

The Billionaire's Twins Play Matchmaker Book Two: Chapter Thirty



Emerson slumped in his chair drinking deeply from his scotch glass. Leaning forward he refilled it from the crystal decanter on his desk. It was already half gone and he showed no signs of slowing down. Ever since the courtroom debacle he urged his lawyer to find another way to claim the kids, or at least the girl, but his lawyer was drowning in litigation due to charges levied against him for presenting false testimony and interfering with a police investigation.

His lawyer urged him to give up on this matter before he lost anymore face. Luckily they had been in such a hurry to call the hearing they avoided a public trial. If he continued to push the issue however it was guaranteed Prescott would not allow the matter to remain private.

Silas Prescott. The name was virtually a curse. His predecessor, Richard Prescott, had been bad enough as a business rival but the Prescott patriarch understood there were limits. Business and personal were kept separate and they did not let their families interact. But Silas had come in like a snake snatching away one of his daughters, turning her against her own father.

Emerson still couldn't believe his obedient Ava would turn her back on him. Did he not teach her how to act? Did she not realize how much she was embarrassing him? And the children...

He still recalled their faces as they sat in the courtroom. They boldly glared at him as if he was an insect. It was clear they had not been raised properly to disrespect their grandfather like that. The boys held no interest to him but he couldn't tolerate their impertinence and the girl wouldn't even look at her grandfather as if he wasn't worth her time.

The fact Ava let the matter go to trial was proof she wasn't raising her children properly but even he hadn't imagined Silas Prescott was behind her rebellion. His mind went back to that night ten years ago when Marilynn loudly declared her sister was a ruined woman and the shame of the family. Emerson had reacted well within the normal expected outrage astonished Ava would harm her family's reputation.

He remembered she tried to protest saying she had been drugged and it was just a mistake but he hadn't wanted to listen. He threw her out like the trash she was...but what if she had been drugged? Was that how Silas ensnared her? If that was the case why didn't Marilynn tell him sooner? If she witnessed it why hadn't she stopped it?

His drunken mind was grasping at straws to explain what had happened all those years ago. But if it had been Silas why was Ava living in squalor? Did he abandon her after he ruined her? Why did he suddenly want her back now and why was she willing to stay with him?

Emerson's lawyer managed to procure a copy of the parental rights Silas filed claiming the kids as his own and amending their birth certificates to reflect it as well as the paternity test proving it. Everything had been done through official channels and by reputable doctors. Silas left nothing to chance ensuring his claim on the children was legal and binding. But why? Why did he care about them at all? And why propose to Ava after all of these years?

Silas Prescott was young, in his prime. Some people might want him to produce an heir but no one truly had a reason to pressure him yet. There was no reason to propose to Ava or claim the children especially as she hadn't revealed him as the father even on their birth certificates. It was the perfect opportunity to simply deny them and walked away. Then why?

None of it made sense to Emerson as he downed another drink. Though he kept the news from Grace and Marilynn they still saw and felt his surly mood. Marilynn had been getting more irritable in response and had been arguing more. Emerson couldn't stand back talk and he had even slapped her just to silence her. The shock that crossed her face was palpable but he was too drunk to care. He had never raised a hand to his children before and her expression made it clear she hadn't expected it. Perhaps if he had done it sooner his daughters would not embarrass him so.

Grace had gone to one of her charity events Emerson was all too glad to miss but Marilynn had been dragged along. Ten years ago it would have been Ava who accompanied their mother but it now fell onto Marilynn. He hadn't expected much from their outing but they returned early with an unbelievable story.

Silas Prescott attended the event with his fiancée and incredibly it was Ava. According to Grace she looked beautiful and they spent most of the night in each other's arms. Grace had always thought Silas was stern and unapproachable but with Ava he was tender and gentle. Ava, she claimed, looked happy and was practically glowing. But she was also distant. She barely showed any recognition when she met her mother face to face and barely acknowledged her.

Marilynn remained silent the entire time her mother described the night which Emerson thought out of character. Marilynn hated not being the center of attention but he was too furious to question her. Just how far was Ava prepared to embarrass her family? Did her shamelessness know no limits?

The computer alerted him to a new update. Emerson glanced at it briefly as if suddenly remembering it was there. He had been working from home as of late to avoid appearing in public with a hangover. With a grunt he leaned forward and opened the waiting message. It wasn't what he expected.

It was from a program his IT department created allowing him to monitor articles published about Marilynn in his crusade to end her bad press. However this one wasn't about her latest party binge. The headline alone made him set his drink down.

Scandal Rocks Carlisle Household

For years Emerson Carlisle has reigned supreme in New York. While others have claimed he is getting too old and whisper his time is over it is an unfortunate truth he has no heirs to entrust his business empire to. Unlike Augustus DaLair whose two sons who have largely taken over for their father and even Alice Stanton, the first matriarch of business, has finally stepped down handing the reins to her grandson Emerson Carlisle has no such options.

His beloved daughter is far too busy partying to even maintain a relationship let alone the discipline to run a Fortune 500 company. It can be no surprise Emerson Carlisle is growing desperate in his deteriorating old age. It's truly a pity his own family has conspired against him.

According to sources close to the family, on four separate occasions Marilynn Carlisle has sought medication to terminate pregnancies resulting from her numerous affairs. With such a daughter it can be no surprise the Carlisle family is soon to follow the Trents and Tomlinsons who are merely footnotes in New York social circles.

Screaming in rage Emerson leapt to his feet throwing his glass across the room. The crystal shattered on impact but he hardly noticed. This article couldn't be true. There was no way Marilynn would do such a thing to him. Seething he reached for his phone and impatiently waited for an answer.

"Mister Carlisle?"

"Doctor Peterson. I want him brought to me immediately. No need to be gentle."

"Yes sir."

Emerson tossed his phone aside and grasped the scotch decanter. He would get to the bottom of this one way or another and god help anyone who betrayed him.

* * *

Robert Peterson was a tall man but not overly intimidating as he was also very thin. So much so it was a wonder a strong wind did not blow him over. Because of that when the two men came to his house and roused him from sleep he did not protest following them meekly to his employer's home. Now he sat looking rather dignified despite his three guards. Far more terrifying than them was the man in front of him.

Emerson Carlisle was not a man to be taken lightly and though Robert stood nearly a foot taller than his employer his made no attempt to appear threatening. He eyed the empty decanter on the desk knowing Emerson was a rather violent drunk so caution was necessary.

Emerson glared at the man in front of him at first unable to put his rage into words but he wouldn't get answers until he asked his questions. Taking a sip from his whiskey, having run out of scotch, Emerson spoke in a voice far too calm for anyone's good. "How long have you been helping my daughter deceive me?"

"I'm not sure what you..."

"I'm talking about giving her medication and covering up her affairs!"

Robert sighed. It came as no great surprise this was the reason for his late summons. In fact he had a feeling this day would. He wasn't as naïve as Marilynn who believed it could last forever. It just took longer than he imagined.

"Seven years," Robert said, "that's when I helped her terminate the first pregnancy although I've prescribed her birth control pills since she was sixteen."

The glass almost slipped from Emerson's hand as he stared at him, "What?"

"Marilynn convinced your wife her period cycles were too erratic and painful on their own and wanted birth control to regulate them which is not uncommon. She refused an actual examination but there was no reason not to prescribe the pills so I did. Seven years ago when she came to me about the termination I asked how it was possible since she was abstinent and she laughed in my face like a banshee. According to her she's been engaging in sexual activity since she was sixteen which was the real reason she wanted the pills in the first place."

"That's a lie. She would never..."

"Your daughter is as ruthless as you and that is far from her most horrendous act under your roof."

"Excuse me?" Emerson's face was red and his livid tone indicated the need for caution.

"You honestly think that Ava fell down the stairs and walked into doorknobs because she was clumsy?" Robert challenged. "A broken arm and a concussion don't happen accidentally. No. Marilynn pushed her down those stairs in fact she's been trying to kill her sister for years! I'm surprised Ava even made it to graduation."

"That...that's not possible."

"That your beloved daughter is capable of murder? Are you really that surprised?"

"Y-you kept this from me?"

"Ashamed as I am to admit it...I valued my job more than that little girl's life. And I wasn't the only one. The first time it happened I tried to talk to your wife and all she asked was how long it would be before Ava could play the piano again. Ava herself knew there was no point to telling you the truth. She told me to forget about it. As many people as you have working here you think there aren't any witnesses? But not a single one tried to protect that little girl. No one!"

Emerson's face was beet red in rage he leapt to his feet screaming, "Out! Get out of here now! Never show your face to me again!"

"Gladly." Robert stood and exited as quietly and meekly as he entered. He left lighter having finally spoken the truth he long concealed but knew he would find no absolution. Only Ava could give that but he didn't dare face her.

Emerson stared after the doctor seething. His hand gaze took in the men who brought the man to him demanding, "Did you know? Did you betray me as well?"

"We don't think of it as betrayal," Dante, his long considered right hand, answered.

"What?"

"We all knew Marilynn was your favored daughter. You would never believe anyone's word against hers and it would be suicide to say anything against her. There is no one in this house who would dare. No one would risk their job to help Ava. Ava knew that. This was Marilynn's home...Ava was just allowed to live here."

Emerson grasped the decanter flinging it in rage. It flew past Dante's ear to shatter on the wall behind but the security officer didn't even flinch. Like the doctor he felt a certain lightness for having spoken the truth but it wasn't absolution. There was no forgiveness for someone who hadn't tried to protect an innocent girl.

"You can rage all you want, sir, but you proved our point ten years ago when you tossed Ava out. You didn't allow her to explain what happened. You still don't know the truth," Dante said with no trace of remorse. "Ten years later you find her working as a waitress with three kids apparently fathered by your greatest rival...a man who hasn't been supporting them at all as if he himself didn't know...but now they are living with him and seem quite happy. Why? How is any of that possible? You don't have a clue, do you?"

Emerson's face twitched involuntary at the accusations. It was true. He didn't know. Apparently he didn't know the first thing about either of his children.

"You don't know because you never asked. You summoned Ava to you but it wasn't for the truth. You just wanted to brow beat her into signing custody papers for a granddaughter you knew nothing about. It's obvious those kids love their mother. Do you really think any of them would ever side with you against her? No. And that's the truth you don't want to face."

"Get out...I said GET OUT!"