

Chapter 497 Can I Touch It

The call ended with a beep.

Edwin cursed quietly to himself.

He turned and saw Vanessa shivering in the snow.

Yet, his heart remained unmoved.

He instructed a nearby servant, "If she doesn't leave, call the police."

As he walked away, Vanessa yelled furiously, "Edwin, you bastard!"

He spun around and snapped. "If I'm such a bastard, why are you so into me? Vanessa, stop these demeaning acts. We have no future together."

Vanessa wanted to respond, but he was already gone.

Inside, Edwin grabbed his coat and car keys. "I'm stepping out," he announced to Mark and Cecilia.

Mark, slightly annoyed, remarked, "You're hardly ever home, and now you're leaving again."

Little Olivia chimed in, "He is old enough to have his own life!"

Edwin, feeling a bit better, gently patted her head and whispered, "Come with me."

Despite Olivia's unfinished dinner, Edwin quickly dressed her in a cute hat and coat and whisked her away.

She felt sorry for her dinner.

In the car, Olivia sniffled and wanted to say something. Edwin, his tone tense, called someone. "Vanessa is in Czanch. Yes. Please send someone for her. I can't be responsible for what she might do if she stays," he said.

After a pause, he apologized in a low voice.

"I can't do this. Love just can't be forced," he said, and hung up.

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As they left home, servants were ushering Vanessa out. Olivia, peering through the window, asked softly, "Is that Vanessa?"



Edwin focused on the road, and then softly said, "You're going to spend some time with Mr. and Mrs. Garcia."

Olivia agreed obediently.

Edwin drove quickly, prompting Olivia to tap him. "Eddie, slow down!"

Realizing he was distracted, he slowed down and lit a cigarette at the red light, smoking in silence.

Olivia watched him, suddenly feeling her brother was quite pitiable. His current state revealed his heartache.

She couldn't help but ask, "Do you really like Laura that much?"

He hummed in agreement.

Olivia, looking at him, said softly, "If you like her, I like her too."

He patted her head.

They arrived at the Garcia house around 8 PM.

Peter and Lina were in the living room when Edwin and Olivia arrived. Peter, always ready with a joke, teased, "You're visiting us early in the morning and late at night. What's the special occasion? It's not time for New Year's greetings yet, Edwin."

Edwin turned to Olivia. "Stay here and chat with Mr. and Mrs. Garcia," he said.

Olivia nodded in agreement.

Edwin then went upstairs directly to Laura's room. Peter, a bit annoyed, cautioned, "Don't overdo it, boy. You're not officially a couple yet..."

Olivia, still clinging to Peter's arm, looked up at him with big eyes. "Grandpa Peter, I'm still hungry," she said.

Feeling sorry for her, Peter went to prepare some food, grumbling about Edwin's irresponsibility. "Such an irresponsible brother! Leaving our little Olivia hungry like this! Don't follow his example," he told her.

Olivia, delighted, buzzed around him happily as he expertly prepared his specialty dish.

Meanwhile, Lina continued her knitting, sighing at how easily Edwin could always outsmart them.

Upstairs, Edwin entered Laura's room without knocking.

She had just finished showering and was in a crimson silk nightgown, looking both alluring and vulnerable. Edwin closed the door softly behind

him.

"Why are you here?" Laura asked him.

Edwin leaned against the door, his voice hoarse. "I was worried you might overthink, so I came to see you," he said.

Laura wrapped herself in a robe and began to dry her hair. After a few strokes, she looked down. "I didn't overthink anything," she said quietly.

Edwin moved closer and took the towel from her, drying her hair for her in silence.

After a moment, Laura said, "Let's end this, Edwin."

He paused briefly as he continued drying her hair, her words barely audible over the hairdryer.

Edwin set the hairdryer down and knelt before Laura, looking up at her. When she tried to avoid his gaze, he gently held her hand.

Laura felt a mix of awkwardness and confusion.

It was her dilemma, yet Edwin's presence, meant to console her, somehow made her feel as if she was overreacting. But how could he know the years of scorn and tears she had endured because of her background?

She believed she deserved a better life.

Choosing anyone but Edwin would have been easier, but he was unique in her world.

Her eyes filled with tears as she touched his face, revealing her heart for the first time. "Edwin, being with you brings happiness, but also pain. I can't ignore my background. I'm even afraid to face your mother as your girlfriend," she admitted, her voice reflecting her inner turmoil.

"Last night, I thought maybe we could give us a chance. But Vanessa's arrival destroyed all my courage. You left me once, Edwin. Now, it's my turn," she said, releasing the thoughts she'd held back for so long.

Edwin gently caught her hand. "None of this is your fault," he assured her.

"But it's my mother's fault," she countered.

"She could have chosen a different life. Being with you, I'm always at risk of being criticized, and I don't want that. I admit I'm weak and selfish. I just want to maintain my life with my family. I like you, but my life isn't just about you."

Edwin had considered these things.

The Evans and Fowler families had longstanding enemies.

A relationship with Laura could reopen old wounds, likely involving the Smith family.

He didn't push her on the matter but didn't concede either.

Kneeling before her, he rested his head against her abdomen, whispering, "Let's just enjoy the holidays for now. We'll talk about everything else later, okay?"

Laura, overwhelmed, exclaimed, "Edwin, why must it be so complicated?"

He remained silent, contemplating.

Why endure all this hardship?

He realized it was because he couldn't let her go. If letting go was easy, who would choose a difficult path? Despite everything, he had no thoughts of giving up.

He encouraged her to take care of herself, knowing some issues he had to face alone.

Downstairs, Lina barely looked up as he approached.

She snorted dismissively. "See? I've told you, if you're not serious, don't bother Laura. She's naive and fell for your tricks. A more experienced person wouldn't be so easily swayed by your efforts."

Edwin didn't respond with words.

Instead, he sat opposite her, helping to wind her yarn.

Lina couldn't help but laugh. "You've got nerve, trying to win me over to your side because handling Laura's too much for you? I won't intervene on your behalf!"

Edwin spoke softly. "I'm just here to keep you company, Aunt Lina."

Lina glanced at his handsome face, secretly pleased.

She felt a sense of satisfaction with this future son-in-law, and she also recognized that the dynamics between men and women often involved such challenges.

A little conflict now and then wasn't actually a bad thing; it provided a chance to gauge Edwin's sincerity.

After a while, Edwin inquired about Olivia.

She had eaten her fill and was now exploring the villa. Her curiosity led her to the backyard swimming pool, where, to her surprise, someone was swimming despite the cold weather.

Olivia couldn't resist; she had to see who it was.

Could it be Peter and Lina's son Bodhi?

Olivia crouched by the pool and called out, "Bodhi, isn't it cold?"

Bodhi, now over 40 years old, was old enough to be Olivia's father.

Whenever he returned from his travels, he always brought her gifts from abroad.

Therefore, Olivia eagerly anticipated treats from him.

The night was pitch black.

A figure suddenly emerged from the water. His pale skin was shining, droplets of water sliding down his well-defined muscles. This created a faint redness on his skin, adding to his allure.

And there he was, right in front of Olivia.

All she could do was open her mouth in shock.

This was too much!

Olivia's face turned a deep red as she stared at him, finally stuttering, "Are you a man or a woman?"

Dylan wiped his face, flicking water onto Olivia's with a mischievous grin.

He chuckled. "Want to check?"

Olivia looked down and covered her eyes. "Why aren't you wearing pants?"

"Swimming trunks count as pants!"

Dylan's parents had come to visit, and they stayed in a hotel. He, preferring to swim daily, stayed at the Garcia residence.

Post-swim, Dylan dried off with a towel, watching Olivia.

She was cute and tender, resembling Edwin closely, making her identity clear.

Olivia peeked through her fingers, softly asking, "Is that real or fake? How did you get it so big?"

Dylan tossed aside his towel and lay on a recliner, covering himself with a bath towel. He patted the spot beside him. "Want to feel it?"

Olivia grimaced. "No way! I'm not a baby anymore!"

Dylan laughed loudly, his teeth shining in the night.

He looked at her. "Did you come with your brother? What's he planning now?"

Sitting beside him, Olivia said, "You like Laura too."

Dylan, stroking his chin, didn't respond but seemed deep in thought.

Olivia blinked brightly at him.

Just as Dylan was about to speak, Edwin approached, surprising them.

On this cold day, the rivals met.

Dylan discarded his bath towel, showing off. Edwin, modestly dressed, looked down at him with a faint smile. "Aren't you cold, showing off like this in a cold winter night, Dylan?"

Dylan chuckled. "Thinking of Laura, who's also here, keeps me warm!"

Edwin's response was laced with sarcasm. "You could stay forever, and it still wouldn't change anything!"

Unperturbed, Dylan retorted, and Edwin's expression darkened. Dylan smirked to himself, enjoying his momentary advantage, yet admiring Edwin's sister.

Edwin led Olivia away, while Dylan watched them leave with a playful blink.

Olivia, unable to resist, ran back to Dylan and touched his muscular arm and chest, marveling at the firmness, reminiscent of velvet wrapped around iron.

Edwin was visibly frustrated. "Olivia!" he exclaimed.

After her brief touch, Olivia quickly grabbed her brother's arm and they both hurried off.

Dylan watched them go, shaking his head with amusement.

He then stood up swiftly and dived back into the pool.

Back at Evans Gardon, Edwin was summoned by Mark to the study. Without preamble, Mark asked, "Was it Vanessa who came over tonight?"

Edwin didn't deny it.

Mark looked at him, not with blame but with deep contemplation. He then said calmly, "Edwin, I used to be uncompromising just like you. But as I've aged, I've learned that sometimes it's also important to let go. In Vanessa's case, you weren't wrong, but you sure bear some responsibility. If you had recognized your feelings for Laura sooner, this situation with Vanessa wouldn't have occurred. You need to offer some form of reparation to the Smiths."

Mark expected his son to resist, but Edwin agreed immediately. "I've been

thinking the same."

Edwin planned to return to Duefron to resolve the issue with the Smith family in person, understanding that in business, benefits often dictate outcomes.

He intended to offer them a deal to settle the matter.

Mark and Edwin then discussed potential offers, aiming for the right balance.

The following day, Edwin flew to Duefron, where Vanessa also arrived.

During a meeting with the Smiths, the matter was resolved when Edwin offered a new energy project.

This project, with an estimated net profit of ten billion, satisfied all parties.

Vanessa's father was pleased, and the next day, the engagement was publicly annulled. Edwin returned to Czanch that night.

The Evans and Garcia families shared a close bond.

Over the years, while Lina and her children often stayed abroad, Peter regularly joined the Evans family at Evans Gardon for meals, continuing the tradition this year.

This year, Peter arrived with his wife and son's family.

As they were greeted by Cecilia, she looked them over and inquired, "Why didn't Laura come along?"

Peter appeared somewhat uncomfortable.

Cecilia commented, "It's not right to leave her out."

At that moment, Edwin's car pulled in. As he stepped out, he overheard his mother say, "Edwin, you're back just in time. Laura's not here. Could you go and bring her for dinner?"

Edwin's expression was unreadable, a subtle tension surrounding the crowd.



Then, he offered a slight smile. "Alright, I'll go get her. Please make our guests feel at home."

The Garcias were speechless.

Cecilia led them inside. In the living room, Mark was distributing presents to the younger family members, reserving the largest and most impressive one for Laura.

Cecilia's face lit up with a smile. "Edwin's gone to get her! Mark, just keep it for her until then."

Mark slid his hand into his jacket pocket.

Wrapping an arm around his wife, he suggested, "Since it's her first visit, you should also prepare a special gift for her."

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