

## Would you give me the princess?

Alessandro cupped Abril's face in his hands. He could see disbelief in her eyes. She didn't believe what he was saying and he asked,

"Don't you believe what I'm saying?"

"I... I don't know what to believe." She replied.

Alessandro leaned in, pressing his lips against hers. He was so close that Abril could feel his breath. He gazed at her lips with desire, as if he were looking at a delicious dessert he longed to taste. Getting closer to her lips, he asked, "May I kiss you? The maids are gone. We're completely alone."

Abril yearned to kiss him too, so she nodded. Their lips met in a sweet, soft kiss. He nibbled her lower lip lightly and whispered, "Your lips are as sweet as honey. They make me want to devour them in one bite."

That frightened Abril, especially since he had actually bitten her lip, although very gently. She covered her mouth with her hands and said, "You can't."

Alessandro hadn't meant it literally, but Abril was so innocent at times that she had actually thought he was going to bite off her lips.

Alessandro couldn't help but laugh and said, "It's just a figure of speech. I'm not going to eat your lips. How else would I kiss you later?"

"But you bit me just now."

"I really need to summon Lady Elizabeth. This time, I'll tell her to be more explicit when explaining the relationship between a man and a woman. Sometimes your innocence surprises me."

"I know I'm ignorant about some things, but it's not my fault that there was no one to teach me, and the books weren't very explicit."

Alessandro stroked her hair and said, "I know that, and I'm not blaming you for it. That's why I want them to teach you what you don't know."

"I'll try my best to learn," she replied.

"I know you will. Now, let's take a walk before I go back to work," he said.

Alessandro extended his hand to Abril. Timidly, she took it, and they strolled through the gardens hand in hand.

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When Alessandro returned to his office, he sent for Lady Elizabeth. Before she continued his wife's education, there were a few things he wanted to make clear.

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Lady Elizabeth answered the king's summons that very day. The butler led her to the king's office, knocked on the door, and after announcing her, ushered her inside.

Lady Elizabeth curtsied and greeted Alessandro with grace and respect. "Long live the Sun King of the Cosset Kingdom."

"Thank you for responding to my summons so promptly, Lady Elizabeth."

"I am at your Majesty's service. May I inquire as to the reason for my summons?"

"I want you to teach my wife about the relationship between a man and a woman."

"I have already done so, Your Majesty. What exactly do you wish me to teach her?"

"My wife is as innocent as a child. I want you to explain to her in detail the relationship between a man and a woman."

"Of course, Your Majesty."

"That is all. You may leave."

Lady Elizabeth didn't move. She seemed to want to say something but couldn't quite muster the courage.

"Is there something you wish to say?" He asked.

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"It's about your wife, Your Majesty." She replied.

"If you're about to say something bad about her, I advise you to bite your tongue and leave."

"I would never say anything bad about her. I have only spent a short time with her, but it was enough

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to realize that she is a good girl. She is sweet and kind, but also fragile. I only wanted to ask Your Majesty not to be too rough with her. I know what all the nobles think of her, and I know they are wrong. I believe she will be a good queen."

"You're on her side?"

"I'm not on anyone's side. I'm just expressing what

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I feel. She may be very innocent, but there's something special about her. I don't know what it is, but I think she will make a good queen."

"Is that all you wanted to say?"

"There is one last thing. When a woman does not receive the support and respect of her husband, she does not receive it from the servants either. The true power of a woman comes from the love her husband shows her."

"Why are you telling me this?"

"Because I know that the princess was attacked by one of the servants. I just wanted to make you aware of that. If you continue to show a clear disinterest in the princess, her life may be in danger again."

"I already know that, and I'm making sure that no one dares to touch my wife."

"That is all I have to say. If Your Majesty excuses me, I shall take my leave."

"You may leave. And don't forget what I told you. Take care of my wife."

"As you wish, Your Majesty."

After Lady Elizabeth left, Alessandro realized something. Everyone who met Abril ended up charmed by her innocence, even him.

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That night at dinner, Cassian didn't appear. Abril and Alessandro dined alone. He asked her, "Have you seen Cassian today?"

"No. We were supposed to take a walk in the garden, but he never showed up."

"I see."

Alessandro was a little worried about his brother, so after dinner, he told Abril he'd be with her shortly.

Alessandro asked the servants if they knew where his brother was, but no one had seen him since the afternoon. Alessandro went to look for him in his room, but he wasn't there. So he went to look for him in their secret place. Whenever his brother was in pain, he would go to their mother's old room. It was like a hiding place where they could rest when they felt tormented and weary.

Cassian was in their mother's room. He hadn't been near the princess that day, and the pain in his leg had returned. It had been so long since the last time it had hurt him this much. The pain seemed to have gotten even worse that day. He was writhing in agony, lying on the sofa, when Alessandro entered and said, "There you are."

Cassian covered his face with his arms to hide the trail of tears and said, "I want to be alone. Please

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leave."

"You haven't seen Abril all day. Has your leg started to hurt again?"

"I'm fine. I just want to be alone. You can go."

"No. I'm not leaving you to suffer alone."

"Why can't you just go and leave me in peace?"

"Because you're my brother, and I'm worried about you. I couldn't go back to my room knowing you're in pain."

Alessandro approached Cassian and asked, "Can you get up?"

"I'm fine, Lessan." Cassian lied.

"No, you're not. So get up, and let's go see Abril. Or I'll bring her here. Your choice."

"Lessan, have you fallen in love with the princess?" Cassian asked.

"What's with that question?"

"I saw you kissing her in the garden today. It surprised me. I didn't think you two were that close."

"She's my wife. I do more than just kiss her. But stop asking silly questions and get up."

"You haven't...done it with her yet, have you?"

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"Why are you asking that, Cassian?"

"Just answer me. Have you done it with her? Yes or no."

"No. We haven't had our first night as a couple yet."

"I see. Lessan, if I asked you to give me the princess, would you do it?"

"Cassian, what are you trying to say?"

"I...just..." Cassian trailed off.

He was asking a stupid question. Alessandro would never give him Abril.

"It's nothing, Lessan. I'm talking nonsense because of the pain."

Alessandro helped Cassian to his feet. Cassian leaned on his shoulder until they reached Alessandro's room. Before entering, Alessandro knocked on the door and asked, "Abril, it's me and Cassian. May we come in?"

Abril opened the door and replied, "Of course."

She was wearing a nightgown and a robe over it. When she saw Alessandro helping Cassian, she asked, "What happened to you, Cassian? You look terrible."

"I'm fine. Don't worry." He replied.

Alessandro helped Cassian to the sofa. He told

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Abril to sit next to Cassian while he fetched a doctor. Abril touched Cassian's forehead. He immediately felt the pain miraculously disappear.

She said, "You don't seem to have a fever."

"That's because it was just a little dizzy spell. I'll be alright and leave in no time. Thank you for worrying about me."

"You don't have to thank me. We're friends, and friends help each other out. So if you need anything, don't hesitate to ask."



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