

## Royal Contract 511

### [Chapter 511 - The Big Boss](#)

Nick was at his office since he arrived from his trip. He thought he had it all planned out. Apparently, there was something wrong, or someone might be sabotaging him.

He was infuriated because he almost had Dani and Alex under his control. But he had to attend to other urgent matters. The two of them would just have to wait till he returned.

"What else have you learned?" He asked his assistant, who had been his eyes and ears when away from his business.

He had been over the reports that his team had submitted earlier. He had studied and analyzed them thoroughly, but he always ended up with one conclusion.

He was searching his brain for the possible culprit behind the attack on his company. He could certainly think of several enemies who would want to take him down.

"We are not the only ones having the same issue," Michael told his boss what he had heard from the grapevine. "Rumor has it that even the Hamilton Corporation and Alex's company are dealing with the same problem."

He had been closely monitoring the progress of the other industries, especially in terms of the stock market. They had tried buying several more shares of Ethan's company and even Alex, but their efforts were blocked.

Alex had learned of their efforts and was prepared to keep them at bay. But under their noses, Alex bought their shares, but only a few. He was not interested in buying more. He just wanted to make a point that he could do it.

"Do we have a lead on who is behind this?" Nick asked, still furious that someone would dare challenge him. And even take away the company he was going after.

It was not him. Somebody else was trying to make a play on taking over Ethan's company while Alex was gone on his honeymoon. Then, who could be behind the hostile takeover?

But, the fool thought that he could also buy his company. He should think again, whoever the man was behind this game. He would not let him get even one piece of his company, not if he could help it.

"They were using several dummy companies to buy the shares. Only their representatives were negotiating for them. Luckily, our investors are loyal. They reported the offers immediately." Michael told him.

However, he was doubtful if loyal was the term he would use to describe their investors. In his mind, he believed that the better word would be scared.

Terrified for their lives, just like he was. If Nick ever learned that they even thought of betraying him, then it might cost them their lives.

Maybe not everyone was motivated to follow him due to fear. Some were handsomely rewarded for their loyalty, while some needed something from him.

"I want you to be on top of this situation. Find out everything you can about the buyer. I want to know who he is." Whoever was trying to buy shares from him and his competitors just declared war.

He seriously doubted that it could be Ethan since his company was in trouble, too, especially now that Alex was out of the action.

Besides, he could imagine Ethan holding on by a thin thread after he had lost his only daughter. Ethan could not possibly hold a campaign against his company and stage a show.

If it was not Ethan and then who could be behind this. He allowed his mind to wander, deliberating all their competitors and enemies capable of such action.

"Sir, would you need anything else?" Michael asked his boss, who seemed to be lost in his thoughts.

He did not want to leave without being dismissed. He waited until he found a moment to interrupt his boss from his musing. He could see that this incident was troubling him deeply.

He wondered why since they had encountered this kind of situation before, but they managed to pull through. However, his boss was exuding a different vibe today. It was as if this was far worse than they had encountered before.

"No, go back to work and get me a name." He instructed, realizing that his assistant was still waiting for him.

He prepared himself for the next board meeting. He had to calm down his investors and make sure that they understood that he was in control of the situation.

He did not want them to panic and started abandoning ship just when he was about to win the war. But there was another war he had to prepare for, which might be more brutal than the other one.

"One more thing, Michael. Can you get me some coffee?" He needed something to energize him.

Then, his mind returned to his current situation. He wondered who would have the guts to attack Ethan, Alex, and him simultaneously.

He could also be a big fish in the industry who wanted to climb to the top. Or someone who had inside knowledge of what was actually happening.

"Damn." He expressed angrily upon realizing that it was a possibility.

It could be another competitor or enemy who had learned of the abduction. He could be capitalizing on an opportunity to squeeze into the top while everyone was not looking, busy with their different problems.

Now, that would be a big problem for him if that was the case. His business and freedom would be compromised if this unknown entity knew about the abduction. He might even have pieces of evidence against him.

He immediately grabbed his phone and dialed a number. He needed help, fast. He had to find out who was behind this new hostile act and put an end to him for good.

"Yes, I need to speak to him as soon as possible." He spoke on the line.

He tapped his fingernails on his wooden table as he waited for a response. Maybe today would be the day that he would finally meet the man he had been dealing with for years.

He had not met the big man behind the shadows but only talked to him on the line. The one who was pulling the strings in the underworld business.

He had helped him several times with his concerns. In return, he did him a favor here and there. Now, he sought his help again because he had the broadest connection in the world, even in the business industry.

"You know the drill. Expect the call any time of the day." The man said, then it was abruptly cut. The man used a voice modulator to change his voice, rendering it unrecognizable.

The man he called did not even give him a chance to reply, but he was already expecting it. They had never stayed on the line long enough for anyone to trace the call.

He always wondered who was calling the shots in one of the most lucrative illegal businesses in the world. He might even say that it might be as big as Ethan.

Why did he have to hide in a mask of anonymity when he could be the king of his own world? He could rule and be feared by everyone. Who was this man that they kept calling The Big Boss?

#### [Chapter 512 - Promising Story In The Making](#)

Harlowe was fascinated with the development of her story. After reviewing all her facts and consolidating them with the other reports she received, she finally had her conclusion.

She believed there was a big story brewing and waiting to explode. Many people were doing their best to cover it up. Her instincts were sounding alarming bells for her to investigate this further.

"Are you sure about that?" She asked her secretary. "Not even for later or tomorrow at the latest." But her secretary only said the same thing.

She had asked for an appointment with the duke when she finalized her conspiracy theory. She needed confirmation that she was on the right track with her new story.

If her information were correct and she had all the facts pieced out accordingly, then she might have a scoop at her hands, a story that would shake the world.

But she learned that the duke was temporarily unavailable, even for her, which only added to her suspicions. They were keeping the story away from the press.

"Give me a couple of hours. I am going out." She instructed her secretary as she left her office, canceling most of her appointments.

She went to another possible source, hoping that person might have more information that could enlighten her about the current situation in the palace.

Well, at least give her an idea if the newlywed runoff somewhere else for their honeymoon. Or, something else was at play in this elaborate mystery in her hands.

"Please, help me out." She pleaded with the person standing before her, wiping the kitchen counter with a hand towel. While she sat on the other side, waiting for her to cooperate.

She could not let her story die, not when it was causing one heck of a storm in the media circuit. Everybody wanted a piece of her story, but she had exclusive coverage.

Besides, her instinct still told her to look into it more. She could smell a juicy story, and she was not about to let it get away. Not until she found out the truth.

"Eida, there is nothing to tell. Alex and Dani left after the wedding to enjoy their honeymoon. The duke is probably busy running the kingdom as usual." A chubby woman told her as she busied herself with her work.

In all honesty, there was nothing she could tell her. The palace had been silent after the wedding. She had not heard much about the newlywed, except that they were off to their honeymoon destination.

She was informed by the duchess about their decision to stay at the grand palace for a few days. But she was not about to tell her about that.

She could see nothing unusual since the couple frequented visiting the king. Especially when there were things that the duke had to take care of regarding the kingdom's concerns.

"Aunt Grace, I am sure that you know something. Please tell me. Where is Duke Frederick? I really need to speak with him." She tried her best to make her aunt talk, but she still would not budge.

She sat down on the kitchen counter where her aunt was entertaining her. She had dismissed the other maids so they could have the room all to themselves.

She had been serving the duke and his family almost her entire life as the head of household staff. She was bound to know what was going on inside the palace.

"You know I will not tell you anything, that is if I knew something. I am bound by my loyalty to the crown." Her auntie spoke in her loud voice, emphasizing her stand on the matter.

"I could not just give information, especially Duke Frederick's whereabouts or the happenings inside the palace." Her auntie shook her head as she continued with her litany, still refusing to help her.

She took a cake out from the pantry that she baked this morning and handed her a piece. She hoped that the sweet goodness that her niece always loved would shut her up and stop her from asking more questions.

Her niece had always been the curious one. She never ran out of questions. Always made people think on their toes when she was around. But she could not break her.

"Just this once, Aunt Grace, you have to trust me. I am not doing this just for a story. I know something big is going on in the royal family, and I only want to help." She was unsure if she could convince her auntie to tell her anything.

Her auntie was a tight lip person when it came to privacy. She could be loud and nagging, but when it came to secrets, she would never spill even a drop.

She could not blame her since she had always been loyal and trustworthy to a fault. It was one of the reasons why the royal family had kept her around for so long.

"What is this really about, Eida?" Her aunt asked, expecting to get to the bottom of the problem.

She noticed the desperation in her niece's demeanor which she had only seen in her once. She was only like this when she believed she was saving the world from destruction.

That was a long time ago and a silly story to tell about her very eccentric niece, but she loved her just the same. Eida might be overbearing sometimes when she was going after a story.

However, she could also be sweet and caring when she wanted to be. She only wished that she would finally meet a man that could make her settle down and be happy with a family. She did not want her to end up like her, old and alone.

"All I can tell you now is that I have a hunch. But I could not tell you yet what it is." She pushed the plate of the delicious cake away from her. Trying to prove to her auntie that she was serious about this.

She wished she could tell her aunt about her discovery to convince her to help her, but she could not. It was a sensitive topic, and she still needed confirmation. Else it would just be rumors, a trashy story that the media tabloids produce.

"I am sorry, my dear, but there is nothing to tell." Her auntie gave her a tight smile, telling her she was telling the truth.

She did not see anything unusual with the couple. Maybe a bit of sadness in their smile. But it was common for parents who sent their daughters away to go with their husbands. Well, at least that was what she thought, having no child of her own.

"Fine," Eida finally conceded, taking the cake back closer to her. Just like old times, she attacked the piece of heavenly delight with gusto thinking that she might as well enjoy it.

She decided to take a different path and not get her auntie involved. She could not let anyone think that her auntie was leaking information to her.

If she was wrong with this suspicion. It would only jeopardize her auntie's honor and position in the palace. It would be better if she only knew as little as possible.

However, her thoughts began to wander to her other story. She still could not decide if the two were somewhat connected. But she was curious about her other project. It was getting more interesting.. It seemed to be a promising story in the making.

#### [Chapter 513 - Fight To Live Another Day](#)

"What took you so long? I have been waiting for you for hours." He said as he lay on the sandy beach, gazing at the beautiful sunset.

He had waited for this for a long time. He planned to make the most of their vacation together, with no work, families, friends, and other things to worry about except making each other happy.

"I was not that long." She defended herself, punching him lightly on his arms as she sat beside him on the reclining chair, staring at the retreating sun.

It was a daily battle between day and night. The ray of light tried to overcome the darkness at the break of dawn. While the shadows crawled up at dusk to cover everything in a pitch-black cloak.

However, not everything was enveloped in darkness. Some nights glowed when the moon decided to display its magnificence. Together with the stars, they shone brightly in the heavens above.

"Well, it felt that way." He spoke softly, shifting his gaze to her face. "You are so beautiful." He took her hand and grazed it with his lips.

He could not help but wonder about the beauty of nature and how anyone would opt not to see it every day. He could stare at the view before him and marvel at its beauty,

But he would prefer to stare at his wife and her brilliance. She was indeed beautiful not only in the physical aspect but deep inside.

For him, she was the most beautiful thing to see in the morning and the last he would enjoy looking at before closing his eyes.

"Not as beautiful as this." She gestured her hands to the scenery in front of them. "I can look at it all day." She turned her back on him.

She gazed at the waters as they glided softly on the sands before returning to the deep end. They moved back and forth as if enticing her to join the coolness and allure of the calmness of the blue sea.

"What about me? Am I not also beautiful?" He teased her, sitting up on the chair and showing off his muscular arms and chest.

He wanted her full attention on him. He wanted them to focus on making this moment last forever. It was rare that they had an opportunity to be alone like this, so he was taking complete advantage of it.

"Of course you are." She turned around, giving him a reassuring smile. It was like she was looking at a child, comforting him. "You are my everything."

She patted him softly on the cheeks, caressing her gently on the side of his eyes, down to his nose, cheeks, and jawline. It was as if she was memorizing each line on his face, committing it to her memory.

"What is wrong?" He suddenly asked, wondering why her face suddenly changed. It was as if she was about to cry.

He did not want her to cry. This vacation was supposed to make her happy. He tried to think of a reason why she would feel that way. Did he do something wrong or say something that made her sad?

"Alex, stay with me. I do not want to live without you." With trembling lips, she kissed him as if she was afraid to lose him.

It was a short kiss, but it felt so sweet and bitter at the same time. It was like a kiss that was saying I love you but at the same time bidding farewell.

He wanted to kiss her again, but she abruptly stood up. She pulled away from his touch and stepped a couple of feet away from him.

"Where are you going? You just got here." He said when she saw him turned around and started walking away. "Wait."

He tried to stand up and run after her, but his body would not respond to his command. He could only look at her, desperately pleading with her not to go.

"What is wrong? I will stay with you, but you should also stay here with me." He shouted, but his voice was lost in the wind as she continued to walk without looking back.

He did not understand as he struggled in his position. But the pain of not seeing her anymore was too much to bear. He could feel tears dropping at the side of his eyes as he laid his back on the lounge chair again.

He wiped his eyes and felt the moisture in his fingertips. He suddenly became aware of his surroundings when he gazed at the darkness.

The noise of the waves was gone, replaced by an eerie silence. The moon was missing, and the stars were absent tonight. Only shadows played around him, creating some weird images.

Suddenly, he was confused as to whether he was in a dream. He tried to shift his body, but he barely moved an inch when he felt an unbearable pain on his side.

"Uhhmm." He made a guttural sound as he moved back into his former position, closing his eyes as he waited for the pain to lessen.

Judging from the experience, he could safely say that this was not a dream. All of a sudden, all his memories came rushing back. He remembered the abduction, waking up in a warehouse, and the man who took them.

"Dani," Alex uttered, concerned about her condition. He tried to slowly move his body again, but it was still too painful, leaving him with no choice but to lay back again.

He vaguely remembered his dream, remembering her face. The way she looked at him with despair. He was worried about her, thinking that she might be in danger.

Without warning, the room was flooded with a bright light, blinding his sight. He had to move his hands to cover his eyes, preventing him from seeing whoever turned it on.

"Hey, you are finally awake." A man in a suit walked closer to his bed, carrying what seemed to be a bag. "Prince Alexander, right?" He stopped just in front of his bed, looking directly at him as if he was checking his condition.

"Who are you?" Alex squinted his eyes, adjusting to the brightness that finally revealed the entire room. "Where am I?" He asked, and then he continued asking more questions. "Where is my wife?"

He had never seen the man before, as far as his memory would recall. He did not seem to fit the criteria of the men who took them. Based on the bag he was carrying, he would assume that he might be a physician of some sort.

"One question at a time." The unknown man said as he extended his hand to take his risk. "Let me just check on your vitals." He pulled his hand closer to him and placed his fingers on his wrist, checking on his heartbeat.

"What is wrong with me?" He asked, seeing that his assumption was correct. "What are you planning to do with me? How is Dani?" He kept asking, hoping that he would at least answer some of them.

"First, who I am doesn't matter." He let go of his hands and grabbed the bag he was holding earlier, sitting on the side of the bed.

"Second, it seems that your heartbeat is going back to normal. That is a good sign that you might still survive for another round." He stated as he took a medicine bottle out of his bag, together with an injection needle.

"Don't worry." The man said as he looked into his fiery eyes.

He could see that he still had a lot of fights in him. The men had not broken him yet, but they were not done with him. "This will just sting a little."

"When I get out of here, I will make sure to make all of you pay." He shouted at the man, struggling to get away from his grip. But his efforts were futile before he felt the prick on his skin.

He would have fought him if his body was not too weak and in so much pain. But he was not ready to give up. He still hoped to save Dani from Nick.

He could feel in his heart that she was just nearby, waiting for him. This gave him hope and a reason to live.. For Dani, he would continue to fight to live another day.

#### [Chapter 514 - Cut From The Same Cloth](#)

Ethan went back to his office where they were conducting their operation. He was thankful that the commissioner of the police force was keeping the situation under wrap.

Only involving his most trusted investigators to handle the case. Otherwise, this entire search would be all over the news. He did not want that to happen.

"Any news on the secret buyer?" He quickly called Marcus, checking on his progress.

He was informed that the board meeting was now over. He wanted an update on the situation. But more than that, he was curious about the man, making a play at taking over his company.

He rubbed his jaw, feeling the long stubbles of his beard as he tried to relax his body from the tension of the entire situation. He had barely calmed down his wife.

He was glad when she finally dozed off to sleep. He would just have to worry about her when she woke up. He had to convince her then to eat.



"It seems that it was not Nick as we suspected. Otherwise, he was putting up an elaborate show." Marcus answered Ethan with his assumption.

Marcus said on the line, still wondering who else could be setting up the show. He had called some of his contacts with their competitors, fishing for some answers. But so far, he had come up empty.

"What do you mean? This entire chaos had Nick's fingerprints all over it." Ethan yelled on the phone, unable to control his temper. He could not believe the news that he had just heard.

It would be far easier if he could pin down one piece of evidence against Nick, but it seemed that he was always one step ahead of him this time.

"Apparently, his company is under attack too." Marcus proclaimed on the line, slightly moving the phone away from his ears.

He was expecting another outburst from his boss. Technically not his boss, but he still would like to consider him as such out of his respect.

He could not also blame him for taking his anger on him. He would also feel the same way if his family was in danger. He did feel that way because Alex had always been a brother to him, and Dani was now his sister.

Someone had to keep their cool in a situation like this, and he elected himself as the one, not counting on Ethan for now. Alex had entrusted everything to him before he left. He planned to deliver on that promise.

"Shit!" Ethan rarely swore, but when he did. He only did it in extreme circumstances. "I don't know what Nick's game is, but I swear he had his hands deep in this whole shinanigan."

He still could not shake off that feeling that the man was behind the abduction. Maybe not the part about the business, but he could feel it in his guts that Nick was the mastermind behind the couple's disappearance.

He could still remember his face when he saw Nick at the party. He remembered the swine smiled at the couple as he congratulated them before leaving the party.

He knew then that he was cooking up something. He should have listened to his instincts then. Instead, he had let his guard down, thinking that they had won the game.

"Let me know if you have any other news." He quickly ended the call and walked out of the room.

He decided to check on Tim and his operation to get Ben back. It had been a couple of hours since he left him. They should have Ben in their custody by now.

"What is going on here?" Ethan asked the man guarding the door. He could hear the loud commotion along the hallway on his way over to the room.

The scene when he reached the room left him speechless. It was chaos as Tim yelled over the receiver as if he was in a war. He could hear shouting on the other line and what would appear to be gunshots.

Tim held his hand to him to stop him from talking. He was probably distracting him from his mission, so he opted to stay on the sidelines and observe.

"Secure the package and get out of there. The airplane is ready to go as soon as you are all on board." Tim said in his commanding voice.

He would not let any of his men down. He wished he was with them on the mission. Unfortunately, he had to admit that he would only be a liability to them in his condition.

However, he was proud of his team for doing everything they could to get Ben back. But he heard some of them had been injured, but all were accounted for.

"ETA, ten minutes, give or take." The man in charge of the mission informed him before cutting the line.

Tim finally put the receiver down on the table and sighed deeply. The team was not clear yet. Not until they were on board and on air. But their enemies were still in pursuit, so there was that.

He finally sat down on his chair, feeling the tension still hanging on his shoulders. Then, he remembered that Ethan was waiting for him, nodding in his direction, acknowledging his presence.

"What was that all about?" Ethan wanted confirmation of what he heard.

He heard one side of the conversation and was unsure of what to make of the scene he had just witnessed. He did not want to assume anything at this point. Only facts mattered.

"Whoever took Alex and Dani almost got Ben." Tim finally explained the situation to Ethan.

When his team reached the facility where Ben was treated, they were almost too late. If not for the commotion made by a young boy, they would have missed him when his unconscious body was wheeled out of the hospital.

One of his men only noticed that Ben was the patient under the white cloth when a young boy questioned a man wheeling him into an ambulance. "Where are you taking, Ben?"

They became suspicious and investigated, then the gunshots were fired. They had to retaliate to protect themselves and Ben. They finally had secured Ben, but the unexpected shots hit two of his men.

"Are they critical?" He would have to arrange for his best doctors to attend to their wounds.

He could not let any of these men die after sacrificing their lives to find his children. He had to do everything he could to reward their bravery and loyalty.

"We will know as soon as they are on board. I already have doctors waiting for them to administer first aid once they are on air." Tim had always been thorough in his missions.

Having Alex as their financier had allowed him to be prepared. He did not have to worry about finding funds for their necessities. The military doctors were also on call every time they were needed.

"Let me know if you need anything else." Ethan offered, glad that they had Ben with them.

"I will. I appreciate that." Tim told the old man. He could understand the respect that Alex had given to this man.

He believed Alex was no different from him. They could pass up as actual father and son.. It was as if they were cut from the same cloth.

#### [Chapter 515 - A Man Without A Face](#)

He had Vince looking for Nick as he flew back to New York City to deal with him. He needed answers and a way to clear his name with the Council, or he could kiss his throne goodbye.

He knew that his father was, at least, doubtful that he could do such an act against Alex. But the Council might not be as forgiving of his involvement with Nick and his apparent illegal activities.

"Where have you been?" Prince Edward rushed inside his office, not letting his secretary stop him from seeing him.

Finally, Vince learned from someone he had been in close contact with inside the building that Nick was coop up in his office. He was not accepting appointments at the moment.

He could not let the opportunity to face him slip by again. He had to take immediate action before Nick disappeared again on his radar.

"What do you want, Edward? As you can see, I am overwhelmed with work." Nick did not even look up from the papers he was perusing as he spoke to his visitor.

He did not need him to poke around his office today. Although he was expecting that he would show up soon enough. After what he did to him, he was bound to confront him.

He was not expecting that they would meet this soon. Not when he was in a crisis and not prepared to deal with him yet. Although, no matter what Edward said, he would never admit any wrongdoings. He was confident that all Edward had was speculations. It would never stand in court.

If he was a criminal, Edward was as evil as a villain as he was. He had not just explored his dark side yet. The prince was also capable of doing horrific things. According to his observation, he just lacked the motivation to do it.

"Why did you frame me up? Make me look like I am trading with the leaders of the underworld business." Edward accused his partner, remembering introducing him to what he said was legitimate clients.

He had known that Nick was a bit shady, but he thought they were partners, and Nick would not put his business and his life in jeopardy. But he was proven wrong.

He sought his help to get what was rightfully his, but instead, he got framed for something he did not do. This was not what he had signed for when he made a deal with Nick, the devil evidently.

"I have no idea of what you are talking about." Nick finally looked up and stared at the enraged face of his former partner.

Well, he was expecting that he would finally say adios once he discovered what he did to him. Unless he could convince him that he had nothing to do with what he was accusing him of.

In his current situation, Edward pulling all his investment out of his company would be detrimental. It could trigger a chain reaction once the board and the company's investors heard about it.

They might think that the company was going under, and they might abandon ship. After all, Edward did invest a large sum of money in his company. That could not happen. It had to be stopped.

"What about Alex and Dani's abduction?" He questioned him, believing that he also had something to do with it. "That was not what I asked you to do. I only wanted you to bring Alex's company down."

He walked closer to his table and planted the palm of his hand on his table as he stared him down. He could see in his eyes the pride in his accomplishment, but his words denied his accusation.

"What?" He acted surprised. He dropped the pen he was holding and pushed his chair backward as his expression abruptly changed into concern. "What are you talking about?"

Nick knew everyone would be pinning this abduction on him. After all, he did have a motive due to his connection to both the groom and the bride.

But he had prepared himself for this. He had made a flawless alibi that would throw all suspicions away from him. It would have been perfect if not for the unexpected situation in his company.

"Don't act like you are innocent," Edward shouted at him, even slamming his fist on the table. "I know that you planned all this."

But Nick remained silent, watching his visitor blow up some steam. Edward continued with his charges, blaming Nick for his current situation in the kingdom. He

"You took Alex and Dani after the wedding and then pinned the blame on me. After all, everyone knew that I had a problem with my cousin." Edward told him what he thought of his idea.

"I know you are the one who transferred all that money into my account. Then, made it look like I was paying off those mercenaries for the abduction." He persisted, voicing out all his speculation about the case.

He would not let Nick get away with this. He would not take the fall for his crime, not without a fight. Not without trying to prove his innocence and taking down Nick.

He had wished numerous times for his cousin to be removed from his path, but not like this. He did not want his blood on his hands.

"As much as I want to be the villain in your story, I am sorry to disappoint you, but I am not. Many people would want to abduct your family, even you." Nick pointed out.

When Edward was about to interrupt, he stopped him, holding his hand up in the air. "As you can see, my company is under attack as of now. I am under a lot of stress because I can lose my company if I don't stop whoever is doing this."

Something in what Edward said sounded alarming bells in his head. He had no idea what he was accusing him of, at least about the last part of his statement.

He did not transfer any money to his account recently. Definitely, he was not involved in the hacking of it. He was curious if what happened to Edward was connected to what was happening to him and the Hamilton Empire.

Someone was coming after all of them, pulling the strings that were creating havoc in their businesses and lives.. An invisible enemy, a man without a face.

#### [Chapter 516 - A Friend Or A Fiend](#)

Nick kept his eyes focused on Edward, watching what he might be thinking. He was sizing up his reaction, wondering if he was taking a bite of his bait.

"I heard Ethan and Alex's businesses are also undergoing the same situation. Maybe whoever took the two was the same people trying to destroy us all." Nick said, suddenly finding his own statement interesting.

He was definitely guilty of framing Edward, but not everything he was accusing him of was his doing. Someone was definitely playing them against each other.

"Are you saying that someone else was behind this?" Edward commented but remained doubtful that he was telling him the truth.

Nick could have concocted this idea, planting it on his mind to win his trust back. In the end, he would find himself stabbed in the back again.

"Of course, that makes perfect sense." That statement was genuine.

It was a revelation that someone else was using his plans to make a play against them. All he could do was shake his head at his new discovery. It would seem that he had been used at his own game.

However, he still had no clue who could be behind this. It was definitely not him who was making everyone dance to this music.

But he was not dancing anymore. He was going to figure this out. He would make sure that he would win in the second round.

"Don't you see? Someone wants all of us to go down. They are playing all of us against each other." He kept going, seeing the distrust in Edward's expression.

He might have been caught unaware of another player in this game, but now, he would come prepared in the next match. But first, he had to convince this fool that he was innocent and his participation in this investigation was very much welcome.

"So, who do you think could be behind this?" Edward decided to play his game.

He would pretend to be clueless about his plan and join forces with him again. In that way, he could monitor his movement and learn his secrets.

"What do you say, partner? Should we work on this together?" Nick expectantly said, as if he already knew that he would agree to his proposal.

He had to appear guiltless about this case and confident in finding the culprit. It was the only way he could make Edward agree to his plan. He still needed him to cooperate, just until he had cleared the problem.

He could not have him running away with his money and accusing him of the crime. Though he had no evidence that could send him to jail, it could still cause problems in his company.

"I think that is a great idea, Nick." Edward finally agreed with his suggestion.

He had set his phone to record their conversation, hoping to get Nick to confess. But he was too smart to fall for his trap. He had avoided incriminating himself with the case.

But it would not stop him from learning the truth. He could not believe that he had allowed Nick to manipulate him before. But he would redeem himself in the eyes of his father and his countrymen.

He would catch Nick red-handed with the evidence that would put him away for life, or better yet, die by the guillotine, which was what he deserved.

"Shit!" Nick cursed when Edward finally left his office. He had to get his shit together, he thought, thinking of the mess he was in.

He walked away from his desk and stood by the window. He hoped that the view would calm his mind from his encounter with Edward and his discovery.

He still had to deal with the issue in his company. Apparently, he also had to plan for his unknown enemies, who might be coming after him.

But all he wanted to do was go back and deal with Alex and be with his future wife, Dani. However, he could not do that until he had settled everything first, or he might not have a company to go back to.

The beeping of his phone alerted him of an incoming call. When he peeked at the screen, it was just a number that he did not recognize. He was good at memorizing numbers, so he was convinced that this was an unknown caller.

"Yes." He finally answered, knowing that he could not ignore the call. It might be the person on the other line who he had been waiting for.

The man did not use identifiable numbers that could be traced easily. Meaning he only used burner phones that he would destroy after the call.

He also did not stay on the line for a long enough period. He had to make this call count, or he might never get the opportunity to talk to him again.

"You wanted to talk to me." He said quickly once the line was connected. As usual, he was using a voice changer, making his tone unrecognizable to whoever he was talking to.

His time was valuable, and he did not waste it on anyone insignificant. But he still considered Nick as someone he still needed in his plans.

He would indulge him a few more times before he would dispose of him like what he did to those who had no value to him anymore.

"Yes, boss. But this time, can we meet?" Nick answered the boss and requested to see him.

He hoped that the boss would finally consider him an ally and trust him to meet him in person. It would be an opportunity for him and his business to have his backing, especially in his time of crisis.

"You know the drill. I don't see anyone in person unless you have a wish to die in my hands." The man spoke on the line with an aura of confidence and arrogance. "What do you need? I don't have all day."

He would have hung up the phone with his request. But as he said earlier, he still needed the man. He waited patiently for him while checking his watch.

"I'm sorry." Nick knew he had made a mistake by demanding from the big boss. He quickly tried to rectify it by telling the boss about his concerns.

He told him that he sought his assistance about the attack on his company. Maybe he had connections who could figure out the identity of the shell company.

He knew he had not given him much in exchange for all the help the boss had already provided him. Still, he was grateful that the boss was still hearing him out.

"I see." The boss said upon hearing his short report on the matter. "Let me see what I can do for you." The man said. "But this time, this one will cost you." He continued as he looked at his watch.

He abruptly ended the call, not waiting for Nick to reply to his statement. He could not stop the playful smirk that appeared on his lips upon disconnecting the line.

He turned off the phone and then removed its batteries and the card and wiped it clean. He placed the phone and a piece of equipment that he used to change his voice in sealed plastic and into his bag.

He would have to dispose of it later. Then, he returned to his work as if nothing out of the ordinary had just happened. He signaled for his secretary to send in his next appointment.

On the other side of the line, Nick could not help but be disappointed. He had hoped that he would finally meet the boss. He badly needed his alliance in a time like this.

A knock on his door snapped him back to the present, realizing that he had been staring at his phone since the call ended. "Yes," Nick quickly responded to the person behind the door, "Come in." He put down the phone on his lap but did not let go of it, looking up to see what his secretary wanted.

His mind was still reeling from his last conversation with the big boss. He had tried several times to learn his identity, the man behind the operation of the underground business, but he was too elusive.

"Sir, you have an appointment in fifteen minutes." His secretary reminded him.

"What?" He asked, unable to grasp what his secretary said as he remained lost in his thoughts.

Based on the intel his investigators gathered, when the leader of the illegal operation died, his son took over the business and ran it in a new direction.

Only the most trusted people knew who succeeded the father. His identity had been hidden from the world for his protection. Until now, he had not revealed himself and publicly claimed his throne.

But his reputation had already gained much respect in the underworld community. Gaining the trust of the different factions operating all over the world.

"Your appointment, Sir." His secretary reminded him, alerting him of his pending schedule.

"Ok, just let him in once he arrives," Nick responded, remembering another investor that he had to appease.

Since this fiasco, at least three of his investors had already expressed their concerns. Luckily, he still had control over them. In the meantime, they would not be a problem.

However, as he stared at the screen again in his hand. Something occurred to him, an epiphany of some sort. What if he was looking at the problem the wrong way? What if his adversary was not entirely unknown?

He suddenly considered that his enemy might be closer than he thought.. He might be hiding under the guise of a partner. But should he regard him as a friend or a fiend?

#### [Chapter 517 - Trashy Clothes](#)

He stood from his table and walked towards the window, hoping that the view would calm him down. But no matter how hard he tried, he could feel his blood boiling and his tension increasing.

In this kind of condition, he could not help but think of Cassie. She would know what to do when he was in this mood. He wondered where she was now. His men still could not find her.

"Michael, will you move my two appointments to later or tomorrow. I need to leave for a couple of hours." He told Michael as he exited his room and moved towards the elevator.

He knew that he could not concentrate unless he had done something about his stress level. He could only think of one fastest way to release his tension.

Because, as of now, he wanted to strangle someone. He was starting to put the pieces of evidence together. He was not too keen on the direction it was going.

"Sir, you can't cancel on Mr. Mortey." Michael tried to reason with him not to leave. The man was one of their top investors that should not be ignored.

"Do your job? Think of a good excuse." Nick waved goodbye to him as he entered the elevator and left him to deal with the client.

He had a more important matter to attend to besides entertaining a spoiled rich client who thought the world should revolve around him.

After a few minutes, he was unlocking a door in one of the expensive condominiums in the city. He never bothered knocking since he was paying for the place.

"What are you doing here in the middle of the day?" A woman greeted him, sitting on the balcony, wearing a cute top and skimpy shorts. "Come to think of it. It has been a while since your last visit."

She stood up from his position and sexily moved towards where he stood, in the middle of the living room. As soon as she was within reach, he grabbed her waist, pulling her hard against him.



"You know exactly why I am here." He whispered in her ears as he let his lips graze the side of her neck.

His hands started moving around her back, pulling her even closer until there was barely a space between them. But he had no time to play with her.

"Do you want something to eat?" She teased him, trying to pull away.

She was a bit angry with him for making her feel like she meant nothing. But she was more disappointed with herself for ending up in this position.

Although she could not complain about the money, he provided for her and her family. Still, it would be nice if he would at least show her a bit of respect. That she was not just a paid whore he fucked when he needed his release.

"No." He told her in all seriousness, making her stop her childish notions. He pulled her with him until they both fell on the couch, with her sitting on his lap. "Take off your clothes." He ordered, not wanting to waste his valuable time.

She stood up and quickly removed the little clothes she wore while he watched her little show. He would have enjoyed playing with his latest toy, but he was on a tight schedule.

He did not care about her feelings. He was paying her enough to deal with that. He only wanted her body and a quick fuck without too much complication.

He had no time to hook with random girls every time he needed to get laid. Since Cassie went missing, it had been hard to replace her, but luckily, he accidentally found her. A beautiful desperate woman who needed assistance.

"Then, let me take care of you." She said, doing what she was paid to do. Take care of him and his needs.

She would never have agreed to this, but desperate times made her do things that she thought she would never do. However, this was better than whoring herself on the street or in a club.

At least Nick paid her more than enough to live comfortably and get her mother hospitalized. She did not mind what he did to her body, even if she had to lose her dignity.

Self-righteousness would not put food on the table or pay her mother's piling up hospital bills. But Nick's money would. All she had to do was make sure to make him happy.

"Come here." He commanded, pulling her back on his lap, letting her straddle him.

She would do, for now, he thought as he let her work on his body. But his mind went back to another woman who he wanted to occupy his bed. This time, he was not thinking about Cassie.

He was obsessing about her, about tasting her delectable body. But the time for them would come soon enough. He would have her eventually. In the meantime, he had to deal with his immediate problems first.

Daniella Hamilton would be his again. "Dani," Nick moaned her name loudly as he closed his eyes, imagining that it was her, moving underneath him.

He pictured her face as he let his hands roam all over her body. He kept saying her name as he pleased himself at the expense of the woman writhing in his ministrations.

He did not care for her satisfaction. He only wanted his as he kept pounding on her until he had found his release. He shouted her name again, feeling the gratification of consuming his need.

Then, they lay spent on the couch for a few minutes, both catching their breaths. "Would you like something to drink?" She asked him, standing up naked after a few minutes of recovering from their recent tryst.

She still could not understand his fascination with the name. It was part of their condition. That was, once she agreed to their arrangement, she had to change her name to Dani.

The first few times he mentioned the name and referred to her, she felt weird. But now, she did not care anymore. After a while, she had gotten used to him calling her by the name.

She did not question his fetish or what the name symbolized. She was not being paid to snoop around about his personal life. She also did not plan to, not wanting additional complications in her life.

"No, I still have to go back to the office." He told her as he stood up and put back his clothes in order.

He had no plan of staying long. He had already accomplished what he came here to do. Now it was time to deal with his current problems. He had to find his enemy.

He ran his hands on his hair, fixing it with his fingers, and then walked towards the door. "Buy yourself some new clothes. Decent ones." He said, turning around to look at her still naked body.

"What would I do with my clothes?" She asked since she was comfortable wearing them.

"Burn all of them." Nick indicated the clothes that were still lying on the floor.. He believed his Dani would never be seen wearing those kinds of trashy clothes.

#### [Chapter 518 - Gentle Giant](#)

She had been pacing the room for a few minutes now, waiting for the guard to open the door. She could tell that it was almost lunchtime, judging from the shadow produced by the sun outside.

Still, she had no news of Alex and his condition. She also had not seen Nick anywhere in the vicinity. She was anxious for any form of information.

The men still loitered outside her window. Occasionally, enjoying basking under the sun. Playing target shooting on an open range on the other side of the house.

"Please, please, please." Dani prayed to whoever was listening, whispering in the air her most desire at the moment.

She was hoping that it would be Samson who would be bringing her the food. It would allow her to talk to him again. She believed that the more she communicated with him, the more she could establish a bond with the big man.

If only she could possibly take hold of a phone, then she could call outside and ask for help. To do that, she would need help from the big man. As of now, she could not think of any other way.

After a few more minutes...

"Blam!"

"Clang!"

A loud noise could be heard coming from outside the room. Then, a metal hit the wooden floor, and finally, a smashing sound of ceramics breaking reverberated along the hallway.

"Damn! What the heck, man." The sound of a loud voice of a man cursing another man reached her ears as she moved closer to the door to investigate the commotion.

She planted her ears on the wooden surface, hoping to make sense of what was happening outside. From what she heard next, it sounded like the man tripped and spilled her food all over the floorboard.

The man in charge seemed to be pissed. "Go get her another set of food and then clean this mess afterward." He barked his order, appearing to be in command of the situation.

She quickly stepped back away from the door when she heard the creaking of the wooden floors. It meant that whoever was out there was coming to check her in the room.

Then, she saw the doorknob rattled, making a clinking sound as if someone was giggling at some keys in his hand. Finally, she heard a gentle knock as the door was unlocked and opened gently.

"I am sorry about the noise, Your highness, but you have to wait for your food. My clumsy partner today had an accident and spilled them all over the floor." A slightly familiar male voice said before he revealed himself by the door.

"I hope you are not yet hungry." He quickly added, looking very apologetic.

The man she was waiting for stopped by the doorway as if he had no plan to enter. He looked around the room as if he was checking the place before fixing his eyes on her.

"That is ok." Dani immediately spoke up, feeling the raspiness in her voice. It was probably due to her crying last night after having a nightmare.

Although, the cause of her despair had nothing to do with the horrible dream. But more on the images left in her head of what Nick had done with Alex.

She cleared her throat before she continued talking. "I am not yet that hungry. I can wait." As she tried to clear her head, concentrating on her current task.

She was slightly hungry, but she would not die of starvation if she waited for a few more minutes. Besides, eating was the least of her concern.

She had more pressing matters to do, realizing that she was presented by fate with an opportunity. He had the big guy all to herself.

"Why don't you come in for a second, Samson?" She beckoned him with a wave of her hands. "I feel like I am going crazy not having anyone else to talk to." She used her most convincing voice as if she was trying to win a jury to her side.

She looked at the big man, who hesitated for a second before stepping inside the room. Just a few feet away from the door, he kept the door opened and remained standing.

"Do you need anything? Are you not feeling well?" Samson asked, slightly worried that she might be feeling unwell. She could see that she was a bit pale, and her eyes were slightly puffy.

His boss did tell him to take care of her and provide for her needs. He could not let anything happen to her while she was on his watch.

"No. I am ok. Maybe just a little..." She held her tongue as if she was thinking of the right words to say to him. "I don't know how to explain it." She looked at him as if she was confused.

"I hope you don't mind if we talk even for a few minutes. I just needed some company. I think." She added before he could respond to her statement.

She believed from the way his face showed some concern. He was beginning to soften up to her. It was a matter of time before he would eventually turn to her side. Well, it was what she was hoping for.

Samson was the only possible ally she could have in this whole place. She could not fail in this mission to win him over. It was the only way she could execute her plan.

"I am not supposed to bother you." He explained, reluctant to give in to her request. "I am just here to assure your taking care of and safety."

He did understand her situation. If he was in her shoes and imprisoned in this room, he would also feel a bit depressed. But he had work to do. It was a high-paying job that he could not lose.

She decided to sit at the table, hoping that he would follow her. But with no luck, he remained standing at his current position, just looking at her.

He was harder to convince than she thought, but she was not ready to give up just yet. She would use all the tricks she had learned in the book. She would not stop until she had exhausted all her options.

"Anyway, how are you today? I can see that the sun is quite beautiful. There is no sign of rain. It must be wonderful to be out in the open." She tried another tactic.

She talked about her fascination with nature, trying to make him feel comfortable around her. She thought talking about relatable topics would ease the conversation and hopefully establish trust.

"I love jogging before the break of dawn. There is some kind of magic in the air when the early morning breeze touches my face." She explained to him when he remained silent, not answering her question.

However, she believed she was not mistaken about him. She had read it in his eyes that he was different. He was not doing this for pleasure but as a necessity.

She just had to get through to him. It might not work, but she had to try.. He seemed to be too sweet to be in this line of business, just like a gentle giant.

#### [Chapter 519 - In One Piece](#)

When he remained silent, she thought that she might have been mistaken. Maybe she only wanted to read in his eyes what she needed. But in truth, he was just as heartless as the rest of them.

"It is beautiful outside during early mornings, but it could also be hot in the early afternoon. Still, it is better than the snow back home." He finally spoke up, gladly telling her his opinion on the matter.

He slackened a little in his military stance, adding a few details of what he liked about the place compared to where he grew up. He still did not move any closer, maintaining the distance between them.

"Do you think I will ever be allowed to go outside?" Dani finally asked the big man, baiting him to continue with the conversation. Looking down at her feet and appearing desolate.

If she could make him talk and open up a bit more, she could confirm that she was correct in her assumption about him. She might still have a chance to get out of here with Alex, hopefully, both of them alive.

She had to convince him that she deserved his help. That what Nick had done to her and Alex was unreasonable. She had to appeal to his conscience if he still had one.

"Eventually." The man shrugged his shoulders, slightly unsure. "I guess, that is, if you behave. The boss might let you roam around the grounds." He answered her.

Even if he wanted her to see the outside, he could not allow it. Not without the orders of his boss. As of today, he was told that he should not let her out of the room. Lock her doors at all times.

"Where is Nick, by the way? Your boss." She asked him as if out of the blue since he mentioned his boss. "I had not seen him since last night." Pretending to be not that interested.

She tried to play it cool so he would not suspect anything. He would only think that she was just trying to make conversation. Nothing else.

She guessed that Nick might not be currently on the estate. She presumed that he had left after the call. Knowing Nick, he would not miss the chance to torture her with his presence if he was anywhere nearby.

"He had to attend to some important business. I heard that something was wrong with his business. That is all I know." It was out of his mouth before he realized that he had said too much.

Luckily, his partner was not with him when he made the slip-up. Or he might be in trouble with his boss. But he just ignored it since he believed no harm was done.

It was the truth, hearing his boss swearing to the person on the other line. Then, he left instructions for him to keep an eye on her before leaving the other obligations to their team leader.

"Oh, ok." She replied, not making it sound like it was a big deal. "I guess he is busy. I hope you don't mind, but is there some form of entertainment in this house." She tried to change the topic, thinking of another question not related to Nick.

She thought that should throw him off a bit and not think of his blunder. She did not want him to stop talking to her, thinking she used him to get information.

"Unfortunately, there is none. There is no other form of reception here except for the satellite phone that the boss is using." He told her.

He made sure not to mention the other satellite phone in the radio room they used to communicate outside. He did not plan to make the same mistake twice.

He had already revealed too much to her. He was not going to do it again. However, he still indulged her questions, entertaining her in the process. It was the least he could do under her circumstances.

"Anyway, it was nice talking to you. You are very kind for keeping me company, even for a short while." She said to him, hearing another sound in the hallway.

His partner was on his way back, whistling as he walked towards them. It was a sign that she should end the conversation before the other man caught her and figured out her plans.

"It was my pleasure. I hope I was able to help ease up at least a bit of your loneliness." He pinched his two fingers together in front of him, showing her the hand symbol of tiny.

"It did. I hope we can do this again." She answered him, feeling delighted that she had made a breakthrough. She just needed to follow it up soon. "Thanks again."

Then, she turned her head at the view outside her window. She pretended to be admiring the landscape of the place, which prompted Samson to move back to the door and check on his partner.

"Just put the food on the table and let us get out of here. We still have something else to do." He instructed the other man. "Hurry up. We are already late as it is." He looked at his watch on his wrist, inspecting the time.

"Eat well, princess." He said before closing the door when his partner had exited the room.

She would have thanked him again, but the door was already closed. Besides, she did not want to appear getting close to him in front of another guard.

She kept her mouth close and stared at the food before her. It looked good, but she still had no appetite. However, just like before, she forced the food on her lips, down to her stomach.

"Bottoms up." She motivated herself as she took the last portion of the dish into her mouth, hardly tasting any of its deliciousness. At least she had made some progress, she thought, keeping herself pumped up with hope.

She reminded herself that she had to keep her body nourished and her mind sharp.. That was the only way she and Alex would be getting out of here in one piece.

#### [Chapter 520 - Punishable By Death](#)

"Damn!"

"That stupid fool. How could Joe do that to us?"

"Fuck!" Tim continued to curse at the top of his lungs. "All this time, I never suspected anything. How could he betray us all?" He ran his fingers through his hair, feeling exasperated.

He still could not believe that one of them would be capable of stabbing them in the back. Although it was not unlikely since all of them were still humans, capable of making mistakes. Still, he expected more from his team, especially Joe.

He just did not anticipate it from the old goat who had been his confidant since he had joined the team. Joe was a good man, but the system might have gotten to him.

"He wanted out with a huge payday," Ben narrated what happened in the facility where he was treated.

If not for the child, he might be a goner now. He mentally reminded himself that he had to visit him one day when he had fully recovered and all of this was over.

He had to thank him for saving his life, not just once but twice. He would never have predicted that a young boy could ever save his life.

"Well, if that was all he wanted, he could have asked me. I would have helped him settle in with a comfortable retirement package." Tim said, still unable to accept that one of his teammates would choose money over family.

He had taken care of most of his men in his best capacity. With Alex backing, his men and their families were well provided for. They were not rich, but they had lived comfortably without worries.

They had risked their lives in the military, not knowing when they would return home in a body bag. At the end of it all, they and their families were still unsure of their future.

"Well, Joe believed that you are bypassing him as a successor in your position and naming me as the next in line. He said he refused to work under me." Ben finally admitted, still unable to consider such a ridiculous idea.

"Of course, I told him that it was not true." He quickly added, not assuming that someone like him could ever take over Tim.

Maybe in a far future, a very far one, he might take on the role. He believed that Joe was right. He still had a lot to learn before he became anywhere near as good as Tim or even Joe.

Ben would have followed Joe if Tim ever decided to pass his position to Joe. He respected Joe for all the things he had taught him, especially those times that Joe was there to save his butt.

"Then he was a fool for choosing his interest first before the entire team," Tim concluded, disappointed for losing a good man. But happy that Ben had survived his ordeal.

He patted Ben on his hand, careful not to touch his injuries. He was glad that Ben was finally back in their midst, being treated by the best doctor in the city.

He was proud of his team for risking their lives for their fellow member and for putting their lives to save another.

He would not lose sleep on Joe. He had become a rotten apple in a good batch. He was glad that they had seen his

"It was his loss, not ours," Ben stated, agreeing with what his boss had said. "I am also glad that you are ok." He told his boss, who sat beside his hospital bed.

He looked at his boss, who had been like a father to him. He would have given his life for this man and for Alex, who never treated him like he was not his equal.

"Anyway, I better let you get back to sleep. I need you to recover quickly." Tim stood from his chair, holding on to his own injury.

"I wish I could do more," Ben said, anxious to help in any way he could. "Do you already have any lead to where they had taken them?" He asked, wishing he had learned where they had taken the couple.

He remembered being surprised to see a new flight attendant on the plane. Then, he was attacked from behind when he tried to talk to the pilot inside the cockpit. That was when he had lost consciousness.

After several hours, he woke up, his hands tied up on his back. It was just fortunate that he had a few tricks on his sleeve. He was able to untie himself without the men guarding him noticing.

"I don't want you to worry about that. You already have done more than enough." Tim assured him. "I want you to concentrate on making yourself better."

He knew he should be listening to his own advice. But somebody had to take charge in this situation. He knew it was only him qualified to handle such a delicate matter.

Joe was wrong about Ben. Ben was more than capable of taking over him. He might be young and less experienced than the two of them, but he still had a good head over that shoulder of his.

"But..." Ben was about to argue with Tim that he could still help, but Tim would not allow it.

"Just get better first. You are in a worse condition than I am." Tim told him, with no room for argument.

He stared at one of his best men on the team. He believed that Ben would be a good leader if not now, maybe someday. As he said before, he could see himself in him.

But Joe was also wrong about his assumption. He seriously contemplated handing some of his responsibilities to Joe when he decided to come back from his vacation.

Fortunately, he had learned of his true colors before he did hand him the reins. He would have regretted it in the end. His team would have fallen into the enemy's hands.

"By the way, do you think Joe survived the encounter?" He asked, remembering his other men were unable to answer him definitely.

During their rescue mission of Ben, his men had exchanged gunshots with the other team. Some of his men were injured, while their adversary also had incurred injuries and fatalities.

Nobody could confirm if Joe was only injured or had died during the exchange of fire. However, they were sure that Joe was hit by one of his men.

"I would not know. I was heavily drugged, and my head was spinning during that time." Then, he tried to recall if he could remember anything from that incident.

"Never mind," Tim said, not wanting Ben to worry about him. "If Joe was shot, let us just assume that he might still be alive." He told him. "If he is. I promise you. I will catch him, and he will pay for his crime."

It was better to assume the worse than be complacent that he was killed, then eventually learn that he survived to haunt them in the future.



He was fair in the way he handled his men. He usually showed mercy for the minor mishaps they made. But the treacherous act of Joe was different. His attempt to harm Ben or even kill him was not tolerable.. His betrayal was punishable by death.