

Royal Contract 131

Chapter 131 - A Bad History

"Would you like me to put some lotion on your back?" Alex asked her as they both laid on the lounge chair.

They were now enjoying lazing on the beachfront, underneath a makeshift tent, after their kissing session in his room earlier.

"Sure," Dani answered, wanting to feel his hands against her body once again. She could still remember what they just did a while ago.

She was tired of fighting what she felt for him. After that kiss that they shared, she knew she could never deny him anymore.

She laid down on her front, exposing her back to him. He took the lotion from the table next to them and started putting some good amount on his hands. Then he unclasped the lock of her bra, exposing the skin of her back to him.

He started rubbing the lotion on every inch of her skin, not letting any part of it unattended. The act was pure, but his thoughts were not. He wanted her, and he could not deny it anymore. He could not keep up with the lie of only wanting her for his charade. He wanted her in every sense of the word.

But he was still skeptical if she was ready to be a part of his world. Because as of now, his life was starting to become more complicated than he ever imagined it would be just because he agreed to have his birthday here.

"Hey, you two. Join us. We are going to play volleyball, and we need more players." Jacky shouted not far from them, breaking the spell cast upon them by the moment.

Jacky could see that Alex and Dani were getting closer every day that they spent time together. She only desired what was best for her friend, so if Dani was happy around Alex, then who was she to stop them. She would be there to support her a hundred percent.

"Do you want to join them?" He asked her as he finished rubbing her back.

"I think we need to." She replied to his question. Although she would opt not to, it was not a choice she could take. She also needed to spend time with her friend. She had forsaken Jacky long enough.

"Ok, we'll be right there," Alex yelled hesitantly at Jacky, fixing back the clasp of Dani's bra, then moving slightly away from her.

If it were up to him, he would rather stay with her underneath this tent and enjoy the whole day talking to her. But he knew that the others would not stop bugging them until they joined them.

She quickly fixed herself before standing up. "Thanks for your help." She uttered as she tied her hair in a ponytail. "Shall we join them?"

They both move in the direction of the group that was waiting for them. There were already four people waiting for them at the sandy court, Jacky, Lance, and two other cousins of Alex, who were joining them on this trip.

When she scanned her surroundings, she found Marcus sitting not far from them, sipping on his drink, relaxing underneath a tent.

"Alex, will you excuse me for a moment. I need to do something." She pointed to Marcus, and he appeared to understand what she was planning to do.

"Go ahead." Alex encouraged her as he went to talk to Lance while she moved in the direction of Marcus.

"Marcus, what are you doing here alone?" Dani sat beside him and also poured herself a glass of what he was drinking.

"Just enjoying some time alone. I rarely get to experience this." Marcus answered her question with a forced smile.

"Come on, join us play some ball. Let's have a good time." Dani insisted, unable to take that he was sulking alone on the sideline while all of them would be having a good time.

She believed that whatever happened to him and Jacky should be put to rest and let go. For now, she wanted all of them to have a good time. Marcus had been a friend to her, and she did not want to see him in this condition, no matter what a douchebag he was to her friend.

"Don't worry about me. I'm good here. Besides, you already have an even group. You will need another one if I join." Marcus reasoned as he declined to join the game.

Marcus was still feeling out of his element, not knowing how to deal with Jacky and their ruined relationship. He knew he wanted her back, but he also knew that she would be expecting more from their relationship. Was he ready to give her that, or should he just let her go?

"We'll look for one more player. I'm sure we could find one more who would like to play." Dani insisted as the others waited for them to start the game. She could see the conflict in his eyes. She was not sure if she should blame him for his condition or take pity on him.

"What about me? I want to play." She heard someone spoke from her back. She was not familiar with the voice, but he sounded like she had heard that voice before.

When she turned around, she recognized the man standing behind her. "Hi, Edward. I did not know that you are also here." She slightly bowed and greeted the prince as she recognized him as the one, she danced with during Alex's birthday party.

"Well, Aunt Katherine was kind enough to invite me to join. So, I could not pass up the chance to be with my family." Edward explained why he was present at this event.

"I am glad that you were able to spare us some time with your busy schedule." Dani had no problem with him being around. He was a member of the family of Alex, so he was more than welcome to be here.

"Can I join the game?" Edward asked, walking closer to her.

"Of course, that would be perfect because we need one more player to complete the team." She told him as she looked at Marcus. "Come on, Marcus, I found you another player."

This time, Marcus had no choice but to join, hearing that the prince would be playing with them. He could not leave Alex alone with his cousin, even if he did not want to play, knowing that they had a bad history.

Chapter 132 - Respond In Kind

"Fine. Let's go." Marcus stood from his lazy position and walked with her towards the group. Edward walked not far behind them.

She could see that Alex had an unreadable expression on his face when she stood beside him. He did not look unhappy nor mad to see Edward. Alex still greeted his cousin with a smile on his face. But it was never the same when he was talking to Lance or Marcus, Dani noted.

"Hope you don't mind if I join the game," Edward announced to the group, positioning himself just beside Dani.

"The more, the merrier," Jacky shouted, responding to Edward. Unaware of the tension between Alex and Edward.

But Dani had sensed it. She had figured it out during the party that something was going on between Edward and Alex. But they never allowed the others to notice their conflict with each other. The fight was so subtle that not everyone could see it.

"Then, let us play some ball." Jacky decided to start the game by dividing the group into two. She took charge of the game since no one seemed to be in the mood to do it.

Dani ended up in Alex's team, with Marcus and the other cousin of Alex. Then on Edward's team was Lance, Jacky, and then one of the other cousins again. They went to their places, and the first one to serve was Alex.

Looking at him as he positioned himself on the serving line, lifting his shirt off and tossing it aside, she could not help but wonder what else could he do with that body of his. He seemed to be perfect in every way.

When Alex served the ball, it went to the other court perfectly, making it difficult for Lance to receive the ball. They got their first point in that instant. The game went on with the lead score going back and forth between the two teams.

"I got it." Dani received the ball and set it up for Alex. Then he quickly spiked the ball to the other court, but Edward saved the ball, and Jacky set it up again.

They knew that Lance was going to strike the ball. Out of nowhere, Edward jumped in the middle and hit the ball right to the center of their court. Nobody was able to recover and get the ball from the other side.

Dani was not expecting that Edward was very competitive as he led the other team to outscore them in the final set, making their team win the final score. She had no problem with losing since it was just a friendly game. The point was for everybody to enjoy.

"Nice game." She shouted to the other team. Then she felt Alex's arm went around her shoulder possessively. Something that she never felt from him before.

"It was a good game," Edward responded with a smug smile on his face. It was not often that he was able to beat Alex in a game. He could not help to feel the satisfaction, especially when Dani was watching the both of them.

"Yes, it was," Alex replied as he directed Dani back to their tent. He did not like to spend a minute longer with Edward's company.

He did not mind losing, even to Edward. But he did not like the way Edward was looking at Dani. Although he was confident that Dani would not fall for his charms, he still would like her to avoid him as much as possible.

As they laid on their tent, contented to laze around, Alex was interrupted by one of the servers. It appeared that he had an important call that he needed to attend to immediately.

Since they still had not replaced their broken phones, the caller had to reach him through the line in the house. He excused himself to answer the call, leaving her for the meantime all to herself.

After a while, she noticed that their parents finally joined them on the beach. She watched them from her tent and was glad to see that her father and mother seemed to be enjoying their time on the water.

It was a rare occasion that she found them relaxing and leaving their busy lives behind them. They both looked so calm and happy, especially her mother, who worried too much about her workaholic father.

She wondered if she did have a family of her own, would she be like her mother. She always admired her mom for standing up to his father when she did disagree with him. However, she was also able to bend to his wishes at certain times when she thought he deserved her support.

Could she be able to balance her ambition for the sake of her family like what her mom did? Or would she prefer a different path?

"What are you thinking? You look so lost." A voice once again penetrated the silence around her.

"Oh, Edward, I did not notice you there." She responded, a bit surprised to see someone else standing close to her inside their tent.

"I'm sorry, I did not mean to startle you." Edward raised his hand in surrender, showing that he meant no harm to her. "Do you mind if I join you? I feel like it is only fitting we get to know each other since you will be marrying my cousin soon. We will eventually be family."

Edward could not help but admire the beauty that was lying close to him. He commended his cousin's taste with women. He knew how to pick them, remembering Tyra, the last girl that his cousin dated before this beautiful woman in front of him.

"Of course, I don't mind. You are welcome to join me. I would also like to get to know Alex's family members." She quickly stood up from her lying position and tried to cover herself up with the thin robe she brought with her.

She knew she could not decline his offer since he had not shown any untoward manner unto her. He was trying to be friendly, so it was a common courtesy that she should respond in kind.

Chapter 133 - An Honorable Man

If Alex and Edward had a personal conflict, she believed that she should not involve herself with that since she was not part of it. But she made a mental note of learning more about the relationship between these cousins.

It would be wise to know what caused the rift between the two so that she would not be caught in the crossfire if a war between them ever happened.

"Would you like something to drink?" He offered, seeing one of the servers waiting for his order.

"Sure." She answered, finding the heat was too much, and she was starting to get thirsty. Besides, she did not want to appear ungrateful to one of her hosts. As far as she was concerned, he was still a family of Alex.

He immediately signaled for a drink, and the server hurriedly moved away to get them some drinks.

"I hope that my cousin is taking good care of you. I heard that you got sick while you were here." Edward remembered hearing that from his father in one of their conversations.

"Yes, it was an unfortunate incident, but Alex was very attentive to my needs. He made sure that I recovered quickly." She told him, not wanting anyone blaming Alex for what happened.

"That's good to hear. I don't want anything to happen to such a lovely lady like you under our watch. You are a guest of the Empire, so you should be well treated accordingly." Edward said sweetly at her, showering her with pleasantries.

He handed her the cold drink as soon as the server placed it on their table. She was not sure of how to react to the way he was charming her. She did not want to be rude, but she also did not feel like encouraging him.

Giving him false signals that she was interested in him was the last thing she wanted to happen. But the way she sensed it, he was very interested to know her more, a bit more than she would like. She suddenly felt uncomfortable being around him, especially alone.

"Would you mind if you excuse me, but I need to use the bathroom?" She could not keep pretending that she was enjoying his company. But she could not wait for Alex to come back to save her from Edward's company. She was not a damsel in distress who needed rescuing. She could get out of an awkward situation all by herself.

She moved away from him and into the direction of the house. Maybe it was time to check herself in the mirror and see what Edward saw in her to make him interested.

She was glad that she suddenly bumped into Jacky, who dragged her into an empty room. "Are you busy?" Jacky asked as she started pacing back and forth around the room.

"Can you sit down?" She commanded rather than asked since she was starting to feel dizzy with her constant moving around. "What is the problem?"

"It is Marcus," Jacky announced as she looked at her friend, confusion written all over her face.

"What about him?" Dani asked, knowing that whatever Marcus did, she would not like it.

"He told me that he wants to get back together. He kept apologizing for what he did." Jacky told her friend.

"So, what is the problem with that?" She could not see any issue with that unless her friend felt like he deserved a second chance. "Do you still like him after what he did to you?" She asked, not particularly thrilled to hear what she was going to answer her.

"Yes, I think so, but I don't want to get back together with him. I also like Lance a lot. He was a better man than him. But in a few days, we will be leaving this place and going back home. I won't be seeing Lance ever again." Jacky stated, clearly conflicted with her situation.

"You know what. You are the only one who could answer all your questions. The only advice I could give you right now is to think over your relationship with Marcus and Lance. Weigh out the pros and cons." She held her friend steady on her shoulders.

She had not much advice to give her friend since she was going through some relationship issues too. She was not the best one to answer any romantic problems since she was no expert in it.

"But I am confused because I never felt like this before." Jacky finally sat down on the nearest chair to her.

"Figure it out if it is worth going again into a relationship with Marcus or see where your friendship with Lance will lead you. Just don't jump into anything without being sure of what your feelings are and the consequence." Dani commented on his friend's situation.

No matter what she said to her, it would still be up to her on how she would want to proceed with her relationship. But she would always be there for her no matter what she decided. She would always be the friend she could count on when she needed one.

After that, Jacky excused herself to find Lance, who was supposed to teach her how to swim. "Thanks, Dani, for always being there for me."

"No need for thanks. I will always be here for you, just you always been there for me." Dani told her as she sent her off to her swimming lesson.

Finally, Alex emerged from the other room where he had taken the call. It took some time since it was an emergency that he could not ignore. Many lives were counting on him, so it was not something that he could set aside, even if he had to ignore Dani's needs in the meantime.

He immediately looked for Dani and found her in the kitchen, sitting on the kitchen counter, playing cards with the cooks and the help. "Hey, I had been looking all over the place for you." He quickly moved close to where she was sitting, placing his hands on her shoulder.

"Oh, I met these wonderful new friends of mine and offered them some entertainment. I hope you don't mind." She explained, pointing to the smiling staff around them. She did not want these people to get in any trouble for playing with her.

But in truth, she had another reason for being in the kitchen. She was hiding from someone, and the kitchen she thought would be the last place Edward would think to look for her.

"Of course not. I bet that if you met Martha, you would never win against her." Alex said, which the other staff also agreed to. "Right, Mario." He asked the opinion of one of the servers she beat earlier.

"Why? Where is she?" She asked curiously, amazed that Alex knew their names.

"She was on leave for a month." He explained her absence today. "Martha taught me a lot about cooking. Promise next time that we are here, I will introduce you to her." Alex told her excitedly.

"I like the sound of that." She could not help but feel excited too with the idea of them together. It suddenly felt like they were in a real relationship. Something far better from her previous experience.

She could sense that Alex was different from most of the men she knew. She knew that he would never intentionally hurt her, confident that she could trust him. She believed that he was an honorable man.

Chapter 134 - A Perfect Gentleman

"What are you doing in there?" Alex finally asked when they were finally out of the kitchen and back in their tent.

He had been searching for her since he went back to their tent but did not find her anywhere. Luckily, Jacky told him that she left Dani inside the house. He noted that he needed to fix their mobile phone situation. They could not function efficiently without it.

"I was hiding from your cousin." She voiced out her actual reason for leaving the beach. "I figured that the kitchen would be the last place he would think of looking for me." She smiled at her brilliance.

"That was a clever thing to do. Yeah, you are right. Edward would never set foot in the kitchen." Alex could not help but feel pride with the woman in his arms.

The fact that she was not charmed by his cousin was a testament that she was indeed an intelligent woman and quite extraordinary. She did not even require his help to get out of that situation.

"Would you like to swim?" Dani asked Alex.

She quickly stood up and ran towards the water, enjoying the grit of the sands on her bare feet. It had been a long time since she tried swimming in wavy, moving water. She was looking forward to having some fun.

"Hey, wait for me." Alex pulled off his shirt again and left it on the chairs, moving fast on the sand, trying to catch up with Dani.

"Do you come here often?" She asked as she submerged herself in the water until only her head was barely floating in the water.

"Yeah, back when I was young. Lance, Edward, and some of our friends would love to hang out here when we were not busy with studying and our other obligations." He answered her question with a smile on his face, remembering the good times they had in this place.

"I think you used this place to escape your obligations." She stated with a hint of accusation. But she smiled, knowing that she probably did the same if she was in his situation.

"I am an obedient child back then. I followed all the rules and paid attention to all my responsibilities." He admitted. He seldom broke the rules. He only did it when he was trying to cooperate with his cousins. It was Edward who usually led them into trouble.

"Unlike you, I used to do that. I would hide or escape from my father when he started piling up the things that I had to do." She confided with him her not-so-adorable childhood.

Her mother would usually support her and help her escape some of the things his father wanted her to do, but there were times that he caught them, and he would double her assignment as her punishment.

She was grateful for that because it had been her training that made her who she was today. A strong independent woman that could handle anything that life threw her way. She had her dad to thank for that.

"It would seem that we had a very strict childhood, but we still ended up rebellious in a way." He summed up what he had assessed with their childhood.

After a couple more swims in the water, they decided that he had won the race. Dani had to admit, Alex was a stronger swimmer compared to her.

"Come on. Everyone is probably looking for us. Dinner was about to get served in the dining hall in an hour, so we better get cleaned up and dressed." Alex took their things in the tent and guided her back to their room.

There was one problem when they reached his room. There was no walk-in closet or a big spacious bathroom in the room. It was just the single bathroom they had to share.

"Maybe you should go shower first. Then I will come next after you." Alex offered, knowing that they could not use the bathroom at the same time.

He decided to go to the balcony while she was inside taking her shower. He did not want to imagine what she was doing inside that room, so he opted to divert his attention to the beautiful view outside.

But no matter what he did, his mind kept going back to the kiss they shared earlier at this same spot he was standing on. He could not wait to have her in his arms again.

When he came back inside the room, she was already wearing a sundress and flat sandals. Dinner was not a formal occasion, so dressing casually was acceptable.

He quickly made his way to the bathroom and cleaned the salty remnants of the seawater and sand off his skin. But no matter how he ran the water on his body, he could still feel her body against his.

He quickly ran his fingers through his face, hoping to wipe away his unwanted thoughts. But it would seem the more he suppressed himself from thinking of Dani, the more his body craved to have her.

When he came out of the bathroom, Dani was now standing outside the balcony. She was probably waiting for him to finish. It appeared that Dani also found herself lost in her thoughts. He wondered if she was also thinking of him and their kiss.

After getting dressed in his casual pants and dress shirt, he walked into the balcony and joined her. "Hi." She greeted her, not wanting to startle her with his sudden appearance.

She looked up at him with a smile. "Hi!" She replied to him.

She did not look anything like she was guilty of thinking of something naughty, he thought as he studied her face. He was expecting that just like him, Dani would be reminiscing the kiss that they just shared earlier this morning.

But he was not ready to leave just yet as he moved closer to her. He needed to test one more thing before they joined the rest of their family and friends.

"Can I kiss you again?" He reached down to her hands and kissed them first, waiting for her acknowledgment of his request.

He knew that if he kissed her, she would never be able to refuse him. She wanted it as much as he wanted it to happen. But there was a possibility that she might regret it later on. He just wanted to be sure that they were on the same page.

When she told him that she wanted it to take it slow, he was unsure of what she meant. But he was not taking any risk of sending her packing and running away from him if he suddenly made the mistake of rushing things.

"Do you still need to ask?" She started to wrap her arms around his neck, pulling him down to her until they were only inches apart.

She was not sure how long she would last with her rule of taking it slow. Because every time they were together and alone, there was only one thing that was running through her mind. She wanted to rip Alex's clothes off of him.

She suddenly regretted asking him about taking things slow. Because she just learned the hard way that like before, he was a perfect gentleman.

Chapter 135 - Caught Everyone's Attention

Everybody was already seated when they arrived at the dining hall. But unfortunately, Dani would be sitting across from Edward on the other side of the table. She did not mind as long as Alex was still next to her.

But she would have preferred another seat away from him. Now, she had to endure looking at him, but it would be difficult for them to have a conversation, which was a relief.

"Let me take this opportunity to welcome our guest on behalf of my father, King Edward II. We are delighted to receive such honorable guests in our midst." Edward stood up and spoke in front of everyone, raising his glass for a toast. But he made sure that his eyes, fixing his eyes on Dani.

He did not care that Alex was by her side. He was interested in her, and no one could stop him from getting to know her more.

"We are thankful for your hospitality. May this be the start of a good friendship between my family and the Royal Empire." Ethan responded to the prince's toast.

"We are glad that you joined us today, Edward." The duchess said to her nephew. It was a common courtesy that they should invite the Royal family on such an occasion. But the King had declined due to a previous commitment, so it was only Edward who attended.

"I am also glad I am here." Edward still did not tear his eyes away from Dani. "I hope that you are enjoying your time here on the island, Dani?" This time, he directed his question to her.

He knew that he had avoided her the rest of the afternoon. But it was no reason for him to give up from pursuing her. In truth, she just became a new challenge for him that spiked his interest.

"Yes, I am. Alex made sure that I have a good time." Dani could not help but feel uncomfortable with the way Edward kept looking at her.

She did not like Edward, especially his arrogant personality. He was the kind of man that she usually avoided association with if she had a choice.

She suddenly remembered Nick when she looked at Edward. They would appear to come from the same cloth. She was not happy about it.

The dinner ensued like the other dinners they had. Everybody tried to converse while eating, talking about their interests, businesses, and anything under the sun.

But one thing that she did not like was the look that Edward kept throwing her way. She could not wait for the dinner to be over. So, they could go back to the villa away from everyone else.

"You have to forgive my family if they could not stop talking about nonsense," Alex whispered next to her.

But he was not particularly happy with the way Edward was ignoring the fact that Dani was already engaged to him. He knew how Edward's mind works.

As of now, Alex knew that Edward was planning to take Dani away from him, just liked what he did with Tyra. This time, he would not allow that to happen. Besides, he was confident that Dani would never fall for his false charms.

"I don't mind. Look at my father. He could not leave his business behind." Pointing to her dad, who was now talking about a business proposal. It appeared that he was encouraging the duke to look into it.

"Well, his idea is quite interesting," Alex commented on her father's proposal, appearing fascinated with the idea. He also overheard their conversation and thought that it was profitable.

"Don't tell me that you agreed with my dad. That this is the time and the place to discuss business." Dani could never understand men.

It was what her mom was complaining about ever since she was young. The way his father would take them on vacation, but he would still end up working half the time.

"I am merely expressing my opinion on the matter," Alex stated, looking at Dani with a smile, intrigued with her reaction.

"I'm sorry. It was my fault, not yours." She suddenly realized that she directed her ire to his father towards Alex. That was unfair to him.

"What's wrong?" He asked, wondering what caused her sudden change of mood.

"I get irritated when my father uses a family gathering like this as if we are in a boardroom discussing how he could expand his business more." Dani confided in him. Slowly, feeling comfortable sharing things with him.

"Maybe he is just more comfortable talking about business than anything else." Alex pointed out. "What about we talk about something else?" He felt he needed to change the topic since he was also guilty of such an act.

"That's a good idea." She answered him, not wanting to dwell on their fathers. At least their mothers were able to entertain themselves with the latest fashion.

"What about we talk about how many kids we are planning to have?" He jokingly whispered in her ears. He only meant to lighten up the mood, but the way she looked at him, he guessed she did not see the humor in it.

"Ok, how many are you thinking?" She suddenly felt like humoring his lame attempt to divert her attention to something else. They needed something to do anyway, so why not play with his game to pass the time.

"I'm thinking of six," Alex answered her, glad that she finally came to her common sense.

"Oh, that many. Where do you think you plan to put that in here?" She indicated her thin waistline, imagining herself getting pregnant six times.

But she did once wish for a big family. Being an only child had its perks, but it was also lonely. If she had a brother or a sister or both, maybe her father would not be so focused on her.

"Well, I'm sure we can fit them one at a time until we get six." He did try to imagine how difficult it was for a woman to get pregnant.

However, he really wanted to have many kids in the future when he was ready to settle down. But talking about it with Dani seemed not to be so frightening after all. On the contrary, he was enjoying it.

"I will assume that you would want all boys." She rolled her eyes at him. She thought that most men thought alike. She knew if her father had a choice, he would have preferred to have a son compared to a daughter.

"Of course not. I want to have four sons and hopefully two princesses." He said proudly, thinking that it was the perfect combination for the family he had in mind.

"Really? I never pegged you for a man who would want daughters." She looked at him, picturing him with their kids around him. She wondered if it was all a joke to him or he was serious about this.

"But I like to have princesses that I would adore just like you." Alex insisted as if he was trying to convince her that he was seriously thinking about it.

"Ahem." Jacky started clearing her throat. Then, lightly elbowed Dani on her side, trying to remind her where they were.

"But, I don't think..." She suddenly stopped what she was about to say to Alex after looking at Jacky's expression, who was sitting on her other side.

She suddenly realized that all conversation around the room had stopped. And all eyes were now focused on the two of them. Even Alex was unaware that they both had caught everyone's attention.

Chapter 136 - Scope Of The Agreement

They could not get out of that house fast enough. After that embarrassing scenario, Dani felt like she was about to die. Seeing their parents' faces light up like a Christmas tree was more than she could take.

Then, when they started thanking their Gods that the young couple was beginning to plan their young family, she knew that it would break her parent's heart if this relationship that was barely starting end in a tragic end.

"I'm sorry about what happened back in the house." Alex profusely apologized as they drove them back to their villa.

"Don't worry about it. I'm sure you did not mean what happened in there. Did you?" She looked at him from her seat.

"Of course not. I was only trying to find something to talk about to divert your attention away from our parents. I don't know what came to me when I opened that topic." He gave her a tight smile while shrugging his shoulders. "Ok, I was, in a way, trying to tease you. I did not mean it to escalate in that way."

"Anyway, we could not do anything about it now. I guess we should at least forget about it. I'm sure our parents will move on from the idea eventually." She wanted to dismiss it, not giving it power over her and her thoughts.

She could not keep thinking of something that was not even real. Their relationship was not even clear yet to her, much less planning for a future together.

"Yeah, I think you are right. Let us forget about it." But how could he forget something already planted in his consciousness? It was a joke that had some truth in it.

As the saying went, most jokes were half-truths. If someone thought about it, then that someone was seriously thinking about it. And that someone just had a funny way of expressing it.

Right now, that was what he was thinking. He had dreamt of a large family with many children running around the house that he would build for them. At the moment, he was imagining that it was Dani who was carrying their firstborn son.

"Hey, are you even listening to me?" Dani's words finally penetrated his awareness, waking him up from his trance.

He did not even know that they were already outside their villa, parked in the front of the house. He must automatically drove them back as he got lost in his thoughts.

"What were you saying?" He asked as he finally noticed her.

"Never mind." She said, deciding to forego what she said. The thought was lost anyway when he ignored her and failed to answer her.

They were back in the house. That was what was important now. She quickly went out of the jeep and entered where they would be spending the night. All she wanted to do now was to go to their room and rest.

He stopped her just inside the front door. "What's wrong? What did I do?" He wondered why she suddenly changed her mood, noticing that she was trying to avoid him.

"Nothing. I feel tired, so I think I'm going to bed." She excused herself as she turned around to move back to the room.

"I'm sorry. For whatever I did or failed to do back there." He said sincerely. He was sure that she would not feel that way without reason unless he did something.

As far as he could remember, his thoughts about her preoccupied his mind earlier, so she might have said something that he did not understand or noticed. It must have been significant to her, and she felt ignored.

"Forget about it. It was nothing. I'm just tired." She suddenly felt like she was making something out of nothing at all.

She should not make it a big deal since they were not officially a couple. What they had was a fake relationship. Not because they kissed, she should be expecting more. It was just unfair to Alex.

"Ok, but are you that tired. I was kind of hoping that we can talk some more. Besides, I want to show something." He felt that the night should not end yet and not like that.

He did not want to let go of her just yet. He longed for her company, liked hearing her voice, and enjoyed their little arguments.

She looked at him, trying to gauge what was on his mind. It seemed like he was desperate to talk. "Fine. Just a few minutes." She conceded, moving back to the living room.

In truth, she was not that exhausted. She was hardly sleepy at all. She knew it was stupid to expect Alex to make a move on her. But that was what she thought earlier was his intention.

But she was trying to avoid the awkward moment wherein Alex would tell her that he changed his mind. After what happened at the house, then on their way home. She would feel mortified if she embarrassed herself one more time.

"Thanks. Would you like a glass of wine?" He asked as he moved to the kitchen to get the wine.

"Sure, just a glass." She did not see a problem with one drink. It was not as if she would get wasted with a glass of wine. But that was her limit. She needed her mind to be clear at all times, especially when she was around him.

"Just a minute." He moved to get two glasses and poured them both a half-full glass of wine.

"Thanks." She accepted the glass. They drank the wine in silence as both tried to recompose their thoughts.

"Would you like to take a short walk outside?" He suggested, standing up from his seat.

"Sure." She followed him as he moved to the patio outside, with the view of the ocean at night.

It was a beautiful view with the moon creating a straight-line pattern on the calm water of the ocean. The small waves were making the lights danced on top of it. It was mesmerizing. She thought as she gazed at them.

"This place is so wonderful." She whispered more to herself. It was so peaceful that she felt like all her problems were slowly disappearing.

She decided to remove her shoes, letting her toes and the sole of her feet feel the sand underneath her. It felt therapeutic. It was like she was letting go of all her worries.

"Yes, it is. It is one of the few reasons that make me miss home." He confided with her.

This place held so many memories of his childhood and his youth. The family get-togethers, the crazy parties with his friends, and many more. Something that he would cherish for the rest of his life.

He led her to the path that brought them to the sandy shore, both silently contemplating with their thoughts. With only the water splashing could be heard in the silence of the night. They only stopped when their feet touched the moving cold water beneath them.

"What do you want to talk about?" She finally asked, feeling more confident to hear what he had in mind.

"I want to change the scope of the agreement." He finally spoke up.

Chapter 137 - On The Same Page?

She gazed at the moon, wondering what magic it held for the night. Because at the moment, she wanted one. She could feel the beating of her heart as if it was about to burst at any time.

She wanted him so much that it suddenly felt hard to breathe. She waited for him to speak about what scope of their relationship was about to change.

He moved in the sand until he was finally facing her. He stared at the side of her face, illuminated by the light that came from the only source of light. He could see the uncertainty on her face, but he could not read her eyes as she avoided his gaze.

"Look at me, Dani." This time, he was not forcing her. It would be up to her to decide if she would like to agree to his new arrangement.

He would not be using any tactics, a form of coercion, or any incentive.

He wanted her to accept his proposal because she wanted it too, without any conditions.

"What is it?" She finally turned to face him, staring directly into his eyes. She could slightly decipher that he was mirroring the same feelings that she had. The uncertainty was evident when she read his eyes.

"It is indisputable that we are attracted to each other. I would not deny how much I want you, and I believe that you felt the same way." He started but was cautious in every word he said.

"Yes, I won't deny that I felt the same way." She did not plan to deny it anymore. Her heart suddenly came alive as hope grew with his words. "But what are you trying to say?" She was tired of second-guessing him and waiting.

"I like you very much. I want us to stop pretending that nothing is going on between us." He studied her face, checking her expression for any reaction.

She still kept her silence, letting him take the lead in this one. She wanted to hear what he had to say before she said her piece.

"I am not saying that. I will never love you, but I think I am not there yet. But I am hoping that I would eventually reach that point as we develop our feelings in this relationship." He would never lie to her.

He would never use her for any selfish means. He wanted her. He was sure of that, but he would not promise her anything that he was not ready to give so that he could have her in his bed.

But one thing he could promise was that he was opening his heart to the possibility. He might be already in love with her, or on his way, or he might be wrong too. It was too early to tell. Because as of now, he was not sure of what he was feeling for Dani.

When she nodded in agreement, he continued. "Are you willing to see where this relationship would lead us?" He was hoping she would. "Do you want to be my girlfriend?"

She stared at his eyes, knowing what to answer him. She already had decided her fate, and she was not about to back out now. "Yes, I want to." She smiled at him.

He immediately enveloped her in his embrace, wanting to feel her body against him. "Are you sure about that?" He asked, hoping that he did hear her correctly.

But why did it sound as if she just answered his marriage proposal? They barely passed courtship, and there was a long way to go before they eventually ended up in an engagement, a real one. He chastised himself for thinking too advance into the relationship.

"Definitely." She looked up to him, letting him see what her expression was trying to convey to him.

She was happy that they were finally letting their feelings free to explore where it would lead them. "Just like you, I am not sure if I am ready to love again. But I am attracted to you. I like you, and I am willing to see if we can work on a real relationship."

He was happy to hear that as he slowly shifted her until she was in line with his face. There was only one thing he wanted to do under the moonlight. That was to see her face and the happiness painted on it as he claimed her as officially his.

He lowered his head until he could feel her breath on his face. He stared at her eyes, glad that they felt the same way. He touched her cheeks, wanting to feel the softness of her skin.

He still could not believe that she accepted his new proposal. He was not expecting that this would happen to them, but he was glad that it did. He was happy to know that she was now his.

"Can I kiss you now?" He teased her, staring directly into her eyes. He knew he did not need to ask, but he could not help seeing her reaction to his question.

He did not hear a response from her, but he felt it as she pulled him towards her, closing the distance between them. She allowed her actions to answer his question.

With the moon as their witness, he finally sealed their agreement with a zealous kiss. He moved his hands until he had her secured in his arms. As of the moment, he was not about to let her go.

Not unless they were about to move back to the house and continue what they both wanted to happen. Even then, he might not even let her go, afraid that she would again slip away from him.

If this was a dream, he did not want to wake up yet. He would like to savor every second that he could feel Dani in his arms and her lips attached to his.

But this was not a dream. Alex knew he could take what he wanted. "Do you want to go back inside?" Another question that he was not sure how she would answer.

But from the way she was responding to his advances, he might have a chance. It would seem that they had the same idea. She was on the same page with him.

Chapter 138 - One In Mind And Body

They could not walk fast enough to get back under the roof of the villa. The weather was fine. It was not raining. There was no fire, but the way they moved, it was like they were on an urgent mission to get inside.

As they entered the villa, she barely set foot on the floor when he pulled her to him until she clung to him. She encircled her arms around his neck and wrapped her legs around his waist, letting him carry her as if she was weightless.

He attacked her lips as if what happened earlier did not stop at all as they continued where they left off a moment ago.

He found himself pushing her to the nearest flat wall until it supported some of her weight so that he could freely move his hands to explore her body.

"I want you so much, Dani." He uttered between his kisses as his lips explored her exposed skin, from her lips, cheeks, neck, and down to her shoulder. "I have been waiting to have you like this for a long time." He admitted to her as he kept her in place, making sure that she stayed in place.

"Oh, Alex!" That was the only reply she could utter as he proceeded his assault to her senses.

Dani wanted him for so long that having him now underneath her touch was overwhelming her reasoning, clouding her judgment, and immobilizing her ability to do anything else but to let him take charge of the situation.

But one thing was for sure. Dani wanted what he was doing and then whatever would happen next. He did not coerce her to do this, but she was giving in to her desire freely. She clung to him until she was stable enough to move her hands along his body.

He started lowering the strap of her dress, exposing more of her skin that he could explore. It suddenly brought back memories of their past, but this was much, much better than any of the things he could remember.

He cupped her breast underneath her brassiere until he elicited a moan from her. He was positive then that she wanted this as much as he desired her. Then, he felt her move her fingers, working on removing the shirt that he was wearing.

This time, she took charge as she started to expose his collarbone, then his chest to her gaze. Her lips left his lips and moved on the line of his neck and down to his shoulders. Then it lowered further to his bare chest until it also produced a groan from his throat.

He knew he would not last long if they kept up with what they were doing. But he did not want their first time to happen on the wall of this structure. Then, he corrected himself, it would not be their first time, but he was sure that this would be different from the other one.

"I think we should move to the room." He murmured between his ragged breath as he tried to control himself, stopping both of their movements before they went too far and ended up doing it on the floor where they were standing.

"Yes. Let's do that." She allowed him to carry her to the other end of the house. She did not trust her feet to cooperate with her if she tried to walk at the moment.

He quickened his pace as fast as he could, bringing the both of them to the other room. It was not that he was afraid that Dani might change her mind, which made him hurry. It was more of how long he would last without having her.

As soon as they were inside, he rushed her to the bed. But he almost dropped her on the floor when he was caught with his pants down. It would seem that his pants suddenly lowered on his upper legs, impeding his ability to walk, causing him to fall on the floor.

Luckily, she landed on the mattress while he ended up kneeling beside the bed. No one was hurt badly, physically.

He did not realize that she already removed his button and unzipped his pants back in the living room. He was so caught on the moment that he lost touch with what was happening with them.

"You are very naughty." He chastised her when he finally recovered from his slip up and stood over her.

"I did not mean it." She crossed her fingers and swore to him.

Then, they both ended up laughing at their situation, finding the humor in the incident that just happened. "You should always check that your thing doesn't try to fly away." She teased him.

"Is that so. What if I punish you for your deed." He threatened her as he started rubbing his chin as if thinking. "What would be a suitable punishment?" He tried to look around him.

"Hey, I don't deserve to be punished. Can I say sorry instead?" She bit her lower lips and then pouted seductively, asking for forgiveness for her action. She believed he could not resist her charms as he climbed the bed to join her.

"That's not fair." He said as he pulled her to him until she was straddling him. He knew he was no match with her.

She lowered herself into him, remembering the first night that they were in this kind of situation. It was the night that she initiated everything that happened to them.

Now, she was doing it again. She was taking control of the kiss, and Alex was allowing her to do so. She appreciated him more because she swiftly realized how lucky she was to have met such a man that night. He never took advantage of her and always made sure that she felt they were equal.

What they were arguing about a while ago were lost again as they ensued their passionate embrace. Everything else seemed insignificant.

The only thing that mattered was the way they wanted to explore each other's desires. To find satisfaction in every touch and to give pleasure to satiate their need for each other.

But it would seem that it would not be enough. As Alex took over, shuffling their bodies until he was back on top. He liked it when she was in control, but he liked it even more if he could also please her.

With him on top, she allowed him to take the lead. She felt him removed all the remaining clothing in her body while she also helped take of what remained of his.

As their skin melted into one, she knew she could never turn back. From this point on, she would be craving for the real thing. Her mind and body would never settle for mere dreams anymore.

When he moved his body against her as if they fitted as one, he acknowledged that nothing would satisfy him anymore, except with her constantly in his arms.

He could not understand how he could have stayed away from her for this long. But now that she was here back in his arms, he was not letting her go. Not without a fight.

Feeling her body moving beneath him was the absolute feeling in his entire lifetime. This time was so much better than the last time because they were both in sound mind when they both agree to do this. They knew they wanted to be one in mind and body.

Chapter 139 - The Only Logical Answer

If someone told him that he would be waking up with a woman around him today or any day soon, he would say that person was crazy. But here he was, staring at the sleeping form in his arms, feeling like he was the luckiest man alive.

He could not help himself when he bent down to her and started kissing her closed eyes, down to her cheeks and then to her lips. She kissed him back but only for a few seconds.

Then she suddenly opened her eyes with a shocked expression. "What are you doing?" She shouted as she quickly pushed him away from her face.

She admitted that she was excited, waking up with him wrapped around her body and his lips all over her face. But realization dawned on her that she just woke up.

She suddenly remembered that she must have looked like a witch with her tangled hairs, then her eyes that might have some dried tears. Worse of them all was her mouth, with its morning breath.

It was not true, what they told in fairy tales. Sleeping beauty did not remain beautiful while sleeping. And the beautiful heroine probably smelled too.

"What's wrong now?" Alex asked, wondering what he did to gain such a reaction from her.

"Nothing." She shifted in the bed and grabbed the cover to put on her. "I was just startled." She smiled at him as she stepped off of the bed and moved towards the bathroom.

Although something already happened to them, for the second time. Dani was still uncomfortable parading herself naked in front of him.

"Are you sure?" He asked, still doubting her explanation.

"Yeah, I'm sure." She smiled at him, reassuring him that all was ok before stepping inside the bathroom.

She immediately stepped in front of the mirror and was shocked at her reflection. Well, not that she had not seen herself in such a condition before, but for Alex to see her in her worse appearance was slightly embarrassing.

"What have you been doing last night?" She mumbled to herself. Then, her mind decided to answer her question. You were having the best sex of your life.

She never experienced being kissed in the morning before she even brushed her teeth or gurgled her mouth, not even when she was still in a relationship with Nick.

She placed her palm in front of her mouth and tried to smell her breath. Then, she was once again startled at a figure standing by the open door.

"Hey, you don't have to be shy around me." Alex moved behind her, seeing what she had been doing inside the bathroom.

"I'm not shy." She tried to deny it, but he pulled her towards him even more until his body cradled hers tightly.

He quickly enveloped her in his embrace, not giving her a chance to get away this time. "I don't care what you look like or smell like because I like you just the way you are."

It sounded so cliché in his mind, but he meant every word. He wondered why Dani suddenly ran away from him when things were heating up. He was concerned that he might have done something wrong that was why he followed her to the bathroom.

But seeing that it was nothing he did, he felt suddenly relieved, but he wanted to do something for her. Something that he hoped would make them relaxed a bit when they were together.

"Why don't we share a bath?" He let go of her for a minute as he moved to the inner side of the bathroom and opened the tap to fill the tub with water.

Then, he went back to her and stood in front of her. He let go of the towel that was wrapped around her waistline, leaving him completely naked. He waited for her to do the same.

"Fine." She finally answered him back, realizing what he was trying to do. He was right. She acknowledges it. They had to learn to be more comfortable with each other and their bodies.

With one deep breath, she let go of the white cloth covering her body, also standing in front of him, naked as the day she was born.

"Don't ever cover yourself around me." He ran his fingers through her cheeks, enjoying the feel of her soft skin with his. "You are beautiful." He moved a lot closer to her and then tilted her chin until she gazed into her eyes. "Now, let me wash that stink out of your body." He scrunched his nose on her, which earned him a smack on his arms.

"That's quite funny." She uttered and slanted her lips as a sign of irritation before walking away from him.

"I was joking. You are always so serious." He pulled her back to him and kissed her.

This time, there was no sign of any joke on his action. He held Dani to him until she was freely clinging to him. Then, he finally let go of her. "I like you more when you are silent or smiling."

"Come on. I want to kiss you some more." He pulled her to the tub and helped her inside it before lowering himself behind her.

"What do you think will happen to us?" She finally asked what was bothering her since she thought of them as a couple.

"We will be like a normal couple, trying to make our relationship work." He answered her what he thought of their current situation.

"But what if it doesn't work." She turned her head around to look at him. "What if it only ruins all our plans?"

"I don't know how to answer that as of now. But I'm sure we will figure it out as we continue in our journey as a couple." He lathered her arms with soap then her back. "Are you up for it?"

"Yes, I think so." Feeling her inhibition lessening as he continued to work on her body.

She had been in a relationship before, with the most serious one, with Nick, but nothing compared to what Alex was trying to make her feel. She never experienced anything like this before.

The way he was considering all her opinion on the matter and her needs were new to her. If this was what a relationship should look like, she just realized that she missed out on it in her past affairs.

"Then, I am glad to hear that." He stopped her from putting her hair up into a bun. "Let it flow on your back. I like it that way." But he placed her hair on the other side of her shoulders.

He started moving his hands around her and pulled her closer to his body, cradling his chin on her other shoulders. "I'm willing to make whatever we have here work. I could not put a name on what our relationship is or where it is going, but eventually, we will figure it out." He whispered in her ears, which sent another shiver through her spine, goosebumps on her skin, and quickening her heartbeat.

"I like that." She knew that was the only logical answer to his statement since she was still inexperienced when it came to love.

Chapter 140 - Near Impossible

"I heard that you were leaving tomorrow," Lance uttered just behind her on top of the poolside.

He watched her move in the water, happy she was enjoying herself, but she was alone. He wondered what happened to her friends. He knew that he should be flying around the world right now, but he could not stop thinking about her. He had to see her.

"Oh! Hi, Lance. How long have you been standing there?" Jacky looked in his direction, a bit surprised by his sudden presence.

She suddenly stopped swimming in the water, if she would call what she was doing as such, and focused her attention on him. She wondered if he had been watching her for some time.

She did not know that he was coming today. Yesterday, when they separated after their overnight trip on the island, he mentioned that he was going on another trip. So, there was no possibility that they might see each other before she left.

With nothing to do, she decided to laze around the pool today. She was also hoping that Dani would show up and join her. Maybe they could do something together.

"I just arrived a few minutes ago." Lance moved closer to her location and lowered himself on the pool so that he would be on her eye level. She also moved closer to him, so they don't need to shout as they talked. "I see that you are practicing what I taught you." He implied that he had seen her swim in the pool.

"I think I am getting the hang of it. You are indeed a good teacher." She felt a bit embarrassed since she must have been like a duck wagging her tails, lacking grace as she made her way from one side of the pool to the other end.

"I think you are a good student. It is why you easily learned," Lance commented as he looked at her. "By the way, where are your friends and Alex." He turned around as if he was looking for them around the area.

"My friends? I have no idea. They are all probably busy with something." She replied to his query. Well, she did not have any idea of where they were or what they were doing.

Dani seemed busy with Alex since she hardly saw her during their entire trip except for their occasional talks. She wondered what was happening with her and the two's pretend relationship.

She hoped that Dani would come to her if she needed any help, but she wished that whatever was happening between Dani and Alex was better than what happened to her and Marcus.

"I thought you needed to be somewhere today?" She gazed at him with one of her eyebrows slightly in a questioning arch on her forehead, suddenly remembering their last conversation.

"Well, I postponed it for tomorrow. I thought I would rather spend the day with you if you are free and have no other plans." It was his turn to give her an inquisitive expression on his face.

He only tried his luck that she had nothing to do on her plate today. Although this was not part of his itinerary today, he decided to change it and cancel all his remaining schedules to be with her.

"I don't have plans, but are you sure it is wise that you waste your time with me. It seems that your meeting is more important than you spending it with me." Jacky wondered what he was thinking.

She could not agree that he should ditch his meeting for her. It did not sound right in her book.

"I'm sure that this is what I wanted to do. And I assure you that I am definitely not wasting my time. Are you free to go out with me?" He was hoping that she would.

She still looked at him first before making a decision. She did not have anything planned, and he was already here, waiting for her. "Ok. Why not?" She finally conceded since she wanted to go out with him too.

"Then, get dress. Maybe we can grab an early lunch on our way," Lance suggested, wanting not to waste any more minutes of their time together.

"Just give me a few minutes to shower and change." She moved out of the water, but he quickly stood to assist her out of the pool.

He also grabbed her robe to help her into it and her towel. "I'll wait for you while I say hi to the folks inside." He walked with her until the living room, and then they went on their separate ways.

She quickly climbed the stairs to her room, happily humming to herself. She was looking forward to another day with Lance. After this, who knew when she would see him again, or if ever they would cross paths again.

But at least, she experienced what it was like to be treated like a princess by a real-life prince. How many girls could say that? In her world, she believed none.

She was still giggling inside with the prospect of a good time when her mood suddenly changed. She just got out of her room and was about to meet Lance downstairs when she saw Marcus on his way to her.

She did not doubt that he was looking for her since he was walking towards her room. Maybe Marcus was on his way to a rendezvous with another girl in a room next to hers. But as far as she knew, the rooms near hers were vacant. So, that was unlikely.

"Jacky, I was looking for you. Do you have a minute to talk?" Marcus asked when he was a couple of meters away from her.

"I'm sorry, but I'm in a hurry." She said calmly, but inside she was feeling the opposite.

She had been avoiding him. She hated his guts. Seeing him only made her blood boil, but this was not the place and time to make a scene.

"Please, just a few minutes. I want to say I'm sorry and to talk about us." Marcus pleaded with her. Well, in his opinion, he was already apologizing and doing things that he had not done with another girl.

"Ok. You already said you're sorry, but here is my answer. I don't care. About us talking, I believe we already said all we have to say to each other. If you still did not get it. Here. I'll say again. We are through." She walked past him and straight to the stairs, not looking back.

"Wait." Marcus pulled her arms to stop her from getting down the stairs. "Just give me a chance to explain." He knew he had to do something quickly before she walked away from her for good.

"Let go of me." She pulled her arms from his hold. And then she faced him. "Never touch me ever again." Her face was full of contempt that she could not hold how she was feeling for him.

Seeing her expression, Marcus had no choice but to hold up his hands away from her and let her go. He had never seen her look at him like that before nor heard her with that tone. He knew then that he did mess up big time, and then getting her back would be near impossible.