

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



"So what's this about?" Theo asked as he and his brother flopped on one of the couches in the living room.

Alexis was ensconced on the other while their mother nervously stood by her. It had been two days since their grandmother swept in and they had suddenly been asked to join Silas in the living room. They were all a little apprehensive since it was the first time he summoned them since their arrival. Leaving them for a few minutes Silas returned with Thomas carrying several identical boxes. Thomas handed the boys each a box while Silas delivered one each to Alexis and Ava.

"What's this?" Sean asked.

"According to your grandmother I shouldn't be so slow about certain things," Silas said. "So these are early Christmas gifts."

"Whoa! Cool!" Theo exclaimed opening his box to reveal the latest iPhone™.

"Awesome!" Sean opened his taking out the phone and immediately turned it on to browse its functions.

Alexis opened her box taking out the phone. Her fingers found the power button and an electric voice said, "Phone is on. Battery full. Voice notification and Talkback options on."

"Whoa."

"I made sure they set the accessibility options for you," Silas explained.

"Thanks," Alexis smiled. It would make using it far simpler.

"Go on," Silas slipped his arm around Ava's waist and held her close as she finally opened the box to see a fourth phone.

All were identical aside from the cases. Ava's was a silvery pink while Sean's was blue, Theo's green and Alexis's glittery white. All had a smooth finish except for Alexis's phone which was roughly textured.

"All the phones are already programmed with each other's numbers, mine, your grandmothers, Thomas and Tracy's. You can add others as you see fit."

"Nice," Theo said already settled into a game.

"Silas, why?" Ava looked at him clutching the box.

"Because you deserve it," He kissed her temple. "Because mom is always right. Because I want to and I want you to be able to reach me whenever you need me."

He hugged her tighter.

"But..."

"Ava don't say no to the things I can give you, that I want to give you," Silas pleaded. "I want to take care of you Ava and I want you to have everything you deserve. I just hope that includes me."

Blushing she leaned against him. She wanted to tell him it was unnecessary but she knew he would still insist. It felt nice that he cared. Her father refused to allow her own phone saying she could use the servant's phone in the kitchen. She had expected nothing more here and was surprised when he let her use the office while preparing for court.

"And don't be afraid to ask Duncan for anything if I'm not here," Silas said. "He's an excellent chauffeur and I'm going to keep your security teams around for the time being so they can escort you."

"Security teams? Why?"

"Because of your father," Silas said. "He's not done. I'm not sure what he'll try next. I have to keep you and the kids safe."

Ava's eyes widened. Had she been too naïve to think it was over with the end of the court hearing? Would her father really try something else now?

"Don't worry. I'll keep you safe," Silas assured her. "I've never let that old man take anything that belonged to me and I won't start now."

Ava shivered at the intensity of his gaze but she felt comforted. No one had ever taken her side especially not against her father. It felt good. She leaned into him accepting his embrace and its comfort.

While their parents embraced Sean and Theo shared a look before gazing at their sister. Alexis sat with a pensive expression. As if feeling her brothers' gazes she nodded. Their father wasn't wrong. Taking care of their grandfather was their top priority.

"Today we'll go shopping," Silas announced.

"For what?" Ava asked.

"For a dress. Next week is the Greenwich Charity Gala. It's the perfect place to introduce my fiancée to New York."

"Me?"

"Of course. The more people who know you're mine the safer you'll be." Silas stroked her cheek. "Will you go with me?"

Ava didn't trust her voice but nodded.

"Good." He kissed her.

"Maybe we shouldn't go shopping," Alexis said, "at least not with you."

"Why is that?" Silas asked.

"What I mean is we should call Auntie Tracy and go shopping with her," Alexis said. "Wouldn't it be better to be surprised by mom's dress?"

"Lexi..."

Thomas smiled knowing how much Silas had been looking forward to seeing Ava try on dresses.

"You have to work anyway, right?" Alexis asked knowing he had been spending most of his time with them while working from home but that would not last forever and there were certain things he couldn't get done without going to the office.

Thomas almost snorted trying to hold back his laugh. Silas shot him an annoyed look but there was no denying Alexis had a point. He sighed. This time he would accept defeat, this time.

"Well I was going to save this but..."

Silas took out his wallet and handed a small card to Ava. She hesitantly accepted staring at it in shock. It was a gold credit card with her name on it.

"Silas?"

"It's yours. Use it to go shopping but you better buy at least five dresses."

"But..."

"You hear that Lexi, boys. No less than five dresses."

"You got it," Sean readily agreed.

"Plus matching shoes and accessories," Alexis added.

"Lexi!"

"Absolutely," Silas agreed.

"Silas."

"Five dresses with matching shoes, clutches and whatever accessories are needed," Silas said, "but I'll handle the jewelry myself. Thomas will arrange your security."

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Ava waited near the shopping center entrance. Sean was still playing with his phone's functions while Theo played on an app. Only Alexis was paying attention to what was going on around them but that might have been more a consequence of her blindness since her new phone didn't have quite the same appeal as it did for her brothers. She stood close to her mother offering support as Ava kept nervously glancing at the four security members Thomas arranged. For simplicity he chose the same men originally sent to watch them.

"Ava!"

They turned at the familiar voice as Tracy hurried up to them. Even before Ava could offer greeting Tracy enveloped her in a firm hug then stepped back to get a good look at her friend. Over the years Tracy watched Ava slowly succumb to the pressures of raising three children alone. She lost a lot of weight and grown paler. Her once shiny, brunette hair became dull and stringy, her clothing was old and usually several sizes too large.

After only a month it was amazing how drastically she changed. Her clothing was new and better fitted to her petite frame. The dark rings under her eyes had faded and her skin had a healthy flush to it. Her hair had regained its natural sheen and body. But most importantly she had regained a good portion of the weight she lost.

Tracy noticed some of the changes during the preparation for the trial but now Ava had developed a healthy glow and her eyes were even getting back their luster. It was like the last ten years were melting away leaving a young and vibrant woman behind.

"Ava, oh my god! You look fantastic!"

"You think so?" Ava self-consciously tugged at the red coat Silas bought her.

"Yes! You look great!"

"Well, I feel much better. I've been getting a lot more sleep and I haven't worked at all. All I do is laze around and eat. It's no wonder I gained so much weight."

"No! You look fantastic! You were way too thin before and you're practically glowing!"

"Really?" Ava blushed.

"Absolutely. I guess Mister Scary Prescott isn't so bad after all. I'm glad he's treating you well," Tracy sighed relief. Even after her conversation with Silas she worried for Ava's well-being but it seemed unfounded now. At her comment about their boss the security team fought to contain their laughter drawing Tracy's attention. "And you are?"

"Oh Auntie Tracy this is the goon squad," Alexis introduced. "Mister Peppermint is Mike. Old Spice is Don. Smoky is Jake and Lilac is Matthew. He's the only one with a girlfriend."

"H-how did you know that?" Matthew stuttered. He hadn't even told his partner about his new girl.

"Because lilac is not a scent men choose for themselves," Alexis said. "At least not cis men like you four. And your friends have almost no hope of getting a woman for themselves...except maybe Don."

"And why is that?" Jake asked.

"FYI, woman nowadays don't like a man who smells like a smokestack," Alexis explained. "They also don't like men who drink to excess. That's you Mister Peppermint. The aftershave does not hide it. One the other hand as far as masculine scents go a lot of woman like Old Spice...so there you go."

The four men shared sheepish glances while Tracy snickered at her niece's candor. Alexis had always been blunt when delivering facts which was often off-putting for those not prepared for it.

"Lexi that is not very nice," Ava admonished before looking at her friend, "and you are not helping."

Tracy cleared her throat, "I can't help it. That was amazing. If I had half of Lexi's observational skills I'd be the best lawyer in the country."

Alexis shrugged. It really wasn't anything special as far as she was concerned.

"So what are we shopping for?" Tracy asked.

"A dress. Silas wants to take me to a Christmas party."

"Oh? Which one?"

"Oh...um..."

"The Greenwich Charity Gala," Alexis easily supplied.

"I'm going to that one too!" Tracy smiled. As far as upscale parties went the Charity Gala was one of the smaller ones and not as exclusive with their guest list allowing people from multiple social standings mingle.

"You are?" Ava asked visibly relaxing. At the very least she would know one person. The thought of attending the event wasn't quite so daunting now.

"So you need a dress. Is that it?"

"Yes."

"Mom, he said to buy at least five dresses with matching shoes and accessories," Alexis reminded. "He plans on buying her jewelry himself."

"Lexi."

"Oh good. I was worried he was trying to be cheap but that makes sense." Tracy nodded.

"I don't need five dresses."

"Ava you've been gone a long time so you may have forgotten how judgmental and conniving these people are. You won't be able to get away with wearing the same dress over and over again. So unless you want to go shopping every time you plan on going out then getting several now is just smart."

"I suppose," Ava frowned. She was used to shopping frugally. In fact she couldn't remember not having a budget. Even growing up her father had been a stickler for controlling obscene spending though there always seemed to be plenty for Marilyn to use.

"So how are we paying?" Tracy asked. "What's the budget?"

"Mom got a gold card, no limit," Sean answered.

"No limit? Seriously?"

"I heard our father say it himself."

Tracy raised a brow at the casual way Sean referred to Silas. It was clear the kids still held reservations but they were willing to work with him. Silas had a lot of catching up to do to earn his place. Even so it was a promising sign this estranged family could knit itself back together.

It gave Tracy hope. Her chief concern was Ava and the kids' safety and wellbeing. As long as Silas lived up to his promises she would encourage Ava to reconcile with him.

"Well then...let's hit the dress shop!" Tracy announced hooking Ava's arm.

Ave grasped Alexis as Tracy herded them on. She had a sinking feeling this trip was not going to be any easier than the last. Though Tracy was a familiar presence she was no less overbearing than Silas in her own way.