

## Royal Contract 231

### Chapter 231 - I Do

"Jacky, where is the file that I asked earlier? I need the file on the case of Mr. ..." Dani was saying when Jacky dropped the file on her table, stopping her from finishing her sentence.

"Here it is." Jacky smiled at her, but instead of leaving, Jacky paced around her table, not saying anything. Then, finally. "Are you busy?" She asked as she sat down in the chair across from her.

"You know I am, but what is it anyway?" Dani asked, seeing that her friend was conflicted by something. Jacky knew that she would drop anything she was doing for her.

Dani put down her pen and looked away from her computer screen, focusing her full attention on her friend, who seemed to be having some issues. From the way she was acting, she assumed that it was somewhat personal.

"You see." Jacky hesitated for a second, then decided to blurt it out before she lost her nerve. "Lance just texted. Well, he had been calling several times now, but I could not answer him."

She had no idea how she would explain to her friend what was going through her mind without sounding stupid. But she knew that if someone could help her, it was Dani.

"Why? What's going on?" Dani did not understand what Jacky was thinking at the moment. As if she was anxious about something. Well, the Jacky she knew did not back down from challenges.

"I am afraid to fall for him," Jacky uttered out of the blue. Realizing her blunder, she immediately followed her statement. "He texted that he wanted to go out. I did promise him that I would show him around."

"Wait. Slow down." Dani placed her hand up towards her to stop her. "Start from the beginning."

"Ok." She took a deep breath and began again. "He wanted us to go out, but I don't know." She said in a rush, hoping that it did make sense to her friend. All she heard from her was gibberish.

"Wait. Let me get things clear." Dani tried to analyze her statement since it was said too quickly, she might make a wrong assessment of the situation. "He wants to see you, and you agreed, but now you are afraid to see him because you might fall in love with him."

"Yeah, something like that." Jacky covered her face with the palm of her hands, unable to look her friend in the eye, knowing that she was not making sense even to herself. She was confused about the way she was feeling.

"You know what. We should not be afraid of the way we feel. It should not dictate how we should live our life." Dani stood from her seat and walked closer to her friend.

"If you like Lance, then go out with him. See if he also likes you the same way. Being afraid of the unknown is like putting ourselves in a cage, and we will never be free." Dani explained, putting a hand on her shoulder.

Jacky listened to her friend. She knew Dani had always been wise. Her advice usually led her to the right path. And it did make sense what she said.

"I think you are right. I should enjoy Lance's company while he is here. And not get work out for nothing." Jacky finally concluded. "Thanks, I will let you go back to your work."

Somehow talking to Dani eased her anxiety of seeing Lance again. Instead of thinking of the future, she should only focus on today. As of now, Lance offered friendship, and she should concentrate on that.

Dani returned to her work when Jacky stood and walked out of her office. But she wondered about her advice if it applied to her. Was she afraid of the way she felt about Alex?

She quickly shoved the idea away. As of now, there were tons of work she had to finish, and mulling over her feelings for Alex was not the time. She could do that later. But would she have the courage to admit her feelings for him?

"Hello there. I hope it is not a bad timing to visit a friend." A man knocked once on her door and spoke up, slightly startling her in the process.

"What are you doing here?" She asked, forgetting to be courteous to her visitor. If she could call him that, she thought. "Where is Jacky?" She wondered where her friend was.

"Well, nobody is guarding your door, so I thought I would just say hi since I was in the vicinity." He stated as he moved a step forward. "Can I come in so we can have a small chitchat just to catch up?"

He could see that she was hesitating, but that did not easily dissuade him from pursuing his interest. He was not known as someone who gave up when he wanted something badly enough.

"You have to forgive my manners, Prince Edward. Please come in. I hope you don't expect me to bow down." She slightly sarcastically muttered the last part.

"Of course not. Here we are friends and equal. And Edward would do just fine." He said as he proceeded to enter the room and sat down on the available chair.

"Well, you have not answered why you are here?" She asked in her most civilized tone.

Despite not liking him, she knew that she still should show him professional etiquette. She could not help but wonder if Alex knew that he was here.

"If you must know, Alex asked me to discuss some contracts with David and Evan, but it seems that I have a few minutes to spare. So, here I am." Edward stated as if that should answer her question.

"So here you are. Although I would probably enjoy chitchatting with you, as you can see, I still have plenty of work to finish." Pointing to the papers in front of her. "Maybe some other time."

She hoped she was clear about what her intention was. But when Edward did not move or say anything, she thought that he completely ignored her. He just smiled and looked at her as if he was amused.

He finally stood up, "Some other time then," Edward buttoned up his coat again and walked towards the door. "I'll call you then to set up a date." He said, turning to her before walking out the door, not waiting for her reply.

She did not expect his parting words, but he was gone before she could turn him down. But she was not afraid of him. She knew she could manage a man like him.

"What was the prince doing in your office?" Jacky suddenly popped up in her office upon seeing Edward leaving her office.

She chastised herself for being gone, longer than she should. Now, someone was here to mess with Dani, and she was not there to protect her.

Not that Dani could not defend herself, but it would have been better if she could stop him from getting close to her. Just like Dani, she never liked the man, even if he was a prince.

"Nothing, he just wanted to play catch up," Dani stated uninterestedly, wanting to go back to her work. "By the way, where were you?" She asked, curious why she was not at her desk.

Edward was not someone she should be befriending. He was a dangerous man, and she should be wary of dealing with him. But she knew she could not avoid him because he was, after all, Alex's family.

"I went to the bathroom." She excused herself, but she omitted the part that she finally answered Lance and decided to have dinner with him later. "I better go back to my work."

Alone again, she was back in her thoughts. She realized that being in a relationship would always be complicated even if they liked each other a lot.

There would always be people around them that would not make it easy for them. They would find a way to insert themselves into the relationship and messed it up.

She just hoped that what she had with Alex would be strong enough to withstand the obstacles in their path. She suddenly wished that he was her forever. Maybe marrying him would not be that bad.

Was she seriously contemplating saying the words, I do, but what about love?

## **Chapter 232 - The Perfect Girl**

"Hi! Ready to go home." A man spoke by the door.

This time, it was a sound she wanted to hear all day. After a very tiring workload and the stressful incident with Edward, hearing his voice was a reward in itself.

"Yes, just give me a few minutes to tidy up." She told him as she quickly piled up her papers not yet done on the other side of the desk and grabbed the ones she had finished, putting them on the outgoing files.

"I heard that you had a visitor earlier," Alex stated as he made himself comfortable on the chair, earlier occupied by Edward.

He knew that Edward would make a stopover at her office once he asked him to consult about a file with David and Evan. Edward would not pass up the chance to create mayhem where he could.

But he knew that Dani could handle him easily. It was one of the things he admired about her. She probably had learned from her mistake, just like him. They had learned to see beyond the surface.

"Well, I did. If you put Edward up to the challenge, I guess he failed." She teased him as she moved towards him and pulled him up from his seat.

"Sorry to disappoint you, but I did not. I only asked Edward to do some filing, but he could not help himself from admiring someone as beautiful as you." He countered.

He grabbed her by the waist with one hand and put his other hand on the side of her face, guiding her until their faces were inches apart. But he did not kiss her and just stared into her eyes.

Somehow, in his heart, he knew that he could trust her. That whatever happened, she would not betray him. It was written all over her face how much she trusted him too.

"He could look, but you know that I am all yours." She had no idea where those words came from, but the way he was staring at her eyes mesmerized her.

It was as if he was reading her soul, analyzing her deepest feelings. She could never lie to him, and it felt the same way with him. An invisible cord bound them together and entwined them to be as one.

"I am also all yours." He lowered his head this time until their lips connected in one passionate kiss.

But he quickly broke away, remembering that they were not alone in this office. Anytime, Jacky would walk in and catch them making out. He would not mind, but he knew that Dani did.

"Let me just get my things." She pulled away from him as soon as she had her footing again.

She seized her bag at the side of the table and her coat on the rack. Then, she walked back to Alex's side. He took her hand in his as he guided her out of the office.

"Jacky, we will go ahead?" Dani said goodbye to her friend, who was also getting ready to leave.

"Yeah, sure. I'll see you tomorrow." Jacky said, knowing that Dani was staying with Alex tonight.

She did not mind since she was going out herself. She felt excited at the same time apprehensive about her date or not date with Lance.

It felt weird that they were going out, because despite what she said earlier. She could not help but expect that something more would happen to them. She was a woman, not a robot.

"Bye," Alex said to Jacky as they both walked ahead of her into the elevator.

"I hope you don't mind if I ask this. Why is Lance here again?" Dani could not help but feel sad for her friend.

She knew that Jacky had feelings for Lance. She already felt it before and earlier when she expressed her fear. She wondered if Lance's presence here would only hurt her friend even more or helped her move on.

"He is helping me with Edward, and at the same time, we are working on a project together." He told her, curious with her line of questioning. "Why?"

"Nothing. I am just curious why Lance is here when he is not initially part of the plan." She said, shrugging her shoulders.

Maybe she was also hoping Lance was here solely because of Jacky. That he was hopelessly in love with her friend that he could not stand being away from her. What was she thinking anyway?

"If he has any other reasons for being here, I am not privy about it." Alex confided with her.

He could only assume that her question had something to do with Jacky. But he had no answers for that. He had no power over what Lance felt for her or any plans to meddle with his affair.

They fell into silence while they rode the elevator, busy with their thoughts. But once they were inside the car, they started to chat again about their day.

"What about we go to dinner and a movie?" Dani suggested. She suddenly pulled out a bag behind her, at the backseat. "Do you think you are up for a disguise?" She asked him as excitement covered her expression.

"That sounds perfect." He agreed as he drove them to their destination.

Ever since their successful adventure using their disguise, they decided to put another set on the car just in case they decided they wanted to do one again.

Tonight, it seemed to be the right time to put on their silly hats and enjoy the night away. She could not wait to see what he had bought them. She had not seen it yet, but she knew she would enjoy every minute of it.

"What about Chinese for dinner?" She suddenly remembered the small Chinese restaurant just beneath her office when she was back in her old job. She had loved the food that they served there.

"I don't mind. Do you have something particular you want?" He asked, wanting this night to be all about her.

He would drive her anywhere if it meant seeing her happy. He could not get enough of seeing her smile. And what made all this great was that she did not ask for the moon. She only wanted to be with him.

What else could he ask for when he had the perfect girl beside him.

### **Chapter 233 - Caught In The Moment**

"Honestly, did you enjoy the movie?" She asked as they walked out of the establishment hand in hand.

Now, they strolled along the busy street as if they were just like the rest of the ordinary couple out tonight on a date. But since it was a bit late, the crowded street had dwindled to occasional people, out for fun or on the way home.

"I did not know that you enjoy watching horror movies. I thought you were only messing me with me when you insisted on this." He looked at her with a frown.

After being together for almost two months, she still managed to surprise him. But he could tell that she was full of secrets, and he could not wait to uncover all of them.

"So, you expected that I would cringe, scream and hold on to you for dear life." She teased him as they stopped on the sidewalk, waiting for the signal for them to cross to the other side.

Typical men, thinking that all women are vulnerable, fearful, and fragile. Always assuming that women needed protection and a savior, but not her. She had learned how to be strong and protect herself.

She did not need a man to do that for her. But what did she need from someone like him? She contemplated on her question as they crossed the street.

"Sort of." He admitted, quite ashamed he assumed her weak. "I certainly did not expect that you would enjoy it." He smiled at her with that boyish grin, scratching his nape as if admitting defeat.

"I don't get scared that easily. Sorry to disappoint you." Revealing to him one of her strengths, hoping to give him a glimpse of another side of her.

If they were to build a future together, they had to learn all the different aspects of their personalities. It was relevant to know if they were compatible.

It was the reason why they were in this relationship in the first place. Well, in Dani's mind, it was. She could only assume that it was what Alex's end game was, too, that they would both end up together eventually.

"On the contrary, you only impress me more." He let go of her hand as they continued to walk with no particular direction. Then, he wrapped one of his arms around her shoulders as he pulled her closer to him.

"You mean, you don't mind if I am not like a damsel in distress." She slightly turned her body to him so that she could directly look at his face.

Tradition built men to be the protector and provider. So, being the knight in shining armor had been their natural inclination. Having women who could do what they could, threatened them.

She remembered toning down her personality to please Nick. She was afraid to show that she was better than him. She did not want him to feel discouraged and inferior.

"Not at all. I like my partner to be my equal. Someone who could speak her mind and defend herself even when I am not around." He faced her in the middle of the sidewalk and tilted her chin until they were face to face.

He suddenly realized that he did not like a woman too dependent on a man for everything she needed. He did not like a clingy woman, wanting to be always the center of his attention.

If he would sum it up, he only wanted her because she was not all of that. He only wanted her because she was all he desired.

"Besides, I want to be the damsel in distress once in a while. So, prepare to defend my honor." He lowered his head and gave her a quick peck on her lips before pulling her back to their walk.

He did not believe in the old culture that women were beneath men. He had seen how his father bowed down to his mother's opinion, not because he felt inferior, but because he loved and respected her.

He wanted a relationship like what his parents have. He fancied a woman capable of being his equal and not someone who would agree blindly to all his wishes.

"I certainly did not expect that." She pulled his head down gently to make him bend to her side. "Then, my prince, I swear to protect and defend your honor." She whispered near his ears.

In her opinion, she was also capable of protecting the people she loved and cared for, even if she was a mere woman. It would not stop her from taking the bullet if needed.

"Then, I am lucky. I finally found my knight with a shining smile." He said softly in her ears. Then, he shifted and kissed the top of her head.

"Yeah, so you just yell if you need rescuing." She accidentally snorted as she chuckled, which made them laughed together even louder.

He pulled her even closer to him. "Come on. It is getting late."

Well, they had been walking for a while with no direction. Alex thought she might be exhausted. Looking at her feet, he wondered how she could walk in those killer shoes, certainly deadly weapons.

"No, wait." She dragged him to a still opened diner a few feet away from them. "I want a cold treat." She requested as they entered the small space and sat on the available seat at the corner.

"Ok." He answered with a raised brow. He was starting to enjoy the way she was bossing her around.

"What about you?" She asked when she ordered her sweet cold treat.

"Why don't we share? That looks like a humongous treat. I might not be able to finish." He checked again on the menu, and yes, it was huge.

"Yeah, I don't mind sharing." She answered him as they waited for their order to arrive.

"So, what part of the movie did you like?" He was curious about how her mind works. One way to know more about her was to ask about her likes and dislikes.

"Well, I will say the prosthetics and makeup were amazing. It looked realistic. The story plot was ok, but it was not that scary at all." She commented. "But overall, it was entertaining."

She did enjoy watching a good movie. Although she rarely had time to do it with her busy schedule, she still appreciated a good one from time to time.

"Ok." But before he could say more, their ice cream had arrived. Judging from its size, it would take them a while to finish it. But at least they decided to share it.

"What about you? I don't remember you answering my earlier question." She reminded him since he suddenly shifted the topic. She would also like his opinion on it.

"I did like it, but I do agree with your evaluation. I also think the scene needed a few more shocking scenes to wow the audience." He seconded her statement.

He also was once a movie fanatic. Since coming to this country, he wanted to know more about the culture and the life of the locals. One way he did was watch most of their films. It was the fastest way to get their style.

"What is the scariest thing that happened to you?" She decided to ask him something more personal.

She was through talking about the movie, but she wanted to know more about him. She believed that he could not be perfect. He must have something that he was afraid of or at least avoided.

"That is a tough one." He started playing with his chin as if he thought of an answer.

Two months ago, he could have quickly answered her with one word, commitment. But now, he felt that it was not that bad anymore.

"There must be something that frightens even a prince like you." She once again teased him, bringing her spoonful of ice cream into his lips.

He took a bite of the ice cream, taking all the ice cream into his mouth as he thought of his answer. Then, the idea came as he swallowed the last creamy taste of the sweet freezing treat.

"The way I feel about you." He uttered in all seriousness as he grabbed her hand and held it firmly in his.

His eyes never left hers, paralyzing them in time, both of them caught in the moment.

### **Chapter 234 - Unspoken Questions**

In another part of the city, another couple was out for dinner. Was it a date? Technically, yes. But in her mind, it was only a friendly date. There was nothing romantic about going out with him to show him around the city.

In all honesty, she wanted the night to be full of hearts and flowers. She wished Lance to say that he was here for her. She dreamed that they would fall in love and live happily ever after.

"Don't you like the food?" Lance's voice penetrated her consciousness, rousing her out of her trance.

He had been observing her since he first saw her walked into the restaurant. He offered to pick her up from her apartment, but she insisted that she meet him instead.

Something was different about her. She was not the same girl he met back home. Although she was as beautiful or more than before, her aura had changed.

"I do. I am just not that hungry." She excused herself, realizing that she had been zoning out.

She looked at her plate, and she barely touched her food. She did not have an appetite since she had been anxious once she saw Lance earlier.

Jacky promised earlier that she would treat this like they were just friends. But she could not help what she felt for him. She wanted more than friendship, but who was she to demand anything from him.

He might be a prince, but she was no Cinderella. She did not have a fairy godmother, a pumpkin carriage, or glass slippers. She was just Jacky, who only had Dani at her corner.

"Would you like something else, or do you like to go anywhere else?" He asked, hoping to see the spark in her eyes. The one that enchanted him to her in the first place.

She seemed so lost, more than the first time they met. Did she end another relationship? Was she heartbroken again? By who? He could only speculate unless she offered him the answers.



He suddenly felt like comforting her. His instinct was to take her into his arms and help her get over him. Whoever the guy was. But the table separating them prevented him from doing that.

"No. I am ok. Let us eat." She told him, smiling in the process, cutting on her food and putting it into her mouth.

She chastised herself internally for appearing less than enthusiastic about seeing him again. She should be ecstatic that he was here. It was easy said than done when she knew at any time he would be gone again.

Instead of eating, he extended his hand on the table and held her hands firmly in his. "If you need a friend to talk to, I am here." He spoke softly, afraid that he would worsen the situation.

He could sense that something was not right, but they just saw each other again. He did not want to pry when Jacky seemed not forthcoming with the answers.

"I'm ok." She answered him with a smile. "I'm sorry if I was not such a good company tonight. Something happened, and I am a bit down." She did not want to lie, but she felt it was necessary.

How could she tell him that he was the reason for her sadness? Seeing him again the other day gave her heart hope, but her mind quashed it instantly before it even began to beat.

Because her mind was right, there was no hope for hoping for the impossible, if that made any sense. Jacky was only leading herself to a colossal heartache with no possible cure.

"That's ok. I hope I can help in any way to alleviate your sadness." As he continued to hold her hand, not wanting to let it go just yet.

He began to question his presence in her life. Why he had this need to see her again? The last time that they saw each other, he promised to let go of her.

Then, why was he entertaining a notion of seeing her again when he was not sure of a future with her. What was his intention of continuing to befriend her? Did he desire something else from her?

"Will excuse me?" She pulled her hand gently away from him and stood up from her chair. "I need to go to the powder room."

She did not wait for his answer as she slowly walked away from him. She needed some air, a space away from him for a few minutes to recompose herself. Feeling his touch on her skin brought back memories of the time that he had shown her a different affection.

For the first time, she felt special, as if she was breakable porcelain that needed to be handled with care. Lance made her realize that she should not settle for less than what she deserved.

"What are you doing?" She asked herself in the mirror, frustrated with herself for acting such in a way.

What if she now believed that she deserved someone like him. Should she act on getting him whatever it took? But that was plain stupid. She could not just come up to him and say that she wanted him. Could she?

But he was a prince, she muttered to herself. But he was also just a man. Her heart and her mind debated in her head. She quickly opened the tap and dabbed her face with water, hoping that would clear her mind.

After a minute, she took a deep breath and stared at herself in the mirror. "I hope you know what you are doing." She said to the woman on the other side of the reflection.

Luckily, no one was with her inside the bathroom, or else they might think that she had turned cuckoo. She immediately fixed her face, removing the slight smudge of her makeup.

Then, she stood straight, preparing herself for what she was about to do later. For now, she would appear as normal as she could and enjoy the rest of the dinner.

"I'm sorry again for earlier. Don't worry. I am perfectly ok now." She gave him a megawatt smile that lighted up her face.

It was not an easy task, but she had learned to do it with the years of training on being tough. She had smiled through her pain. She had laughed behind her cries. She did it before, and she could do it now.

"I'm glad to hear that. But my offer still stands if ever you will need it in the future." He helped her back to her seat and resumed their dinner.

He could still sense that she was hiding something from him. Maybe he would figure it out later, but for now, he was letting it go. He was just glad that she would seem to be genuinely smiling again.

"I'll surely take note of that." She jokingly answered, hoping she sounded convincing.

This time, she ate with gusto, despite not tasting much of the food she put inside her mouth. She showed Lance what he wanted to see and that she was ok.

"So, tell me, how have you been these last months.." He asked, hoping to hear some answers to his unspoken questions.

### **Chapter 235 - Entwined Hands**

"The way I feel about you." It kept ringing in her head as he stared into her eyes.

It was what frightened him the most. What did it mean? He was afraid that he might be feeling more than he intended. All of a sudden, she was confused.

She did not expect him to say that, and now, she was left stunned, unable to react to his words. She did not anticipate that kind of response to a question meant to be just for fun.

"I think it is getting late." She abruptly mumbled, grabbing her bag at the side of the table, breaking the connection they had.

She could not describe why she felt anxious with his statement. It was not as if he declared that he was madly in love with her or the exact opposite. It was vague, but she felt she was not ready for the explanation.

"Yes, it is." He was not surprised by her retreat. He realized that if she told him those same lines, he might end up running in the other direction too.

He did not understand what prompted him to express what he felt for her. It was not as if he said that he loved her. But in his mind, it sounded that way.

Now, he questioned his mind if it was interpreting what he felt in his heart. Was he beginning to fall in love with her? That was the only explanation he could think of with the way he felt for her.

"I just remembered that I need to go to the office early tomorrow." She knew she was making excuses because she did not want to face the inevitable question.

Not that she was closing her mind and heart to the possibility of love. In truth, she dreamed of it. But the fear of being broken again once she fully engaged her heart in this relationship was overwhelming.

She knew she would not make it if she allowed herself to love him and then ended up making a mistake again. Was she ready to give him her heart and risk everything for him?

"I also need to report early tomorrow." He could sense her need to get away from him.

But he had no plan to pressure her to face their situation now. They were still new. There was still plenty of time to deal with their emotions as they continued their journey together.

Nevertheless, if he was not in love with her yet, he knew it was only a matter of time. The inevitable would happen. He could not prevent his heart from falling for her.

The car ride was silent as they were both lost in their thoughts. Who knew that such a statement could have a striking impact on them?

"I think I'll grab a glass of water in the kitchen." She told him, once inside his apartment. But she only needed an excuse to calm herself from the thoughts that plagued her on their way home.

But could she keep running away from her feelings, or should she face what she had feared since she agreed to this arrangement? If she was to fall in love. Would it be better to risk it with a man like Alex?

"I'll just be in my office." He walked past her and continued on his way to the other side of the living room.

Despite wanting to confront her and make her face her fears, he had to hold back. He felt it would be better to let her come into terms with her feelings for him on her own rather than forced her to admit it.

Once inside his office, he started working on some of his files, distracting his mind from what happened earlier. But his thoughts still went back to Dani and her reactions to him occasionally.

After drinking her glass of water, Dani decided to go straight to the bedroom. It was the first time they acted like this. As if they were both avoiding each other's company.

She laid on the bed for almost half an hour, but sleep was not coming anytime soon. Eventually, she gave up as she stood and decided to fix what she started.

"Hi!" She greeted him by the door of his office, seeing him busy with a bunch of papers on his desk.

It would be her first time to enter his private room. She never tried before, and now she could see that it held many of his memories of home.

The first time she came here, she remembered that she could not open the door. Now, she could see the mystery hidden behind that door.

Photos, memorabilia, and other precious artifacts, probably family treasures, were spread across the room. It was not the sort of heirlooms that thieves would be interested in, but it was indeed beautiful.

"Hi!" He responded, dropping the papers in his hand and prying his eyes away from his computer screen. He quickly glanced at the clock and only realized that he had been gone for a while.

"I have something to tell you." She walked towards him, stepping further inside the room while still checking the different decorations that surrounded them.

"What is it?" He asked, glad that her mood had changed. It would seem that she was back to herself.

He swiveled his chair until he faced her when she stood beside him at his table and waited. He was genuinely interested to hear what she had to say.

"I have been thinking of your question." She began, hoping that she could be brave enough to finish what she was about to start.

She could not continue to fear the future or the possible rejection and the heartbreak. She had to start taking a risk even if it meant another painful experience in the end.

"Which one?" He asked, encouraging her to continue. He had no idea what she was talking about since they had so many arguments and open questions.

He gently pulled her to him and made her sit on his lap as he cradled his chin on her shoulders. He wrapped his arms around his waist and waited for her.

She turned her head to him so she could see his face when she said her following statement. "About marrying without love. I think I change my mind." She wanted to see his reaction.

"Are you saying you might consider it?" He was not sure what she meant by that. He did not want to assume, but from what he understood. She would marry even in the absence of love.

"Yes, I think so." She immediately answered before she changed her mind again.

"What made you change your mind?" He asked, slightly unsure of what was going through that pretty little head of hers. But he could not wait for her rationalization. He could guarantee it was based all on her fears.

"I believe marriage due to compatibility would be so much better than waiting for love that may never even come." She waited for what his response would be.

He remained impassive as he continued to stare at her eyes.

Then, he took her hand in his, imagining a ring on her fingers.. Would that be so bad? He thought, staring at their entwined hands.

## **Chapter 236 - Respect, Passion, And Love**

"Is that what our relationship is all about to you? Are we just together because we are compatible?" He put her palms on both sides of his cheeks, wanting to feel their warmth on his face.

He could not care less anymore if that would scare her and make her run for the hills. He would come running after her if that was the only way to make her understand that what they had was more than that.

After a few seconds of analyzing her statement, he realized that it was not what he wanted to hear from her. Honestly, he found himself wishing that she was in love with him.

"But..." She intended to say something but had no idea what. She could not find the words to express what she desired, at the same time, what she feared most. Afraid that he might not understand or misinterpret what she might say.

"What about marrying for love?" He voiced out when he saw her indecision.

He knew that if his statement earlier did not scare her, this might. Even he was afraid of his words. But he could not lie anymore, not even to himself.

Because he suddenly realized that hurting her was the last thing he wanted to do. Making her happy was the only thing in his mind, and loving her was all his heart shouted at the top of his lungs.

He was already undeniably and irrevocably in love with her.

"What?" She barely whispered, finding herself unable to say anything more.

She had no response to his question as shock took over her ability to process her thoughts and actions. She was not even sure of what she felt about him anymore.

"I love you." He finally said it. With their faces only inches apart and their eyes locked together, he finally uttered the words that he had not spoken of to anyone in a long while.

He never thought that he would break his rule for her. But he did not regret it one bit because he believed she was worth breaking all the rules. He would do anything to make her happy.

"I..." She stuttered, incapable of continuing with her sentence. It was as if she was drowning, and she could not breathe. She just continued to stare at him without saying anything.

"You don't have to say it if you are not ready. I did not say it to force you to say it too. I only want to put it out there. Since it is what I truly feel for you." He mumbled on as disappointment interlaced with his voice. He lowered his face, not wanting her to see further the hurt he felt of her rejection.

It was not his intention to proclaim his feelings for her in this manner. He did not even know that he loved her, not until just a few moments ago. But he already said it, and he could not take it back.

At the moment, it was either she accepted his love or rejected it. If it was the latter, all he could probably do was wait for the day she might learn to love him too.

"Honestly, I am a little bit shocked." She finally found her voice, admitting to him what she truly felt was surprisingly not that hard.

Seeing the despair that crossed over his expression broke her heart. He tried to mask it with a smile, but she still saw it anyway. Now, all she wished to do was wipe that grim look off his face and make him happy.

Who was she kidding, certainly not herself? When did it happen? Who knew, but as of now, her heart was about to explode because of how she felt about him.

"It was not my intention, and I am sorry if I put you in an awkward situation. But, if it..." He was about to say more, but she rudely interrupted him.

"Stop." She placed a finger on his lips to prevent him from saying anything more. "Would you let me say something first?" With the tip of her fingers, she made him look up to her until they were eye to eye again. "I love you too."

She could keep lying about it, but what was the point when he already declared his feelings for her. He already said he loved her. She was also already in love with him.

Completely and madly in love with the man in the palm of her hands. The same man, who had his arms wrapped around her and his eyes boring through her soul.

"You do?" He knew he understood her right. But he felt that it might be his mind making him hear what he only wanted to hear. He wanted her to say it one more time, a confirmation that it was not just his imagination.

"I love you." She repeated, enunciating each word, hoping that would finally sink in that big silly brain of his. "Did you finally get it? I am also in love with you." She once again said for good measure.

Instead of answering her this time, he pulled her into a deep passionate kiss. He felt that no words could match his action. His kiss would be the perfect way to seal their love.

When they came up for air, he knew that he was the happiest man in the world. He believed that she felt the same way, judging from the smile displayed on her lips.

"I could not wait to shout to the world how much I love you." He said as he ran his fingers through her hair and entwining them on the strands holding her head in place. "And you are now mine."

He knew that he did not mean to make it sound like she was a possession that he could own. It was more of a right for him to say that they were already one.

"I feel the same way." She admitted, keeping her eyes on him. Suddenly, feeling confident to stake a claim on him.

It was the first time that she felt that she belonged with someone. Not as an object but as an equal, a partner, and someone to share their everything and anything.

He slowly carried her to his room to celebrate their new union. He wanted to savor their moment as a couple who just declared love for one another.

He laid her gently on the bed and covered her body with his. Slowly, he devoured her lips with his, wanting to feel every inch of her as his hands explored her body.

"Make love to me." She moaned in between their kisses, craving to have him, all of him, body, heart, and soul.

"I will." He could never deny her. Her wishes would always be his to obey because that was how much he loved her.

As they moved together to please their every desire, as they twisted and turned to make their needs satisfied, giving and taking to meet their fill. There was only one thing that went through their mind.

Love was the major binding force that was holding their relationship together. The strength of what they felt now was nothing compared to what they felt before with their other affairs.

Their relationship was not a mere connection of the flesh but a combination of respect, passion, and love.

### **Chapter 237 - Broken Heart And A Lonely Soul**

They fell into a comfortable conversation as if they were back to the time they first met. The awkwardness slowly dissipated but was not completely gone, but at least more tolerable than earlier.

"It had been more or less the same," Jacky answered his question of how she had been since they last saw each other. "Nothing much did happen. Work is still the same."

She assumed that was what he wanted to know. But what else could she tell him when her life was not as glamorous or adventurous as his. Nothing exciting had happened to her except dating Sebastian.

But should she tell him about him when that topic was not even relevant to their conversation? Anyway, she was sure that listening about her love life was the last thing he would like to do.

"Oh. I would think that a girl like you will always have something fun and exciting to do." Lance stated, studying the girl that sat across from him.

"If you really must know, I step in the shoes of the people that I read in the news, the net, and other gossip columns and imagine a life like theirs. That is the most excitement I get in my life." She admitted, hoping that would sum up her life.

She was tired of pretending that her life was anything but what it was. It was boring life of work and home. It was the reason why she sought a partner to share her day.

She wanted someone to give her life meaning. She dreamed of colors and rainbows when she woke up in the morning. She craved for the sparks and fireworks before she drifted to sleep at night.

"That seems exciting enough, although I had never tried that before. Maybe you can show me how to do that sometime." He smiled at her, genuinely interested in her unusual hobby.

But in all honesty, he knew that he wanted to see her again. She could probably tell him that she was a bum, a waitress, an assassin, a secret agent, or something else, but he would still be interested to know her.

"Are you for real? Why would you want to do that?" She looked at him with a raised brow, unable to figure out what was going through his mind. She wondered if he was making fun of her.

He was a prince with a very adventurous lifestyle. Why would he want to hang out with her and join in her crazy daydreaming? That did not make any sense to her at all.

She was positive that there were millions of things that he could think of to entertain himself. If he fancied any activities, she was sure that many establishments would more than welcome him, and it would be more worth his while.

"Because I want to experience that with you. It seems fun." He knew that it sounded surreal if he was going to use common sense. But nothing about what he had been doing since he saw her again was anything logical.

He could not explain it, not even to himself, why he had this need to see her. It was not as if he could not find another company. He was sure that many would line up to spend some time with him.

But the problem was, they were not her. Lance could go on a date with a model, an actress, a wealthy daughter of a businessman, but it would not be as exciting as talking to her and learning things about her.

She raised her hand in the air as a sign of surrender, finding his claim ridiculous. "You are out of your mind." She said as if he had gone insane. "Why would you waste your time doing boring things with me?"

Why would he want to spend time with her? He could have any girl in this city to entertain him. Many girls were already eyeing him, just looking around the restaurant.

Besides, she did not want her heart to hope. She knew that after this, there could not be something more. Lance would go back to his world, and she would remain in hers.

"Why? Because I enjoy your company." He dragged his chair until he was seated beside her. "Furthermore, I don't think you are boring at all." He said, staring at her face, close up. "I don't think so."

He was not a player, not in the true sense of the word. Although he did date many women, it did not mean they all ended up in bed. He still preferred meaningful relationships.

However, his life as a royalty and his obligations to his family limited him from seeking a lasting relationship. Rules had restricted him from pursuing what he wanted.

"I give up. Anyway, it is your time, your lost." She was not about to argue with him. "But I will suggest that you find something else to occupy your time while you are here."

But all she got was an adorable smile from him, clearly amused with her. She was glad he felt entertained by her actions, but she was not. On the other hand, she gathered she should not be spending more time with him.

"Anyway, are you dating again?" He knew that was none of his business, but it was beyond his control when the question slipped out of his lips.

"I was." Her answer came out automatically. She suddenly realized that she should have said she was currently dating. That would have given her an excuse not to see him again. "I am." She tried to retract her earlier answer.



"Which is it? Are you or are you not?" He stared at her hand, which was fidgeting on her lap. Was that an indication that she was trying to make some excuse, a lie?

"I just stopped dating a great guy." She finally admitted, knowing she was not good with lies. "But I am still trying dating." She should have stopped with the first sentence.

Now, she believed she sounded like she was expecting him to ask her out again, which was not her intention at all. She suddenly felt frustrated because she was making a mess of everything.

"Oh, that is interesting," Lance responded to her statement with a grin on his lips.

He knew that dating her would always be exciting, but he had to consider if that was indeed a good idea. After all, he would only be here for a month.

He was not sure if he could promise her anything but a good time. Well, he did not like the idea at all because that might hurt her in the end. The last thing he wanted was for that to happen.

Then, what was he doing dating her now? Because nothing about what he was doing was friendly. He had to admit that he fancied her, and he wanted to see her again. But was there any future in this.

"Nothing about my dating is interesting." She contradicted him, not wanting to encourage him to another one.

She feared that seeing him again might lead to something more. Her heart was already in the process of letting him in, but how long would he be staying.

A month, then he would be gone again, and she would be alone again. This time, it might be for good.. What then would become of her when that time came? Another broken heart and a lonely soul.

### **Chapter 238 - Perfect Day**

"Why do you look like you swallowed a light bulb? You can brighten up the entire place with that smile plastered on your face." Marcus teased his friend, gesturing around him as he walked into the room.

He could only think of one thing that could make his friend in such a good mood despite the situation they were in right now. He could answer it with one name, Dani.

He knew he had been hard on his friend since he got involved with her. It was not his intention to hinder their affair, but he was only looking after his interest.

"If your here for business, state your case. Otherwise, you are not allowed to ruin my mood." Alex slightly loosened his tie and stretched her shoulder muscles.

He was indeed in a good mood after what happened last night. He still could not believe that he finally realized what he truly felt for Dani, and to learn that she felt the same way was just overwhelming.

He could not wipe out the smile on his lips even if he tried. He still could imagine every time Dani repeatedly declared her love for him in the heat of their passion. But honestly, he also did the same.

"Can I assume that something great happened during your date with Dani?" Marcus walked further inside the room and stared at his friend as if he was reading his reaction.

In the last past weeks, he knew he sounded like the enemy to Alex and Dani's relationship. But he was only looking out for his friend. He did not want him to find himself in a relationship without any life support.

Having someone to question his decisions, Marcus thought, would help Alex make the correct one. So far, it would seem that it had paid off as his relationship with Dani strengthened.

But yes, in the beginning, he felt like a total ass\*le for almost ruining even his friendship with Alex, only because he was afraid of commitments.

"Yes," Alex admitted to his friend with a satisfied grin on his face. "I think I plan to take this to the next level."

He could still remember how he thought that she was going to reject his proclamation. How disappointed he felt with her reaction, only to find that it was all a misunderstanding?

"Don't worry. I am not here to pop your bubbles. In truth, I am happy for you and Dani." Marcus told him as he made himself comfortable on the seat opposite his table. "But I am here with good news."

But seeing him on a different level with Dani compared to what he had with Tyra, he was starting to get convinced that he had nothing to worry about his friend.

Maybe his affair with Dani was not that bad after all. In fairness, he could see that it was having a positive effect on him. It was good for him personally and for the business side.

"If that is the case, then I am all ears." Alex was happy that Marcus seemed to be warming up to the idea of him and Dani.

Marcus was his best friend, and if anything, he wanted him to be the first to support his relation with Dani. Maybe in time, he could convince him that commitment was not a death sentence.

"Well, we managed to secure enough shares to rattle Nick. As per your instructions, we did leave bread crumbs for him to follow. If he had a good team, he might have discovered it by now." Marcus informed him.

He could only speculate on his intentions on buying Nick's company shares. Although business-wise, he agreed that in the long run, it would be profitable.

But on a personal level, it was safe to assume that the move had something to do with Dani and her past relationship with Nick. He was keeping an eye on this to make sure that Alex did not make a wrong move.

"Good, that is perfect," Alex said, glad that everything worked out as planned. Now, all he needed was for Nick to find out what he had been doing.

He was sending him a message, loud and clear. Nick could not mess with his company and certainly not with Dani and get away with it. He would make sure that Nick understood that he was not someone Nick could easily intimidate.

Nick might still be higher than him in standing, but he was sure that he was better than him in many ways. He would not stop until he reached the top and was declared the next king of this kingdom.

"Are you sure that we could manage Nick? Remember, Nick's company is still a lot larger than ours." Marcus reminded his friend.

Not that he was afraid of the man and what he was capable of doing. He was only reminding his friend to be cautious. He already Nick did not fight fair, but Alex was too noble to be shady like him.

"Don't worry. I know what I am doing." He assured his friend.

He could understand his concern. After all, Nick did not reach that position without having several bags of tricks up his sleeves. He also reminded himself that Nick managed to fool Ethan for a long time.

Nick was not an easy opponent that he could easily underestimate. But he was not afraid of him. Even without the help of Ethan, he knew he could handle Nick on his own.

"Just making sure. But if you need anything else from me. You know that I am always here to help." Marcus felt he owed his friend for being stupid in the past. Now, he had to make up for it.

"What about the fundraising event? How is it coming?" He asked his friend, who was also coordinating with the organizers, about a charity event he was sponsoring.

It was a surprise for everyone and especially Dani, who would be benefitting from the celebration. One of the beneficiaries would be her pro bono cases and other institutions devoted to a good cause.

"Almost done with the preparations. Invitations are on their way as we speak." Marcus announced boastfully.

He knew that this would be one of the grandest events this year, if not of the century, but it would still be one of the best. With Ethan's support of the event, many would surely come and support this event.

"Good to hear. So far, all seems to be working just fine." Alex said, finding nothing else that could go wrong with his day.

Everything seemed to be right in the world. Well, at least in Alex's world, since he was still in cloud nine. He felt that nothing could ruin it for him.

"Excuse me, Sir. Prince Edward is waiting outside to see you." His secretary interrupted their conversation.

"Send him in," Alex instructed his secretary, suddenly finding himself taking his word back. But he would still find a way not to allow Edward to mess up his mood.

"Well, I better get back to work. I will leave you to your new apprentice.." Marcus jokingly said, knowing that it would slightly ruin his friend's perfect day.

### **Chapter 239 - Selfish Intentions**

Soft, cuddly teddy bears covered every surface of her room, at the entrance, even the chairs. She knew Alex was sweet, but this was over the top. Everybody might think that she had opened a toy shop inside her office.

"I hope you don't mind, but I took several of these cute, cuddly bears," Jacky announced as she followed her into her office. "I placed it around my workplace. It is surely fun to see."

She was the first to arrive in the office earlier since Dani had to stop by at the partner's meeting. Just like Dani's reaction, she was also surprised to see all the boxes of those fluffy toys addressed to Dani.

When she peered inside, she found a note for her boss. Automatically, she knew that it all came from Alex, which she confirmed by his handwriting.

"I assume that you already knew where it came from." She knew that only one man would do this for her. After last night, she had known better that he would perform a romantic gesture like this.

"Yep." Jacky pointed to the biggest, white bear in the batch, with a red tie, sitting at her chair. Tied around its arms was a card.

"He should not have done this. It is just too much." Dani spoke out, but instead of her usual annoyance, her tone only indicated jubilation at his gifts.

She quickly moved towards the big bear, at least three feet high, and a very soft, fluffy, stout figure. She pulled the ribbon on its arms and started reading the note.

To the one and only person that painted colors to my life and stirred my heart to beat again, I hope you will love it.

Because I love you.

Alex

She could not stop the smile that spread on her lips as her face lighted up like a lamp at the way Alex expressed his feelings. She never thought that those simple words could overwhelm her with so many emotions.

"So, am I to assume that he already proclaimed his undying love," Jacky uttered dreamily, displaying in front of her a brown teddy bear. On the bear's hand, it held a red heart with an I LOVE YOU sign. It was an inscription written in the middle.

That was the only explanation for all of this, she thought. Besides, she already guessed as much that Alex and Dani were already heading in that direction.

It was only a matter of time until they finally admitted it to each other. Finally, Jacky could assume that was the case. Her friend finally found the person she would love and love her back.

"Yes." Dani could not help the giggle that came out of her lips. She felt like a schoolgirl who just heard her crush said that he liked her.

"Yes, what?" Jacky could not contain her excitement after hearing her answer. But she wanted confirmation that they were talking about the same thing.

"Alex told me that he loves me." She finally admitted to her friend what was the cause of her smile since she walked into her office.

She still felt like she was floating in the air as she reminisced the feeling of being in his arms the entire night. Sleeping with the knowledge was like dreaming over and over again.

Knowing that he loved her had changed everything about their relationship. It felt like it suddenly leveled up to the clouds, and she had no idea how to come down.

"That is great. I am so happy for you." Jacky ran to her side and enveloped her in a crazy hug as she shook her with excitement.

She was genuinely happy for her friend. Well, at least one of them was happy, but she was not giving up on her happy ending too. Someday, she would also find hers.

"Thanks, you are a true friend." She hugged her friend back, happy that she could share this with her.

She knew that this must be hard for Jacky after her many heartbreaks. But she believed that just like her, Jacky would eventually find the right man for her.

"I think we should celebrate," Jacky announced as she moved towards the door.

"What is all this? And what are we celebrating?" A voice suddenly interrupted their conversation, making them stopped in their tracks and turned to the source of the sound.

"It is..." Jacky was about to answer Evan, but Dani decided to interrupt whatever her friend was about to spill to their boss.

Talking about her love life during office hours was not professional. There was a time and place for those things. Now, she had wasted valuable time instead of working on a case.

"Jacky is just going back to her desk. What can I do for you, Evan?" She suddenly changed the topic, hoping that their boss would not pursue his earlier question.

"I'll leave the two of you. I think I heard the phone ringing." Jacky quickly moved away from them and exited the room.

"I'm sorry if I interrupted something personal, but I am here because of this." Evan moved further inside the room and handed her a beautiful envelope that looked like an invitation, that was if she was not mistaken.

"You were not interrupting anything. It was not that important." She told him as she stared at the envelope in her hand. "But what is this?" She asked as she opened it and checked the content.

It was an invitation for a charity event based on the first few lines. As she read further, she realized that Alex would be sponsoring the event. But why was it the first time that she heard about it? Alex had not bothered to tell her about a big event like this.

But before she jumped into any conclusion, knowing Alex, he might have a very sound explanation for not telling her about it. She could not think of any reason why he would intentionally hide something like this.

"As you can see, Alex will be sponsoring a charity event next weekend. Our company will also be joining the event. So, naturally, we are all invited to attend." Evan explained to her.

"Oh, ok." She understood the reason for the event. "But you should just send this through a messenger instead of delivering it yourself." She said, finding it a waste of his time to come here, to hand her an invitation.

"No, there is something else why I am here." Evan moved to a chair and made himself comfortable.

He was unsure why David gave him the task to deliver the invitation and the news, but he did not mind. He liked mingling with Dani. She always had a sharp mind and an intriguing point of view when they conversed.

"What else?" She asked, also moving to her chair and sitting across from her boss. She always felt comfortable talking to him because he always treated her like an equal.

She could not think of any other reason why her boss would make the trip from his office to hers. They just had a meeting earlier, so what else was there to discuss.

"The fundraising would be including your cause in the event." Evan finally said the gist of his visit.

"My cause?" She was puzzled. She had no clue what Evan was talking about with those words.

"One of the reasons for the fundraising is for your pro bono cases. It was Alex's idea. David and I agreed that it would certainly expand your coverage." Evan further explained.

He could not tell if Dani was ecstatic with the news or enraged by how her face turned blank. Maybe she was in shock that her cause was picking up too much attention and support. Well, he hoped that was it.

"That is amazing," Dani finally answered him. But she could not say if it was.

Her mind was reeling with many questions about the event. Questions like how Alex came up with this idea and why he failed to mention any of it to her when she was involved with it.

"Glad that you think so." Evan suddenly felt relieved after hearing that she liked the idea. "Well, I will leave you to your work. I'll see you then at the event." Evan quickly excused himself and walked out of her office.

She found herself contemplating the said event. But then again, she would never locate the answers in her head. She would need to talk to Alex all about it.

A charitable event should mean helping the people who are in need. She hoped that this event meant that and not another ploy to take advantage of others.. Many did use these events for selfish intentions.

## **Chapter 240 - Hand In Marriage**

"This is a surprise," Nick said as he opened the envelope handed to him by his secretary.

He was not expecting that Alex would include him in the list of guests. After all, he was the ex-fiancé of his current girlfriend. At the same time, a competitor in the business.

He suspected that Alex had a hidden agenda for inviting him since he recently discovered that Alex had been buying shares from his company. It was safe to assume that Alex was planning something against him.

"What surprise?" Cassie asked since she was also in the office that day. "What is that?"

She looked at him as she waited for him to tell her what was on his hands. She could feel the excitement of her partner with the news he just received.

"An invitation to the grandest event this season." Nick waved the piece of colored cardboard in his hand and showed it to Cassie, who moved closer to him.

He felt that he should have thought of such an event to make a promotion of his company. Now, Alex had beaten him to it. It was a shame that his people were incompetent to come with this kind of gimmick.

But he would get Alex next time. He would give this one to him. However, he would guarantee that the next round would be his turn again. He would bring down Ethan and include Alex with him.

"That is perfect. Will Ethan be there?" She knew how much Nick wanted an audience with the king himself.

If Ethan would be attending the event, then it would allow them to get near him. That would give her a chance to step up her own game. Maybe use Nick to work out her plans.

"Probably, because I am definite that Dani will be there." He said with a wide grin on his lips. "Chances are Ethan will not miss the opportunity to see his daughter."

Parties like this were an opportunity that he could not miss. Even if Alex did not give him an invitation, he would find a way to secure himself a spot inside that celebration.

He could already sense that everybody way up in the social circle would be present. While those who wanted to be anybody would strive to be part of the list.

"Then, why would Alex invite you, knowing that Ethan would be there? It just does not make any sense." Cassie expressed her confusion with the entire scenario.

Unless Alex was planning something against Nick, she could not see any benefit for Alex to invite Nick to the event. All he did was fuel up the flame that was already blazing, and in the end, it just might backfire on him.

But who knew what Alex was thinking and planning. He was the dark horse that nobody saw coming. She certainly did not expect that Dani would end up with him.

"Who knew, but I don't go to battle unprepared. I am betting you a million bucks that he is up to something." He would not trust a man like Alex. He did not trust any man at all, not even a woman, especially Cassie.

He was canning, but he knew that the next man might be as well, and if he allowed his guard down, he might be caught unaware. That was how empires fell, and that was how he would make Ethan roll to the ground.

But a king would not just fell to his knees. Most of the time, he had allies to cover his ass. He needed to ensure that he would have enough weapons against him to secure victory against the king himself and those supporting him.

On the other side of the city, Alex sat on his desk, contemplating if Nick already received his invitation. He knew that he was probably wondering why he invited him in the first place.

He could already guess that Nick was more than happy for the opportunity to be part of the celebration but was probably already planning his demise.

"Sir, you have a call from Mr. Ethan Hamilton." His secretary said, interrupting his musing of the possibilities.

"Connect him in," Alex told his secretary as he answered his future father-in-law.

As soon as he answered, Ethan's voice boomed on the other line. "Did I hear it correctly? Did you invite Nick to the party?" He could not believe that Alex would do such a stupid thing.

Nick was not someone he could trust. It was a mistake not to follow his instinct about him and allowed his heart to dictate what he felt. Now, because of that mistake, it was his daughter who paid the price.

"Yes, and before you have a heart attack, it is all part of a plan." He spoke to the other line hoping that Ethan would heed his word. "Don't worry. I have this covered."

He was aware of the risk he was taking, playing a game with Nick. But it was a calculated risk that he had to do for Dani, Ethan, and his company.

He could not let Nick get away with his handiwork without making him pay. Hearing what he did to Dani still made his blood boil. He could manage a business competition, even an underhanded one.

But a slimebag like Nick should suffer for what he did to Dani. The humiliation, the heartbreak, and the emotional torture she had to suffer because of him. He just could not let him get away with it.

"I hope you know what you are doing because I don't want my daughter caught in any of this. She had been through enough." Ethan made sure that his voice contained enough warning to let Alex know that he was watching his moves, any false move, and he would be going after him.

"I know. Rest assured that I am only doing this for Dani." Alex told Ethan with a calm tone that should assure him that he had everything under control.

"Well, if you would need any help. You just let me know." Ethan could feel Alex's determination to push through with his plans.

He just hoped that Alex was not pure talk but a man with balls to back up his words. Although he had proven himself to him several times in terms of his business strategies and excellence in his people skills, still he had to see how he would handle a man like Nick.

"I will let you know if ever I do, but as of now. I am confident that I can take care of Nick alone." Alex confidently responded to Ethan, who was impressed with his tone.

"Then, I will let you be. I will see you at the event and take care of my daughter." He hung up the phone without waiting for Alex's response.

"I..." But he already sensed that the talk was over.



He heard loud and clear Ethan's warning that he should heed before continuing with his plan. He was not ignoring it and taking every possible precaution.

On the other line, Ethan stared at the view outside his window. Suddenly, he remembered Nick, sitting next to him, feeding him with lies. He quickly shook Nick's image away from his thoughts.

If Alex could manage to pull this through and make Nick answerable for his wrongdoings to his daughter, then maybe, just maybe, he could finally believe that Alex deserved her daughter's hand in marriage.