

Royal Contract 371

Chapter 371 - No Dull Moments

He did go to her apartment with a mission. But recent events had slightly sidetracked him from accomplishing it. Now, he was back on track and planned to face the issue head-on.

"Yes, as Jacky worded it. I came to gravel at your feet." He might as well admit it without sugarcoating and beating around the bush.

He believed it was the right thing to do. He knelt before his fiancée while placing his hands on top of hers. "I wish to beg for your forgiveness for what happened yesterday. You are right. I should have considered your feelings."

"I..." She was about to ask him that there was no need for him to apologize. She was as much to blame for their misunderstanding. She should be the one going down on her knees and saying sorry, but he stopped her.

She still believed that she could be responsible for herself. Although the way she handled the situation yesterday was wrong, she could have done better.

Instead of taking her anger and frustration on him, she should have been more open-minded with his feelings. She should have tried harder to put herself in his shoes.

"You are not my property to own and make decisions for your well-being. I should never try to control your life, instead be your equal partner in it." He continued without allowing her to interrupt him.

He looked down at her hands that still wore his ring. He pulled them closer to his heart as he stared at her loving eyes. He could see the different emotions swirling in her eyes.

But what mattered to him was the love displayed brilliantly in her facial expression. He believed that as long as they felt the same way. They could overcome all these petty disagreements and misunderstandings.

"That is all I ask from you. I want you to see me as your equal and not some weakling that you have to protect all the time." She appreciated what he was trying to do, giving her a bit of slack.

But it did not mean that she did not understand what he did for her. She acknowledged that he was only trying to protect her because he loved her. She should not have blamed him for that.

"I am sorry, too. I think I overreacted again. I know you are only thinking of my safety, and I do appreciate it very much. I don't think anyone had done that for me, except my dad." She admitted to him.

She knelt before him, pulling her hands out of his and then placing them on his cheeks, caressing his skin with her fingers. "I love you so much, Alex. I am sorry if I sometimes can be a handful."

She gazed into his face, catching his emotions in his eyes. She admired a man who was not afraid to show how he felt. It only proved his bravery and sincerity in times of crisis.

She was so lucky that he loved her and was willing to overlook her shortcomings. She should remember that in times she would think negatively about him.

"I guess that is what makes us perfect for each other. I think we can both agree that we can sometimes be a pain in the ass." He sported a crooked smile, making a light joke to ease the tension.

He believed no relationship could be perfect. Not even the longest couple he had known had a flawless affair. For him, it was a matter of searching for common ground and a fair compromise that could make a relationship last.

"But as long as we can listen and comprehend what each needed, then maybe we can truly make this work." She finished it for him.

Then, she realized maybe it was not a crime if she sometimes depended on him. After all, he was entirely different from her past relationship.

At the same time, she had already proven to her father and everyone how she could take care of herself. No one could accuse her of being weak if he kept allowing him to protect her.

"I love you more, Dani." He whispered near her before standing up and pulling her with him. "Can we seal the deal with a kiss?"

He did not wait for her to respond as he allowed his emotions to take over all his reasons. This woman was his world. She could have him going in circles, but he would still come back to her.

He let their lips communicate what else was left unspoken between them. He allowed his arms to wrap around Dani, showing her how much he would always make her safe.

"I think I need more convincing." She teased, slightly panting as both came up for air.

She wrapped her hands around his neck, pulling him closer again. This time, she was the one taking the lead. She never wanted to experience another fight with him, but that was like wishing for the moon. stronger

It was bound to happen again. Trials, problems, and various issues would surely test their relationship. But Dani hoped that their relationship would be more solid and stable than ever when that time came.

"Am I convincing enough?" He questioned in between kisses as he pulled her down with him on the couch.

He would give her everything she wanted. If she asked for the earth to stop spinning, he would make it happen. He was sure there were several things he could do to satisfy her whim.

"A little more." She pleaded, deepening the kiss, taking their love-making to the next level.

She wanted more of Alex. She needed to feel his touch all over her body. She would do anything to be one with him. She took back what he said. She wanted him to own her, body and soul.

She loved him deeply, and losing him would never be an option, even if she had to swallow her pride. He was the sun, the moon, and the stars in her eyes. She would not survive without him.

"I'm sorry," Jeremy worked his way out of the room, limping on his injured foot and back into the living room, not realizing what he would see. "Did not mean to disturb you guys, but I need a bathroom."

The two immediately stopped kissing, abruptly remembering that they had company. Luckily, they had not done more than kissing. Not yet anyway, or the boy would be in for an unlikely treat.

"Come on, let me show you the way," Dani immediately walked in his direction, but not before she whispered in his ears. "We should continue this later."

He immediately rewarded her with a wicked smile. "I am counting on it." He replied to her, watching her move away from him.

He was glad that she was back in his arms again, safe and sound. But it was not enough for him anymore. He wanted her to be with him forever. He could not wait for their wedding.

He could already see a very interesting and exciting future with her. She was not just all beauty, some brawn but also pure brains.. He believed that there would be no dull moments when he was with her.

Chapter 372 - A Loose End

Nick was furious that Cassie was able to get away. That was twice in one day that a woman tricked him. But he did not mind Dani since he had other plans for her.

What mattered today was to find Cassie and get her back. She was crucial in his plans, and he still needed the evidence that she held against the Hamiltons.

"You are a fool." Nick looked at the mirror in front of his minibar and saw his reflection. "You allowed her to deceive you once again. You should have taken the evidence at the very start and disposed of her."

He stared long and hard at the man, who almost had it all. He should be married to Dani by now. He should be the one running Ethan's company instead of Alex. But he blew it again and again.

But now, he feared that his plans might not be enough anymore without Cassie. He shoved the entire content of his drink into his mouth, trying to drown himself in his misery.

"Sir, we searched the entire area, but we did not find her." One of his men reported as he presented himself before him.

Two of his men stood in attention behind him as they waited for his reply. He always thought that he hired the most competent mercenaries money could buy, but why did they fail to find an intoxicated woman.

"Where could a drunk woman go? There was no car missing at the car park. She could not have a walk on the road without anyone spotting her." He did not understand how she could have escaped or vanished into thin air.

The location of the place was miles away from the city. There was no public transportation that she could use. The only way in and out of that place was through that single road. He highly doubted that she would go through the forest.

Even so, she would not have gone far with her state. The only thing he could think of at the moment was someone helping her or taking her. But who would want her? Or she could have an accomplice.

"But we found this, Sir." His man interrupted his thoughts as he handed him Cassie's phone, which they found in a ditch.

He recognized it because he was the one who gave it to her. He had it traced, but the woman must have thrown it away when she ran away. His men told him that after finding the phone, they could not see any traces of her.

He grabbed the empty glass in the table with his free hand and hurled it on the glass shelves, shattering most of them into bits and pieces of shards that littered the floor.

"Keep searching for her. Don't dare come back until you find her or something that would point to her. I want her alive." He barked his orders at his men, wanting them out of his sight. "Leave, now."

He held the phone in his hand, shaking his head with regret. He should not have underestimated Cassie. He knew she was evil but did not foresee that she was as cunning as him.

He always thought that she was acting on his behalf. She fooled him into believing that she was just a dumb bimbo who only wanted to please him by spreading her legs and providing for his needs.

Then, an alarming thought came to him. He hastily sprinted to his office, shoving the painting away from the wall. Hidden in the wall was a vault, where he kept most of his important files.

He quickly pinned in his passcodes and used his thumbmarks to unlock the safe until he heard the clicking sound. He gradually opened the door, afraid of what he might discover.

As he feared, his vault was empty. He was duped again by the woman he trusted. This time, he had reached his boiling point as he trashed his office space. It was a mess by the time he finished with the place.

"You will never be able to hide from me, Cassie. Once I find you, I will make sure to make you suffer before I kill you." He shouted in anger and frustration.

He sat on his chair and turned to the view outside. He could see the beautiful sky above him, but his mind was busy planning Cassie's demise once he had her in his captivity again.

A vibration on his pocket alerted him of an incoming call. He immediately picked it up, believing it was his man about to give him the good news.

"Hello, my partner. You are not in your office today. Your secretary said that you are sick." He listened to the line, recognizing the voice of his caller.

He had a meeting with him today that he had forgotten since his mind was busy thinking of another problem. He was the last person that he wished to deal with, but he had no choice anymore.

"Edward, I am sorry if I had to cancel on you." He stated on the line, not sure if he sounded hoarse or drunk, but he did not care. "I am a bit under the weather."

He just wanted to get rid of him and deal with him later when everything was less chaotic. At the moment, talking to him would only complicate things.

He was sure that Edward was going to follow up on their plans. But he had no answers for him, especially now that Cassie was missing. Edward would never appreciate his situation.

"Oh, I never knew that a man of your stature, mighty and powerful, is still susceptible to such mere human conditions." He taunted, knowing too well that he was not sick but only making up excuses.

He did hear him slur a bit. An indication that he had already drunk his fill, and yet the day was not even over. It was not a good sign. He did not like to be made a fool of, especially when his money and reputation were on the line.

"As I said, I am not feeling well today. I will call you first thing tomorrow morning for our meeting." Nick wanted to terminate the call, believing that Edward deserved it.

But he still needed his help, especially now that Cassie was missing. Edward was the only key he had to put Alex down off his pedestal. Without the prince, he had almost nothing to go on with his plight against his enemies.

He could not afford to lose. He would never accept defeat to someone like Ethan, Alex, and Dani. He would die first before he would ever admit failure.

"I am counting on that. Remember, my time and money are valuable." Edward avoided saying a direct threat. They were partners, after all.

Nick still held a large volume of the money that he invested in his company. Besides, Nick still had what he wanted. He could not just let go of his association with him.

He still needed him in the executions of his plans.. But from the way Nick had been acting lately, he believed Nick was a loose end that he had to get rid of eventually.

Chapter 373 - Too Tired To Think

It had been a busy day at the hospital. He was new. Therefore, the workload seemed heavier than usual. He still had to learn most of the protocols that the administration imposed on their staff.

He also had to familiarize himself with the names of his co-workers and other hospital staff. At the same time, he must study the histories of his new patients. Then, there were the emergency cases he had to deal with too.

"Hey, Jacob. How are you doing so far?" Sebastian asked him as he walked into the locker room.

He had meant to talk to him about the earlier incident, but the day had been a bit crazy. There was just no time to deal with it until now. He could see that Jacob was readying himself to go home.

"Good. I am a bit tired, but I think I did ok. What do you think?" Jacob asked his immediate supervisor for his feedback, remembering that he was observing his performance.

He had reservations about accepting this job and transferring to this city. His life away from his brother had been quiet and peaceful. But living in this city had put him in a location near him.

He was not sure if that would be a problem or not. However, the hospital offered him what he wanted all this time. To serve and heal young people who were seriously sick. They gave him the grant he needed for his research.

"Well, I did not see anything that I could complain about as far as I observed. I think you did great." Sebastian said as he placed his things inside his locker.

He watched him close his locker and grab his jacket and bag before walking towards him. "Do you have time for one drink? Show me around where people around here go to unwind."

He still had questions he wanted to ask him before going home. But the locker room was not a safe place to talk about it. He required clarifications, and it had nothing to do with his job description.

"Yeah, sure. Meet me at the lobby in a few minutes, and I will show you around." Sebastian accepted his offer, knowing too well what his intentions were.

He knew a perfect place where they could grab a drink, at the same time, talk about the elephant in the room. He knew that his new friend was bothered by the boy's condition and with Dani's participation.

He understood what he saw and what his conclusion had been. He would like to set the record straight before he accused Dani of something and worsened the situation.

After a few minutes, they were seated at a bar not far from the hospital, ordering their first beer. The place was not loud and not too crowded. It was a perfect place to drown your sorrow or talk.

"What was the deal with the boy and the woman?" Jacob could not wait for him to tell him. He had been dying to know the story, especially now that he figured out who the woman was.

But he did not plan to tell Sebastian about that. He did not need to know that the woman was the former fiancée of his brother. He had no plan to tell anybody about his association with him, not yet anyway.

He valued his privacy and peace. He did not want to get involved in his brother's bullshit affairs. He would rather be poor with the meager salary he would get from his job than take money from him.

"I knew you would be asking about that. But thanks for having my back earlier." Sebastian chugged his beer before continuing. "Dani is a friend of mine. She is a lawyer who loves to help people."

"So, what did it have to do with the boy? It was obvious that someone had abused the boy. Then, she should be reporting it to the authorities." Jacob voiced out his opinion.

He did not see why she would hide him from the system if she wanted to help the boy. It just contradicted what he believed was the right thing to do.

"Yes, we both figured that the boy suffered some injuries, probably from the cruelty of his foster parents," Sebastian revealed their initial conclusion.

"But Dani would like to dig deeper into his situation. She believed she could not do that if she turned him over to the authorities. She had to gain his trust first." He further explained to Jacob what Dani had planned for the boy.

He might not be that close to Dani, personally, but he believed in her character as a person. Jacky had also reaffirmed what a wonderful person she was.

"But is it wise to go around the law? As you said, she is a lawyer. She should be the one upholding the law." He still was a bit apprehensive with the way the two were handling the case of the boy.

In a way, he did understand why Sebastian was helping Dani with the boy. He had seen several cases of abuse and malnourishment of kids coming from the low-income brackets. And also those who came from foster care.

Their conversation about the issue continued for a few more minutes before replacing it with some new ones. The one beer turned into two before Jacob finally called it a night.

"Sorry, but I still have morning rounds tomorrow." Jacob made his excuses as he put on the bill and paid for both of their drinks. "My treat this time."

He did drink occasionally. But in his line of work, he did seldom drank more than his limits. The hospital usually called him during his off, so he did not see the point of getting wasted.

The only time he could remember kissing the floor was back in premed. But other than that, he had controlled his intake of alcohol. It was not suitable in his line of profession.

"Well, then we should do this again next time. My treat." Sebastian said, enjoying his new friend's company.

He could use a drinking buddy since he was still unsuccessful in his dating life. It could be lonely when all he did was work. He thought he had the perfect girl, but she still slipped through his fingers.

"Sure. I am looking forward to it." Jacob could use a friend. It could be lonely in this new place without someone else to talk to and ask for help.

Jacob walked away from him and rode his car back to his apartment. All he wanted to do was crash on his sofa and close his eyes, forgetting about anything else. It did not matter that he still had not eaten breakfast or taken a late-night shower.

As soon as his back landed on the soft cushion, he was gone. "Go away." It was the last thing he remembered babbling before all consciousness left his body and mind.

He passed out like a log, unmoving from his place. He even snored like a train, filling the room with his deep slumber.. He might not even remember if he had a dream because he was too tired to think.

Chapter 374 - Casualty Of An Erroneous Practice

"I know it was not easy talking about your experience. I am so proud of you for being so brave." She stared at the boy directly in his eyes, establishing eye contact, hoping that the walls he built around him would all crumble down.

After learning the entire story of the boy she had accidentally bumped with at the park, she immediately decided to help him. It was precisely for this reason that she had devoted her life to her pro bono cases.

"Please, Miss Dani, don't send me back to my foster parents. I don't want to go back to that house." Jeremy begged, kneeling before her with his hands clamped together tightly in front of her.

He knew the drill. He was not the only one to experience such injustice. Usually, it was the kids who took the blame for running away.

It was either they were rotten eggs, naughty kids, or teenagers with an attitude. It was the kids who took the blame for running away. While their foster parents acted like they were saints, only doing some good deeds.

"Let me see what I can do, Jeremy." She knelt in front of the boy and touched his young, innocent face. He was indeed handsome when properly bath and wearing clean clothes.

She did not want to give the boy some false promises. Right now, she knew that she already had bent the law in his favor when she failed to report the boy to the authorities.

She had to uphold the law, even if it was crooked and flawed. It was what she had sworn to do when she became a lawyer. But she would make sure that she would do everything she could to help this boy.

"Please, help me. I am sure once you return me to my foster parents. They will beat me again for running away," This time, he was trembling in fear. He had tried to be brave, but he was still just a boy.

It was his first time to run away from his recent foster family, but he had seen what they did to one of the kids caught running away. He swore once he got out, he would never go back.

But what could he do if social services were turning a blind eye to the wrong things that were happening to kids like him? He was just a kid. Nobody took them seriously and believed what a boy like him said.

"Don't worry. I will do my best." She pulled the boy in a tight hug, trying to understand what he was going through.

She could see the fear in his eyes, despite his effort to appear tough. He was a fighter. She could see that, but he was just a young boy who still had no chance against the reality of life.

There were just so many injustices in the world, and the worse ones usually involved a child. She could not let this innocent child become another victim of their rotten system. She had to do something.

"Thanks, Jacky." She said to her friend over the phone when she called her for help.

Jacky, who used to be a part of the foster system, was the first person she could think of who could help her with Jeremy. She had managed to create an alliance with several other foundations who tried to help foster kids to have a better future.

She assured Jeremy that he would be safe with the temporary home that would shelter him until she found a solution to his problem. Because if she surrendered him to the child service, they would automatically send him back to his family.

"I'll be back to check on you from time to time. You have my number. You can call Alex or me anytime." She could see his hesitation, but she had convinced him this was for the best in the meantime.

If only she could take him and then put him in another home, she would. She would even take him to her apartment, but that was simply impossible.

She had to go through a tedious process, and it would take time. Besides, her busy schedule did not qualify her to take another life under her care.

"Thanks, Miss Dani and Mister Alex, for all your help." He had no choice but to trust her. She had not shown her any reason to doubt her sincerity so far.

Alex took her back to her office after dropping off Jeremy at his new home, at least a temporary place where he would feel safe. It was the best option until she had figured out what she could do for him.

"Do you think I am crazy for doing this?" Dani turned to Alex as he drove her to her work.

Under the law, the foster parents could accuse her of kidnapping. Jeremy was a minor under their care. She could counter it by filing a case against them for child abuse, but she would need more proof against them.

She had to plan her case against them so that abusive foster parents would stop using the system for their interests. In the end, it was the kids who suffered because the law was not enough to protect them.

"No, I think what you are doing is admirable. I believe it is what attracted me to you in the first place." He kept glancing at her at every opportunity.

He loved that she was trying to help the kid. Under the same position, he would probably do the same. For now, he would be there to support her every decision.

He dropped her off at work, and he proceeded to his. He would like to spend the rest of the day with her, but both of them had obligations they could not ignore.

As soon as he arrived at his office, he called his best friend and asked for a favor. "Marcus, I want you to look into this case." He explained the situation to his friend, narrating to him Jeremy's story.

"Am I doing this for you or Dani?" Marcus could see that this entire scenario had Dani written all over it.

He did not mind since it was for a good cause. But he could not help but ask, seeing how much his friend would do anything for his future wife.

Maybe it was what was missing in his life. He needed passion and devotion for the woman he would love, a reason to be insane and act irrationally because of his obsession to see her smile.

"For us both," Alex replied, knowing what he was trying to point out. He only wished that Marcus would finally see the light. That love was not as terrible as it seemed.

He also knew that he had to do something to help Dani. He did not want to meddle with her affairs, but he was also concerned with the boy. The boy deserved a chance for a good home and a regular life.

He enjoyed playing with him. He could sense that the boy was intelligent.. It would be a waste if he would end up as a casualty of an erroneous practice in their social system.

Chapter 375 - Pursue A Hopeless Case

"What happened to you? Jacky said that you were in a sort of accident. Are you sure you are ok?" Gerald fired away his questions as he showed a bit of concern when he walked into her office.

He had wondered why she did not show up in their deposition this morning. Jacky was a bit vagued in her explanation for her absence. But he did not push for more, hearing that no harm happened to her in the incident.

"It was nothing. I don't want to bore you with the details." She reasoned as she stood from her chair to welcome him to her office.

She offered him a seat on the available chair while she returned to her own.

"Whatever happened, I am sure that it might have been important. But I won't push you if you don't feel like sharing it." He would eventually find out about it, whether it came from her or some other source.

"Anyway, I'm sorry about this morning. I will make sure to make up for it on the next one." She knew she owed him one. She was glad that he was not mad or disappointed with her.

She had completely forgotten about her meeting with Gerald and the other party today. Jacky had to remind her at the last minute, but it was too late for her to meet with them.

She had no choice but to send her excuses. Besides, she did not feel right to leave the boy until she had a concrete plan for dealing with his case.

"Well, about that. Would you mind coming with me tomorrow night for a dinner meeting? I think Mr. Bradshaw is starting to see reason. He wants to talk with us." Gerald inquired as he made himself comfortable in his seat.

He narrated what happened at the meeting earlier. And how the other party had no counter with their discoveries. And then the call he had received afterward.

He believed that the other party was starting to feel the pressure. So far, they were gaining ground on their investigations, finding more bullets against their opponents.

If they kept up searching for evidence, he was sure they could dig up more. It was a matter of time before they would eventually give in, if not yet now.

"Wow, that is great news." She expressed her excitement, knowing what the dinner could mean. "Well, if they do decide to take our offer." She toned down her enthusiasm since it was not yet a sure thing.

Although she could foresee that they were already at the upper hand unless the other side had a few more cards left under their sleeves. She was guaranteed success in their fight against them.

"Even if they don't accept it, we still have a solid case against them. So, I thought we might as well see what Mr. Bradshaw wants to discuss later." Gerald informed her.

He just hoped that Dani was currently fine and available to join him. It would be better if they showed a united front. It might intimidate them and finally, concede with what they want.

Ending the case in an amicable settlement had always been better for both parties. It saved time and energy compared to pursuing a tiresome, long trial that would cost substantial money and take years before an outcome.

"I think that is a good idea. If you believe my presence would be relevant, and then I am more than happy to join you." She could not turn his boss down, especially when there was a possibility that they might win this case earlier than they expected.

She could finally concentrate on her wedding preparations and cut down her responsibilities in the firm in the meantime. Just until she was married to Alex.

Besides, she also wanted to look into the situation of Jeremy. She knew that it would not be an easy case. She could already expect the red tapes, corruptions, and the many cover-ups around this issue.

"Then, it is a date." He said. "I meant I'll be seeing you tomorrow." He quickly clarified, recovering from his slip up. He did not want to frighten her away by prematurely declaring his feelings for her.

He knew she was not ready to hear it from him. She was still very much in love with Alex. He could not match against him right now, not in her heart, anyway.

He stood up from his position, preparing himself to leave. He had already taken much of Dani's time. He was sure that she still had many on her plate to do for the rest of the day.

"Of course. I'll mark it now in my calendar." She assured him that it was all set. She would be there this time.

She was still guilty that she had abandoned her boss in a crucial meeting. But she was glad that it still went well. She had already promised to make up for it, so she would do her best to help him during dinner.

"Do you want us to go together, or should I just text you the location?" He followed up. He would like the former, but he could settle to see her and spend time with her during dinner.

They might not be alone together in the restaurant, but at least she would be there dining with him. He could not ask for more for now. He still hoped that eventually, she would notice him as a perfect match for her.

"I think it would be best if I see you there. I still have several errands to do tomorrow, so I don't want to keep you waiting. But I promise to be present on time." She responded, still clueless to the true feelings of her boss about her.

If she had known about his feelings, she would have kept her distance. She might have forgotten about the project she was working on with him.

She did not want to give him false promises. Because she was very much in love with the man she was going to marry very soon.. She would not want him to pursue a hopeless case.

Chapter 376 - Out Of The Blue

Jacob woke up with a grumbling stomach as his nose involuntarily started sniffing the air. There was a delicious aroma piercing his consciousness, making his body aware of his surrounding.

His mind pondered if he could be dreaming, but then again, why would he be asking that if he was. It just did not make sense as his nose continued to enjoy the enticing smell of delicious food.

"If only I could cook like that." Jacob thought to himself, feeling the lack of food on his stomach. He suddenly remembered the burger he barely ate for dinner last night before the staff paged him again.

He tried to pry his eyes open, but it was a struggle. It was not a hangover since he barely drank last night with his new friend, but he was tired, extremely tired.

His alarm had not gone off yet, so it must still be early, but he could already see the bright light coming from his window. He was not due to the hospital this morning, so he planned to stay late on the bed.

"What the heck?" He yelped when he fell on the floor when he quickly turned on his back.

He believed that he went straight to bed last night, but apparently, he did not make it further in his apartment. He was surprised when he found himself on his sofa instead of the bed.

Luckily, he had found a place not too far from the hospital. It would have been harder if he had to drive several more minutes in traffic before reaching his home.

"Oh! I am glad that you are finally awake. I made breakfast." Someone not far spoke to him. It took him a few seconds to adjust his eyes to see who it was.

He was shocked to find that he was not alone in his apartment. He quickly scrambled on his feet to make himself decent. But he finally recognized who the intruder was.

He did not expect that she would still be here. After he had attended to her bruises and forced her to eat something, he thought that she would leave at the first chance she got.

"You are still here." He uttered in amazement, suddenly feeling dumb for saying the obvious. "I meant I assumed you had left when I went to work." He quickly corrected his statement.

In his defense, he felt like he was still dreaming and nothing about this morning was real. He seldom slept on his sofa, finding his bed more comfortable.

Then, he never had a girl come over to his place. Well, at least, this new place of his. He barely met new people in this city to have someone to come over, let alone have a sleepover.

"I hope you don't mind. I was still not feeling quite well yesterday. I decided to take on your offer to stay for one more day." She immediately explained her presence, still in his apartment.

She did still feel sore after the bruising she got from what happened the other night, in addition to her exposure to the cold temperature of the night breeze.

She was lucky, Jacob found her just in time, or she might be suffering a worse condition. She did not want to think of what else could be worse than her present situation.

"No. Of course not, Cassie. I don't mind." He stopped his mumbling as he walked closer to her.

It was a small apartment but big enough to cater to his need. It had a small kitchen, a decent size living room, but only one bedroom. His mind was suddenly analyzing the situation.

If he did make it to his bedroom, and then he might end up sleeping on the same bed as her. That might have been one chaotic night. He thanked his lucky star for letting him fall on the sofa instead.

"Don't worry. Once we eat breakfast, I will call a cab and be out of your hair in a jiff." She swore, putting his palm up in the air. "Don't be mad, but I rummaged through your kitchen and cooked what I found edible in it."

She did have a hard time finding the ingredients she needed to cook a decent meal. But she believed she managed to prepare a delicious one despite the lack of food in the pantry.

"I'm sorry about that. I planned to do some groceries, but I am always busy at the hospital. I always ended up eating at the cafeteria." He explained the situation in his kitchen.

He was suddenly slightly embarrassed with his situation, but he did try. It was just hard to live a regular life for a man like him. With his irregular schedules and long hours of work, doing domesticated things was his last priority.

He then noticed that his place did not seem like a pigsty anymore. There were no scattered clothes or leftover food in the living room or the kitchen. Not that he was very messy, he just was too tired to do anything else.

He instantly wondered what his room must have looked like this morning. He did remember leaving it a bit untidy. But judging from what he was seeing, he could expect that it was now neat.

"Anyway, you should not have cleaned the place up." He told her as he moved to get some coffee. He noticed that she also had managed to prepare some. "You also did not have to cook. We could just have ordered."

"It is alright. I am hungry since it is your food, then I should be the one to cook. Besides, I had nothing to do when you left. The least I can do for your hospitality is to tidy the place." She explained to him, hoping that he did not mind.

Cleaning up his small apartment was not that hard. He was not that gross that he had left rotten foods around the place. Maybe an empty soda on the table and a few clothes around the room but nothing terrible.

As he mentioned yesterday, he was a doctor. Maybe he was telling the truth. He did not have time to buy groceries, explaining his lack of food in the refrigerator or his cabinets.

"Then, let us eat. I am also starving." Smelling the scent of the food that was already on the table. He could not wait to dig in as his eyes feasted on the beautifully cooked homemade food in front of him.

It had been a while that somebody had cooked for him. He longed to taste something that was freshly cooked and did not come from a box. It could have been a boiled egg, but he would have loved it too.

"Sure," Cassie sat opposite to him and offered the omelet, bacon, and some garlic toasts she had prepared. She would have cooked more, but there was nothing left in the kitchen.

"Anyway, you don't have to rush to leave. You can still stay for a few more days if you need a place to crash. Although my place is nothing much to look at, you will be safe here.." He suddenly offered out of the blue.

Chapter 377 - Dressed To Kill

She stretched her body and extended her hand to the other side, but it landed on an empty sheet. She tapped the beddings, but she could not feel anyone. She was alone on the bed.

She finally opened her eyes to confirm that he was not by her side. She felt his side of the bed, and it was already cold. He had left without saying goodbye.

"Hmmm." She did not know what to feel about that.

Although it was not the first time it happened, she was still concerned since they barely made up for their recent misunderstanding. She could not help but feel a bit insecure.

She checked around the room and already saw the telltale sign that he had already gone to work. He was not in the kitchen or on the balcony, preparing some form of a surprise for her.

"It's ok, Dani. At least you made up last night." She reminded herself, remembering his arms securely around her before she fell into a deep sleep.

That should be enough to reassure her that their relationship was doing fine. She had nothing to worry about it. She should not doubt love because it conquered all.

She finally slid out of bed and went straight to her vanity mirror. She was about to brush her hair and tie it up before going to the bathroom when she noticed a note with a rose on top of it.

I told you so. Dani could not help but admonished herself for doubting Alex. She could not blame her subconsciousness for feeling like a mess. It was her who could not keep it together.

D,

I am sorry if I have to leave early. There is an emergency at the office. Have dinner with me tonight.

Love A.

She could not help but feel the butterflies flying around her stomach due to his thoughtfulness as she placed the rose near her nose. She could smell the lingering perfume that he usually used when he went to the office.

Her earlier doubts quickly vanished, replaced by the excitement of seeing him again. "I love you, too." She uttered as she placed back the rose on the top of the table.

She excitedly went through her cabinet and checked the line of clothes inside, already thinking of what she would wear for their date.

She had to look extra beautiful for him tonight, she thought. She selected one dress after another, deciding whether she should wear something classy or a bit sexy.

It was times like this that she missed Jacky and her impeccable opinion regarding fashion. Although she also had a good fashion sense, still having another point of view was better than one.

Eventually, she found the perfect dress. It was classy and sexy but not too vulgar. It was just the right ensemble that could make Alex have a second look.

Her thoughts were interrupted by the ringing of her phone. "Hello, Jacky." Dani was excited to hear her friend's voice. She could not wait to share with her what happened yesterday.

But before she could tell her anything, she rattled on about one of the cases she was handling. There seemed to be some issue with it, and David wanted her at his office at the soonest time.

She had to set aside all thoughts of the dinner date for a later discussion. Her mind started thinking about the case, already analyzing the situation.

"Where are the files I told you to prepare?" She asked Jacky as soon as she arrived at her office.

She had worked hard on making this deal smooth, so she wondered what could have gone wrong. She quickly took her files with her and brought them to David's office to discuss the case.

After spending almost an hour at his office, she was glad that they found an easy resolution to the problem. The client and the other party were satisfied with the outcome of the meeting.

"How was the meeting?" Jacky asked as soon as she returned to her desk. She followed her into the room with another stock of files in her hand.

Not because she had successfully dodged a bullet, it did not mean that the fight was already over. She looked at the new case that was already waiting for her.

"Thankfully, it was just a minor issue. The clients were only being stubborn, but we managed to settle it without further conflicts." Dani told her as she settled comfortably on her chair.

She did not want to take the credit since David did most of the negotiation. She only did the paper works. But she was happy that their teamwork paid off.

"That sounds good. At least another case was closed." Jacky stated as she dropped the files on the side of her table, but she stopped as she noticed her clothes. "Anyway, you look fabulous in that dress."

She was surprised that her friend was wearing something special for dinner. As far as she could remember, she only wore business clothes when she went to business dinners.

"Do you think this is ok for dinner?" Dani excitedly asked as she stood from her chair and modeled the outfit to her friend.

It was not a new dress, but it was something that was in her rack for some time, waiting for its time to shine. She did buy it for a special occasion but never had the chance to wear it until now.

"Well, it is very eye-catching, definitely, a head-turner." Jacky complimented. "If that is what you are going for, but do you think it is appropriate for the dinner tonight." She questioned her intention.

She did not know what was going through the mind of her friend. But she liked that she was coming out of her shell and trying new things.

Being more daring about her outlook in life, maybe Alex did bring out the best in her.

"I was counting on the dress to work its magic," Dani explained to her friend, but before Jacky could respond to her, the phone on her desk started ringing.

Jacky had to excuse herself immediately and leave the discussion to continue later. But she was still confused with her friend's statement, but she had no time to follow it up at the moment as her load of work started filing up.

Dani, on the other hand, was quite satisfied with her chosen clothing. She could not wait for dinner to arrive, already seeing her date drooling over her.. She was indeed dressed to kill.

Chapter 378 - A Capable And A Good Lawyer

She was working on finding a solution with Jeremy's case in between her several other files. She had called him just a few minutes ago to check on his condition.

He appeared to be fine but still too afraid to trust anyone else besides her and Alex. She made a mental note to visit him either tomorrow or the next day.

She remembered what Jacky said, reminding her to be careful. "Don't get too attached to the kid. You know you can't keep him." She knew her friend was right.

It would not do the boy any good once she found him a better home. In all honesty, she knew it would also be hard for her when the boy eventually left, but she knew the boy would need a friend in a hard time like this.

"Oh my!" She dropped her pen and slumped back on her seat. She suddenly remembered something she had forgotten because of her excitement.

She felt stupid for forgetting something as important as a meeting, a dinner meeting with Gerald and Mr. Bradshaw at that. She looked at the schedules that Jacky had given her this morning and noticed at the bottom, written at six o'clock.

Why did she not see that earlier? Because your mind was preoccupied with work and the other date you wanted to go to, she scolded herself.

She knew she could not cancel on Gerald anymore. She promised to make up to him after the last time. But that would mean canceling on Alex.

It was the last thing she wanted to do because she was looking forward to their date. But it was the only sensible thing to do. She could always go out with her fiancé at another time.

"I'm sorry, Alex. I did not know how it could have slipped my mind. I am looking forward to our dinner, but I already gave my word that I will attend this meeting." She implored his understanding regarding her situation.

She immediately called him upon realizing her mistake. She did not want to make him wait and waste his time when she was not coming. She was sure that he had more important things he could do with his time.

Canceling their date was the last thing she wanted, but she could not help it. She could not back out again and leave Gerald hanging. That would be unprofessional of her, and that would mark on her impeccable record.

"Don't worry. I understand," Alex answered her calmly, a bit disappointed because he was also looking forward to their date. However, he did understand that she also had a responsibility in her job.

He also had to cancel on her when he had no choice, so it was not a big deal. He could always ask her out another day. Maybe tomorrow or the next day.

They ended a call after reassuring herself that Alex did not take canceling on him the wrong way. She did not want to add on their misunderstanding, especially since they only recently made up.

Then, she realized another thing after ending the call with Alex. She was not dressed correctly for her business meeting. In truth, she felt overdressed.

But when she looked at the time, there was barely half an hour left before the appointed time. She would not make it if she had to rush home and change into a new outfit.

"How can you forget about the meeting?" Jacky expressed in astonishment.

She could not believe that she would overlook such an important event. Suddenly, the entire situation had some clarity in her mind.

"I know. I feel bad about it. Now, I have to wear this." She explained to her friend.

She had no options left but to attend the meeting in her current clothing. She readied herself and the files she might need later. The only consolation she could think of with this sacrifice was the possibility that the case would be over.

"Well, if you don't hurry up, you will still end up late." Jacky reminded her as she tapped on her wristwatch to indicate the time.

Dani immediately moved from her position and grabbed her things. "Wish me luck. I hope that this case ends here." She left her friend to meet her boss and their client.

As soon as she stepped into the classy restaurant, she knew that many did turn to look at her. Some guests looked curious, while others seemed appreciative, especially the young men.

She tried to ignore them, following the hostess to her designated table. She could already spot Gerald, but their client was still missing.

It was still early by a few minutes. It was only proper that they should be the first to arrive before the client. Once Gerald saw her approach, he quickly stood up from his seat to receive her.

"Good evening, glad you were able to come." Gerald greeted her. "You certainly look stunning." He could not help but compliment the beauty that stood beside him. He did appreciate the dress she was wearing.

He automatically pulled a seat for her as he assisted her to the chair. To the other patrons of the restaurant, they looked like a couple on a date. They did look perfect together.

To him, it felt great to be in her company. Although, it would have been better if this was a date. But for now, he would settle for a few minutes to be alone with her.

"I'm sorry about what I am wearing. I know I am overdressed, but there was a mishap, and I did not have time to change." She rambled on, trying to explain to Gerald her situation.

Although, she believed she did not look like a dumb bimbo in her dress. Still, she did try her best to impress, which she did succeed, as evident by the appreciation she saw in his eyes.

But he was not the intended audience. Dani was a bit disappointed that Alex would not see her in this lovely dress. But maybe she could still work something out once she got home, a bit of a surprise.

"Don't fret on it. I think no matter what you wear, people will still stare." He pointed out, seeing that she was a bit uncomfortable around him. "But I do think you look just fine."

He did not want her to feel like she could not act normal around him. On the contrary, he wanted her to feel at ease when she was in his company.

He wished for them to get closer. And he could only do that if he could gain Dani's trust. He liked her very much, but it would take a lot more than just confessing his feelings for her.

That would surely guarantee his instant rejection. He had to be patient and take his time. Good things came to those who waited for the right timing.

"Thanks." She replied, feeling less anxious. She did not want to make a wrong impression with her boss and her client.

All she could do now was to maintain her grace and confidence until the night was over.. She should not allow her dress to overshadow who she was, a capable and a good lawyer.

Chapter 379 - True Villain

On the other side of the city, he had to assist a surgery and managed several emergency cases besides the patients he had to attend to regularly. It was exhausting and quite late.

"Are you on your way out?" Sebastian stopped him at the lobby just when he was about to exit the door.

He heard that he did well in the operating room today. One of his colleagues could not stop praising the new doctor. He was curious. He could use another good doctor around.

"Yeah, why?" He asked, praying that it was not another case because his body was giving up.

He could feel that the muscles in his legs were about to collapse. He might still be able to function barely, but it would only be due to adrenaline, nothing more.

"Don't look so glum, Jacob." Sebastian teased him. "I was only going to tell you that you are scrubbing with me tomorrow. I have a new case. That is if you are up for it."

He did see the fatigue expression on his face. Being a new resident in a new hospital was never easy. He knew all about it since he also went through the same rigorous training.

But he believed it did help develop his skills as a doctor and a surgeon. He was still a long way from becoming a great doctor, but he would get there eventually.

"That's great," Jacob shouted in excitement. It felt like it was his lucky day. His tiredness slightly eased out upon hearing the news. "Thanks. I'll be there."

He was looking forward to every opportunity to be inside the operating room, learning from his mentors. It was the only best way to learn, according to his book.

"Then, I'll see you tomorrow." Sebastian went back inside the hospital while he walked straight to his beaten car.

For someone a bit wealthy, he still drove his old car. He did not feel like letting it go. It had a sentimental value. Besides, it was still working just fine.

"Take me home, my friend." He mumbled to his car as he started the ignition. He hummed perfectly, just the way he liked it. Then, a few minutes he was on the road towards his house.

He carefully unlocked the door of his apartment, afraid that he might wake her up. However, he was the one shocked when he saw her still in his living room, watching a movie, wide awake.

"Hi! I hope you are not waiting for me." Jacob quickly said as he closed the door and walked towards the living room.

He was expecting that he would find Cassie probably sleeping already when he got home. That was if she decided to take on his offer to stay for a couple more days until she was ready to leave.

Well, he could not force her to stay if she did not want to, nor could he ask her about her relationship with his brother. She would tell him about it if she trusted him enough. Else, it was not his business.

"Well, I am. I figured that you might be hungry, so I cooked something for you." She stood up from her seat and led the way to the kitchen, where she had laid some food on the counter.

She figured it was the least she could do for him, for saving her and taking care of her and then allowing her to stay in his house for a few days until she could figure out what to do next.

"Where did you get all this food?" He asked, remembering that his kitchen was almost bare since he forgot to drop by the grocery again.

He did plan to do some shopping. As a second-year resident, it was not that easy. Although the hospital was impressed with his achievements at a very young age, it did not mean that he received favored treatments compared to his fellow residents.

"I sneaked out earlier. I was hungry. I figured we have to eat, so I bought some few stuff." She explained to him.

She sat down on one of the chairs and offered him what she had prepared for them. It was not much, but it was what she used to cook for Nick. She was not a chef, but she still believed that it tasted good.

"But, I thought Nick was after you. You should not be walking on the street, or he might catch you." His tone was a bit louder than he intended. He could not help but be alarmed by her careless action.

He did guess that she was hiding from his brother. It did not need a rocket scientist to figure that one out. His brother was a notorious businessman.

A criminal, he was still figuring out how deep he was in that area. He still did not know him that well, but he knew his brother had many connections. Was he cruel? Maybe, judging from the incident in the bar.

"Don't worry. I made sure that no one recognized me with my disguise. Anyway, I only bought some food. I did not roam the street." She felt a bit defensive all of a sudden, not expecting his sudden outburst.

She knew the risk she was taking as soon as her foot stepped out of his apartment, but she could not keep hiding in there. She would have to leave eventually.

But first things first, she needed a plan to see or talk privately with Alex. She could not leave town until she had seen him. But she knew that Nick's men were out there scouting the city for her.

"I'm sorry. I did not mean to raise my voice. I was just concerned about your safety." Jacob immediately calmed down his tone.

In the first place, he had no right to meddle with her life. She was not his prisoner, and he could not stop her from doing what she felt she needed to do.

"That is fine. You are right. I should be extra careful with my actions. I don't know what I was thinking." She also realized what he was talking about and understood his reaction.

Suddenly, she felt she could trust him even if his brother probably wanted to have her captured, tortured, or even killed. She could sense that Jacob was different from the first time she talked to him at the bar.

"Well, could we forget about it and start again? I don't want all this delicious-looking food to go to waste because we had a little disagreement." He offered a truce.

He started to taste the first dish that was nearest to him. And find it way much better than the breakfast he had earlier. He could not wait to try the other sumptuous meal on the table.

She was glad that he found him easy to talk to and funny in a way. It made their meal less awkward and enjoyable. At the end of the meal, she finally decided to share her past with him.

"That is how I got involved with your brother." She knew it was a risk, but she could not keep acting like she was the victim. She was not innocent and needed saving.

Parents wanted their kids to stay away from someone like her because she was not good and did not play fair.. She was a true villain in the story.

Chapter 380 - Cunning Man

"I think you are doing very well. Many of your clients are very impressed with your work." Gerald commented as they drank the wine served to them as they waited for their client.

He did experience it for himself. He knew that Dani contributed quite a lot to their case. He could not monopolize the credit because she did work hard to give him a good position against the opposing team.

"Thanks for this opportunity. I think your guidance has helped me a lot. I have learned so much from you." She expressed her appreciation for his trust in her.

She knew that she did not make it this far if not for the support of all the people she had worked with, in this case, her new mentor, Gerald. He had been patient with her despite all her shortcomings.

"Shall we drink to our good teamwork?" He raised his glass to her, waiting for her to acknowledge the toast.

He believed that he was finally making a connection with her. It might be work-related, but it was a start. He was willing to wait, but he was hoping that he would not be too late.

He heard that the couple had moved up the date of the wedding, an earlier schedule. The news did not bother him at all. Anything could still happen between now and then. He believed that Dani might still change her mind.

"Sure." She smiled at her boss, genuinely agreeing with him. She clinked her glass with his before taking a sip. However, she could not help but wonder why the opposing client was still missing.

She hoped that Mr. Bradshaw did not suddenly decide not to join them. That would be a total waste of their time. Besides, she did not want to think that she gave up a perfect date, only to be stood up by a client.

"Tell me, Dani..." But before he could continue further his statement, she interrupted him.

She notified him that their guest had arrived. "Oh, I'm sorry, but he is on his way here." She did not intend to cut him short, but she suddenly felt that she was not comfortable with what he had to say.

It might be intuition, or she was overthinking things, but she felt that her boss was showing some form of interest in her. She was not aware of what kind yet. But it might be because he liked picking on her brain.

"Mr. Bradshaw, it is so nice to see you again." He stood up from his chair and offered him a firm shake, which he gladly accepted.

He was slightly frustrated because he knew that the timing was not good. He had the perfect opportunity to get to know her more, but he lost that chance when the other man came to the scene.

But the show must go on. Gerald had to start this meeting and see what the man had to say to their case. Was he about to accept their terms? But he wondered why he did not bring along his legal team.

"Mr. Bradshaw, good evening." Dani also offered her hand to him, but instead of shaking it, he gave her a mild graze of his lips on her knuckles.

She did not mind since many men did use that gesture as a sign of respect. But she was anxious to know what the meeting was for and to learn if they finally won.

"You are more lovely than the evening." The man told her as he slowly let go of her hand. Then, all of them returned to their respective seats.

He did admire the beautiful lady at his side. He could see that she was not only beautiful but had a matching brain in that gorgeous head of hers. She did make it hard for his team to fight this battle.

She would have been a great match to his son, but he already heard her engagement to the prince. It was a missed opportunity and a loss for his company.

"Thanks, you look great as well." She knew that compliments were never necessary for business transactions, but sometimes it was important in making things run smoothly.

She had learned that many wealthy men liked to boast their wealth, accomplishment, and other priceless possessions. They wanted their egos inflated until they felt like they could almost touch the sky.

Well, Mr. Bradshaw was one perfect example of this kind of man. He only wanted recognition, wealth, and power. He could not care less of the other people who might be suffering because of the consequences of his actions.

"Well, shall we order and eat and then discuss the reason why I called you here?" He did not like mixing business with his food. It stressed him out and interrupted his digestion.

But as soon as the meal was over, he did start the conversation about the case. It began with mostly pleasantries but then went into business eventually.

"I guess there is no other way around this problem." Mr. Bradshaw finally asked them directly.

He was not afraid of getting into jail because that would never happen, no matter how strong their case was against him. But he knew that he would lose a lot of money if he did not cut the deal in half.

"What are you suggesting?" Gerald asked, waiting for his real intention. Mr. Bradshaw did not waste money on trivial matters. But he also did not want to waste them if he could help it.

In the end, he and Dani realized what Mr. Bradshaw wanted to happen. It would certainly end the case. They would win it too, but the prize money was just not as good as their initial proposal.

"Well, think about it." Mr. Bradshaw said as he stood up and made his excuses. He concluded the meeting and bade farewell to both of them.

He would let them sit on the idea and wait to hear from them. He did not bring his lawyers with him because it would only complicate the matter. He already knew what he wanted to happen.

"What do you think of his counteroffer?" Dani felt a bit disappointed that Mr. Bradshaw did not take the bait of grabbing their initial offer.. He was indeed a good businessman but still a cunning man.