

## H. Academy 906

### Chapter 906 InfernoKnight

The next morning, Irina stirred before the world fully awakened.

A hazy warmth blanketed her senses—the quiet hum of early dawn, the soft rustling of the wind against the window, the first golden traces of sunrise bleeding into the sky. It was the kind of moment where time felt slower, where the air still carried the last remnants of the night, cool and crisp against her skin.

Her eyes fluttered open.

The soft glow of morning light filtered through her dorm's curtains, stretching long, lazy beams across the room. The warmth settled against her face, gentle but insistent, pulling her from the final traces of sleep.

She inhaled deeply, blinking away the fog in her mind.

And then—

"You are awake."

A voice—low, steady, familiar.

Her breath hitched.

She turned her head—slowly, hesitantly—until her gaze met a pair of sharp, unreadable purple eyes.

"Eh?"

That was all she could manage.

Astron was right there.

Too close.

Too awake.

The morning light cast soft shadows across his face, highlighting the sharp angles of his features, the cool, unbothered expression he always wore. But it wasn't just that—it was him.

In her bed.

Oh, right.

She hadn't let him leave.

She had told him—no, ordered him to stay.

This was her plan.

She had made him sleep here, all because—what? Because she felt like it? Because she didn't want him to leave?

Irina's face burned.

She thought she had planned this out—had everything under control. But she hadn't accounted for waking up and seeing him. Right. There.

"You..."

Her voice came out slower than she intended, still hoarse from sleep.

Astron blinked once, watching her carefully. His expression didn't change.

"What?"

Irina narrowed her eyes, staring at him.

Something was off.

Astron always woke up earlier than sunrise. It was routine. It was him. Every morning, he was up before the world, training before the academy even stirred.

So why was he still here?

He should have left.

He should have been long gone.

But instead—

He was still lying there.

Still watching her.

Like he had been waiting for her to wake up.

Irina's heart skipped.

Her grip on the blanket tightened.

'No. No, no, no. There is no way—'

"Why are you still here?" she asked, narrowing her eyes.

Astron didn't react immediately. He simply held her gaze, unblinking, as if waiting for something more. Then, tilting his head slightly, he spoke in that ever-calm, ever-neutral voice.

"What do you mean?"

Irina exhaled sharply, forcing herself to regain some semblance of composure. She couldn't let him see how much he was throwing her off. She couldn't—

Her grip on the blanket tightened. "You always train in the morning," she pointed out, voice still scratchy from sleep. "It's routine. You wake up before the sun, head out before anyone else, and—"

She stopped herself, frowning slightly.

Because now that she was saying it out loud, she realized something.

She knew his schedule.

Too well.

'Wait. How do I even—'

Before she could question herself further, Astron replied with his usual even tone, "I decided to skip training today."

Her mind blanked.

Her eyes widened.

"What?"

Astron blinked, his expression unreadable. "What, what? Is this too much of a surprise?"

Irina opened her mouth. Closed it. Opened it again.

'No, hold on. That is surprising.'

Astron was obsessive about his training. He didn't skip. Not for bad weather, not for exhaustion, not for anything. Even after missions, he still made sure to fit it into his schedule. The idea of him voluntarily skipping was insane.

She tried to process it.

Astron... choosing to sleep in? Choosing to stay?

'No way.'

She narrowed her eyes, suspicious. "...Why?"

Astron remained calm as ever, as if he had expected the question. "Yesterday, we went to bed quite late. I decided to take a day off today."

His voice was smooth, casual, like it was the most logical decision in the world. Like it was something he did all the time.

But it wasn't.

This wasn't normal for him.

This wasn't something he did.

Irina felt her pulse jump, and she hated that it did.

'He's lying.'

Not a full lie, but—he was leaving something out.

He wasn't just skipping because of sleep deprivation.

Something else was at play here.

And then—

Before she could demand further explanation—

Astron's lips twitched ever so slightly. The faintest, most infuriating hint of amusement flickered in his sharp purple eyes as he added,

"Unless... did you want me to leave?"

Irina's brain short-circuited.



Her face heated up instantly, her body reacting before her mind could catch up.

"Wh—?!"

The sheer audacity of this bastard.

She grabbed the nearest pillow and launched it straight at his face.

Astron caught it.

Effortlessly.

Because of course he did.

The worst part?

He didn't even look remotely surprised.

Didn't flinch. Didn't waver.

Just sat there, holding the pillow, watching her with that unreadable, calm expression that made her want to kick him straight off the bed.

Irina, still burning with embarrassment, gritted her teeth and yanked the blanket over her head.

"Shut up."

Astron hummed, still holding the pillow she had thrown. "Was that supposed to be an answer?"

"I said shut up."

"Hmm."

Irina stayed under the blanket for a moment longer, willing the heat in her face to disappear. It wasn't working.

Damn him.

Damn his calm.

Damn the way he said things like that with zero hesitation, like he wasn't completely aware of how they made her brain explode.

She exhaled sharply and sat up, the blanket sliding off her shoulders.

And then—

The loose fabric of her nightgown slipped lower, cool air brushing against her bare skin.

Astron's gaze flickered.

A small, barely noticeable shift. But she caught it.

Oh.

Oh, interesting.

Irina smirked, tilting her head slightly.

"What? Like what you see?"

Astron didn't look away.

Didn't even blink.

But there was a pause.

A small one. A fraction of a second.

Just enough for her to know.

Then, with that same unreadable, infuriating calm, he murmured, "You are getting bolder."

Irina's smirk widened. "Problem?"

Astron tilted his head slightly, studying her like he was contemplating something.

Then—

"Not now," he said smoothly, "but if you keep this up, you will have problems walking in the future."

Irina choked.

Her entire body locked up as his words settled in—casual, composed, impossible to misinterpret.

The heat that had just started to fade came raging back, twice as intense.

"Wh—?!"

This bastard.

This absolute menace.

Her face burned, the realization hitting her like a damn freight train.

'He's been saying that more often.'

Not just once.

Not just twice.

It wasn't a fluke.

It wasn't her imagination.

Before, Astron never said things like this. Never outright teased her this way, never hinted at things so blatantly.

But now—

Now, he was doing it on purpose.

Frequently.

Casually.

With zero shame.

Irina's hands clenched the blanket, her breath unsteady.

"Y-You—"

Astron watched her reaction, perfectly calm. "Yes?"

Irina hated that she had no comeback.

Hated that she was the one flustered again.

Hated that he was winning this battle so effortlessly.

She sucked in a sharp breath, her fingers twitching.

She needed to retaliate. Now.

Otherwise, he'd have too much fun knowing he could throw her off like this.

With a forced, smug smile, she lifted her chin. "Hah! Look at you, acting all confident now. Did you read a manual on how to tease?"

Astron blinked, and for a brief second, she thought she'd finally caught him off guard.

Then—

"I don't need a manual to tease you."

His voice was lower now.

Smoother.

Like he knew exactly what he was doing.

Irina's stomach flipped.

Nope. Nope, nope, nope.

Abort. Abort.