

Royal Contract 311

Chapter 311 - Spur-of-the-moment Thought

"How are you, Dad?" Dani walked closer to his bed while her mother fed him on the other side.

She just had an informative discussion with his doctors. They notified her that the operation was successful, and they did not observe any complications after the surgery.

They were predicting his fast recovery as long as her father would follow their directives while recuperating. They expected full recovery and long life for her father if he watched his diet and stress level.

"Great. Did you not hear? I am a new man." Ethan jokingly said, which earned him a mild slap on his shoulder from her mother.

"You are an old man who needs to watch what he eats and does, or you will die very soon if you keep abusing your body." Laura interrupted him with her sermon.

After hearing what the doctors told them, she could not help but worry. His operation did not guarantee his long life. It only provided an extension.

The rest would still be up to his lifestyle if he wanted to live long. But he had not been a few days in this hospital, and he was ready to explode.

"You worry too much. I will not die that easily." Ethan said confidently in front of his wife and daughter.

However, he was not as convinced with that himself. But he did not want his family to go through another traumatic experience like that. He also learned a valuable lesson from this event in his life.

He was not invincible. No matter how much money he had, he could be subject to death anytime and anywhere. There was nothing his power could do about it.

"You will not die if you follow all the doctors' recommendations." Laura insisted, knowing how stubborn Ethan was with regards to his health. It had always been his last priority in the order of things.

Laura could sense that since he woke up, all he could think about was the condition of his company. But he was careful around the subject in front of her.

"I think you two need to stop bickering and relax. I have two good news that might both cheer you up. Do you want to hear about it?" That temporarily shut her parents for a few seconds.

"What is it?" Laura asked excitedly. Coming from her daughter, she could only guess that it would be something special.

"I already booked you two in a week vacation on this relaxing island where you two can have your time to relax." She looked at her mom, who seemed to be looking forward to their trip.

"They would also be conducting specialized therapy sessions specifically for your condition. It will help for your faster recovery." She directed her statement to her father, who only smiled for her mother's benefit.

But she could only guess that was not the news he was hoping to hear. She could already see the anxiousness in his eyes to ask questions about his company but knew not to do it in front of her mother.

"You said you have two news. What is the other one?" Nothing could escape his father's sharp mind. It would seem that the operation and the anesthesia did not affect his cognitive abilities.

"Perfect timing." She announced when she heard the door open, and Alex entered the room. "We have something to tell you both." She grabbed Alex's hands as he stood beside her to give her support.

She could see her mom staring at her, trying to read the situation. Her father, on the other hand, laid back on his bed quietly, waiting for their breaking news.

"Are you pregnant?" Her mom clapped her hands frantically, jumping to her conclusion. It was clear that it was the first thought that came to her mind when she saw the entwined hands of Alex and her daughter.

"Mom, stop that. I am not pregnant. We just decided to move the wedding to an earlier date." She finally spilled out the news to her parents, who sported a beaming smile on their faces upon hearing what she said.

She could tell that her mom and dad were both ecstatic with their plans. Her mom especially, since she had been harassing her about having grandkids soon.

"Don't worry, Laura. I also want kids soon." Alex winked at her, assuring his future mother-in-law that they were on the same page on this.

He was still slightly shocked by the way he was acting since he reunited with Dani. He would never dream of getting married and thinking of having kids several months ago.

Now, all he could wish for was to marry the girl of his dream. Then, he could not wait to have three bundles of joys with her, remembering their last conversation about kids.

"At least you are marrying a sensible man." Ethan agreed with Alex's statement.

He wanted a new heir. Someone who would continue his legacy. Although Alex already agreed to safeguard his company. He still wanted a new lineage that would take over what he had worked hard to build.

"Stop that. You are as bad as my parents. Let us concentrate first on getting married." She pinched him on his waist to remind him that he should be at her side and not working against her.

"Ok, but you can't blame your parents for wanting a cute baby in their arms." Alex continued to tease her as her parents watched their exchange.

"Fine. Mom, can you join me outside in the gift shop I saw downstairs? I want to buy something for the nurses who put up with my father's insanity." She looped her arms around hers and dragged her outside the room.

She only did that to give her father some time to discuss his company with Ethan. She knew that despite her mother's concern, she believed that hearing some good things about the company would help him in his fast recovery.

She also believed that Alex could use the expertise of Ethan in running his company. They still needed each other, and she would help in any way she could.

"What do you have in mind?" Laura asked, but she was hesitant to leave her husband.

She already suspected the Alex wanted her out of the room. But she knew that she could not decline her daughter's request. All she could do was to go along.

Anyway, it was a good time for the two of them to bond as mother and daughter. At the same time, they could discuss the wedding preparations.

"You are the expert in this. I will leave it up to you." Dani replied to her mother, having no idea of what to buy.

Although, it would be nice to show their appreciation to those hardworking people in the hospital who took great care of her father. She never liked being in a hospital, but the doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff devoted their lives to caring for these sick people.

They deserved recognition for their efforts. It did not need to be anything too expensive, but something that would show their devotion to their job was truly valued.

"Ok. Let us see what we can find." She heard her mom answer her.

It was a spur-of-the-moment thought that she did not plan but indeed a good idea.

Chapter 312 - Movie Night

"I think I made a mistake." She said on the line. She began pacing her apartment, walking around her living room.

It was her third call to him to cancel, but he would not let her. He kept insisting that they should continue seeing each other.

"No, you did not." He answered her.

He could hear the hesitation in her voice. She was having second thoughts about their second date. He believed that the first one went well. But that was his opinion.

"But I don't want to force you into this, Troy." She continued to reason out.

She did enjoy the first time that they went out. She found the man intriguing, funny, and charming. Physically, she could not find any fault in him.

But the circumstances of their first meeting did not sit well with her. She believed she only pressured Troy to agree with her insane idea. Now, she felt she should do the right thing and set him free from that responsibility.

"No one can force me to do something I don't like, Tyra. So, stop torturing yourself." He assured her.

He was not a child subjected to perform an act out of his free will. It was the exact reason he ended it with Cassie. He was not going to be her puppet, to use to play with other people's lives.

With Tyra, he did not feel like he was obligated to do anything for her. She did request something from him, but she did not force her will on him. She was not using him for another purpose but only for herself.

"But..." She was ready to argue with him again, but he stopped her.

"I'm already on my way to your apartment. Whether you like it or not, I will camp out on your hallway if you don't come out." He warned her.

He was not letting her back out from their current situation. It might not be an ideal match-up, but he was enjoying her company. She was helping him in getting over with Cassie and Dani.

He knew that it felt like he was using her as a rebound, but she was also using him for her benefit. As long as they were both honest about their intentions, he did not see any problem with their plans.

"Fine. But I already warned you." She said before ending the phone conversation.

She was starting to learn that she could not easily dissuade Troy from his plans. Once he set his mind to something, he was determined to see through it.

She still had an hour to prepare for their second date. She already had a dress on her mind earlier, but she decided to change to something else because the first one was too seductive.

She was not trying to lure him into bed. The purpose of this date was to get to know more about him and vice versa. To see if they could click as a couple while they pretend to be married.

The buzzing on the door alerted her that it was time to face the music. She could ignore Troy and pretend that she was not home. But instinct was telling her that he would wait all night until she came out.

"I'm coming." She finally responded on the third buzz. She quickly opened the door, revealing the handsome man standing at her doorstep. "Please come in. I'll finish up."

"You look lovely." He complimented her as he moved inside her apartment and settled on the armchair near the door.

She had a cute apartment. A bit small from what Troy initially thought she might possess. But it was luxurious enough with the expensive decorations that litter the place.

"Thanks." She replied, used to hearing such compliments.

In her line of work, being beautiful and having an hourglass body was her capital. She had to maintain her image to stay on top of her modeling career.

But somehow, hearing it coming from him felt different. He seemed to be honestly complimenting Tyra and not just saying it. It did give her some goosebumps, something she had never experienced for a long time.

"Take your time. I don't mind waiting." He told her, knowing that women take time to prepare themselves for a date.

He watched her disappear behind a door, thinking of finding something to do while he waited. But then again, she reappeared a few seconds later.

"I'm ready. Where are we going anyway?" She asked, standing in front of him. She did not want him to wait for too long.

The sooner she got this date over with, the sooner she could decide what to do with their current situation. She was conflicted about whether she should proceed with the plan or abandon it entirely.

"I thought about dinner and a movie. Is that ok with you?" He asked, wanting to hear her opinion on his plans.

"Sounds good to me." Tyra suddenly felt excited about going to the movies.

Having dinner was such a cliché that she felt she could skip it entirely, but it had been a long time since she went to see a movie. It sounded fun.

"Then, shall we go?" He offered his arm to her as they walked together out of her apartment.

She was glad that she had changed to more casual clothing compared to her initial dress. Troy was also in a plain shirt, a jacket, and denim jeans. She suddenly felt more comfortable around him.

"Are you sure you like to eat here? We can still move to another restaurant." He offered, suddenly remembering that she was a vegetarian.

He was thinking of impressing her with the delicious steak this restaurant served. It was one of the best, but he neglected to consider her diet.

On their first date, he took her into a Chinese restaurant that offered vegetarian meals. He did not notice that she only ate veggies at that time.

"No, it is ok. I am not a vegetarian. I still eat meat at times. But with my dietary requirement, I usually avoided too much protein and fats." She explained to him. "But for this night, I am willing to make an exception."

"Are you sure? I don't want to force you to eat something that you don't like." He insisted that they could still transfer to a nearby restaurant that might serve some vegetarian cuisine.

"Hey! It is ok. I think I have starved myself to death. I can indulge in a few pleasures for tonight." She assured him, ordering to the waiting server their best steak in the house.

In addition, she even ordered a sumptuous dessert that would make her manager cry if he saw her eat it. But everybody deserved a cheat day, and this was hers. Tonight, she would enjoy the food in front of her.

"Well, then I will also have what she is having." He told the waiter. "But I promise you. You won't regret tasting their steak. It is one of my favorites in this city."

"I believe you, and I can't wait." She told him, placing the napkin on her lap as the server placed their orders on the table.

She suddenly did not care about her diet or her figure. She was enjoying this night, and nothing was stopping her.. She was even looking forward to their movie night.

Chapter 313 - The Big Bad Wolf

"Don't worry. You can do this. It is time to walk away from this misery." She kept convincing herself as she threw another luggage and placed some of her clothes on it.

Cassie just finished packing her things. She decided to move away from this place for a while. Take a long vacation away from her past and the things she had lost.

She looked at the mirror and saw the face of a woman who found herself lost while trying to find justice. But instead of doing it the right way, she took the path that led her to only sorrow.

"I lost the only man who loved me because I allowed my hatred to consume me." She imagined Troy standing just behind her, just like in the past. He was trying to persuade her to stop with her plans.

She could see his face staring at her, now with anger but with so much sympathy. He pitied her because she could not stop her madness.

Now, she had to accept the fact that he had left her. She could not blame him when it had been her fault all this time. He had done so much for her, even to the point of almost doing something against his principle.

But Troy was just too good a person to take advantage of the kindness of other people. She could guess that Dani got through to him. He might even be attracted to her.

"I am not mad at you." She told the image behind her. "But I am sad that I was too blind to see that I was losing you." She felt her tears come down her cheeks without control.

It had been a long time since she last cried. Years that she swore never to repeat in this lifetime. But as they said, be careful of promises because they could tend to get broken.

"I am so stupid for believing that revenge was all I need." She buried her face in the palms of her hands, too ashamed to look at herself in the mirror. She could not even look at the imaginary figure of him in the mirror.

She quickly grabbed a tissue in front of her and wiped her face dry. She could not keep doing this to herself. She could not change what happened in the past, but she could still do something with her future.

She moved away from the mirror and continued with her packing. After finishing the last bag, she took them out one by one to the living room in preparation for her departure.

The bell buzzing reminded her of the delivery man she requested at the front desk. When she opened the door and recognized the man, she immediately took the package that she had prepared earlier and handed it to the man.

"Make sure that you will hand this to Mr. Alexander Princeton's hands. He is already expecting you to proceed directly to his office." She informed Alex a few minutes ago that she was sending him the

evidence she possessed of Nick's plans. She was through being Nick's puppet. She would do it first before she allowed Nick to betray her and throw her to the dogs.

She guaranteed that if Nick needed a fall guy, she would be at his top of the list. But she would not let that happen. She would get out of this messy situation she got herself into before it was too late for her.

"Yes, Mam." She had used this man in many of her shipments. He assured her that her package was in safe hands. He would handle it with discretion and give it only to the intended receiver.

"Ok. Expect my full payment once I get the confirmation that Mr. Princeton had received the package." She usually gave a huge tip when he completed his task without any hitch.

But the years that he had worked with her, he never once did disappoint her. She would miss this young man who had been loyal to her through the years.

"Then, I better go ahead, Mam. It has been nice working with you. I heard that you are leaving." He stated as he held the package in his hand but did not take a step to leave.

"Yes, but don't worry. I will still come back. I thought I like to have a long-needed vacation." Cassie kept telling herself that.

However, something was whispering another thing in her mind. It felt like she might not come back at all in this city for a while. But who knew, she could not predict what she might do with her future.

"I hope so. I will miss you, Mam. You are one of my biggest clients." The boy proclaimed as he saluted Cassie before turning around and going in the direction of the elevator.

Cassie could only smile at the young man. She wished him a prosperous future. Just like her, he had the misfortune of having a bad card from the start.

But people who used their brains and were resilient to changes had a more likely chance to survive and thrive in this present world. The weak would be eaten alive with any way to defend themselves.

She closed the door and walked back into the living room, double-checking her items of luggage. She did not want to forget anything important, because as she said earlier, it might take some time before she returned.

A commotion at the door alerted her of another visitor. Instead of buzzing the bell, whoever was behind the door, knocked hard on the wooden frame.

"Wait. I am on my way." She shouted behind the door, not wanting her neighbors to feel scandalized by the noisy banging on her door.

She wondered if it was her most trusted delivery boy who might have forgotten something. But she believed he would not bang on her door as if he owned it.

She could only think of one person who could be standing behind the closed door. Now, she was anxious to answer it. But another set of knocks made her move closer to the door and unfastened the bolt.

She knew she had no choice but to face the big bad wolf in this story.

Chapter 314 - An Intelligent Mind

"Jacky, I need to report to Gerald today. Hold my calls until I get back." She gathered her notepad and her phone before walking towards her door. "Just text me if there is an emergency."

Gerald already updated her through his emails on the case he was working on with her. He did not pressure her to report to him during the last week, knowing her condition, but she could tell that he badly needed her help.

She determined that she might need a couple of days to get acquainted with the case but could tell that she did not have that much time.

"Ok. I will text you if it is important." Jacky knew the drill. Then, she also returned to her table to do her work.

Not having Dani around the office did not mean that she could laze around her table. She also had tons of work to finish. When her boss returned, Dani would find the files neatly piled on her table for her perusal.

One thing she learned by working with Dani was her work ethic. She did not like slacking off on the job. She also believed in giving more than a hundred percent of effort in everything she did.

"Ok. I'll see you later then." She walked straight to the elevator that would bring her to his floor.

She had been looking forward to working with him in this case. If she was lucky, she might have her time in court with one of the best litigators in the business. She could not wait to learn from an expert.

She waited anxiously inside the lift as it climbed the floors one at a time. It felt like it took her forever, but in truth, their elevators were one of the fastest in the industry.

"Mr. Brown is expecting me, Diane." She greeted his secretary, who was startled.

Diane was busy typing something on her keyboard that she did not even notice her approaching her table. She almost dropped her files when she accidentally knocked them out of place upon seeing Dani standing in front of her table.

"I'm sorry. I did not mean to frighten you. But I have an appointment with Gerald." She decided to forego the formalities since she had been socializing with Diane during break times.

Jacky had introduced the two of them, and they had managed to exchange some pleasant stories in some of their snack times with Jacky in the kitchen room for staff.

"Oh. Don't worry about it." Diane did easily get rattled, but she was used to it. "Yes, Gerald is waiting for you. Just go in, Dani." Diane told her, pointing to the door.

Since she already knew her way around his office, there was no need for Diane to escort her to his room which was just a few steps from her desk.

Compared to her office, his was massive with large and heavy doors. A good lawyer like him only deserved the best. He had earned his right to preferential treatment.

"Hey, Gerald." She slightly knocked on his door before peeking through the cracks. She was still a bit uncomfortable working with him. She still had to learn more about him and how his minds worked.

She could not simply assume what he was expecting from her. She had to establish good communication with him so that the case would run smoothly without a hitch.

"Please, Dani. Come in and sit down." Gerald quickly stood from his seat and walked around his table to greet her.

He pointed to the vacant seat in front of him and indicated to her to sit down. He was glad that she was finally here to help him out with the case.

He looked forward to the chance to work with her, but the opportunity did not arise until now. But he would make sure to pick her brains during this time and get to know her more.

"Thanks." She took the offered seat and placed her notepad on her lap as she waited for whatever her next step would be.

It was her first time working with him, so she still needed a few guidelines to what he wanted to proceed with the case. At the same time, she was trying to observe a few hints on how he was as a boss.

She already had worked with David and Ethan in several cases before, but it would be her first time working with him. She had not observed him personally, but she did hear only good things about his reputation.

"Have you seen the emails I sent you? Did you also get the chance to review some of the depositions I sent to your office?" He began to ask her, quickly shifting to working mode.

"Well, honestly, I am still reading the depositions. I am only halfway through with it." She admitted to him.

She knew that lying about it would only cause more trouble. But she could easily catch up with her backlog if Gerald would give her the time until tomorrow.

"That's ok. At least you started. But I will need you to speed up a bit more since we are running out of time. The opposing counsels are already gearing up to speed up the trial." Gerald informed her of the latest development on the case.

"I assure you that I am working overtime on this. By tomorrow, I will try to finish it." She could not promise him that she might be able to accomplish everything tomorrow, but she would certainly try her best.

"I think that is good enough for now." Gerald felt if it had been another lawyer, he would ask that lawyer to get out of his office right away. But Dani was different.

Gerald had been waiting to work with her since he first had an opportunity to talk to her. He also noticed something special about her. He could not put her out of his mind since then.

"If you don't mind, I have some clarifications on the first few files I read. Maybe we could discuss it right now." She took out her notes, hoping to clear out the confusion she had about the case.

"Of course, I am glad that you already noticed some discrepancy in the files." He suddenly knew that he had made the right choice of working with her.

He was right about her. She was not only beautiful physically, but she possessed an intelligent mind that he would love to explore.

Chapter 315 - The Sound Of Silence

The week had passed since she started working with Gerald, and it had not been easy with her schedule. There were nights that she had to work overtime, not wanting to neglect her other obligations.

In a few more hours, she would be free to take some time off. A weekend rest was what she needed. She looked forward to a couple of days away from her job, which meant more time with Alex.

"Jacky, why don't you go ahead?" She said to her friend, who was still waiting for her to finish.

She wanted to finish a few more loose ends on her pending case before the weekend so that she would not have to think about it. By Monday, she could deal with them with lesser possible problems.

"What about you? Are you coming home tonight?" Jacky asked her friend, who she rarely saw at their apartment.

She stepped inside her office and dropped some files she had finished typing, placing them on her table. So, she could check them first thing on Monday.

She did miss Dani's company, but she was happy that her friend had found the man she would share her life with and build a future together.

"No, but I will drop by the apartment in the morning. I need to get some things." She informed her friend.

She was thinking of staying at Alex's apartment tonight and surprising him with a nice dinner. She had been neglecting him this week. She wanted to be able to make up to him.

"Then, I shall go ahead. But don't take too long." Jacky reminded her. "You had been working hard this week. I don't want you to get sick."

Jacky moved to the door before waving goodbye to her friend. She did not want to leave her friend alone in the office, but knowing her friend, she would not let her wait for her.

Now, Dani was on her own again in her office. She doubted if the other offices on her floor had someone else working overtime. Most of the employees had probably left in a hurry. They were either going out on dates or proceeding home with their families.

After half an hour since Jacky left, she noticed an unusual eerie silence in the office. It was not the first time she felt like someone was out there, but she always considered it her wild imagination.

"Stop it. There is no one out there." She mumbled to herself, looking behind her to the darkness outside.

She never believed in ghosts since she never experienced seeing one. Although, she was not discounting the possibility that there might be an entity still beyond a human's comprehension.

After a few more minutes, she could not help feeling that something was moving outside her office. However, the chance that there was someone out there at this moment was very slim.

She concluded again that it was just her active imagination working overtime. She was just tired and feeling susceptible to the different elements around her.

Maybe it was time to go home. Alex would not be coming to fetch her tonight because he still had a late meeting. But Ben was waiting for her downstairs at the parking lot.

"Anybody out there?" She peeked slightly at her door, just checking if she might find someone out there. But Jacky's desk was empty, and she could not find anything moving on the corridors.

She returned to her table and stared at her files. She was still debating whether she should leave or finish what she had already started when her phone suddenly rang.

She was slightly startled by the sudden shrilling sound that broke the silence. At the same time, welcome it, wanting someone to disrupt her wayward thoughts. "Hi." She quickly answered, seeing Alex's name on the screen.

"Ben told me that you are still in the office. I am just checking if you are ok." Alex said with concern in his voice.

He felt guilty that he had been neglecting her this week with the work that had piled up. Since he took over Ethan's company, it felt like his workload had tripled.

Now, he was still in a meeting but hoping to wrap it up soon. He was also looking forward to the weekend where they could spend some alone time together.

"Yeah. I am just finishing up, but I am leaving soon." She told him, not wanting him to worry further.

He had so many things to think about, and she did not want to add to it. He had been carrying a lot of weight on his shoulders. He also deserved some time for himself.

She suddenly remembered that since they had been together. She could not recall Alex going out with his friends. He had devoted his time to her and the business.

"Good. Don't overwork yourself." He reminded her, then he smiled at himself, thinking that he should listen to his advice too.

He could not help it. He had to catch up with Ethan's work. His company was far complicated than what he was used to handling. He was still studying half of his obligations.

Luckily, he had Marcus and his team to help him with the adjustments. He knew he was good at his job, but it took Ethan his entire life to build his company. He could not simply step in and learn it in a day.

"I am hanging up now so that I can finish up. I'll see you later at home." Dani could not stop the smile that came to her lips as she realized what she called his apartment.

"Ok. I'll see you home soon." He answered back, also noticing her statement. "Goodbye." She quickly turned the phone call off, or they would keep saying goodbye.

She was back in the empty room with nothing else she could hear but the sound of her breathing. Then, a loud crashing noise resounded in the empty hallways.

This time she was sure that she was not alone. She quickly moved out of her chair to check out the noise. She walked towards her door with caution, picking up a small vase as a weapon.

She hid it at her side, just in case she would need it to defend herself from the unknown intruder. She slowly peeked outside her door, checking if there was any movement. But all she saw was a quiet and empty space.

"Who's there?" She shouted, hoping to scare whoever was out there, but no one responded, and no movement happened.

She walked further outside her office, to Jacky's table, but no one was hiding under the table. But she saw Jacky's things scattered on the floor. It was as if someone knocked it down and let it fall down the table.

But it could be something else. Dani's mind was trying to convince her since there was no sign that she had company. All the lights were still on. The janitor or the guards had not roamed yet to do their jobs.

"Is anybody out there?" She repeated one more time, directing her call on the hallway. But nothing replied to her howler.

She finally gave up and returned to her room. She immediately returned to her table and fixed up her things. She had enough for the night.

She was not a coward, but tonight was different. Her instinct was telling her that there was danger in the air. She would rather side with caution than find herself in deep trouble.

"Ben, I am on my way down." She called her bodyguard, hoping that he would be waiting at the car park.

After feeling a chill go through her spine, she knew she could not ignore her fear. She would prefer Ben waiting for her than to walk in the parking lot to her car alone.

"I'll be waiting for you at the elevator," Ben replied to her, knowing the drill.

He knew that something was off with her. She seldom called him to inform him if she was leaving. Most of the time, she just ignored them.

In addition, he heard a hint of a tremor in her voice. As if she was afraid of something. His instincts told him to be alert because something was wrong with this scenario.

"Ok." She quickly ended the call and gathered her things. She decided that she could continue working on her work on Monday.

She stepped out of her office, locking it before striding towards the elevators. But as she moved, she could not stop the feeling of someone watching her.

She quickened her movement, almost doubling the size of her steps as she neared the elevator. But so far, she still did not see anyone else on the floor. The other offices were closed, and the hallways were empty.

She tapped on the button and waited for the doors to open. She could not help but scan the place, but she still could not find anything amiss.

"It is just your imagination." She finally concluded with herself. She pushed on the button again, willing the doors to open. Finally, it opened and revealed an empty box.

She stepped inside and pressed the button to the parking floor. Before the elevator closed on her, she saw a glimpse of a shadow moving out of her vision. This time, she felt the hair in her nape stand up.

She was not alone in that office, but she failed to see who it was. Was it someone she knew, a ghost, or a figment of her imagination?

"Hey!" She tried to call the attention of the intruder, but the door closed on her.. All the response she got was the sound of silence.

Chapter 316 - A Fuzzy Memory

Alex stepped inside the room that was dark and seemed empty. He could not sense any movement inside the apartment. But Ben told him that he had already escorted Dani home an hour ago.

He surmised that she might be in their room, waiting for him. She might even have fallen asleep due to fatigue. He also felt like dropping down on the bed after a long day.

"Dani, are you in here?" Alex moved along the living room, checking the sofa if she might be there. But the place remained quiet without a sound.

He continued to walk further inside the house, even checking the kitchen, but there was no sign of her. Then, he climbed the stairs, careful not to make unnecessary noise. In case Dani was sleeping in their room.

He noticed the lights on the hallway on the second floor slightly dimmed, not exactly unusual, but he was used to a brightened hallway.? He strode to their room and opened the door, puzzled at what he saw. Darkness enveloped the entire room.

"Dani?" He whispered, calling out her name. But nobody answered him.

He was not easily frightened by the dark. He had been trained for combat in case the need to defend himself arose. But he figured there was no indication that he would need his skills in fighting.

He opened the lights and found the bed empty. The bed remained untouched, just like the way he had left it that morning. He was sure that Dani had not laid on it yet.

The lights on the bathroom were also off, and no sounds came from inside the smaller room. It was clear that Dani was not present inside their room.

"Where are you?" He asked, mumbling to himself. But there were still several rooms he could check. Maybe she might be in his gym, working out, or in his office, doing some work.

It was not unlikely since she did use his other rooms while she was staying in his apartment. He had given her access to all his rooms since they were getting married soon anyway.

Even his office that he had usually secured was now accessible to Dani anytime she needed to use it. He felt that there was no need to keep things from her.

He stepped down the stairs back to the first floor and went straight to his office. He had a strong feeling that he would find Dani inside, either too busy working on her case or fast asleep on his desk.

The eerie silence was not enough to spook him. He was more frightened of an actual intruder than a ghost that might be lurking in the shadows.

But he doubted that anybody could have entered his apartment without being caught. It was well secured and guarded. He also did not believe in ghosts.

He slowly opened the door and found a low light coming from the lamp, focused on the table. As he expected, Dani was slumped down on her arms, sleeping on the top of the desk with papers everywhere.

"Not again." It was not a new sight, but it was becoming more often lately. Alex was slightly concerned that she might be overdoing things, but he was guilty of the same situation.

He carefully threaded the short distance and stood behind her, watching her sleeping form. He observed her closed eye exposed to his view and found it hard to wake her up.

She looked like she badly needed the rest after a long week at work. Alex learned that the new case she was handling with Gerald was not an easy task. But he could not do anything to stop her from pursuing it since it would be good for her career.

"Hey, Dani." He finally decided to wake her up since her position did not seem comfortable.

She would have a stiff neck if she kept sleeping in that position. Alex lightly tapped her on the shoulder. Then he pushed her hair to the other side so that he could see her face more clearly.

He called her name once again to wake her up. She swiped his hands away as if she did not want to be disturbed, then returned to sleep.

He could only smile at her action, finding her adorable. He decided that he should carry her instead back to their room instead of waking her up.

Slowly, he moved her, transferring her weight from the table to his right arm. Then, he shifted her position until he could scoop her up from her seat and into his arms.

When she was securely on his arms, carrying her bridal style, that was the time that she started to stir, finally aware of having company. But her groggy state prevented her from recognizing who he was.

"Ahhhh!" She shouted as fear gripped her, her body trembled, and her heart erratically beat uncontrollably.

She tried to break free from his hold, shouting and beating him on the chest to let her go. She was frantic, afraid of the one who was holding her captive.

The earlier incident in the office reminded her of someone watching her. Now, the shadow that was following her had succeeded in catching her. She needed to escape.

"Hey. Dani. Darling. It's me, Alex. Wake up." He dropped her on her feet, not wanting to hurt her. He tried to make sense of what was happening to her.

He could only come up with one conclusion. Dani had a bad dream, and she remained trapped in it. He started shaking her to awaken her consciousness, but she was still struggling in his arms.

"Let go of me." She desperately tried to get away. All she saw was the shadow at the office earlier. It was playing hide and seek with her until it finally caught up with her.

She did not realize that she was struggling against Alex's arms, even if she was already staring into his eyes. All she saw was the shadow enveloping her in its darkness, taking what it wanted.

Whatever that was, she had no idea. But the fear she felt was so real that she could not stop shaking, feeling her body pulled to the unknown.

"Dani. Snap out of it. It is just a dream." Alex pulled her closer to him, trapping her in his embrace. He prevented her from hurting herself.

Finally, he felt her trembling subsided as she finally realized that what she experienced was not real. He sensed that she was calming down in his arms as her breathing slowed down.

"What happened?" He asked quietly, not wanting to startle her any further.

He knew that something must have triggered her fear, remembering the other incidents that she had nightmares about her experience with Nick.

It was a trauma in the past that had caused damages to her self-esteem. Alex wondered if the same thing was happening now with her. But he was going to find out more about it.

"I'm sorry. But I don't know if it was a dream or if it did happen.. Did I fall asleep again on your table?" She still had a fuzzy memory to get her story right.

Chapter 317 - No Stalker

"I think you had fallen asleep again while working on your case. I was trying to wake you up, but you did not want to be disturbed. I tried to carry you back to the room, but you struggled in my arms." Alex explained to her what occurred while she was sleeping.

But the rest of the story, Dani was the only one who would know. That was if she could recall her dream and if she would share it with him.

"I did not notice that I had fallen asleep. I was working on a case." She told him as she tried to recall the next scene. But she was not even sure of what happened at the office or if she should even talk about it.

"Did your dream have something to do with what happened in the office?" He asked as he sat down on his chair and dragged her on his lap.

He wanted to get to the bottom of the problem. Allowing Dani to keep it from him was not the solution. After Ben told him about his observation, he set it aside as unusual but did not give it much thought.

After witnessing her breakdown, he contemplated if the incident in the office had anything to do with her current dream. It might be connected and might even be the reason for the fear he saw in her eyes.

"What do you know about what happened earlier?" She looked at him puzzled as she shifted in his lap, watching his face. She had not told anybody about it.

"Only that Ben noticed something was wrong with you when you called him and when you walked out of the elevator. He said that you looked like something frightened you." He narrated what Ben told him when he spoke to him earlier when he reported the incident.

"Oh. I did not know that I was that obvious. I thought I was able to hide it successfully. But it is nothing. I just got spooked in the office for no reason." She wanted to downplay the situation since she did not see the point of making a big deal out of it.

"Why don't you tell me about it and see if it was nothing." He encouraged her to share whatever it was that happened earlier. He could not assess the situation without any information. It might be something that they should be concerned about or ignore.

She started relating to him the scene that happened after Jacky had left. About the feeling that someone was outside her office, then Jacky's things, dropping on the floor.

She kept insisting that no one was around when she checked the other room and the hallways. She was sure that the other employees had already left because Jacky was the last one with her.

"Well, it could be anything or be nothing at all." He also could not explain the event since he was not present in the scene. But from her story, it could be just an unfortunate accident that led Jacky's things to fall.

"But did that already frighten you to the point that you had some bad dreams?" He felt that Dani was a strong and independent woman. It would take more than that to scare a woman like her.

"Actually. Something else did happen while I returned to my table to work." She continued with her story. "It felt like someone was watching me. But as I said earlier, there was no one else on that floor except me."

She could swear that she did not see or sense someone else on the floor. The possibility of someone else hiding in the other offices might be slim to none. Each office had its security lock.

"Are you sure?" He was slightly alarmed with her latest revelation. It was not something that they should set aside without investigating. "That is all that happened."

He could tell that she was still keeping something from him. There was something else that might have happened in the office. She might be forgetting to relate to him.

"Well." She thought about the last thing on her mind if it was worth mentioning.

"What is it?" He pushed her to tell him about it.

He could see the hesitation in her voice. But she needed to share with him what made her seem afraid of the incident earlier.

"After that, I decided to fix my things and readied myself to leave. I was bringing home my work and continued it here." She related to him.

She jumbled her memory, hoping to make sense of what was popping on her mind, but she could only conclude that it was just a figment of her imagination.

But then again, she continued with her story. "But when I reached the inside of the elevator, I noticed a shadow in the hallway. However, the door was already closing. I could not get a better look at what it was."

She suddenly felt foolish for sharing that last part with him. She hid her face on his shoulders. "It was probably nothing. Just my mind playing tricks on me." She added, not wanting him to think that she was being silly.

"If you saw it, it could be something. Let us not easily disregard it as nonsense. Let me check on David if they had cameras installed on that floor." He told her, suddenly aware that there might be someone stalking her fiancé.

But he was not discounting the possibility that it was her fatigue mind, conjuring up images from her memory. "But it could also be just like you said nothing, produced by your tired mind." He suddenly retracted his words, not wanting her to worry about the situation.

"Yeah, I think I am just tired and stressed with work. Now, I even brought it in my dreams." She smiled at him as she looked up to stare at his face, giving him a quick kiss on the lips.

"So, would you like to watch a horror movie now?" He teased her as he continued kissing her.

He tried to distract her from the earlier incident, which seemed to be working.. But he would have it investigated to assure himself and Dani that there was no stalker following her.

Chapter 318 - No Peeking

"Wake up, sleepyhead." Alex nuzzled his nose on the side of her neck to wake her up.

He knew that it was late when they slept last night, but he planned a quick getaway for the two of them for today until tomorrow. He believed that both of them needed to unwind from the pressure of their jobs.

She partially opened her eyes, checking the time, but the first thing she saw was the dark sky outside the window. It was still either very late at night or quite early in the morning.

"Is there something wrong?" She asked, confused as to why Alex was waking her up when the sun was still not up.

She stretched her body like a kitten as she tried to untangle the stiffness of her muscles. It had been a long day, and sleeping on the table had taken a toll on her body, especially on her neck and shoulders.

"I just thought of inviting you on a weekend getaway." He shifted in his position, laying back on the pillows. "We need some alone time, away from all this stress." He suggested as he placed his hands behind his head for support.

He woke up almost half an hour ago with the idea of sweeping Dani on her feet and dashing out of the city. Maybe somewhere they could be alone and enjoy each other's company.

"Oh! What are you planning?" She moved on a sitting position, turned around, and looked at him. The idea of a weekend together sounded exciting.

She was suddenly very awake and alive, guessing his plans. She checked his face for any hint, but as usual, his expression was unreadable.

"I think you should pack light and bring something to wear on the beach." He smiled at her, finally giving her an idea of what he had in store for them.

This time, he did not want to surprise her but included her in the planning process. As a couple who would soon tie the knots, he needed to share more of his plans with her.

"Are you saying we are going to the beach?" Her excitement had doubled once she heard of his plans. She looked expectantly at him as she waited for his confirmation.

The weather temperature had considerably decreased in this last couple of weeks, and soon it would be too cold to do anything else outside.

But the prospect of being under the warmth of the sun was too tempting to pass up. She would give anything to be on the beach and with him at the same time.

"Yep! Do you like us to go?" Alex removed his hands from behind his head and grabbed Dani towards him, making her straddle him in the process.

Last night, after she had gone to sleep. He found himself thinking of how to help her with her situation. He knew that the pressure of work was getting into her. She needed something to ease her mind.

After thinking about it, he finally concluded to take her out of the city. He searched for a place that could offer them a different kind of environment.

"Of course, I do." She answered him without hesitation. She rested his hands on his shoulders for support as she studied his face.

She could see that he was serious about his plan to visit the beach. Where? She had no clue, but she did not care as long as she was with him.

She leaned closer to him, entangling her fingers in his hair, before letting her lips guide them to a sweet kiss. But she did not linger long as she jumped off of the bed and walked towards the bathroom.

"Hey, where are you going?" Alex felt deprived of the kiss as he started complaining.

He would like her to finish what she started, but she was gone before he could deepen the kiss. Now, he was left wanting more but could only wait for the next opportunity.

"I am preparing for our early departure and packing for our things." She told him, moving further away from him.

She could not help but taunt him a bit. Not giving into him made the chase more exciting. It was a simple game that they played to spice up their relationship.

"Fine. But prepare yourself for some retribution later." Giving her a fair warning to what was to come.

He enjoyed their little banters. Sometimes he won, but most of the time, Dani did. But it did not matter who won or lost. What was important was the fun they got from the game.

He quickly followed her and started preparing for their impromptu trip to the island he had picked on this trip. It was a three-hour flight from their current location, but it would be worth every minute of it once they were there.

"I am looking forward to it." She replied to him with a sweet smile on her lips.

She wondered if she could keep him at bay until they had reached their destination. But she doubted it. She wanted him as much as he wanted her. That was for sure.

She still had no idea of the entire picture of their trip, but she was not going to ask any questions anymore. It was enough that Alex gave her a glimpse of his plans. She wanted the rest to be a surprise.

A few more minutes, after a fast and short ride to the airport. They entered a private hanger where the company's private jet was already waiting for them.

She did expect them to fly since the beach in their area was not conducive for sunbathing and swimming during this season. She did wonder if they were flying west or east.

She kept her thoughts to herself as they boarded the luxurious plane. This kind of lifestyle was not new to her. It had its convenience, but she would prefer to travel by coach.

The captain walked out of the cockpit and greeted them. "We are ready to take off anytime, Sir." The head pilot informed them.

Alex already had the plane prepared two hours ago, even before he woke her up. He wanted it ready anytime she agreed to go with him.

"If that is the case, then take us on the air," Alex instructed the pilot which saluted as he returned to the front of the plane.

Alex sat beside the comfortable chair beside Dani, fastening his seatbelt and preparing for the takeoff. He also assisted Dani on her seat as he helped her with the seatbelt as the plane revved its engine.

"I hope you will love the place." He leaned towards her, resting his head on her shoulders.

He looked outside the still darkened sky. But on the far horizon, he could already see a small glimpse of light. The sun was about to show its magnificence and strength.

"I am sure that wherever you are taking me will be something great and special because you are with me." She mumbled to him as she also stared at the window outside, looking at what he saw.

She could look at the sky and never get tired of it. Its beauty had no bounds whether the sun was high in the clear sky or the clouds covered them with their thick cottony patterns.

"I'm glad to hear that." He took her hand and continued to stare at the slowly glowing sky with its hues, mixing with the blue sky.

After a few minutes of putting his arms around her and with the steady hum of the plane engines, he found himself dozing off. Still tired of the previous day.

Dani also found herself sleepy. After being lulled by the steady rhythm, not by the plane's engine but of Alex's heart, she started to close her eyes and lost consciousness.

He woke up after half an hour, seeing Dani in an uncomfortable situation. He immediately fixed the chair, reclining it so that Dani could lay comfortably.

"Sleep tight, my darling. We have a long day ahead of us." He whispered in her ears before planting a soft kiss on her cheeks, careful not to wake her up.

Then, he also fixed his chair so he could lay next to her. In more than an hour, they would be landing in the paradise he chose for them.

Somewhere where they could relax and enjoy a peaceful vacation. It was a place Alex had never been for a long time but had a special place in his heart. He would like to share this place with her.

As soon as they landed, a car was already waiting for them, which would take them to their final destination. "Are you excited?" He asked her as they settled on the back seat of the car.

"I am very excited to see your surprise." She sat comfortably alongside him as they watched the scenery before them.

The greenery of the enormous trees was a big contrast to the jungle they left behind. The birds produced a melodic sound compared to the horns and the noise of engines Dani usually encountered in the street.

The breeze that blew her hair when she opened the windows had a fresh and aromatic scent, while the one in the city was smug and polluted.

"Then, close your eyes because we are almost there." He instructed as he peeked outside the window.

He placed his hand over her face, then covered her eyes, forcing her eyes to close it shut. He wanted her to enjoy the entire experience of the surprise.

"Is this necessary?" She touched his hand that was covering her face, but he would not budge. "Fine. I will not look." She promised, feeling the giddiness in her, just like back when she was a schoolgirl.

"No peeking," Alex whispered as he removed his hands, trusting her not to look.

Chapter 319 - Dates And Trips

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!

The knock, alternating with the buzz of the doorbell, echoed in every corner of the apartment. It continued for a few minutes more before Jacky finally realized that someone was at the door.

She did not want to open her eyes, not wanting to lose the wonderful dream she was having. She was almost at the climax of her fantasy, not wanting to cut it short.

"Ohhh!" Jacky tried to cover her head with a pillow to stop the buzzing sound, but it persisted, irritating her until she had no choice but to wake up.

She opened her eyes to the bright light coming from her window, but it was still no reason for her to wake up at this hour. She tried to recall her dream, but it was slowly fading away.

"Now, look at what you have done." She blamed the person behind the door that continued to pester her so early in the morning. She could sense that her dream was slipping away until she had forgotten all about it.

She shoved her blanket away from her body and dragged herself out of bed. She could kill the person who had the nerve to disturb her beauty rest.

She was definite that it could not be Dani since she had access to the apartment. But who else would come to visit today and at a very early hour?

Another buzzing sound, followed by a knock on the door, almost blew her fuse. That would certainly earn her a few complaints from their neighbors.

"Stop buzzing before I call the police." She shouted as she neared the door, sprinting to reach the door before the unknown intruder started a series of disturbances again.

She tightened her robe, not wanting to expose herself to whoever was visiting her or Dani. She checked herself quickly one last time if she was a little presentable before moving closer to the door.

She peeked through the hole in the door, checking on the identity of the intruder outside. She quickly opened the door with an angry expression once she had confirmed who he was at the other side of the door.

"Finally, I have been waiting here for a long time." He said exasperatedly, feeling a slight relief that she finally opened the door. "I almost banged your door just to make sure that you are ok."

He had started buzzing on her door thirty minutes ago. But after waiting for a long time, he became impatient and started knocking and buzzing continuously to wake her up.

The perpetual silence inside made him think whether she was out or something might have happened to her. Although, he did remember that she loved her sleep in the morning.

Another ten minutes, he was contemplating whether to use drastic measures to assure himself that she was ok. But he was glad that he did not have to resort to that, now that she was ok.

"Don't be dramatic. There is no need for you to act like my knight in shining armor." She retorted back, not liking the way he was acting and the disturbance he just created.

She stood her ground, placing her hands on the side of her waist as she waited for him to tell her why he was outside her apartment. She could not think of a reason for his presence.

"I am just concerned that something might have happened to you since you did not respond to my buzz and call." He explained, seeing that she was irritated with his presence.

He was hoping that she had mellowed down since their last encounter. He did apologize to her sincerely, and she somewhat accepted. But from the way she was acting, it would seem that she was still mad at him.

"I am just a sound sleeper, and you just disturb a good dream." Jacky did not know why she had to mention that to him, but she regretted it when she heard his statement.

"Am I included in it?" He did not know why he said that. Maybe old habits, but it was not intentional. It just slipped his tongue, and it was already out by the time he realized his mistake.

He already admitted to himself that he did miss her. Ever since they broke up, he had regretted hurting her in such a manner. He knew then that he had no right to come back and beg for her to take him back.

"If you were part of my dream, then it would not be good. It would have been a nightmare." She could not help but feel exasperated with the man in front of him.

She suddenly tightened her hold on her robe when she noticed his eyes roaming down her body. He did not have any right to talk and look at her that way.

"What do you want, Marcus?" She quickly added before he could respond to her last remark. "Why are you here?"

She was sure that he was not here to visit her. There was no reason for him to see her anymore. But if it had to do with Alex or Dani, he must be aware that they were staying almost every night at Alex's place.

"I am looking for Alex. I was trying to contact him, but his phone was off. I also tried Dani's number, but the same thing happened. They were both unreachable." He told her.

He did not usually disturb Alex on the weekends. But today, he needed his approval on an urgent matter. However, he could not get hold of his whereabouts.

"Did you try to check on his apartment? Dani told me that she was staying with him last night." She suddenly felt alarmed, worried for her friend.

"I came from his place, but the front desk only knew that they left before daybreak. They had no idea where they went." He suddenly regretted not taking the phone numbers of his bodyguards.

He did not want to think of the worse, but he had to find a way to talk to him soon. He had an important matter that he needed to discuss with him. It could not wait until tomorrow.

Alex did not mention anything about going out of town with Dani, but it did not mean that it was unlikely that was what happened.. He did love to surprise Dani with dates and trips in the past.

Chapter 320 - Out Of Reach

"Come in." She opened the door wider for him to enter. "Let me check my phone if there was a chance that Dani left a message." She offered, quickly leaving Marcus in her living room as she rushed back to her room to look for her phone.

"Thanks." He quickly replied, seeing her back as she retreated behind the closed door. He could see the tension on her shoulders from the worry he had caused her because of his disturbance.

She was the first person he could think to ask regarding the whereabouts and how he could contact Dani and Alex. There was a likelihood that Dani texted her of the unexpected trip.

She returned to the room where Marcus was waiting with a confused face. Her nose was scrunching on the screen as she stared at it. Her fingers kept swiping, trying to look for something.

"I'm sorry, but Dani did not seem to leave a message too on my phone. Are you sure that they were not in his apartment? Did they not leave a message on the counter?" She looked at him for an answer.

She immediately dialed her number, hoping she might answer her call. But like what happened with Marcus, her call went to voice mail. She decided to leave a message instead and hoped that she might answer later, once she received it.

"That was odd. But don't worry, there must be a reasonable explanation for Alex and Dani's sudden disappearance." He did not want to alarm Jacky unnecessarily.

"What do you think happened to them?" She asked as she sat on the lone chair across from him.

"Where did they go? Dani usually tells me if she was going somewhere with Alex."

She could not help but feel a bit of worry that something might happen to them in the middle of the night. But she could not call Dani's parents and worry them. It just might be a miscommunication.

She recalled when she left her last night at the office. She could not remember anything amiss with her situation. She concluded that she was worrying over nothing. They might be somewhere having a great time.

"I have no idea. But knowing Alex, he might have planned a surprise for Dani and forgot to turn their phone on or something. I don't think we should worry about them." Marcus tried to assure her, seeing the slight panic expression on her face.

"Yeah! You are probably right! I might be worrying about nothing." Her voice was calm, but no matter how she tried to calm her heart, it was still beating erratically for her friend.

Until she had heard from her, she knew that she could not relax. She needed confirmation that she was ok. But she had no idea where to look for her and how to reach her.

"Are you alright?" He asked, seeing that she was slightly pale.

He knew how much Dani meant to Jacky. He now regretted disturbing her and telling her that he could not find them. He only caused undue worry to her when it was probably nothing.

"Yeah, I am ok." She did not want to appear too affected by it as she tried to control her emotion. As she had said earlier, there might be a problem with their connection wherever the two went.

She was confident that she would hear from Dani as soon as she found a way to communicate with them. Many did survive in the past without cellphones.

Besides, it required twenty-four hours before she could declare her friend was missing. Not that she thought something terrible happened to them, but she still felt uneasy not getting a message from her or contacting her.

"Would you mind if I make us some coffee as we wait to hear from them? I need something to pump my energy." He suggested, not wanting to leave with her current condition.

He could stay for a while until they could figure out how they could contact their friends. Two heads were usually better than one. Somehow with her help, they might find them easily.

"Fine. I believe you still know your way around the kitchen." She pointed to the other room. "I'll be in my room and change. Call me if you need anything."

She left him to attend to the coffee he was preparing and proceeded to her room. She quickly changed to her comfortable clothes. After fixing her hair in a neat bun, she walked out of her room and looked for Marcus.

She found him still in the kitchen, cooking something on the stove. She thought that he would only make them coffee, so she was surprised to see him holding a pan and spatula in his hand.

"I hope you don't mind if I help myself in the kitchen. I am hungry, and I saw some eggs and bread. I thought of making us some breakfast while we wait." He pointed to the stove.

He showed her the egg that was frying on the pan and the coffee boiling on the counter. He did think of having something delivered to her apartment, but when he checked the refrigerator, he found himself cooking.

"Nah. That's ok." She walked towards him and turned to the freezer, and took out a pack of bacon. "Let me fry some of this."

She prepared the bacon and heated the oil, preparing to cook the strips of pork. She also felt her stomach making funny noises, indicating that she needed sustenance.

"Thanks," Marcus muttered in a low tone as he finished toasting the bread and placing them on a plate together with the egg.

All that was left was for the bacon to cook so they could have their breakfast. He busied himself with the coffee, putting two sets on the table, and waited for her to finish.

He avoided thinking of the two of them intimately. It would not help in their situation, but he still could not help remembering how they were in the past.

They finally sat in comfortable silence when she placed the bacon on each of their plates. Lost in their thoughts as they ate their breakfast.

"I'm so..." He was about to break the silence with an apology, but she stopped him. He still felt the guilt of what he did. Her earlier not-so-warm welcome did not help in the way he felt.

"If you are about to apologize again, please don't." Jacky could not hear another sorry from him. "You already said it before, and I accepted it."

But she still did not condone what he did in the past. She still felt the hurt of his actions. But she was willing to put it behind them for her peace of mind and their friends.

Because whether she liked it or not, their paths would continue to cross, especially now that both of their best friends were to marry. She would rather have him as a friend than an enemy.

"Then, can I assume that we can be friends again in the future?" He suddenly felt a little hope that they could at least rekindle their friendship.

He liked Jacky a lot. Too much that it frightened him, making him do those crazy things to drive her away. But it was too late when he realized what he had done. She was gone.

Until now, he was sure if he even deserved her friendship, but he was willing to beg for it if there was a possibility.. He loved her, but she was now out of reach.