

## Royal Contract 151

### Chapter 151 - Putting Too Much Faith

"So, how was your day?" He asked after a very long day, sitting on the sofa of his apartment. He could not help but feel glad to relax with his feet on the coffee table.

"It was tiring but fulfilling." She started telling him about her new pro bono case. She laid on the sofa as she savored his voice while sipping on a glass of wine. "What about you?" She asked.

"Marcus was about to lose his shit when I almost fell on my chair during a meeting. I was so sleepy. I could not keep my eyes open." He narrated to her what happened that early morning.

"I hope that the client was not offended by your unprofessional action." She could not help but laugh at what her mind was conjuring about his morning.

"It was your fault. You know that." He accused her as a smirk showed on his face.

"How could that be my fault?" She questioned him, raising her voice by an octave, wondering why he was blaming her.

"Because you hardly allowed me to sleep last night." He teased her as he remembered every minute they spent together.

"Funny. If I remember right, it is you who did not want to stop." She could not help the giggle that came out of her mouth as if she was a teenager.

"Ok, guilty." Alex finally conceded to be the reason for both of them not getting enough sleep. "Anyway, your dad called today, asking for a meeting tomorrow." Alex related to her.

He promised not to keep anything from her. He had to tell her about his plan to see her dad.

"You said no, right?" She asked, knowing her dad. He was probably planning something.

She did not want to make Alex feel obligated to please her father to impress her or make her happy.

"I... already said yes." He hesitated at first, feeling that he made a mistake. "I am meeting him tomorrow morning."

"You know you can say no to him. I don't mind if he did not like you if that would put you in a tight spot." She reminded him, not happy that her dad was making a move without telling her.

She knew how her father could manipulate people to do his bidding. Her experience with Nick's association with her father was enough to traumatize her if Alex fell on the same path.

"Don't worry. I can handle your dad. I'm sure it would be a harmless meeting. He probably wants to get to know me. It would be a perfect time for me to assure him that my intentions for you are noble." He assured her as he placed one of his hands at the back of his neck to get a more comfortable position on the couch.

"That is so sweet, but don't say that I did not warn you." She told him as she refilled her glass with more wine.

"I wish that you are here laying down on my lap while we watched an exciting movie." He imagined her looking up to him while she laid down on the couch.

"I also miss you. There is nothing more I would like but to be with you. But we both agreed that we needed some rest." She recalled her day when she also almost slept on her table while working on a brief.

It was not as worse as what happened to Alex, but it was not acceptable office etiquette. She believed that she had to give her hundred percent in every job she tackled.

"And you should put that phone down so that you can." Jacky just showed up and sat down on the other armchair next to her head. "There is a reason why you are not together right now." She reminded the two of them. She was sure that Alex could hear her.

"I guessed she was right. We need to hang up now." Dani acknowledged that Jacky had a point.

"Oh, but I want to continue hearing your voice and seeing your face." He told her, unwilling to end the call.

"Well, you have no choice but to accept my good night. I hope I can see you tomorrow night." Dani pouted her lips on the screen as a sign of her goodbye kiss.

"Ok, fine. I'll see you tomorrow night." He knew he could not stop her. Besides, she deserved to rest, just like him.

After saying their very long good night and goodbye, they finally ended their video call.

"Finally, I thought the ants were about to attack us. You two almost made me puke with that too much sugar." Jacky jester as she stood from her seat and moved to the kitchen.

"What about you? Is there anyone new in your dating calendar?" Dani asked her friend.

She knew that she was not over with Matthew and Lance, but it never stopped her before from seeking a new date. Her idea was to get over one with another.

"Nah... not this time," Jacky answered her as she grabbed an ice cream in the freezer. "Would you like some?" She asked as she grabbed a spoon. When she nodded, she took two and moved back to the living room, making her scooted a space for her on the couch until they were sitting side by side.

"Are you sure you are ok?" She asked as she treaded on unfamiliar grounds with Jacky's new perception about dating.

"Never been better. I think after failing miserably with my tactics of finding the right man for me. Maybe I should follow your lead, seeing how happy you are now." Jacky shoved a spoonful of the ice cream in her mouth.

"Oh! That's great." She agreed with her friend. "There is no need to rush this. I am sure that the right man would show up eventually." She hoped because she also wanted to see her friend happy.

"But I am happy to see you and Alex doing so well. I also want that." She was now shoving the cold treat in her mouth at a faster pace.

"Slow down on the ice cream. Leave some for me." She admonished her friend, grabbing the tub from her and taking a few spoonfuls into her mouth before Jacky took it away from her.

She was glad that they were able to enjoy a quiet night together. It had been a long time since they last did this.

"I miss this, just the two of us, a girl's night." Jacky hugged her. "Don't hesitate to tell me if he hurts you because I would beat the crap out of him if he does."

She sensed that Alex was different from most of the men she met. He would still be answering to her if he made the mistake of using her friend, just like Nick did.

"Of course, but I am sure that he would never do that to me." She was positive that Alex would never hurt her.

But she was sure that Alex would not do anything to her that would intentionally harm her. She had no idea why she was putting too much faith in him, maybe because he had not shown any reason for her to break her trust.

## **Chapter 152 - Learn From The Master**

"Are you sure that partnering with Alex in this venture is a good idea?" Laura questioned once again her husband's decision, watching him walk out of the bathroom and into their closet.

She remembered too well when Ethan placed Nick under his wings and trained him because he was the perfect candidate to be Dani's husband and the next in line to take charge of his business.

She feared that her husband was going on the same path. Although Alex seemed to be a good man, they still barely knew him. Nick also appeared to be a perfect gentleman until her husband discovered his true colors.

"I think this is the best way to get to know him as the future husband of our daughter. At least this time, I have learned my lessons. I know what to watch out for." Ethan assured her wife that he had control of this situation.

He moved around the room as he prepared to go to the office. He could not wait to meet with Alex and talk about his proposal.

"But I think you should have consulted Dani about this. You know how she feels about you, meddling with her affairs." Laura could not help but worry about what Dani would feel about her father's plans.

Dani and her husband had barely worked out their last issue. She only wished that this would not worsen their father and daughter relationship.

She moved closer to her husband and picked a tie that would go with his suit. Since they got married, she had made it her obligation to help her husband look good. In her opinion, he did not have any fashion sense.

"It is not as if I am setting up Alex to fail. In truth, it is he who would benefit more from this transaction. I want to spend more time with him to get to know him more. I'm sure that Dani is mature enough to understand that." Ethan defended his actions, not seeing anything wrong with his idea.

Although he had every intention to uncover the real intentions of Alex for entwining himself to his daughter, he was not about to divulge that to his wife. It was a secret that he would have to keep to himself for now.

"Fine. I wish you know what you are doing." Laura finally gave up as she reached for her husband's tie and helped him fix it. "Off you go. Don't want you to be late for your meeting." She tapped on his chest after aligning his collar.

"What would I do if you're not here?" He pulled his wife closer to him, kissing her gently on the lips.

"You will surely be lost without me." She kissed him back before letting him go.

She walked away from him to prepare for her day too, but before she could put a distance between them. She suddenly felt a slight slap on her behind that made her jump a little in surprise.

"You're going to pay for that later," Laura warned him as she continued on her way to the bathroom.

"I'm looking forward to it," Ethan answered her back with a wide grin, shaking his head.

Until now, he could not believe how lucky he was to be so successful not only in his business but, most importantly, with his family as well. He only wanted that for his daughter, a man that would love her unconditionally and happiness that would last for a lifetime.

After an hour, he anxiously waited for Alex's arrival. Although Alex still had twenty minutes to spare, he believed that being early was a good trait. He would expect but only the best from the man that would take his daughter away from him.

"Sir, Mr. Princeton had already arrived and is not on his way up." His secretary informed him.

"Send him in as soon as he arrived." He instructed before returning to the graph he was studying.

At the lobby, the receptionist, upon recognition, immediately assisted Alex to the private elevator that would directly lift him to the CEO's floor.

Alex followed without apprehension. He already prepared for whatever Mr. Hamilton was about to throw at him. He knew what the man was planning.

If his assumptions were correct, Ethan would make him undergo a process of proving his worth for his daughter's hands. After learning what Nick did to Dani, he was sure that Ethan had already learned his lesson.

He believed that Ethan would make sure not to make the same mistake again. If he would put himself in Ethan's shoes, he would probably do the same. But he would prove Ethan wrong because if he and Dani wound up separating in the end, it would not be because he used her for his interest.

"You can go inside, Mr. Princeton. Mr. Hamilton is already waiting for you." The assistant that greeted him at the elevator ushered him to the big double doors that led to his office. He opened it for him and quickly closed it when he was already inside.

"Good morning, Alex. Please come in and take a seat." Ethan looked up from his files and pointed to the chair in front of him. "Thank you for indulging my request that you come and visit me today. I know that you are a very busy man."

"Good morning to you too, Ethan." He moved to the chairs and took a seat. "Not as busy as you, I supposed, but I am glad to be here." He knew that pleasantries were necessary for this matter.

"Laura and I would like to extend our gratitude for the warm welcome and an enjoyable stay we had experienced while we were at your home," Ethan told him.

"It was our pleasure to have you as our guests. You can come back anytime you wish. I am sure my parents would love to have you again." He told him.

"Anyway, I asked you to come today because of a business proposition that I felt would be lucrative if we join forces," Ethan said as he lit up a cigar. "Would you like one?" He offered.

"No, but thanks." He declined. Smoking was another vice that he did not plan to try.

"Good for you." Ethan knew it was a bad habit, but it was hard to quit.

"What is this proposition you had in mind?" Alex had a busy schedule lined up today, but he prioritized Ethan. Something that Marcus was not particularly thrilled about when he heard his plan.

"If you are willing to hear me out, then maybe we could further discuss it in the conference room where my team already prepared a proposal," Ethan informed him.

"I am already here, so I don't see any problem in hearing more about it." He knew that he could not simply turn him down.

If this proposal proved to be beneficial, he could not see a reason to decline it. If Ethan intended to get to know him better, it would be his opportunity to impress him.

He also believed that this arrangement would be advantageous for him. It would give him a chance to work and learn from the master.

### **Chapter 153 - A Real Challenge**

After a long meeting, Alex decided to surprise Dani in her office by dropping unannounced. They agreed to meet at his apartment at around eight in the evening. But he managed to finish his work ahead of his schedule today.

The rest of his meetings, canceled that morning, were rescheduled till the next day. The investor, his last scheduled appointment for the day, postponed the meeting for next week. So, he had nothing he could do about that.

"Is she available?" He stood in front of Jacky's table without her noticing, making her grabbed her chest out of fright.

"Oh! How long have you been standing there?" Jacky uttered in a pitchy tone.

"I'm sorry. Didn't mean to scare you? I just wanted to surprise Dani. He slightly backed away from her table as he waited for her answer.

"She's inside alone, but she told me that she should not be disturb." She spoke to him with a bit of authority in her voice, establishing that she meant what she said.

"Oh! Is that so?" He raised his brow at Jacky, wondering if he should heed the warning in her tone.

Then, suddenly, Jacky pointed to him and then used her finger to beckoned him to come closer to her. "If I were you, I won't listen to me." She whispered in a conspiratorial voice when he leaned closer to her. "But don't ever tell her that I said that because I will simply deny it."

She turned back to her work as if he was not standing in front of her. She knew that she would get in trouble for suggesting that to Alex. But she could not help play her little part in making her friend happy.

Alex could only shrug his shoulders when it was clear that Jacky had already dismissed him. Now, he was in the dilemma if he should heed her warning or take her next suggestion.

He was here. What else could he do? He thought as he marched into her door. But a few feet away, Jacky suddenly stopped her.

"What now?" He asked, wondering why she changed her mind.

"You're not going in without a flower or a gift in your hand," Jacky uttered in her breathy tone. "That is not how you surprise someone." She suddenly shoved something in his hand before walking back to her table.

He looked at his hand and found a gift. It had a silver wrapper with red lace on it, tied into a bow. He wondered what was inside it, but when he looked at Jacky, she was already busy with her work.

He wondered if he should give it to her or proceed with his initial plan of simply surprising her. But Jacky was her friend. Surely, Jacky knew what Dani like more than him.

He proceeded to the door and opened it, finding Dani's nose shoved on the papers in front of her. He slowly moved towards her, noticing that she was still not aware of his presence. He decided to move behind her and covered her eyes with his hands.

"Hey, I don't appreciate a prank like this," Dani shouted as she found her vision impaired by two manly hands.

She could not think of any man who would attempt to do this to her except for him. Besides, she could already smell his favorite perfume that she had already associated with his presence.

"Guess who?" He tried to change his voice into something thinner than his usual thick manly voice.

"I thought we are going to meet at your place tonight." She pointed out, not playing his game.

"You are no fun." Alex let go of her eyes, but before he moved away, he made sure to steal a kiss on her lips. It was short, but he made sure that she would want more. "I came to pick you up."

"I still have a lot of work. Unlike you, I have a boss that would grill my ass if I don't finish all of this in time." She spread her hands across her table to show him the files that were still waiting for her. "And I still have one appointment that I need to meet before I can leave."

"Don't worry. I can wait. I don't mind. If you need any help, I can even help you." He offered as he remained standing a foot away from her seat.

"Nope. I don't need a distraction. You need to leave, or I won't be finishing anything." She stood up and started shoving him towards the door. But it was a tedious task because he was not making it easy for her. "Come on, now." She voiced out exasperatedly.

"Fine, but before I leave, I have something for you." He handed her the gift that was in the back of his hand. He hoped that it would change her mind and abandoned her work for him. But of course, he was doubtful that it would ever happen.

"You should not have bothered. You don't have to give me anything every time we see each other." She pointed out but still accepting the gift. "Thank you. I appreciate the thought."

"Ok. Message heard loud and clear." He needed to remember that because he could not keep on irritating her because he was not ready to listen to what she wanted.

"Good. Now, go. Find something else to do while I finish. I will come looking for you when I am through." She instructed as they neared the door.

"Ok. I'll visit David in the meantime while I wait for you." He faced her and tilted her face to him.

She slightly tiptoed in front of him until she reached his face, placing her hands on his cheeks as she returned the kiss, he gave her earlier. She made sure that, at the end of it, it was he who would be craving for more.

She opened the door and walked him outside her office. When they were standing close at Jacky's table, she placed the gift down on the table. "Thanks, Jacky. For conspiring against me." She smiled at her friend, knowing that she had something to do with it.

Besides, she already saw that gift before, hiding inside her drawers. Whatever was inside of it, she had no reason to find out.

Jacky looked at Alex, accusing him of ratting her out. "I kept my mouth shut." Alex semi-whispered in front of the two. "She figured it out all by herself." Putting his hands up.

"If I didn't find this adorable, I will be mad at the both of you." She looked at Alex and then Jacky, placing her hands on both sides of her waist. "Now go check on David before I change my mind."

"I'll see you later, Dani. Thanks, Jacky." Alex said before walking away from them into the office of David.

"I was just trying to help," Jacky uttered as she looked at her friend with her innocent eyes.

"Excuse me." Someone interrupted them before she could comment on her friend.

"Ria. Come in." Recognizing her client from yesterday. She was the last client that she needed to see.

"Where's your baby?" She asked, noticing that she was alone.

"A friend of mine offered to babysit him for a while." She answered as she followed her inside.

"Then, let us discuss your case inside." She had promised when she started to work with this company. She would do her best to win her cases.

She knew Ria's case would be a real challenge.

## **Chapter 154 - Take Heed Of The Warning**

I'm ready to leave. Where are you?

She texted him as she cleared her table and picked up her things. Jacky was also preparing to go home as she turned off her computer and put the remaining files on her table back to the cabinets.

After barely a minute, Dani's phone pinged, indicating an incoming message.

I'm at David's office, but I'll meet you at your office. On my way.

She read his message as she was also on her way out of her office. "Jacky, you can go ahead. I'll have to wait for Alex here." She locked her door and walked towards Jacky's table.

"Are you sure? I can wait with you." Jacky said. "I'm in no hurry."

"No need. Alex is here now." She looked beyond Jacky and saw Alex striding along the hallway towards hers.

She could not take her eyes away from him. He certainly looked delectable in his crisp shirt and well-fitted suit. She did not realize that she was feasting her eyes with his body until Jacky jabbed her ribs with her elbows.

"Close your mouth, dear. You can eat that yummy body later." Jacky whispered in her ears as she took her bag on the table and walked past Alex. "She's ready for you." She uttered mischievously, leaving them behind. Alex could only look at her and smile back, clueless about what she truly meant.

"Hey, hope you did not wait that long." She quickly recovered from her drooling and met him halfway through the corridor.

"Not at all." He gave her a quick peck on her cheeks before letting her go.

"Shall we go?" She hooked her hand on his arms and dragged him in the direction of the elevator. She did not want him to have a hint of what her mind was thinking.

She did not want to appear too desperate for his attention. She enjoyed what they have now. She did not want to drive him away by being too clingy, demanding, or showy. She was still trying to find the balance for a perfect girlfriend.

They rode the elevator in silence together with some of her colleagues and other employees. She noticed how the other women inside could not help but looked at the man in her arms.

She had noticed it before but did not give it much thought. Now that they were officially together, she found it intriguing. She was not sure if she should act proud that she found her prince charming.

"You can leave your car. We can use mine." He said to her in his low voice as the elevator dinged, indicating that they were already on the ground floor.



When the door opened, he quickly ushered her outside to a waiting car. This time, he was not driving, but someone else was sitting on the driver's side. Another man opened the door for them as he helped her inside before he followed.

The man that opened the door for them quickly walked to the other car waiting for him, parked behind them.

"Do your bodyguards have to follow you around all the time? Don't you find it irritating?" She asked, suddenly uncomfortable with the situation.

There was a time in her life that she also had bodyguards following her around. Of course, courtesy of her father. She made sure to get rid of them when she was old enough to take care of herself.

She agreed to take self-defense lessons to prove to her father that she could protect herself if the need arose. So far, there was no instance yet that required her to defend herself.

"I got used to them. Besides, my securities are not just anybody. They are, sort of, my brothers. I protect them as much as they protect me. And now they will also protect you if there is a need." He explained to her the reason for his constant security.

He also underwent rigorous training to protect himself by hand-to-hand combats or through the use of a gun, knife, or whatever was available. But, in his position, he also believed that having some backup was not a stupid idea.

"I don't need any bodyguard. I am more than capable of taking care of myself." She crossed her arms on her chest, showing that she did not agree with any of his plans.

"I'm just taking precautions. With the recent announcement of our engagement, some of my security was a bit concern for both our safety." He held her by her shoulders and turned her around to face him.

"I don't..." She was about to protest again but stopped when he interrupted her.

"Please... Just until the news frenzy about us died down. I'll make sure that the team would be inconspicuous, so you will hardly notice at all." He assured her, not wanting her to decline his plan.

It was one of the things that he and Ethan had discussed this morning. They were both concerned that the exposure of their union might attract some problems. It was better to be prepared than to be sorry in the end.

Besides, Ethan believed that if it came from Alex, Dani was less likely to reject the idea. But, if it would come from her father, Ethan already could guess the outcome.

"Fine. But make sure that your men will not stand in my way. I don't want to see them anywhere near me." She did not know why, but she was finding it hard to refuse him.

"That's my girl. I know you can defend yourself, but let me protect you too, even if I am not around. I don't want anything to happen to you." He pulled her closer to him until he cradled her in his embrace, with her head laying underneath his chin.

"Where are we going?" She asked when she saw that the car was going on a different path, away from her apartment.

"I thought that you might want to taste my cooking." He replied as if that should answer her question.

Honestly, she could not care where he took her as long as they were together. She did not know what was happening to her, but she could not get enough of him.

Her mind was warning her to take it slower, but her heart was already diving in head-on. There was a fear in the back of her mind that she wished to ignore, but as logic suggested, she should take heed of the warning.

## **Chapter 155 - No Typical Woman**

"How did you like the food?" He asked as he placed the used dishes on the sink and started cleaning the table.

He grabbed his glass and drank the remaining wine in it before including it in the pile that needed a wash.

"It was fine, the same as the last time." She admitted, helping out in the kitchen.

She might not be the one who usually worked on the chores back home, but she tried to help when she could. Although, she would admit that Jacky was better at doing it.

"Fine. Just fine." He turned around to her with a look of disbelief. "I put my heart and soul into that dish to satisfy your palate, then all you can say to me is that it was fine."

Despite his busy schedule today, he wanted to make this night special for them, even planning this dinner in his mind in between his meetings. So, he was not about to agree with the assessment of his cooking being just fine.

He moved towards her and grabbed her. "Are you sure that you have not made a mistake?" He asked as he kept her hostage by holding her shoulders.

"What do you want me to say?" She stared at him as if she was clueless.

Although she found it hard to keep the smile from showing on her face, she still upheld the charade.

"I want you to tell me the truth." This time, he used his fingers to extract the truth from her, tickling her on her side until she started giggling uncontrollably.

"Stop it... Stop it." She pleaded when she could not take it anymore. She tried to stop him, even running away from him when she got the chance. But he was too fast for her, and she could not get away from him that easily.

"Then, admit it. It was more than fine." He wrapped her arms around her and waited for her response.

He still was trying his best to be gentle in handling her. She looked so fragile that she might break if he applied too much pressure on her.

"Ok." She placed her fingers on his cheek and started pinching the flesh on both sides. "If you are not so adorable, I will never say this. But your cooking was superb." She pinched it once more before releasing it, giving it a pinkish glow.

"Why does it sound like I am forcing you to say that." He gazed at her suspiciously, knowing that she was up to something no good.

"Because you are." She managed to get out of his hold and ran away again. "You can't take criticism."

"I can if it was true, but I can see through your plans to discredit my cooking with fine. I demand that you tell the truth." He chased her across the living room, around the couch until he jumped on it and caught her hiding behind it.

"Ok. I give up." She raised her hand in surrender. "You did very well. I love every bite of it. Your cooking was so mouthwatering. I could not stop myself from taking another bite until I finished them all." She smiled at him, knowing that she had satisfied his ego.

She had no bad intention of teasing him, but she did enjoy the chase. She could not remember the last time that she was as playful as this. He managed to crumble all the walls she built around her, and she could do nothing about it but let it happen.

"That's better. Because of that." He pulled her closer to him. "I have a prize for you." His head lowered down to hers until his nose touched hers.

He wanted her to take the next few inches and meet him halfway, but instead, she pushed him away and escaped his hold. "Not until we finished the dishes." She walked back to the kitchen, sashaying her waist at him.

"Funny. But you win." He followed her behind, but before he walked past her, he decided to give her a slight smack on her butt, making her shriek in surprise.

"You'll pay dearly for that." She stopped in her tracks and touched the cheeks of her butt. It was not painful, but it did send some thrill in her body.

"I barely touch you. It was just a small tap to make you walk faster." He said innocently.

They spent more time dirtying the kitchen than cleaning it as they played their dirty tricks at each other. As a result, they had laughed more than they could remember in their life.

"That was fun." She uttered as they both sat down on the couch. Both exhausted from laughing than the cleaning.

"It was. Do you want to watch a movie?" He asked, picking up the remote from the side table.

"Sure." She answered, thinking she could use some relaxation. "By the way, what happened with your meeting with my father?"

She suddenly remembered what she meant to ask him since she saw him at her office. But she was too busy then to tackle the task.

"He has a business proposal that he believed we should handle together. A small merger that I could lead, but he would be the silent partner." He related to her the purpose of the meeting, but not exactly going to all the details.

"Are you going to take it?" She asked, staring at his face. She wanted to read his reaction, hoping to get a better feel of his plans.

"I told him that it was interesting, but I wish to run it with my team before I make a decision." He told her.

He was interested in the business side of the proposal. In his opinion, it was a small lucrative venture that was a bit amateur for the likes of Ethan. But if his guess was correct, he was only doing this to test him.

"That's good. You should think about it more before you agree to my father." She readily agreed with his initial response to her dad's plans. But she was still hoping he did not feel forced to agree to such an agreement because of her.

"Don't worry. I won't agree to this if it would in any way affect my business, and most importantly, our relationship." He could sense that it was the reason for her worried expression. She was trying to hide it, but he still saw a glimpse of it in her face.

"Anyway, enough of my meeting. What about you? How was your meeting with the girl you were talking about yesterday? If she needed help with her baby, I am willing to sponsor the operation." He offered as they continued to watch the movie without understanding it.

"Yes, I already talked to her, and I think I want to explore my plans first before I seek external help." She told him.

She had to check if her plan would work first before she sought other ways to help the mother and the child. If her plan worked, then she would be hitting two birds with one stone, figuratively speaking.

"Ok." He conceded with her plan, impressing him more.

It only confirmed his initial assessment of her. He was one lucky man because she was no typical woman.

## **Chapter 156 - Checkmate**

"Hey, Jacky. Where you able to get me an appointment this morning?" She asked as she walked back to her office after the meeting with the other partners in the conference room.

"Yes, you have an hour to get to the meeting. I just called for a favor so my friend could squeeze you in the schedule today." Jacky told her as she continued to type on her computer without looking up.

"Good. I'll leave in five minutes. I like to make some phone calls first." She moved towards her office and sat down on her chair.

It was a busy morning, and she had no time to spare for idle chitchats with Jacky. She took the receiver off its hook and started dialing an outside number.

"Excuse me, Boss. You did not let me finish. Your appointment won't be in the office. My friend told me that he would meet you at this restaurant." Jacky stated as she suddenly appeared in her office and placed the note she made with the complete details.

"I'm sorry. I am just literally swamped." She placed her two hands together to ask for forgiveness from Jacky, placing the phone in between her cheek and shoulder.

"Fine." Jacky walked away from her and outside her office, closing the door behind her.

She did not mind. She knew that Dani was taking more cases that she was not sure if she could handle. But she could only not stop her friend, but only helped her in any way she could.

"Hello, Can I speak to Mr. Ryan Damon Brett?" She spoke calmly on the phone.

"Who's this?" The man on the other line answered with a pleasant voice.

"I'm Ms. Daniella Hamilton. I wish to inform you that I am representing Ms. Ria Barbara regarding her claim that you are the father of her son. We will also be demanding child support regarding the matter." She quickly told him before he hanged up the phone on her.

Or maybe he already did because she did not hear him respond. However, the line was still on as she did not hear any beeping sound indicating that he already ended the call.

"I don't know what she told you, but it is all lies." The man proclaimed on the line before ending the call.

"At least now, I know what I am dealing with." She breathily said as she also placed the receiver back on its cradle.

She established that Ria was telling the truth that Ryan refused to acknowledge his son. Although, it was still debatable at this point since there was no physical evidence supporting their claim. The case remained, he said, and she said case. But she believed that Ria was telling the truth based on her gut feeling.

It was not a hundred percent accurate way of assessing a situation. There were a few times her instinct did fail her. But she was sure this time was different.

Thirty minutes after, she was now standing outside the restaurant written on her note. She knew she had time to spare, but she wanted to proceed with the meeting if it was already possible.

The influential man she was meeting with was one of the highly celebrated philanthropists in this city. His foundation had the highest record of assisting the less fortunate ones.

She would like to seek his help first about the condition of the son of her client. If he declined, then that would be the time she would decide to take a new course of action.

"I'm here to see, Senator Donald Brett. He is expecting me." She announced to the hostess assigned in front of the restaurant.

"Of course, Ms. Hamilton. He is already waiting for you inside." The hostess answered her, recognizing who she was.

The hostess quickly opened the door and ushered her inside, working her way around the tables. She followed her until she reached an exclusive area further inside the restaurant. There she could see that the Senator was eating with a man opposite to him.

She did recognize him as one of his advisors that she frequently seen with the Senator in his everyday activities.

"Good morning, Sir, but Ms. Hamilton is already here." The hostess alerted the Senator, who was silently observing her as she approached the table.

"Of course, Ms. Hamilton. Join us." The Senator offered the seat beside him. The man beside him pulled up a chair for her.

"Well, you look lovelier than the photos I have seen of you." The Senator complimented.

"Thank you, Senator Brett, for fitting me with your busy schedule at short notice." She was not easily swayed with compliments when she was on a mission.

"I'm sure that as a friend of your father, I can always give time to your cause." The Senator said.

"Anyway, regarding why I am here." She did not want to waste any more of her time as she handed him a folder of the case she prepared.

"Why don't you join me first for lunch before we discuss this matter?" Senator Brett suggested, calling for the waiter.

"I am honored, but I am afraid I had to decline. I am in a tight schedule and only have a few minutes to spare." She was not about to get sidetracked with her plans.

"Wow, now I know I should not be messing with a woman like you. You know what you want, and you are ready to get it. You are indeed your father's daughter." Senator Brett said as he started to open the folder.

"I'll take that as a compliment." She uttered with pride.

She waited as he skimmed through the file, then placed it down on the side of the table.

"I see that there is some urgency in the case of this baby boy. I am sure that my foundation can do something about this immediately." He announced.

"Yes, as you can see. The boy needs the operation at the soonest possible time. This boy has a chance for a normal and happy life if you, Sir, could help him." She emphasized the man beside her.

"I'm sure that there are also several foundations that you could have asked for help." Senator Brett looked at her, curious why she chose him for this particular case.

"I could. But I chose you because of a particular preposition I want to discuss with you." She knew that she was finally getting the full attention of the Senator.

His eyes lit up as realization came to him of why she was here. "Carl, would you mind leaving Ms. Hamilton and me for a few minutes." He looked at his advisor, who had a curious look on his face.

"Sure." The man quickly stood up and excused himself from the table, and walked away.

Alone on the table, the Senator called the waiter once again and had his drink refilled. "What about a drink?" He offered once again, but once again, she refused.

In silence, Senator opened the file again and checked the content, this time thoroughly studying the file and the picture attached to it.

When his new drink was in his hand, he dropped the file on the table. "Now, tell me what this is all about, and don't leave out any details." The Senator said after taking a sip on his newly refilled drink.

She handed him another piece of paper containing her proposal. "Think of it as me saving all of us from getting a terrible headache." She calmly spoke as she placed her hand on the table.

She knew when the Senator remained silent, still maintaining his composure after reading the paper, he was ready to hear her out. She knew she had him where she wanted him, checkmate.

### **Chapter 157 - Win Against A Big Fish**

After Dani's meeting yesterday with Senator Brett, she just received a message from the family's lawyers, setting up an appointment with her today.

Based on her conversation yesterday with the Senator, it appeared that he was amicable with her plans. However, she could not be too complaisant in such a handshake agreement because it might still change.

After he consulted with his lawyers, there was every chance that his counsel might give him other options that she had not thought of before. After all, she was still a rookie compared to them.

"Jacky, get me, Ria. I need to talk to her right away." She shouted to Jacky, who was busy at her table.

She just hanged up a phone conversation with Ria about the latest development. She told her that she did not have to be present in the negotiation. She will hear what the other parties had prepared and tell her later all about it.

"What's going on?" Jacky entered her room after the call she made to Ria, probably noticing the excitement in her voice.

"Brett's lawyers are on their way to talk about settlement. I hope that we can get a good offer so that Ria could finally get her life back and not worry too much about her baby." Dani stated, feeling amazing about herself.

If she managed to make them agree with her terms, then Ria would win her case. They would not need to go to court, something she would like to avoid for Ria and the baby's sake.

"That's good news if they finally agreed to settle. Maybe whatever you said to the Senator made him think about Ria and the baby's condition." Jacky told her.

"Nah. I don't think so. I believe the Senator was more concerned with the image of their family if this ever came to court and publicized." She offered her opinion on the matter.

"Yeah. That is more plausible." Jacky stated as she moved to sit on the chair. "What exactly did you say to him? Did you threaten him or something?"

"Of course not. I don't resort to dirty tactics. Although, I did explain to the Senator the repercussion if they refused to cooperate. The possibility of the press finding out because she will file the case if she had to." She explained to her.

She believed that Ryan Brett was not afraid to be sued since the other lawyers backed out once they learned who they were going against compared to who they would be representing.

However, with a person like her, plus the backing of a reputable firm, going after them, they were now finally taking Ria's case more seriously. They were now willing to discuss the matter.

"Oh! You are smart." Jacky complimented as she stood up from her seat. "Better leave you now so you can prepare for your meeting." Jacky walked out of the room, leaving her with her thoughts.

After an hour, she walked into the conference room, where three lawyers were already waiting for her. Fortunately, Evan agreed to accompany her in the meeting, more of moral support.

The meeting commenced with both parties discussing the merit of the case. Dani informed them of their conditions, which in her opinion, were quite fair to both parties.

"What if my client refused to subject himself to a paternity test?" One of the lawyers asked, fishing for a way to salvage their case.

"Then, that is his right. But my client is prepared to bring this to court if your client will continue to deny acknowledging that the child is his." She knew that the Senator already instructed his lawyers to rattle her.

But not today. Those times, she went home frustrated because powerful and wealthy people got away with their wrong deeds were long gone. She was here to fight with the backing of this massive firm and its entire resources.

"As I told Senator Brett, we are prepared to take this to court because my client is determined to settle this for her child. The child that your client fathered but not manly enough to take his responsibility." She kept her voice as neutral as possible.

Men like Ryan and the Senator made her blood boil because of their hypocrisy. They appeared saints in the eyes of the people, but they were the devil in disguise.

"As Ms. Hamilton already stated, our firm will take this case to court if your client continues to refuse our generous offer for settlement. I believe my client will lose nothing if this becomes a media frenzy, but yours might have some issues with it." Evan finally gave his opinion on the matter to support Dani's claims.

The head of the opposing team finally took over the conversation. "It is clear that my client would be the one in the losing end of this deal in the long run." He finally acknowledged that they could not win the case without creating a colossal scandal for their client.

Dani and Evan only nodded in affirmation of his assessment but remained silent as they waited for him to continue.

"My client has given me the authority to offer your client with this settlement." He pulled out an already prepared folder and pushed it across the table towards Dani.



Dani immediately scanned the file, checking the pertinent contents of the file. "This looks fair, but give me a day to review and confer this with my client." She told their visitors.

She hoped that her voice did not sound like she was already rejoicing, but she could feel her heart almost skipping a beat. She just won her first pro bono case in this firm against a giant.

Finally, the other party made their excuse and left Dani and Evan alone in the room. With a huge grin, she smiled at Evan and handed him the file. Evan looked at it and nodded in agreement.

"You certainly impressed me. You are learning fast. Keep it up. We are not wrong to have you in the team." Evan handed the file back to her before standing up.

"I will take that as a compliment. By the way, I appreciate the help earlier." She said to Evan as both walked out of the conference room.

She smiled to herself, tapping the folder in her hands with a renewed spirit. It is her first win against a big fish, but it would not be her last.

### **Chapter 158 - The Biggest Fish In The City.**

"Did you understand what the conditions stated?" She asked her client as they sat in her office.

She summoned Ria to come to her office if she had time, so they could discuss her case since there was a need for urgency.

"So, you are saying that after I sign this agreement, my son will finally get his operation. They will pay for all his medical expenses from the operation and as long as he needed medical attention." Ria was still finding the news a bit unsettling.

She felt like she was dreaming. And any moment now, the dream would turn into a nightmare. She had been praying for a miracle, but now that it seemed that her prayers were finally getting their answers, she could not fathom how to respond to it.

"Yes, but I need you to understand that besides that. Your son would also receive a decent house where you don't have to worry about rent, a monthly allowance for his everyday need, and a scholarship that would guarantee that he would get the best school available for him." She enumerated what the contract stated.

"Is this for real? They agreed to all of this." Ria still could not believe what she was hearing.

The last time a lawyer talked to her, they almost laughed at what she wanted. During that time, all she asked for was a little help for the operation of his son.

"Yes, but you also have to understand that they have their conditions." She reiterated what she earlier said so that she could make it clear to her.

"Yes, of course. I understand. If I accept all of this, I had to sign the non-disclosure agreement. I would lose my right to tell my son who his father is. I could never bother them again. Is that right?" Ria stated what she understood of her situation.

"Yes, are you sure that is what you want?" She looked at her as she stared at the paper in her hands. "Because once you signed all those papers, it will be a signed deal, and there is no more going back."

"I understand. After Ryan denied my son, I don't think I will want him in his life. If only he did not have this condition, I would not have asked for any help from him." Ria uttered as she fought the tears that wished to escape from her eyes.

"I know, but I think you need this. Accept what Ryan's family is offering so that you can give your son a better life. After this, you don't have to hear from them." She placed a pen in her hand, believing this was the best option for her.

"Where do I sign?" She held the pen in her hands and started scribbling her name and signature on the dotted line.

After she had signed all the documents, she handed them back to Dani to check on them. When everything seemed to be in order, she told her that the ordeal was through. Now, it was time to start her new life.

"The money will all come from their foundation, so there would be no link between you and their family." She wished she could do more. Then, she suddenly remembered something else.

"Thank you so much, Ms. Hamilton. You don't know how much I appreciated all you did for Edison and me." Ria stood from her chair to shake her hands.

"Wait." She quickly opened her cabinet. Instead of shaking Ria's hand, she placed a folder in her open hand.

She had been working on that paper since yesterday. Something she had been contemplating since she met Ria.

"What's this?" Ria asked as she looked at the folder, wondering if she should open it.

"It is an additional gift from me. Something that could help you take care of Edison in the future." She explained without giving away what it was. "Open it."

Ria did. She looked inside the folder, and her eyes almost bulged out of its socket. "This is insane. It is too much." Ria started using the paper to fan herself, unsure if any of this was real. She felt like she was about to faint any second now.

"No. It is not. You deserve this. You made a mistake, and you should not keep punishing yourself for that mistake. You deserve a second chance, so my advice is to use it wisely." She stood up from her chair and moved closer to her.

"But how could I ever repay you for all that you did for me," Ria asked, still wondering what she had done to deserve all of this help.

"I'm not asking for anything in return, except for you to take this scholarship and go back to school. I already talked to the administration. They are willing to give you a part-time job inside the campus that pays well." She told her.

She believed that Ria would have a better future if she could go back to school and finish. Then, she would never have to depend on the Brett family. It would give her the independence she needed to give his son a better life.

"Thank you so much. I don't know what I will do without you. You are a guardian angel sent to me to grant my miracle." Ria stated as she hugged her tightly.

All she could do was to hug her back, assuring her that things would get better eventually. Ria might have fallen out of her path, but it did not mean that she could not stand up again and make a new path.

"Go on, check on your son. Bring him to the hospital as soon as you can, and the hospital will be ready to admit him for his operation." She promised as she let go of her.

"I will. Thank you again for all your help." Ria gave her again another hug before grabbing her things to rush home to her son.

Alone in her office, she could not help but felt overjoy about her new accomplishment. It was not the first time that she had won a case, but it was her first time to win against one of the biggest fish in the city.

### **Chapter 159 - The Night Was On**

"Nothing can ruin this day for me. As of now, I am on top of the world." She declared in front of her friend as she twirled in front of her table after dropping the signed contract on Jacky's table.

"Good for you. You like to grab a drink tonight." Jacky asked. It had been a while since they had last gone out together.

She missed her friend and the good times. Lately, Dani and Alex were becoming inseparable, and she was feeling more alone.

After Marcus, she decided to slow down in her dating activities. She preferred to take time for herself. She had to learn more about what she wanted with her life and in a relationship before she started searching for another one.

"I don't know about tonight. Let me..." She suddenly stopped what she was about to say when she saw her friend's face dropped.

She suddenly realized that since she got involved with Alex. Her time for her friend had dwindled to zero. Although Jacky never complained, she still felt guilty that she had ignored her, especially when her friend was going through a lot.

"It's ok. I understand." Jacky interjected as she went back to her work.

She understood what her friend was going through, wanting to spend all her available time with Alex. New relationships tended to cloud the judgment of the people involved. She wanted that for her friend, and she also desired it for herself someday when the right man came along.

"Wait. I change my mind. Let us go out tonight." She whispered down on her ears as she moved behind her chair.

"Are you sure? A minute ago, you had no time for me." Jacky said dejectedly. She tried to maintain a neutral expression, but she still heard the disappointment in her voice.

"Sorry. I was not thinking straight earlier. But I really would like to have a fun night with my friend." She shook Jacky's shoulder to pump her up.

"Are you sure?" Jacky asked. "I don't want to interfere with you and Alex if you already have a plan," Jacky said, a bit hopeful.

"Of course. We have not made plans yet. So, are you up to painting the town red?" She turned Jacky on her seat until she faced her.

"Yes. I am sure you will never regret it. We will have the greatest night of our lives." Jacky announced with a huge grin. They started giggling with excitement just like they used to do when they were excited about something.

"What's going on here?" A voice came from the newcomer that was now standing in front of them. "What are we celebrating?"

She quickly moved towards the man and wrapped her arms around his neck. Simultaneously, the man also placed his arms around her waist.

"Hey, get a room." Jacky could not help herself as she teased the couple in front of her.

"What are you doing here this early?" She asked, ignoring Jacky, after a sweet short kiss they just exchanged. "Let's go inside my office." She pulled him inside the room.

"I had a meeting with David about a case, so I thought I could drop by to see you." He said, following her inside.

Instead of sitting on the visitor's chair, he quickly moved to sit on her chair. Then, he dragged her on his lap.

"What are you doing?" She asked, shocked at his unexpected action.

"Just picking up where we left off." He told her as he repositioned her and placed her hands around his shoulders.

He wound his fingers in her perfectly pony-tailed hair and pulled her head closer to him until she decided to move her head on her own. She eventually met him halfway until their lips touched.

Eventually, what started as a light pecking of the lips turned into a more intense exchange of desire as they both wanted more. Alex loosened her hair, grabbing it to have more control of their kiss.

"Ehem." A clearing of a throat alerted them that someone was at the door. "Sorry, I didn't mean to disturb you, but Jacky said that I could come in."

Dani quickly jumped up on her feet and made an effort to fix her crumpled dress and her disastrous hair, totally mortified to be caught making out. Luckily, they were only kissing and not trying to take their clothes off.

"Oh! Come in, Evan." She walked towards him since she could not go back to her seat when Alex did not appear to have any plan to stand up despite her glare warning. Instead, he only smiled at her as he fixed his tie.

"Hey, Alex. I didn't know that you are here." Evan appeared surprised by what he witnessed when he entered the room but quickly masked it with indifference.

"Hi, Evan. I had a meeting with David earlier and thought of visiting Dani. But I'll come by your office once I finish here." Alex did not elaborate any further.

Besides Jacky and Marcus, the only two other people that knew about their fake agreement were Evan and David. Until now, he had failed to inform them about the change in their arrangement. Something that he intended to remedy soon.

"I came by to congratulate you once again for the case earlier. I also want to give you this new case. David wants to see you first thing on Monday to discuss it with you," Evan said as he handed her a folder.

"Thanks again, but you were also a big help in that case." She did not want to take all the credit. "Tell David that I will be at his office on Monday."

She scanned the file to get a grasp of the file that Evan handed to her. At first glance, it seemed the case was interesting and challenging, something that she was looking forward to her next task.

"Well, I'll leave you two alone. I still have a few things to finish before I set out." Evan moved to the door. "I'll wait for you at my office, and I also expect you to come tonight as promised," Evan said.

He wanted to make sure that he was not skipping on them after what he just witnessed. He had a lot of questions he needed to answer regarding what he saw in Dani's office. When Alex nodded, Evan knew that the night was on.

## **Chapter 160 - Balance Time**

"What was that all about?" Raising her eyebrows in question when Evan was already out of her office. She walked back behind her table and stood in front of him.

Alex had not mentioned that he had already planned anything today. She was expecting that he was here to pick her up. She was already rehearsing in her mind how to tell him about her plan to go out with Jacky. Only to find out that he was about to go out with the boys.

"The guys asked if we could go out tonight. I found it hard to say no since it had been a while since we last hang out together." He explained what Evan meant with his last question. "I'm sorry, but it had skipped my mind, so I forgot to tell you about it."

Although the only thing he wanted to do after finishing his work was to spend the night with Dani, he could not disappoint his friends tonight by not showing up. He already promised that he was coming, and he could not back out on his word.

"Don't worry about it. Go, have some fun with your friends. I don't mind." She softly spoke as she sat on his lap again, turning around until she was facing him.

"Are you sure?" He studied her face, trying to read what was going through her mind.

"Of course." She gave him a definite answer as she worked out a way to spill to him her plans for tonight too.

"Thanks for understanding," Alex gave her a boyish grin, glad that she did not make a big deal out of it. He was hoping that she was not the jealous, clingy, or demanding type.

He suddenly realized that there were still many things about her that he still needed to learn. Small things that seemed insignificant but could make or break a relationship.

"I don't plan to put you on a tight leash. You are free to go out with your friends without waiting for my approval." She clarified to him as she ran her fingers through his hair, messing it a bit.

She did not want them to start on the wrong foot in this relationship. It was better to put some things straight before it becomes a misunderstanding.

"I'm glad to hear that. But don't wait for me tonight. I'm sure that we will finish late. I'll probably crash on my apartment after we are through." He told her, holding her tightly in his arms

He knew that he could leave his friends anytime he wished to. However, it had been a while since he had spent some time with them. He did miss their presence and conversations. He was still a man who needed a little time with his friends.

"I won't. In truth, it is perfect. I also have plans to go out with Jacky tonight." She pulled on his tie until he was only a few inches from her face. "At least I won't have any distractions while you are out with your friends." She tapped her pointy finger at his nose.

"So, you are saying that I am a distraction." He stared at her eyes but only seeing his reflection in them. "Well, it is not my fault if you can't control yourself around me." He teased her.

"Excuse me, but I think you have it the other way around." She moved her face a few inches away from him.

She could not keep the smile from showing on her face despite her effort to appear annoyed at his answer. He did speak the truth. She seemed to find it hard to keep her hands to herself, just like now.

"But seriously, I need you to behave while you are out with your friends." She pretended to be a jealous girlfriend, knowing what his friends were like, especially Marcus, who had no regard for a woman's feelings.

But honestly, she knew that she could trust him to behave even if she never reminded him about it. He might be friends with Marcus and her bosses, but she had learned a long time ago that he was not a womanizer.

"Are you jealous?" He stared at her curiously, as if he was trying to read her mind.

He smiled at her reaction and pulled her back until their noses were touching again. Then, slowly he teased her with small kisses that eventually made her respond by meeting him halfway.

A minute later, they were making out on the chair in her office once again. It was something that she never thought she would ever do in her life.

"Nope. What about you? Do you easily get jealous?" She quickly asked when their lips eventually separated, curious about how his mind works.

She believed it was the perfect time to learn more about him. As she discovered more things about his likes and dislikes, the more she could navigate through this relationship. It could give her a better background of what to expect from him and what she should adjust on her side.

"As far as I know, I am not a jealous type as long as I don't see any reason to be." He answered her truthfully.

He was not sure if he should count the time that he was with Tyra. The way he was suspicious of the way his cousin was moving around her. But in his defense, he had every right to be doubtful. His cousin did make a move on his girlfriend. In turn, his girlfriend dumped him for Edward.

Would you call that behavior jealousy when there was proof that something was going on behind his back? He was uncertain. But in his present situation, it was indisputable that Dani was different. He had nothing to fear with her going out.

"Good, because as long as we remained honest and we don't keep secrets from each other, I think that we are all good." She stated as she kept playing with his already loosened tie.

"I'm glad that we are on the same page." He pulled her again for another kiss, memorizing every contour of her lips and mouth in his mind. Tonight, he fancied her to be the only thought that would be plaguing his mind.

"Hey, you two love birds." Jacky suddenly walked into her office and dropped several files on the table.

She enjoyed the show that her friend and her lover were displaying in front of her. It was uncharacteristic behavior that her friend was manifesting.

She was happy for her friend. Dani was finally letting go of herself and pushing for her happiness. Unfortunately, there was work to be done, so she had no choice but to interrupt them.

"Don't you know how to knock?" Dani asked, once again slightly embarrassed to be seen sitting on the lap of her boyfriend.

"When did I ever knock?" Jacky asked her, pointing that to her friend. "Besides, if you want some privacy, better locked your doors. By the way, David is looking for you. He needs you in his office ASAP." Jacky emphasized the last word, pointing to Alex. Then, she was out of there with a wink.

"You have to excuse Jacky." She started mumbling as she stood up from his lap.

"No worries. I like Jacky. I can see that she is always looking out for you." Alex stated as he also stood up and fixed his tie.

He did not want to leave, but the inevitable had to happen. The reality was now starting to catch up with them. They could not be together all the time. They had to learn to balance time for all their priorities, or they would not survive this relationship.

