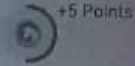


You're a liar



## You're a liar

After dinner, Alessandro stood up. Abril didn't know what to do, whether to follow him or remain seated. Seeing she wasn't following, he said, "It's late, let's go."

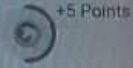
Abril said goodbye to Cassian and trailed behind Alessandro. When they reached the king's chambers, Alessandro removed his jacket and loosened his shirt, making himself comfortable. Abril stood still, unsure of what to do. Someone knocked on the door, and Alessandro opened it to reveal two maidservants carrying the princess's nightclothes. Alessandro let them in without a word and sat on the sofa while the maidservants helped the princess change.

The maidservants were always rude to the princess. However, they weren't that day. They must have been terrified of making a mistake and being punished by the king.

When they finished changing the princess's clothes, they practically ran out. Alessandro was having a glass of wine and offered one to Abril.

"Would you like some?"

Abril took the glass the king was offering her. Upon tasting the wine, she wrinkled her face and



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said, "This tastes horrible."

"Haven't you tried wine before?"

Abril shook her head.

"I see. You'll have to get used to the taste."

"I don't think I can get used to it. It's bitter. Why

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does Your Majesty drink something like that?"

"Because I like it."

"Your Majesty has strange taste."

"If you drink it every day in small doses during meals, you'll end up liking it."

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"I don't think so," Abril replied.

"The butler told me you started your lessons on the principles of magic today. How did it go?"

"I suppose it was fine, although I still think it's a waste of time. What good is it for me to learn the principles of magic if I'll never use them?"

"Even so, you must learn it."

"I don't want to."

"What?"

"I don't want to learn them. Now I have to spend more time in the palace. I don't like that."

"I've been wondering about this for a while now. Why do you hate the imperial palace so much?"

Abril didn't know whether to tell the king the truth, though she doubted he would believe her anyway. She fidgeted with her hands nervously and said in a low voice, "You're not going to believe me anyway."

"What are you whispering about? Speak properly."

"I know I'm not welcome in this place. Everyone looks at me with hatred and treats me with contempt. I don't want to be in a place like this. I prefer to be alone."

"I thought that had already been taken care of. I



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ordered them to be nice to you. Tell me who has been rude, and I will see to it that they are punished."

"I don't want that. I just want to go back to my little house. Your Majesty promised that I could stay there until I got pregnant, but I've had to stay in the palace. I don't want to be here."

"You've been living as you please, but you must understand something. You are a princess. You cannot live as you wish."

"But Your Majesty promised."

"I'm sorry, but you must continue with your magic lessons and your wife's education classes. I will not discuss this issue any further."

Abril's eyes welled up the more. She lowered her head and whispered, "Liar. Your Majesty is a liar."

Alessandro stood up, took her by the shoulders, and said, "Why are you always murmuring? Speak properly and look me in the face when you do."

Abril lifted her face and stared at him with tears in her eyes and said, "Liar. Your Majesty is a liar. You haven't kept your promise."

"You're a nuisance. You've lived without obligations for several years, but that's over. You can do as you please in your free time, but you must fulfill your obligations."

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Abril continued crying. Alessandro was tired of her tears. He gave her a long, deep kiss that left her breathless and said, "Stop crying, or I'll continue kissing you."

"Why don't you let me go? I'm a nuisance, aren't I? Find another wife who will do everything Your Majesty needs. Someone who meets the requirements to be your wife."

"Princess," Alessandro called.

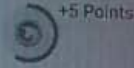
"Find someone else who can become your queen." Abril said angrily.

Alessandro grabbed Abril's left hand, where the marriage mark was, and said, "Look at this mark. This represents our union. Don't think you can leave. That will never happen. You will be with me forever, until death do us part. So stop talking nonsense and go to bed."

Alessandro let go of Abril and went to bed. It took her a long time to fall asleep that night. She stared at the marriage mark on her left hand. Until that day, she hadn't thought much about it, but that mark was like a leash that would keep her tied down for the rest of her life. That day, she realized that she could never be free, that no matter how much she wished it, her destiny was to be a prisoner for life.

From that day forward, Abril did not complain





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again. She went to her magic lessons in the mornings, and in the afternoons, she received wifely education lessons, though she paid no attention to any of them.

Sirius went to look for Alessandro and said, "This isn't working. The princess isn't paying any attention to my classes. She just sits there listening like a doll."

Alessandro understood perfectly what Sirius was referring to. From the day he had argued with her, Abril had stopped talking to him. Whenever he arrived at their chambers, she was already lying in bed, pretending to be asleep.

Sirius sighed heavily and said, "It's easier to catch bees with honey than with vinegar."

"And what does that mean?" He asked.

"If you want her to cooperate with you, wouldn't it be better to be sweet and affectionate with her?"

Alessandro stared at him intently.

"What I mean is, if she falls in love with you, she'll do whatever you ask. She might even agree to help us win the war."

"Don't be ridiculous."

"It's just a suggestion. Think about what I've said."

