Chapter 111 James and Emily

In the middle of the heightened song and dance, James grabbed a bottle of champagne before he slipped out of the banquet hall, went up the stairs and into a dark corridor he did not recognize at least, not in his state without anyone noticing. No one would miss his presence after all, not after the man of the moment had just made his grand announcement.

With his sloppy steps and regrettable dance moves, he was able to keep the champagne bottle under his armpit for five minutes. The man was drunk out of his mind. All he had done since the party started was down glasses of champagne without speaking to anyone.

When he got to the corridor, he leaned against the wall and slid all the way to the ground, until his butt touched the hard floor, he winced in pain.

"You definitely had that coming for ya."

He heard a female voice say. James would have jerked up, since he didn't see anyone there before he entered, but he was way above the clouds to bother about that right now.

He corked his head towards the direction of the voice and was far from surprised to find the crazy woman from the hospital's car park. Although she looked a tad bit different today, he knew he couldn't miss those dark eyes.

Emily was surprised when she heard footsteps approach her. She was forced to drop her bottle of beer down for the first time in two hours before looking up at the intruder. When she saw James steadily approach her, she wondered what was wrong with the man.

"Hey, aren't you the lady from the hospital? Isn't this supposed to be your best friend's engagement? Why aren't you downstairs?" he asked, even his speech was sloppy. Emily couldn't make fun of him, hers wasn't any better.

Worse still, she reeked of beer, and his scent was masked with champagne.

"Aren't you the rude guy from the hospital? Isn't this supposed to be your brother's engagement?"

James chuckled when she twisted his question and threw it back at him.

"Oh. Yeah, you're smart alright..." A hiccup escaped his throat, before he began to laugh.

"You see, I would have been down there, but all the love and happiness is making me feel real uncomfortable. I haven't seen such a mood in a long time, and I don't even know how to react to it..." He stopped talking and tilted his head back to its normal position, as he stared at the sole of his feet.

"Seeing Lancelot, my brother, so happy." A sad smile crept up to James's face. Sober James would have never done this. Sober James would have never sat next to a human woman while spilling his guts out to her, but drunk James didn't seem to care.

"Ever since our brother died, there was this thick cloud that came upon our lives. It just refused to go, or rain, for many years. Until, the human woman came along. I was frightened, angry, not just because she was human, but because she was change. And my family never responded to that well."

Emily listened carefully and wholeheartedly, not to judge, not to snap-as was a contrast to the first time they met-but because she really wanted to

know what he had to say. Poor man seemed to have a lot of shit going on. No one was ever stuck up like he was, without a reason.

Finally, she scoffed and turned slowly to him, corking her head gently to the right.

"Yeah, you're right. Change does suck." She shouldn't have said what she did next, but she couldn't help it.

"You know, I've had my bullshit share of change as well."

James's eyes seemed to brighten as he turned to her.

"Really?"

Emily smiled sadly and nodded.

"Yeah. I mean, when my father died, it was just my mother and I for a very long time you know. We were each other's rock and I convinced myself we was gonna be like that forever. Well, until my step father came and all that changed. Mum never had time for me anymore. Step-daddy introduced her to drugs, weed, every pill that could be popped. And when she was done for, he left her, just like that. My mother became a shadow of herself, you know. She kicked me out when I was fourteen, I haven't seen her since then."

Tears which were very strange to Emily gathered in her eyes as she spoke. She had only ever told this to one person, and that was Roxanne. Still, it had been years ago since she opened up about her past, why she was so strong and distrusting about everything and everyone.

She sniffed back her tears and James narrowed his eyes at her.

"Well, if it does make you feel any better, I think I'm on drugs too."

Emily's right brow arched as she glared at him in query.

"What?"

James rolled his eyes before they landed back on her again.

"'Cause I can swear when I saw you a few days ago, your curls were blonde. And now they're purple? Champagne doesn't do that to people."

Just like that, Emily burst into laughter. She had not expected to, she had not planned to, but it happened anyway. James's eyes softened as he looked at her, she was much prettier when she smiled. "Shut up white boy." Emily continued to laugh, as she punched his thigh playfully. James feigned a scowl and held on to his legs dramatically.

"That hurt!" he cried out, and Emily continued to laugh, until her laughter disappeared.

"Honestly though, why you out here?" she asked, when she had gotten his full attention again.

The question he had carefully avoided, had managed to resurface. He picked up the bottle and pressed it against his lips, while he eagerly downed the content.

"Other than the fact that another change I'm scared of has appeared, I don't know. Maybe I'm worried and I don't trust your friend. I might not be one of the best brothers in the world, but I love my brother. He's been hurt, we've all been hurt, and I saw what that did to him. I cannot stand to see him get hurt again, by your friend. He's so happy, just like he was before Bran left us, if your friend suddenly realizes along the road that all this...him, is too much to handle and she leaves...it'll shatter him."

Emily didn't say anything. She turned her eyes back to her bottle of beer and reached out to it.

How was it that they had the exact fear about everything?

"So, why are you out here? Aren't you supposed to be playing chief bride's maid or something?" James threw her the question back, and Emily was forced to chuckle.

"Other than the fact that I don't trust your brother and I'm scared Roxanne is happily walking into the worst mistake of her life, I don't know. Maybe

'cause deep down, I just want us to hop on a plane and go back to America. But, she's madly in love with him, has faith in what they share and believes they deserve a fighting chance."

James tilted his head to the other side.

"She said that?"

"She did, and it's all in her eyes."

James chuckled and rested his head on the wall.

"Damn, love does make people fools."

Emily laughed and rolled her eyes. She rested her head on the wall, close to his.

"It sure does."

"Well, if they trust each other, that means we have to trust them too, right?" James spoke up again. And Emily continued to stare at him.

It was only now she noticed the hard structure of his cheek bones.

"Yes, I guess we would just have to. I have my eyes on your brother though. If he hurts my friend, he's past tense, I'll make sure of it."

James laughed out loud. The image of Emily trying to hurt Lancelot in his head was funny.

"And if your sister hurts him..."

"You don't have to say another word," Emily cut in, and James's laughter grew louder.