

## 6: Miss Montague.

Chapter 6: "Miss Montague".

Isabella Montague.

Shit. s\*\*t. s\*\*t.

I did not just kiss a stranger in public.

For a moment, I was still high on it—I couldn't focus on anything or anyone aside from the soft lips moving on mine—and I was overly aware of his hand that was wrapped around my waist, pulling me close to him. My arms remained around his neck, wounded them there as if they have a mind of their own.

My fingers, they found the hair at the nape of his neck—the soft locks that felt like silk between my fingers, as if they were meant to be ran through my them. My head, it was a haze. I'd forgotten for a second why I was there, and what I was doing with him.

I slowly pulled back after a while, opening my eyes just as he did—our eyes clashing. The first thing I noticed was how his eyes had darkened, or were they dark to begin with and I'm just imagining stuff?

I was breathing heavily, my eyes unable to move from him and supposedly, his from mine as well. His eyes, they searched mine, my expression as if looking for something. Then, I saw his eyes ick downwards, to my slightly parted lips and I could swear I saw the corner of his lips tilt only slightly.

I didn't have time to react though, because an announcement came, snapping me back to reality. It was like a button had been switched on, and suddenly, I was zoomed back to the present and not the trance we were both stuck in.

"Tonight with us, we have a very important guest making a public appearance for the first time. The heir to trillionaire and aristocrat, Duke of Westminster, Edward Montague; his daughter and heiress, Lady Isabella Vivien Montague."

I blinked once, then twice. My head turned to the side, suddenly aware of the hundreds of eyes on us thanks to the sudden spotlight casted on the two of us. I took in a sharp, unexpected breath, my eyes dilated. From the corner of my eyes, I could see a few ashes, and it doesn't take a genius to know what's to follow.

I wanted none of that.

But the fact that I was still in the arms of this stranger...wait, f\*\*k how can I forget? My eyes moved to where I left Mrs. Donnelly, and I was pleasantly surprised to see the shocked look on her face. She was accompanied by her son, his mistress or girlfriend, and family.

My lips slanted upwards instinctively, loving the expression on it.

"Lady Isabella please, if you may do us the honor of opening this fundraiser for us." The man in charge of the microphone suddenly declared, as part of his earlier speech.

I forced myself to hold up the smile on my face, to mask the awkward situation I found myself in then hastily unwound my arms from around his neck, trying to take a step back—keyword, trying.

He didn't let go.

I turned around to glare at him, though trying to not make it obvious since there's plenty of eyes on us. Now due to the spotlight, I could see his face clearly. And damn is he handsome, but that was the last thing on my mind then.

He must've gotten the sign from my glare, and what did he do? He smiled, like a full blown smile and then leaned down to my ear, whispering so only I could hear. When his voice came, I could feel his warmth breath on my ear, his voice deep.

One of his hands that was wrapped around my waist found its way to the side of my neck, easily occupying half of it, his fingers on the base of my neck. "Is that the thank you I get, Isabella?" His voice, it was deeper than I imagined. It had my stomach uttering.

But I have a feeling he made it so intentionally.

It's weird how this stranger that I only shared a kiss with had this effect on me, and judging from the smug look he sported, I'm certain he knows. Sad to say, I wasn't going let him have the upper hand, even though my racing heart wasn't on the same side.

I blinked, getting a hang of my emotions and putting a lid on it. My lips curled upwards into a smile, though it was more like a smirk as I turned my head to look at him—we were close again, his face inches away from mine and so were his lips.

I icked my eyes down to his lips, my smile widening as I met his gaze again. "Thank you. You aren't so bad but..." I leaned down and pecked his lips again, but it only lasted a brief second before I pulled back again—this time around easily stepping out of his hold.

Now standing with inches' distance between us, I jutted my chin up, keeping my expression in check—one betting of the woman I came here as today. "...I hope we never cross paths again."

He quirked a brow, his expression still amused. He straightened his spine, one of his hands tucked away in the pocket of his pants.

Flashing him one last smile, I turned around to the awaiting crowd then pushed my legs forward in the direction of the podium just as I was called upon. I had to pass by the Donnelly family on the way, whom I could feel their eyes on me as I strolled past them but I didn't spare any of them a glance.

They aren't worth it in the slightest.

Eyes followed my every movement, cameras flashing from all angles but I didn't let any of it get to me. I kept my head up, my gaze set on the target, on what I was there for and I would be screwed if I let anything ruin it.

Not even an impromptu kiss with a stranger is going to faze me.

Upon reaching the podium, Karl Rutherford and his wife Rose Rutherford stood to welcome me with warm smiles on their faces. I widened mine, reaching out to shake the hands of Karl.

"Hello, Karl. It's been a while." I greeted an old family friend of mine. But really, Karl and Rose are on good terms with almost all the most influential families out there.

Karl's fatherly smile was as soothing as it has always been. "You've grown into a lovely woman, Isabella." He complimented, as we hadn't seen in each other since I was a teenager if I'm not mistaken.

"Thank you." I grinned, then turned around to face Rose, who welcomed me into her warm arms. "Hey, Rose."

"Isabella." She patted my back lovingly, before she pulled back, keeping me within arms-length. "I'm so glad to see you."

"I'm glad to see you as well." I stated honestly. "You're looking younger every day."

She chuckled, waving me off. She then hauled me over to do what I was called out for. I excused myself from the two and made my way towards the awaiting emcee, taking his earlier spot in front as he handed the microphone over to me.

Now facing a room full of the most influential people in America and beyond, I knew there's no going back on my identity after this. I took in a deep breath, exhaled discreetly then spoke.

"Good day, every one. I hope you're all having a pleasant night." I plastered a wide smile on my face. "My name is Isabelle Vivien Montague, and I will be opening this event tonight. Welcome to the 39th annual Karl and Rose ball, and I hope you'll have a pleasant night..."