

## **You'll Fall for Me, Today or Tomorrow**

### **Chapter 383 - 384**

Clarissa had felt better about the casting of the male lead since the incident had passed.

However, she was unaware that Matthew was still attempting to reverse her decision of the male lead's casting.

Thankfully, the official announcement did not report this incident. If they ever decide to recast the male lead, the reaction that it would provoke might be catastrophic.

Clarissa had begun casting the other roles with Justin. As for the court case regarding the assistant director, not a word had come up after the matter had been resolved with a settlement offer.

It was a big burden off her shoulders to have finally put the matter to rest.

They had decided to cast a young actress for the role of the female lead. There were some hotshots who had put in their resumes to the manager and the studio, but none of them was deemed suitable for the role by Clarissa.

Truth be told, her expectations were high as the role was a reflection of herself. As she had absolute authority over the entire project, she was determined to select the leading actress with great care.

Due to the absence of pressure from the investors, Clarissa had complete creative freedom in every aspect. As a result, things became much simpler to manage. The actors she had picked were not only young and good-looking, but they were also skillful and accommodating as well.

Justin had teased Clarissa during the casting process for her ridiculously high demands. By imposing such high standards onto the actresses who would be playing her, she would have

to struggle to live up to them.

Clarissa gave it a thought and couldn't help agreeing with him.

"Actually," Justin added. "You're a very beautiful and capable woman, Clarissa. You'd be hard-pressed to find a girl like you."

With such generous praise upon her, Clarissa's heart fluttered with delight.

Back at home, she showed Matthew headshots of the actresses who had auditioned that day.

Perhaps Matthew would have some insight into the kind of a woman I am.

Matthew was lost in thought as he browsed through the headshots of the actresses.

Clarissa stood hovering over him, glancing nervously over his shoulder.

"Which one do you like?" she asked as she clutched his arm.

Matthew frowned. His long fingers tapped on the stack of headshots before him as he

turned to look at Clarissa with a strange look in his eyes.

Clarissa blinked confusedly. "Why are you looking at me like that?" she asked, flustered. "Are

any of these actresses not good enough? I've gone through them myself and find them

acceptable. Of course, there aren't many who are as perfect as I am."

She did not seem abashed at praising herself. Rather, she smiled mischievously, displaying a perfect set of teeth.

Matthew couldn't help smiling himself. Stroking her cheek with a long finger, he said, "Clare,

I'm afraid that I wouldn't be of much help in choosing the actress that would be playing my

wife. In my opinion, nobody in the world could measure up to you. The decision to select

who to play you would be your own call to make."

Clarissa was mollified. She blushed as she smiled somewhat shyly, but the sparkle of joy in

her eyes revealed how much his praise had pleased her.

Clarissa was fond of hearing affirmations of her value from her husband, as was the nature of married women. She threw herself into his arms in affection as he received her embrace.

With a chuckle, Matthew kissed Clarissa on the forehead as he wrapped his arms around her waist to lift her up and gazed upon her face affectionately. "You seem awfully happy!" Matthew commented. Clarissa did not express her joy verbally but her actions were more than sufficient to prove it.

It would only stoke his ego if I told him how much his words had pleased me.

Content with merely pouting, she ran a finger over his thick and masculine eyebrows. "I thought you would be offering some constructive criticism instead of sweet-talking me like that," she chastised in feigned annoyance. "I'm serious. We need to cast an appropriate actress for the role, or I'll be forced to play myself."

Matthew laughed. "That could work. I could play myself too, as your husband. As the male and female leads of your film, it couldn't get more authentic than that." Clarissa shook her head. "I wouldn't want you to be the male lead." "Why not?" Matthew demanded, his eyes glinted dangerously for an instant as he held her chin. "Am I not suitable for the role? Is Ryler a better fit than I am?" He's jealous again, Clarissa thought resignedly, though the smile on her face remained.

"All right, we've established that neither of us could play ourselves. I won't be asking for your opinion anymore. I'll make the decisions myself."

At that, Clarissa freed herself from Matthew's arms and gathered up the stack of headshots.

Mumbling softly to herself, she vocalized her thought process as a means to think clearly.

"I've seen her in a play before. She's pretty professional, but not too good in other aspects..."

“Hmm, good acting skills, but looks a bit plain...”

“This one... Ah!” Clarissa gave a little scream as Matthew grabbed hold of her from behind as they both fell backward.

Her exclamation of surprise was promptly stifled with Matthew’s lips as they pressed up against hers. The next instant, she was drunk on the spell of Matthew’s kiss.

After a long while, Matthew finally let go of her. He touched a finger gently on her flushed lips, still grinning despite receiving a frosty glare from Clarissa.

“Clare, I thought we agreed to let work remain at work.”

Clarissa stared. He’s bringing this up now?

She recalled with a twinge that guilt that Matthew had never talked about work when she was in his company. Even if he did, it was when they were not conversing or busy with their respective tasks.

“I’m sorry, it was wrong of me.” Clarissa tossed the headshots aside.

Turning around to face

Matthew with his arms still around her, her body remained firmly pressed up against his.

“I say, Matthew!” Clarissa exclaimed, seized by sudden excitement.

“What did you like about

me the first time we met? Also, I want to know if you think any part of me stands out. Do you

like my fashion sense? My temperament? What?”

Matthew was draped against the couch with one arm around Clarissa’s waist and the other

on his brow as he smiled contentedly. The faraway gaze in his eyes exuded love and

affection from the presence of his wife.

Clarissa watched as Matthew allowed his gaze to sweep across her slowly. He was either

considering her question seriously, or he was gathering his thoughts regarding the aspects

of her that he was fond of.

As Clarissa was about to burst with expectation, Matthew's lips moved at long last, only to form a single word.

"Perfection!"

Clarissa couldn't decide between feeling happy or helpless.

His answer is perfect too. Perfectly helpful.

He's probably worried that if he had said anything else, he'd be in trouble.

Clarissa chuckled. "Come on, you can do better than that. I'm not trying to bait you or

anything, you know? It's just a casual conversation that we're having.

Would you like me to

do you first?"

Matthew raised his eyebrows. "Let's hear it."

"The first time I met you, you behaved like a perfect gentleman, but there was something

distant about you. I only saw derision whenever you looked at me.

You've rescued me and

courted me without ever taking advantage of me. I thought at that time that you were afraid

that I would cling to you. However, as we got to know each other more, I had wanted to be

as far away from you as I thought that you didn't want me using you for your wealth. To be

honest, I was always afraid and nervous around you as my self-esteem was low. I was

always in denial that I am very attracted to you," Clarissa smiled sweetly as she concluded.

Reaching out to touch Matthew's cheek, she added, "You're tall and upright, stylish,

gentlemanly, self-sustaining, with the wisdom and magnetism that only comes with age.

Who wouldn't want a man like this? I consider myself lucky to have met you before anyone

else. Perhaps someone else had met you before I did, but I was the one you wanted, not

them."

Clarissa looked very pleased with herself. Matthew said nothing, content with gazing at her affectionately.

“A man like you is loyal to his wife. Most ordinary men would not be able to escape from the clutches of their lustful nature. Besides, I’m sure somebody with your status and looks would have been able to have any woman he desires, yet you have never done that. This trait of yours had made me decide to be your wife. Is that better?”

“Yes,” Matthew concurred. “I am also the best one out of all the men you’ve dated, aren’t I?”

Clarissa chuckled in response. “I’m not comparing you with anybody.” In an instant, her smile vanished, which was replaced by a look of seriousness. She leaned over to initiate a kiss on him. “To be honest, the best trait of yours is how attractive you are. That’s the real truth.”

Clarissa had fantasized about her future many times in her youth. She had thought about the kind of man she would be spending her life with, and what kind of life that would be.

Every aspect of her future life had been planned right down to the minute details.

However, before love came knocking on her door, Clarissa never had a reason to consider

and construct her fantasy when Matthew had appeared in her life.

Despite wanting to reject him, Clarissa was unable to.

Even if she had tried, it must have failed because Matthew ended up marrying her.

Her decision to accept his love with open arms no matter what the future held was the epitome of following one’s heart wherever it led.

Unknowingly, Clarissa had been gazing deep into Matthew’s eyes in her reverie of love. She

started and smiled. “All right, I’ve said mine. Now it’s your turn.”

Clarissa is relentless. Matthew held her and spoke deliberately and softly. “You’re beautiful,

demure, stubborn, timid, sexy, intelligent, simplistic..."

"Eh?" Clarissa glared at him indignantly. Why does it sound like he's reciting from somewhere?

However, she understood why instantly.

These were the impressions Matthew had had of her through the entire time of knowing her.

He must be going through the memories we have shared together.

Clarissa smiled in content as she listened to him.

"Nubile, fair of skin..."

"Stop!" Clarissa said in a panic, beginning to feel embarrassed with where the descriptions were heading. With one hand over Matthew's mouth, she looked coquettish and girly.

"Where are you going with this? That's not what I meant when I said tell me what you liked about me."

Matthew laughed as he spun her around to press her against the couch.

"Didn't you want to hear the things I felt about you? Your body is an integral point of that. Wasn't your body the first thing I saw when I met you, Clare?"

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Clarissa had no more words to refute him.

Facing Matthew, they continued to chat amicably. When she was not being unreasonable

from a temper, she could never win an argument against him.

"Alright, you win." Clarissa held up her arms in surrender.

"So, for the traits about myself that you've listed, none of them could be used to select an actress to my satisfaction to portray myself."

Matthew tapped Clarissa's forehead lightly with a cheeky laugh.

"That's because you are irreplaceable."

Clarissa nodded. "Is that so? All right, I'll do some introspection. I can't be demanding for perfection."

I think we'll go by acting skill, then.

Before the audition, Clarissa had received a lot of invitations to dine with actors eager to be considered for her film. If it was not a free meal, it would be another form of a request to meet.

Yael was not subtle in the delivery of her opinion.

“They are trying to curry for your favor to be cast as the main or secondary characters.

Because there was no announcement of Ryler being cast as the male lead, the competition

for that spot is still fierce. I’m guessing that the men who are taking the initiative to bribe

you are intending to be considered to be the male lead.”

At the mention of bribery, Clarissa was immediately reminded of the fiasco on set.

Her face turned grim at the memory.

“Yael, reject them all and be firm about it. I will not entertain any requests to meet or

exchange favors. If they want the parts, they’d have to audition for it.”

Clarissa loathed opportunists like these. The memory of that encounter still left a bitter

taste in her mouth.

To prevent that from happening again, Clarissa avoided any locations that she would likely

run into hopeful but unqualified actors. She shut herself off in Zen Highlands to work

without even showing up at the studio. Unless absolutely necessary, she could only be

reached by phone or the Internet.

Clarissa’s self-imposed exile had ended on the day of the audition.

Due to the sheer number of candidates, the audition had to be broken up into batches,

which was something Clarissa had not expected. To combat this, she had arranged for the

audition of the main roles to be left towards the end, as she had intended to cast every

single role to perfection.

Clarissa browsed the profiles of the candidates and discussed them with several members of the crew. Justin had offered many acute opinions, which were invaluable in Clarissa's decision-making process.

"This Roxanne seems promising. She's not only a good actress, but she also looks the part too."

Clarissa nodded in agreement. "I think she'll do."

As the circumstances had evolved to the way they were, she felt that Roxanne was more suitable.

Though Roxanne was new, she had professional training from a drama school. Her most appealing factor was the elegant way that she carried herself. Aside from that, Clarissa had discovered to her surprise that Justin was right. Roxanne did have an uncanny resemblance to her.

Due to a bizarre combination of coincidence and fate, Clarissa had asked that Roxanne act out the scene of the main characters breaking up when it was her turn to audition. Every detail was accounted for to the point that Clarissa felt like she was watching her very own breakup with Matthew before her eyes all those years prior. When the scene had ended, Roxanne was shocked when she met Clarissa's gaze after bowing to each of them.

Roxanne discovered to her surprise her resemblance to Clarissa. Justin smiled and nodded in response to her performance. "That was good," he praised.

Clarissa nodded as well. "It's Roxanne, is it? That was a great performance."

Great? Did I get the part? Roxanne was beside herself with excitement, though she did not dare ask.

Aside from plays that she had written for herself in drama school, this was the first time she was acting in front of a production crew. Roxanne had been a loyal fan of Clarissa for a long time. When she had heard that Clarissa had intended to shoot a movie, many of her classmates had voiced their intention to audition for a part in her film. However, what they were really after was only a slice of glory for themselves. Due to Clarissa's popularity, they surmised that this biopic of hers was going to be a hit. It was about the romantic history between her and the president of Tyson Corporation, Matthew Tyson. Though this was only Clarissa's directional debut, it had no chance of being a flop. Roxanne joined them for the audition without high expectations. Just to be able to meet Clarissa in person and get her autograph would make the trip worth it.

Unexpectedly, Clarissa was not only more beautiful than she had expected, but she had also looked strangely familiar too, as though Roxanne had seen her somewhere before. Even more unexpectedly, her performance had drawn words of praise from Clarissa and Director Yates. Roxanne's heartbeat quickened as her face turned red with anticipation. An excitement that was on the verge of exploding brewed up within her. She opened her mouth but her nerves failed her as not a sound escaped. The only thing she was capable of doing was to bow and thank them in a stammering voice. When Roxanne had left the room, her classmates that she came with surrounded her as they interrogated her.

Clarissa felt a great burden lifted off her shoulders after she decided that Roxanne had won the part.

As she bent over to examine the profiles of other potential candidates, the door was pushed open and someone entered.

“Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Shermaine.”

Clarissa jerked her head up at the sound of the name. It really is her.

Clarissa thought that she had misheard. Turning around to see how the others would

respond, she found that they shared her expression of shocked disbelief.

Clarissa frowned slightly but said nothing. She stood waiting with a grim look on her face.

Even the production staff who was present grew startled at Shermaine’s arrival. Her

intention of auditioning was abundantly clear, though it was not explicitly announced.

It was common knowledge that she was the romantic rival of Clarissa all those years ago.

“Excuse me, Ms. Smallwood. Have you happened to have walked into the wrong set?” said

the staff, hurrying over as he thought of an excuse to escort her away.

“No, I’m here for an audition. Ms. Quigley, am I correct in presuming that there would be a

supporting character who is a wicked woman? I might be suitable for that part.” With a

mild-mannered smile and earnest demeanor, she was a world apart from who she used to

be.

She stood perfectly composed as her request was being considered.

Clarissa returned her smile.

“Apologies, Ms. Smallwood. I have no wicked characters in my novel.

Naturally, the film

wouldn’t have one either. You must have mistaken my intentions.

Besides, forgive me for

being blunt, but there is not a single character that would be fitting for you.”

“Ms. Quigley,” Shermaine pressed on. “If you would give me a chance, I would like to try anyway. I’ll accept and respect your decision no matter what the outcome may be.”

That was all she wanted. For us to watch her audition.

Since Shermaine had turned up, it wouldn’t look good to turn her away without giving her a chance.

However, Clarissa was firm on excluding Shermaine’s involvement from her project altogether.

“There’s no need. I am certain of the fact that you are not what we are looking for.”

Shermaine was taken aback. Her subtle make-up seemed to accentuate the disappointment

in her face. With a sad little smile, she bowed graciously.

“Apologies for intruding, and thank you for your time.”

At that, Shermaine turned and departed.

Not a single person at the scene attempted to stop her.

“Ms. Quigley, I really had no idea that Shermaine would come for an audition. My apologies for overlooking this possibility.” The production crew was stammering in fright.

“It wasn’t your fault.” Clarissa shook her head. “Let us continue.”

The process went by smoothly as they were aware of what they were looking for.

When the audition finally drew to a close, Clarissa sat with Justin to discuss business. When

they were done, Clarissa blurted, “Justin, do you think that I did the right thing?”

Justin frowned. “Shermaine?”

“Yes, her. She is a gifted actress, no doubt. As for her character, she seems to have turned

over the new leaf. I had read on social media that her temperament had improved

tremendously. Everybody who has interacted with her had reported that she had become so

humble that it was like she was a completely different person. After seeing her today, I have been shocked as well. But I still do not wish to even look at her after everything she'd done."

Justin did not press his opinion. "You're free to think what you please about her. It doesn't even matter if you've made up your mind. Besides, this is your movie. If there is a constant thorn by your side that you have to deal with, your entire project might be jeopardized."

Clarissa's heart lightened considerably at Justin's words of encouragement.

She turned to look out of the window and met the curious gaze of the staff outside.

"I don't quite understand what she's thinking. She knows perfectly well that I wouldn't cast her. Why would she show up and get herself humiliated?"

"Who knows?" Justin shrugged as he packed away his documents. "Stop overthinking. It's been a long day, go home and get some rest, will you?"

Clarissa nodded. "You go on ahead, Director Yates. I'll leave shortly after you. Matthew's coming to get me."

She smiled sweetly at the mention of her husband's name.

Justin scoffed in jest and departed with a shake of his head. Maybe it's time for me to find someone too, he thought.

Spring is here. It's the perfect season for a budding romance.

Clarissa turned her attention back to the stack of profiles. As Shermaine invaded her subconscious again, she shook her head with a self-deprecating laugh. She was not only upset about the fact that she rebuffed Shermaine. The other reason was that in her novel, no wicked characters existed despite Shermaine's presumption.

When Clarissa began working on her novel, it began as a diary chronicling her time with

Matthew. Though their love had been tested with obstacles, it was nobody else's business but hers and Matthew's.

Does Shermaine think that I will include her in my book?  
Does she think that her role in my past is that important?

Shermaine was wrong on both accounts. Clarissa had never referred to Shermaine in her novel or created any characters based on her. It was a love story about her and Matthew; no other woman was involved.

Since the novel had not been released, Shermaine could only guess that she had been written in as well.

That was not the case. Clarissa felt sick even writing about her. She definitely did not intend to stain her work with the inclusion of Shermaine.

The diary of their shared history together was Clarissa's gift to Matthew. It would have been tainted to include other women.

Clarissa smiled in relish at the look on Shermaine's face when she realized that she had been completely omitted from the novel. She was not even worthy of being mentioned.

A light knock on the door interrupted Clarissa's pleasant fantasy. She raised her head, her smile still plastered across her face. The sight of Matthew leaning against the door with his dark and twinkling eyes boring deep into hers left her breathless with admiration.

"What're you thinking of?" Matthew strode over and placed his hands on the table as he met her gaze.

Clarissa held her head up by her chin, looking demure with her eyes narrow from smiling so widely.

"I'm imagining what the film would turn out to look like when it's done. That's another gift

from me to you. If it turns out bad, you have to be kind about it, won't you?"