Chapter 12

**Scene: MC’s suite. Dining room. Day.**

The next day during breakfast, my butlers are acting somewhat weird.

(Well, weirder than usual.)

Bullet

“Good morning, little miss!”

Bullet greets me with so much enthusiasm and flashes me a wide smile like he’s appearing on a toothpaste commercial.

Bullet

“How’s your sleep last night? Good?”

Bullet

“I made you your favorite chamomile tea.”

Bullet puts the tea in front of me.

MC

“Thank you, Bullet.”

Zachary

“Ah, my lady, I’m so glad you’re up.”

Zachary enters from the pantry.

Zachary

“I’ve had the Chef made you some eggs benedict. You were craving for this the other day.”

MC

“Thank you, Zachary. It’s nice to know that you’re paying attention.”

Zachary

“When it comes to you, my lady, I always take notes.”

Stefan

“Lady [namae], good morning.”

Even Stefan is awfully cheerful this morning.

MC

“Good morning, Stefan.”

I smell something oddly familiar as Stefan approaches.

MC

“Is that—”

Stefan

“Why, yes. It’s croissants from your grandmother’s bakery. I had our provision staff acquire them this morning.”

MC

“Oh, my god! Stefan, thank you!”

I’m so excited to have my usual breakfast again. I take a bite out of it, and it’s like heaven in my taste buds.

Bullet coughs but it sounds oddly enough like the word “cheater” when he did.

MC

“Well, aren’t you guys going to join me?”

Without hesitation, the butlers scramble to sit beside me.

Stefan smoothly sits to my left first, while Bullet and Zachary fights who get to sit on my right.

Bullet

“I was here first. You sit there.”

Zachary

“You sit over there.”

Bullet

“No, you sit over there.”

(?!?)

MC

“All right, that’s enough!”

MC

“What is going on here?”

MC

“Why are you guys acting so weird?”

Bullet

“I think we should tell her.”

MC

“Is this about the thing you wanted to talk to me about last night?”

Stefan breathes deeply as if to gather his courage to finally tell me.

Stefan

“All right, my lady, here’s the thing.”

Stefan

“We think that you’re ready.”

I wait for Stefan to say more and be more specific, but he didn’t so I just give him a confused look.

Zachary

“What Stefan means is that we’ve covered everything you need to know about being a proper lady.”

Zachary

“And that it’s time for you to move up to business school.”

(?!?)

(I’m done with training?)

MC

“But that’s great news!”

I notice the sad look on my butlers’ faces.

MC

“Isn’t that great news?”

MC

“What’s wrong?”

Bullet

“We’ve already informed the Chairman about our evaluation.”

Bullet

“And he’s decided to announce your succession to be the leader of S Group at the shareholders’ meeting a few days from today.”

Stefan

“That means that you will be starting your formal training at the S Group Business School right after that.”

Zachary

“And that marks the day that you will have to part with your butlers.”

(Oh.)

MC

“I didn’t know that. This is the first time I’m hearing about this information.

MC

“All this time I thought you will be with me all throughout business school.”

Bullet

“Business School is a whole different ball game. Butlers are not allowed.”

Stefan

“After four years of business school, you get to return to the estate and be assigned a butler.”

Zachary

“But by that time, we might have already been assigned to a different lady, most likely located outside the country.”

MC

“Well, that’s a bummer.”

(I can’t believe I will have to say good-bye to these three men.)

(They’ve been there for me every step of the way.)

(I hate to part ways with them.)

MC

“Is there any way around it?”

Zachary

“I’m afraid there is none.”

Stefan

“There is some other serious matter that we need to discuss though.”

(This can’t be good.)

Stefan

“We’ve been talking. The three of us. And we’ve come to the conclusion that we all have feelings for you.”

I just sit there waiting to hear more. I feel like I’m in the hot seat right now.

Stefan

“You didn’t exactly commit to any single one of us. And that’s okay.”

Zachary

“But since we’re about to bid each other farewell. We’d like to ask you for one date, one for each, before we part ways.”

I consider the proposal, thinking long and hard about what this arrangement will entail or accomplish.

MC

“To be honest, I am quite confused as to what I’m supposed to feel about the three of you.”

MC

“This is all new to me. I’ve never had to struggle with this kind of feeling before, given our unique situation.”

I look at all three handsome butlers.

(It’s a very unique situation indeed.)

MC

“That being said, I really have no idea how to handle this.”

MC

“But given the difficulties we had to face in the past several days, I think this will be a pleasant reprieve from all that.”

MC

“I believe this will be a great opportunity to make sense of all our feelings.”

Zachary

“That settles it then. We all get to plan a special date for you.”

Bullet

“Thank you for agreeing to this, little miss.”

MC

“Please do bear in mind that this is not a contest. I am not some prize to be won.”

Stefan

“We completely understand, my lady.”

(This is a good decision.)

(Maybe after all this, I can finally choose which one of these guys I want to start a relationship with.)

(And I believe I have my work cut out for me.)

**Scene: Seymour Estate. South lawn. Day.**

The next day, the dating begins. The first date is with Stefan.

He has asked me to meet him at the south lawn of the estate in the late afternoon, and told me to wear something warm.

When I arrive at the south lawn, Stefan is there with a helicopter on standby.

Stefan

“It’s nice to see you, [namae].”

MC

“It’s nice to see you too, Stefan.”

MC

“Where are we going?”

Stefan

“It’s a surprise.”

Stefan takes me on a helicopter ride across the vast Seymour Estate.

I am reminded of the first time I get to see it’s magnificence.

The helicopter flies toward the mountain range to the southwestern part of the estate.

(We’re going to the mountain lodge!)

We land on a large clearing near the huge log house.

The two of us disembark from the chopper and start to hike toward the cabin, Stefan taking my hand.

(This should be interesting.)

**Scene: Mountain lodge. Day.**

By the time we got inside the cabin, it’s already getting dark outside and it’s starting to get cold.

(Good thing I dressed appropriately for the weather.)

(I’m not so sure about the shoes though.)

I am wearing knee-high boots with 3-inch heels.

(These shoes aren’t exactly made for hiking.)

Stefan

“Are you all right, [namae]?”

**Choice: What should I say?**

1. *“My feet are killing me.”*
2. *“I’m all right.”*

**1.**

MC

“My feet are killing me.”

MC

“Wearing these boots is a totally bad idea.”

Stefan

“Here, let me help you.”

Stefan suddenly sweeps me off my feet and carry me in his arms.

(His big, strong arms.)

(Oh, my...)

Stefan carries me across the living room and sets me down on a wingback chair. He takes a footstool and settles my feet on it.

MC

“Oh, thank you.”

**Recombine with main dialogue**

**2.**

MC

“I’m all right. Don’t worry about me.”

I take another step and wince in pain.

MC

“Nope, not all right. I’m not going to pretend anymore.”

I begin limping across the room and Stefan holds me by the arm, assisting me.

I slump into a wingback chair as Stefan puts my feet up on a low stool.

MC

“Thank you.”

**Recombine with main dialogue**

**BACK TO MAIN DIALOGUE**

Stefan

“Let me take this off.”

Stefan proceeds to take off my boots, giving me instant relief. Then he starts to massage my foot.

MC

“That’s nice.”

I can’t help but moan in pleasure as he begins massaging my other foot. Stefan is really good with his hands.

MC

“That’s all better.”

Stefan

“You know, your father spent a lot of his time here.”

MC

“Really?”

Stefan

“Yes. This is his sanctuary. When we were here, he used to tell me stories about your mother Amanda.”

Stefan

“He said that if ever they had a son, they agreed to name him Bradley.”

Stefan

“And if they had a daughter, they would name her [namae].”

I am surprised to hear that, and I smile at the thought.

MC

“He told you that?”

Stefan

“He did. And that’s the reason I believe your mother still loved Master Errol because she named you [namae].”

I stand up and start to walk across the room. Imagining the time my father spent here.

MC

“You know these stories you have about my father never cease to amaze me.”

MC

“Somehow I feel this connection with you because of the bond you have with my father.”

MC

“It’s as if I can still get to know him through you.”

I look outside through the window.

MC

“Thank you for bringing me here, Stefan. I would very much like for this cabin to be sanctuary too.”

Stefan

“This is practically yours if you want it.”

Stefan stands behind me.

Stefan

“You know there’s a pottery workshop here at the lodge.”

Stefan

“I asked the Chairman’s permission a long time ago to use it whenever I’m not working. Pottery is kind of my hobby.”

(No wonder he’s so good with his hands.)

I turn to face Stefan. He’s standing so close to me.

Stefan

“I would very much like to teach you sometime.”

**Premium Choice: What should I say?**

1. *“If I have time during business school, maybe I can visit you and you can teach me.”*
2. *“You can teach me now if you want.”*

**1.**

MC

“If I have time during business school, maybe I can visit you and you can teach me then.”

Stefan

“Yes, that would be wonderful.”

Stefan

“Would you like to have dinner now?”

MC

“Yes, I would love to.”

**Recombine with main dialogue**

**2.**

MC

“You can teach me now if you want.”

Stefan

“Are you serious?”

MC

“Of course, I am.”

Stefan

“Wait here. I’ll just light up the kiln. It gets really cold out there.”

Stefan leaves me for a few minutes and returns wearing only a tank top, all sweaty and a bit dirty.

Stefan

“It’s ready.”

Stefan takes my hand and leads me outside to the pottery workroom.

**Scene: Mountain Lodge. Pottery workshop. Night.**

Shelves filled with clay pots line the wall of the workshop. At its center is some sort of big wheel or turntable.

I imagine this is the traditional way of making pots.

Stefan

“Are you ready to throw some pots?”

MC

“Oh, no, Stefan. I don’t want to destroy your work.”

Stefan laughs.

Stefan

“Throwing is the term used to call the process of making pots. You’re not literally throwing a pot and breaking it.”

I laugh, a little bit embarrassed.

MC

“Oh, all right. Let’s do it then.”

Stefan removes his tank top, revealing his toned upper body.

Stefan

“I prefer to work topless. It gets really hot in here.”

(I bet it does.)

Stefan

“You should remove your coat too. Clay stains are very hard to come off.”

MC

“Okay.”

I remove my coat, so that only my blouse remains. Stefan leads me to the turntable, where he slams a big lump of clay.

Stefan

“Sit.”

I sit on a low stool next to the turntable as Stefan spins it. Stefan sits right behind me, reaching out to guide my hands.

I feel his warmth against my body.

Stefan

“The first step is called centering.”

Stefan’s hands guide my thumbs to press the ball of clay inward. His hands send a jolt of electricity through my skin.

Stefan

“Second is opening.”

As the turntable rotates and my thumbs press downward on the clay, it starts to form a hollow center.

Stefan

“Flooring.”

He guides my fingers to mold a flat center inside the clay.

The combination of his voice in my ear and his hands in mine, sends shivers down my spine.

Stefan

“Now comes the throwing.”

Together with Stefan’s hand, we start to squeeze and pull gently on the clay, which starts to resemble the shape of a pot.

Stefan

“Good. That’s it.”

His breath in my ear is too much to bear. I close my eyes. That’s when Stefan starts kissing my ear.

I let out the breath I didn’t know I was holding, and his lips goes down to my neck.

I turn to him as we both let go of the clay. His lips continue to brush my neck.

MC

“Stefan.”

Our lips come together in a passionate kiss. With one heave, Stefan lifts me in his arms and sits me on a worktable.

Stefan

“I love you, [namae].”

With his arms wrapped around me, I feel him press his hard body onto me as we are locked in a fervent kiss.

This fire I feel with Stefan is only matched by the fire in the kiln. And in that moment, I hope that this fire never dies.

**Recombine with main dialogue**

**BACK TO MAIN DIALOGUE**

**Scene: Mountain Lodge. Day.**

I awake in Stefan’s arms the next day.

We had steak dinner last night courtesy of Stefan’s cooking skills, which is comparable to a chef.

After that we just talk for hours, and cuddled on the sofa. Before I knew it, I had fallen asleep in his arms.

I watch him for a few moments while he sleeps. He looks so peaceful that I didn’t want to wake him.

I put on my coat and head outside, breathing in the morning air.

As the sun rises, I take in the majestic view from atop the mountain lodge.

(It’s breathtaking.)

Looking down at the vast expanse of the Seymour Estate, I see the mansion from afar.

Stefan has spent so much time here, and it’s refreshing to get to see things in his perspective.

(I can spend my life just living here.)

(It’s so peaceful.)

(I fully understand now why this place has become my father’s sanctuary.)

Suddenly, Stefan comes up from behind, wrapping his arms around me.

Stefan

“Good morning.”

I snuggle closer to feel his warm embrace. Somehow it feels like home.

MC

“Good morning, Stefan.”

Stefan

“What were you thinking about?”

**Choice: What should I say?**

1. *“I was just think about you.”*
2. *“I’m think about how we’re going to get out of here.”*

**1.**

MC

“I was just think about you.”

MC

“You have this wonderful view of the estate and I thought it’s nice to experience how you see things.”

Stefan gives me a kiss on the lips, like it’s a natural thing between us. Then I look out into the scenery below.

Stefan

“I wish you could experience how I see you.”

**Recombine with main dialogue**

**2.**

MC

“I’m thinking about how we’re going to get out of here.

MC

“‘Cause I’m not hiking all the way down in those shoes.”

Stefan laughs. He tries to kiss me on the lips. And I let him.

MC

“Seriously, I was just trying to admire the view. It’s beautiful.”

Stefan

“My view’s more beautiful.”

**Recombine with main dialogue**

**BACK TO MAIN DIALOGUE**

I turn to look at Stefan who’s been staring at me.

(He’s a really great guy.)

(He makes me feel safe.)

(Like he would do anything to protect me.)

Stefan and I just stay there, his arms around me. And for a long while, I feel like I’m on top of the world.

**Scene: Man-made lake. Pathway. Night.**

That night is my date with Bullet. He had asked me to wear an evening gown, so I did.

He’s being all formal and quite a gentleman as he escorts me to the south entrance of the mansion.

A horse-drawn carriage is waiting for us outside.

(So they do have a horse-drawn carriage around here.)

(I thought Zachary was kidding during the time of my first brunch.)

Bullet takes my hand, assisting me as I clamber onto the carriage. He climbs onboard and sits right next to me.

He sits up straight, being all stiff and rigid.

(What’s up with him?)

**Choice: What should I say?**

1. *“Why are you acting like an android?”*
2. *“You don’t have to act so formal around me.”*

**1.**

MC

“Why are you acting like an android?”

Bullet

“No, I’m not.”

MC

“Yes, you are.”

Bullet

“I’m just trying to be formal for a change. This is our first real date, after all.”

MC

“It’s not…you.”

Bullet

“I guess I’m not Prince-Charming-material, huh?”

**Recombine with main dialogue**

**2.**

MC

“You know, you don’t have to act so formal around me. I like the real Bullet better.”

Bullet let’s out a sigh of relief.

Bullet

“Oh, thank goodness. I was actually going for a prince-charming persona. I really can’t pull it off, huh?”

I laugh.

**Recombine with main dialogue**

**BACK TO MAIN DIALOGUE**

MC

“I like you for you, Bullet.”

Bullet

“Thank you, little miss.”

The coachman directs the horse down the pathway that leads to the south mansion.

We stop by the man-made lake, where Bullet has set up a candle-lit dinner for two, underneath a small gazebo that is covered in flowers.

The fact that it has a view of the lake makes it perfect.

(It looks so romantic!)

Bullet climbs out from the carriage and takes my hand as I step down.

MC

“Bullet, this is marvelous!”

MC

“I didn’t peg you for someone with a romantic bone in his body.”

Bullet

“Ouch.”

I laugh.

MC

“I’m just kidding.”

**Scene: Gazebo near the man-made lake. Night.**

A violinist begins playing as we reach the gazebo.

MC

“Well, this is nice.”

There is a kitchen staff who served us our appetizer which is chicken noodle soup in a cup.

(?!?)

With a confused smile, I look at Bullet.

Bullet

“Yup, your favorite cup noodles. Zachary maybe addicted to them now, but you have to admit that you love them too.”

We both laugh.

MC

“Oh, Bullet.”

Our main course consists of my favorite kung pao chicken from Chinatown, while dessert is a lemon pound cake from our bakery.

(He really thought this through.)

Apparently, Bullet asked my grandmother when we were there about my favorite food.

(That’s so sweet of him.)

When we finished eating, Bullet invites me for a walk along the lakeshore and takes my hand.

Bullet

“Would you like to go on a boat ride or would you like to feed the swans?”

Bullet

“But I would suggest that we go on a boat ride because that’s more romantic.

Bullet

“And who knows there might be surprise in it for you.”

Bullet winks at me.

(Is he trying to give me a clue?)

(I’m getting curious about that boat ride now.)

**Premium Choice: What should I say?**

1. *“I’ve had enough surprises for one night. Let’s feed those swans!”*
2. *“I want to know about that surprise. Count me in!”*

**1.**

MC

“I’ve had enough surprises for one night.”

MC

“Let’s go feed those swans. They aren’t going to feed themselves.”

Bullet

“Are you sure you don’t want to go for a boat ride?”

MC

“To be honest, I’ve got a bad childhood memory riding a boat. So…”

Bullet

“Then let’s go feed those poor, unfortunate swans.”

As we go feed the swans, I am reminded of how Bullet have become so close to me.

Out of the three guys, he’s the one who understands me the most. He can easily make me laugh.

And he has made it easy for me to adjust to my situation, what with being a lady-in-training and all.

(I don’t know what I would have done without him.)

(This whole experience might have been pretty painful.)

MC

“Thank you for this night, Bullet.”

Bullet

“Thank you for giving me this chance to be with you.”

(It would be a shame to say good-bye to him.)

(Especially now that I’m sure that I have feeling for him too.)

**Recombine with main dialogue**

**2.**

MC

“I want to know about that surprise. Count me in!”

Bullet

“This way, then.”

**Scene: Middle of the man-made lake. Night.**

Bullet takes me to a rowboat, which he brings across the waters of the lake, the moonlight reflecting off it’s calm surface.

Bullet paddles our way and stops in the middle of the lake.

Bullet

“Now we wait.”

(?!?)

MC

“Wait for what?”

I didn’t have to wait long to have my question answered.

Tiny pinpricks of light began to appear in the air all around us.

(Fireflies?)

I stare in awe.

MC

“Bullet, I’ve never seen fireflies before. This is astounding.”

Bullet reaches out his hand, and a firefly lands on his open palm.

Bullet

“When I was a kid, my mom used to tell me that shooting stars become fireflies when they reach the earth.”

Bullet

“So you can wish upon them.”

I do the same as Bullet, and catch a firefly in my hand. I close my eyes and make a wish.

(I wish to find my true happiness.)

I blow on the firefly and it floats away into the night. Bullet does the same with his.

MC

“So what did you wish for?”

Bullet

“I wish for your wish to come true.”

I smile and feel the blush blossom in my cheeks.

Bullet

“You are so easy to love, [namae], that it comes naturally for me like breathing.”

Bullet

“And although circumstances might prevent us from continuing on with whatever these feeling may take us, it will never fade.”

MC

“Oh, Bullet. You’re the one who gets me, better than most people. It’s because of you that I don’t feel alone.”

MC

“I can’t help but feel sad that we’re going to be apart. And I will lose all this.”

Bullet holds my hands.

Bullet

“Tonight you don’t have to think about any of that. What matters is that you’re here with me now.”

He leans in closer and presses his lips against mine. I savor the sensations that the kiss sent through my body.

In the tranquility that the lake provides, it feels as though it’s just really me and Bullet that exist in the world.

(The future can wait.)

(I must live in this moment.)

**Recombine with main dialogue**

**BACK TO MAIN DIALOGUE**

**Scene: MC’s bedroom. Night.**

After the wonderful night I had with Bullet ended, I enter my bedroom to find a note on my bedside table.

(It’s from Zachary.)

He’s asking me to meet him at the west building early in the morning.

He says that unconventional as it may sound, but he needs my help on their date. And he’s going to need lots of it.

(That’s odd.)

(What could Zachary possibly need help with?)

*Read more to find out…*