

Peaceful Day

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Grace

I don't realize when I fall asleep beside him again.

The next time I wake up, the sunlight burns my back, and Tristin's warmth consumes me once more.

I blink, slowly recalling what he said before he fell asleep. My eyes fall on his peaceful, resting face. Tristin's breathing is steady, his chest rising and falling gently against me.

For a moment, I just lie there, savoring the sensation of being held so closely, so protectively. But then I remember that we are not completely fine yet. My heart skips a beat, and I begin to pull away.

But just as I do, Tristin stirs, his arms tightening around me as if sensing my desire to run away. His eyes flutter open, and he gazes at me with a sleepy, soft smile.

" Good morning, Little Butterfly. " He murmurs, his voice husky with sleep.

I bite my lip, feeling a mix of emotions—happiness, embarrassment, and an overwhelming need to be away before the reality of our situation catches up to us.

" It's noon by now, I am sure. " I whisper back, my voice barely audible.

I make another attempt to slip away, but he holds me in place, his

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smile widening as he watches me struggle.

"Can you not stay for some time? I am all warm because of you." Tristin asks, his tone teasing but laced with a softness that tugs at my heartstrings.

Before I can answer, there is a knock at the door. My body tenses as the door creaks open, and I hear the unmistakable voice of Alma.

"Tristin, why are you sleeping in? Are you sick?"

Panic surges through me. I try to untangle myself from Tristin's hold, but he seems oblivious to the urgency of the situation.

The door opens fully, and Alma steps inside, her eyes immediately landing on us.

I freeze, my heart pounding in my chest. Tristin doesn't seem to care, but I can feel the heat rushing to my cheeks, embarrassment flooding through me. Without thinking, I scramble out of the bed and dive underneath it, hoping that somehow, I can disappear from her sight.

Under the bed, I hold my breath, my heart racing as I listen to the silence that follows. I can barely make out the muffled sounds of their conversation above me, and I curse myself for acting so ridiculously. I'm not a child, but right now, I feel like one.

She saw me...

Oh My God.

And I just hid under the bed instead of dealing with this situation

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calmly.

After a moment, I hear Alma's voice again, this time tinged with amusement. " Well, I didn't mean to interrupt, but it looks like I will have to have this conversation later. Tristin, when you are ready, come down for Lunch. "

" No need for that, Mom. I have to be in the office in an hour. " Tristin refuses.

" Well, then make sure to send Grace down so she can eat something. " Alma sighs.

" No harsh words, Mom. " Tristin states, still annoyingly calm.

" What do you take me for? A devil? Ask Grace. We are not on bad terms anymore. " Alma sounds offended before she storms out.

I stay perfectly still until I hear the door click shut. Only then do I let out a breath, my face burning with embarrassment.

I know I can't stay hidden forever, so I reluctantly crawl out from under the bed.

When I finally come out, Tristin is sitting up, grinning at me like he just won some sort of victory.

" You know, Little Butterfly, hiding under the bed is not the most effective way to avoid my mother. " He chuckles, his tone light and teasing.

I huff, brushing the dust off my clothes. "I was not hiding. "

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"Then did you suddenly want to know what's under my bed?" He tilts his head to the right and asks innocently.

"You—" My face heats at the way he is enjoying this whole thing. "You shouldn't talk to me! I am still angry!"

Tristin grins, his eyes shining with amusement. "Sure, you can stay angry. But can you please come back to my room so I can sleep tonight too?"

I open my mouth, stare at his puppy dog eyes, and find myself speechless. What is wrong with him?

I glare at him, trying to muster up some anger, but it's hard to be mad when he's looking at me like that—like I'm the most amusing thing he has seen in a long time. Still, I need to save face, so I straighten up and head for the door.

"I am leaving!" I announce, trying to sound as casual as possible.

As I turn to leave, I hear him chuckle again, and I can't help but smile, even as I close the door behind me.

The sound of his laughter is infectious. And the fact that his words keep echoing in my head is not helping my poor heart.

A little while later, I find myself seated across from Alma at the dining table. The smell of freshly cooked food is filling the space.

Despite the warmth of the room, I feel a little cold, my earlier

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embarrassment still lingering.

Alma seems relaxed, though. She is serving rice on her plate and she is acting like she didn't see anything embarrassing at all.

I fidget with the napkin on my lap, my mind replaying the moment when she walked into Tristin's room.

"Grace, there is no need to be like this." Alma says suddenly and steals a glance my way.

I snap out of my thoughts and force a smile on my lips. "Um...I am fine."

Alma smiles knowingly, and my heart sinks. This is too bad.

"You know, Grace, you don't need to be so shy around me. I don't mind what you two do in your free time." She sighs, her tone soft.

My face heats up instantly, and I lower my gaze to the table. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to—"

Alma cuts me off. "Like I said, I don't mind. You didn't need to hide from me."

Her words catch me off guard, and I look up to find her smiling at me with a warmth that eases some of my nerves.

"It's still embarrassing for me." I mumble, unsure of how to navigate this conversation.

What do you say to a Mom who caught you in bed with her son? I will have to figure it out soon.

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Alma takes a sip of water before answering. "I am quite pleased, actually. Tristin seems to be doing better and...as much as I don't like to admit this...but it's true that this is all because of you. That's why... I want you to stay here for some time. "

"You want me to..." I trail off, and sigh.

It's right. I don't feel like leaving either.

"Yes. " She nods instantly.

I nod in reply just like her but remain silent.

I should escape from her as soon as possible and go visit her greenhouse again. That's the best place in Tristin's house.

The greenhouse is as beautiful as ever. I find a quiet spot in the corner and sit down, letting the peace of the space wash over me.

For a few moments, I just sit there, lost in thoughts. After what happened this morning...I feel like everything will be okay. Maybe this is the beginning of something new, something good and it doesn't scare me anymore.

My peaceful moment is interrupted by the sound of footsteps approaching. I look up to see Ania, standing a few feet away.

She freezes when she sees me. And I too find myself unable to move. I met her only once and that meeting didn't end too well.

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She is glaring at me, her eyes narrowed with suspicion and something else I can't quite comprehend.

...It must be hate.

"What are you doing here?" Ania snaps, her voice sharp and piercing.

I swallow, suddenly feeling out of place. "I...I was just..."

Ania crosses her arms over her chest, her gaze becoming colder. "Who let you sit here?! Isn't it enough that you are in this house and now he wants you to roam freely?"

"Ania...I didn't mean to..." I start but she doesn't let me finish.

"Stay away from my family." Ania hisses, her voice cold and hard. "You don't belong here. If you want to play house with Tristin, you should stay in his room and make sure to not show your face around."

I sigh, shifting my attention to the roses beside me. "So you do care about them. But if you care so much, why do you keep hurting them?"



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