

The Billionaire's Twins Play Matchmaker Book Two: Chapter Twenty-Five



"Here you are, ma'am."

The chauffeur leaned in accepting the slim hand reaching out and helped his employer exit the small limo. He was an older gentleman and had served the same family for years. In fact he had watched his employer go from a charming young lady to a dignified matriarch.

Opal Prescott was fully aware that aging brought changes but she didn't obsess with her youth as so many others did. Because of that she aged gracefully. Certainly she had a few wrinkles here and there but her face retained a natural glow. Her gaze was as bright and sharp as ever and people would be foolish to think she had lost a step.

Many still sought her out to join their various projects. She was known to be compassionate and championed many causes as the Prescott matriarch. Dedicating her time and attention to social causes kept her busy unlike her husband. After giving the reins of the company to Silas he lounged at home reading the Financial Times. She wished he showed more ambition to socialize but he was never very interested in her hobbies. Their marriage was founded on splitting responsibilities. Her husband took care of business and she made sure they made adequate charitable donations.

She hadn't minded the division but now that Silas had taken over his father had nothing to keep himself busy. Her husband's chief concern was Silas providing heirs to carry on the family name and business. To that end he forced Silas to date numerous girls throughout high school. The girls were daughters of business associates. His hope was to grow the company through merger but Silas steadfastly ignored these efforts and once he went to college he terminated these crude attempts from his father.

To be honest Opal hoped Silas would have married before now as well. The idea of having a daughter-in-law to share in her social endeavors rather tickled her. Being able to share it with a granddaughter even more so but she didn't want to force Silas into a relationship either. It might have been an old fashion wish but she wanted her son to find and marry for love. But there was only one woman who would satisfy him.

One thing she wouldn't tolerate was being ignored. Silas had ignored several of her phone calls. She didn't care how busy he might be it was unacceptable. Hoping to take him off guard she had gone to the office only to be informed he was working from home that day. That was surprising in and of itself but when she went to his condo the housekeeper told her he hadn't been around for weeks and could be found at the villa.

The Prescotts owned several properties many of which could be classified as villas but there was only one Silas would use. They had long maintained a brownstone on the Upper West Side that had long been Silas's favored residence even more so than the family estate. Any time he needed a vacation or change of scenery from his Manhattan condo he would spend a weekend at the brownstone but she had never known him to stay for weeks on end as the housekeeper seemed to imply.

Nonetheless she ordered her driver to take her there. Even from the street she could tell it was occupied. Windows that usually remained closed were open. Curtains were drawn back and the small, close-knit group of housekeepers and cooks were certainly active and going about their duties.

"Ma'am?"

"Wait here, Charles. I won't be long."

"Of course."

Squaring her shoulders Opal marched up the steps and pressed the doorbell. Moments later the door swung open revealing Duncan who seemed very surprised to be receiving another guest. Despite his shock he maintained his composure.

"Welcome Madam."

"Duncan, how are you?" Opal asked as she stepped in.

"Very well. Thank you for asking."

"I was told Silas was staying here."

"He is indeed. Shall I announce you?" Duncan asked taking her coat.

"No. That's not necessary. Is he in his office?"

"Yes."

"Good, then I'll..."

A young voice echoed through the house interrupting them. "And now the finals for the Indoor Stair Luge!"

The announcement was followed by a Whoop! of exclamation as a young boy came barreling down the stairs on a plastic, green toboggan. Making it down the curved staircase he rocketed across the floor and crashed into the opposite wall just missing the open door leading to the living room. Laughing the boy lay on the sled catching his breath.

"Are you still alive?" a voice called from above.

"Yep!" the boy on the floor declared. "Your turn! Don't wuss out!"

"Three! Two! One! Go!"

Seconds later the performance was repeated as a boy identical to the first came sliding down on an orange toboggan and crashed next to the first. The pair laughed, high-fiving each other.

"You two are going to break your necks one day and I'm not crying for you," another voice declared as a girl descended the stairs.

While the boys had black hair and blue eyes she had brown hair and green eyes. Reaching the last step she looked down at the boys wrinkling her nose with disgust.

"Mom's going to wring your necks if she sees you like this."

"What? You going to tell on us?" one of the boys asked.

"Like I'd have to. You're making so much noise a deaf person could hear you," she snorted. "You two better calm down before she gets here. Oh. Hello?"

The girl turned sniffing the air. She gazed in Opal's direction but there seemed something odd about it. The girl didn't quite look her in the eyes and seemed to look through her. It was several moments before the Prescott matriarch realized the girl was in fact blind.

"This is Madam Opal Prescott," Duncan introduced. "She's your father's mother."

"Oh cool," the girl stepped down and came forward. "It's very nice to meet you. I'm Alexis and Tweedledee and Tweedledum over there are my brothers: Theo and Sean. How would you like us to address you? I suppose Grandma is too informal right? Should we just go with Missus Prescott for now?"

Opal opened her mouth and snapped it closed as her gaze went from the girl to the boys and back again. Did Duncan just imply Silas was their father? Were these three rambunctious children really her grandchildren? How? When? Why hadn't he told her?

"I think we broke her," Theo said when she remained silent.

"Do you, like, need to sit down?" Sean asked.

Opal blinked slowly composing herself, "Forgive me. But...you are Silas's children?"

"We're triplets," Alexis said as if that explained everything. "Sean's the oldest and Theo's the youngest though there really isn't much of an age difference, physically at least. Not that you'd ever notice when they act like this."

Theo and Sean blew raspberries at her. Alexis shrugged as if there was no need to explain more.

"H-how old are you?"

"Almost ten." The trio responded as one.

Ten years? Opal eyes went wide recalling an incident now almost eleven years ago. But that would mean these children were conceived that night. And their mother...

"Can I ask...who is your mother?"

Alexis tilted her head as she considered the request. It was a reasonable question. After a moment she answered, "Avalynn."

"...Avalynn Carlisle?"

"Well she changed her name to Carter before having us...but yeah."

Opal covered her mouth but couldn't disguise her shock. Yes. She recalled the rumors of a scandal which led to the younger Carlisle sister to disappear. At the time Opal was far more concerned with the incident involving Silas she hadn't paid much attention to the gossip and she never connected the two but that meant...

Tears blurred her vision as she gazed at the young lady in front of her. Opal smiled, "Can I hug you?"

"Sure." Alexis smiled.

Shaking Opal stepped forward. She set her hands on Alexis's shoulders before pulling her into a firm hug. Not wanting to make her granddaughter uncomfortable she stepped back and said, "You look just like your mother."

"You know mom?"

"I saw her play once. It was at the All Boroughs Music Competition. She was ten or eleven, I think, and absolutely brilliant."

Alexis smiled pleased the woman in front of her remembered. Opal gently held her face stroking Alexis's cheeks as she studied her. Taking a breath she looked at the boys watching them.

"And you two look just like your father. Please call me Grandma. Nothing would make me happier."

"Sure," Sean said.

"No problem Grandma-O," Theo agreed.

Opal smiled still hardly believing what was in front of her. Silas had a lot of explaining to do but she couldn't be mad anymore. Sighing she said, "I have to talk with that father of yours so...you three be good and no more of...that."

Alexis snorted. Her brothers chuckled but agreed. It certainly wasn't their intention to worry people needlessly. Opal nodded, satisfied, before she reluctantly took her leave and headed for the office.

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"How about the Midtown Holiday Gala?" Thomas suggested.

"No. Too small."

"Then what about Soho's Christmas Tree Lighting?"

"No. It won't be good for her to be exposed to that much cold air."

"Okay. The Tribeca Gift Exchange?"

"Absolutely not."

Thomas sighed out of frustration. This had been going on for the last thirty minutes. No sooner had Silas finally sat down in his office to work he demanded Thomas to sort through his various invitations and pick out a suitable holiday party to attend.

"I don't think it really matters which one you attend," Thomas argued. "Your presence alone will elevate any party."

"This isn't about me. This will be Ava's first appearance in ten years. Everything has to be perfect for her."

"Amen."

The pair suddenly stiffened as Opal stepped into the room and seated herself in a chair across from her son as Thomas stood.

"Ma'am, would you like coffee..."

"No. I won't be here long," Opal studied her son closely. He didn't often work from home but he certainly looked more relaxed in casual clothes. There was a slight blush to his cheeks no doubt brought on by the mention of the young woman she had yet to meet. "I'll have you know I just saw my grandchildren."

Silas sucked in a breath.

"The boys almost broke their necks tobogganing down the stairs."

"Thomas," Silas ran his fingers through his hair.

"Confiscate their sleds," Thomas nodded before departing.

"Mom..."

"How is Ava? Is she all right? It can't be easy raising three children alone. How did she manage? What was she doing at that hotel?"

Silas leaned back. Leave it to his mother to already put the pieces together. After a moment he started at the beginning telling the story as it had been told to him before eventually moving on to how he first discovered the children and what their lives have been like. Opal remained silent growing pale as she learned what her grandchildren and their mother endured. Silas finished with Emerson's courtroom fiasco.

"Oh my god," Opal shook her head. "How is Ava really?"

"She's...recovering. She's still much too thin but she's gotten some color back. She's sleeping and eating better. But...she's scarred after how her father treated her. It goes beyond just disowning her. I think she endured a lot of verbal and emotional abuse growing up."

"I wouldn't put it past that man," Opal scowled. "Trying to frame his daughter for drug abuse, really. But there is something you're not telling me. What is it?"

"Something Lexi said. She said I broke Ava's heart. That she had a crush on me and when I dismissed her like I did...it broke her."

"Guilt is not going to help you, or her."

"I am aware."

"But she still said yes."

"She did." Silas's lips twitched with a smile.

Opal chuckled, "You loved her for such a long time, ever since you saw her at the music competition. I still remember that day. You were so frustrated with your father I invited you along so you could relax. It must have been fate when you saw her play for the first time. You looked right at me and said, That's the girl I'm going to marry."

Silas nodded. He remembered.

"Your father is in for quite a surprise. You know he planned for you to marry Jenna."

Silas snorted, "She's nothing compared to Ava."

"I won't argue that. There's something about her that rubs me the wrong way but she can do no wrong in your father's eyes."

"It doesn't matter. I'm going to marry Ava."

Opal nodded. His eyes held the same look of determination as they did some two decades ago. Silas had a stubborn streak a mile wide and more than enough to match his fathers. Regardless of her husband's plans Silas had his own.

"In that case, how about Greenwich Holiday Charity Gala?"

Silas raised a brow at her suggestion.

"It has a high profile but it's not terribly large so Ava shouldn't feel overwhelmed and you can introduce her. Are you bringing the kids?"

"Introducing Ava as my fiancée is sure to cause quite the uproar. The kids will be like dropping a bomb."

"You're not wrong. You'll have to do it eventually but I agree Ava should have her own time in the spotlight," Opal nodded.

A knock interrupted them as Duncan pushed open the door and entered with a tray laden with coffee and cups. He brought it to the table saying, "Refreshments for you both."

"Thank you Duncan but I really must go. It took me time to track down this wayward son of mine."

Silas grimaced.

"Maybe next time he'll answer my calls and we can avoid the game of hide and seek."

"Yes mother."

Opal chuckled. It wasn't like Silas to ignore her in the first place so she had known something was going on. But even she hadn't expected to find three grandchildren waiting for her.

"Can I see her before I go?"

"Duncan, where is Ava?"

"Miss Ava is in the study."

With a nod Silas stood as did his mother. The pair went in search of her. They found Ava curled up in a chair reading The Manchineal Scheme by Rosemary Thomas. So engrossed in the book she didn't notice their entry.

"That's a good one," Opal said startling her. "I heard the author lived in Paris six months studying photography and French cuisine before writing that."

Wide-eyed Ava hurriedly stood. She wore leggings with a large, oatmeal-colored sweater. Despite instructing Duncan to raise the house's temperature she still caught occasional chills so Silas wasn't surprised to see she also had a blanket.

"...Um. Hello," Ava nervously greeted.

"Hello my dear," Opal immediately stepped forward taking her hand in her own. "You'll have to pardon my rude son for not introducing me sooner."

"Son?" Ava glanced at Silas and back again. "Y-you're..."

"Opal, your soon-to-be mother-in-law," she smiled. "I saw the kids when I got here. I'm so happy you are all finally here and safe."

"You are?"

"Oh yes. Silas has loved you for so long." Opal smoothed her hair as if comforting a child.

It took her only a moment to confirm Silas's fears. Ava had indeed suffered abuse, persistent and pervasive. Opal couldn't imagine the strength it took her to come this far on her own but she wouldn't be alone anymore.

"I'm so happy he finally found you."

Ava blushed.

"If you need anything just ask me. I'll give you my number," Opal took out her phone. "Don't hesitate to call all right?"

"O-okay. That's nice of you but I don't have a phone."

"You don't? Silas what have you been doing these past weeks?" Opal turned on him.

"Well I was planning to make it a Christmas surprise," he fidgeted under his mother's scrutiny.

"Really, men," Opal huffed. "You better make sure my number is programmed into it."

"Yes ma'am."

Ava smiled offering a laugh at how meek Silas became around his mother. Despite her attempts to control it she still drew their attention. Opal warmly grinned and Silas smiled broadly happy to see her joy even at the cost of his own dignity.

"You are so pretty when you smile," Opal said and Ava blushed again. "Don't be afraid to crack the whip when my son gets out of line, all right?"

"But I..."

"There is one truth in this world that has been in place since the beginning my dear: men may think they rule the world, but women rule over men. Don't forget that."