

## The More the Merrier Chapter 696

### Chapter 696 Inviting Her To Lunch

“I’ll find some time to talk to Benjamin about him deducting your one-month pay,” Arissa offered. Edwin grinned. “I shall await your good news, Mrs. Graham. If it’s you doing the talking, I’m sure you’ll succeed.”

His comment had her smiling diffidently. “I’ll try my best. But if it doesn’t work out, let me compensate you. It’s just that I don’t know how much he pays you.”

He merely smiled instead of answering her question. In truth, losing a month’s pay did not bother him. Benjamin always gave them lots of incentives and other benefits at the end of each year, after all.

“Please don’t, Mrs. Graham. If anything, it should be Mr. Graham who pays me.”

Suddenly, Arissa’s phone rang.

Seeing that the call was from Darius, she hastily picked it up.

“Issa! I heard from Benjamin that you didn’t come to the hospital because you were in bed. Are you not feeling well?”

The woman’s heart felt warm and fuzzy as she heard how concerned Darius sounded.

“I’m fine, Old Mr. Graham,” she replied kindly. “I just overslept a little this morning. I’m not unwell.”

“Seriously, that boy, Benjamin! He never tells me anything, even when I ask him. Anyway, I’m about to head over to Yaleview. Are you home now, or are you outside?”

“I’m at the hospital with my grandaunt right now. Is something the matter, Old Mr. Graham?” she asked gently.

“I had William prepare you some food. I’ll send it over to you.”

Arissa was deeply moved. “You can get someone else to do it, Old Mr. Graham. We’ll be having lunch here. You don’t have to go through the trouble to come over here yourself.”

“It’s not like I have much else to do anyway. I’m heading over now. It’s also a good opportunity to pay your grandaunt a visit.”

Darius hung up right after saying that.

Arissa was at a loss for words.

“Is Old Mr. Graham coming over?” Edwin asked, smiling from ear to ear.

The woman nodded. “He said he’s prepared us some food.”

He laughed. “He really adores you.”

Arissa felt touched too. Despite all the rumors about his character, the elderly man had never been difficult toward her.

He’s always been so nice to me and the children.

“I’d say it’s because of the children,” she mentioned casually.

“Not at all. He really is fond of you. It has nothing to do with the children.” Edwin turned to her. “Old Mr. Graham is always especially forbidding toward everyone else. You’ll realize that as you get to know him better. He’s also quite stern toward Mr. Graham, even though it’s not too obvious.”

Arissa smiled in response. It’s more like Benjamin keeps getting on Old Mr. Graham’s nerves. If the children weren’t around, I would have asked Benjamin why he has such an awkward relationship with his father. I can tell that Old Mr. Graham does care about Benjamin a lot, but for some reason, Benjamin seems to have some sort of grudge against him.

Just as she pondered over that matter, her phone rang again.

Noticing Benjamin’s name on the screen, she stilled briefly before answering the call.

“Hello?”

“Have you eaten?”

“Not yet.”

She walked out of the ward.

“Give me ten minutes,” the man said to her.

Arissa’s heart skipped a beat as she heard that.

Is he inviting me to lunch?

“Are you coming over?”

“Wait for me downstairs. Don’t bring Gavin and the others with you,” Benjamin instructed.

Arissa froze. He’s taking me out to lunch without the kids?

“But we’ve already ordered our food at the hospital.”

The children would be so heartbroken if I were to leave them behind to enjoy a good meal.

“Get ready. I have a lunch appointment at twelve.”

Benjamin hung up right after clarifying the situation.

A lunch appointment?

Arissa looked at the time and realized that it was almost half-past eleven.

Then, she glanced down at her outfit and concluded that it was presentable for a lunch appointment.

After returning to the ward, she stood at the entrance and beckoned Edwin over. “I’ll be attending a lunch appointment with Benjamin. Could you please watch over the kids and take them home after lunch?”

“Of course, Mrs. Graham. Don’t worry. Enjoy your date with Mr. Graham! I’ll take good care of the children,” he responded cheerily.

Arissa was taken aback. “It’s not a date! It’s a lunch appointment with someone else!”

Edwin merely smiled. It’s definitely a date.

“Could you also let Old Mr. Graham know when he gets here?” she asked, rubbing her forehead slightly.

The butler nodded. “Certainly.”

## The More the Merrier Chapter 697

### Chapter 697 Benjamin Picked Her Up

“Let Grandaunt know too, okay? I’ll be heading down now.” Arissa glanced into the ward one last time and left quietly, afraid that the children would follow her.

“All right, Mrs. Graham!” Edwin snickered discreetly as he watched her leave. Lunch appointment? Mr. Graham never attends any of these!

When it came to business-related social events, it was usually Ethen who went on his boss’ behalf.

After arriving downstairs, Arissa figured she should give Darius a call to let him know where she was headed.

The phone rang shortly before the line was picked up.

“Issa!”

The elderly man’s voice came through.

“Hello, Old Mr. Graham. I just got a call from Benjamin. He wants me to attend a lunch appointment with him, so you don’t have to come to the hospital since I won’t be around. Well, if you do come, Gavin and the other kids will still be here,” the woman explained apologetically.

“I’m already on my way,” Darius replied. “What lunch appointment is it?”

“He didn’t say.” Arissa glanced over to the entrance.

The elderly man let out a huff. “What kind of lunch appointment could he possibly have anyway? He probably said that because he knows I’m planning to see you.”

Amused by his grumbling, Arissa tried to console him while wearing a smile on her face.

“It’s just a coincidence, Old Mr. Graham. Benjamin wouldn’t do such a thing to you on purpose!”

“Hmph! So, you’re finally taking his side?” Darius teased her.

Her face reddened. “I’m just stating the truth, Old Mr. Graham. He’s your son; wouldn’t you understand him better than I do?”

Hearing that, he burst into laughter. “You sure have a way with words. All right, then. Go have lunch with him. If you’re meeting someone else, you don’t have to bother talking to them. Just focus on eating!”

Arissa grinned. “Got it, Old Mr. Graham!”

After a few more exchanges, she hung up and was about to dial Bradley’s number.

However, Benjamin’s car appeared at that very moment, stopping right in front of her.

The window rolled down.

“Hop in,” he called out to her.

Arissa hurriedly opened the door to the front passenger seat and sat down.

“Who are we having lunch with?”

Benjamin shot her a glance. “A friend.”

That took her by surprise. She had thought they would be meeting a business partner.

“You’re bringing me along to have lunch with a friend?” she asked, eyeing him.

Benjamin’s expression remained cool. “He wants to see you.”

Then, he leaned over to help her put on her seatbelt.

Upon catching a whiff of his familiar scent, she felt her heart race uncontrollably.

Benjamin’s gaze darkened when he noticed her flushed cheeks.

He then leaned closer to her.

“Why is your face so red?” he asked in a deep, alluring voice.

Arissa immediately panicked and pushed him away. “Aren’t we going to meet your friend? If we’re not, I’m getting off. Old Mr. Graham’s making his way over with some good food!”

The man’s eyes narrowed. “My dad came looking for you again?”

She glanced at him in return.

“What do you mean ‘again’? He was so worried about me not feeling well that he told William to make me some food.”

Benjamin studied her before letting out a scoff. “He won you over just with some food?”

Arissa’s mouth twitched lightly. “I didn’t say anything like that. Anyway, what’s going on between you and your dad?”

The man merely leaned back into his own seat and drove away from the hospital.

Seeing him remain silent with a poker face, she pursed her lips and suppressed her curiosity.

She then tried to call Bradley again, but all she heard in response was the operator's robotic voice.

Why isn't he picking up?

While pondering, Arissa bit her lip subconsciously, only to aggravate her prior wound by accident.

Benjamin looked over as she hissed in pain.

"You bit the spot?"

"Mhm..."

Tears threatened to spill from the woman's eyes. It hurts so bad.

"There's some medicine in the car. Use it."

Raising his chin, Benjamin signaled toward the glove compartment.

"I have some ointment in my purse. Mr. Bailey gave it to me."

"Use it then. Do you have antiseptic? If you don't, there's a bottle inside there along with some cotton buds," the man stated while focusing on the road.

## The More the Merrier Chapter 698

### Chapter 698 You Did That On Purpose

Arissa glanced at him before opening up the glove compartment in front of her. Her heart fluttered as she noticed that all the medication inside there were brand new.

He didn't prepare all this just for me, did he? At that very moment, Benjamin's voice rang out from beside her. "Ethen replaces them timely, just in case I ever need them."

With that, Arissa felt all the joy inside her die out.

"Oh." It was evident that she was not in good spirits.

Benjamin took a brief look at her, his eyes flashing when he noticed that she looked a little disappointed.

"Are you upset?"

The woman shot him a glance before turning to look out the window. Then, she grabbed the ointment from inside her purse and applied it to her wound.

Benjamin furrowed his brows. "Why didn't you disinfect your lip?"

"It's just a tiny wound. There's no need for that."

Arissa capped the tube of ointment and tossed it back into her purse.

He darted a glance at her before shifting his focus back on the road.

The two remained silent for the rest of the journey.

As soon as they arrived, Arissa alighted the vehicle on her own, not bothering to wait for Benjamin to open the door for her.

She observed her surroundings.

The man came over to hold her hand, but she avoided him instinctively.

He tried again and managed to grab her hand firmly that time around.

Then, he led her into the restaurant.

"Welcome, Mr. Graham!"

Benjamin inclined his head as a greeting before walking into the place. It seemed like he was a regular there.

Arissa eyed him briefly before checking out the surroundings again.

"Why were you upset?" the man asked suddenly.

She froze for a split second and answered with a pout, "I wasn't."

Benjamin tilted his head to look at her. His gaze was so sharp that it was as though he could read a person's mind.

Then, he looked back up. "Those medications were for you," he said softly.

Arissa turned to him, her eyes widened in astonishment.

Seeing the hint of amusement in his eyes, she looked away swiftly. "But you said it was Ethen who prepared them!"

Benjamin chuckled. "I didn't think you'd care that much."

The woman glared at him in embarrassment. "Then why didn't you just tell me the truth? You did that on purpose!"

He raised an eyebrow. "Are you going to keep scowling like that? It's going to look bad on us if someone else sees you."

With that, she quickly looked away, smiling discreetly.

Noticing her lips curving upward, Benjamin could not help but smile too.

It took only a second for Arissa to regain her composure, and she wore a professional and courteous smile on her face.

The man frowned at that sight. "You don't have to smile like that."

"But I have to give whoever I'm meeting a good first impression," she replied, giving him a sidelong glance.

Her voice sounded so sweet that he just could not find any fault with her.

"There's no need to be nervous. You've already met him."

"Who is it?" The woman grew curious.

"He's already here."

Benjamin followed an attendant into a private room while still holding Arissa's hand.

Jonathan was already seated inside there, waiting for them.

Upon seeing them, he got up and nodded at Arissa.

"Hello, Ms. York."

"Mr. Patterson?" she exclaimed.

It never crossed her mind that they would be meeting him.

Jonathan smiled faintly. "I've been waiting here for a while."

Benjamin glanced at him before leading Arissa to a chair and handing her the menu.

When she was done ordering their food, Jonathan spoke to her.

"Ms. York, I need your help adding some details to Ms. Adams' case."

The woman nodded. "What is it?"

"Is your memory of the time she took the children away still foggy? Because if it is, we still have to be consistent. Can you be certain that she had taken two children with her—"

"I've regained my memories, Mr. Patterson." Arissa cut him off.

Hearing that, Jonathan turned to Benjamin. "Why didn't you say so earlier?"

"You didn't ask," the latter retorted.

Jonathan was bereft of words.

Arissa gazed at both men. "I'm so sorry, Mr. Patterson!" she apologized.

"It's fine. It doesn't affect anything. In fact, it's great that you remember."

The lawyer then cautioned her about areas to look out for, lest she fall into their opponents' trap.

## The More the Merrier Chapter 699

### Chapter 699 The Lunch Appointment Became A Date

After explaining things to Arissa, Jonathan got up to leave. "Enjoy your meal. I have to go back to the office to sort out the details. See you."

Arissa jumped to her feet. "Come and eat with us, Mr. Patterson! It won't take much time." "It's fine. Work is more important." The man cast a glance at Benjamin before nodding at her and walking away with his briefcase.

Arissa was bewildered. But it's lunchtime! Doesn't he need to eat?

"Sit down." Benjamin's brows puckered into a frown when he tilted his head to look at her, only to find her looking outside the window.

Meeting his dark gaze, Arissa could somewhat tell that he was not too pleased.

"Weren't we supposed to have lunch with him? Why did he leave?"

"Didn't you hear what he said? He's busy," Benjamin stated, obviously not caring whether or not Jonathan was going to eat lunch.

Soon, the dishes arrived.

“Let’s eat.”

Seeing him begin to eat, Arissa could only do the same.

It was not long until the woman’s eyes shone with delight. She looked especially pleased.

The food here is really good!

Benjamin’s eyes twinkled at the sight of how lovely the woman looked enjoying her food.

She looks so relaxed whenever she eats.

“Do you like the food?” he asked tenderly.

“Yeah!”

Arissa nodded while continuing to stuff her face, paying no attention to her aching wound.

Benjamin placed some side dishes on her plate.

The woman glanced up at him. “You should eat too.”

“I will. Slow down! Don’t hurt your lip again.”

Arissa’s face fell. She would not have noticed the pain on her lip if he had not mentioned it.

“Okay.”

Her phone suddenly rang as she continued eating. A feeling of guilt washed over her when she realized who was calling her.

“Gavin’s calling.”

Benjamin smirked upon noticing her flustered expression.

He took the woman’s phone and answered it for her.

“Hi, Mommy. Mr. Whitley said you went out for lunch with Daddy?”

Arissa grew frantic when she heard the child’s voice.

“Your mommy’s with me now. What’s the matter?” Benjamin asked solemnly.

The boy at the other end of the line fell silent for a moment before replying, "I was just asking. Since you're taking Mommy out for lunch, you'd better take her somewhere nice."

Benjamin arched a brow. "Your mommy's already eating."

Arissa's lips twitched. Then, she glared at him and exclaimed at the phone, "I had something to discuss with Daddy, Sweetheart! That's why we're having lunch together!"

"What are you two discussing, Mommy?" Gavin asked earnestly.

"Stop being nosy," Benjamin responded in a deep voice.

"Give me back my phone!"

Arissa snatched her phone back.

"I just met up with a lawyer, Sweetheart," she explained the situation to Gavin gently.

"Was it Mr. Patterson?"

"Yes, but he left without having lunch with us. I'll be heading back to the hospital once I'm done, okay? Has your grandpa arrived?"

"He just did. He's walking out of the elevator now," Gavin answered.

Coincidentally, his grandfather appeared at that very moment, so the boy informed his mother.

"Okay." Arissa smiled, recalling that Darius had just left home when she called him prior.

"Enjoy your meal, Mommy. We're about to have lunch too," the boy exhorted seriously before bidding her goodbye. "Bye, Mommy!"

"Okay. Bye, Sweetheart! Muahh!"

The woman even kissed her son through the phone, and the boy returned the gesture before hanging up.

Benjamin's expression darkened as he saw how affectionate Arissa was with the boy.

Noticing his gaze, she turned to him and put her phone down. "What's wrong?"

"Do you always do that when you're on the phone?"

The man was curious and despondent at the same time. She always sounds like she can't wait to hang up whenever we talk on the phone.

"Do what?" Arissa asked as she continued eating.

"The goodbye kisses." Benjamin's gaze was intense.

Arissa giggled. "Yeah. Is there a problem with that?"

His eyes gleamed as he stared into her dazzling eyes.

## The More the Merrier Chapter 700

### Chapter 700 Benjamin Took The Takeout

Arissa felt uneasy from getting stared at like that, so she looked away and continued eating. Benjamin then followed suit.

For a long moment, only the sound of cutlery clinking could be heard. The man would serve her some food on her plate from time to time, and it was a heart-warming scene.

The first to finish his meal, Benjamin set his flatware down and wiped his mouth. Arissa nervously sped up as soon as she saw that he had finished.

"Slow down. There's no need to hurry," Benjamin said, glancing at her.

"Aren't you in a hurry to go back?" uttered Arissa after she gave the man a look.

In response, he raised an eyebrow and inquired teasingly, "When did I say anything like that? Do you want me to go back?"

"I meant to ask if you're supposed to be in a hurry to return to the office!" Arissa replied, her lips twitching slightly.

"I'm waiting for you to finish, so focus on chewing and be careful not to choke yourself." Benjamin continued to pile more food on her plate.

After rolling her eyes at the man, Arissa furrowed her eyebrows at the pile of food in front of her. "I can't finish them! There's too much food here!"

"Take your time. Now stop talking and start chewing," Benjamin commanded as he gave her another glance.

Unhappy with the man's domineering behavior, Arissa pursed her lips before biting down hard on her food.

“Don’t scarf down your food like an animal. Chew it thirty times first. The children eat in the same way as you do. Swallowing food without chewing can cause indigestion!” Benjamin complained.

Overwhelmed with fury, Arissa swallowed the food in her mouth and turned to beam at the man, who could not look away at the sight of her bright smile.

“If that’s true, why do you have stomachaches, Mr. Graham? We chew less than you do, but we’re totally fine,” Arissa retorted.

There’s nothing wrong with how the kids and I eat. They certainly don’t scarf down their food like animals! With that thought in mind, she scoffed at Benjamin.

While the man was rendered speechless, she smirked in secret.

After ingesting a few more bites, she became full. There was still food left on her plate.

“You’re full?” Benjamin fixated his gaze on her.

Leaning back on the chair, Arissa glanced at the man and answered lazily, “Yes. I’m too full to take another bite, so let’s take it to go.”

“I don’t think it’s a good idea to store these leftovers for the next meal,” protested Benjamin with a frown.

“I’m taking it to the hospital for the children.” Arissa thought it would be a waste to dump the food since it did not seem cheap.

There’s no shame in taking the food to go. It’s pretty delicious!

Then, she asked the waiter to pack the food so that she could take it with her, leaving no waste behind.

“If you don’t want me to pack the leftovers, you shouldn’t have ordered so much. You’re wasting food!” Arissa could not help but grumble.

The waiter, who was packing the leftovers, was surprised to hear that someone dared speak to Benjamin in the manner. Hence, he could not resist casting a few glances in Arissa’s direction.

However, he quickly lowered his head and focused on the task at hand after meeting Benjamin’s warning gaze.

Unaware of what happened, Arissa continued to nag Benjamin. “We’re supposed to set a good example for the kids. Wasting food is what you should be ashamed about. I

don't see anything wrong with taking out leftovers since they are our uneaten food. Are you afraid this will affect your precious image? Leftovers or not, they're still food."

Benjamin simply stared at Arissa without making any rebuttal, letting the woman say her piece.

When Arissa noticed the man's quietness, she felt somewhat embarrassed.

"It's done!" informed the waiter politely.

"Thank you."

With the takeout in hand, Arissa turned to the man on the couch. "We're good to go."

Benjamin then got on his feet and took the takeout from her before holding her hand and leading her out.

Arissa looked at the man's dignified appearance and uttered in a lowered voice, "Maybe you should let me take it."

However, he continued to walk her out without saying anything in response.

"Aren't you going to pay the bill?" inquired Arissa when they got close to the exit.

"They'll send the bill to the company," Benjamin replied with his head tilted to stare at her.

The woman nodded in response before continuing with another question. "Do you come here frequently?"

"Sometimes." Benjamin opened the car door for Arissa and thoughtfully shielded her head with his hand to prevent her from hitting the door frame.

After getting into the vehicle, she turned to Benjamin. "Give it to me."

As requested, he gave her the takeout, which she then placed on her thighs.