

Royal Contract 49

Chapter 49 - Left At The Altar

He looked at the woman seating across from him. She seemed perfect in every way. The way she carried herself and held a conversation, she would do well by his side. He quickly corrected his earlier thought. He meant she would be his perfect fake bride.

He was not ready for a commitment yet, not anytime soon. He still had a goal that he needed to fulfill and that would require his full attention. A family was not part of the picture in his near future. It was a distraction that he could not afford.

After being shown to their table, the main waiter provided them with the menu. He stood quietly on the side as he waited for their orders.

"Dani, what would you recommend?" He asked knowing that this was her favorite place. She would know what would be the best dish to order. Besides he needed a conversation starter to break the awkward silence between them.

"I like the beef wellington in this place. I suggest you try it." She recommended as she tried to appear civil with him. She even picked the best wine to go with it.

"Then, I'll have what she is having." He instructed the man on a formal white shirt and black pants.

"Let's cut to the chase, Alexander." She quickly said when they were finally alone. "This is not a date, so you don't need to dine and wine me to impress me." She said in her very serious tone.

She figured that treating this whole scenario as a business transaction was the best way to deal with this situation. Being logical would be easier to assess if this proposal was feasible. Removing emotion out of the equation would be the right approach to assess if she should accept it or not.

"But you certainly looked the part. You look stunning. I almost thought you doll up just for me." He could not help himself from commenting on her appearance, but he certainly appreciated the effort she made.

In truth, he was not the only one. Many men had turned their heads as they passed them and it was not left unnoticed by him. He suddenly found himself being possessive of her as he had seen how the other men gawked at her.

"I did not wear this for your benefit." She pointed out, regretting agreeing to Jacky's ministrations. This was what she was avoiding by wearing this dress. It was too revealing. It appeared as if she was asking for trouble.

"A man can dream." He muttered as their food arrived, putting a halt to their conversation. He studied her under his gaze, trying to figure out what she was thinking.

"Anyway, can we get this over with? What else should I know about this entire deal?" She stated, hoping that they could finish this meeting as soon as possible.

"Here's the deal. We try to get to know each other first during the course of the meal. Talk about the contract after. Then, decide whether you want to sign it or not." He knew that was reasonable.

"Ok. Fine." She stated since she could not find fault with his request.

That should give her a better overview of this entire situation. She suddenly realized that she barely knew this man except for the little information she gathered from his profile. It was not much.

"Good. What do you want to know about me?" He asked her. He wanted her to trust him, so he had to trust her by answering her questions truthfully. "I'll give you this chance to ask anything you wish to know about my personal life."

She looked at him as if he just gave her a trick question. She had read the contract. The first thing she noticed was the Non-disclosure Agreement. Now, he was allowing her to ask him any question without it. She was suddenly curious about what he was hiding.

But there were so many questions that were swirling in her mind. "I guess we can start by telling me why you needed someone to pretend as your fiancé." It was one of the things that were bothering her about this proposal.

This kind of thing was a common occurrence in their society. She had encountered such situations before in her line of work. Several reasons usually lead to this kind of arrangement. She wondered what was his.

"Ok. If that is what you wish to know." He took a sip on his wine before he continued. "I am an only child, just like you. My parents are getting old. We have a tradition in our family that requires me to present a future wife on my twenty-eighth birthday."

"This is the twenty-first century. We barely follow any tradition anymore." She voiced out, trying to recall any kind of tradition in her family, except for the usual, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve.

"Not my family though. Although I can forego tradition, my family can't. They follow it as if their lives depend on it. Honor is very important in our society and without it, my entire family will lose face among our people." He continued to explain why it was so important that he follow tradition even if he did not believe in it.

That confused her even more. It was like he was talking about another civilization. There was no community here in New York City that requires such tradition. She started to question if he was part of some kind of cult or an alien who came from another planet.

As far as she knew, that kind of thinking belonged to the past. Maybe he came from a country that still practices such kind of tradition. That could be another explanation for it. But she always thought that he was just like her, a New Yorker.

"So, you are saying that you need to present a future wife. Did that also mean that I have to marry you? I don't think that was part of the arrangement." She tried to recall what she had read on the contract but she was sure she did not see any part about marrying him.

"No. Definitely not. I will never ask you to marry me." He stated as he tried to correct her wrong assumption. He did not want to give her the wrong notion. Marriage would be the last thing on his mind.

Hearing him say that to her, kind of hurt. She did not know why, but it felt like a part of her heart just broke. But it was stupid for her to feel that way when they did not even have a relationship. The only logical explanation, she must be thinking of her past when she was left at the altar.