

## Royal Contract 181

### Chapter 181 - Extra Cautious

"Disguise? What for?" She asked as excitement coursed through her, fixing her hair underneath the baseball cap. "And whose car is this?" She asked, adjusting her seat as they entered the busy street.

She had nothing against the car. It was something she would drive since she was not into fancy ones. However, she could not picture Alex driving a vehicle like this.

She looked at him and found herself amused with the way he concealed his identity. Just like her, he wore almost a similar outfit to her. The baseball hat did look nice on him. He looked younger as his features soften in his casual appearance.

In her opinion, he would always look dashing whatever he was wearing. She was doubtful if they would not stand out in a crowd with her boyfriend, looking so yummy in his tightfitting shirt.

"I thought that maybe we could explore the city like an ordinary couple. Without the paparazzi or anyone recognizing us." He told her as he carefully maneuvered around the cars. "And this is my car, by the way. She has been with me since my college days."

"Oh, and your car is a she. And does she have a name?" She was curious as they finally stop in the building traffic.

She liked that he felt comfortable telling her about his past. Maybe if they kept sharing things more about each other, they might eventually transcend to the next level of their relationship.

She knew that if he kept doing what he had been doing since they met again, she was not far from getting too deep. He already did manage to break down many of her walls. But still, marriage was something that she was not sure of yet. But then again, it was never part of their deal.

"I just called her babe back then." He admitted, in his defense, they did share a lot of memories back when he was still in college.

Maybe it was not the usual car he drove now, but it was his favorite. Besides, it was still running and maintained to be in top condition.

In fairness, she found it adorable that he cared so deeply about his car. "Ok, fine. So that is your fetish. Now, I know." She tapped the dashboard with care. "I hope you don't mind sharing your man with me."

"Real funny." Both of them ended up laughing. "But I am sure that you also had yours when you were young." He asked her, curious as to what she was hiding under that perfection.

To him, she was almost perfect. So far, he had not seen any flaw that he did not like about her. It would seem that everything she did fascinate him. He could not get enough of her.

"Oh yeah, I remember naming my doll, Alexis. What a coincidence. I think she looked like you." She could not stop kidding around. But Alexis was indeed her doll when she was young. Although she barely remembered what it looked like, it was such a long time ago. "Anyway, where are we going?"

"I enjoyed doing this back when I was in college. I thought it would be nice to do it again together." He told her, remembering the times that he enjoyed exploring this new city and his newfound freedom.

He recalled when his father suggested that he studied abroad as an exchange student, he immediately grabbed the opportunity. He wanted to experience life outside of their country. Away from all his obligation, even if, for a short time.

But as soon as he landed in this part of the world, he fell in love with it. He could almost see his dreams coming true by staying in this foreign land, in comparison, to going back to his hometown.

"Did you enjoy your college here?" She asked, wondering what it was like for a prince in a foreign land.

She remembered that the first years of college life for her were a blast. Partying and enjoying life with her friends, like Cassie and Nick, she felt a certain kind of freedom. But things change after their betrayal. She quickly had to grow up and turned her life around.

Pursuing her career in the law was the best thing she ever did. She managed to put her life into perspective and gave it a purpose. She had learned to cope with the pain they caused her and moved on.

"I did. For the first time, I was free to be myself. Do the things that I wanted to do without servants to provide everything I needed. I learned to fend for myself." He enjoyed every minute of his college days, especially when he had friends like Marcus and David. Evan joined their group a bit later, but he still contributed a lot in his past.

They talked more about what kind of life they had during their younger years. She learned that Alex was more adventurous than her, joining many activities. While she was stuck in her textbooks, burning her eyelids studying the law.

He finally parked on the side of the busy street, barely finding an open spot. She looked around the crowded street and wondered what he had planned for her. She had seen this place a few times that she had passed this place but never did stop to look closely.

"Come on. We'll explore the city on foot." He knew that Dani had the stamina for a stroll since she loved to run. She was not going to faint if they checked several sights just by walking. "Are you up for a little adventure?" He challenged her.

He quickly moved to her side of the door and opened her door, like the gentleman he was. He knew that Dani was a very independent woman, but he still liked to show her extra special treatment.

"I'm all for it." She told him as she grabbed his hand and let him guide her to their destination.

She was surprised at the plan he had come up with, she was not expecting it, but she appreciated it. He did take note of her request not to be dined and wined in a fancy restaurant. Now, he was trying to be very creative, and she liked that.

"Good. Be ready to be entertained." He announced as they walked among the people that crowded the streets.

It was almost dark, but the busy streets were only starting to be alive as locals in suits, office attire, casual clothes, uniforms, and the tourists together in the mix hassled around them.

Suddenly, she remembered something as they leisurely walked along the sidewalks as if they were just one of the ordinary folks. "Don't you have bodyguards following us around?" She whispered near to his ears when she stopped him in front of one of the store windows. She did not notice the black SUV or the cars his men usually used when following them around.

"I still have two following us around, but you would never notice them." He told her.

The rest of the team stayed to act as a diversion for whoever might be plotting against him. But it would not stop him from continuing living his life the way he wanted it.

Now that they considered him as King, his father warned him to be extra cautious.

## **Chapter 182 - Eye To Eye**

As Alex and Dani explored the city on foot, enjoying the new experience together, another couple was also getting to know each other on the other side of the town.

"I promise that this time, nothing will be interrupting us," Sebastian told Jacky as they drove to their dinner destination.

He made sure that nobody would be calling and bothering him tonight with his date with Jacky. A friend already agreed to take his on-call duty in case there was an emergency.

Just for tonight, he wanted to give Jacky his full attention. He was genuinely interested in her. Watching her the other time at the hospital's waiting area, playing with the kid made her more appealing. There was something about her that fascinated him.

"I don't mind what happened last time." She assured him, not wanting him to feel guilty that their date last time almost ended early because of his job.

"Thanks for understanding. But not tonight." He promised her because he wanted to spend time with her and get to know her.

"Where are we going?" She asked, curious about what he had planned for them.

She certainly wanted this date to work. She knew that she liked Sebastian. He had a good profession that he could be proud of, and she did find his sense of humor entertaining.

But there was a but. Jacky could not pinpoint what exactly was missing in their date. She could not feel the excitement of seeing him, unlike her previous dates. There was no thrill when she finally saw him on her doorstep.

"I thought of Japanese if you are not allergic to seafood, but there is also Italian or Mexican if you like spicy food." He asked her as they moved along the traffic. "Then, maybe a movie if you are interested. A friend of mine highly recommended this new movie."

"I like the Japanese food and the movie." She placed her hand on top of his that was on the gearshift. He responded with a wide grin on his lips. But to her dismay, she did not feel anything when their skin touched.

She promised that she would give him a chance to woo her, and that was what she intended to do. She figured that she just needed to purge the image of what Marcus did to her and the memories of how great Lance was. Then, she could concentrate on liking Sebastian.

Maybe a few more dates with him should do the trick. That was if he was still interested in dating more. Well, Jacky could only hope.

Going back to the other lovely couple on the stroll, so far, they had managed to find several things to see that interested them, then ended up on the Brooklyn bridge.

"You know, I think I have passed this bridge a thousand times growing up, but never once stop to look at the sight." She told him as they continued on their way across the long walk across the wide river. "I never had the chance to explore this part of the city."

"Why?" He asked, wanting to know more about how her mind worked. "Don't you find this place fascinating?"

It was one of the places he had fancied exploring on his own when he first arrived at this city. He was captivated by the different things it offered compared to the life he left behind to study here.

"I don't know. Maybe it just did not appeal to me at that time. But now, I think I figured it out." She spoke softly at him as her gaze traveled the beauty that surrounded them. "I would rather experience my first time here with you."

She did not ever think, even in his wildest dream, that a simple walk on the bridge with him could turn out to be so romantic. With him on her side, everything seemed so different. The lights from the other side of the bridge seemed to be more colorful and brighter.

She could feel his hand tightened its grip on her, but it did not hurt her. It was more comforting. As if he was reassuring her that she had nothing to fear as long as he was around.

"Do you like coming here?" She questioned him, seeing that he was indeed familiar with the place.

"Yes, I like to come here whenever I want to think. But the last time I was here was a long time ago. After that, this would be the only time I returned." He stopped on the railing and looked beyond the river, pulling her closer to his side.

"If you like this place, why did you stop." She looked in his direction and could only see a side of his face. There was a solemn look in his expression that she could not decipher as if he was in deep thought.

"The last time I was here was when I brought Tyra with me. I wanted to share with her the beauty of this place. But it was a mistake. She never appreciated it." He confided to her something about his past that he had buried already in his mind.

"Oh!" She did not know what to say to that. It was the first time that he did mention something about his past relationship with Tyra.

"I hope you don't mind that I brought you here. I want to experience this with you. This place is so special to me that I want to share it with you." He pulled her hand towards his lips. He planted a kiss on her knuckles while he stared at the view beyond the tall skyscrapers that lit the darkness into the dark sky that enveloped the city.

"I don't mind at all. I am glad that you cared enough to share this with me." She could see how this place might not appeal to everyone's taste, but she was glad that she liked what he liked.

They continued to stroll around the city, ending up in a diner to have a late dinner. There was nothing fancy about it. The server only wore a shirt under their checkered aprons.

"Isn't this the best burger and healthy french fries you ever had for dinner," Alex said as he teased her with soggy fries on her lips, probably drenched in a drum of cooking oil.

"Definitely." She took a bite of it, enjoying every minute that she was spending with him. Of course, not much the fries.

She never thought that eating in a place liked this would be more romantic than the hundred of dates she had eaten in an expensive restaurant.

Then, she did the same. "Open up." She placed the fries in line with his lips.

He took a big bite of the fries, but before she could pull her hands away, he grabbed it and planted a single kiss on her fingers. It automatically sent electric shocks on her body, creating sensations she had been craving since she saw him earlier.

"I like you very much." He once again admitted. "I want to share with you many more about my interests and likes. To explore more new experiences with you, if you want that too." He said, holding on to her hands.

"I like that very much too." She answered him, moving closer to him until they were only inches away from each other. Slowly, she lowered her lips to him until he also responded to her kiss with abandon, not caring if they were in a public place.

So far, their interests seemed to be matching. They seemed to enjoy the simple things and loved to explore more. Dani wondered if there was something that they would have difficulty in seeing eye to eye, but that was something that they would face together when the time came.

### **Chapter 183 - By Hook Or Whatever Means**

She sat beside Alex outside of the club as he parked the car. Sebastian and Jacky were already inside, waiting for them. She wondered if Alex was ok, truly ok, with them attending Troy's party.

"Are you sure you want to do this? I know that you still feel a little off with my friendship with Troy." She did not want to push him if he was not comfortable about this.

But earlier, he insisted that he would like them to go, so she did not want to argue. Besides, Troy was only a friend. She could not keep avoiding men who were close to her just because he felt jealous of them. He just had to learn to trust her.

She guessed she also had to trust him when he was out with other women, whether a friend or a client. That was the only way if they would survive this relationship. In their case, with their profession and social standing, it was an unavoidable situation.

"I know that I acted poorly around Troy before, but I assure you that it was only a mild lack of judgment on my part when I allowed my jealousy to take over me." He could feel the apprehension in Dani's movement as if she doubted his motives for coming with her.

But he could not blame her when he should have trusted her in the first place and talked about the issue instead of reacting like a raging bull, as she pointed out.

"But I don't want you to feel obligated to be here because of me." She told him what she feared, not wanting to keep secrets from him.

"Don't worry, I trust you. I know now that there would be times that I will need you to trust me just the same. Not that I am using this as a jail-free card. But what I am..." He tried to explain, but her smile stopped him from going any further.

"Can we enjoy this evening together? If at any point that one of us wants to go home, then we leave." She finished for him, sealing the deal with a kiss as she entwined her arms around his neck.

"Hey, you're both finally here. I thought that you change your minds." Jacky greeted them as soon as they walked into the club and saw them. "This is my date." Jacky pointed to the man at her side as they sat at a booth provided by Troy for them.

"Hi, I am Sebastian." Jacky's date introduced himself, while the rest also did the same.

"What are you having?" Alex offered to get them some drinks since guests were starting to crowd the place. The servers seemed to be out of sight.

"I'll go with you." Sebastian stood and went with Alex to the bar, leaving the two girls on their own.

"What do you think about my date?" She immediately whispered to Dani's ears as she sat beside her.

She always trusted Dani's judgment, and right now, she needed to know what she thought of the man she was currently dating. Based on her point of view, he seemed to be a great catch. It did not hurt to hear someone else's opinion.

"He looks good and seems nice." She told her friend, who waited anxiously for her verdict. "I think you look great together." She said confidently, looking at Jacky and the man at the bar.

"Yeah, I think so too, but why does my body seem to think otherwise," Jacky said disappointedly. "I don't feel any spark when I am with him." She pointed out to her friend what seemed to be her problem.

"I think you should give it time. You have just recently broken up with Marcus and are a bit hung up with Lance. So, it might take time before you fully recover from your heartache." She told her friend.

She remembered the time after breaking up with Nick. She also felt as numb as her friend. She almost thought that she would never feel love again, not that she was presently in love.

But she believed that she was not far away from falling in love with Alex with the way he made her feel. She looked at him, and he smiled at her as if he knew that she was thinking about him.

"You're probably right," Jacky said, but a minute later, the boys were back, handing their drinks. Then, they sat on their sides respectively.

Alex and Sebastian started talking about Sebastian's specialty and found something interesting to discuss, while Dani and Jacky just talked about random things. Occasionally, joining in with the guys' conversations.

After almost half an hour later, Troy finally showed up with the same set of friends they saw him before. When he noticed them, he left his friends from the table across from them and walked towards them.

"I'm glad that you were able to come." Troy greeted all of them, giving friendly kisses to the girls and handshakes to the men.

"We just want to greet you with a happy birthday and wish you good health." Dani voiced out for the group.

"Thanks. I appreciate your well-wishes." Troy said with a wide smile, but his eyes lingered longer at Dani's face before he excused himself with the promise of returning soon.

"Do you guys want to dance?" Jacky said, swallowing the remaining of her drinks. She stood up and pulled Sebastian with her.

"What about you? Care to dance with me." Dani asked the man sitting quietly beside her.

He seemed calm when Troy came by to talk to them. She did not see any sign of aggression in him, which she appreciated. Maybe it was a good idea that they came, Dani finally realized. She had seen again another side of him.

"I thought you would never ask." He rewarded her with a boyish grin, let her pulled him up, and dragged him to the dance floor.

As soon as they hit the floor, he enveloped her in his embrace and wished he never had to let her go. The music was a slow beat, so they slowly swayed in time with the rhythm.

He finally accepted in his rationalization that he did not mind at all if men wanted Dani. What could he do if his girl was one attractive, sexy as hell, and quite an intelligent woman, that men wanted her?

All he could do now was trust her that she knew how to fend their advances off her. But if not, he would be there to protect her from anyone who would try to do her harm.

"Are you enjoying yourself?" She finally asked as she tilted her head a bit to look into his eyes.

"As long as I am with you, I don't think I will ever be bored." He leaned down a little to plant a soft kiss on her lips. It was just a gentle touch, but it meant so much to both of them.

But oblivious to their surroundings, another pair of eyes were watching their every move. More particularly, the way Dani moved her body around him.

Those watchful eyes meant business, and she was his target. And what he wanted, he would get by hook or whatever means possible.

## **Chapter 184 - Truth Or Dare**

The beat suddenly increased the tempo, making everybody wild on the dance floor. Dani was not new to the scene since she was a party girl once in her life. So, she started moving to the beat. She knew that Alex would soon follow her lead.

Although she had mellowed in her ways through the years, she did promise to enjoy this night with Alex. She intended to do so as she danced to the music with him moving along to the beat.

"Come on. I think you can do better than that." She challenged Alex, who was barely moving his feet. But she knew that he was a good dancer. She had seen it several times before.

"Fine." He placed his hand on her hips and started swaying with her.

Then, he was once again lost in her, pulling her body closer as they stared at each other.

What was one upbeat music had become nothing more but a background sound to the beating of their hearts. The crowd that surrounded them was mere noise that they shut out as they were both enveloped in their private world.

Nothing matters but his eyes on hers and his possessive touch protecting her, telling anybody watching that she was his and nobody else could have her. She did not feel that he was branding her. On the other hand, she felt safe and reassured by his action.

When the music changed into a slower beat, she rested her body against his, savoring the feeling of his warmth. She could not stop feeling the firmness of his shoulders as her hands rested on top of them.

"Hey, you two. We are going back to our seats. Do you like something to drink? We are about to order some." Jacky interrupted them as she and Sebastian stood beside them.

"Yeah, sure," Dani answered as the magic of their moment died down. "Shall we also sit down?" She suggested to Alex.

"Ok." Alex nodded and pulled her towards their table.

He wished they did not have to stop, but he felt she needed some rest too. They had been dancing for quite some time, and although they had the stamina for it, it was still a long night ahead of them.

As Alex and Dani sat at their table and waited for the other two to come back with their drinks, they decided to talk about their day. It was something that was becoming a routine with them.

"Here are your drinks." Jacky handed them each a glass of their orders.

"Thanks." Alex and Dani simultaneously said to the other couple as they joined them at their table.

Barely a minute had passed since Jacky and Sebastian came back from the bar when Troy walked over to their table. He did look great in his suit minus the tie.

Dani and Jacky thought to themselves, but neither of them was interested in him. They believed that Troy was a good guy and with a good sense of humor. But they only saw him as a good friend.

"Hey, guys. I hope that you are enjoying yourselves. By the way, I put all your drinks on my tab, so no need to pay for it." Troy returned the card that Alex left in the bar. "It is my birthday, so let me all give you a small treat." He offered as he stood beside their table.



"Would you join us for a few minutes?" Dani offered since it was only fair. They should at least celebrate his birthday since they considered him their friend.

"Sure." He signaled one of the bartenders to serve them another round of whatever they were having. Then, he sat down on the available seat next to Jacky, slightly across from Dani.

"Jacky tells me that you are a doctor. That is such a noble profession." Troy commented, trying to strike up a conversation with the doctor.

As much as possible, he tried to stay clear from Alex after their last encounter. He knew that Alex did not like him because he saw him as a threat.

He did not plan to poke the bear. That was not how he would play this. If he was going to get Dani to his side, he had to be the knight in shining armor and save her from that prince.

"I am a doctor, but not too sure about the noble part. But I think all professions can be noble as long as you have every intention of helping in the betterment of man." Sebastian answered him.

"I think what you do here is great too," Jacky interjected, indicating the bar. "You make a lot of people happy, including us." She jokingly said.

"If you put it that way, maybe I also have a noble profession." Troy acknowledged Jacky's words.

He did not exactly receive a college degree. Going to school was the last thing he enjoyed about his youth. But he had a way with his words and a wit to match that he used to get where he was now. Call it street smart, but it was good enough for him.

"I think you are also doing well with your business." Dani finally commented, wanting to join in the conversation. She could see the place was full of customers, just like the last time they were here.

"Yeah, I agree. This business is very lucrative. If handled well, then it could easily grow." Alex finally gave his take of what he thought of Troy's trade.

"Coming from you, I am honored," Troy said upon hearing Alex's remark.

"Enough of your nonsense. We are here to have fun. Why don't we make this a bit more exciting?" Jacky interrupted them as she tapped on her chin, thinking of a better way to enjoy the rest of the evening.

"What do you have in mind?" Sebastian asked as he also would like to take advantage of his day off to enjoy it with Jacky.

"Why don't we play truth or dare? Are you guys in?" Jacky said excitedly, believing that it was the most ingenious idea she ever made.

### **Chapter 185 - The Next Victim**

Well, Jacky was not yet drunk, but she might as well be if they continued with their conversations. She was getting bored of them, talking about the business, stocks, and others, relating to their profession.

They were here to celebrate Troy's birthday. That meant having fun. And as of now, she only had one game she could think of, and they would play it no matter how lame it was.

"Aren't we too old to play that game?" Dani questioned Jacky's recommendation. She felt silly that Jacky would even suggest it.

She had not played that game since forever. But she did not think it would be a good idea to do that now. But knowing Jacky, she would be insisting on it if she was already ready to play the game.

Nothing would stop Jacky from getting what she wanted. The question would be if she would be willing to join the game. And if Alex would also be open to taking part in it.

"Are you all afraid of the truth or not up to a challenge of a dare?" Troy asked playfully, challenging not only Dani but everyone on the table.

He did like the idea of having some fun. It was the whole concept of his bar, for everyone to enjoy themselves.

Jacky and Troy waited for the others to agree as both of them were ready to light up the party.

"Fine, I am in," Sebastian answered as he gulped down his drink.

He, too, would like to try to live up a little. It was a rare occasion that he could be free to enjoy himself. Besides, he believed it would be nice to get some truths out of Jacky.

"Ok. I'll join," Alex stated as he too waited for Dani, who was still yet to answer. He placed his hands on hers, assuring her that they would be playing the game together.

Under other circumstances, Alex would not join in such silly games, but he did not want to look like he was killing the fun for everyone. He could also sense that Dani was only waiting for his decision before she made hers.

So far, Dani had endured his surprises and embraced his ways, so he might as well try to do things her way. Although this was more of Jacky's idea, he believed that Dani wanted to make her friend happy.

By joining her friends, he was making her happy. If that even made sense.

"Ok. I am also in." Dani said, feeling a bit excited that they were doing something together again. Something new to experience, although it was a bit weird to be playing this game. She appreciated more what Alex was doing.

She had a clear notion that this situation might not be Alex's idea of a good time. But she could see that he was making an effort to enjoy it with her.

For the first time, after a very long time, she wanted to be young again and let herself loose. For this one night, she wished to forget all her responsibilities and enjoy life. And party the night away with her friends and the man by her side.

"Rules?" Jacky asked the group. When no one immediately answered, she raised her hand excitedly as she came up with something.

"Ok, I got one. If you chose truth or a dare and you don't want to either do it, you have to drink one shot of tequila." Well, she was sure that if the bottle stopped at her and she had to dodge a bullet, she needed an escape. Drinking would not be a problem with her.

"That is a nice one." Sebastian agreed with Jacky, followed by Troy, making the rule official.

Dani was about to complain since she was not a strong drinker, but they outvoted her, consisting of Jacky, Sebastian, and Troy. It would seem it was her and Alex against the three.

So the game began as Troy had the table cleared and ordered a series of tequila shots for those who wished to take the punishment. Then, Jacky was turning the bottle, hoping that it would not land on her first. The bottle kept turning until it finally stopped, pointing at Troy.

"Ok. I guess the birthday boy is first. I choose truth." Troy immediately said, excited to know what his first question would be.

"Ok. I am curious, do you have a girlfriend? I meant a current one." Jacky could not help her nosiness since she never saw him with a girl, not even in this club.

Sure, she noticed that he had friends he talked to, but she did not see him get intimate with any of them. But she discerned that from the very start, he had his eyes on her friend.

"No, I don't have a girlfriend now. But I am looking for one." Troy truthfully answered since it was the game. "My turn." He let the bottle turn until it halted on Dani.

"Ok. I choose dare." Dani said, not wanting to answer any question. She figured it would be easier to do a dare. If not, she could pop the alcohol instead.

Since it was Troy who did the last truth, he got to say his dare. "I dare you to dance with me as my birthday gift." He told the group.

Troy knew that everybody would not have any problem with his dare, but one person might fume on the side. He extended his hand to her, and she accepted.

He led her to the dance floor, where a light beat was blasting to the speakers. "Thanks for coming to my birthday, he whispered to her ears without touching her."

"Of course, we are your friends. We would not miss this." She told him.

She did not mind dancing with him for three minutes since that was the time limit for the dare. She would prefer it than to put the alcoholic drink in her system.

A minute was over, and they made their way back to their table. She could see that Alex was looking at her, but his face was unreadable. But when she sat down next to him, he smiled and reassured her that nothing was amiss.

The bottle spun again and pointed at the next victim.

### **Chapter 186 - A Stalker In Their Midst**

"Oh, payback time," Troy stated with a wide grin. "Have you fallen in love before?"

"Yes." It was a simple answer, so Jacky felt relieved that she did not have to drink again.

The game went on, as everyone was being chosen by the bottle randomly. Some of the questions were relatively easy to answer, some dares were not that complicated to do, and if they don't want to do it or answer, all they had to do was drink the shot.

It seemed so simple, but not when some of the players were starting to get tipsy. That was where the problem began.

"How many sexual partners have you had in total?" Troy asked Jacky, who was getting drunk every time Troy asked the questions or made her do things.

"I think I need another drink," Jacky said as she dodged again another of Troy's questions.

As the bottle turns, again and again, questions and dares flew among them.

"Do you want to continue to date, Jacky?" Alex asked Sebastian, wanting to get a gauge if he was another Marcus or Lance. Or someone in between the two.

"Definitely. I want to get to know Jacky more." Sebastian answered him. That was his whole purpose of being here with her and even joining this game.

"How serious are you about marrying Dani?" Sebastian was the one asking the question when it landed on Alex this time. He heard that the two were already engaged to be married, so it was an appropriate question.

Alex was still sober since he answered and did the simple dares that they asked of him. But this question took him aback. "I am very serious." He said, holding Dani's stare. He was sure that Dani was also surprised by the question, and she was probably waiting for his answer.

He was not sure if that was the truth. Or if he was only saying that because of the game. Not this game, but the contract that they had signed. For the first time, he remembered that he still had to marry someone. But was he ready to marry Dani?

Then, the game was back on again. Another spin of the bottle and landed with one of the boys again. "Truth." He answered.

"Do you like Dani?" This time it was Alex's turn to ask the question.

He wanted to know the truth, but he was unsure if the man would honestly answer his question.

"Yes, I do like her very much," Troy answered him, his eyes unwavering as he stared at Dani. "If you are not going to marry her, then I will." Troy openly answered him, daring him to tell him to shut up.

"But we both know that it is only you Dani wants, so I am settling to be a good friend to her." He immediately retracted his answer, not wanting to drive Dani away from him. "I'm just saying that she is a good catch, and any man could easily fall for her."

As of now, he had to accept that Dani wanted Alex in his life, but if an opportunity for him to sweep her off her feet presented itself, then he would have no qualms to grabbed it.

He would steal Dani away from him because from the moment he saw her, he wanted her. It was just unfortunate that somebody beat him to her.

"Yes, she is. I am a lucky guy that she chose to marry me." Alex could not help but rub it off his face that Dani was already his, and nobody could take her away from him.

He just wanted to make sure that Troy should know his place. He should not cross a boundary that he was not welcome. Because if he did, Alex had no problems beating him into a pulp.

"I think it is time for us to go." Dani could feel the tension in the room just went up another notch. "It was a lovely party, and happy birthday again, Troy."

What started as a friendly game was turning out to be a disaster waiting to happen. Dani did not want another scene like the other time, so she would end it now before it escalated to something more.

Besides, it was clear that Jacky was already intoxicated. She had to bring her home.

"We're going. But it is still very early." Jacky said with a slight slur in her speech.

"I think it is better if we go home now," Sebastian answered Jacky, seeing that she was not in any condition to continue anymore.

It appeared it was only her who drunk most of the tequila. She refused to answer most of the questions and do the dares.

None of them had much to hide, and Troy answered everything asked of him. Whether all of them were true, nobody knew but him.

"Dani, I am sorry. I did not mean to say anything to offend you." Troy said in a low whisper near her ear when he came closer to her as Alex helped Sebastian with Jacky.

"It was nothing. I know you were joking around." Dani answered him, not wanting anything that happened this night to affect their friendship.

In her opinion, she could stay friends with him as long as he did not cross any line. So far, a declaration that he like her did not mean that he was acting on it. Or was she being naive about it? She questioned again, herself.

Troy finally excused himself to join the rest of his friends who were celebrating on the other side of the club.

"Shall we go?" Alex stood by her side and wrapped his arms around her waist. He guided her out of the club with Jacky and Sebastian in front of them.

Every step they made going to the exit, so was her wish to leave the place. She could not shake off the feeling that someone was watching her. Then, a tingling sensation had her hair standing up.

As if there was something off about this evening. Was Dani just paranoid, or was there a stalker in their midst?

## **Chapter 187 - Coincidence Perhaps**

"What happened last night?" Jacky walked through the kitchen in her robe, holding on to her head, and slumped down on the counter. The last thing she remembered was going out of the club with Sebastian

holding her, probably guaranteeing she did not end up in a ditch somewhere. "What about Sebastian? Where is he?"

"You got wasted. That was what happened. Don't worry. Sebastian probably went home safely after dropping you home last night." Dani informed her as she prepared a coffee that her friend badly needed.

From the way she looked, coffee might not be the only thing she needed. She would highly recommend a shower since she still reeked of alcohol.

"Oh!" Jacky moaned as she pulled on her hair to ease her pain. Her brain was still hardly functioning as she stared at the steaming cup in front of her.

"This came for you." Dani placed the flowers in front of Jacky with the card still intact.

She was not Jacky. She never liked snooping on things that were not hers. Although she did not mind when Jacky did it, she was used to her. Sometimes, she did find it funny.

"From whom?" Jacky asked curiously, but Dani only shrugged her shoulder.

She quickly checked on the note, and as expected, it came from Sebastian. He said that he had a magnificent time last night. He hoped that her headache gets better.

It seemed that the way she disgraced herself last night had not sent him running for the hills. Well, maybe they did have a future together, she thought as she stared at the flowers in her hands.

"This also came with that." Dani handed her a pill for her headache.

The doctor did earn a few good points with his thoughtful gesture, in her opinion. It would seem that Sebastian was just what the doctor recommended for a broken heart.

"That is so sweet of him," Jacky stated, feeling delighted as she swallowed the pill in one gulp. She badly needed it to get her head together so she could survive her tasks for the day.

But the thoughtfulness of Sebastian was not lost to her. She appreciated the gestures he was showing her.

"Why would you suggest playing that game and agreed to drink when you have no plan to answer and do all those dares?" She still could not understand how her friend's mind works sometimes.

"I thought it would be fun, and Troy kept asking those stupid questions. Why did I always end up with Troy doing the asking and the dares?" Was it just her bad luck last night when she kept ending up against Troy, who would seem to be just as bad as her. Or maybe it was karma getting back at her.

"I don't know. But why did you keep dodging the questions?" She asked, curious about her reasoning.

"Normally, you would have no problem telling us what is in your mind."

She believed that her friend did act strangely last night. As if she was playing out of her character.

"Because I was hoping to make an impression with Sebastian. I don't want him to know my past, not yet anyway." Jacky explained to her friend. "I want to get to know him better and for him to know the real me before I tell him what I did in my past."

"Are you sure that it is the right way to do it? I feel it would be better if you tell him outright who you are before he found it out somewhere else." She suggested to Jacky.

"Don't worry. I don't intend to keep it forever, just a few more dates." Jacky assured her. "But you know what I realized." She held again on her head as a new onslaught of headaches hit her brain.

"What?" She waited for her friend to continue her revelation.

"I want to give Sebastian a chance." Jacky picked up the coffee that Dani offered and sipped on its hot goodness. She badly needed the caffeine boost.

"Great! He seems to be a nice guy. It appears that he genuinely likes you." She was happy with her friend's conclusion.

"Really? I hope so." Jacky still did not feel the same giddy feeling she had with her other recent relationships, but she was willing to try to see if she could develop it with Sebastian over time.

"Just give it time." She said, hoping that her friend would finally find what she was looking for in Sebastian.

"I guess not everything happened all of a sudden. Not everything is about love at first sight." Jacky contemplated on her current situation.

"I believe so too." Dani could not agree more. But she spoke too soon.

"Look at you and Alex. You started not liking each other, but eventually, the attraction developed in time." Jacky said, citing her relationship with Alex as an example.

"Enough about me." Jacky was about to say more, but Dani cut in and blocked whatever she was about to tell her.

"Yes, enough about last night. I am..." Dani was saying, but her friend also interrupted her.

She suddenly felt guilty that she had not mentioned to her best friend that it was not the case between her and Alex. Attraction came first before their relationship.

"You always do this when you don't want to talk about yourself. Stop avoiding the subject. I think I just confirmed that Troy is quite interested in you." Jacky pointed out what she remembered of last night's game.

"Troy is just a friend. Nothing more. Besides, I already told him I am serious with Alex." Dani did not want to put too much thought into the game last night. Well, she did not want to talk about herself anymore, period.

She did not want to dwell on the subject that was not supposed to be an issue because it was not. Troy would always remain just a friend. And she would make sure again that he understood it, or else she would have to end their friendship.

"Where is Alex, by the way?" Jacky asked, looking around the place for a trace of him. He was usually bustling in the kitchen when he was around.

"He had to rush home early this morning because his parents surprisingly arrived today without a hint that they were coming." She said, using a neutral tone as she finished the breakfast she prepared and gave half of it to Jacky.

She related to her friend that his mom called. They were arriving that morning and wanted to have breakfast with him.

"Why did you not go with him? Shouldn't you be there with him having breakfast with your soon-to-be in-laws?" Jacky asked her with a raised brow.

"I can't leave you in your condition. But Alex and I plan to have dinner with his parents tonight." She reasoned out, but deep inside, she was freaking out. At least, she still had time to prep herself up for tonight compared to if she had gone with Alex this morning.

"Really? As if I need a babysitter. Don't give me that crap. What's wrong?" Jacky confronted her friend with his two hands on her hips. Dani might be able to lie in front of the court, but not to her. She could not use her poker face to fool her.

"I feel awkward seeing them again. Now that Alex and I are in a relationship." She admitted to her friend.

It was different when they were pretending to be a couple. But now that Alex and Dani were in an actual relationship, she could not help but stress out, especially regarding seeing his parents again.

"Don't worry about it. Alex's parents already love you, so the tiny lies you told them would not matter anymore. Besides, you are serious about making it work with Alex, so stop stressing about seeing them." Jacky encouraged her.

"Well, coming from you, I feel much better." She teased Jacky.

But she never thought that Jacky would someday be advising her about relationship issues. But she was glad that she did.

"Dani, what about..." But Jacky was interrupted again by a loud shrill of Dani's phone.

"Hi! Did you miss me already?" She immediately and excitedly answered her phone, thinking that it was Alex. Who else would call her early in the morning?

"Wow! That is a sweet way to greet your mother." Her mom spoke on the other line to her surprise.

"Yes, princess, I miss you too."

"Hi, Mom. I thought you..." She suddenly changed her mind and discontinued what she was to say.

"Anyway, what's up, Mom?" She was surprised that her mom called. It was not as if she did not call her at any time of the day. She was not expecting it this morning.

"I called because I was wondering if you are not busy now. Maybe you would like to have lunch with me." Laura said with a slight noise in the background.

"I'm not busy. I can meet you for lunch. Just text me the details." She told her mom, feeling a bit guilty because she barely bothered to call her and see her mom since they got back from their trip.



"That is wonderful. I will give you the details later. I can't wait to see you. my princess." Laura said, but she could hear another voice in the background.

She could already guess that her father was listening to their conversation. She suddenly contemplated the sudden purpose of their lunch date.

Was his parents' sudden arrival had anything to do with her mom inviting her out? Was it a mere simple date because her mom missed her, a coincidence perhaps, or was there something more to it?

## **Chapter 188 - Baiting First Before Going For The Kill**

Two days ago, at the Palace of the King, the Council of Elders was summoned by the King. He wished to discuss the position of his son as the heir to the throne.

"I am aware that the Council is considering replacing my son with another heir." He directed his words at his brother, the Duke of Blackstone House. "I know that under our laws, you have every right to do so if you can prove that my son is not fit to be one."

"Your highness, the Council members are still deliberating on this matter. We are still considering your son in the position." Duke Frederick replied to his brother's statement.

His brother was still the King, and he had much respect for his position as the head of their kingdom. He would give his son, Prince Edward, the benefit of the doubt that he might still be worthy of the crown.

"But you are also considering Alexander, your son, as my next heir. Is that right?" The King stated, this time, he looked around the room and observed the expression of the other Council members.

"Yes, Sire, we are. Alexander is the next in line to Prince Edward." Lord Bailey was the one who answered the King. "But we are also aware that he is reluctant to take the position."

"So, what we have here is a prince who wanted to be a king but is not qualified yet to take the throne. And a prince who fits the criteria of a king but refused to be one." The King believed he surmised the situation correctly as the rest of the Council nodded in agreement.

If Alex were his son, he would have agreed to his coronation because he admired what he already achieved for himself. But Edward was his son, and he had to support him no matter what.

"I believe that is the case, my King." Count Wellington agreed with King Edward.

"Then, what do you think would be best in our situation?" King Edward asked, wanting a solution that would be favorable to his son. He would cooperate with them and find a way to put his son into his position than go against them and declare an internal war inside the kingdom.

One by one, the Council members made several suggestions, glad that King Edward was amicable to their situation. As much as possible, the Council of Elders wished that the transition from a new king would be void of conflicts.

Finding a reasonable solution to their dilemma was essential. The King, together with the members of the Council of Elders, wanted the same thing. A solution that everybody would be satisfied with and agreeable.

"I have an idea. I hope you would all hear me out." Lord Asthorne spoke up among the voices that enveloped the room. Suddenly, everyone stopped and looked at him. "My King, if you would allow me to suggest something, I might have a solution that could help our situation."

The King and the Duke looked at him with high expectation. Lord Asthorne was not born with a noble right, but his intelligence and contribution to the throne had rewarded him the title to be one.

"Go ahead. Tell us what you have in mind." King Edward turned his full attention to one of his loyal supporters.

He was sure that his loyalty had always been to him. So, whatever his idea was, it would surely benefit his son.

"My King, here is what I suggest we should do." Lord Asthorne enumerated the plans he had come up to the head of their kingdom and the Council members.

With the consent of King Edward, Duke Frederick, and the Council, the plan was vetted and approved by everyone. The Duke was assigned to execute what they agreed upon in the meeting.

Thus, presently, the Duke of Blackstone House flew across the ocean to see his son. He sat across from Alex, having their breakfast. His wife sat beside him, happily chatting with Alex about his fiancé, Daniella.

"Oh, I wish that Daniella is here. I would have loved to see her." Alex's mother uttered in her soft tone.

"She wanted to come, but she already was busy with other matters." Alex excused Daniella's absence in their meeting. "But she will be delighted to see you tonight at dinner."

"We look forward to seeing Daniella tonight." His father spoke up after taking a sip of his coffee.

At the moment, neither his wife nor son was aware of the real reason why he had decided to visit him. His wife was too excited to see Alexander that she did not care about the purpose of their travel.

"Yes. I have a lot to discuss with her about the wedding plans." Duchess Katherine uttered in pure excitement.

When Fred told her that they would immediately fly to visit Alex and Daniella, she was over the moon with happiness. She could not wait to see them.

She did not care about her husband's reason why they were visiting because she had her purpose of wanting to see Daniella.

"Isn't it too early to be talking about the wedding?" Alex asked his mother, not expecting that she would be talking about his marriage at this time. "The wedding is still more or less five months away."

He thought that he still had a lot of time before dealing with the wedding preparations. Besides, he was not even sure if there would be a wedding.

"You boys don't have a clue of how much time wedding preparations require. But don't worry, I already talked to Laura about it, and she had agreed to help in handling it from this end." His mom continued to mumble about what she already had set up for Dani and him.

"Is it necessary for the wedding to be that extravagant? Dani and I are thinking that we want it simple and small, just family." Alex was a bit overwhelmed about the wedding his mother was planning.

"Of course, Dani's father and mother would be expecting only the best for their daughter." His mother said, but she could understand what his son was saying. But people would be expecting that their wedding would be one to talk about for centuries.

"Fine. I will tell Dani later about your plans." Alex said with a blank expression, but the wheel in his head was speeding up as he thought of what Dani would think about the wedding.

Until now, he had not decided on what he would do about the wedding and his relationship with Dani. His connection inside the Council had not come up with a solution to his problem.

With regards to Dani, if ever they ended up getting married. He wanted them to be married because they both wanted to be. And not because the Empire required him to present a wife.

"There is another reason why we are here today besides talking about the wedding." His father stated, bringing his son's attention back to him.

"If this had something to do with you, trying to convince me to take on the throne again. You already know my answer to that, Dad." He answered his father, wanting the topic of him becoming King closed.

"It is about the Empire, but not exactly about the title. We have a proposition that we want you to hear first before you decline." His father entered the topic like he was in a negotiation.

His father was good at that, baiting first before going for the kill.

### **Chapter 189 - Hypothetical Question**

Dani was already dressed and prepared for their dinner date with Alex's parents. She was waiting for Alex to pick her up. Then they were off to the restaurant that his parents had picked.

"Would you stop pacing around? You're giving me a headache again," Jacky told her as she dropped down on the couch to watch a movie. But Dani's moving around in front of her was making her dizzy.

"Sorry, I can't help it." She apologized to her friend, who only raised her eyebrows at her.

She was slightly agitated. No, that was a lie. She was very apprehensive about seeing Alex's parents again. Especially after hearing from him about his mother's wedding plans.

It was like experiencing again what happened to her during lunch with her mother. Laura would not stop talking about the wedding arrangements that would be perfect for her.

"Can you relax? Nobody can force you or Alex, for that matter, to get married. All you have to say is no if you don't want to, so calm down." Jacky talked to her as calmly as she could.

"I know that, but they are putting us in a spot. I am not sure if we could handle it. I am not sure if I am ready for that." She told Jacky.

"I like Alex a lot. As in so much. But marrying him in six months of being together is just too soon. We might not like each other by that time. Many things could happen." She whined on and on to Jacky.

But the bottom line was. Dani was afraid that Alex did not feel the same way as she did. She knew that maybe she could see herself marrying someone like Alex in the future.

If she was honest with herself, she could see herself marrying Alex in her future. But what if Alex could only see her now, but marrying her was a different story. They had not even said the L-word.

"Stop fretting on things that are not yet happening now. Just enjoy discussing the wedding with Alex's mother." Jacky counseled her.

She stood up from the couch and turned the television off, giving up on watching. Then, she moved closer to her and took her hands in hers.

"Hey, let this be another experience that you will never forget. At least you get to practice what to do for a wedding. So, if your wedding comes up, you already know what to do." Jacky hugged her and went back to the couch. She grabbed the remote and scanned the channels.

"I guess you are right." She told her. She could not do anything about it now, but she could pretend to like it for the sake of Alex's very adorable mother.

After a few minutes more, the doorbell rang, and Alex appeared by the door. As usual, he looked strikingly fashionable in his semi-formal clothes.

"Ready?" He asked, offering his hand to her.

"Yes," Dani replied as she walked out of the door. Both of them said goodbye to Jacky before closing the door.

"By the way, you look stunning tonight." He complimented her very sexy and classic dress that fully showed her assets without looking distasteful.

"Thanks, I can say the same thing with you." She told him, glancing again at his appearance.

"I wish that we did not have to attend this dinner so I can have you to myself." He whispered behind her ears once they were in the elevator going down.

She could sense the tingling sensation that went through her spine, down to her toes, with the way his breath touched her skin. But she had to control herself because they were not alone in the small space.

She was relieved after a few minutes when they were safely inside the backseat of his car. This time, he opted not to drive.

"I hope that I did not give you a heart attack earlier when I called about what my mother was planning." Alex finally opened up the topic that he was dreading since lunch. He grabbed her hands and rested them on his lap as he gazed into her eyes, checking on her reaction to what he said.

But it was an unavoidable topic that they needed to discuss whether they liked it or not.

"Almost. But my mom already beat you to it. When I had lunch with her, it was also the topic of our discussion. It appeared that your mom already talked to her about our lack of preparation for our wedding." She spoke to him with a slight anxiousness in her voice.

She narrated to him what happened during lunch, where her mother suggested a thousand arrangements they could choose from for the wedding.

"I guess we can't do anything about them." He conceded since it was what they made their parents believed.

"I agree." She said, looking at the view outside of their window.

"Hypothetical question." He stated but waited for her to return her gaze at him before he continued.

"You know how much I like you. There is no doubt about that. I know that you also like me as much."

He slightly shifted his position until he was facing her. With a light kiss on her hands and a deep breath, he again looked into her eyes.

"Yes," Dani replied to him, wanting him to continue.

Her earlier anxiety suddenly increased tenfold as the suspense of what he wanted to say hang in the air.

But looking through his eyes and seeing the familiar passion and longing in his eyes assured her that there was nothing she should fear.

"What if I was not able to find a solution to my problem? What if I would have no choice but to marry someone for the sake of my parents' honor and family name?" He stopped for a second to search her eyes for her reaction.

Although this was the last thing he wanted to do, he could not help but think about it. He never wished to force himself to marry anyone just for their tradition. Nor did he plan to put a girl in a situation of a loveless marriage.

But somehow, he found himself in a tight spot, and he had no choice but to explore his options. If he was to marry anyone, he believed that Dani was the only woman he preferred to end up tied to at the moment.

"What are you saying?" She asked. But at a certain level of her intellect, she already knew what she was about to ask her.

Was she ready to answer his question? Her nerves were back with a vengeance as she felt butterflies flipped inside her stomach and cold sweats started to form at the back of her neck.

"You don't have to answer me right away, but maybe think about it." He said before asking his next question. "Would you marry me for real?"

He felt her hands slightly retracted from his hands but not strong enough to break their connection. Was that a sign that she might not be ready for his question?

Or maybe she was just as surprised as him with the suddenness of it.

"Are you proposing that we get married?" She could not stop the question from spilling out of her mouth.

Was he? He asked himself also the same question as soon as it left his mouth. He had not planned to ask her that question. It did not even cross his mind before.

Silence befell them both as a million things ran through both their mind with that hypothetical question.

## **Chapter 190 - No Way Out**

She feared that she might be hallucinating and hearing things. Was Alex proposing that they should proceed with the wedding? Did he ask her to marry him just now?

It was not part of their arrangement but was he suggesting to amend the contract that they signed. Dani doubted that he wanted to marry her because he was in love with her. She believed that their relationship had not crossed that threshold yet.

She gathered that what they had was mutual respect and attraction for each other, but she seriously questioned that it would be enough for him to come up to the conclusion of a marriage proposal.

"I think I am." He answered her with a slight hesitation in his tone. There was no confidence in his voice that would indicate that he had any control of their situation.

It felt more like an afterthought than something he had been contemplating about for a long time. But truthfully, he would not consider this if not for the talk he had this morning with his father.

Now that he had spoken the dreaded question, he seriously had to give it more thought. Was he ready to put Dani in a tight spot as his wife if, by some miracle, she did agree?

"But you said that marriage is not part of the deal." She reiterated what was on the contract. "Are you..." She could not even finish her sentence, unsure how she should rephrase her question. Because as of now, her mind was reeling in confusion.

She was not saying that marrying Alex was out of the question. Maybe they would come to that at some point in their relationship. Maybe years from now, when they were both ready and were probably head over heels in love with one another.

But as of now, she could not fathom the idea of marrying him in five months. It was just an idea that never crossed her mind. More like, she never allowed herself to explore that possibility.

"Hey, it is just a hypothetical question as of now. I am not even sure if it would be likely to happen. But I am just putting the question out there if in case I would need to marry someone." He pulled her close against him, trying to reassure her that they did not have to fret over the matter.

"Honestly, if you will ask me now. I will tell you that I can't marry you." She finally gave him an answer that reflected what she truly felt at the moment. She was not about to lie and give him some crappy, yes, to answer his musing.

"I know that it would be your immediate response. I already predicted that." He told her since it would be his reaction too if asked the same question. Both of them were not ready for that kind of commitment, and they both knew it.

It was different wanting a committed relationship. All Alex and Dani wished to do were to explore their likes and dislikes. To develop a more solid foundation to base their relationship so when the time came for them to move on to the next phase, they would be more ready.

"What is this all about, and why the sudden question?" She could only speculate that it had something to do with his father.

She moved out of his hold to look into his eyes. She wanted to see if she could read some answers in his expression, but as always, he had masked it well.

"Can we talk about this more later?" He indicated that they had arrived at their destination.

He knew that he had a lot of explaining to do later when they were once alone again. And he planned not to keep anything from her. If he would find a solution to his dilemma, he knew that her input would be beneficial in this case.

"Ok." She conceded, having no other options but to wait.

Something must have happened with his breakfast meeting with his parents. He must feel pressured to even thought of getting married as a solution to the problem.

That was the only logical explanation she could think of why he was suddenly bringing up the topic of tying the knots.

Presently, she was definite of her answer. But what if the time came that Alex would need a wife. Would she be able to say yes, or would she decline the offer and let him go? It was her final thoughts as they walked towards the table where his parents were already waiting.

"You look so lovely, my dear." Alex's mother greeted Dani with a motherly smile, a warm hug, and a tender kiss on the cheeks.

Katherine liked Dani from the moment she met her. She could tell that Dani was perfect for his son. She could not wait for them to get married and officially became her daughter-in-law.

But moreover, she could not wait to have kids to call her grandchildren. It had been a while since the palace had small kids running around. It would be nice to hear noises echoing around the walls once more.

"You also look stunning in that dress, Duchess Katherine," Dani replied to the beautiful mother of Alex, unaware of what was going through behind the smile on Katherine's lips.

She could not find any fault in Alex's parents, especially her mother that reminded her so much of her own. If she had to marry Alex, she did not mind becoming part of his family at all.

Well, that was still not something that she was contemplating any time soon. It was just an idea if ever in the long future she was to wed.

"You have to stop calling me that, Katherine or Mom, would be just fine with me. After all, you are soon marrying my son." Katherine insisted as they all sat on their respective chairs.

After all the formalities, they ordered their meals and settled on a comfortable discussion of different subjects. Eventually, as expected Katherine, immediately brought up the topic of wedding planning or the lack of it on the couple's part.

"At this time, we should already be talking about the date, location, and the rest of the arrangements. Laura and I already came up with several suggestions that we would like for you to see. If you have time, maybe the three of us could talk about it more." Katherine informed her.

"Of course, let me see what I can do to fit that with my schedule." She had learned that Alex's parents would only be here for a few days, so she had no choice but to make time for Katherine and her mother.

"That would be great," Katherine answered excitedly, clapping her hands to show how much she was looking forward to their next meeting.

Then, it was Frederick's turn to open the topic of their plans after the wedding. "Would you consider leaving this place and moving to the palace?"

He wanted to involve Dani in the conversation. Whatever was about to happen. It would also affect her life once she was married to Alexander.

"Dad, we have not discussed that yet." Alex stopped Fred from pursuing the discussion that his father was initiating. Not in front of Dani, who still had no clue of what was happening next.

He would rather talk to her about it in private. Not that it would make any difference. Because as of the moment, he felt trapped in his situation, and there seemed to be no way out.