

HELLBOUND HEART

Chapter 31 Wedding Night



What Elle wanted was for Sebastian to take her virginity, her first time. No matter the kind of marriage they end up having, there could be no dispute that he was now her husband, and no other man had the rights to bed her but him. She already knew about his kinky desires and that was why she had to admit that she was a bit nervous. But as she had told him, it was just for tonight. Just this once. She only needed to go through it one time. She could do it. After tonight, no more sex.

This decision was her way to protect herself. She had already experienced how easily this man could make her feel the intense carnal desire she has never felt before. He was dangerous for her in every way already, and she knew that if she was not careful, she would fall for him and to her demise without her even knowing how and when it happened. She saw the actions of sex with him as one of the most dangerous traps that she must avoid at all costs.

She knew that the first time for women was not all that a great of an experience, as it was said to be painful. She thought that it was better for her that way, as it would eliminate the future possibility of her craving for more after one taste. So, she must never have sex with him again after this one time. She had agreed to allow him to continue living his usual lifestyle and it

was already stated in the contract. Sooner or later, he might bed other women and she would not have a say in it.

The mere thought of it already had an awful effect on her so she was going to prepare for it as early as now. And the one of the first things she should do was to make sure to eliminate any possible intimacies that could lead to her wanting him or falling for him.

The sound of Sebastian's glass clinking against the side table sounded loud in the thick silence. Then she saw the ends of his lips curved up. "Just for tonight..." he echoed mysteriously, his eyes turning darker as he caressed her body with his burning gaze.

"Yes." Elle confirmed stiffly, never faltering despite the heat his smoldering gaze was causing. "And just once." Her voice trembled a little at the end, but she lifted her chin, not giving into her nervousness.

His smirk had his faint dimple appearing as he regarded her with a mysterious and amused look. But Elle did not budge from her stance. She stared back at him, showing him how serious she was with her decision.

"Fine," he lifted his long arms wide and rested them on top of the sofa's back. "As you wish, we'll consummate our marriage tonight. But that's only if you're ready."

"I am ready, Sebastian." The way she said it was as though she was ready to be sent to the gallows. Sebastian's lips curled up even more as he regarded her with much amusement.

"That's for me to decide, my little wench." His voice sounded rough yet deliciously dark as he told her. And Elle's eyes widened at the nickname he used on her. Her heartbeat stopped for a moment and her face burned red.

She had already prepared herself to hear such things as he had made it abundantly clear to her the first time that they met that he calls his women

names. He had already called her 'bitch' before and honestly, she did not like it. She hated it, in fact. But this... she did not know why she could not quite describe the feeling she had at the moment. Did she hate it, or did she like it? It was a weird feeling.

After mentally berating herself for even questioning herself if she liked being called a wench, Elle sucked in a deep breath to calm herself. She told herself to just ignore his antics so they could get this over and done with quickly.

"Now princess... take that nasty night gown off." He ordered. "I want you completely bared for me."

Without hesitation, Elle tugged on the chiffon waist tie that she had knotted into a bow and her actions bared her front to him. Just with a tiny shrug, the night gown slipped off her milky white shoulders. When the soft and gauzy fabric pooled around her ankles, her heartbeat drummed loud in her ears. His eyes slowly caressed her every curve, and she could see something intense now flashing across his darkened gaze.

"On the bed, princess. Now." Came his second command and Elle slowly turned, taking one step at a time as she fought the urge to scramble onto the bed and dive beneath the sheets to hide herself. She could still feel his fiery gaze boring into her, following her every move.

Somehow, she managed to climb into bed at a normal pace. She sat not in the middle but at the far side and leaned against the headboard.

When she lifted her eyes and returned her gaze to him, he was still seated at his black sofa, his eyes gleaming in the dim light. She had noticed his room's lighting was not upgraded like the rooms in Eves palace so the lighting still gave off the feeling that they were back in the olden days. She wondered if it was because this prince does not use this room much, or perhaps they have protocols or rules not to modernize anything? Whatever the case, right now, Elle was glad the room was not brightly lit.

He finally stood from the sofa and as he approached the bed, Elle's heartbeat picked up the pace. She watched him come nearer and nearer to the bed. To her.

Stopping by the foot of the bed, he stood there, looking down at her. And his quiet and commanding voice echoed in the silence.

"Crawl towards me, princess."

Chapter 32 Unexpected



"Crawl towards me, princess."

His deep voice penetrated and reverberated straight through her. Reaching so deep within Elle that she felt like her brain fritzed out at that confident and absolute command.

The pure focus he had thrown at her as he towered over there, looking down at her, had Elle unconsciously clenching her fists into the bedsheet. But the moment she saw a spark of something mischievous and seemingly taunting in his eyes, she unclenched her fists and tipped her chin up. He was challenging her. It seemed like he did not believe that she could do this. That was how she interpreted that look in his eyes.

And she did not like what she had thought his reaction would be if she did not make a move now. Surprisingly, she disliked the thought of him smirking as he told her 'He's right and that she's all just bravado' much more than doing what he was asking her to do right now.

Holding his gaze, Elle felt the surge of strong refusal to back off. She reminded herself once again that this was just for tonight. Only one night. Just to consummate their marriage. She will never need do this again. Ever. She reminded herself that she had bravely told him before that she could handle him as long as he would not hurt her. But that was back when they had nothing complicated going on between them. Before her father had taken advantage of the situation and somewhat forced a marriage arrangement between them. When her goal was only going to sleep with her as a one-night stand.

However, right now, she felt that this was not enough to overcome the surge of her intense desire to erase that look in his eyes. All she wanted was to go against what he was obviously expecting from her. She wanted to prove him wrong. And besides, even before their wedding, Elle had already thought of all the things that could happen between them the moment they will get down to this business. Though him, commanding her to crawl to him still surprised her, she was not totally ignorant about this possibility as she had actually done her research on everything about these matters while she was at the hotel in the past few days. She had not wasted her time lounging and doing nothing in her room during the nights after coming back from her touring the city the whole day.

She had already mentally prepared herself and that was maybe why she was braver than ever now.

Without breaking eye contact, Elle slowly dropped on all fours. Her knees and hands dipping slightly into the plush top of the super king-sized mattress. Her heartbeat was rushing a mile a minute and she could feel her cheeks burning hot. But... it seemed that this might not be as hard as she thought it would be. She was never the submissive type. She was certain of that. She was stubborn especially to people who had wanted to control her, like her father.

Her stubbornness was the kind when one expects her to do one thing, she would be willing to do the exact opposite thing – even if she had to suffer a little along the process. So, this was surprising even to her. Was it because this was the bedroom? She had heard there were things that would only work differently for some people in the bedroom. Was she like that...? No way... right? This must be because she had long prepared herself mentally.

Elle then began to crawl, still refusing to be the first one to break their eye contact. Her heartbeat sounded so loud in her ears that she did not even realize just how slowly she was moving at the moment. When she saw how his eyes stretched a little as she got closer to him, a tinge of triumph rose within her. Another unexpected thing. The sight of him looking surprised was somehow enough to trigger and rise her courage to the next level.

But her focus quickly shifted the moment she became aware of her breast swinging with every move she made. The shade of red on her face grew to become an even deeper tone. She paused just before she could reach him and heard how loud and fast her heartbeats were getting. Feeling the dryness on her lips caused by her hot pants, Elle licked her lips to moisten them.

Looking up to him, she saw his eyes dilate. She did not know how that had her continuing her incredibly slow movement. She was really surprising even herself right now. She wondered what had gotten onto her tonight. Was it the wine? She really wanted to blame it on her surprising emotions and actions, but she knew full well that she was clearheaded and was not the slightest bit drunk at all.

Elle stopped, finally reaching him. She tipped her chin even higher to maintain eye contact only to catch an unexpected devious glint in his eyes. That had got her already fast pulse racing even quicker.

He reached out and cupped her chin, guiding her gently to kneel before him. The touch of his leather gloved hand on her chin was... distracting to say the least.

"You just keep impressing me with how bold you are, princess." He said in a husky voice, a slow grin spreading across that sinfully beautiful face of his. "It seems no amount of discouragement could make you change your mind, hmm??"

"I thought I have already made that clear to you many times before?" she replied in what she hoped was a composed manner, "So I hope you can stop trying to test me now, Sebastian."

"Test..." he echoed. A mysterious smile then curved on his lips. "I wasn't testing you, Izabelle. I was merely showing you what you're putting yourself into right off the bat." He bent closer, putting their faces only merely inches apart. "And tonight, is actually the best choice for you."

Tonight, was the best choice for her? What did he even mean by that?

Chapter 33 Standard



Elle's brows creased a little, curious to know what he meant by what he just said. What did he even mean by that?

But before she could ask, Sebastian was already continuing, "Alexander and my brothers are all here right now. Normally, it would only be us in this place. To top that off, everyone obviously likes you a lot. Due to that, I won't have a choice but to force myself to tamper down on my usual style and be as gentle as I possibly can tonight. Or else..." he let go of her chin and bit at the tip of

his glove. In an elegant move, he pulled the glove off his right hand and flicked his head, allowing it to fly in an arc before landing at one corner of the bed. Elle could not help but wonder again why he likes wearing those black gloves. "... the entire family will come at me mercilessly tomorrow. And we can't have that happening, can we?"

Elle blinked, speechless. Her mind immediately wondered how his family would even know if he was gentle or rough with her as they do the deed. She could not quite figure that out even after thinking for a while. But then, she had quickly remembered that there was also the choking and tying that he had mentioned to her before. Her mind quickly went into overdrive, and she saw herself with bruises all over her wrists and neck. Did he know that her skin easily gets bruised? There should be no way he could know that, right? He must really like it extremely rough in bed like he had told her before, if he was this worried about his family's reaction! She did read in the article that this activity could leave bruises!

She forced herself to stop the urge to swallow nervously. Somehow, she was suddenly really glad at her decision of not postponing this wedding night. She had found out that the only prince living in the Reign castle was actually Sebastian. The rest of the princes actually live in their own homes including Abigail and Alexander. This had made Elle a little sad when she had found out. She had wished that they lived in the castle too. That way, it would be easy for her to find company whenever she wants to find a chat buddy.

"But don't expect too much from me." Sebastian's deep voice echoed again. "I don't do gentle... so my kind of gentle might not be up to your standard."

He looked serious as he said those words. She could see that he was trying to be as clear as day to her about everything. And his statement once again had her relaxing a bit. The fact that he was even willing to try and hold back was enough to calm her frantic heartbeat a little. Though she had mentally

prepared herself for a rough experience for her first time, she still would get bouts of nervousness that needed to be suppressed so that she would not chicken out at the last minute.

A small smile tipped at the corner of her lips. "Don't worry. You already know that I'm pretty pessimistic, Sebastian. So, I am not and would not be expecting too much." She shrugged her shoulders elegantly.

His dimple appeared as a smile flashed – but only for a split second. Because in the next second, his expression had changed into something that had her heart stuttering and threatening to stop for a moment. This man could really switch gears in the blink of an eye! Who said that women were the fickle ones?! Apparently that statement also applied to men as well. Princes included!

He cupped her face again. This time without his gloves. And oh lord... the feel of his hands directly touching her skin was electrifying. Was it just her nervousness and the atmosphere affecting and overwhelming her senses? Or was his touch really a little too hot? It was like he was burning with a fever!

"Listen, Izabelle..." his voice and gaze held her captive, "there're two rules I need you to follow at all costs. This is very important, so you really need to pay attention. First... if you can't handle what I am doing to you anymore and want me to stop... just say your own name. "

Silence reigned between them for a few moments before she could answer – but only with a nod. His thumb moved to her mouth and pressed down on her plump lips, brushing it as he stared intently at it.

"Use this beautiful mouth of yours and speak up Izabelle." came his commanding tone and Elle did not know how that had her immediately responding. Was it the seemingly hypnotic look in his eyes that had prompted her to answer so quickly?! Whenever had she been so obedient? She wondered but stashed that thought away for later contemplation.

"Yes. I understand." She answered and nodded as well.

"What will you say?"

Something strange was happening to her. It was like the more he spoke to her with those commanding words and the more she did the things he asked her to do, the more she felt like she was falling down some unknown and dangerous territory.

"I... Izabelle." Her own name came out breathless past slightly trembling lips. That was not the way she had wanted it coming out at all!

And that devastating smile flashed across his face again. "That's my good little wench." He said indulgently and her eyes widened.

Elle bit down lightly on her lower lip and he followed that line with a question. "Do you dislike that pet name I've given you?"

She blinked, moistening her lips again. "I..." Elle trailed off, frowning a little. "I don't know. I'm not –"

"Slut?" He cut her off causing Elle's lips to part. "Whore?" came another word and Elle's eyes stretched even wider. "I need to know which one works best for you, princess –"

Chapter 34 Rule



"I need to know which one works for you best, princess –" his face was serious as he said that. Elle had at first thought that he was making fun of her. But she immediately realized that he was serious and was expecting her response.

"The f-first one would do!" her face was blazing red as these words burst out from her lips. Among the three names he had rattled off, wench sounded a mile better to her compared with the other two. Even thinking about the other two was enough for her to squeeze her eyes shut. She could only quickly choose that as she did not want to hear any other selections of those kind of words. She was afraid he would only come up with even weirder names if she did not reply soon. But most importantly, she was really afraid she would lose her courage and composure if he continued with this. What came out of his lips were just names... but they really flustered her! They had yet to even start anything yet! And she was already flustered to this extent. She must not let him get her all thrown off before they could even begin!

Sebastian regarded her with a searching gaze, tilting his head a little. "Which one?"

Oh lord... Elle could only groan within her, knowing that he wanted her to say the word. Is he purposely trying to push her limits? Did he really need her to spell it out?

"The... umm... wench one. That one's fine for me." She quickly responded, her volume dropping at the 'word'. She did not want this conversation to drag on any longer than was necessary.

He was silent for a moment, just staring at her. She could tell he was trying to read her and see if she was lying or not.

"As you wish." He eventually said, though she could still somehow sense a slight doubt in his tone. However, he seemed to have just decided to take her words at face value. She then felt his thumb started to caress her cheek. That small circular movement was... his touch really was too hot! "The second and last rule is..." he held her chin and tipped it higher as if to make sure that all her focus was on him alone. "Don't touch me. Never... while we are at it."

The breath of relief Elle was about release was stuck in her throat. W-what did he just say?

"You heard that right, Izabelle." he said as though he had heard the question she had just asked herself in her mind. His eyes looked so intense. So mysteriously strange. She felt something unspeakable suddenly oozing from him. Something so extreme that she felt like him just telling her that rule of his was already some kind of a nightmare to him. It was hard to even explain but something in her told her that she needed take this very seriously. She suddenly remembered her gloves and she could not help but wonder if he had actually some unspeakable issues about this matter. Hence this rule. Or was she overthinking it again and this was just one of the many other preferences of his?

"Do you think you can do that?" he asked, pulling her off her thoughts. It was strange how she felt such a strong compulsion in obeying this particular rule. She did not even know why, but it was like something was forcefully convincing her not to break this one rule of his. At all costs. Whatever the reason, she did not have the luxury to delve more into the matter at this moment. Contemplation and scrutiny will have to wait for later – when she has time to be on her own. Her mind was already filled with so many questions and uncertainties that she was afraid she was already losing focus due to all these. And besides, she was also quite certain he would not give her further explanation about it either. She could still remember how he had told her before, never to ask or mention anything about his eldest brother. The look in his eyes at that time had had her heart shivering cold and she did not want that to happen again this time.

Forcing herself to stop thinking about it and just making herself believe that this was nothing but his preference for now, Elle nodded agreeably at him. She also told herself that this was better off for her too, because not touching

him back would make this less intimate for her. It would be easier for her to pull back and keep herself from being accidentally attached to him. She remembered how it felt just having his bare palms touching her face. How electrifying it was. Thinking about it now was enough to send a tiny jolt of pleasure shooting through her. Yes... it was better off that she did not touch him as well. She agreed fully to this condition.

"Yes..." she answered with a firm nod of her head, making sure that there was no hesitation in her voice. "Can I assume that what is prohibited is actually touching you directly...? Since you have let me touch you before. Or is this only your... rule in bed?"

"That's right." He took a moment to respond. His expression was once again unfathomable.

"What will... happen if I accidentally break this rule?" she asked in a careful tone. She needed to know the consequences so she can be ready for it. Just in case.

His grey eyes gleamed as his bare hand on her face moved. He fiddled with strands of her red hair and slowly tucked them behind her ear. It was a gesture that had her eyes circling at him.

"If that does happen... you shall be punished." he answered. Though his voice was gentle – almost a whisper – but something savage, primal and dangerous danced across his eyes. Then his hand crept to the back of her neck and fisted her hair a little tightly as he continued in a strained dark voice. "Real. Hard... Izabelle."

,m A/N:

To all my dearest readers,

For those who aren't on our fb group, i would like to update you guys that the delays in updates are due to the strong earthquake that hit my region last month. But don't worry about me because I and my family are safe.

I just want you guys to be more patient for my updates' pace for now. I will be releasing five chaps tomorrow but for another privilege tier. And then maybe five more the next day to fill the last tier.

Once the privs are filled, I will try my best to resume daily update and resume Spellbound as well.

Thank you so much and I am hoping for your continues support and understanding.

Love, Kazzen (08/05/22)

Chapter 35 Here



"Real. Hard... Izabelle."

Those last three words had Elle's heart hammering itself into frenzy within her ribcage. Her throat ran dry as an inexplicable tremor ran powerfully through her. The feel of her slightly damp hair being fistfisted by him felt... it felt...

"And that isn't something you can handle no matter how you brave yourself." He continued. His voice remained low, but she could almost taste the warning in them. "So, I would give you another reminder again. Do. Not... Touch me."

Fighting back hard the urge to gulp down in fear, Elle lifted her hands a little, bringing them together before her as she mustered up a smile.

"I see... then, I think it's better if you tie my hands. Better to be safe than sorry, right?" she said, trying to calm her now chaotic heart.

Sebastian's grip in her hair loosened and she relaxed a little. Still, she dared not breathe out in relief. Not yet, at least.

"Best to avoid any accidents from happening." She flashed a quick forced smile as she waited for him to tie her hands. "I'm afraid I might momentarily forget. You know... in the heat of the moment..."

He finally looked away from her eyes and stared down at her hands. She watched as a slow smile tugged at his lips. And with just that, the dark tension seemed to quickly evaporate between them.

"Smart little wench, aren't you?" He uttered under his breath, as he fully let go of her hair and removed his robe's tie.

Elle kept her gaze firmly trained on his face, not daring to look down. Not even a single inch. She had not seen him naked yet. That night, she had been too scared and desperate that she did not even allow herself to get more than a blurry glance at his naked body when he had climbed of the bed to face her father. But then... what was the use of her not daring to look?

Swiftly, he started tying her hands together. She then dragged her gaze down and saw his robe had fallen open, baring quite an expanse of skin to her wandering eyes. Ink black tattoos welcomed her eyes. Were those images of... fire?

Her eyes trailed curiously over the tattoos, travelling downwards, until her gaze stopped at his navel. He was wearing a dark grey boxer brief.

"Now princess," his voice almost jolted her out her own skin and her face reddened as she guiltily returned her gaze back to his face. He sat next to her and in a swift move he had her sitting rather primly on his lap, facing away

from him. "Let's get started, shall we?" He whispered provocatively in her ear before blowing gently into it, sending shivers running helplessly through her.

It was then she realized that her hands were already secured together. She could not help but be amazed at how fast and perfect he had gotten it done. She tested and tried to break free from it but could not even get it to loosen up the slightest. Oh dear, this man really was an expert in this! To think this was not even a heavy-duty rope but just a robe's tie!

His scorching hands cupped her jaw and pinned her against him. The touch of their bodies against each other's, skin to skin, had her gasping breathlessly a little.

"Just lean on me and relax, Izabelle," he whispered as he gathered her fiery red hair and spilled it over her left shoulder. "I'll take care of the rest."

Elle never expected to hear those words coming from him. She had never thought he would say such an intimate and gentle line to her. And now she could not help but be alarmed because that line just turned her on damned hard. She could feel her heart racing as her cheeks warmed up from his words alone.

She felt his lips on her shoulder as his hands moved from her waist, caressing her skin until he reached her breasts. The moment he squeezed her there, a silent gasp escaped her mouth. Oh dear...

"Your breasts are so soft yet pliable to the touch, my lovely wench." He whispered huskily as he continued massaging her breasts.

Sweat started to break out on her temples and forehead. And when he rolled her nipples between his pointer and his thumb, another gasp was torn from her lips as her whole frame trembled within his hold. Her eyes squeezed shut as she could not help but drop her head back on his shoulder – solid and hot

as hell. "Yes, just like that my princess. Relax and just let me prep you until you're ready for me."

This was not what she was expecting. At all!! Oh, good lord. He was not supposed to whisper these sweet words with his erotic and deep voice while touching her with burning strokes like this. He was not supposed to... Wait, what was he not supposed to do? Elle could feel herself spinning out of control as her mind somehow just could not make sense of things.

Another twist on her nipples had her letting out a sharp sound. A sound she could not believe had originated from her own lips.

"Shh, princess..." came his vibrating whisper as his one hand clasped around her throat, tightening its hold on her slightly. It was a secure grasp but not one that caused fear or doubt. "I need you to be quiet, my little wench. If you don't, I will be forced to bring you somewhere dark tonight and you wouldn't want that to happen."

His warning caused Elle to bite down on her lower lip. She did not want them to move anywhere else. Especially to that place that he had made it sound so dangerous for her. She wanted to be here, where he was gentle. Here, where his family were around in the same place. That way, he would still be able to hold back and not go all out on her.

"That's my lovely princess," he praised when he pinched the other nipple, yet no more sharp sounds came out of her. "I just love how obedient you are right now..." he murmured into her ear as she bit down harder, holding back any sounds from escaping her mouth.

He trailed his tongue from the spot just below her ear, down to the dip in her shoulder. His tongue was so hot. Like liquid fire that was threatening to burn her whole.

She could feel powerful muscles bunching and tightening under her ass and thighs as he continued touching her everywhere, except below her waist. She wanted him to touch her more, in there. But he only took his time and played with her breasts with ruthless and delicious patience.

Chapter 36 "Answer Me"



"Spread your legs open for me, princess." He commanded in a deep, vibrating voice. His hand had ever-so-slowly and finally crossed below her waist and was now resting on her legs. To be specific, it was placed right on her upper thigh. His palm was so hot, it was as though a flaming brand was being placed there, marking her as belonging to him.

Elle found herself obeying without any struggle, wanting him to bring his fiery hand to touch her now aching place so badly. Her face was blazing red as she opened up.

"Wider." He breathed, giving her a sharp nip on her earlobe. That almost tore another sharp sound from her mouth. "Not enough. More. Yes! Just like that. Mmm... That's my good and lovely wench..." he murmured words of encouragement and satisfaction when she did according to his wishes. Normally, she would have found this appalling and demeaning even. However, what he was doing was only causing the heat to burn even hotter down there. She could feel herself getting so wet.

Elle could only shut her eyes – whether in embarrassment or anticipation, she did not quite know – as she felt his hand trailed on the insides of her thigh. Intense anticipation gripped her as she waited for him to touch her there, where she was most sensitive. But again, he took his time, delaying and

making her wait, driving her crazy. But all she could do was bite down on her lip and stay docile and patient in his arms. She did not want to beg him like some desperate and wanton woman again. But oh lord... this was much harder than she had ever anticipated. She had not expected for herself to be stuck in such a situation.

When his fingers finally brushed across her there, Elle heard his curse rumbled low in her ear. "F*ck. Look at that wet pretty c*nt..." these words left his mouth as he suddenly palmed her center. "Do you know... do you have any idea on just how wet you are right now? Huh? Princess?"

She did not know what she should say. Her mind was no longer working normally as before. Her mind was blurred, and her focus was fixed on nothing else but these delicious sensations and his... his hard, hot and throbbing manhood against her behind.

"Answer me."

"I... I d-don't know..." Was all she could stutter out with labored breaths.

"Fine... I shall show you then." He replied delightedly before starting to play with her folds, sliding his fingers up and down with sweet shallow motions. And without warning, he sunk his fingertip into her wet entrance. Elle stiffened at the invasion of his thick and blunt fingertip as she stifled a sound that he had elicited from her. "Easy there..." he whispered, "relax your body, princess."

That coaxing deep voice was like magic that had relaxed her jolted nerves. And before she knew it, she could feel nothing but pleasure as her focus was fixed to where he was touching her. Her whole universe had sharpened and was fully concentrated on that one place. Until his finger was sliding in and out inside her in a delicious rhythm.

"F*ck." She heard him curse again. His voice seemed to be getting more strained.

And then he suddenly stopped and pulled his finger out of her. A protest was about to be torn from Elle's lips when he lifted his hand right before her face. The moisture on his finger all the way to his palm had her eyes stretching wide in embarrassment and shock.

"This is how f*cking wet you are right now, my lovely wench." He drawled and then he moved his hand towards himself.

Elle turned her head over her shoulder to look what he was going to do with it only to see him putting his finger inside his mouth and wrapping those seductively sexy lips around it.

"F*ck." He cursed after licking his finger clean. "You're f*cking delicious."

Her lips parted and she felt like her mind fritzed out in another shock. His expression was as though he had just tasted something glorious. And what he had just said and did, as well as his expression and the look in his eyes drove spikes of something intense through her.

He entered her again, impaling his finger inside her as his one arm hooked around her throat again, pinning her against him. He glided his thick and long digit in and out of her as the heel of his hand ground against her nub. His actions sent pleasures shooting through her that left her gasping and moaning helplessly as she arched and jerked around in his hold. She had thought that being restrained; it would be an unpleasant experience. However, what she was feeling so far is nothing but heavenly.

Soon he added another finger to the one already effortlessly gliding in her depths. The heel of his hand moved in circles against her sensitive nub in a rhythm so perfect and mouthwatering that she could feel her head spin.

"Se... bas... tian..." she began to call out his name between her ragged breaths when he increased the pace and pressed the heel of his palm down a little harder.

"Shh... princess... can you hear that? Listen to it. That's the sound of your incredibly wet c*nt." He whispered and the scandalous and erotic squelching sounds suddenly seem to echo out louder in her ears the moment he mentioned it. Oh dear lord...

He suddenly stopped his fingers just when she started to writhe uncontrollably in pleasure, causing her to nearly cry out in protest. He seemed to be waiting for something for a moment. Was he waiting for her to beg him to continue? Or could he be deciding if she was finally ready for him?

Whatever it was, Elle could no longer take it. Pure instincts took over her body and her hips moved on its own, her hips grinding herself onto his hand. And he cursed again. This time, it sounded like a growl rumbling in her ears, sending even more delicious shivers through her.

"Gods! You're so hot. You really never cease to surprise me. Look at you..." his other hand guided her head forward. "Look straight ahead, princess."

Elle was shocked to see herself being reflected through an antique mirror before them. She had not noticed that mirror there earlier. She could not believe the sight she was seeing and all she could do was gape at the image of herself that was almost unrecognizable.

Chapter 37 Bits And Pieces



"Can you see how beautiful and hot you are right now?" he asked but words had failed her. She was not sure if he actually posed that question for her to answer or was it just to draw her attention to her current state that was reflected in the mirror. Whatever it was, she was in no shape to answer him anyway. But her eyes were drawn to the reflections in the mirror and could not look away at all.

In it, Elle could see him behind her, his large body framing her smaller one and she could not believe the scandalous sight that was displayed so shockingly. Had he been watching them both in that mirror the entire time since they had started?

"Now, now... don't stop moving those sexy hips. Grind yourself against me. No, don't take your eyes off the mirror, princess." He murmured. There was something just so deliciously intense and sinful in his voice as his eyes gleamed while he stared so passionately at her through the mirror. And she could not quite tell if that look belonged to a predator preparing and planning to consume his prey or a lover worshipping her, or both.

However, her body listened to him, to his every command. And all she could feel was pleasure and more pleasure. So much that she suspected her IQ would continue dropping the longer the time she spent being in his arms.

"F*ck yes. You're so hot. What a beautiful wench you are... yes, keep watching. Watch just how hot and beautiful and ravishing you are. Watch how you bloom and respond so wonderfully in my hands."

These rumbling whispers in her ears had her feeling like she was going to lose herself completely. The fire he had ignited now had raged and turned into an inferno. A heavenly inferno.

When he worked her faster, Elle felt something tight coiling within her, intensifying the more he grinded his palm down on her nub. Every inch of her

flesh seemed to emanate spikes of intense pleasure, causing her breath to hitch continuously, threatening to cut off her breathing at times.

It was as if Sebastian had already mastered playing and controlling her, as for every place he touched now only served to send her floating into the heavens. Everything he did was just right, just perfect. There was nothing that felt bad. Nothing was off.

He doubled his pace, gliding and diving his digits harder into her. The wet, erotic and scandalous sounds mingled with her pants and moans. Something big and amazing was coming... she could feel it. She was coming! And she could already tell this would be the kind of orgasm she has never experienced before.

At exactly the right moment, he gave her what she wanted, needed, and then her pleasure exploded like never before.

She pulled and clamped around his fingers violently as she cried out, not even able to make any sense of what he was murmuring in her ears anymore. She only knew that he was speaking to her in that wonderful deep voice that could cause tingles to spark in her lower areas.

Everything was just shocking. Simply mind-blowing. And her mind was in bits and pieces.

But he did not stop his onslaught on her as if he did not want her orgasm to end yet. He kept on going, prolonging her bliss, until every inch of her tingled and sang and danced with inexplicable pleasure that it was bordering on painful.

"Gods..." his growl finally pierced through the fog that wrapped around her as she came down from that impossible high. She felt like she was now nothing but a heap of jelly. "You're the hottest wench I've ever seen. Look at you..."

f*ck!" His voice was ragged in her ears. "Look at this, baby. Take a good look."

He brought his hand that was glistening with her juices closer to her until it was literally right in her face. His hand was drenched and all she could do was stare at it. She could not even find a word to say. Her mind seemed to have short-circuited.

Then she was moved. He placed her on the bed, gently. She had expected him to drop her on the bed like what she had read during her research, but he once again did the unexpected.

"You're more than ready for me now, princess. F*ck, I can't wait to be inside that beautiful wet c*nt of yours." He said as he stood there, looking down at her like he cannot wait to devour her. His eyes gleamed with such ferocious hunger that it sent an uncontrollable and pleasurable shiver through her body.

And when he freed his manhood from his boxer brief, Elle felt like she was instantly jolted back to her senses. Oh, dear lord!

She unconsciously pushed herself up on her elbows and almost scooted back against the headboard in her alarm. Her eyes stretched wide as she stared at his length. He was bigger and thicker than she had ever thought. And those veins...

"Look at what you did to me, princess." His deep voice echoed as he half bit his lip. He looked like he was in disbelief himself. "Yes, you did this. It was you who made me this hard."

Elle swallowed as she looked up at him, a little alarmed. There was only one thing in her mind now. She was sure that huge thing would be painful if it were to enter her! Because... there was just no way it wouldn't! Right...?! Her heart raced frantically the longer she stared at his length.

He climbed on the bed and when he loomed above her body, Elle could not help but stiffen up.

"You're not going to tell me you're not ready yet, are you?" he asked, staring down at her.

What he said made Elle bite down on her lower lip. She remembered that they still need to go all the way. That they must do it tonight. They must! She had also told him so bravely earlier on that she was ready. But... oh lord...

Chapter 38 Good Call



"I... I..." she swallowed to make herself stop stammering. "I didn't know you're... you're that huge. I'm afraid I might not be able to... uhm... accommodate something that... huge." The last word came out barely as a whisper.

He pulled away, sat on his heels and threw his head back. A breathy chuckle escaping his lips. The scene was so riveting and alluring that Elle's heart could not help but skip a couple of beats. How could a man so deviously sensual as Prince Sebastian portray such a pure and fresh aura? He was a man of many contradictions, to be sure...

When he returned his gaze down to her, Elle could not help but hold her breath at the sight. Only a blind woman would probably not fall into a daze seeing how he looked right now. He looked even hotter, sexier, and more handsome than before. She still could not explain how this man was even capable of looking like this. This is an unfair advantage that he had over her! There should be a law against men from being so perfectly gorgeous and

alluring all at once. Elle could not help that sudden complaint that sprung up in her mind.

"I can't believe nothing could intimidate you but my hard dick." He shook his head, his eyes gleamed with amusement and a little playfulness.

Elle's face burned red and could not retort. How was she to have a come-back for that kind of statement?! She was certain that with his size, it would definitely hurt. The feeling of not wanting to taste pain right after all the incredible things he had just made her experience had her resolve a little shaken.

He licked his lips once his smile faded. And then all amusement evaporated as though it was never there in the first place. He was back to his insanely hot predatory expression. "How did you even know you can't take it in, hmm? Princess?" he asked, palming her down there again before lifting his hand back to his mouth and licked her juice so slowly as he pinned her with his gaze.

Then he reached out and undid her restraints that were holding her hands locked. She looked up at him, surprised at what he did. Did he not say she should not touch him?? Or.... Was he perhaps going to stop now?

Suddenly, all their talks from a while ago came rushing back in her now fully awakened mind, causing hesitation to fill her. The thought that she was throwing this chance away so stupidly had her feel as though a bucket of icy water was being splashed all over her face. No!! She must not let this chance slip away just because she was afraid to experience that little bit of pain she had been anticipating anyway. And besides, if she was not going to do it now, she might not have the courage to do it anymore later in the future. 'This is your best chance because he's holding back, Elle!' her mind yelled at her. Internally, she was panicking and desperately grasping at this chance. Outwardly however, she was still a picture of calmness.

"You're... right." She forced out a decisive voice. "Didn't they say you wouldn't know unless you try? So..." she trailed off when he suddenly smirked.

"Good call, princess. Because I wasn't planning on letting you get away just like that. Not after you have made me like this." His hands moved to her knees and grabbed them as he held her eyes. "I was planning to pleasure you until you cry out that you're ready... No. You would be begging to take my dick inside you by the time I'm done with you..."

As Elle's eyes widened, he took that moment of inattention to spread her legs wide apart and then his head went down on her and gave her wetness a long sinful lick that had re-ignited the flames once again.

And with her hands now freed, Elle immediately reached out and grabbed his tousled dark hair, only to stiffen when she realized what she had just done. She only touched his hair... that was not breaking his rule, right?

His eyes lifted and met hers. But he did not take his mouth off her. Not even for a fraction of a second. And dear lord... seeing him in that position... and that gleaming metallic eyes... trained fully on her...

"I have decided to go ahead with my initial plan anyway." He said, causing Elle to burn with embarrassment when she tingled because of what he was doing, talking right before her... oh lord... she could not believe how she was feeling with this supposedly dirty scene.

Then he ate her there, sending Elle's mind into space again that she could barely think about the fact that he did not react that she was gripping his hair. Was this not a part of his rule? Was he fine with his hair being touched? Was it an exception since it was not directly touching his skin?

The wicked and skillful dance of his tongue as he played with her nub quickly erased all thoughts in her mind. Her moans slowly became a little louder as he

did not bother hushing her anymore. He was so busy with her down there, driving her insane with how he pleased her with his mouth and tongue.

Soon, she felt it again, that coiling feeling building and tightening within her. Wanting to experience that mind-blowing explosion once again, she unconsciously pulled at his hair, but then... he pulled away.

She was panting hard as she met his gaze. Licking his wet lips, he grabbed her chin and whispered. "You're too delicious that it is driving me crazy. Now on all fours, my gorgeous princess." His voice was so strained. So damned sexy.

Before she knew it, she had already obeyed and was on her hands and knees. He had done it. He had done what he had told her. Though her mouth did not cry the words out loud, her body cried them out for her.

Chapter 39 Burning Her



Elle knew that this was it. There was no going back now.

Bracing herself, she looked down and stared at the pillows that looked so fluffy and inviting. Something then popped into her mind, causing her to immediately turn over her shoulder and looked at him. "Wait. Uhm... you have prepared a condom, right?" she blurted out. She could not believe she had nearly forgotten about this one most important thing! They should not forget about taking precautions! Things were already complicated enough between them and there was no need to further muddle things up with the possibility of a child being made.

She watched him half-bite his lower lip and for a moment, he looked like he wanted to say something but quickly changed his mind.

"If you don't, I have one... with me." She added, before she slipped her hand under the pillow and pulled out the condom she had stuffed under there when Sebastian was in the shower. She had prepared it – just in case. Little did she expect that they would actually end up using hers!

When she lifted it and showed it to him, a small and seemingly disbelieving smile tugged at the corner of his lips.

"Hopefully, you got the one with the right size, princess." He only commented as he stretched out his hand, indicating that she should hand him the condom.

When a breathy smirk escaped his lips while looking at it, Elle breathed out a sigh of relief. She had not checked what size the condom was and had just accepted what Ava handed her when she told Ava to buy her one. Judging from his reaction, it seemed she had gotten the right size.

Her thoughts were quickly pulled back to him when he brought the square package up to his mouth. His eyes never leaving hers, he bit down on the edge and jerked his head to the side, that seductive movement causing the foil to be torn, leaving the ripped edge dangling from between his teeth. Then she continued watching as though in a trance, as he spat the piece to the side while pulling out the rubber and brought it to his manhood. She could not seem to look away even when her face was already burning hot enough to resemble a poached lobster. She still could not help but swallow at the sight of it. But why did the action of him putting on the condom look so erotic in her eyes? She could not have so suddenly turned into a pervert with weird fetishes, could she?

Elle caught her lips between her teeth as she watched him effortlessly slid the condom down his length in a seemingly practiced manner. It was indeed a perfect fit for him.

"Done." His voice had her attention drawn back to his face. But his hand went to her back and guided her down, back to her previous position, on all fours.

Her heartbeat hastened as she braced herself once again. What suddenly came was a slap to the side of her ass. It was unexpected and the surface of his palm meeting the exposed and smooth curve of her behind produced a sharp whack, its sound seemingly louder as it was magnified in the silent room.

It came out of nowhere and Elle was jolted from the sudden action and shocked a yelp was torn from her mouth. And yet, the electrifying sensation it sent zinging through her had her insides throbbing.

Then he loomed over her back. "Sorry about that." His voice was ragged as he whispered in her ear. His lips directly brushing against ear. "Your ass is too beautifully tempting that I couldn't stop my hand. But thankfully, you loved that surprise. Right, princess?"

Lowering his hand from her neck, his fingers travelled until it reached her breast, caressing the heavy globes and then travelled further down until it settled on her wetness. Elle was again driven to distraction at the sensation that sparked all over her skin where his fingers trailed over that she could not focus enough to reply to his earlier question.

Another spank came while she was still in a daze, her mind still basking in the pleasure. "Answer me, princess."

"Yes." That word just seemed to be automatically pulled from her lips.

"Good girl." And then another spank landed on the same spot, sending toe-curling quivers through her core. His other hand played with her nub, causing

her womanly place to weep even more, while the other hand alternately spanked and caressed her ass, delivering a sharp hit before gliding over the reddened flesh to soothe the sting. She nearly even came at the last spank, but he pulled his hand off her, leaving her in a quandary where a jumble of pain, achiness and pleasure were fighting for dominance within her.

Hooking his hand around her neck and pulling her closer to his body, he tilted her head back and made her look at him. "Are you ready for me, princess?" he asked as his thick rod rubbed deliciously against hers. Her curved back arched even more at the stimulation, jutting her deliciously rounded breasts out provocatively that he felt like chomping down on them, leaving teeth marks on those snowy white peaks of hers. Marking her. "Open your pretty mouth and tell me."

"Y-yes." She finally said it. At that moment, the only word she had in her dictionary was 'yes'. She could not believe it, but she just could no longer take it anymore. All she wanted was for this desperate ache, this yawning void within her to be filled and satisfied. She had never thought she would feel like that she might actually die if she did not get it.

A deep, rumbling sound of satisfaction came from him as he licked the side of her neck. And then his large, long and hard body covered her. His weight pressed down on her even though there was still maybe a tiny space between them. His impossible heat infiltrated her skin, burning her everywhere.

When she felt his raging hardness prodding against her entrance, her pulse race wilder than ever. He continued rubbing himself against her in the attempt of lubing himself up with her own fluids that she soon could feel how slick he was against her folds. There was clearly no need for the aid of external lubrication here. She was wet enough to flood them down there.

His breathing was getting more ragged, vibrating, and her insides pulsed in anticipation. Waiting. He nudged at her entrance a few more times and then

withdrew, making her feel like he was teasing her and prolonging her torture. It was excruciating. But he then suddenly surged into her without warning, causing her breath to hitch for a long time. She thought that she would die from the lack of oxygen. The stretch and pinching pain was shocking that it caused her to lose her breath.

Chapter 40 Undone



"F*ck. You're as tight as I expected." He growled as his palm went to her mouth, covering it completely. "What I'm about to do will most probably cause you to scream out loud." He added in a strained voice. "Don't worry, the pain will only be temporary."

As soon as said the words, he pushed himself all the way in, eliciting a sharp cry from her mouth. Oh lord... she thought that he was already fully in with that first push! That move!! She had felt how he had penetrated her so deeply that with every inch he entered, her most private place was being spread out forcefully, accommodating his impressive girth and length. And every vein on his hot and hard rod brought unspeakable and exquisite feelings erupting within, that her mind felt as though it would meltdown from being overstimulated. There was that searing pain initially, but as he continued pressing himself further into her depths, it somehow changed until he finally was all in.

Elle felt like she could not breathe for a moment while he was panting, keeping himself still while making strained deep sounds that were coming from his throat. "Gods... f*ck... Izabelle." Sebastian used her name for the

first time since they started this, making her entire being shiver. But what surprised her the most was the seemingly tortured sound being wrenched out of him. As though she was not the one in pain but him instead. Which was a little ridiculous because even as they both stilled in their movements, she was still unable to figure out how to breathe with him stretching her out and filling her so utterly full.

"You are... really unbelievable..." he muttered. She could not see his face, but he seemed to be talking through clenched teeth. But that was barely her concern as of now.

She attempted to move forward and remove that invading rod in her insides. To escape that battering ram that would soon be staging its attack. But he held her still, wrapping his strong arms around her as he nuzzled into the crook of her neck. "Don't princess... stay still for now. You're doing good, baby. I promise you'll feel better in a little while." He whispered lowly, his warm and moist breath fanning the side of her cheek.

"But..." Elle spoke in a daze, shaking her head. "... too much. It's too much for me —" her tone was bordering on begging.

"Oh... it's not, Izabelle." He disagreed with her and started kissing her skin. It was as if little flames were descending and burning her skin at random spots. "Can't you tell you've taken me whole down to the hilt in one go? That's how amazing you are. I'll show you, princess. I'll show you how perfect my dick is for you. You were made for me to f*ck!"

And with that, he started moving. Gliding out slowly and then pushing his rock-hard length back in. Every time he pulled out, Elle gasped as though she were losing her breath. When he pushed back in, she whimpered and mewled out in intense pleasure as he stretched her out again. He was slow and patient. She still could not get used to it but the way he seemed to be giving her time

to adjust and get her normal breathing back as he murmured to her slowly had her body relaxing.

"See? You're taking me in so good. F*ck, you don't have any idea how your delicious c*nt is made just for me, Izabelle." His voice was nearly guttural. As if he was having a hard time speaking.

When she was finally starting to feel sparks arcing inside her, she felt his hand went up from her breast to tangle itself in her hair. He then fisted her hair at her nape and thrust into her. Hard.

He growled low as he screwed her. The sound of skin slapping against skin filled the air. It was suddenly so intense that Elle could hardly find the chance to pull in air to breathe. At that moment, there was nothing gentle about him. Everything was hard, powerful and penetrating.

Just as when she felt like she could no longer take it, his intensity let up and he softened quite a lot as he embraced her from behind. He held her like a lover as he rained kisses on her nape, fist loosening into a loose hold in her hair.

"F*ck. I've never tasted anyone so delectable like you, princess." He praised. "You're the most delicious wench I've ever tasted. You have no idea, Izabelle. No idea..."

Sebastian continued whispering against her ear in a deep raspy voice, calling her princess and then changing it to wench the very next moment. And every word he uttered send tingles all over her body. But what drove her crazy was when he said her name. The way her name sounded in her ears every time his thick length thrust powerfully into her depths was just... inexplicable. It seemed to sink into her entire being, branding her as belonging to him with every stab and filling her everything with so much pleasure.

"Shh... you've got to lower your voice, my lovely wench." He whispered as he continued gliding in and out of her, sometimes slowly, sometimes at a furious pace, eliciting loud moans from her that she could not stop. "They might hear you at this rate."

Her hand flew to her mouth in an attempt to muffle the sounds and she heard him let out a throaty chuckle. Pleasurable shivers ran over her skin as the laugh caused his length to jump and jerk as he was still buried deep within her tight sheath.

"Let me do it for you, princess." He said and Elle dropped her hand. He covered her mouth and then pulled out of her before slamming back into her in one smooth plunge. And there it goes. The roughness he had told her before. Signs that all his warnings were real and not just something he invented to scare her away. His hand on her mouth was restrictive – perhaps even a little punishing. The way he took her was now one of utter domination. If this was him still holding back... if this was what he calls being gentle...

His other hand suddenly came down and landed on her ass with a loud clap. Harder than before as he drove in deeper, causing her to erupt in a violent shudder that had her teeth almost chattering. She could not believe it. She came so hard. Harder than when he first made her orgasm. And she thought that first one would be her most mind-blowing orgasm.

She never thought that his roughness would have her blowing up like this.

And like what he did before, he did not stop. Did not give her the chance to come down from the high. Instead, he came again at her like an animal in heat. His voice was rumbling and feral as his hips moved faster against her. Deeper. Harder. More intense than ever. Spearing into her over and over, forcing her insides to adapt and adjust to his thickness and length. Driving her crazy with pleasure.

Her name was then torn from his mouth, and he came undone with her. Together.

Chapter 41 Perhaps



Much later...

In the bathroom, Sebastian was standing under a spray of cold shower. One hand was braced against the marble wall, his head down, staring at Izabelle's bite mark that was decorating his other hand.

There was a slightly dazed look on his face and a glint of alarm and disbelief were dancing across his still gleaming eyes. The experience he just had with Izabelle had rocked him to his core. It was like an earthquake that he had never anticipated would happen to him. Ever.

Rubbing his wet face with his palm, Sebastian combed his hair back and tilted his face up to let the water cascade down from his face. He stood there with his eyes closed for an immeasurable amount of time before he suddenly clenched his fists. One would not know what was going on within that mind of his and would expect that he was relaxed and calm, looking at his seemingly unruffled expression in the shower.

But with a tightened jaw, Sebastian's eyes flew open and when he looked down, he saw that his manhood was still as hard as a rock. A curse was torn from his mouth as he reached down and jerked himself off with the hand that Izabelle had bitten.

...

The room was utterly quiet when he returned. He silently stood there, leaning against the wall while focusing intense eyes at Izabelle who was lying on the bed. It took him long minutes before he moved and approached the bed.

Looking down at her, Sebastian's gaze bored into that fair and lovely face that was now peaceful in sleep. She had immediately dozed off after that one round, leaving him no other choice but to force himself out bed and into the bathroom to go calm himself.

Carefully lifting the covers off her, Sebastian sat beside her nude form and silently started to clean her up. He never does this. Maybe because he usually just left immediately after the act. He never sleeps next to a woman after having sex with them. And yet here he was, even handling her like she was some fragile vase. He could not explain the reason, but all he knew was that this woman was making him do things that he usually never even considered, ever since the night they met. And he hated that. He hated how she could influence him so easily.

Yet tonight... f*ck. He had come to realize how dangerous she was. For him. And the most surprising thing was that, despite how crazy she had unexpectedly turned him, he actually did not choke her in the act. Whenever he starts feeling crazy good, Sebastian usually always reaches out for his partner's neck. And he would never be able to reach his climax unless he chokes them.

So tonight, he was not expecting to feel good much less to even climax, given that he had strictly told himself never to do that to her. At least not tonight, for her sake and his as well. Because his entire family was obviously infatuated with Izabelle that his sister-in-laws even reminded him to take extra good care of her. Alexander even personally told him to treat her well. And Sebastian knew what Alexander really meant when he said that, because the man was already aware about how he played in bed.

That was why he had planned to just give her what she wanted. He had planned to drive her crazy. To make her realize how naïve she was to tell him she was going to have sex with him just once!

As planned, he knew he had succeeded in making her feel the epitome of pleasure that she had never forget and would crave for more afterwards. But what he had not banked on was her effect on him that was unprecedented. Completely unexpected. It was like a natural disaster he could do nothing about but just to ride it out.

And it was making him feel now that, between the two of them, he was the one who was screwed! Which was ridiculous!

Shaking his head, a small and wicked smirk flashed across his face. Something danced in the depths of his gleaming eyes as he stared at her peacefully sleeping face.

After staring at her like he was wondering what kind of a creature she was, Sebastian finally stretched out next to her, threading the fingers of both hands and placing them behind his head. He stared at the ceiling, wide-awake for more than thirty minutes until he felt her scooting over to him.

He stiffened a little at the feel of her seemingly fragile hand that had crept around his waist, but he did not do anything to it. He just allowed her to hug him and shared her warmth.

...

It was dawn when Elle finally woke up. She found herself spooned so intimately from behind by Sebastian that she did not dare to move for a long time.

Everything was shocking her right now. She could hardly believe everything that had happened last night and now this. The feeling that this moment evoked within her... with him holding her so intimately as though he held her

dear, had her heart warming up. She could feel her heart melting and she could only allow her eyes to flutter close, wondering if it was a mistake to let herself revel in this feeling. Wondering if it was okay for her to expect that after what happened between them last night, perhaps something has changed.

She could still remember the sound of his voice, especially when he called out her name. She could still remember how insanely good he had made her feel... it was like they were imprinted on her insides and outsides. He had literally branded her as his.

When she recalled all the praises that she had heard from him during their joining, her face heated up. Her heartbeat raced and she bit down on her lips to stop a smile that was trying to break free.

He suddenly groaned behind her, causing her to still in his embrace.

And what she heard next had that smile quickly fading. Those words were turning her warmed up heart back to stone cold ice. "A... li... sa..." he muttered as his hold on her tightened. "... li... sa..."

Chapter 42 If You Say So



When Sebastian woke up, he found that he was alone on the bed. His brows creased a little as he looked next to him. Putting his hand on the empty spot beside him, he felt that it was cool to the touch. She must have left for quite a while already.

Climbing off the bed, Sebastian went to the window and pushed the curtains aside to gaze outside. It was still quite early in the morning. Was Izabelle an early bird?

Still, he had not expected her to be the first to leave the bed. And to think that he was not woken up when she left.

The lines between his forehead deepened and his expression darkened as he realized that he was already thinking of nothing else, but all things related to her as soon as he woke up. Why did such a thing even matter to him?

Displeasure was etched over his handsome face as he strode over to the bathroom. The woman can do whatever she wanted. It was not like she had to wait for him to get up.

By the time he was done getting ready and left their room, his expression was now devoid of any readable emotions.

"Your Highness," a butler approached him and bowed in greeting, "if you're looking for the princess, she's having tea in the garden with Madam Abigail."

Sebastian's eyes twitched as he looked at the butler, his mood suddenly souring, causing the butler's eyes to dart to the side and tensed up. He was not sure what he had done wrong for the prince to look at him like that. All he did was to inform him of the princess' whereabouts.

"Yo! Sebby!" Alexander's voice rang out from behind him, granting the perfect excuse for the butler to escape. The butler bowed low to Sebastian, immediately turning around and leaving after excusing himself.

...

In the garden, Elle and Abigail were merrily chatting over tea and finger food prepared by the kitchen, while enjoying the morning sun when Alexander arrived with Sebastian in tow. Elle's smile faltered slightly for a moment when

she lifted her gaze and met Sebastian's stormy eyes. But she was quick to flash him a smile before turning to face Abigail again as the two men settled themselves next to their respective wives.

"You're set to visit Keria tomorrow, aren't you? Seb?" Alexander asked and when Sebastian nodded, Alex sighed. "Do you need my help in cancelling it?" Elle's eyes widened at Alexander's suggestion and the man immediately noticed her expression and smiled understandingly at her. "Well, it's not fair for you both as newlyweds to immediately jump back into work, right? You two deserve a honeymoon – even if it is a short one – so I guess the visit to Keria could only be cancelled." He explained to her, causing Elle to blush.

However, she quickly shook her head in response. "Oh, I think... uhm... that might not be a good idea. The people and everyone in that place must've already been waiting and it would be a let-down to them if after all their preparations, we send word for it to get cancelled at the last moment. That would not be respectful to them, right?" Elle's gaze alternated from Alexander to Sebastian as she spoke.

She had the experience of being heavily criticized before because she had cancelled out on one of her scheduled visits to a certain town in Dalenn. She had come down with a high fever that very morning of the scheduled visit, causing it to be cancelled as she was just too sick to even get out of bed. Though they had released an official statement, the people still criticized her, saying she had feigned illness to cover up on her laziness carrying out her duties.

The topic had gone so out of hand that she got a slap from her father. And since then, she had never missed a single scheduled event. She always attends it whether she was feeling sick or not.

The thought of gossip news breaking out and talking bad about Prince Sebastian cancelling an important visit just to go on a honeymoon was

something Elle wanted to avoid at all costs. Keria was a beautiful and prosperous country located in the Northern Pacific. It was an overseas territory of Viscarria and Elle was aware of how valuable Keria was to the country's economy. Because even though Viscarria was not a popular spot for tourists, Keria, which was located quite far away from Viscarria was one. It was known as a paradise getaway and many affluent people visit the place, hence the tourism's boom.

Citizens in Keria were also mostly consisted of rich and powerful people. Making it all riskier for Sebastian, because Elle knew just how much power rich people have in ruining someone's reputation.

"So, I think Sebastian should just go. Our honeymoon can wait... right?" she faced Sebastian, holding on to his arm as she said that to him with a smile. "It's not that we are in a rush."

"Well, our Elle is right about this. I, too, think it's better for you not to cancel it, even if you can." Abigail agreed with Elle's suggestion and Alexander only responded to her with her with a nod.

Something danced across Sebastian's eyes as he gulped down the liquid in his glass. "If you say so." Was all he muttered, looking away from his wife.

Alexander watched as Izabelle seemed to breathe out in relief while Sebastian's face certainly turned a shade darker. It was obvious to Alex that the man did not want to agree. He bit off a mischievous smile as he stared at Sebastian.

"Well... there is one other way. You both could go together, right? Sebby can see to his work and at the same time spend your honeymoon there. Keria is the perfect place for honeymooners." Alexander said slyly and he could no longer hide his amusement when Sebastian's mood seemed to light up a little. Looks like the lad has it bad for his little wife. But Alex wondered if he was

even aware of it himself. This should be interesting to watch. And it was a big relief because with this, it seems, there was no need for Abi to worry about Izabelle anymore.

Chapter 43 Bad Idea



Elle spent the rest of the day playing and getting better acquainted with Abi and her adorable and incredibly smart twins. She made sure to keep herself occupied and not have any free time to think and be depressed. To her relief, Abi's company and the children had her completely enjoying the day. The twins were just too precious and precocious that it was impossible to not enjoy being in their presence.

But evening came around too quickly for Elle and before she knew it, it was already time for Abi and her family to leave and return to their own residence. They were supposed to leave earlier in the afternoon along with Prince Skyler and his wife, but Abi decided after their morning tea and had Alex postpone and rescheduled their flight to later tonight. Though she felt a little bad for the trouble, it was something Elle was so thankful for. That way, she would not be left alone and to her own devices too early in the day.

She really liked Abigail and her family. Even after enjoying the entire day with them, she still could not get enough of her and the little ones. And now that they were leaving, she could not explain how sullen she felt. This was just a little too unbelievable, considering the fact that she had just met the woman only yesterday. It somehow felt as though she had already known Abi for a long time. Was it only a little more than 24 hours that they were introduced to each other?

But here she was, holding back her emotions as Abi hugged her goodbye. "We'll definitely visit again as soon as possible." Abi whispered to her, obviously being emotional as well while giving the younger woman a tight squeeze.

And soon, they finally left, with Alexander tactfully dragging his wife away, claiming that they would miss the flight if they were any later. That goodbye left her standing there next to Sebastian, waving at the car that was getting smaller as it drove towards the horizon.

...

The steam from the hot shower curled and spread through the bathroom. Elle had her eyes closed as she relaxed her muscles, letting the warm water cascade down her face.

It had been a joyful and busy day, but now that Abi and everyone else were no longer in the castle, it was like she had taken away the sun along with her departure. Now the castle felt dark, cold and kind of gloomy.

Elle knew that this feeling was also due to the thought that had been niggling at the back of her mind. Now that she was alone, and had all the free time to think, the matter that she had been forcing out of her heart and mind since she woke up at dawn have now reemerged to occupy her mind. Causing an abundance of chaos and messy thoughts to clutter her mind.

Thinking about it, Elle remembered their talk this morning about Keria. She had not wanted to go to that place. That paradise of a place was a place she would never want to visit ever again. Because that place held a nightmare, one that she knew she never would be able to forget for the rest of her life. Just the thought of her going there was enough to make goosebumps writhe and crawl all over her skin. And that was why she had tried her best to stay

quiet and hide her emotions when Alexander suggested that she could go there with Sebastian for their honeymoon.

And that was not the only reason. She also did not want to go there or anywhere else for that matter, with Sebastian. Much less to have a honeymoon together. That would be nothing but pure foolishness on her part.

After he had sleep talked and called out some other woman's name while still holding onto her, Elle felt like reality had slapped her hard in the face. She had been enlightened. Now, she had sworn never to let her guard down against him ever again. She would keep her word. Last night would be the first and the last.

Last night was nothing but a lustful moment. They did not even kiss. She did not even touch even a fraction of his skin. She had not even the chance to embrace him while they joined to become one. What happened between them was just plain brainless f*cking, not love-making.

So that was it. She must stand her ground and stay clearheaded and focus on keeping her words. Unless she wanted to hear him calling out other women's name again after having sex with her.

A bitter smirk spread across her lips. Was Alisa that beautiful woman she had seen with him going into that restaurant? Was she the one always calling him?

Elle squeezed her eyes closed, hating how these things could stir her thoughts and emotions. It was infuriating because she had already expected this! She was supposed to have prepared her mind!

Taking a long and deep breath, Elle fought for calmness. When she opened her eyes again, determination gleamed in her eyes as the earlier stormy depths have cleared and quietened down. Her will was solid as the ancient glaciers again.

By the time she left the bathroom, she saw him sitting there again, sipping at wine from a glass in his hand.

Their gazes held. "I have something I wanted to tell you, Sebastian." Elle broke the heavy silence.

"Go on." he twirled the wine in his glass slowly as he waited for her to speak.

"I'm sorry, but I don't want to go to Keria with you." She quickly spoke after drawing in a breath.

The motions of his hand immediately stilled as his fingers tightened imperceptibly around the stem of the glass. His gaze twitched.

Elle swallowed nervously and tried to explain. She did not want to, but she still needed to be careful and try to not get on his nerves too much.

She tried to make her tone sound mature and reasonable. "Like we had agreed last night, I won't be having sex with you again. So... a honeymoon would be a bad idea for both of us, right? That's why I don't see the need to go with you. I will stay here in the castle and do my duties here as the crown princess in your absence."

Chapter 44 First Time



Following her statement that was rather reasonable – in her mind, that is – a heavy silence filled the room.

Sebastian's expression seemed to darken, looking as though what she had just said was something utterly ridiculous and highly unacceptable. But Elle inwardly shook her head and sighed, telling herself realistically that there was no way Sebastian was getting upset over this matter. He probably was, but

she thought that it must be because he just wanted to have more sessions of sex with her, or his pride might have been hurt because she was not begging him to have sex with her again.

Well, if that did not happen. If she had not heard him uttering some other woman's name repeatedly in his sleep, she most probably would be unable to stand her ground against him after all that mind-blowing experience he had introduced to her. But it was all thanks to his sleep talk that she came back to her senses. Because whatever desire she had for getting together sexually with him was now being completely overcome by her will to shut her doors from here on out. She was really glad now on how they did not mention anything about sex in their agreement.

When Sebastian did not speak even a single word and just sat there with his darkened expression, Elle turned and moved to the bed. She did not see how his jaws clenched ever so tightly and how his hands itched to crush and break the glass he was holding. If she had looked a little closer and paid more attention to him, she would have seen that his whole frame was trembling slightly with the efforts of holding back his anger and lashing out mindlessly.

Elle stood by the bed and instead of climbing onto it, she stretched out and reached for the pillow she had slept on and held onto it.

Sebastian's eyes narrowed as he watched her every action. "What are you doing?" his deep voice finally broke the silence. It was a booming sound that had shocked Elle and caused her to startle a little, as she did not think he would speak to her.

Slowly, Elle turned to him, clutching the pillow tightly in her hands. He could see her knuckles whiten slightly as she fisted her hands in her pillow, hugging it so forcefully as though it could be her shield. "For both of our sakes... I don't think I should sleep next to you tonight. I wouldn't want to spark any possible rumors, so I won't ask to use another room. But I'll be sleeping on the couch."

His eyes stretched a little wider hearing her explanation. Then she saw a muscle in his jaw ticked. But Elle ignored his display of displeasure and took a step towards the couch. Her movements were stilted and stiff as she still felt uncomfortable having his steely eyes focused so intently on her. Though she did not know what he was thinking, she knew that at the very least, he was highly displeased with how she was going about doing this. But even so, she kept repeating within her mind, like a mantra, 'I need to stay away and stay focused' and continued heading for the couch that was on the other side of the room.

"You stop right there, Izabelle." He growled out somewhat roughly. His voice was not loud nor was it fierce, but it rumbled so darkly that Elle immediately stilled herself from taking another step. She could tell that he was really mad now and his piercing glare on her had her heartbeat picking up its pace.

But then he shut his eyes closed and a long and deep breath escaped his lips. When he opened his eyes again, those grey orbs were back to being calm and composed again. However, the set of his jaws still gave her the sign that his dark emotions were not gone at all. They were just being forcefully suppressed. She was impressed that he could suppress his emotions so quickly within a couple of seconds. If she had not been looking straight at him, she would have thought that he was not even upset in the first place.

"I will never allow my wife to sleep anywhere but in a comfortable. Freaking. Bed. And you better catch on quick, Izabelle." he said lowly, causing Elle to find her heart skipping a beat at those words and the way he was looking at her now. That was... the very first time he had ever uttered the words 'my wife'. It was the first time she heard him admitting out loud and acknowledging that she was his wife. She had always thought he would never verbally declare and recognize her as his legally wedded wife. Hearing those words somehow caused her resolve to waver for a tiny fraction of a second.

She pressed her lips together tightly. Her mind was quick to criticize her heart's reaction, reminding herself that she must not fall for his sweet and wicked mouth again. Because that was the same and sweet mouth that had called out another woman's name while he was deeply asleep.

Tipping her chin up in defiance, Elle responded in her calm voice, "Please do not worry. For me, the couch is quite comfortable. It's not like I have never slept in couches before. To tell you the truth, I really like sleeping on the couch. It affords one a kind of firmness that the bed can never have."

His face darkened once again at her rejection. Somehow, Elle mused that her being able to make him react like this seemed to be doing wonders in her. It feels as though it was making her braver to stand her ground and not back off.

He gulped down another large mouthful of his wine after hissing out what sounded like a curse under his breath. Then he sprung from his chair, slamming his glass down on the side table a little firmly that Elle was amazed that the stem did not break into half from the impact.

With such a heavy and dark air around him, Sebastian strode towards the bathroom and shut the door firmly behind him.

A couple of long and deep sighs flowed from Elle's lips. She told herself that she had done well as she went ahead and settled on the couch. What she did was the right thing. She was not going to be the naïve wife who would just sit there and cause herself more possible pain in the future. All she had to do was stand her ground and safeguard her heart. After all, they would divorce one day. And she suspected it would be sooner rather than later. And she would be fine.

Lying on the couch, Elle allowed her eyes to flutter close. She had worn a fluffy and warm pajama, so she did not need any blanket. The lap blanket was enough to make her comfortable since the room's temperature was not cold.

Letting out another long sigh, Elle tried to relax. And thankfully, she was able to loosen up and soon, she finally felt like falling asleep. But her eyes flew wide open at the feel of hands grabbing her.

Her eyes circled as she gasped, finding herself being lifted from the couch by Sebastian himself.

Chapter 44 First Time



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Sebastian had moved so stealthily that she had not heard him approaching her at all! He had gone ahead and scooped her up, then turned around and carried her towards the massive bed on the other side of the room and then dropped her, but with his arms still behind her.

He was not gentle. She could feel what seemed like anger seeping out copiously from his skin. He had not bothered to keep it contained anymore. And when she lifted her gaze and their eyes met... she saw a veritable storm dancing wildly within his metallic grey orbs. It was as if she could almost see tiny sparks of lightning striking within those grey depths.

He lowered his face closer to hers as he pinned her back into the bed. "You really do find joy in driving me crazy, don't you?" he hissed right into her ears. His eyes narrowed. At that moment, he did not even bother masking his emotions anymore. He was... way past livid right now.

"F*ck..." he half bit on his lower lip but to Elle, he looked like he only did that to stop whatever it was that was about to leave his mouth. Then a sardonic smirk flashed across his face for a moment before his expression turned serious again. "Fine. I'm leaving. So, you stay here and sleep in our f*cking bed. I'm not that ungentlemanly to let my own wife sleep on the couch." He pulled away roughly as soon as those words left his mouth. She had no time to process that before he was no longer hovering over her.

Elle's eyes blinked and widened after a few seconds when she realized that she was no longer held down. She immediately propped herself up before looking at him with shock when she noticed that he was already dressed. However, he had not changed into his pajamas, but into a casual attire – a pair of black pants and white long-sleeved shirt. Though simple and basic, with his tall figure, broad shoulders and lean waist, the effect was too good. A sudden rush of desire for him surged within her but she quickly tamped it down by biting down hard on her inner cheeks. The pain managed to push the

lust back. However, she was brought back to the present happenings, seeing Sebastian heading towards the door.

"W-where are you going?" she asked almost frantically as his hand had already reached out for the doorknob. She did not know why she was suddenly so desperate for him not to leave their room.

He looked over his shoulder while pulling the door open. His expression was again, unfathomable. "I'll be heading over to Keria earlier than planned. You can stay back." Was all he said, before shutting the door closed behind him with a slightly loud bang, not even giving her any chance to respond to him.

When Sebastian reached the garage, his mood was so dark and heavy that the guards stationed there were too intimidated to approach him. Only Lucas stepped up and opened the car's door for him before he reached it.

"Where to, Your Highness?" Lucas asked. The ginger-head was wondering who had made Sebastian's mood drop to such new depths that he had never seen before. Well, he wanted to really know because anyone who could elicit this kind of reaction from this man was worth investigating! Must be an interesting person indeed.

"Keria." Sebastian snapped impatiently.

"Okay... wait, what? N-now?!" Lucas had not expected this.

"Yes." Sebastian climbed into the driver's seat, causing Lucas to blink in confusion for a moment before he rushed towards the passenger seat. But when he opened it, Sebastian stopped him. "You will stay behind and guard my wife, Lucas. I'm leaving her safety to you." He commanded and the moment the door slammed shut, his car immediately accelerated and screeched out of the garage.

Soon, he was speeding up the highway. He had wound down his window, allowing the chilly wind to blow on him, tussling his dark hair and messing it up. But his mood did not get any better.

He could not believe all the things that she had said. Did he not make their first night together one hell of an experience for her? He was quite sure that she had been so saturated with pleasure that she could not even think straight. Even when they had reached their peaks together, he had remembered to take note of how she was glowing from the pleasure of their joining.

So, what the hell was wrong with her now? Why was it that she seemed to be hellbent on never wanting to have sex with him again? How could she not want him, crave for him after tasting the immensity of the sensual pleasure he could bring her?

His jaws tightened as he barely stopped himself from punching his fist into the wheel. Then a sudden thought came to him that made his expression soften a little. 'Could it be that... could it be that he had been too rough on her...?? No... there's no way...'

The moment that thought crossed his mind, he immediately threw that thought away in the next second, causing his face to harden again. He had made sure she had experienced a pleasure she has never known. He had seen it with his own eyes how she had reacted to his skillful maneuvering. He had felt and remembered how much her body had loved his touches, his kisses on her skin, his stimulating words, his rock-hard d*ck. Hell, last night, he was certain she was as crazy for him as he was for her! Yet now it seemed that he was the only one who was dying to be inside her again. What the hell was the problem?!! He could not seem to figure it out.

As he was alone in the car, he allowed himself to groan out loud. He could not believe what was going on with him. He could not believe he was feeling and

acting like this, just over a woman! This is so unlike him! He could not believe that he was running away like this because he was afraid that he would not be able to control himself around her. He could not believe that all it took was just one taste of her sweetness, was enough to make him lust for her to such an extent that he had never known before.

Chapter 46 Invitation



Three days later...r

Sebastian was standing by a floor to ceiling window, overlooking a beautiful harbor. His expression was grim, and a disbelieving smirk was gracing his handsome face as Lucas went on to report on his daily account. It was all mostly on Isabelle's situation and the daily activities that she was keeping herself occupied with. r

"So, you're saying that she had not asked anything about me at all?"

Sebastian's deep voice echoed in the thick silence that had followed after Lucas took a breath. His face had darkened even more and seemed to be covered with a layer of frost. The atmosphere around him was so chilly to the point that even Lucas could not help but shiver a little – even if he was over the phone. r

"The princess had been pretty busy, Your Highness. She's actually been quite dedicated in carrying out her royal duties already, even though you both have been hardly married for a week. She has even attended a few important events on your behalf as, coincidentally, there had been quite a number of events happening during this period." Lucas blabbered on without pausing on the other side of the phone as if he did not want to give Sebastian a chance to

interrupt in the middle of his report. "But don't worry Your Highness, I believe the reason she had not asked anything about you is surely because she's too busy. Also, she might still be a bit shy to ask me on when you will be heading back. The princess is also such an animated lady. Everyone could not help but adore her with her bright and approachable and graceful character. I can assure you that she's pretty comfortable and happy carrying out her duties here. So I don't think there is anything you need to worry about. I believe she's truly enjoying the last few days on her own, despite your absence. It does not seem as though she's putting up a front." Lucas mentioned to Sebastian in a reassuring tone.

Sebastian's jaws clenched as he heard Lucas' words and his eyes closed tightly. "Are you telling me that she's actually happy and comfortable? Because I'm not there?" he snapped at Lucas after keeping silent for a couple of seconds. His voice remained calm, but his face was even darker with displeasure now. Thankfully Lucas was on the other side of the phone. He could not have imagined how scary Sebastian would look right now, going by his calm tone.

There was a short silence before Lucas managed to speak again. "Err... I don't think that's what my entire report meant, Your Highness. I mean... that's not the point or I should say that I don't think that's the case. Well anyway, why don't you call her if you miss her so much, Prince Sebastian?" Lucas straight up asked Sebastian the question that had been on his mind the past few days. He did not know why Sebastian was going through him to check on the princess.

Sebastian rubbed the back of his neck. He ended the call and threw the phone onto the couch, but it did not help vent his irritation.

He had left abruptly that night hoping to cool his head. He had thought that he was just still high on her or something. He had thought all of those feelings

were only temporary. And that he only needed some time off to cool his head and everything will return to normal. He was confident that her potent effect on him would eventually dissipate over time. r

But three days had come and gone, but there was no cooling down happening at all. He still felt the same as that night he left her! In fact, it was as though the feeling had intensified! As if three f*cking days had not passed at all. And the worse thing was that he could not seem to bear it any longer. r

A buzz pulled at his attention, and he went to pick up the phone he had just thrown onto the couch. It was a notification of an incoming text. r

[Lucas: Just to remind you, Your Highness that tonight is Elijah's birthday celebration. Her Highness had been invited to attend in your place. Though I tried my best to discourage the princess from going, she did not listen to me. She told me that she was obliged to attend because Elijah is her brother-in-law and an important member of the royal family. Sorry, I did my best. But don't worry, I will not let anything bad happen to her.]r

Sebastian's expression immediately changed upon reading this text. His eyes widened and as soon as he grabbed his coat, he quickly disappeared from the room. r

...r

In one of the most famous and luxurious hills in Quesa, proudly stood Elijah's, the fourth prince's modern mansion. r

It was not designed to look like the olden castles or palaces. In fact, it was a home with the most advance architecture one would find comparable to the best in world. If one looks at it from above, they would see massive pools situated tastefully around the grounds and even on some flat-topped roof of the house. It was nothing but an elaborate display of modern wealth. A

mansion that could accommodate a huge number of guests and even more cars. r

When Izabelle and Lucas arrived, the first thing Izabelle noticed was the luxurious top-of-the-line cars parked around. That alone was enough to tell her what kind of people Elijah's guests were. r

The truth was that Elle had been feeling a little hesitant in attending this party. She could not help but feel curious at how everyone in the family had unanimously told her she did not need to attend it. And then, even Lucas had tried to persuade her not to go. Even when she told him she would go, the man had continued trying to convince her to turn it down. When she asked Lucas the reason why, the man went silent for a moment before saying that Sebastian never attends Elijah's birthday. r

Of course, she had asked again, but Lucas did not want to answer her anymore. He only said that the two princes did not get along well. Elle also remembered that Sebastian had warned her about Elijah previously. But in the end, she still decided to go. It was not because she was disregarding everyone's words, but she just thought that it would not be good for her to decline such an important invitation. Elijah was one of the princes of the Reign royalty. She had gone to many other events and even attended a Duke's daughter's birthday just the night before. So it would definitely come across as disrespectful if she now rejected the prince's invitation when she did not have any good enough excuses at the moment. r

So, she could only go. She had never met Elijah yet, but she wanted to meet him, nonetheless. At least once. She could not help but be curious on why this one particular prince seemed to be kind of disliked not only by Sebastian but by everyone. r

"Your Highness," Lucas leaned on her as the two walked down a black carpet. She had raised a brow seeing that instead of a red carpet, a black one was

used. "Please don't forget what I told you, okay? Please make sure to never stray away from me. Everyone's wearing a mask at this party, hence making it harder for me to trust anyone for your safety."r

Chapter 47 Reward



Knowing how important the talk of her safety was, Elle nodded firmly at Lucas. She was already used to being guarded and the fact that the way Lucas had been guarding her ever since they stepped into this place from the beginning was something she did not find annoying and suffocating at all. It was so unlike the way her father and Brandon Haze had been guarding her from before. r

"I understand. Don't worry, I will try to excuse myself early tonight." She assured Lucas and then the two finally arrived inside.r

The party's motif was a dark masquerade, so everyone was dressed in something gothic and dark. All the guests' faces were covered with glamorous and interesting masks. r

Elle was holding her black mask inspired by a phoenix wing. She was dressed in a chiffon black-to-red gradient one-shoulder dress. Shimmery sequins decorated the strap crossing her right shoulder and also along the gathers just above the left waist. A gothic black Victorian lace necklace with black diamonds decorated her slender swan-like neck. She also put on a long open fingered black laced gloves that reached her elbows. On her dainty feet, black stiletto heels with straps going round the ankles and down the front, as well as red soles gave her an additional height to her already perfect height. To complete her ensemble, she had on smokey eyeshadow, black-to-red

gradient nail polish, a red garnet flower black shiny gold ring on her ring finger and a vintage black large velvet bow clipped to hold half her hair back.r

Though she could not see everyone's expression, Elle had immediately felt gazes turning to fall on her. It was like all eyes turned and focused on her. Trying her best to stay calm, she continued walking in gracefully until they reached their assigned table. The place was dimly lit but was really beautiful. It was like a scene from a dark fairytale. The ceiling was dark but silver chandeliers hung above, lit up by long taper candles. It gave her the feeling that they were back in the past. It was a complete contrast to the exterior of this modern mansion.r

Somehow, Elle could not help but be amazed at the atmosphere of this party. She had been to many parties before, but this was the first time she had been invited to a party this extreme. The dark fairytale theme had been perfectly executed. And to think that even the feel of it gave her goosebumps. Like there was something sinister hanging in the air, something dark lingering in the beauty of everything and everyone. Just exactly what one would be expecting of a dark fairytale. Whoever the organizers and designers were, they had truly nailed the theme. And did the guests received any script to follow or some orders to stare at the other guests with those creepy gazes beneath their masks? r

"Are you okay, Princess?" Lucas asked. For some reason, the man seemed a little too concerned about her tonight. Was he worried she would get nervous with this setup? r

She smiled at him. "Don't worry. Actually, this is quite thrilling." She whispered to him. "Not the same old party I've gotten so used to. The atmosphere is pretty amazing. It's so realistic!" she gushed.r

Lucas could only fall speechless at her words and let her be. r

Soon, the party started. Like what Elle said, it was not the usual formal birthday party she had been expecting. It was completely something new to her. r

They started even without the birthday man appearing at all yet. There were no usual formalities whatsoever like that announcement of important guests. They just went straight to the main event, and everyone started enjoying the dancing and games held along the sides of the large hall. r

Soon, the games started to level up, at least in terms of sinisterness. The host began a mystery murder game that truly had Elle's heartbeat rushing so wild. The actors were so... they were so good. So realistic. Even the vampire actor who had bitten a woman to death seemed so real that Elle could not help but cover her mouth at the scent that had filled the air when the woman was dropped on the floor acting dead. That's definitely a scent of real blood, right? Did they have to go so far as to using real blood? r

A spotlight suddenly focused on Elle and the host asked her who she thinks was the real murderer among the four suspects in the stage. Elle was so distracted and felt like she was watching a real horror movie that she did not have the capacity to act as the detective right then. So, to get the spotlight off her, she just pointed a random person who she thought was most likely the culprit. r

To her shocked surprised, the host yelled 'correct' and everyone congratulated her. What?!! She got a lucky guess? r

"Congratulations my lady. You are the luckiest lady for tonight because your reward is..." the host gestured her hand and then people cleared a path. r

A tall man was walking down the dark carpet. He had on a crazily elaborate mask that covered the entirety of his face. It was covered with all types of gemstones – all in black and gold hues – giving him a very freaky yet attractive vibe. Only his eyes were visible, and they shone and sparkled with a

dark interest as he stared at her. He was dressed all in black from head to toe. The only color in his clothing was on his black outer coat that had gold embroidered Victorian themed patterns all over it. Elle could not help but to be in awe at how he came across as super luxurious even though dressed in all black and with tinges of gold.

The atmosphere seemed to turn even heavier and

Elle wasn't sure why but her heartbeat picked up so wildly as the man approached her.

Chapter 48 Waltz



A/N: I'm listening to The Vampire Masquerade by Peter Gundry while writing this chap. Just sharing in case some of you want background music while reading. ^^

No matter how Elle tried to calm down her wild heartbeats, her heart seemed to be insistent on disobeying her mind. She was getting incredibly nervous every step the person came closer. Was it because of this prince's somewhat inexplicable air around him? Now that he was near her, Elle even could not help but feel a little shiver running down her spine. She had never felt anything like this when she met the other members of the Reign family. Was she kind of scared or was she just creeped out at how freaky his mask was?

Now that he was closer and she saw his mask's details, Elle noted the line of sharp teeth indicating the mouth area on his mask. The sight of all the details were just truly, unsettling to say the least.

He finally stopped before her. Elle found herself fighting for calm again, yet she kept her chin lifted and her bearing composed as though nothing was bothering her. Looking up at him. His height was probably just an inch shorter if compared to Sebastian's. But there was his aura. She could sense something off about him, but she could not quite put her finger on what was the problem. It did not give the similar feeling of something dark and intense or mysterious like Sebastian's. And it definitely was not something warm or light and normal either. It was simply hard to describe or something that one could not even figure out.

"Good evening, my lady." He bowed so gentlemanly. His voice was smooth, a little deep and... surprisingly polite and pleasing to the ears. Somehow, his voice and actions were a contrast to what she had been expecting from all the warnings she had gotten on her not attending this party. "I'm glad you didn't reject my invitation for my party."

"It was my pleasure, Prince Elijah." Elle managed to give an immediate and gracious response. "There's no way I would miss attending such an important event." She smiled at him.

,m "You are looking as gorgeous as I have heard." He responded and she saw his grey eyes gleaming from behind that truly unique mask of his, indicating that he might have just smiled at her. Before she could say 'thank you', he continued. "May I have this dance, my lady?"

He extended his hand to her in another gentlemanly move. But what Elle had noticed first was his black leather glove. The sight of it immediately reminded her of Sebastian.

Forcing herself to stop thinking about Sebastian for the nth time, Elle placed her gloved hand on his. There was no way she could reject his offer right in his face. She had no real reason to. And she had already prepared herself for this since she knew that this country did not have any strict protocol on their royalty regarding matters like this.

Even so, Elle was not planning to just accept any man's invitation to dance, just in case a few others would later invite her to dance. She only planned to accept a dance request from her brother-in-law in case he asked because it was his party. And maybe just one or two more with someone she might be comfortable with. She just wanted to avoid any rumors that might spark if she only danced with the prince and rejects everyone else.

"I hope you do waltz, my lady. But if you don't, please let me know. I believe I am familiar with every decent types of dances there are out there. So I can definitely make the adjustments for you." His words flowed so smoothly that Elle just found herself relaxing and smiling at him again.

"That's very considerate of you, Prince Elijah. But worry not, I can waltz. Any decent princess worth her salt should be able to waltz well enough, don't you think so?" she joked lightly.

"Perfect then. And I'm sure you are more than a decent princess, right?" Elijah then winked at her.

Elle glanced over her shoulder at Lucas and saw the man taking a half step towards her, obviously on the verge of stopping her. So, Elle smiled reassuringly at him and discreetly gestured that it was alright as she allowed Prince Elijah to lead her slowly towards the empty dance floor. Somehow, at the moment, her nervousness towards Elijah had subsided that she started to wonder if her initial impression about him was just being overexaggerated and was perhaps influenced by the atmosphere. Because right now, this man did not seem dangerous to her. At all.

When they stood in the middle of the dance floor, Elijah stared at her with a look that seemed to be promising her much enjoyment. And then the music started and flowed melodiously around the large hall.

They began to waltz along with the music, their steps going in time with the beat. He danced with so much grace that Elle, who had mastered the textbook waltz since she was young was finding herself being amazed at his skill. It was like he has had decades more practice compared to her. But that was just impossible, because she could tell he was probably at most, just a few years older than her. How much difference could that few years make even if he did practice dancing daily?

"You're pretty amazing, Prince Elijah." Elle complimented him genuinely when the dance slowed down a little. She could really feel the extent of this man's experience, especially with regards to women's bodies. But he was a gentleman, and his hands that were placed on her were nothing but respectful. He held her with assurance and poise, that Elle was starting to really feel she could really depend on him.

"And so are you, my lady." His eyes smiled down at her. "I hope you have been enjoying your stay in the castle so far?" He probed mildly.

"Yes. Everyone has been so welcoming. The people, places and things that can be found in this country is truly amazing." Elle did not hold back on her praises and was generous in her compliments.

"That's a relief to know. But sooner or later, I'm sure you'd start to see something you have never expect." His voice was suggesting something else that she did not know. Elle knew he was trying to pique her interest.

"Like what? Pray tell, Prince Elijah." Elle replied in an airy tone with mock curiosity.

Something flashed in Elijah's eyes as he stared at her. But Elle did not catch what it was as he suddenly moved a little closer to her and whispered lowly. "Bloodsuckers... like the one you saw earlier."

Chapter 49 Secret



Background music: Derek Fiechter's Masquerade of the ghosts and Alex Roe's Dance of the blood.

Elle almost stumbled because of what Elijah had just whispered to her. But thank God he was smooth enough to prevent that from happening and gracefully managed to continue their dance as if nothing had happened at all.

She was just thankful that the upper half of her face was covered with her phoenix wing inspired mask right now or else everyone would be audience to how embarrassed she was for almost tripping while dancing. Oh lord... she truly needed to keep her presence of mind running at full force! She could not believe she almost fell for what he just said! This man was really amazing to be able to talk so believably like that! To think that he even managed to send shivers down her spine was truly a feat in itself. Elijah could really pass as one of the world's best actors!

Forcing out a soft chuckle, Elle decided to play along his skit to perfection. "Vampires, hmm..." she paused for a moment to achieve what she hoped was a believable contemplation on her part. "I think I won't mind catching a glimpse of a real one. As long as he is not out for my blood."

For a moment, Elle saw an interesting complexity flash past his eyes. She was focused on his eyes just because she really could not stand how creepily beautiful his mask was up close.

"What will you do if I tell you that this place that you thought is a perfect paradise is actually hiding a deep dark secret?"

"Well, every place always has that, does it not? There is truly no place that is perfect – just the illusion that makes it seem so. Just like us... places have their own dark sides too."

A low and throaty chuckle came from him. "That's true," he admitted. And then, his voice and gaze became serious again. "So, you're saying that you have your own dark side...? I'm curious to know because you're too bright that one wouldn't believe that you have even a spot of darkness in you."

It was Elle's turn to smile. "Even the bright moon has a dark side, Prince Elijah."

"But I don't think you're a moon, my lady. You're much brighter than that."

Elle blinked and he continued. "You're more of a sun. And the sun doesn't have any dark sides. It is the source of light."

Speechless, Elle almost gasped at his words but she stopped herself and laughed quietly. "You're unexpectedly smooth, Prince Elijah."

"Unexpected..." he echoed, sounding curious. "Now I'm curious to know what you had been expecting."

"I'm just... my first impression of you is that talking to you would be awkward. But it seems that I was wrong. You felt friendlier than I had thought you would be. And I'm truly relieved for that matter."

"Did any of my family members made you feel awkward?" he asked her in a kind tone.

"Oh, no! Not at all!" Elle said without hesitation, "In fact, I enjoyed chatting with each one of them. It's just that my conversation with the other men in the family weren't like what we're having right now. I think it's because my conversation with them, except for Alexander, had usually been serious – formal I should say. I was honestly expecting you to be kind of serious as well, as this is our very first meeting." She beamed at him. She had wanted to let him know she was truly glad he was comfortable with joking around with her and did not need to remain so serious. If he was, Elle was afraid that she might be so tensed up right now, especially with that creepy mask of his and the incredibly uncanny atmosphere.

She made a turn and when she was close to him, she nearly gasped because he seemed to have reduced the distance between them. Before she could take a step back to maintain their earlier distance, Elle was frozen still at the dark whisper she heard. "What if I tell you that our conversation had never been a joke and was always serious since the very beginning?"

The words he said had Elle unable to respond. Something in his voice just made her feel like wanting to push herself as far away from him as possible. But... this man was just acting again, right? It must be! There was no way their conversation was serious! Only a child would think it was!

Taking a silent breath to regain her composure, Elle forced out another laugh. "You almost got me there. You are such a hell of an actor, Prince Elijah. Color me impressed."

"Then do you want to hear a secret, my lady?" he asked as though he did not hear what she had just said. And the pace of her heartbeat only increased at that statement. She also started to wonder why the music was not ending yet. A waltz like this should have long ended already and yet... it still seemed to be dragging on? Was this only because she was starting to feel nervous? And what secret was he going to disclose?

She feigned curiosity even though at the moment, all she wanted was nothing else but for the music to finally stop in order for this dance to end. She wanted to turn and look around at Lucas, because she really wanted to know if the music was really that long and was not just her imagination. But she was afraid that Lucas might notice she was uncomfortable and would step in to stop the dance – which was the height of rudeness in such a situation. And a scandal was the last thing she wanted being pegged to her name. So, as long as he was not trying to cross her limit, she would rather endure this strange and seemingly extended dance.

With her heart in her throat and doing her best to keep her composure, Elle nodded at him. "Of course." Was all she said, and he bent a little closer again to whisper into her ear.

Her heartbeat was pounding so loudly now that she felt like her heart was going to burst out of her chest. And she did not know why she was suddenly whispering desperately 'help, please stop the music, stop this dance...' within herself.

"Here's the secret, my lady..." came his voice and Elle unconsciously held her breath. "You are –"

Then something pulled at her. But she swore she did not feel any hands touching her. It was like an invisible force that had removed her from Elijah's hold and made her do a single spin before spreading her arms out to her sides, as if to finally make a bow as thanks for the dance.

A familiar large hand grabbed her free hand and pulled her away.

Chapter 50 Apology



Despite the fact that Elle felt Elijah tightening his grip on her hand – as if not wanting to let her go – he still was somehow unable to keep her from slipping away from his grip. Effectively causing her to be spun around in another unexpected and graceful turn until she was tugged into someone else's embrace. r

Everything had happened so fast, yet it was all so smooth. As though it was already all planned out and practiced countless of times. The bystanders would even think that what had happened was actually a part of the dance. Even Elle could not quite process it. Everything just proceeded... so strangely. It was just so unnatural she was starting to wonder if she was even dreaming, and this was some sort of magical nightmare that she had stumbled into. r

Her pants were heavy as she rested herself against the solid and warm body that was now holding her, serving as her perfect leaning bar. She knew this scent well and recognized this feeling... she did not need to look up into his face to know who it was that had come to stop the dance, to her rescue. But for now, all she could think about was relief. Pure relief that the dance had finally ended for her. r

She had just realized now, with the feeling of weakness in her knees, the dryness in her throat, the heavy breaths, that the dance had indeed dragged on for too long. That was the only explanation on why she was in this state right now. She had a pretty good stamina as she always kept up her exercises, so she knew it was not her body that was to be blamed. r

"Wow..." Elijah's darkly amused voice echoed softly, "that's one flashy entrance, dear brother." Followed by a quiet chuckle that seemed to ripple in the now eerily quiet atmosphere. "And such a gracefully rude one too. But that's quite expected of you, isn't it my great brother?" r

Sebastian did not bother to say anything, but Elle could feel the heavy air emanating from him. It was so strong that Elle could not help but grip her fists

harder on his shirt, wanting him to calm down for now. It was as if a raging inferno was barely being held back underneath that thin layer of stoic indifference at this moment. r

"Seems that the rumor I heard isn't actually true, hmm...?" Elijah continued. When Elle finally lifted her head and looked at him, she saw him standing there. His posture was relaxed, and his head was tilted as he faced them both. One of his hands was shoved into his pocket. "To think you couldn't even wait for the dance to end." There was laughter in his voice as he said that. He sounded as though he could not quite believe what Sebastian had done. r

"All because you forgot your manners again, Elijah." Sebastian's deep and velvety dark voice finally echoed out. "How inconsiderate and mean of you to actually drag a dance out for so long and tire your sister-in-law like that." A tinge of venom could be heard in Sebastian's cold voice. r

,m Elle was so surprised at what she just heard. She was about to look up at him, but Elijah's reply stopped her from doing so. r

"Well, for that... I admit that was so ungentlemanly of me." Elijah admitted in an apologetic tone. Another surprise. r

He sauntered closer to them and bowed slightly, placing one of his hands over his chest and using the other to lift his mask slightly, but just enough for his sharp jaw line and thin lips to be visible. "So, I would like to apologize for my behavior, my dearest sister-in-law. You are such an amazing dancing partner you had actually made me forget about the time. I hope you can accept my sincerest apology, my lady." His sincere sounding voice plus the shock of the sudden unexpected view of his face – even if only a little – had Elle's mind taken aback in shock. She had not thought that he would back off so easily and graciously. But coming back to her senses quickly, she replied to him.r

"Oh, it's... of course, prince Elijah." Elle could not help but stumble a little in her speech. It was so surprising that he, as a prince and Reign royalty would apologize to her like this. And so candidly in front of so many people. "Apology accepted and... you were such an amazing dancer as well." She managed to force out her sweetest smile at him. r

"You are really kind. Such a sweet sunshine." He straightened and Elle could have sworn she heard Sebastian snorting under his breath. She could not help but wonder what kind of expression he was wearing at the moment, so she attempted to look up when Elijah suddenly walked even closer to them and reached out to touch Sebastian's shoulder.r

And then he whispered to Sebastian. "But thanks to me losing track of time, because I also accidentally found out something very interesting. It took you much earlier to step in and stop the dance than I had expected, dear brother. Seems I was wrong in thinking that no one could ever breathe fire in your little dark heart again –" r

"Shut your f*cking mouth, Elijah." Sebastian uttered, low and calm. But there was an underlying chill that she picked up and that alone was enough to cause the tiny hairs over Elle's nape to rise. r

Elijah seemed to feel the seriousness of his warning too, before he wisely stopped talking and backed off. "Alright, I'll stop for now." He sighed as if he was a little depressed at the fact that he had no choice but to stop himself from doing something that was very amusing to him. But then his tone changed again to something more formal and serious. "Don't leave just yet, brother. This is the first time you have attended my birthday party, right? Since you are already here, you might as well stay on a little longer." r