

Jasper watched the adults for a while before turning to his siblings and found Gavin and the others staring at him.

He smiled so broadly that his eyes were slits. “I made that up!”

Benjamin’s eyes flashed as he gently turned Arissa’s face to place the egg’s warmer side against her other cheek.

Arissa closed her eyes and raised her neck, feeling the man’s breath on her face from time to time. Her heartbeat accelerated again.

Reveling in his masculine scent, Arissa felt her heart hammering wildly against her ribs and wondered if he could tell.

As if in response, Benjamin’s eyes flickered. A hint of mischief appeared in his eyes at the sight of her blushing cheeks.

“Does that feel better?” he asked when he switched sides again.

“Hmm.”

The glint in Benjamin’s eyes became more profound at the quaver in Arissa’s grunt.

He inched closer with great deliberation. “What’s wrong?”

Arissa felt as if she was being hugged by him. Her ears became hot.

“That’s enough!” She pushed his hand away.

“Stop moving!” Benjamin grabbed her wrist. “I’m not done yet!”

Arissa gulped before resigning to lean back in her chair so Benjamin could dab her eyes.

Are they swollen? Did I really cry in my sleep?

She had dreamt that Tim would not forgive her. Even worse, he refused to recognize her as his mother.

She remembered feeling heartbroken in the dream.

“Do the clothes fit, Tim?” she asked him softly once more.

“They do!” Tim chirped in response before trying on another set.

“What about the altered ones?” she asked, smiling a little more now.

“I’m trying them out, Ms. York. Everything seems to be in order. I finally have a set that fits!”

Like music to her ears, the child’s tender voice made Arissa smile with delight like music to her ears.

“I’m glad, Sweetheart! Put aside the ill-fitting shoes for now. You can try them on again in a few years when you grow into them!”

Tim nodded wordlessly before a glance at her. Upon recalling that Arissa had her eyes attended to, he answered her with his voice.

“I will.”

Benjamin looked down at her bright little face with gentle eyes.

Suddenly, a familiar voice came. “I’m getting diabetes just being around the sweetness in this room. Good thing I’m in a hospital.”

Arissa turned and met Kingsley’s mischievous smile.

Benjamin, too, glanced at the newcomer.

The children were surprised to see him. “Uncle Kingsley!”

Kingsley beamed as he walked toward them who ran over to meet him halfway, clearly delighted by his presence.

“What’re are you doing here, Uncle Kingsley?”

Kingsley gave each child a hug and a tousle as he replied, “I miss you kids, that’s why. Where are your brother?”

Upon noticing Tim in the corner looking at him after a quick glance around, Kingsley's mouth fell open in astonishment.

"What a tanned child!"

Tim seemed to wilt before their eyes.

Zachary rapped Kingsley's forehead severely. "You aren't allowed to say such things about Tim, Uncle Kingsley! If you're not careful, you'll be even darker than him."

Upon regaining his senses, Kingsley squatted in front of the child at once to apologize.

"I'm sorry, Tim. I shouldn't have teased you like that. Will you forgive me?"

As he spoke, Kingsley reached out to stroke the boy's lowered head.

"It's all right."

His eyes lighting up suddenly, Kingsley bent over to pick Tim up to the group's surprise.

"What a fine complexion Tim has," he declared. "The rest of you should get some sun. Look at all these pallid little faces!"

The other five children stared at him angrily. "You are the one who needs a tan!"

"Okay, fine. I'm the pale one here!"

Being in an exceptionally amicable mood, Kingsley hurriedly placated the indignant children.

Arissa was amused. "How did you find us here, Mr. Watts?" she asked, remembering Benjamin's prior warning not to inform Kingsley.

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Chapter 550 Did Benjamin Hit You

"Oh, don't remind me. It's all Shaun's fault for preferring to watch me suffer as I stumble around in search of where you might be than to just give me the address."

After vented, Kingsley smiled at Tim again.

"This is Uncle Kingsley, Tim!"

Tim looked at him curiously. "Are you Uncle Kingsley?"

Kingsley was surprised. "You know me?"

The boy nodded as he had heard the name on more than one occasion.

Kingsley laughed and pinched his little face adoringly before noticing that the child was all bones.

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"Poor Tim," he said, visibly distressed. "Don't they ever feed you? I'll take you for something nice to fatten you up!"

To Arissa's amusement, Tim pouted.

Benjamin shot her a glance before turning her head to get a better angle of her eyes.

"That's enough now!" she said.

"What's wrong with your eyes, Arissa? Did Benjamin hit you?"

With Tim in his arms, Kingsley came over to tease Arissa next.

"He did not," Arissa explained hurriedly. "It had nothing to do with him!"

Kingsley gave them a meaningful smile. "This is the first time I'd seen Benjamin dab a woman's eyes so tenderly. Becoming a ladies' man, are you?"

Arissa was embarrassed. Her whole body stiffened up at the sight of Tim in Kingsley's arms.

Regaining her mobility the next second, she got up and quickly took her son.

Benjamin glared at Kingsley before reprimanding in a deep voice, "What are you making such a racket for? Can't you see that Mdm. Mary is trying to rest?"

It was only then that Kingsley noticed the figure in the hospital bed as he had his attention captured by the children earlier.

"My apologies, Madam." Kingsley hastily apologized to Mary.

"Don't be," Mary replied affably. "Don't feel like you're disturbing me, too. I happen to like the noise."

It had been many years since she found herself in the middle of a lively scene like that.

Benjamin signaled for Kingsley to leave with a severe glare, though Kingsley did not cooperate at first.

Despite wanting to stay, Kingsley quailed under Benjamin's glare and followed him out.

"I'll play with you later, children."

Arissa looked at them before turning to address her son. "Are the altered clothes comfortable?"

Tim nodded.

At that moment, Benjamin walked in and handed Arissa an egg. "Here. Eat this."

Arissa took it and sat down with her son in her arms. With a smart rap against the table, she peeled the shell off neatly and handed it to Tim.

"Thank you for the egg, Tim. Here, it's yours."

Tim shook his head. "You should eat it, Ms. York."

Arissa was moved by the sincerity in her son's eyes.

"How about we share it?"

Tim looked at Gavin and the other five. He bit his lip and shook his head.

It's not fair that I get to eat the egg and the others do not.

Interpreting her son's reluctance correctly, Arissa smiled.

"One egg isn't enough for all of you," she said with a glance at the five children. "It's better that I eat it instead!"

Jesse ran over and threw her arms around Arissa's neck. "Mommy," she said coquettishly, "I'll help you with it!"

Arissa was greatly amused by the girl's initiative and expressed it by brushing her nose affectionately. "Here you go!"

The little girl shrugged her shoulders happily.

"Thank you, Mommy!"

Jesse kissed her mother's cheek before seating herself on Arissa's side as she helped herself with the egg. "Would you like to share this with me, Tim?"

“No, thank you.” Tim shook his head. “You can have all of it!”

Arissa put him down. “Are there any more eggs? I can cook some more.”

“There aren’t anymore, Ms. York,” Tim informed her. “I borrowed the last one from the nurse.”

Arissa froze. She was so moved that Tim overcame his shyness to speak to strangers for her that she sniffled.

“Did you returned it to her?”

Tim lowered his head. “I’d treated her to a cup of water for her help.”

Arissa stroked his hair fondly. “That’s very nice of you, Sweetheart.”

Tim glanced at her before lowering his head again. His ears were scarlet.

“You don’t have to, Mommy,” Zachary said. “We shouldn’t eat so close to dinner.”

I’m sure they wouldn’t hold it against us if Jesse ate one egg of theirs.