

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



"Almost done mom. Don't move." Alexis instructed as she carefully braided her mother's hair in the half-up style she preferred. The braids added a bit of texture and style so it was less plain. "There, what do you think?"

Ava turned looking at her reflection. Alexis had done a braid on either side combining them into one behind her head. Despite the fact it had all been done by feel the braids were remarkably uniform and even.

"Lexi, that's amazing. I have no idea how you learned to do that."

Alexis shrugged. She like using her hands and fiddling with her friends' hair was a natural diversion. It really wasn't worthy of praise.

"Okay." Ava stood and faced the bed where Sean and Theo played on their phones. "Boys, how do I look?"

"Wow! Mom you look hot!" Theo whistled.

"You look really pretty," Sean seconded as their mother blushed.

"You think so?"

A knock interrupted further discussion. The door swung open as Silas entered. He had carried on his own preparations in their room while Ava used Alexis's bath and bedroom. The kids insisted he should be surprised when he first saw her in her dress. Stepping into the room Silas froze as his gaze fell on her. His eyes went wide and his mouth dropped.

Ava stood in a sparkling silver gown that hugged her slim, curvy form. She wore matching shoes that peeked out from under the dress's hem. It had a sweet-heart neckline and thin shoulder straps.

The triplets had debated between the five gowns before picking the one she should wear. Theo originally voiced support for a red dress but Sean was quick to point out a lot of people would choose red since it was a holiday color. A gold dress was shot down for the same reason. It had ultimately been Alexis who suggest the silver one. While a lot of people would choose white for the same reason as many would choose red, silver was more unique and their mother would stand out among the crowd.

As Silas stood staring without saying a word Ava grew nervous. She rubbed her hands and anxiously asked, "Is this okay?"

Silas blinked coming back to himself. Crossing the room he reached her taking her hands in his and said, "You look absolutely amazing."

She blushed as he kissed her hands. Tracy and the kids often told her she was pretty but it felt different when he said it. Perhaps it was the passionate gleam of his eyes that made it so.

"I have something for you."

Silas took a hinged case from his pocket. Opening it he revealed a rose gold necklace. The pendant featured two hearts mimicking the infinity symbol and at the point of each heart was a sparkling diamond. Though simple in design it was stunning and Ava's heart skipped a beat. Was it really for her? Was it okay to wear it?

"Let me put it on you." Silas smiled pleased by her reaction.

Ava remained speechless as he stepped behind her and clasped the necklace. His arms slid around her waist as she looked at their reflection.

"I knew it would look beautiful on you."

"Thank you...You didn't have to get me this."

"It's just a small token of what you mean to me, Ava. Don't say no to that."

"All right."

"Good." Silas kissed her temple holding her against him. He wanted nothing more than to shower her with such gifts but knew it would be too overwhelming for her.

"If you're going to play kissy-face here you're going to miss the party," Theo commented reminding the adults they had an audience.

"Theo!" Ava exclaimed blushing.

Silas chuckled, "He's not wrong. Shall we?"

"...Okay."

Ava hesitated but allowed him to lead her to the front door. The kids trailed behind as far as the stairs and watched as Duncan helped their mother put on another of her new coats, this one a beige, trench coat style that would keep her warm even in her gown.

Silas pulled on his own coat looking at the kids, "If you three need anything don't hesitate to call on Duncan. All right?"

"Yep."

"No problem."

"Sure."

Ava walked up to them giving each a nervous kiss. This was the first time she ever left them at home while she went out. A few weeks ago she would never have even considered it, "Don't stay up too late and don't cause trouble."

"Of course, mom."

"Promise."

"Got it."

Ava stepped back still nervous even as Silas's arm came around her and he led her into the chilly night.

"Have fun!"

"Don't worry about us."

"We'll be fine!"

Outside Thomas waited beside the small limo only a little larger than a sedan. He opened the door and held it as Silas helped Ava safely inside. Then both men circled to the other side to climb in themselves. As Thomas pulled away from the curb Ava tried to relax. She told herself tonight was nothing special but she couldn't make herself believe it. What if she didn't perform to Silas's expectations? Would he abandon her?

Seeing her nervousness Silas reached for her clasping her hand in his. With a smile he kissed her knuckle beside her engagement ring before saying, "You have nothing to worry about. I'll be with you the entire time and the moment you feel uncomfortable we'll go."

"Won't it reflect poorly if we leave early?"

"Not at all. We don't have to cater to anyone Ava but rest assured they will cater to us just to keep us here because the longer we stay the more prestigious their party becomes."

"Really?"

"Yes but my first priority is you. Now and forever."

Ava blushed and nodded not trusting her voice. It felt good to be someone's priority, like she was truly special. Perhaps in Silas's eyes she was someone special. Why else would he care so much or do such nice things for her?

In the past, her days never seemed to end and her worries followed her home. Ava's biggest fear was Silas finding her that was why she went to such great lengths to remain hidden as she struggled to care for her children.

Yet since Silas found them he acted the exact opposite of what she assumed. He doted on her and the kids, taking them shopping, sheltering them in his home. Ava knew the kids were on the fence about him but they accepted every gift. Caring for the children would have been enough but he catered to her as well. He insisted she rest, eat and relax. He bought her clothes and his lovemaking was tender and seemingly insatiable.

It was almost too much for her to bear but she was certainly getting more rest. When she lay in his arms sleep came easily and she didn't toss and turn like she used to. Anxiety induced nightmares were long forgotten and she woke refreshed for another day.

He wanted her to do whatever she wished. If she wanted to work he encouraged her to pursue her dreams. Never once did he say she wasn't worthy of his time or attention. Instead he insisted she deserved it all. Her comfort was the most important thing to him. It was all so new to her. Was it wrong to want it to last forever?

The ride was mercifully short and she avoided further introspection. Reaching their destination Thomas pulled up at the curb and hurriedly opened her door before the valet. Silas let himself out and was there to take her hand leading her inside out of the cold. Thomas accepted the valet's ticket and trailed after them. At the door they checked their coats letting Thomas handle the necessity of keeping the tickets before entering the main room of the venue.

Here they found a large open space decorated with holiday lights, garlands and poinsettias. A large Christmas tree stood in the center surrounded by colorfully wrapped packages and Ava wondered if they were actually presents or just empty décor staging. There were several seating areas with comfortable furniture as well as tables for people to gather and converse.

It was still early so there were barely a hundred people present. Some had small plates of hors d'oeuvre taken from the buffet style tables or plucked from the serving trays being offered by the caterers. There was also a bar as well as servers offering champagne. Even before they were greeted by the host one such server approached allowing Silas to select two flutes of sparkling champagne. He offered her one gently clanking their glasses before taking a sip.

"Ah Mister Prescott! I'm so glad you decided to join us," their host, a middle-age rather portly, gentleman greeted.

The man had a thick beard which was ironic since he was also balding. He wore a clean suit but it was not quite as fine as his guests suggesting he didn't have the same disposable income despite being the event's sponsor. If Ava remembered correctly from her youth accompanying her mother the Greenwich Charity Gala was sponsored by a health organization and its proceeds were donated to various charities which changed year from year.

"Of course, all for a good cause," Silas amicably shook his hand.

"Indeed. Oh, pardon me miss. You are?" the man turned to Ava.

"My fiancée," Silas answered slipping an arm around her. "Avalynn Carter."

Ava blushed but she smiled at their host, "Hello. I love how you decorated for the holidays."

"Y-yes. Thank you." The man stuttered surprised by Silas's bold announcement.

Ava could practically see his wheels turning. No doubt Silas's introduction was a shock as he was known as New York's most eligible bachelor. Though she disappeared ten years ago her name had once been well-known. She wondered if he was trying to retrieve it now.

"Please, enjoy yourselves."

"We intend to." Silas escorted Ava further in.

Silas did not have any particular area of interest in mind and saw no need to seek company. People would seek him out once they realized he was in attendance. He merely had to wait for them to do so. Until then he was content to enjoy Ava's company. She was the only person there who mattered and he wanted to give her time to get used to being among peers again.

Finally he settled for a relatively quiet area near the tree. Ava's gaze studied the eight-foot pine marveling at the delicate ornaments. Seeing her joy Silas made a mental note to have Duncan purchase a tree and bring the decorations out from storage. Normally Silas wasn't one to decorate for the holidays but now that Ava and the kids were with him it made sense to add homier touches. In fact it would be even better to allow Ava full rein to decorate as she pleased.

"Ava, would you like to decorate the brownstone?"

"Y-you want me to decorate?" she looked at him.

"Yes. My mother was the one who originally decorated it and I haven't had a need to change it but it could stand for some updating. I want you and the kids to feel comfortable so don't be afraid to change it. Just tell Duncan what you want. He can get painters, even a construction crew if you want to do any major renovations."

"I don't think that would be necessary."

"I do. Make it however you want," Silas insisted. "It's your home and my mother always said men might be kings of their castle but women rule the roost."

Ava chuckled. She had no doubt Opal would say such a thing. Setting aside their brief meeting at the brownstone Ava had actually met the Prescott matriarch once before. While accompanying her mother to various functions they had been introduced to Opal and there was no doubting the natural charisma the latter possessed especially compared to Ava's mother who tended to be quiet and meek.

"I think your mother is very tasteful. I can see her influence in the brownstone's décor. I wouldn't want to do anything dramatic...but maybe one or two small changes."

"Anything," Silas smiled sensing her respect for his mother. He pulled her close and kissed her. "No budget necessary. Just tell Duncan what you want."

"Thank you." Ava leaned against him. "Does that include your bedroom?"

"Our bedroom and yes, especially that room. Anything make you uncomfortable?"

"No. It's just...a little dark." She blushed.

Silas chuckled, "Change it anyway you want."

"There you are!"

Startled Ava turned as Tracy approached. She had forgotten Tracy was also attending the event. Tracy wore a navy blue gown, strapless and shorter than Ava's showing her toned legs. Given Tracy was almost head taller than Ava she had plenty of leg to show off.

"Hello," Ava smiled.

"You look gorgeous, Ava. I mean it."

Ava blushed.

"I agree." Silas nodded causing her blush to deepen.

"Well I'm sure you'd like to keep her to yourself but she should make a few rounds. I have the perfect people to start. So if you don't mind..."

"Of course not, as long as she's comfortable with it." He leaned forward and kissed Ava gently. "Have fun and if anything happens call for me."

"Come on, Ava."

Tracy tugged her away from Silas's protective embrace. Ava followed her but suddenly paused. Biting her lip she returned to him. Hesitating she reached for him pulling his face toward hers and pecked him lightly on the lips.

Silas blinked surprise. His heart hammered in his head. It was the first time Ava initiated an intimate gesture. He was both shocked and thrilled by her action.

"Thank you," she smiled. "I'll call if I need you."

He could only nod unable to trust his voice. Blushing at her audacity she turned away and followed Tracy. Silas swallowed the lump in his throat trying to control the sudden urge to sweep her off her feet and seek a private room. Was there anything more attractive than a confident woman?

"Looks like someone is whipped," Thomas commented. As always he was near at hand but unobtrusive. He was part of the scenery until needed.

Silas clenched his jaw feeling his face warm but he wasn't particularly embarrassed. Taking a sip of his champagne he said, "Keep a close eye on her and make sure she isn't bothered. I want this night to be perfect for her."

"Naturally."

"Hey Silas!"

He taking as another man approached. A few years younger than Silas he was making waves in the business world for taking over his family's holdings at such a young age.

"Lucas good to see you," Silas nodded. "I heard you're interested in the Tomlinson buyout."

The other man snorted, "That's my grandmother's idea. She's supposed to be retired but she just can't help poking her nose in other people's lives."