

Royal Contract 461

[Chapter 461 - Word Of Wisdom](#)

"You did a spectacular job once again, Abby," Laura commented, which Katherine approved, on the gown Dani was wearing as they put the final touches on her veil.

They could not stop staring at the stunning bride that stood in the large full-length mirror before them. She was one of the most beautiful brides in the world as far as they were concerned.

"Thank you. But, this design was inspired by all your inputs, especially the bride." Abby, the designer, replied. "What do you think, Dani." She had to ask her. It was her opinion that counted the most.

In determining the pattern and design of her gowns, she usually used what she had learned about the personality and preferences of the bride.

She did not have a problem with the inspiration since her client was not very hard to work with. She usually had trouble with demanding clients who changed their minds up to the last minute.

"As I told you before, I love it." Dani turned to her designer and hugged her. "Thank you."

She had to admit that the gown was more than she had ever envisioned. It was a mermaid cut, off-the-shoulder neckline with delicate lace sleeves, made in a pure white silk garment.

She preferred a shorter veil, but Katherine suggested it to be longer. It was too long for her taste, but she had to concede to some of their requests.

"Oh my! You look like a princess." Jacky uttered as soon as she entered the room. "Well, I know you are already a princess. What I meant to say is that you are absolutely gorgeous."

She immediately walked towards her friend and hugged her gently, afraid that she might ruin her dress or makeup. But she was glad to be part of this memorable celebration.

"And you look amazing too." Dani returned the compliment, knowing Jacky also deserved to be praised for all she had done for her.

She noticed how Jacky shined in her blue gown, but there was more to it than what she was wearing. There was a certain glow on her face that made her radiant.

"Thanks to Abby. She creates amazing gowns that make me look amazing." Jacky acknowledged the creativity and hard work of their new friend.

She caught a reflection of herself in the large mirror, standing beside her best friend. They did both look great together. But more than that, she was glad to see Dani happy.

Another soft knock on the door alerted them of another visitor in her room. Then, her father peeked behind the door with an adorable smile.

"Can I borrow my daughter for a few minutes?" He walked straight to his wife, kissing her mildly on the lips.

Of course, he was like all the fathers of the world. He wanted some alone time with his daughter before he walked her down the aisle.

The four women nodded in unison, agreeing to what he said. One by one, they left the two to be on their own, the father and the daughter, for their last hours of her single life.

"Dad, what is this all about?" Dani allowed her father to drape his hand around her shoulder, feeling his kiss on the top of her head.

"I just want to see my daughter. It has been a while since I have you all to myself." He sat on the edge of the bed and tapped the space beside him, beckoning her to join him.

But instead of following his direction, she decided to sit on his lap. Then, she wrapped her arms around his shoulder, doing something she had not done since she was a teenager.

She laid her head on his shoulders, finding comfort in his arms. She remembered every time she needed him to protect her, she would run into his arms and cry her eyes out. He would cradle her in his warmth until she had calmed down.

"You are not about to cry, are you?" She asked her father with a baffled look in her eyes.

She could not help but notice the slightly watery eyes of his father as he stared at her face. It was one of the sweetest things she ever saw her father do for her.

Crying was one emotion she never shared with her father. But to see her father shedding a happy tear on her wedding was a moment she would cherish forever.

"Well, what is a tear when it feels like I am losing my daughter to another man?" Ethan smiled at her daughter's teasing. He was never an emotional man but a man of action.

He remembered something he used to tell her when he found her in tears. "Crying is good for the soul." Taking her hand, resting them on the top of her heart.

"But there are better ways to deal with a problem without shedding a tear." He guided her fingers, pointing them to her temples. She would stop crying, smile, and find a way to resolve her troubles.

"You are not losing me, Dad. But you are gaining a son." She knew it was an addition that he ultimately approved of. Alex was able to prove himself to him more than she could count.

She suddenly felt that she had wasted many years hating her father because she did not understand what he was trying to do. She hoped it was not yet too late to make up for the lost times.

"I know that. I am glad that you are marrying Alex. He is a great man." He slightly pushed the loose tendril of her hair away from her face to see her eyes.

He would not say those words if he did not believe them himself. He wanted his daughter to understand that he only did what he did in the past for her.

"I know that too." She mimicked what her father said, grinning a little.

"But," Ethan could see that something was bothering her. It was all over her eyes. "Are you having cold feet?" But he doubted that.

Nothing could stop his daughter from marrying the man of her dreams. Her relationship with Alex was entirely different from what she had with Nick. He had noticed it earlier on.

"Of course not. No one can prevent me from marrying Alex." She vehemently stated, which was what he just recently thought. "But, I do have some questions about our future." She remembered her conversation with the king.

She stood up and walked towards the window to look at the palace ground. It was a massive lawn and enormous land that went beyond what her eyes could see.

"A piece of advice, my Princess." Her dad followed her and stood behind her, looking at the same view as she was.

He only wanted a more beautiful future for his daughter. It was the only thing he had dreamt of since she was born. He believed that Alex could continue that for him.

"What is it, Dad?" She looked forward to what he had to say. His words had always been the foundation of who she was today. Many of the things she had learned growing up came from the man behind her.

"There is every chance that Alex will lose his way, just like I did. I need you to be like your Mom. She never left my side and guided me back to the right path." He squeezed her shoulder, hoping she understood what he wanted to impart with her.

They fell into silence as both stared in the distance, savoring the final moment of their time alone together.

She appreciated what her father said.. It was a word of wisdom that she would undoubtedly take to heart.

[Chapter 462 - Status Symbol](#)

"Dad, have you heard of the Council's decision?" Edward barged into his office chambers without any announcement, interrupting his meeting with a guest.

He did not care who heard him because he was done with his father and the rules of their kingdom. It seemed it was no use anymore when his own father abandoned him. He had tried to follow him and look where he landed.

"Watch your tone, young man. Think of who you are talking to." The guest sitting on the opposite chair across the king reprimanded him.

He had high respect for the king, but not about his son. The prince's behavior clearly proved that he had no regard for decorum.

"Who are you to talk to me like that?" Edward changed his direction and faced the other man.

He did not notice him before when he walked into the room. His rage had him seeing red when he first heard of the rumor. Although he believed gossip would not have spread like wildfire if it had no fuel to feed it.

"Edward, sit down." King Edward called his son's attention. "Would you give us some privacy?" He directed his command to one of his loyal subjects, looking at him for understanding.

Upon hearing his father's voice that demanded respect, he decided to sit down on the other available chair. While the other man excused himself and left the room.

The king walked towards the side of the room and poured himself a good amount of whiskey. He felt he would need it to deal with what was to come.

"Do you have anything to do with the decision of the Council?" He repeated what he had asked earlier.

However, if the rumors were indeed true, then his father already had a say on the matter. The Council would never go behind his back and conclude among themselves.

Whatever happened, the Council would always seek his blessing. But his father, being a foolish king, would hear them out and eventually grant them their wishes.

"The decision of the Council had not been officially announced." He had known where the Council had been inclined to go.

But he could not tell his son about it. Not right now when the wedding of Alex was in a couple of hours. He could not risk his son making a scene. He could not scandalize their family any further.

"Don't give me that bullshit about technicality. The Council might not have vocally announced it to the entire world, but they already told you their decision." The prince stood up from his chair and started pacing the room.

He could not understand why his father was taking this lightly and doing nothing about it. He should be calling his scholars by this time. Looking for ways to overturn the Council's decision.

"We have discussed it in passing in one of our meetings, but nothing is set in stone just yet." King Edward told his son, hoping that would suffice.

He wished he could do more for his son, but he had dug this big hole and buried his crown in it. There was nothing he could do to reverse the situation.

"But you have to do something about it, Dad. You can't let them get away with my birthright." He demanded from his father, still not convinced that his father was doing enough.

Alex was already getting married. If his father could not stop the Council, he could kiss the throne goodbye. He was still not buying his cousin's act that he was not after his position.

"Let us talk about this after the wedding. We could not do anything about it now." King Edward had to calm him down.

He could not afford not to attend the grand celebration. Everyone would be expecting his blessing to the marriage. But many would question if his son decided not to grace them with his presence.

"Fine." The young Edward finally conceded, knowing that there was nothing else he could do at the moment.

But he would make sure that the topic was not yet over. His father would have to deal with the Council and give him back what was originally his.

"Good." The king felt satisfied with his answer. He had not had much time to argue with his son. He had to prepare for his appearance at the wedding soon and so was his son.

He downed the remaining of his drink, wanting to clear his throat. "One more thing." He turned to his son, making sure that he was listening.

"What is it, Dad?" He knew his dad would tell him to get ready for the event.

What his father did not know was? He had all intention to attend the ceremonies. He would not miss it for the world. He had to be there to support his cousin and his lovely bride.

"I know that your business venture with this Nickolas Travis is doing well. I also heard that he is one big bad news. Your association with him could only lead us into trouble." The king stated as he stood up from his chair and moved towards the door.

"I assure you that his business is legit. Those are only rumors from competition who wanted a piece of his company." Prince Edward tried to defend his partner and investment.

He had to find out who was supplying his father with that information. He knew he went into bed with a shady person, but he had run his underground operation without a hitch.

He could only think of one man who could ruin all his plans. He was the only one who could have a motive to do this to him. He believed his cousin would not stop until he had taken everything away from him, just like when they were young.

"Still, I want you to end all your transactions with him and cut all your connections. I don't want our names to be dragged by this man to the mud once the authorities start snooping at his illegal activities." If he could save him one last time, this was it.

His son had to listen to him before he ruined his life forever. He still had a chance for a future. He might not turn out to be king, but he was still a prince.. He could still maintain his status symbol and live a comfortable life.

[Chapter 463 - Blindsided](#)

The massive cathedral was packed with hundreds of guests, and more were expected to arrive. Royalties, celebrities, politicians, and wealthy members of the society were invited to the ceremonies.

Well, anybody who wanted to be somebody had to be part of the celebration. It was, after all, the wedding of the century. This event was already set to make history.

"How is everyone outside?" Alex asked, checking the black military uniform he chose for the occasion for an invisible lint on the fabric in front of the mirror.

He wore a traditional garb that his father and his father before him had worn during matrimones. Besides the emblem of his father's house, the only medal he wore was the air force wings pin he received during his service in their military.

Other than that, he had not served in his country because he had chosen to stay away. He had opted to live away from his home to build a new life for himself.

"The place is starting to get full. I think everyone invited decided to join the celebration." Marcus stated as soon as he came back to the back room where his friend was waiting for the ceremonies.

He had run an errand for his friend and checked on the status of his bride. He knew that Dani would never stand him up on the altar. Still, he was a bit anxious that other circumstances might still happen to prevent the wedding from proceeding.

He had his men on high alert, doubling the security around the palace and the cathedral to guarantee that the threats would be neutralized.

"It is to be expected." He had no doubt of the volume of the attendees to this special event in his life. Not because they actually wanted to celebrate their union, but rather take advantage of the exposure.

He already suspected that most of their guests would use their event for their personal motives, except for a few who truly wished to share this moment with him and his bride.

"Don't worry about Dani. She is already in her gown with her parents, just waiting for the signal to leave the palace." Marcus wished to assure his friend that all was running according to plan.

"That is good." He rubbed his hands together, trying to get the chill he felt inside. Not that it was cold outside. On the contrary, the weather was fully cooperating with the entire celebration.

It was a sunny day. Only partial clouds could be seen on the horizon. It was a perfect day to conduct the ceremony. The sun was high in the sky but not too hot to cause any discomfort.

The breeze was just in the right amount to cool the skin but not enough to mess up a tendril on top of his head. He could not think of any natural forces that could ruin this day for them.

"Better stop fidgeting before someone mistaken that for having cold feet," David said, noticing how his friend was acting when he walked inside the room.

He could not guess what his friend was feeling, but he could assume it was worse than being in a boardroom while in a hostile takeover surrounded by sharks.

"The car is ready anytime you want to run," Evan said, following close behind David.

He still could not accept that their group was slowly changing. But he would support his friend to whatever he decided to do with his life. Either to stay or to run.

"Stop it, guys. Kidding aside, I think something is off." He clapped his friends' hands, glad that they could join him.

He could not pinpoint where it was coming from, but he could not shake the feeling of brewing trouble. He wished it was just the nerves kicking in and nothing to do with his instincts. Because he was rarely wrong.

"You know they will not pass up the chance to mess with you." Marcus fixed his bowtie and tugged his collar to put it in place.

He would have joined the rest of their friends in taking a jive at Alex, but he already saw how serious his friend was about this threat.

He was also aware of the attempt on Dani's life. It was still not clear of the intention of the mastermind, whether the intent was to take her alive or to put an end to it.

"I know, but..." Before Alex could finish his sentence, another man showed up in his room. Unlike the others, he was an unwelcome sight.

If he was not part of his family, he would not have invited him to the wedding, but it was out of his hands. Besides, he still had no proof that he had anything to do with the incident.

He could not disrespect the royal family by making a scene at his own wedding ceremony. He would be keeping an eye on him, especially when he had learned that Nick also made an appearance as his cousin's guest.

"I think congratulations are in order, my dear cousin." Edward pranced inside the room, followed by a waiter carrying a bottle of champagne and several glasses.

He wore his military uniform from the armed forces, showing off several medals that everybody in the room doubted he actually earned.

"Thank you, Edward, for showing your support." Alex could not find any other words to say to his cousin, who he believed had an ulterior motive for visiting him.

He had to play his cousin's game, letting him think that he had the upper hand. He could use this to his advantage and get closer to his cousin's plans. If he was indeed part of the conspiracy to bring him down.

He did not mind an attack on him, but when his enemies started involving Dani in the scene, it had become a different ball game. He would be prepared for their next attack.

"We should make a toast for the groom." He handed each a glass of wine and raised his glass to his cousin as a salute. "For a fruitful future with your lovely wife."

He was indeed making a toast for his cousin and his fate. A future that did not include him getting his throne. Not if he could still do something about it.

All raised their glass to their friend, wishing him the best of married life. But all was apprehensive of the other prince's presence.

"Excuse me, Prince Alexander." Another voice interrupted them inside the room. "I just want to inform you that the bride is about to leave the palace." He continued when he had the prince's attention.

Alex acknowledged the information relayed to him with a nod, dismissing the messenger. But his mind was already working overtime, wishing to have the room all to himself.

"I guess you still have a few things to do around here. I better leave you be." Prince Edward clapped his cousin on the shoulder before moving toward the exit.

He had done what his father had asked him to do. Now it was his turn to do what he had to do to get his throne, moving out of the room.

"What do you think?" Marcus spoke once the other prince was out of earshot, directing his question to the groom.

He did not believe even one bit the nice act Edward had displayed just a few minutes ago. He suspected that Edward was assessing the situation.

"I think I need to make a call." Alex immediately grabbed his phone in his pocket and dialed a number.

He was not taking any chances. Alarm bells were ringing in his head, and he could not ignore them anymore. But if something would go down at this moment or later, he trusted his team to do their jobs.

They had already had conceived every possible scenario they could think of.. Designed and strategized counterattacks to prevent being blindsided.

[Chapter 464 - Take A Bullet](#)

He stood by the car, inhaling deeply, dragging a big puff of the cigarette in his lips. A series of smoke slowly escaped from his mouth and nose, creating an illusion of white clouds around him.

It was broad daylight, and he had a clear view of his surroundings. He had all his attention fixed on the building across from the street.

It appeared that he was waiting for something or someone to cross the street or come out of the building. But whatever it was, he was not taking his eyes away from that direction.

"I have eyes on the tiger." The man said on his Bluetooth headset, indicating his sights had acquired his target.

He immediately went inside the car, readying himself for the subsequent command. When the man on the other line gave the signal, he automatically knew what he had to do.

He nodded to the man sitting in the driver's seat to start the engine and follow the bridal car about to leave the premises. He could not lose sight of their mark.

He was not about to lose this job because of a slight mistake. This undertaking was one of the biggest paydays in his life. He could not afford to mess it up.

"Follow them and update me. You know the drill." The man whose voice seemed to be calling the shot instructed before abruptly ending the call.

The man on the passenger's seat kept his eyes on the prize as they followed the other car not too far from their position. His job was quite simple.

All he had to do was follow the car. Then, he would give the signal when they were close to their designated spot. From there, the rest of the team would take the lead.

"Sir, the car is stopping on the side. What should I do?" The driver informed him, suddenly alerting him of a change in plan.

He was not expecting the bridal car to make a pit stop. It was not in the itinerary passed to them during their meetings. He knew he had to report this to the other team urgently.

"Boss, I think you should reconsider changing the plan." He recommended after telling him about the current situation.

He could also see an opportunity here. If he played his cards right, he might find himself with a fat bonus. But he had to be careful. One wrong move, his head would be dangling on a spike.

"What do you have in mind?" The man calling the shot asked.

He was curious about what his man was planning to do. He wondered if he had made the right decision to put the young man in that position, considering the high stake of the job.

But he had proven, time and time again, that he was ready to assume higher roles. This time, it was his time to prove his value to his group. If he could pull off a good job, then it would mean he could sit at the larger table.

"Hear me out." He quickly explained his plan, knowing that time was of the essence. They could not afford to mess up the timing, or they would lose the window of opportunity to execute their plans.

After telling his boss of his idea, he waited with his eyes still glued to the other car, which was still parked on the side. He wondered if the bride had cold feet and would want to change her mind.

But the reason for the stop was not relevant. What was important was the execution of the plan and the success of the task at hand.

"I like the idea, but could you pull it off with minimal backup." The boss asked, a bit skeptical but still open to the suggestion.

As of now, with the sudden shift in the schedule. The boss had no other option but to go with his scheme. He still could come up with a better plan if there was time, but unfortunately, there was none.

"I can. If you will give me a chance." He told him, anxious to hear his response. When he finally gave the go signal, he quickly replied. "Thank you, Sir. I will not fail you." He swore to the man who had shown so much trust in his skills.

But more than the money, he wanted to be recognized in the organization. It was his time to prove not only to his boss that he was ready to climb up the ladder.

Then, a sudden chill went through him, remembering the other incident that failed. Luckily, he was not part of that team. He would not make the same mistake.

"I hope so." The man could only trust him this time with such a big job. Because he had no choice. But he already had his other teams deployed to intercept them as soon as they could. "Give me an update when it is done." The line died again.

The man in the car signaled his driver to listen, giving him instructions. Then, he talked to the men in the other utility vehicle not far behind them, also waiting for his command.

He discussed his plan for the other team to take care of the security detail following the bridal car. While he and his team personally handle the driver and the bodyguard inside the white vehicle.

"We have no more time. Let us do this." He ordered the two teams at his disposal to finally make a move.

He could feel his body sweat, and slightly his hand shook, but that was to be expected. Nobody was totally out of fear when they performed a job like this.

Even the humongous and meanest men he knew still admitted that they feared for their lives every time they went out there. Fear was a good factor that would keep him alive if worse came to worse.

There would be a blood bath if things did not work out the way he had envisioned his plans. It could go either way. It could be theirs or them. But whatever happened, failing was not an option.

"Go!" He signaled for all his men to move at lightning speed. His men were well-trained, just like he was.

He might be the youngest in the group, but his men trusted him for his skills in tactics and fighting. No one would dare question his command, betray him, or they would die in his hands.

Everything was happening in fast motion, but precision was still the key to a successful ambush. One mistake could be the end of life and the failure of a mission.

"Now!" He shouted to his team when everybody was in their position, causing a disturbance on the street.

People started moving away when they saw what the commotion was about. The street was suddenly empty as passersby, tourists, and the locals ran for their lives or hid behind a covering, protecting themselves from what was about to happen.

He had his gun out, pointing to the white car, while his other team had the other car also surrounded. The only way the occupants of the vehicles were going out was in a body bag.

That was unless they would surrender without a fight. But studying these men, they never went down without defending their client.. They would take a bullet to protect them, even costing their lives.

[Chapter 465 - Master Manipulator](#)

Earlier, back at the palace, a call on Ethan's phone broke the silence that enveloped their privacy. Her father had to excuse himself to take the call, leaving her alone to herself.

On the other hand, Ethan walked along the hallway of the palace, looking for some empty space to take the call. He did not want anyone eavesdropping on his conversation.

"Yes," Ethan finally answered when he was secured inside another room. "What is it, Alex?" He quickly asked, hoping that it was nothing serious.

But nothing in his world was that easy. He had many enemies who would stop at nothing to destroy him, but apparently, his soon-to-be son-in-law was no different.

"I think we have a situation. This is just a precaution, but I already instructed my men to change the plan. I know this is last minute." Alex informed Ethan.

He had formulated this on his mind, thinking he might need a backup plan. He never informed anyone about it until the last minute. Well, except for his most trusted men, Tim and Ben, who had helped him strategize a game plan.

He needed assurance that the plan would not leak to their enemies. He believed that spies could be lurking everywhere, just waiting to gather information.

"Ok, I understand," Ethan confirmed the plan, ready to cooperate with him.

He could not agree more with Alex's idea. If executed well, they just might be able to pull this off without causing much of a scene. The wedding would go without a hitch.

"I will inform the others that it is a go. Be ready for anything." Alex warned Ethan, alerting him for any possibility.

He could only wish to accompany her bride, but tradition prevented him from seeing her. Suddenly, the idea of eloping seemed a better one compared to this grand celebration.

"We will see you at the church," Ethan said, determined to get her daughter safely to her wedding.

He ended the call and immediately returned to her daughter. She was now surrounded by her wife and her friends. He stared at his family, promising to himself that no harm would come to them.

"I think we are all ready to leave." Antonette showed up in the room, carrying her list of itineraries. Checking each box, she concluded that everything was in order.

She began instructing the usherettes to assist the wedding party to their respective vehicles that would take them to the cathedral. While she personally handled the parents and the bride.

"Sir, can I talk to you for a second." Ben pulled him on the side, not wanting anyone else to hear what he had to say. They allowed the others to walk ahead of them and waited till they were in the clear.

He had worked for Alex for almost a decade now. His family would not have a comfortable life if not for his boss. He would do anything to return the favor, even offering his life for him.

Until now, he still felt guilty for what happened to Dani. He still felt responsible for the incident, but now, he wanted to make up for it by doing his job more thoroughly.

"Tell me," Ethan figured that Ben would not have disturbed him if it was not necessary.

Ben must have crucial information to share with him regarding their current situation. Any report that could help was more than welcome at a time like this.

"We caught a man lurking around the bushes a few minutes ago. He claimed that he was just taking pictures. We already placed him in custody for interrogation." Ben related the latest update.

One of his men was roaming the ground when he spotted him behind some bushes taking pictures. It was indeed possible that he was just part of the paparazzi, trying to get some pictures.

However, it was more likely that he was gathering information for whatever it would serve him and the people he was working with. He could not discount that possibility.

"Keep him there until we figure out what he knows and who he was working for," Ethan ordered, but he could see that there was more. "What is it?"

He could not contain his curiosity as he noticed that Ben was still holding out something from him. He had not succeeded in this career without learning a few tricks and reading people.

"I think there is a mole in the security." Ben voiced out his suspicions. Although he had already mentioned this with Tim and Alex, he could not confirm it yet without enough proof.

Everything was mere speculation until he gathered enough intel to support his claim. But he was already eyeing some men who he felt were not trustworthy.

"Do you have an idea of who they are?" Ethan would not be surprised if that was true.

Even the most loyal men could be bought at the right price. What more those who were only in for the money. He had his share of traitors in the workforce.

"A suspicion." That was all Ben would like to share. "But I am not letting my guards down. I have my eyes on them." For now, that was all he was willing to share about the topic.

"Update me if you have more information," Ethan stated as they both tried to catch up with the entourage.

He just hoped that these men, who Alex trusted with his life and his daughter, would never betray them for money. He also had his team, who he trusted with his family, but he had already put them to the test and passed with flying colors.

"Dad, is everything alright?" Dani asked when his father finally stood beside her as they settled at the lobby for final instructions.

She could not help but notice his dad's private conversation with Ben. In years of experience, it could only mean one thing. There might be trouble coming.

"It is just some minor problem with the bridal car. It is already taken care of." He told his daughter, not wanting her to worry about anything.

After a few minutes, the problem with the vehicles was sorted out by the security group. The female entourage rode their respective cars.

The last to leave was the bride's parents and the bride herself. With Ben on the lead, he guided them to the car they would be using.

"Do you have this under control?" Ethan whispered to Ben, subtly asking before following his wife and daughter inside the backseat.

"Yes, Sir. You have nothing to worry about." Ben wished he was speaking the truth. But they both knew that anything could happen.

"I trust you. If anything, protect my wife and daughter." Ethan said to him, knowing Ben understood what he was saying. Ben only nodded before closing the door on him.

"We are ready," Ben spoke to his headpiece when everyone was settled on their seat. He rode the front seat while the family was at the back.

The other team went ahead of them, while the others were not far behind as they left the palace on their way to the cathedral where the ceremony was to take place.

Even the most well-conceived plan messed up when fate intervened.. He just hoped that the master manipulator was on their side today.

[Chapter 466 - Fate Was Sealed](#)

He was sitting inside the backroom waiting for the arrival of his bride. Last he heard, they had already left the palace. Now, all he could do was hope nothing would go wrong with his plan.

"Ben said that they are on their way," Alex said when Marcus asked for an update.

Marcus wanted to handle the situation since it was his wedding, but he would not have it. He could not put the life of his bride in the hands of another.

He did not want to worry since he knew Dani was in good hands, but he was still human. He still feared for the same things. The difference, he could handle the stress quite well than others.

"As your best man, do you want me to do something?" He asked as they sat comfortably on the couch.

David had to go out and check on his date. While Evan, well, had other things to do. Leaving just the two of them to wait for the bride.

"I think you have already done enough. I would not have made it through this wedding if not for you." Alex tapped his friend on the shoulder.

They had been through many stressful situations, but he believed this was the worse one yet. He never thought that this ceremony would be like going through hell.

He knew that once Dani was in his arms, things would change. He would be floating on air, thinking that he was in heaven with an angel in his arms.

"Hey, can I interrupt the private moment?" Lance walked inside the room with a smile on his face. "I am sorry I am late and missing most of the fun."

He did not mind not being the best man. Marcus had been a great friend to Alex when he needed a friend the most. He would have done the same under the circumstances.

Besides, he had been swamped with work that he barely had time to join in the fun. Much more took on the responsibility of being the best man.

"Hi, Lance. Come on, join us." Alex beckoned his cousin, even offering him a glass of the wine Edward had brought earlier.

He had not seen much of Lance with all the activities, but he knew Lance had been busy running the business at this end of the world.

Looking at his cousin, he could not help but think that he would have been a perfect choice for the throne, instead of Edward or even him. But their law needed a revamp first before that could ever happen.

"How are you holding up?" Lance asked, sitting down opposite the two on the lone chair.

He had heard all about the threat, and knowing his cousin, he was not taking any of this lightly. Well, he would not wish this burden on his cousin, especially on his wedding day.

"Barely." Marcus was the one to answer his question, believing that Alex would never admit his true feelings.

His friend was not the kind of man who showed his weaknesses. But he was a friend who could guess when he needed his support.

"I am fine, guys. Stop with the melodrama." Alex could not be more than happier to have great friends around, who would always have his back.

But, he needed to hear from his bride soon, or all his facade would soon break loose. He began to realize that his life was only beating because of her.

He could not imagine what would happen to him if he failed to protect her because he dragged her to this foolish tradition. He could have married her readily in the city hall. It would have been less stressful than this.

"Good to hear. Then, we should make a toast for losing your freedom soon." Lance understood his cousin's situation.

Maybe if he was placed in the same situation, he would have done the same thing. Protect the woman he loved with everything he got.

Unfortunately, he still could not find the woman for him. He liked Jacky a lot, but he guessed not enough for him to move mountains and swim the deepest sea, just like Alex was doing for Dani.

But he could pinpoint a man who would do that for Jacky. It was so obvious how much they were totally crazy for each other. However, mistakes, guilt, and pride could blind a man or a woman of the truth.

"I will toast to that." Marcus poured them each glass and clinked his glass of wine to both Alex and Lance.

He had no issues with Lance, even if he was back with Jacky or not. In fact, he would be more than happy to see Jacky in the arms of a good man like Lance than a man like him.

As they raised their glass, Alex's phone started beeping. He put down his glass and quickly answered the call. The other two could only wait for an update as Alex listened to the other line.

"She's here," Alex uttered with a massive sigh of relief. He had to release a big chunk of air that he had been holding in his lungs since he answered the call.

It was all he wanted to hear, to know that his bride had safely arrived for their wedding ceremony. Now, nothing could ever ruin his day because, in less than an hour, he would be holding his wife's hand.

"Then, we should get you ready," Marcus said, raising his glass again before the three of them finished up their toast.

He checked his friend in the mirror and tapped him on the shoulder to tell him he was ready. He had always been the only one in the group who knew that Dani was the one from the very start.

"Let us get this show on the road," Lance said, mimicking a famous line that he watched in one of the western movies he had watched with Jacky before. "Are you ready?"

Lance opened the door, guiding him out of the room into the hallway that would lead him to his destiny.

"Any lingering doubts that you should not marry this woman," Marcus asked, seriously looking his friend in the eyes.

But he doubted that he would see any trace of him backing out of this matrimony. To others, it might be the end of their bachelor's life, but to his friend. All he saw was the beginning of a new life.

"I have been ready to be hers since I put my ring on her finger," Alex told his friends without even batting an eyelash.

He might be trembling inside with fear earlier. Presently, his heart was running a hundred miles per minute out of his excitement to see his bride.

He had been ready to marry her for as long as he could remember. He even believed that he was destined to be with her from the very beginning. He was just not aware of it back then.

The first time Alex had laid eyes on her, he had no doubt that his fate had been marked to cross paths with her again. It was the precise reason that he had never forgotten about her.. Their fate was sealed.

[Chapter 467 - A Wreck And Riding A Sinking Ship](#)

"Is this not great?" Cassie said as she attacked her pancake and coffee with gusto in a diner not far from her place. As she tried to convince him that going out was a good idea.

She felt so alive and had a great appetite as she enjoyed the food on the table. She could feel her heart pumping with adrenaline as she thought of the things they would do for the rest of the day.

She sliced a big chunk of the pancake and tried to feed Jacob with a mouthful. He first declined, but eventually, he opened his mouth and gave in. He only ordered coffee since he was not hungry.

"You know I could have cooked you that in the safety of your place." Jacob still was apprehensive about her plans.

He wanted to regret agreeing to her plans, but seeing the smile on her lips made him feel guilty that it was his brother who was the cause of all her misery.

He knew it was not the food that was making her jolly. It had something to do with the feeling of being free. However, he could not help but fear that this little venture had a price at stake.

"But this is much more fun." She pointed at her surrounding, with the old tables and chairs and slightly dilapidated paintings on the wall.

She did pick a place that no one would suspect she would go to. It was a small, typical diner that the locals or those on a tight budget would go to.

She would have preferred to dine in an upscale restaurant. But many would recognize her in such a place, even in her disguise. Although she did make an extra effort on her makeup and hair to change how she looked.

"Fine." He conceded, seeing that she was genuinely having fun despite her situation. "Where else are we going after this?" He was curious about her plan.

He could not complain since he was used to this kind of scene. Before his brother showed an interest in taking him under his wings, he and his mother did not have much.

If not for his financial backing, he could never afford his education. He was indeed thankful for his brother for helping him out, but he was still curious about his motive for doing so.

"Let me see." Cassie tapped on her chin, appearing to be thinking of something. "Well, we better finish this so we can be on our way." Judging by her expression, she was able to come up with a plan.

She shoved a big chunk into his mouth and did the same with her, making them almost choke in her foolishness. Both grabbed the coffee in front of them and drank immediately.

But when she looked up, she could not help but laugh at his expression, which caused her to spill the coffee out of her mouth. Unluckily, it landed on Jacob. Hot coffee splattered all over his shirt and pants.

"What the heck?" Jacob yelled in surprise, quickly swallowing the food and beverage inside his mouth.

He was not expecting that from happening, but he had no time to duck out of the way when she blew the contents of her mouth on him.

"I am so sorry, Jacob. It was an accident." She immediately apologized, grabbing the tissue on the table to help him wipe the liquid and pieces of pancake out of his body.

"I did not mean it. I am sorry." She kept saying. But she could not keep the smile away from her lips, still finding the situation a bit funny.

"From the way you are smiling, it seems like you are not sorry at all." Jacob stopped her hands from rubbing his chest, especially when her hands were going dangerously low.

He did find Cassie beautiful, intelligent and sexy, very attractive if he was honest. In any other circumstance, he would have dated her.

But her past involvement with his brother prevented him from pursuing a deeper relationship with her. It would not seem right for him to take advantage of her vulnerability.

"Well, you can not blame me. You should have seen yourself earlier." Cassie chuckled, trying hard to suppress her laughter.

She took another tissue on the table and wiped a few droplets of coffee that were left on his cheeks. She did not want him to be angry at her. It was not her intention.

"Really? But have you seen yourself?" Jacob returned the question, mildly laughing at her.

He did find it funny how her facial expression turned from happy to complete horror with the following incident. Then, he was slightly shocked when she started to panic and had her fingers all over his shirt.

He did not mind what happened to his clothes. He could easily have it washed later, but they would have to go home to change if they were going anywhere else.

"Ok, ok, ok. You win. We both look ridiculous." She conceded, throwing away the napkins in her hands. "Shall we call it a truce?"

She offered her hand for a shake, glad that he seemed to be enjoying the situation himself. When he accepted her hand, she was relieved to know that everything seemed fine between them.

"How can I be mad at someone as adorable as you?" Jacob kept her hand in his, but instead of letting it go, he pulled her closer to him. "Wait."

He leaned forward, and with the tip of his finger, he wiped a syrup stuck at the side of her lips. Then, his eyes shifted from her lips to her eyes, finding himself fixated on them.

"What are you doing?" She was supposed to say that question. But the words got stuck in her throat as his eyes never wavered from hers.

She was suddenly unable to move, paralyzed on the spot as she felt the electricity that ran through her body with that single touch.

"We don't want you walking along the New York street looking like that. Don't we?" Jacob finally said as he pulled his hands away from her.

Suddenly, he realized the mistake he had just made with her. He should not have touched her or looked deeply into her eyes because it stirred something inside of him.

"Of course. Thanks." She finally snapped out of her own trance, retracting her hands back on her lap.

She was confused with the way she felt. She was not expecting that to happen. She liked Jacob. He was the closest she could call a friend. Since she associated herself with Nick, she had cut ties to the other people in her life.

"Anyway, I think we should go so we can explore more before the day ends." Cassie quickly stood up from her seat, grabbing her bag and eyeglasses.

"Where to?" He asked, still having no idea of her plans.

He placed a few bills on the table before walking with her outside the small establishment.

But she would not take advantage of his kindness and friendship by tagging him along with her insane life. He deserved more than what she could offer.. She was a wreck and riding a sinking ship.

[Chapter 468 - Pick Up The Pieces](#)

The cathedral was almost full of guests who wished to be part of the grand celebration. Nobody on the guest list would pass up the chance to be included in the event. While many still would wish to be invited.

Local folks, tourists from all over the world, and the international media had also camped outside the imposing structure. Some were already present since last night, while the others arrived in the wee hours of the morning to witness such a historical event.

"How are you holding up?" He had to ask, thinking that all of this might be too much for her.

If his understanding was correct and she did not break up with him, this would have been her wedding. Instead, she was witnessing her ex-fiance getting married to someone else.

Then, she had to answer the questions of the media about her failed relationship with the prince. That was not the worse part. She had to introduce her fake husband to the world to prove that she had moved on.

"As I told you for the hundredth time, I am ok, Troy," Tyra told him, touched by his concern. "Instead of focusing on me, can we at least enjoy this wedding. I like what they did with the place."

She could not stress enough to her husband that this wedding was not affecting her the way he thought it might. In truth, she was also relieved to feel nothing.

Well, not exactly nothing, but not the way she was expecting when she first heard of the wedding. She might still feel a bit sad about it. Not because of the lost love, but more on the long-time friendship that might have gone down the drain.

"Sure, if that is what you want." He was here to support her in any way he could, which was part of their agreement. But more than that, he genuinely liked to help her, contract or not.

He could not think of a better way to show his wife, whether it was a sham, that he was more than a paid help, but a friend, who she could depend on in times like this.

"Oh, my. He is here." She whispered to Troy, referring to the man she wished she did not have to see so soon. She quickly hid her face in his shoulders, hoping that it was not too late.

Although she already knew that it was inevitable that she would see her father on this occasion. She had hoped that it would be much later, or better yet, not ever.

"Who are you talking about?" Troy asked, seeing that the place was full of people. She could be referring to anyone. He had no plan to play a guessing game.

But then again, when he saw an arrogant-looking man glancing their way. He could already assume whom she was talking about.

"My father." She mumbled, still trying to hide, cowering behind his body. "Do you think he saw me?"

She was having a great time earlier, but now, she felt all the fun was sucked out of her as she got a glimpse of her father looking directly at them.

"I'm sorry, but I think he did." He leaned closer to her ear and whispered before nodding at the man in question.

He might not have met him personally, but he had no doubt that he already knew who he was. He probably had his profile in his possession as soon as he learned of his marriage to his daughter.

Luckily, his meeting with his father-in-law would be delayed for later. He was sitting quite a few rows away from them, on the opposite side of the aisle.

"Can I say I am sorry in advance for dragging you into this? I can already feel that my dad would do something stupid." Tyra expressed her embarrassment at what her father might do later.

She already learned that her father only survived in the business world, not because of his skills and abilities to run an empire. But because of his scheming and manipulations.

She was not about to feed her husband to her father, who would only use him for his personal interest. She was sure that her father had already checked on his financial background and found it lucrative.

"Don't worry about me. I can handle your father." Troy could see the worry in her eyes.

He handled more cunning people than her father in his line of business. He could deal with one man who only wanted money. He did not need protection from his wife, but he would definitely protect her from her own father.

"You can always say no to whatever he wants. Remember, we don't need his blessing in this marriage." She reminded him, not wanting to put him in any difficult situation.

Besides, she was not here to please her father. The only reason she actually wanted to come to the wedding was to see if she actually had moved on from Alex.

"Let me handle him my way. Just like you said earlier, let us just enjoy this day." He wanted to wipe out the worry lines on her face.

He would not have second thoughts of bringing her home if he saw her agitation increase. Either from seeing Alex getting married or dealing with her father.

"Ok." She finally conceded, nodding at her father as a greeting before putting her concentration back on the event.

She wished she was stronger when dealing with her father. She hoped she could overcome her need to get his approval. She was tired of pleasing him, following his whim, and taking care of him.

She wanted to be free of him and her obligation as his daughter. Something that her father kept reminding her of every opportunity he got.

"I think the ceremony is about to start," Troy muttered in a low voice, watching her entire reaction.

He wondered what would happen when she finally witnessed the exchange of vows. How would she react to her ex-lover pledging his love to another?

He believed it would never be the same as what they did in the city hall. Their wedding was only for convenience and had nothing to do with love.

"Oh, you're probably right." She absentmindedly answered as her mind was still reeling from her thoughts about her father.

Then, her eyes finally settled at the center of the altar, focusing on a man who suddenly walked in. He looked more dashing than she remembered.

Maybe it was the glow that was oozing from his aura. His smile as he listened to what Marcus was saying could light up the entire room.

Honestly, she had never seen him this happy before, not even when they were still together. Not that she was complaining, she was actually happy for him.

"Are you good?" The man she called her husband asked, wrapping his arms around her shoulders for support.

He could see that her eyes never left the man at the altar, but he could not read what she was thinking. Her expression did not tell him much, but her body remained calm since he wrapped his arms around her.

He hoped it was a sign that she was getting over him.. He hoped that he would be enough to help her pick up the pieces of her life and meld her back together again.

[Chapter 469 - The Start Of Forever](#)

She sat in the car with her parents, slightly worried about the wedding. She had learned that her car accident was not an accident but an orchestrated plot against them by an unknown mastermind.

She could not help but fear not for her safety alone but for her family and fiancé, as well. Alex and her father had tried to downplay the situation, not wanting her to worry about it, but she knew better.

"We are here," Ben, who was in the front seat behind the partition glass, spoke in the speaker, informing them of their arrival.

He was glad that they misled the enemy with their decoy. He just hoped that his associates were not injured by the ambush. He still had to check on them later.

For now, his mission was to protect their princess and bring her safely to the ceremony. Alex was depending on him. He had no plan to fail this time.

"Thanks, Ben," Ethan answered as he turned to his daughter, who appeared to be a little anxious.

He could not blame her after what she went through earlier. They had to deceive the enemy and make them believe that she rode the decoy car.

As of now, he could not let her worry about anything else. From this point onwards, all he wanted to see painted on her daughter's face was the excitement of getting married.

"I am so thrilled for you. I can already see you with a fruitful and wonderful life with Alex." Her mother, who already had tears in her eyes, said as she held her hands in hers.

She seldom cried unless there was a big reason why. But she knew, if she had to shed tears, they would be happy ones. Eventually, she smiled, controlling the tears from falling.

She knew if she started crying, chances were, her daughter would be crying too. She could not ruin her daughter's beautiful face.

"Thanks, Mom, for everything." She tapped Laura's hands before pulling her for a hug. Then, she turned to her dad, who sported a big smile on his lips. "I love you so much. Both of you."

They ended up in a group hug, expressing not through words what they felt at the moment. Ethan was the first to pull away, followed by her mom.

"I think it is time, my princess," Ethan said, afraid that the longer they were cooped up inside the car, the more they would become emotional.

He could see behind the tainted glass the coordinator signaling the other parties to enter the cathedral for the procession. On the other side of the fence, many spectators and press awaited her daughter's appearance.

He had dreamt of this for his daughter. For her to marry the man that would make her happy and give her a beautiful, happy life. He was glad it was Alex and not a man like Nick.

"Are you ready?" Laura squeezed her hand, showing her daughter her full support.

At least she could see that her daughter's mood had changed. Her earlier anxiety was replaced by a certain calm. Maybe it was the excitement of the wedding and the adrenaline running through her veins.

She could not help but thank God for giving her a kind and lovely daughter. Now, she was letting her go for another chapter in her life. Dani had finally grown up and now leaving their nest.

"Yes," A single word that meant so much to her. Suddenly all she could focus on was the man waiting for her inside that massive structure.

He had never failed to keep her safe. He had always kept his promise. He loved her with no conditions and with love that knew no bounds.

Looking outside her window, she saw all the people that came to witness their union. Comparing herself to them, she could honestly say that she felt like the luckiest woman in the world.

A mild knock on the window snapped her back to reality, then the door opened. Ben stood outside waiting to assist his father, who was the first to exit the car.

"You look lovely, my princess." Laura gently touched her face, not wanting to ruin her applied makeup.

Then, she also exited the vehicle, following her husband outside. Official cameramen and photographers allowed to cover the wedding took their pictures as they waited for their daughter's turn to join them.

Finally, Antonette gave the signal to Ben. It was time for the bride to make her public appearance to the whole world. The anticipation was killing everyone. To see the beautiful bride in her stunning wedding gown.

"Thank you, Ben," Dani mouthed to the man standing by the door, holding out his hand to assist her.

She was not only thanking him for the assistance but for his sacrifice to assure her safety. She knew that he blamed himself for the accident, but she made it clear that it was not his fault.

She carefully got out of the car, mindful not to step on the hemline of her dress. She would not want to trip on her own clothes and land on the floor on her wedding day.

"Just doing my job, Miss." He uttered in his no-nonsense voice as he continued to usher her until Antonette stood by her side.

Antonette and her assistants helped her with the dress. They fixed the creases on the gown and the veil until all were back in its place. While she held onto her bouquet made of her favorite flower, a combination of various colored roses.

On the other hand, she smiled at Ben, knowing that it was not simply a job for him. Alex had told him about the story of his men.

They were not merely paid men to keep them safe, but a family, protecting each other. She owed him her life, not only from the previous incident but all the times he had been there to protect her.

"Miss Hamilton, can you pose for the camera." One of the official photographers requested as she stood on the red carpet.

She stopped and proudly smiled in front of the lenses. For the first time, she wanted to show the whole world how happy she was to marry the man of her dreams.

Several shots later, she was escorted by her parents towards the closed wooden doors. They waited for the signal of the beginning of the ceremony.

A few minutes from now, it would be the start of forever for the groom and the bride.

[Chapter 470 - A Series Of Moments](#)

As she stood in front of the massive doors, waiting for her turn to walk down the aisle. All she could think about was all the blessings she should be thankful for.

She had rejected everything her father had sacrificed to give her a comfortable life. She had continued to fight Alex's attempt to protect her and keep her safe.

"You are the most beautiful bride I have ever seen," Ethan whispered to her daughter.

He was not only saying that because she was his daughter. But he had seen her grow as a kind and caring woman who was neither selfish nor materialistic. She always had a pure heart.

He was lucky that she did not inherit any of his bad traits nor corrupted by the rotten system. She had remained vigilant in making things right, even if it was not the easy way out.

"You are only saying that because I am your daughter, and you love me." She teased her father, but she knew her father would never lie to her.

She believed every parent would say that their children were the most beautiful creatures in the world despite how they looked or what they did.

But everything her parents did for her was only to show her how much they loved her. How much they were willing to do anything to give her everything she would ever need in life.

Maybe it was time that she returned all of that love and sacrifice. It was her chance to prove that she was also willing to do anything for them.

"Thank you so much, Dad, Mom." She hugged them both, glad that she had agreed to this wedding. She suddenly realized the importance of the matrimonial ceremony.

She learned that the real reason for getting married was more than the celebration itself. It was not just a mere event where everybody flaunted their best or wealth.

She believed it was something so much more, just like the giddy feeling she was experiencing at the moment. The anticipation of seeing the man she was about to marry and spent the rest of her life with.

"We only want the best for you." Her father stated, kissing her lightly on her forehead.

He would give her the universe if he could continue to see that sweet smile on her face right now, over and over again. But he was passing down the torch to another man.

It would be Alex's responsibility to keep his daughter happy and safe by the time they got married. If he failed, he would not have a second thought of taking her daughter back. But he doubted Alex would ever fall short in his obligation.

"I know now." She acknowledged the sacrifice and the love that her parents had given her. "I'm sorry for doubting it before."

She would embrace this opportunity for a brand new life. With Alex by her side, she could make her world far better. Opening herself more to her family and the family she would be making with Alex.

"We love you, our princess. That is all that matters." Laura finally spoke up, pleased to hear that her husband and her daughter had finally reached an understanding.

She had waited for this moment. The point where they would finally see eye to eye and not just be civil because of their blood relations.

"Excuse me, but we are about to start." Antonette broke the little bonding that the three were sharing.

Dealing with rich, powerful, and royalties alike was not usually easy for her. But it was rare that she found a bridal client that acted rational and uncomplicated with her demands.

"I guess it is time." Dani faced her mother and father for the last time before she journeyed to her next adventure.

Her excitement went through the roof as the wedding bug began to infect her with a vengeance. Her first opposition to the entire big wedding celebration had finally rubbed her in a good way.

More than that, it was the memory that she would share with their kids. The fairy tale that every young child dreamt of having when they grew up.

She might have forgotten all about it or chosen to ignore her childhood whims. Today, she was reminded of her fantasy to meet her prince charming and to wed in a magical palace.

"Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, please follow me." Antonette requested as she showed them to the door.

They stood at the center and walked inside the aisle with Laura's hand in his arms. They proudly walked in the long pathway, showing how proud they were to be the parents of the bride.

They only stopped a few rows before the front of the church, where they would have to wait for their daughter as she followed them to her destiny.

"Ms. Daniella, are you ready?" Antonette asked as she prepared everybody for the grand entrance.

She looked at herself, alone in the big mirror, not far from where she was standing. She could see a beautiful woman staring back at her.

She loved her gown and the crowning veil that cascaded down the floor-length hemline, extending to the floor by more than a few meters. It flowed like a white shadow, following her every movement.

She also saw a big girl who had been through a lot. But she figured she had been tougher because of the experiences in her life. She had grown to be who she was today because of the hard choices that she had to make.

"I am ready." But marrying Alex was one decision that she would not regret in her entire life. It might not have been the easiest decision she had to make, but she knew it was the right one.

She stepped into the middle of the closed door, preparing herself for the big reveal. She waited for the cue, which meant it was time to move her feet and face the music.

When she heard the first melody of the song, she knew it was the beginning of a lifetime of ups and downs with the only man she would love forever.

"It is your moment to shine," Antonette whispered in her ears as she made her final touches on her hair and her gown. "Now, go get your prince, princess."

She never felt emotional in ceremonies like this because most of the work she had done was only a job to her. But after talking to her clients, learning more things about them. She became a fan.

She began to believe that fairy tales still might be true. Well, at least with this incredible couple who seemed genuinely in love. She suddenly wished that more people would follow their example.

"Thank you so much for all your help, Antonette." She appreciated what she had done to make this enchanted wedding come true.

They might not have started at the right foot, but she believed she had won her over to her side eventually. It was not hard since they believed in the same thing.

"Shall we do this?" Dani squared her shoulders, held tight to her bouquet, and put a big smile on her lips.

When the big oak doors opened and presented her for the first time to all their guests, friends, and family, her eyes only saw one person, and she planned to keep it that way.

This occasion was one tiny dot in her entire life, but it had made one of the enormous impacts on her past, present, and future.. They did say that life was a series of moments, and marrying the man destined to be hers was definitely one of them.