

Hellbound Heart

Chapter 381 Kyle and Lilith (Part 3)

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A delicate blush crept across Lilith's cheeks, like the first brushstrokes of dawn painting the sky. The softness of the light seemed to dance over her features, accentuating the gentle curve of her cheeks and the subtle parting of her lips. Her eyes, reflecting a mix of emotions, were pools of depth in the serene night.

Observing the subtle changes in her expression, Kyle let out a soft chuckle, a sound that seemed to weave a spell of warmth and intimacy in the cool night air. He drew her closer, his embrace tightening with a tenderness that spoke of years of pent-up longing, a yearning that had simmered beneath the surface, now finding its quiet expression in this simple yet profound act of holding her. His arms around her tightened even more in a more secure embrace, enveloping her in a cocoon of warmth and affection as he whispered, "Don't worry," his breath caressing her ear. "Though I won't deny my desires, this moment—holding you like this—is more than enough for me now. You can't imagine how much I've yearned for this, Lilith. So please... allow me to hold you, to cherish this closeness for as long as you can bear it."

And Lilith just found herself melting into his embrace. His presence, so near and filled with unspoken yearnings, was like a fire in a world of ice. Each second in his arms was a drop of warmth, seeping into her very bones, threatening to liquefy the resolve she had so carefully crystallized over years.

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In that serene room, time seemed to suspend its relentless march. They held each other in a silent communion, cocooned in a world of their own making, where the outside world of duty and fate blurred into the background. They lay there, entwined, as the night deepened around them. No words were exchanged, for their heartbeats and the warmth of their bodies spoke a language more profound than words could ever convey.

The moment stretched on, an eternity captured within the confines of the night. It was a precious interlude, a pause in the relentless march of time, where they could simply be together, away from the complexities of their lives.

But the dawn soon approached and the first rays of sunlight began to seep through the window, casting a warm, golden glow over the pair. Yet, even as the sun rose, Lilith made no move to break the magic of their embrace. She remained still, savoring the feeling of being held in Kyle's arms, a feeling she wished could last forever. When the sun climbed high in the sky, casting its warm light through the window, Lilith's voice, finally broke the tranquil silence. "Aren't you thirsty?" she asked, her tone imbued with concern. Despite the question, her body remained motionless, comfortably enveloped in his embrace. "I think you should at least have something to drink," she suggested softly, mindful of his needs and his situation.

Kyle was lost in his thoughts so he did not respond immediately, his silence stretching out between them. Sensing his preoccupation, Lilith gently disentangled herself from his arms to study his face more closely.

And there he was, the handsome vampire prince, his features etched in contemplation. His eyes, usually so expressive, seemed distant, as if he was pondering over something utterly important.

"Kyle?" she called out, her voice a delicate whisper.

He blinked, returning from his reverie. A sad yet tender smile graced his lips, a bittersweet expression that tugged at her heart.

As he opened his mouth to speak, Lilith preempted him, her curiosity evident in her tone. "What are you... thinking?"

His gaze lingered on her, the smile slowly fading but leaving behind a dreamy sheen in his eyes. "I'm thinking of... asking you not to say goodbye to me, yet," he confessed, his voice a soft murmur and his words like a soft prayer, filled with a desperate hope for a few more moments in her presence.

The words struck Lilith with an intense ache in her throat, even though his tone bore no trace of pain. "I have to... send you away, Kyle," she responded, her voice heavy with the weight of their reality. "We're just... not possible."

He drew her close again. "I was actually thinking of telling you that I can definitely live without sex as long as I'm with you, like this, Lilith. As long as I can stay beside you, hold you, talk to you... just be with you... that is all I ever needed. That to me, sex with you is a want I'm willing and will sacrifice just to be with you. But then, I know that wouldn't be fair for you... that would be cruelly selfish of me to—"

He stopped abruptly as Lilith suddenly pulled away, her eyes wide with a mix of surprise and disbelief. The earnestness in his declaration, the depth of his willingness to forsake his desires for her, was written clear in his gaze, a gaze that held her with a gravity she could scarcely believe.

Kyle's fingers hesitated at his lips before drifting through his hair, a motion that spoke of internal conflict and a fleeting sense of vulnerability. An embarrassed smile, tinged with a self-aware wryness, then briefly illuminated his features. "I know how absurd—"

"Are you... really serious?" Lilith interjected, her voice slicing through his words with a mixture of disbelief and a desperate need for confirmation.

Kyle's gaze, previously wavering, steadied as he met her eyes. "I am, Lilith. I might sound crazy, but I am," he affirmed, his smile carrying a mix of earnestness and resignation. Then, gently yet reluctantly, he released her from his embrace. "But that's also exactly the reason why I can't blame you for needing to send me away again."

"Why... would you think that?" "Because of the sheer unfairness of it. I am a vampire with a very long life ahead of me... you are a witch and will live less compared to mine."

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The words seemed to weigh heavily on him, a confession of a truth both had silently acknowledged but never voiced. He swallowed, the act visibly conveying the difficulty he found in vocalizing these thoughts. "I can't deprive you of the pleasures in life because of my desire to be with you, can I?"

Lilith's tears began their silent descent, tracing paths down her cheeks. This revelation was unexpected. She hadn't anticipated that Kyle would have already delved so deeply into the heart of their predicament, even understanding and considering all its complexities. One of her primary reasons for resolving to let him go again was precisely this – the inevitable passage of time for her, a mortal witch, against his near-immortal vampire existence. The reality that she would grow old and die, while he continued on, had always been in her mind. She didn't want him to watch her grow old. She never want him to watch her die. "I don't... want you to watch me grow old..." Lilith's voice broke through her tears, each word a testament to the depth of her emotions. Kyle tenderly cupped her face in his hands, gently wiping away the tears that streamed down her cheeks.

"Don't cry. I understand, Lilith," he soothed, his voice a comforting balm. "I know that if I were in your position, it would also be hard for me to even contemplate. I will never force you to endure that... so please..."

With her eyes still shimmering with unshed tears, Lilith suddenly asked with a hint of daring in her voice, "Tell me, Kyle, if I tell you that I'll give you ten years of my life starting today... will you take it?"

At her words, Kyle's movements stilled, a mixture of surprise and deep emotion washing over his face. Then, as if compelled by a force greater than himself, he leaned in and kissed her. "Oh, Lilith, I would cherish every single moment of it," he whispered against her lips, his voice raw with sincerity.

"Even if that would mean no sex for you for ten years?" "I told you, I can live without that," he affirmed, his conviction clear.

Lilith took a deep breath before she uttered her next question. "If one day, I tell you to leave me forever, will you listen to me and go?" Kyle lowered his gaze, the internal struggle visible in his eyes. But then, lifting his head, he offered her a smile, a gesture of acceptance and promise. "Yes. If that's what you truly want, I promise I'll listen and leave without turning back."

"Then... that's settled..." Lilith declared, "ten years, Kyle... I want to be with you for ten years." The room, bathed in the soft glow of the sun, became the stage for a moment that would forever alter the course of their destinies.

Kyle rose from the bed, his figure casting a long, dramatic shadow across the room. With a swift gesture, he knelt before her, an act of devotion and humility that took Lilith's breath away. The world seemed to pause around them, the very air holding its breath. Her heart pounding in her chest as if trying to escape the confines of her ribcage.

Lilith's eyes suddenly grew wide as Kyle reached for his necklace, a jewelry that he had been wearing since the very first time she met him. With a swift, resolute gesture, he pulled the necklace off, unveiling a ring that had been carefully concealed within its embrace. This ring wasn't just any jewelry; it held a significance that Lilith was deeply aware of.

Kyle had once confided in her the priceless value of this ring. It was more than just metal and stone; it was a legacy, a treasure bestowed upon him by his late grandmother. Lilith remembered the way his eyes had held hers, imbued with a dreamlike intensity, as he shared that he would one day pass this ring to the most precious person in his life. The memory of that conversation, his dreamy, unfathomable look, which she had never quite deciphered at the time, now unfurled its meaning in this very moment.

"Lilith, Queen of witches," he began, his voice trembling with emotion, "will you be my wife? For... ten years?" His words hung in the air, a proposal that defied the norms of their worlds, a vow for a decade of togetherness in the face of eternity.

Lilith's heart pounded in her chest, her emotions a whirlwind. "Yes," she replied, her voice a testament to the love and courage that filled her. With a tenderness that seemed to slow the passage of time, Kyle delicately guided the ring onto Lilith's finger. The ring nestled there, a perfect fit, as though the ring had always been meant to find its home there, and as though it had been crafted with her in mind, waiting for this destined moment to arrive.

In a fluid motion, driven by a yearning that had long simmered beneath the surface, Kyle drew her closer. And then their lips met in a kiss that transcended mere physical contact, becoming a profound melding of souls. This kiss was not just an expression of love; it was a declaration, a commencement of a journey they were to embark on together.

In that moment, their destinies were sealed. Kyle and Lilith would be inseparable from that day forward, two halves of a whole, bound together by a love as deep as the ocean and as enduring as the stars. Their union, born from a love so pure and strong, would also one day come to be known as the cursebreaker – the love that would become the key to breaking the age-old curse that had long divided witches and vampires. ____

Chapter 383 Light and Darkness - Part 1

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In the depths of the underworld, where light dared not linger and shadows reveled in their eternal dominion, the air quivered with the arrival of three individuals: Zeke, Alicia, and Gav. They emerged from the vortex of darkness that tore through the fabric of realms like a silent scream. But what welcomed their arrival was the sound of clashing steel and guttural war cries echoing in the distance. Alicia, who was still clinging to Zeke, immediately felt the thickness of the air, filled with the scent of brimstone and death. As the trio landed on top of the edge of a steep cliff, overlooking the battlefield, the sight of them was a sight to behold. Alicia stood between two imposing men, her silver hair cascading like ethereal silk, shimmering like a star's last light against the darkness. Alicia's gaze swept across the battlefield, where creatures of nightmare clashed with one another. Orc-like entities, their skin a patchwork of greys and blacks as if painted by the soot of a thousand fires, wielded massive weapons. Weapons that seemed not crafted but born of the underworld itself, pulsating with a malevolent life force. Beside these hulking brutes marched creatures that transcended the boundaries of nightmares. They were a collection of the bizarre and terrifying, a fusion of limbs that twisted in unnatural angles, eyes that gleamed with malevolence, and mouths filled with fangs, ever snarling, ever hungry.

The sky churned with dark clouds, lit sporadically by flashes of lightning, revealing glimpses of the hellish scene. "Seems they are indeed barely holding on," Gav remarked, his tone casual, almost bored, as if commenting on a training spar rather than the infernal war before them. The timbre of his voice was completely devoid of any concern.

He turned to Zeke. "You can go, Zeke. Leave this to me."

Zeke gave a nod, his expression unreadable. In the next instant, Gav became the center of a gathering storm, his form a nexus for the shadows that seemed to hunger for release. His vast wings unfurled, blacker than the void between stars, as the shadows pulsed even stronger around him.

With a smirk that spoke of dark confidence and a gleam in his eyes that burned with unholy light, Gav released his power. Alicia, instinctively squeezed her eyes shut against the blinding eruption of Gav's dark energies.

She immediately opened her eyes again, only to find that Gav was gone. In the distance, a sound like thunder rolled across the battlefield, a sonic boom that seemed to signal Gav's arrival into the fray.

And as the shockwave of Gav's arrival rippled across the battlefield, a thunderous roar rose from the throats of the demons. It was a roar of bloodlust and battle joy, a sound so potent it seemed to shake the very ground beneath them. Alicia, felt a surge of awe at the display of raw power she had witnessed. She couldn't even help the goosebumps that crawled all over her skin. She's been into numbers of battles but this... this was just entirely... she couldn't even find the right word to describe this!

"Are you cold?" Zeke's gentle murmur made Alicia turn to face him.

"No, I'm fine. It's just..." She paused, her eyes scanning the vast, dark space before them again. The air was heavy with darkness, filled with countless demons moving and roaring. They spread out in a terrifying display, too many for her to comprehend. "I'm taking you out of here." "But... what about Gav? Will he be fine?"

Zeke's eyes held a flicker of something indecipherable as he reassured her. "Don't worry about him. That man's power surpasses mine. He's more than capable of dealing with these demons singlehandedly."

"If he's stronger than you, then why does he heed your commands?" she began, curiosity getting the better of her. "No, forget I asked. It's just... I keep forgetting that you've always had this ability to command the strongest with ease."

In response, a faint smile tugged at the corner of Zeke's lips. His fingers then gently brushed back strands of Alicia's silver hair, tucking them tenderly behind her ear. His

gaze captured hers, gleaming with an intensity as if he was committing every detail of her face to memory.

"What is it?" Alicia asked him, curious why he was suddenly looking at her that way. Zeke's response came with a slight clearing of his throat. "Nothing," he said, his voice a half-note deeper.

A brow arched gracefully on Alicia's forehead, unsatisfied with his non-answer. She reached up, placing her palms against the coolness of his cheeks. "I guess my only choice is to try to decipher it myself, huh..."

A smile teased the edges of Zeke's mouth, his stoic facade crumbling ever so slightly as he tightened his hold on her wrists, his fingers a gentle yet firm like shackle. "Fine, I'll tell you..." His voice trailed off, a smile still playing on his lips. "Don't look so eager. It's nothing important." A momentary pause, and then he continued, the smile disappearing as swiftly as it had appeared. "I'm only thinking how out of place you are in this world..." His eyes held hers, steady and sincere. "Like a lone star in the pitch darkness..."

Alicia's breath hitched, the metaphor painting a vivid image of her luminance amidst the consuming void around them. Before she could respond, Zeke drew her in, his arms wrapping around her in a protective embrace as if he wanted nothing but to shield her from the darkness itself. "I want to take you out of this world as soon as possible, Alicia," he murmured into her hair, his voice soft. "I'm fine, Ezekiel." Alicia said, trying to let him know that she was totally alright and he had nothing to worry about. Zeke's embrace around Alicia tightened. His impossibly calm power rippled. Then they began to dissipate, their forms fragmenting into tendrils of smoke. Swirling and coalescing, the smoke seemed to dance around them. And just as a star winks out at the coming of dawn, they disappeared, leaving the space where they had stood empty.

Chapter 384 Light and Darkness - Part 2

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Alicia and Zeke reappeared onto the sprawling terrace of a castle perched atop mountains as sharp and imposing as the claws of a colossal dragon. The sky above was purple-black, a dusk that seemingly knew no dawn, while the mountains themselves were shrouded in the obsidian shades of twilight. Despite the clarity of the sky, not a single star dared to twinkle as if this world was devoid of any celestial bodies.

Shifting her gaze from the sky to the structure before her, Alicia stared. This castle wasn't the one she remembered. This structure dwarfed the previous one in both size and height! "This castle is... massive." She whispered, still awed at its spires that seemed to be stretching toward the heavens to stake a claim among the gods themselves.

Zeke followed her gaze. "This is the second-largest stronghold in the underworld. It was once the seat of the so-called strongest prince."

"Did you and Gav kill this so-called strongest prince, and that's why this castle is yours now?"

"We defeated him, and the castle fell to us," he answered. "But unfortunately, he is still alive somewhere. Come, let's get inside."

Zeke then gathered her in his arms, lifting her as effortlessly. "I don't feel as weak as I do in our world right now, my husband. You don't need to cradle me as though I'm a sick, fragile princess."

"I know." Zeke's voice was a gentle rumble. "But indulge me in this, Alicia. I want to care for you every moment that we share here... every minute, every second."

"Oh dear... please don't overdo it Ezekiel... I might just melt." Alicia beamed as she reached out and lovingly pinched Zeke's cheek. "But who am I to say no when my husband wishes to spoil me?"

"That's right... just let me spoil you rotten, Alicia." Zeke gently squeezed her in his arms as he continued walking. "But what are we going to do tonight?" Alicia then asked. "It's actually daytime now. Here, when there's a semblance of light and color in the sky, it's considered day. Night in the underworld is devoid of any light."

"I see..." Alicia murmured, her gaze fixed towards the surreal sky again until her view was obscured as they were finally inside the massive castle. "So, what are we going to do today?"

"You will rest." Alicia arched a brow. "But I'm not tired or weakening. In fact, I feel remarkably strong. It's as if my powers have returned."

"Then... I guess, I should find a way to tire you out," Zeke suggested, his voice tinged with a mischievous undertone.

"We've only just arrived, Ezekiel, and already you're thinking about... that."

"I was thinking of dancing with you in the ballroom, my wife. It seems you're the one with love making on her mind. Though, I must admit, I'm not complaining."

Alicia gave Zeke a playful, gentle shove. And once Zeke put her down, she darted away, her soft laughter ringing through the corridor. She glanced back over her shoulder, her smirk a clear challenge. "Who said what I meant by 'that' is love making? It appears you're the naughty one here, my dear husband."

Zeke bit his lip, his eyes gleaming as he looked at her. "You're getting good at this, babe."

"I've graduated from being the one always blushing," Alicia retorted. "I plan to turn the tables around from now on. So better prepare yourself."

Zeke, following Alicia's light-hearted challenge, extended his hand to catch her. But just as his fingers were about to graze her arm, Alicia playfully dodged him. And to her shocked surprise, that one move didn't take her just a single step away from Zeke. Instead, she was suddenly meters away from him! Her eyes widened with realization and wonder. "My powers... they're back!" she exclaimed at Zeke.

Before Zeke could say a word, Alicia's body lifted from the ground and she floated effortlessly towards the ceiling. Surrounded by the enveloping darkness of the underworld, she appeared ethereal, like a glowing angel suspended in a void.

"Oh, goodness... I can't believe this!! My power is truly back! All of it, Ezekiel!" Her voice, that was filled with excitement, echoed, causing Zeke to just stand there, watching her hover above with a dreamy expression painting his features.

From her elevated position, she looked down at Zeke. "Want to make love with me, hm, dear husband? Catch me if you can."

Zeke's smirked. "Are you seriously challenging me right now, my wife?" he called out.

Alicia laughed, her voice resonating in the vastness of the hall. "I most certainly am, my husband!"

With the ease of one born to command the elements, Zeke's wings unfurled and the next moment, he was chasing after Alicia. Alicia's speed hastened as she darted across the ceiling, her silver hair trailing behind her like a comet's tail as Zeke pursued her. Glancing back at Zeke, Alicia's eyes sparkled as she dared him playfully. "You'll have to be faster than that, dear husband!" she teased before she weaved and spiraled through the air. She truly moved with the freedom and grace of someone rediscovering a long-lost part of themselves.

Zeke simply smiled, his glinting eyes never leaving her. In truth, at that moment, Zeke felt like he was falling in love with Alicia all over again. He had been scared that Alicia wouldn't even smile anymore after her separation with Azy so watching her laughing and enjoying herself right now was just... Zeke felt his heart brimming with utter relief and gladness.

Right now, he just really wished that she would be able to keep smiling like that, at least for a little bit longer. He wanted nothing more than to preserve this moment, to extend their little game so that her smile might linger just a while longer.

And so, he skillfully guided their aerial dance, ensuring their playful chase continued, drawing out the time where they could just be lost in the moment, away from the burdens and shadows of their reality. As they moved through the air, the sound of Alicia's laughter echoed like a melody within him, a tune he wished to play on an endless loop. Until Alicia was about to reach the dead end, towards a section of the castle that Zeke preferred to keep hidden from her.

With a sudden burst of speed, Zeke closed the gap between them. As their bodies meeting in mid-air in a tender collision, his arms encircled her in a gentle, yet firm grasp, bringing their game to a sweet end. "Caught you, Alicia," he declared with a triumphant grin and Alicia's laughter rang out in the darkness once again.

Chapter 385 Light and Darkness - Part 3

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As Alicia and Zeke danced, they created such a breathtaking image. Zeke's hand rested gently yet firmly on Alicia's back, the other holding her hand as they glided effortlessly in the air. Their movements flowed in seamless synchrony, resembling a ballet of souls dancing in perfect harmony.

Around them, the cavernous hall of the castle felt both vast and intimate, the dim light of the chandeliers casting a soft glow that enveloped them in an almost magical aura as the shadows seemed to dance along with them.

They simply looked like figures from a dream as they danced up there. Their dance could have been the subject of a masterful painting, one that captured the essence of light and darkness entwined in an eternal waltz. And if one would give that painting a title, 'The Dance of Light and Darkness' would have suited it perfectly.

Zeke and Alicia's face, as they continued their beautiful surreal dance, were filled with nothing but bliss. They might be in the underworld right now, a place of darkness and chaos and blood... but right now, within the vast, shadowy halls of this colossal castle, they had created their own sanctuary, a place where only their love existed.

Alicia knew this won't last forever. She knew this bliss will be ending soon. But she was just grateful for these moments. Dancing with Zeke in this manner, in this darkness, lost in each other and the music of their hearts, was a soothing reprieve she hadn't realized she so desperately needed.

"I love this..." she whispered. Her eyes, luminous and full of emotion, were fixed on Zeke.

Zeke's smile in response was tender. "Me too," he whispered back, before he twirled her in a graceful arc. Alicia's dress and hair fanned out around her like a halo. Then, with equal grace, he drew her back into his embrace. "I'm... so happy right now," he added. Alicia nestled closer into Zeke's embrace and rested her head against the steady rhythm of his heart. "Me too, Ezekiel," she echoed, her voice a soft murmur against the fabric of his clothing. And with that, their dance continued, each step, each turn, a silent plea for the moment to linger just a little longer. In that moment, they both wished to prolong this dance as long as they could. But the dance, as all dances must, reached its inevitable conclusion. Floating gently between the glowing chandeliers, their lips met in a union that was as natural as the coming together of two halves of a whole. As they descended gracefully, like feathers gently falling towards the ground, Alicia's fingers playfully traced Zeke's lips. "What did you do this time, hm, my husband?" she asked. She was curious and at the same time concerned about something.

"Hm?"

"About my power returning," Alicia continued. "I know you must've done something, and while I'm grateful, I can't help but worry about what it might have cost you."

Zeke's slight smirk was one of both confidence and reassurance. "I'm much more powerful now than I was before, my wife. And in this world, restoring one's power isn't too difficult, provided one knows the proper way to do it."

Alicia suppressed a smile. "Why am I not surprised anymore?"

"Because you know your husband is simply amazing," he replied.

"Cocky, handsome demonic prince," she chuckled, reaching up to pinch his cheek affectionately. In response, Zeke effortlessly scooped her up in his arms once more.

"Well then... this cocky, handsome demonic prince shall now escort you to bed." "Can we bathe first?" Alicia suggested, the idea sparking a light in her eyes.

"Now that you mention it... I have something to show you, Alicia." Raising an eyebrow inquisitively, Alicia watched as Zeke carried her towards an imposing set of double doors. With a fluid motion, he pushed them open.

And when they entered the door, Alicia and Zeke were greeted by a sight of breathtaking beauty. Before them was a tranquil pool, its surface glowing with a soft, ethereal turquoise light that seemed to emanate from within the water itself. This serene glow bathed the surrounding area in a magical luminescence, lending an otherworldly quality to the scene.

The pool's edge was marked by stone steps, gracefully descending into the clear waters. These steps appeared almost sculpted, their edges softened by the gentle, radiant light. On either side of the staircase stood two impressive stone towers.

Between these two sentinel towers arched a magnificent gateway, its peak curving elegantly skyward. The archway framed a picturesque view of a cascading waterfall that tumbled from an unseen source high above. The waterfall's waters, infused with the same captivating turquoise luminescence, seemed to dance and play as they made their descent, merging seamlessly with the pool below.

There were also lanterns dotting the area. They were hung at strategic points and their gentle light casting a warm, golden glow. This soft illumination complemented the mystical light of the water, creating an ambiance that was both magical and inviting. Alicia stood in awe, her gaze sweeping over the place. "I didn't know... a place like this exists here," she said, her voice a whisper of wonder and surprise.

Zeke, watching her reactions with an unreadable expression, nodded. "There are many waters in the underworld too, but to find one as pure and clear as this is rare indeed. This pool is exceptional. I've yet to find clearer waters than these."

Alicia turned to him, a playful suspicion in her eyes. "Why do I feel like you decided to take over this insanely colossal castle just for this clear water here?" Zeke leaned in closer, his lips finding her earlobe in a playful and tender gesture. "This place," he murmured softly in her ear, "reminds me of that little spring where we bathed together on the night we first made love." Alicia's cheeks flushed at the memory. She looked at the setting again, at the pool and she couldn't help but bite her lower lip. "You're right..." she said softly, her eyes drinking in the serene beauty before them. "Shall I?" Zeke asked, his fingers now deftly playing at the hem of her dress.

Alicia smiled and nodded. "You're really going to spoil me rotten, Ezekiel."

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Zeke carefully gathered her silver hair, draping it elegantly to one side to expose the delicate nape of her neck. He then leaned in and pressed a soft, affectionate kiss there. That one little kiss was enough to elicit a contented hum from Alicia.

Zeke began to undress her. His movements were slow and reverent. As if even this act of undressing her was a form of worship. And soon, the fabric of her dress slid away, revealing her skin to the cool air of the underworld and the soft, ambient light.

When only her panties remained, Zeke moved before her, gracefully descending to one knee without breaking their eye contact. Alicia bit her lip again. "If you keep seducing me like this, I might forget about the bath and jump at you right this instant, Ezekiel," she whispered, her voice tinged with both mischief and desire.

"Oh, babe..." Zeke replied, his voice a low rumble. He then leaned forward, pressing a tender kiss to her lower stomach, sending a shiver through her. His fingers hooked gently around the sides of her panties, tugging them downwards with a careful yet decisive motion. "I should be the one saying that..." he added.

As the last barrier of fabric slid away, her nakedness was fully revealed to him. The moment was charged as Alicia stood there, bared not just in body but in soul before the man she loved.

Zeke forced his gaze back up to meet Alicia's. "Go to the water now, Alicia..." he urged, his voice a mix of restraint and desire.

With a playful tilt to her head, Alicia asked teasingly, "Don't you want me to undress you too, hm, babe?"

His response was a lifted brow, a telltale flick of his tongue across his lip signaling his internal struggle. "I'd love to, but not tonight. Now go on and enjoy your bath. You might not get another chance if you don't go now."

With a light chuckle, Alicia turned and made her way to the water, the anticipation of the magical bath evident in her quick steps. As she dipped her feet into the pool, a gasp escaped her lips. The water responded to her touch, shimmering and rippling in a dance of light. The effect was mesmerizing, as if the pool itself was coming alive under her influence.

She whirled around to face Zeke, her eyes wide with wonder. "This water is magical?" she exclaimed.

Zeke, watching her with an affectionate smile, shook his head. "No, it's you who's magical. The water didn't shimmer like that when I was in it."

"Is it responding to my magic, then?" Alicia pondered aloud, her gaze fixed on the ethereal glow of the water.

"It seems so," Zeke replied. "This place... I mean the underworld sometimes resonates with someone's power. So it's possible that this water is reacting to the essence of your magic."

Alicia stepped a little further into the water, watching in awe as the luminescence followed her movements, creating a beautiful, otherworldly spectacle. She excitedly began to soak herself when she felt Zeke's presence close behind her. He hadn't joined her in the water, but his hands were there, tenderly gathering her long, silver hair.

"You're okay with getting your hair wet?" he asked.

Looking up at him, Alicia responded with a soft smile. "It's fine. You love seeing me with my hair wet."

Zeke, seemingly caught off guard by her response, cleared his throat. "I do, but I love seeing your hair dry too. You don't need to wet them just because..."

His words trailed off as Alicia reached up to pinch his cheek playfully once again. "I love how adorable you are when we're alone like this, Ezekiel," she said, her soft chuckle echoing lightly in the space around them.

Zeke blinked. He looked like her words made him think but dismissed whatever thoughts that popped in his head immediately. His expression softened, turning into a look that conveyed a simple truth – as long as she was laughing and happy like this, nothing else mattered.

"Now come here and join me, babe," she beckoned, her voice playful yet inviting.

"I'll join you a bit later. I want you to enjoy your bath and just relax first. I'll watch you," he replied and Alicia did not insist anymore.

Once he settled himself at the water's edge, his fingers entwined and played with her floating silver hair. Alicia, meanwhile, immersed herself in the experience, her hands dancing through the shimmering water.

"Feels so nice... this water is kind of different. But I can't quite explain what the difference is," she mused aloud.

"Mn," Zeke agreed, his attention remained fixed on her.

Alicia playfully splashed forward, watching with delight as the water shimmered around her. She then lifted her gaze to the starless sky above, exhaling deeply as a wave of relaxation washed over her. The blissful feeling was accentuated by Zeke's presence, the gentle touch of his fingers on her hair, and the magical properties of the water itself.

In this underworld, a place she never thought could provide such serenity, Alicia found a sense of peace. And she knew that this was all because her husband was right here with her – as long as she was with Zeke, the location mattered little. Heaven or hell, it was irrelevant; their togetherness just seem to transform any place into a paradise.

Yes... It would always be paradise when she's with him.

When she lifted her gaze to him and saw him just staring at her, her eyes sparkled. He looked so relaxed. So dreamy. So darkly divine. To be the object of those gaze was just... beyond everything.

"What are you thinking, my love?" she asked, resting her chin on her knees as she gazed at him with eyes so filled with love.

"I'm just in utter awe..." Zeke replied, his voice a deep murmur filled with genuine emotion. "...at the way this dark and desolate world is suddenly so beautiful now that you're here, Alicia."

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Chapter 387 Light and Darkness - Part 5

Chapter 387 Light and Darkness - Part 5

Alicia rose and extended her hand in a graceful arc towards Zeke. Then she kissed him. She savored his lips while she stood enveloped by the gentle caress of the water, which now covered her from the hip.

Zeke kissed her back, passionately so, his body shifting until he was sitting at the edge of the pool. His long legs now jailing her naked body.

When their lips parted, Alicia pressed her forehead against his, smiling and eyes shining with desire. "I want you, Ezekiel," she murmured.

Zeke reached up to brush away the tendrils of her hair made heavy by the water, tucking them tenderly behind her ear. Then he opened his arms wide, as if offering himself to her.

"I am all yours, Alicia. Heart... soul... and body... so feel free to devour me if that's what you desire, babe," he said, his voice a low rumble that vibrated with sincerity. His grey eyes, now alight with a fiery intensity, held hers in a gaze so compelling it seemed to reach into her very soul, urging her, inviting her into the depths of his being and own over and over again.

Alicia slowly bit her lower lip, unable to take her eyes off him. This was going to be the first time they will be intimate while she felt that her body was in its prime. While she felt like she was just purely a powerful witch again. And she couldn't help but feel thrilled. And the way he was offering himself to her like this wasn't helping at all. Goddess above... looking at this man just sitting right there, asking her to devour him... was just all too much. Already more than enough to make her body burn with desire. Because just who could not be completely seduced by this god of a man when he was like this?

She reached out and began to undress him. Unbuttoning his shirt slowly as she whispered softly to him. "Did you ever think about me while you bathe here?"

He smiled. "You have no idea." He caught his lip between his teeth then released it ever so slowly. "Will you believe me if I tell you I masturbate here imagining you're right here with me... pleasuring me?"

Alicia's gaze intensified, her pupils expanding as if to capture every detail of the moment, every nuance of Zeke's expression. Slowly, she cupped his handsome face between her hands, her thumbs gently caressing his cheeks.

"Tell me, babe..." Alicia murmured. "What are the things the me in your imagination were doing to you?"

"Hmm... I'd love to tell you but... I'm more thrilled of what the real you are going to do to me right now."

"I'll do what I want later," Alicia replied with conviction. "For now, I'm curious and also intensely thrilled to know about your imaginations of me."

Zeke stood, removed his wet pants and threw it on the floor without taking his eyes off Alicia. But Alicia couldn't help but shift her gaze towards his now already raging manhood.

But his hand caressed her cheek, causing her to return her eyes to his. "Whatever I do," he began, "whether I'm jerking myself off while standing like this... in my mind, you always appear from behind me. You touch my back, then kiss my skin as your divine hands crawl their way to my front..." Zeke paused when Alicia suddenly moved and stood behind him.

She began to touch his broad back, caressing his skin in a way as though she was trying to worship every contour of his muscles, causing Zeke to make a deep sound coming from deep within his chest. "Did I touch you like this in your imaginations, Ezekiel?"

"Yes..."

"Is what I'm doing right now gave you the same feeling you felt when —"

"I believe so... just that, this is a thousand times better..." he said in a voice so low it almost sounded like a mix of growl and moan.

Alicia's eyes gleamed with both happiness and desire. "What else did I do to you, hm, my husband?"

"You kiss my skin while your hands caressed their way to my abs, my chest, my navel."

And Alicia did just as he uttered. Her lips began to plant kisses on his broad back while her hands wound their way to the front, touching him, caressing him everywhere.

"Like this?" she murmured and Zeke hummed his agreement.

"What were you doing while I'm doing this to you, hm, babe?" she asked again.

"Fisting myself like what I'm doing right now." he replied straightforwardly. No shame or even a tinge of embarrassment in his voice.

And that's when Alicia realized that her man was indeed already pleasuring himself. She craned her head a little to look and she almost lost track of time at what she watched. His large hand was wrapped around his thick manhood, stroking up and down in a very slow motion. She could see his precum dripping as he clenched around the tip, making her swallow with need. She wanted to... suck him...

Biting her lip, Alicia shifted her attention from his damnably erotic sex. And then she began to lick his skin. She felt him shiver as her tongue traced his spine.

"What did I do next?"

"You help me get off."

"How did I help?"

"You pressed against me from behind and your hand joined mine."

Again, Alicia did just as he said. He reached from behind him and touched his manhood. Zeke's hand had halted in the base so Alicia wrapped her hand around the upper part. He was so thick!

He cursed inaudibly when she squeezed a little.

He let go of his shaft and Alicia began to move her hand, spreading his precum and slicking his manhood. Zeke let out a low moan as he watched her pale hands pleasure him.

Sliding up and down, Alicia did it slowly until she felt his manhood throb against her palms.

Chapter 388 Light and Darkness - Part 6

Chapter 388 Light and Darkness - Part 6

"Tell me babe... what was I telling you in your imagination while I pleasure you like this?"

"You were asking me to come for you while..." he made another low growl as she began to hasten her pace, pumping him.

"I'm jerking you like this?"

"Yeah... f*ck... Alicia..."

"Are you close, love?"

Another sexy deep moan was torn from deep within his throat. "Mn..."

"Come for me, babe." Alicia whispered and he threw his head back, facing the sky as he moaned her name and came.

Panting, Zeke suddenly turned, grabbed Alicia and crashed her against his strong body. His hand fisted her hair as he kissed her hard.

And Alicia could only cling to him, kissing him back with abandon.

He lifted her from the water like she weighed nothing and Alicia wound her legs around his waist.

When their lips parted, their gazes held. A fire filled with nothing but love and desire were burning wildly in their eyes. It was insane how their longing and need for each other seemed to only keep going stronger and stronger as time went on.

Zeke turned swiftly, his arms capturing Alicia with an urgency that left no room for hesitation. He pulled her against the solid strength of his body, a hand gripping her hair to draw her into a kiss that was both a conquest and a surrender.

Alicia's arms wrapped around him, her own passion mirroring his. The water around them became inconsequential as he lifted her effortlessly. And instinctively, her legs wound around his waist, anchoring herself to him.

"Alicia," he whispered, her name escaping him like a prayer. And just when Alicia thought Zeke would take her right then and there judging from the sudden surge of his intensity, he lowered himself into the water, not venturing deeper but simply sitting down, as if the strength had ebbed from his legs.

Straddling him, Alicia attempted to pull back slightly, to catch a glimpse of his face. But Zeke's grip on her tightened. It was then that Alicia sensed an underlying fear in his hold, it was almost as if he believed she might vanish if he dared to let go, even slightly.

"Eze...kiel?" She called his name so softly and eventually, he allowed his grip to relax, lifting his gaze to meet hers.

"Sorry," he said, "my body just reacted. I guess it thought you're going to disappear like in those imaginations."

Alicia felt a pang at the sight of that look in his eye even though he was smiling.

"I'm not... going to disappear this time." She told him and his smile faded.

He cupped her face and pressed her forehead against his. "Yes..."

Gently, Alicia took his hands from her face, guiding them to encircle her waist. She then planted a kiss on his forehead, his eyes, the tip of his nose, his cheek, his jawline.

"I love you to hell and back, Ezekiel," she confessed, and the sound of his delighted hum filled the space around them, a melody of contentment and belonging.

"Can you say that again, my wife?"

"I love you... I love you... I love you... Ezekiel..." she repeated, her voice a soft cascade of emotion, each utterance a wave washing over them both, binding them closer.

"And I love you, Alicia... I love you... I love you..." Zeke's voice cracked a little and tears silently trailed down Alicia's cheeks.

"You're making me emotional again," she mock-complained. "Why do your 'I love you's' just hit different?"

"Is it?" he asked, genuinely curious as he gently wiped away her tears, his touch as tender as the sentiment behind his words.

"It definitely is!" Alicia affirmed, her emphasis adorable, a burst of earnestness that brought a smile to Zeke's face once more.

"Adorable..." he murmured, his gaze fixed on her with such warmth and adoration, as if she were the embodiment of his every joy and happiness.

Almost absentmindedly, he caressed her cheek with the back of his fingers and asked, "Tell me, Alicia... what imagination of me had managed to set you off the hardest when you were pleasuring yourself?"

She blushed a little as she replied. "Do you really want to know?"

"Tell me, babe... I want to know."

"Well, I think it's when I imagine you... tied up in our bed." She admitted.

When Zeke's eyes widened slightly as if he didn't expect what she just said, Alicia continued. "I think it's because I keep fantasizing about a world where all I could do was just tie you up in my bed and you could never leave ever again."

A short moment of quiet fell between them until Zeke broke it.

"Do you want to tie me up right now, Alicia?" The intensity in his eyes was unmistakable, a direct invitation to explore the uncharted waters of her fantasies.

Alicia swallowed. "I do. But are you... okay with that? I honestly don't think you're... into... that." Her voice trailed off, uncertainty coloring her words.

His response was a smile, one that transformed his expression from tender to tantalizingly seductive. "Well, we will never know unless we tried, isn't it?"

Alicia's eyes widened. "Are you... sure? You're not just –"

"Shh..." Zeke interrupted, his thumb pressing gently against her lips, silencing her doubts with a touch. "I want you to not think of me but you alone this time, Alicia. So don't hold yourself back... let me see what my witch queen is in action this time..." His words, a blend of consent and curiosity, ignited a new fire in Alicia, a flame of empowered desire and anticipation for the exploration ahead.

"I'm thrilled to see more of what you can do. So just show me, babe." His encouragement was the final nudge she needed and with that, Alicia's body glowed, and silvery white glowing chains materialized around Zeke's wrists. The chains, ethereal and gleaming, stretched out to connect to the opposite pillars, parting his hands and suspending them in a V-shape.

Zeke's reaction, a half-bite of his lower lip accompanied by a smile, was one of anticipation. A silent approval.

Chapter 389 Light and Darkness - Part 7

Chapter 389 Light and Darkness - Part 7

Bound to the bed, Zeke looked like the god of hell caught by a mischievous angel.

There was an undeniable allure in his restraint, a dynamic display of power and surrender. He was smiling, eyes gleaming as if thrilled about something. "Such a naughty goddess," he murmured, his voice a husky murmur that vibrated with delight as his eyes fixed at the seductive goddess atop him. And Alicia smiled back. Her tongue flicked across the corner of her lips, and she extended her hand, her fingertip slowly drawing a path across his broad chest. "Naughty..." she echoed softly. Lifting her eyes to meet his, she added with an enticing purr, "...would you want me to be even naughtier, my husband?"

He released his lips in what felt like a slow motion before responding. "I'd love to see you let yourself completely loose tonight, Alicia. And I'd like you to not hold back at all and worry about anything. Right now, we're in the depth of a world that others call hell. A place they said where sinners dance in flames forever. So be as naughty as you can, my goddess. Be at your naughtiest."

The way he looked at her as he said those last two lines ignited something within Alicia. And she suddenly bent and devoured his mouth thoroughly. The kiss was deep, fervent, an exchange so consuming that when she finally pulled back, their breaths were ragged, intermingling harshly in the charged space between them.

They stared into each other's eyes in silence before Alicia slowly, reverently, kissed his forehead. She then moved to his jaw, her lips tracing the strong lines of his face, before descending to his neck. There, she lingered, her lips and tongue working in tandem—licking, sucking, marking him with the devotion of a worshipper paying homage to a revered deity.

Alicia wasn't actually planning to dominate him or anything like that. There was only one thing she wanted to do right now, and that was to pleasure him, worship him. Because this beautiful man... this husband of hers... this one hell of a man who had suffered so much and yet still fighting to no end, deserved all the love and reverence she could offer.

She just wanted to give him everything, do everything she could to make him feel just how precious he was. She wanted to envelop him in the full depth of her love, to make him feel cherished down to every inch of his being.

So she kissed him... kissed every part of his skin with all the passion and love she could muster. Each kiss, each touch of her tongue and lips was a silent tribute to the man beneath her.

And he let her. Allowed every sensation to wash over him. His body stiffened and his muscles clenched at times but he never asked her to stop. He never said a word. He just stayed there, watching. But the occasional shudder that coursed through him, and the way his eyes fluttering shut were like silent prayer of ecstasy. Alicia could feel it... the way he was savoring every moment, every kiss she gave. His every reaction, each sigh, each deep moan resonated within her, stoking the flames of her devotion... fueled

her to continue lavishing him with affection until he shattered underneath her while screaming her name.

That night, the couple didn't sleep. They made love over and over. They lost themselves in each other, time and again. Their lovemaking was fervent and unrestrained, each encounter a deeper exploration of their boundless affection. They worshiped each other with a desperate intensity, as if trying to outdo the very concept of love itself, as if there might never be another chance to express the depth of their feelings.

Yet, despite their wish for the night to never end, and despite the cocoon of darkness that enveloped them, making it seem as though the night would last forever, the inevitable approached. Even without the morning light to break the spell of darkness, the new day crept in. The absence of sunlight did little to diminish the reality that, regardless of their desires, tomorrow always arrives.

...

Still entwined in the bed, Alicia murmured against Zeke's chest. "Babe...?"

"Hm...?"

"I'm still not weakening. I think it's about time you take back this power you lent me."

She could hear the smile in his voice as he responded. "I'm not going to take it back because your power is never mine. I simply helped return it to you."

Alicia creased her brows and pulled away to look at him.

"Listen, Alicia," Zeke said, locking eyes with her, a serious undertone threading through his voice. "You need to be at your best strength from here on..." He paused, searching her gaze as if looking for a sign of readiness, before continuing, "I will be taking you with me to see my mother."

Alicia's eyes widened, her expression shifting rapidly to one of gladness. "Are we going to leave soon? Should I go get changed now?" Her words tumbling out in a rush of enthusiasm.

Alicia couldn't hide her excitement. But as she started to rise, Zeke's hand reached out, pulling her back down to him in a swift, fluid motion that landed her atop him. He wrapped his arms around her tightly, holding her close as he spoke in a low, solemn voice. "I'm so sorry if this will erase your excitement, but I must brief you first about my mother's situation. My mother is already dead... it is only her spirit that is left here..."

The room fell into a heavy silence following his revelation. Alicia remained quiet, absorbing the weight of his words, her own emotions a complex swirl of sympathy and shock. "I'm so sorry, Ezekiel," she finally murmured.

Zeke gently raised himself up, his movement bringing them face to face while Alicia still straddled him. He caressed her cheek tenderly, a sad smile playing on his lips. "Though I had hoped she's still alive somewhere, I was already long prepared for something like this. And even if it's just her spirit that I've met, I was still so glad to see her again. I'm sure you'd feel the same once you meet her."

Slowly, Alicia nodded, her agreement soft but firm. "I'm sure of that as well. So... I think we should start moving now to..."

Yet again, Zeke's arms tightened around her, pulling her into an embrace that felt as if he were trying to hold onto the moment just a bit longer. A long sigh escaped him. "I can't wait to meet her too but... once we go see her... it would be the last time."

Chapter 390 Light and Darkness - Part 8

Chapter 390 Light and Darkness - Part 8

Once Alicia and Zeke finally left the castle, they immediately reunited with Gavriel. Gav had just come from the battlefield, so he was drenched in blood. His eyes were also still bloodshot, and his entire demeanor reeked of death and darkness. The sight of him at that moment was so severe it sent involuntary shivers down Alicia's spine.

"Now this is a surprise," Zeke said as they approached him. "You took longer to finish the battle than I expected, Gav."

Alicia couldn't help but widen her eyes a little towards Zeke, only to see her bloody husband looking all nonchalant as if he had said nothing wrong. Seriously, she always forgets how Ezekiel usually acts around everyone else, especially after their special moments where he bares himself as vulnerable and all, but... but she still honestly wanted to pinch his side hard right now because... well, Gavriel had been in an extreme battle all night while they were... they were enjoying themselves, and yet her husband dared to say such a thing?!

"Somehow, their strength this time is unexpectedly beyond what's normal. I believe someone cooked up something. I had fun though." Gav simply shrugged. His bloodshot eyes seemed to be clearing up. "Ruka will tell you about the details once he arrives. I'll go clean myself."

Zeke nodded subtly. "I'll meet with him once we're back."

"Where are you going this time? And don't tell me you're going to disappear for a long while again." Gav raised a brow. Though Alicia was covered with a cloak from head to toe, he was still obviously avoiding to even glance at her.

"We won't take long." Was all Zeke replied.

Gav opened his mouth as if to say something lengthy but he closed his lips, sighed, and ran his bloodied hand over his head. "Well, as long as you come back with head intact." He then walked away still talking. "Look after your husband, lady. Everyone's after his head so we're insisting that he's stop going out solo but he never listens."

Once Gav was gone, Zeke looked at Alicia and squeezed her hand. "Ready to go?"

Alicia nodded without hesitation and with that, the couple was swallowed by smoke and disappeared.

...

The journey towards their destination wasn't easy. It was actually far and fraught with dangers and battles against monstrous creatures, so intense and frequent that when Zeke mentioned they were only halfway to their goal, Alicia could only muster a smile of disbelief.

She was never expecting everything to be easy but seriously, they were just half way through? And to think that the monsters were obviously stronger the further they go.

"What's with that smile, my witch queen?" Zeke inquired, his tone light as he deftly dispatched a giant ant-like creature that had crept up behind Alicia. "And here I thought you were enjoying this journey so far."

Almost in sync with his words, Alicia's reflexes snapped into action. With a speed mirroring a lightning bolt, one of her twin swords whistled through the air, past Zeke, and impaled another monstrous ant that was stealthily charging from his blind spot. Her actions were swift, precise, a dance of deadly grace.

As she retrieved her sword from the fallen creature, Alicia responded. "What... made you think I'm even enjoying this?"

Zeke's smile widened as he stepped closer to Alicia, his hand reaching out to gently wipe a smear of monster's blood from her face. "Your eyes have been telling me," He whispered, his voice low and knowing.

Alicia caught her lower lip between her teeth, at the realization that Zeke had seen through her way before she even realized it herself. She thought that maybe it was the long hiatus from battle, the dormant skills and thrills of combat reawakening within her. The rush of adrenaline, the dance of danger—it had reignited a spark she hadn't

realized she missed. Despite the danger of their journey, there was an undeniable excitement in wielding her abilities again, a thrill that her eyes, unbeknownst to her, couldn't hide.

And right now, Alicia knew that her excitement was nowhere near its peak yet. As she continued to engage in battle alongside Zeke, her excitement surged, not yet reaching its zenith but climbing steadily. Initially, she had feared that her skills had dulled from years of inactivity. However, with each skirmish, she felt her old prowess awakening, her movements becoming sharper, more instinctive. She was rediscovering the rhythm of combat, almost regaining the full extent of her capabilities. The thrill of rediscovering her former strength was insane, and her excitement was evident, impossible to mask.

Alicia also knew that her heightened adrenaline wasn't solely due to her resurging combat skills. She knew that one of the main reasons behind her adrenaline was because she's fighting a battle alongside her beloved man. To fight next to him... to fight with him and destroy enemies together... the feeling was just surreal.

There was just something so fulfilling about standing shoulder to shoulder with him, facing down threats together. The synergy between them, the way they seamlessly cooperated to kill their foes, added a layer of surreal delight to the experience.

Alicia had been dreaming of this. Of moments like this where she could help him end his enemies and fight together with him.

Just the thought of all this finally happening was making her emotional.

Suddenly, she hugged him and buried her face against his chest.

"Now... now, my queen." He purred, caressing her hair so gently.

"I'm just... I'm just happy I can finally fight alongside you like this." She finally admitted. "I've been dreaming for this, Ezekiel... to be able to help you destroy your enemies like this."

Zeke hugged her tight against him and planted a heartfelt kiss on top of her head. "Me too..." he confessed. "I admit I never wanted you to be here, fighting monsters like this, but... but here I am wishing that we could be together like this a little bit longer."