

## Royal Contract 551

### [Chapter 551 - Winning Was Everything](#)

"How is he?" Ethan asked his daughter as he stood beside her on the side of the bed.

He wanted to convince her that she also needed to rest, but he figured that she would never listen to him. She was just as stubborn as he was.

The doctors had already assured him that she was not harmed physically. But they still advised that she should see someone for the trauma she had experienced.

"The doctors said that he still needs to undergo more tests just to be on the safe side." Dani held Alex's hand, not wanting to let it go, as she sat on a chair beside him.

She did not want to leave his side in the possibility that he might wake up at any time. She wanted to be at his side when he finally opened his eyes.

Since he had slept last night, he had not woken up. She was afraid that he might be in a worse state than what they were telling her.

The doctors told her that his body had just gone through a difficult phase. Sleeping was his way of trying to cope with the injuries he incurred.

She had nothing to worry about since he was not in any critical condition. Still, she did not want to leave his side, not until he had woken up.

"Princess, don't you feel tired." Ethan ran his hand through her hair, trying to comfort her.

He wanted to pull her daughter in his embrace, to tell her that all would be fine. But that was not how the world worked. He did not believe that cuddling her would help her situation.

She had a tough battle ahead of hers. Alex, too. They would need each other to get through this ordeal. But more than anything, Alex would require her strength.

Men could appear so all-mighty and overly powerful, but he had to admit that he would not have made it without his wife, Laura. She had been his source of all his strength. Without her, he would be nothing.

"I already had enough sleep earlier, and I already ate something a while ago." She looked up to gaze at his father, who had worry lines on his forehead. "Don't fret about me. I am taking care of myself."

She understood the concern in the voice of her father. The way he saw it, she also had been through a lot. But what he did not realize about her. She had changed these past few years.

She had been fending for herself, fighting every battle that had stood in her way. This incident might have been horrific, but she would not allow this experience to define her future.

"Ok. If you say so, Princess." He finally rested his case. He knew nothing else he might say could change her mind.

He leaned over to her and planted a tender kiss on the top of her head. He wished there was something more he could do for her and Alex, but there was none.

He might be king in his domain, but he had no power to grant wishes. He could not magically make everything back to the way it was.

In this instance, he understood that he was just a mortal like everyone else who could only hope that everything would turn out fine eventually.

"Dad, what are you planning to do with Nick?" As much as she did not want to discuss that name, she knew she had no choice.

Knowing her father, she was afraid that he might do something that might not be according to the letter of the law. He might take the matter into his own hands.

As much as she wanted Nick to pay for his crimes, she still wanted him to go through the justice system. She did not want her father to be the judge and executioner in Nick's case.

"Let me worry about Nick. Just focus on making yourself better." Ethan did not want to discuss the issue with Nick with her.

He believed she already had enough to worry about to even include Nick in her things to think about. He could handle Nick on his own as far as he was concerned.

He tapped her shoulders to assure her that he had the matter under his control. She had nothing to worry about because his men were already hunting Nick at the very moment.

"Dad, I don't think you understand. I don't want you to do anything to Nick. I want you and your men to stand down." She said to her father, shifting in her seat until she was face to face with him.

She knew that her father had done some not so commendable things in the past. But she knew he was not a criminal. However, this horrible incident might push him to do something that they all might regret in the end.

"I know what I am doing, Princess. I will do what needs to be done." He spoke to her with conviction.

Nothing could sway his decision. He believed that it was the only way that he could put a stop to Nick's evil ways. He realized that Nick would not stop harming his family until he had gotten what he wanted. But he was not waiting for that to happen.

He would act now before Nick could strike back. Besides, he believed that the law would not be enough to stop him. Even putting him behind bars would only be temporary.

"Not this time, Dad. Let the authorities do their job. I will handle Nick myself." Dani let go of Alex's hand and stood up to stare her father in the eyes. "You have to let me do this."

She knew that her father might not listen to her. But she had to try. She wanted Nick to pay for his crime, not lying in a ditch somewhere.

She wanted him to think of what he did every day of his life. She doubted that he would regret any of it, but she believed he would still suffer, knowing that he did not win.

Because for Nick, winning was everything.

[Chapter 552 - All For One And One For All](#)

"I don't know how to thank you, Tim, for all you did to get them back." Ethan walked inside another room where Tim lay on the bed.

Tim was recovering from an additional injury he incurred during the encounter. Ethan learned that when the shooting started, Tim immediately went to join the fight.

He could not thank Tim and his men enough for their bravery and selflessness in risking their lives just to rescue the people he loved.

"It is my job. You don't have to thank me." Tim responded to Ethan as he shifted into a sitting position in the bed to greet the old man.

Although, it was more than a job for him. He would have done anything to save Alex and his wife, even if no money was involved. But still, he appreciated that the old man recognized their effort.

When Tim heard what his team leader planned to do, he immediately agreed that it was the right move. Instead of waiting in his hiding spot, he decided to help out.

"I am sorry about your men." Ethan offered his condolences, standing closer to the injured man.

He felt responsible for the two men who were killed in the line of fire and the different injuries suffered by the other members of the team besides Tim.

He planned to offer them reasonable rewards for what they had sacrificed. But he knew that it would not be enough replacement for the lost lives of his men.

"They knew the risk when they had joined our group. We always considered that there would always be a fifty percent chance that we might not come out of this alive every time we went on a mission." Tim solemnly said as he remembered one of his crew, who remained unconscious until this time.

The doctor had assured him that his injured men were out of critical condition. There was a high chance that they would recover fully well. He was glad because losing another of his team was hard on him.

Even finding out about what Joe did was painful for him because he had treated every member of his team as if they were his brothers or his sons. They were the family he did not have.

He never chose to grow old alone. He had a few relationships in the past. Unfortunately, he did not meet a woman who could understand his passion.

Each one of them loved him but did not like the risk he was taking every time he picked up a gun. Eventually, each left him when he failed to give up his missions.

"Still, I am grateful for what you did for my family. Let me know what you need, and I will do my best to grant them." Ethan said to Tim.

He believed that he had never met someone like Tim before. He had always been a good judge of character, and Tim had exceeded his high standards.

He did not easily get impressed by any man, whether by wealth, power, or beauty. He did not measure the success or worth of any man with those qualities. He preferred the quality of character and contribution to society.

"You already did so much, Sir. But if my men would need anything else. I am not going to hesitate to inform you." Tim said, speaking for his men who could not speak for themselves.

His men who died had families who were now grieving their loss. The only thing he could do for them was helped their families, that were left with a hole in their hearts. Maybe compensate them with all the help he could get to bring them back on their feet.

However, it was not just the money he was talking about but the support they could provide for them. As for the injured, recovering would also require rehabilitation and therapy. He planned to give them the best help he could find.

"What about you? What do you need?" Ethan asked the team leader.

Ethan had heard what his men needed from him, but what about him. What help could he provide for the man who had led this entire operation to its success?

He understood from the report that their interference had tremendously helped Alex and Dani escape from that place. They had provided a diversion that led the enemies away from the two.

Then, he remembered that he still had to thank the other man who had helped them escape from their captivity. He was another hero in his book, despite what he did in his past. What mattered to him was what he did today.

"I don't think I can ask for more. You already provided what I need." Tim spoke up, declining additional reward from Ethan.

Then, he remembered something. "Well, I only have one favor to ask." He told him.

He did not need money since he had enough to last him two lifetimes. With his low-maintenance lifestyle, he believed that he would not need more. Besides, he had no family to spend it on. No one to give it to.

Being injured again with a gunshot, this time, reminded him that he was easily susceptible to death. However, he was unsure if he should rejoice, not leaving anyone to mourn for him if he died.

"Tell me." Ethan anticipated what he would ask of him. He already knew that it was not a financial reward since he had already offered it before, but he declined.

He wondered what else a man like Tim would want from a man like him. It was hard to guess since most people wanted money and power, but Tim was not like that.

"I only want to take care of my men. If luckily, Joe is still alive. I want you to let me handle him." Tim said as his mind pictured Tim and what he would do to him.

He had been a friend to Joe, but he still had to pay if he was still alive. He could not let him get away with his crime. Despite what they had been through, he could never forgive Joe for causing harm to his teammates and putting his need before the others.

In his team, he had one most sacred rule. Nobody dared break it because everyone agreed with it. Except for Joe, so far. But the rule was simple.

All for one and one for all.

#### [Chapter 553 - The Pain Was All Worth It](#)

"How are you feeling?" Dani asked as soon as she entered the room. "What are you doing out of bed?"

She could see that Alex was out of the bed and walking toward the balcony of the room. She immediately strode to him, afraid that he might hurt himself.

It had only been a couple of days since he was allowed to leave the hospital. Although the doctors said he was recovering well, she did not want him to abuse his body until he was fully healed.

"I am fine. Don't worry." Alex stopped in his tracks and waited for her. Although he still felt the pain of his injuries, it was not a hinder anymore in his movements. "I am being careful."

He believed that moving around would not impair his recovery. It was actually helping hastened the healing process. His doctors also said that he could do it gradually.

He immediately took Dani's offered arms to assist him out of the door. When he was finally seated on a chair outside, he felt so much better. He liked the feel of the cool breeze outside the open air.

"You can't blame me. I just don't like to see you worsen your condition." She explained her overprotectiveness as she gazed into his face, which was still a bit pale.

She could only guess that he was still in pain but trying hard not to show her. The doctors said his injuries would take weeks before he felt a bit normal. But it would still take time before his injuries fully heal.

She was relieved to learn that he was now in the clear from any danger. She guessed that was the most important. She was glad that he was on the road to recovery.

But she agreed with the doctors that they must attend a few therapy sessions for their trauma. Even if Alex did not think it was necessary. It would not hurt to talk to someone about their experience.

"Ok. But stop worrying. I am doing so much better." Alex smiled at her as he leaned over and reached out for her hand.

He pulled it closer to his face and planted a kiss on her fingers. He truly appreciated what she was doing for him. Taking care of his needs.

He planned to make it up to her as soon as he was well. He would take her on another trip for their honeymoon and make her the happiest woman on the planet.

However, he still needed to do one thing first before devoting his entire time to her. He had to make Nick pay. He had heard that Nick had already surrendered to the authorities yesterday.

He was now under the custody of the authorities while the case was being investigated. However, he was not taking his chances against Nick. He had to prepare everything he got on him to take him down, once and for all.

"But you need to slow down. Take more rest." Dani suggested, watching him with concern.

She discovered that he already had several meetings for his company this morning. Then he had been talking with the authorities this afternoon.

"Well, shouldn't you be doing the same thing?" Alex showed her a big grin, knowing that he had made a fair point.

He was grateful that nothing horrible happened to his wife during the abduction. Except for a few minor bruises, she appeared physically well.

But he could sense that she was still terribly shaken by the experience. He believed that seeing him in that condition could not have been easy for her. Mentally and emotionally, she was affected and traumatized.

"Guilty," Dani admitted, realizing she should also be listening to her own advice.

She had been out the entire day. She had visited her work, hoping just to catch up with her cases, but Jacky would not have it. Even her bosses politely turned her away and made her go home.

She did not plan to go back to work yet but just checked on her clients. She had been away for too long that she felt obligated to see if someone needed her attention.

But they had assured her that she had nothing to worry about except rest and try to get better. She might not be injured physically, but she might still be shaken mentally. Besides, Alex still needed her.

But, she also stopped by to visit her father and checked on Nick's case. She was thankful that her father had listened to her. He allowed the authorities to build a case against Nick instead of going after him.

"Anyway, for tonight, can we just forget the whole thing and focus on us." Alex gazed at the almost darkening sky, wishing that they were on the beach or somewhere else besides his apartment, enjoying each other's company.

However, he still believed that despite the incident. It should not stop them from continuing their lives. They still have a honeymoon to resume and a lifetime of their married life to enjoy.

"I think that is a very nice idea." She could not agree more with him, nodding her head in understanding.

She was also tired of thinking about the case or Nick consuming most of her waking hours. If she was being honest, even in her nightmares. She had to start regaining her life back.

The only way to do that was to take the control back. Not to allow the past to dictate her future. She had to put Nick at the back of her mind and concentrate on building a life with Alex. Well, even for a few moments.

"Then, shall we continue with our honeymoon?" Alex pulled her closer to him until she was close enough to lean in for a kiss. "What about making our first prince?" He suggested after a short but meaningful kiss.

He had been wanting to hold her in his arms for the longest time. Wishing to kiss her since he could remember. He could feel the tightness in his chest, remembering he had almost lost the chance to be with her again.

"I don't think you are physically well to perform that task." She teased him, remembering that he was still physically unable to move much.

She was also afraid that she might hurt him in the process of making love. Although, she longed to be with him again. To feel his lips and hands explore her body.

She almost cried, thinking she could have lost him. However, she believed she should smile because fate had given them another chance for love and life.

"Is that so?" He questioned her, appalled that she doubted him. "I think I should teach you a lesson." He grabbed her and pulled her into his lap.

But the suddenness of his movements, then the slight bump of her back on his injured ribs, made him wince in pain. She immediately stood up and fussed about his injury.

"Now, look at what you have done." She reprimanded him for his foolishness. But she could not help but pity him for his suffering.

But he only laughed at their situation, but it only had worsened his pain as he held onto his chest, trying to control himself. But the look on Dani's face was priceless, he thought.

"I love you so much, Dani," Alex said when he had calmed down, as he held her face in his hands. He felt so lucky to have married the best wife in the world.. He believed the pain was all worth it.

#### [Chapter 554 - The Phantom](#)

"I think Mr. Travis failed to deliver what he promised." One of his father's friends, who served as one of his advisers in their organization, commented as they were having dinner at one of the most expensive restaurants in the city.

The man, known as Bobby Zayne, who owned a big conglomerate in the city, commented on his observation upon reading the news regarding the apprehension of Nick Travis.

Although the meeting had nothing to do with the organization but simply a dinner about his legal acquisition, he still felt the need to open up the topic.

"Let me handle him, Bobby." He told the man, who was as old as his father.

Mr. Zayne was one of his clients in his profession. He was counseling him on one of his investments when the old man shifted the topic to Nick and his case.

He was not planning to talk about Nick, but this man was right. He needed to address the matter before it got out of hand. He had to appease his associates that he was in control of the situation.

What happened to Nick was an isolated situation and would not affect their operations. He did not like when they questioned his ability to lead this organization or his decisions because he knew what he was capable of.

However, he could not afford to offend them. Not when he was still solidifying his role as the new leader of the largest underworld organization in the city. He hoped that someday his group would be the largest in the world.

"I know that you will be a great leader. I even told your father that you might exceed what he had achieved. But fair warning, many want your position, so better watch your back." Bobby rambled on about what his father had gone through to earn all their trust.

He knew that the young man already was aware of that, but it would not hurt to remind him about what he was up against. He still believed that he was the rightful heir to the throne that his father vacated.

"I am aware of what is happening inside the organization. You have nothing to worry about me. Those fools who think that they could take my place had a surprise coming their way soon." He assured the old man.

He appreciated his loyalty to his father, but he still could not trust someone who pledged his allegiance to a dead corpse. He needed men who believed in his vision.

"If you don't mind me asking, do you have any plan about Nick?" Bobby wiped the oil that stuck on the side of his lips with the table napkin before placing it back down on his lap.

He was interested to hear what their young leader had in mind regarding the issue. If it was still his father, he already could anticipate what he would do, but this man sitting in front of him was different. He was not easy to read.

"I already suspected that from Nick. He was never cut out to be part of this organization. You have nothing to worry about because all this is part of my plan." He assured the man as he continued to eat the juicy piece of beef on his plate.

He had no intention of sharing any of his ideas with the man, especially when there was still a likelihood that he might be working for his enemies.

He also knew that gambling with Nick was a tremendous risk, but he did not put all his money on him. He just used Nick as a pawn in one of his many games. In this case, he lost, but it was just one round.

In a game of power, he could not just play one game and expect to end up being the best. To be the king, he must learn to choose his battles wisely. Which one he would sacrifice and which one he must win.

In this circumstance, he was hoping that Nick would succeed. Since he did not. Then, he had to opt for plan A. His initial objective.

"Then, I trust that you know what you are doing. You can count on my full support in whatever you are planning to do." Bobby raised his glass to him, concluding the discussion.

The old man returned to his meal immediately after the new boss acknowledged his pledged support. He could not afford to disrespect their new leader by going against him.

He had to play his cards right, just in case, the young man remained in his position. Otherwise, he also did not want to offend another candidate that might take his place.

"I appreciate that." The young man said, hoping that he was telling him the truth. Or else the old man would suffer the same fate as Nick.



Nick was a good plan, even if it did not pay off. It was a good distraction that gave him an opening to put his own strategies into action. He could proceed with ease with his grand master plan.

Now, his opponents believed that the war was over, even though it had just begun. He could strike without them knowing what hit them.

"Regarding my case, do you think that it was wise for me to enter a deal with this Prince Alexander Blackstone," Bobby asked his legal counsel.

He returned the topic back to the initial purpose of the meeting. He was initially set on making a deal with Ethan before he had his health issues, and the project was placed on hold.

Now that the project was back on the table, he was hesitant to pursue it with a new head of the Hamilton Empire. He had no prior knowledge of the prince and his record in handling his business.

Although he had heard good things about the prince, he still had to prove himself in the business world. He thought a few milestones were not enough to assure him that the young man could handle such a business empire.

"I assure you that I have met the man. He had a good reputation and good business sense. It would be worth your while to agree with their more than reasonable offer." He advised the older man.

Honestly, he was rooting for the business arrangement to push through. It was an opportunity that he could explore to his advantage.

Nobody would know who he was and when he would strike.. He was the phantom that would hunt them down.

#### [Chapter 555 - Read Between The Lines](#)

In another part of the same restaurant, two people also had an intimate dinner date. They were slightly hidden from view from the other diners.

He had planned this dinner ever since he had canceled on her. He wanted to make up to her for the last dinner he had promised her. This time, he had arranged it himself. Even picked and bought the flowers personally before delivering them to her doorstep when he picked her up earlier.

"I am glad that you hid this from me," Jacky said as she just placed a small chunk of meat in her mouth. She was hungry, but the news she received slightly affected her appetite.

She could not believe that something so big was going on under her nose. She thought that the power couple was just busy consuming their honeymoon, not realizing that something horrific had already happened to them.

She could not blame Marcus for not telling her. Although, she did feel hurt that she was the last to know about the entire kidnapping issue.

Well, not exactly the last, but still, she should have known about it. Then again, maybe not knowing was a good thing since she might not have handled it well.

"I honestly wished I was able to share it with you, but the entire situation was sensitive. Any wrong move might jeopardize Alex and Dani's safety." Marcus explained to her, feeling slightly at ease, hearing that she was not mad at him.

He looked at her from across the table, watching her face for any sign that she might be slightly irritated with him, but there was none. She might have looked a bit shocked. But nothing indicated she harbored any ill feelings.

He was dreading the time that she would hear about what happened. He felt that she might be furious with him for keeping such a big secret from her. But he was surprised to hear that she was taking the whole situation lightly.

"I understand your situation fully well. You have no choice. Maybe if I was in your situation, I might have done the same thing." Jacky told the man whose face appeared to be pleading with her.

She extended her hand until she held his hand and squeezed it firmly. She wanted to assure him that he had nothing to worry about hurting her feelings.

She would admit that she did feel ignored or not valued. But she also realized under the circumstance, she had nothing to contribute if she had learned about it earlier.

On the other hand, she might have caused more problems for them if she suddenly became aware of the abduction. She would be one more distraction that could have affected the rescue of her friends.

"Thanks for taking this entire situation well." He pulled her fingers into his lips and peppered them with gentle pecks.

He suddenly wished that he had ordered take-out and just ate in the privacy of her apartment. In that way, he could do what he was thinking at the moment.

However, she deserved so much more than just this dinner gesture to make up for all the horrible things he did to her. He was not only thinking about the canceled dinner.

"I think we should learn to trust each other if we would make this relationship work," Jacky spoke softly, afraid that she might be saying too much.

"I know it would be difficult for us to share everything with each other. But we just had to learn to accept that we are doing this because it was necessary and not to hurt the other." She added before he could respond to her previous sentence.

She was still not sure of the status of their relationship. She might know what she wanted from it, but she was still guessing what Marcus was expecting from this.

She did want to scare him away if he was not ready to take this to the next level. However, she also did not want to waste her time with him if he only thought that this was just another of his casual fling.

"I agree, but it does not mean that I plan to keep a lot of secrets from you." He said as he moved his chair closer to her, not liking the space separating them.

He tilted her face, using the tip of his fingers until she gazed into his eyes. He liked seeing her eyes when it was dancing with uncertainty and vulnerability.

It was a rare occasion because Jacky had always been one of the few women he knew that was always confident about herself. She had never allowed anyone else to dictate how she wanted to live her life.

Leaving and growing up on her own had made her a strong and independent woman who believed that she could survive the world without depending on any man.

But her heart was just as soft as cotton, able to forgive and love even the most despicable person in the world. More than that, she trusted him enough to show that he was the only one she needed when she felt weak.

"You are everything to me, Jacky." He finally confided in her, deciding to let his emotions show.

He finally had broken down the barriers that he had set up against any kind of commitment. He was willing to admit that he was ready to take the next step.

"I am?" She was confused by his words. Her heart wanted to believe what she was reading in his eyes, but her mind was still warning her to take caution.

She wanted to believe him with all of her heart, but the past still lingered in her mind. Despite her resolution to give him a chance, she still wanted to hear the words come out of his lips.

It was the only confirmation she needed that he had changed.

Gestures and body language might be a good sign of his intentions, but there was a chance that she might misinterpret his true feelings.

She had to carefully read between the lines.

#### [Chapter 556 - Monogamous Relationship](#)

She was surprised by his admission of his feelings. She did not expect it, although she had dreamt of hearing something like that from him for the longest time.

"You are." He repeated with all seriousness in his tone.

He lowered his head until his face aligned with hers. He gazed at her, focusing the intensity of his stare on her eyes. He guessed this was the right time to express what he truly felt about her.

He wanted to see her reaction once he finally said what he had been keeping from her all this time. Although he might still have some doubts about his worthiness to be with her.

He felt he was treading on unfamiliar grounds and was still a bit of a loss on how to handle a relationship. Nevertheless, he was one hundred percent certain that he was willing to give it a try.

He was afraid that he might still hurt her unintentionally. But he believed that not telling her what he felt was hurting her just the same. So, he was putting his foot down and finally making his big gesture.

"There is something I wish to tell you." He said with a slightly nervous smile, terrified that she might not believe his words. Still, he was determined to tell her now more than ever.

He could not blame her if she did not believe his confession right away. After all, he had put her through, he had to accept whatever her reaction would be.

He just hoped that what he would do next in their relationship would absolve him from his past mistakes. He planned to do everything he could to make up for it, even if it would take his entire lifetime to do so.

"What is it?" She was supposed to tell him something too, but she was thankful he had gone first. She could feel her hands shaking as her nerves went on edge, slightly unsure how to open the topic on the tip of her tongue.

She was planning to confront him about her feelings. She wanted what Dani and Alex had. If Marcus did not feel the same way. Then, she had no choice but to end it with him. She could not wait for him anymore.

Her anxiety increased, making matters worse when she saw the uncertainty in his eyes. She could sense that he was also nervous. As if he was about to break her heart again but did not know how he should do it.

She could feel her heart pumping erratically as her nerves became frantic. But on the outside, she still appeared calm and collected. She was not about to give him the satisfaction of letting him see her break down again just because of him.

"I want to make this relationship work. I am willing to take this, whatever we are doing, wherever you want it to go." He pulled her even closer, with their faces almost touching.

When he ended things with her, it took him a while to realize that he had made the biggest mistake of his life. Now, he could not let that happen again.

"I need you in my life." He finally confessed, believing in every word he said to her.

He had tried to forget her, but he failed miserably. Despite all his effort, his mind would not let him forget about her. His body still craved to touch her. His heart ached to be with her.

He believed, just like Alex and David, he was hooked, lined, and sinker. He had no way out of this. He could not afford to lose her anymore.

"Are you sure about that?" Jacky questioned his words, surprised, shocked, unable to believe what she had just heard. At the same time, she felt relieved upon learning that he was not breaking up with her again.

She was ecstatic. Yet, she still waited for something to fall, breaking this entire illusion. Then again, she was also hopeful that Marcus was just about to make her dreams come true.

Not that she was waiting for him to go down on his knees or anything, but she was happy that he was not ending it between them as she feared.

"I hope you are not just saying that because of what happened to Alex and Dani." She felt that he might have been forced by the circumstances around them.

She only wished to be sure of his feelings. Emotions were high after the incident. She did not want that clouding his judgment and making hasty decisions.

"I will be honest with you. This is new for me. But I will try my best to make this work." Marcus held her hands firmly, assuring her that he spoke the truth.

"I already thought about this when I realized that letting you go was the biggest, stupidest mistake I ever made." He divulged to her what he had realized a long time ago. "I do not wish to lose you again."

"I don't know what to say." She suddenly became speechless as her heart did a few somersaults inside her chest, hearing his admission. "Well, I have dreamt of hearing you say those things." She also informed him.

She realized that he was not planning to end their relationship, but rather, he would like to commit to it. She had waited for this moment since she first agreed to go out with him again.

Now that it was actually happening, she could not help herself but feel like she was over the moon. She could not get happier than this.

"Just say that you are willing to take a chance with me again." He leaned forward, burying his face in the palm of her hands.

He had never felt this way with anyone else. Only she had the power to make him fall to his knees. He would beg if he had to just to prove himself to her again.

"I like that." It was her turn to tilt his head up until he looked into her eyes. "I want that too, very much." She smiled at him, showing him how much she agreed with his plans.

Well, it was not the declaration she was waiting for from him, but it would do for now. She was willing to take baby steps on this relationship until both knew what they were doing.

It was already a giant leap for him to admit that he was ready to leave his bachelor life.. And to finally enter a monogamous relationship with her.

#### [Chapter 557 - The Best Litigator In Town](#)

"You should be resting and not wandering around your apartment all day." His mother nagged at him as she fussed around him since she arrived more than an hour ago.

Dani was left in the kitchen to clean up after dinner while her mother accompanied him in the living room. Thankfully, his father had remained silent as he watched the latest news on the television.

His parents had come over for dinner tonight, saying they missed having their company. However, he suspected they just wanted to check on him and his condition, particularly his mother.

"I barely moved a muscle from my office." He counteracted, slightly stretching his head in the direction of the kitchen, hoping that Dani would come back to rescue him from his mother.

He had worked at home since he felt a little better, hoping to help the company from its problems. He knew Ethan and Marcus were still capable of handling the business.

Nevertheless, he was concerned about his father-in-law and his health condition. Besides, having three heads was better than two, working on the situations.

Well, he was also bored of just sitting or lying around with nothing else to do but stare at the air around him. His body might still be in pain, but his mind was not. He believed he was more than capable of working.

"I heard that you are overdoing it. Even Dani was concerned about your actions. She was afraid that you might be forcing yourself with work when she was not around." His mother continued as she placed a cup of tea in front of him.

Katherine brought the tea back from the palace, believing that it had medicinal properties, speeding up his recovery. He appreciated the gesture, but he was old enough to know what would help him in his recovery.

Besides, the pain was already tolerable compared to yesterday. He thought he might be able to go back to work in a few days. But Dani and his mother did not consider that as such a good idea.

"Dad, can you help me out?" He caught his father's eyes looking in their direction, so he thought to seek his support on the matter.

Women could be too worried about trivial things, to the point they could be overbearing sometimes. He believed his father would know what he was talking about and put on a good word for him.

"I think it would be better if you should listen to your mother and wife just this time." His father commented before returning his attention to the program on the screen.

He did not want to stand in the middle of the situation, knowing that his wife was in the protective motherly mode. He would just be burying himself in trouble if he sided with his son.

Better to stay away from this situation and keep his mouth shut. Besides, he could not see any harm in it if he would remain in the house for a week more and fully recover while resting.

"Thanks, Dad. You are a big help." Alex said sarcastically at his father, who only smirked at him when his mother had her back turned on him. "Traitor." He mouthed to his father without a sound.

He knew his father heard it loud and clear as he laughed before turning away from him and concentrating back on the movie in front of him.

"Well, he knew better than to cross me," Katherine remarked, knowing what was going on between the two.

She had known how the two would conspire against her since he was a young boy. Sometimes, she would allow them to get away with it. But most times, she would teach them a lesson they never forgot.

"Anyway, do you have any news about Nick's case?" His father turned the volume down to look at his son, very much interested to hear the news about the mastermind behind their kidnapping.

He wished he had his hands around the man's neck. He would not have second thoughts of snapping them because he believed that the evil son of a bitch deserved it.

However, Dani was right. He had to face a fair trial and suffered behind bars. Dani believed that they had more than enough evidence to make him pay for life.

"Dani told me that the case was already filed against him. Nick was now taken into custody until the trial. He was not allowed to make bail because of the charges against him." Alex explained to them, sipping on the tea his mother had prepared for him.

The tea was bitter and unpleasant on the taste buds, but he did not want to displease his mother. He almost coughed it out when the liquid touched his tonsils, but he held it inside his mouth, swallowing it with some difficulty.

"I am glad if that was the case." His mother interrupted, still feeling the chill every time she remembered what her son and Dani had gone through. "I only wished for the speedy trial so all of us could put this all behind us."

She was very thankful that the couple had come out of this horrible experience with only minor injuries. She would not have taken it well if her son died, even her daughter-in-law.

She would want nothing else but to see the man behind bars and their lives back to normal. Although putting him in jail would not end all their problems, it was still one problem that they could leave behind.

"Don't worry, Mom." Dani interrupted the conversation as she walked back to the living room to join them. "Our lawyers are working hard on this case. They would not stop until Nick would be out of our lives for good."

She would have defended the case against the man who had abused them. But she also believed that it was not such a good idea. Someone who was more experienced would be better to handle the lawsuit.

With the help of her boss, they had recommended someone who would be more suited to take on the case.. He and his team had handled cases like this before, and his records would show that he was the best litigator in town.

#### [Chapter 558 - No Plan To Propose Again](#)

"Thanks, Mom and Dad, for visiting." Dani bade farewell to the elder couple, showing them to the door. "We are looking forward to your next visit." While Alex stayed behind inside the room.

She enjoyed their frequent visits since they arrived to check on their son. She sensed that Alex also had relished their company, even if his mom could be a little bit overprotective and smothering.

She could not blame her mother-in-law after what her son had been through. She would only know what she felt if the same thing happened to her, but she would not wish that for anyone, not even herself.

"You have always been a gracious host. My son is a lucky man to marry such a lovely and incredible woman." Fred said as he tapped her on the shoulder. "We are glad to have a daughter like you." Before giving her a soft peck on the forehead.

He was happy that despite the circumstances of how this two have met, they still ended up together. He was glad that fate still had favored them and intervened, sparing the lives of his children.

"You have fulfilled my wish to have a daughter," Katherine stated as she leaned forward to give her a hug. "You are more than I ever hope for." She whispered into her ears before kissing her on the cheeks.

The day she had learned they were missing, her world came crumbling down in an instant. But she knew she could not appear weak in the public eyes, but most especially in the eyes of her husband.

She continued on with her duties, at the same time, helped her husband with his. There was no time to fret, but internally, she was dying every minute she had not received any news about them.

"I am the one lucky to be a part of this family." She could not deny it, feeling the warm welcome coming from the royal couple.

She believed that Alex had been the perfect man for her because his parents had raised him well. She was the fortunate girl who had won his heart and became the new member of their big family.

As soon as their guests were out of sight, she immediately went back to the living room where her husband waited for her return. She found him sitting down on the sofa, comfortably watching the news, flashing on the screen.

"What took you so long?" He complained, patting the space on the couch beside him, indicating that she should join him.

He would have walked his parents through the door, but he would not hear the end of it from his mother. So, he played it safe and just waited on the couch like a good son, obeying his mother to take his rest.

On the contrary, sitting still was the farthest thing he liked to do at the moment. Lying down would have to come a bit later, maybe after he accomplished what he had planned for the remainder of the night.

"Don't be overly dramatic. It was just a couple of minutes." She told him as she followed the gesture of his hand. "Your mom just had a few pointers." She continued, plopping comfortably on the soft, fluffy cushion beside him.

She lowered her head on his shoulders, reveling in the warmth that oozed from his body. Eventually, she felt him shift in his seat, and his arms went around her shoulders, enveloping her in his embrace.

She snuggled a bit closer but carefully avoided hurting his injury. Until now, she could not believe they were back in his apartment. And finally, out of the nightmare that scared the shit out of her.

"I see." He expressed in a sigh as he turned his head from side to side. "I am not sure if that would be useful." He mumbled, knowing that nothing would stop him from doing what he had set to do.

He did not like the sound of his mother joining forces with Dani, but he could not do anything about it. His mom probably had given her a list of how she could take care of him better.

He would not be surprised if she even gave her tips on how to handle him when he was being stubborn. The only consolation was, at least, he had his wife all to himself. He did not have to share her anymore with his parents.

"Anyway, I have something for you." He held her firmly around him, not caring if he felt a little discomfort.

He had arranged for a simple dinner in candlelight with his wife. It was supposed to be just him and her for the night. But his parents had to show up and interrupt his surprise.



However, it would not stop him from continuing what he had already set out to do. He was accomplishing his plans even if it took him the entire night to do it.

"What?" She was stunned since she could not think of any special occasion at that moment or the next day that merited a gift. She wondered if she had missed something.

She watched him pull a small box out of his pocket and show it to her. She could already guess what could be inside the box, judging from its packaging. Then, it suddenly made sense to her.

"I was planning this the entire day. A special dinner with my wife and then presenting this to you, but my folks had to show up." He said with a chuckle, finding the situation a bit funny.

He actually did not mind his father and mother showing up during dinner, unannounced. Although it had delayed his plans a bit, he still liked seeing them and spending time with them.

He appreciated that his parents had flown in to see them as soon as they were rescued. Then, stayed a bit to make sure that both of them would be ok.

However, he felt that things were getting back to normal, so there was no more need for his mother to fuss over him. He was already recovering from his injury, and there was no more imminent danger at the moment.

"Now, you are making me feel bad. I have nothing prepared for you." She chastised him for being too damn thoughtful and sweet. She mentally had taken a note to return the romantic gesture somehow.

She did not like him to pamper her with gifts even if there was no occasion at all. However, she knew she could do nothing about this one because he was simply stubborn that way.

All she could do was to make up for it and make the same gesture every chance she might get. She could not change him, she had tried, so it was time that she just followed his lead.

"I only want to make you happy." He said as he pulled his arm out of her body and gradually slid out of the couch.

Suddenly, he was kneeling before her, with his hand stretched toward her. His face never left hers as he watched her every reaction with his following actions.

He opened the gift, revealing to her the content of the small package. He had no plan to propose again since she was already bonded to him forever.. But he had concocted something else in mind.

#### [Chapter 559 - The Heroine In The Story](#)

"What are you doing?" She was once again surprised by his sudden action. She was not expecting that he would go down on his knees again. "Get up, or you might hurt yourself."

Well, she guessed she was going over the top, thinking that kneeling would hurt him, but still, she did not have any idea what he was planning to do.

"Seriously?" He furrowed his brow at her. "I think I can handle a few pinches in my chest for a few minutes." He assured her as he continued to kneel in front of her.

"Now, listen to me." He stopped her from fussing over him, grabbing her hand with his free hand.

He again raised the present he had for her, then swallowed hard to clear his throat and clear his mind. He had prepared a few words to tell her. But her interruptions had disrupted the flow of his words in his mind.

"Ahhhhmmm..." He began, then stopped again. "I love you." He thought he should start with that. "I almost died, but I am glad that you managed to find a way to save me. I owe you my life."

He still felt like he was the luckiest man alive for having Dani in his life. He did not mind that the table was turned. He appreciated that she was capable of being a knight in his time of need.

"I love you, too," Dani spoke up despite the emotions that were starting to build up inside of her. "I only did what I had to do. I could not bear to lose you. You do not have to thank me."

She placed her free hand on his cheek and caressed it. She would do it over and over again if she had to because losing him would never be an option for her.

"You have saved me more times than I could count. What I did was nothing compared to what you already did for me." She reiterated that she did nothing if she would think of all the things he had sacrificed for her.

"I guess at this point, we should call it even, then." Alex teased her with his boyish smile, playing on his lips.

He always believed in having an equal role in a relationship. He did not think that being a man meant that he should always be on top of the situation. Even his partner could act as the dominant factor if it was necessary.

"I like that. But you did not have to buy me a gift every time I save you from a situation." She jokingly said as she lowered herself until their foreheads were touching.

In their case, she was the one who had the opportunity to save them both. It did not mean that he was a lesser man if she had to rescue him in that situation.

"I just wanted to replace our missing rings." He pulled the round object out of the casing and placed it on her finger. "It is not the same one that God had blessed for our union, but I will vow to you that I will love you till my last breath."

He inserted the ring on her finger and kissed her fingers to seal the deal. It was not just an object but a symbol of his pledge to love her for all eternity.

She also took the other ring on the case and held it on her fingers. "With this ring, I also vow to love you till my last breath and beyond." She repeated his words, swearing to love him even beyond the afterlife.

"Can I now kiss my wife?" He asked as he planted a soft kiss on her lips.

He stood up from his position and dragged her with him. He wrapped her body around his arms and started kissing her.

He had long to touch her again. Kissing was not enough anymore. Even the pain could not stop him from consuming his need to be with her.

"Of course, you can." She replied, wanting to feel his lips against hers.

She wrapped her arms around his neck and let her fingers entwine on the hair on his nape. She parted her lips, allowing him entry as their tongues collided in a battle of desire.

When her hands started to explore, she let them wander on his shoulders and down to his arms, feeling the strength as his muscles flexed underneath her touch.

"I think we should continue this in the bedroom." He mumbled in between their kiss.

He slowly pulled her towards the bedroom. If he was not in pain, he would have carried her for a faster result.

"Slow down. There is no need to hurry. We still have all night and forever." She assured her as she followed him into their room.

She only felt him stop when they reached the bed. Then, he slowly unbuttoned her blouse while she pulled his shirt off from his body. But as she ran her hands over his body, she felt him wince a bit as her palm landed on his injured ribs.

"Ohh!" He groaned, but it did not sound anything pleasant at all.

However, he was determined to push through the pain. The slight discomfort would not stop him from pursuing his mission. Not this time.

"I am sorry, Alex." She immediately lifted her hand away from his ribs, afraid that she had worsened his condition. "What is wrong?" Showing her concern.

She mildly panicked, watching him bite his lip and close his eyes. She leaned back to check on him, but he did not let her go. His hands remained planted on her hips, firmly keeping her in place.

"There is nothing to worry about. It was just a mild pain that I could handle. I was just caught unaware. But it is fine now." He took a deep breath and allowed the pain to subside before pulling her back to his body again.

He ran his hands on her cheeks, examining how her eyes danced with the light of the room. He could see the passion in her eyes, but her face was overshadowed by her concern for him.

"Are you sure?" She questioned him, unsure if she should allow him to continue with his plan.

As much as she missed his touch, she would never prioritize her needs from his. She could wait until he was fully recovered before fulfilling her desire for the flesh.

"I want you more than anything. I could take the pain of my injuries, but I could not stand not being able to hold you in my arms anymore." He answered her.

He began planting gentle kisses starting at her temple, working his way down to the side of the skin of her neck. "To feel you next to me, yet not be able to have you." He uttered as he peppered her with his soft lips.

He had been in control of his situation all his life. He knew what he wanted to do with his profession. He had never allowed anyone else to dictate his future. His path was his own to make.

However, meeting Dani had changed everything about him. He had to reevaluate his life to accommodate hers. He had found himself, just another human being, also susceptible to his own vulnerability.

She might think that he was her prince charming who would always be there to save the day.. But still, in his book, she was the heroine in the story.

#### [Chapter 560 - The Real Mastermind](#)

"You have to get me out of here, Arnold." He shouted, slamming his hands on the metal table separating him from the other man inside the three-by-three room.

Arnold had been his lawyer for a long time. He had worked on many cases for him and had not lost one. Currently, he had advised that he cooperated with the authorities while they processed a solution on his case.

He said that his legal team needed time to find a loophole in the criminal charges against him. At the moment, the overwhelming evidence and testimonies against him would be difficult to disprove.

"I don't think I can last long inside these bars." He pushed himself off the table, but the chains prevented him from going far.

At the moment, he could not do anything but remain in police custody. He had no other choice but to defend himself and prove his innocence.

He could not just flee the country and leave everything he had worked hard to build behind. That was not an option. He had to face this in court and make everybody believe that he had nothing to do with these accusations.

"We are doing everything we can. For the meantime, all you can do is sit tight." The lead attorney in his case responded. "We believe we can find a way out of this," Arnold said in a confident tone.

He was one of the best in handling criminal cases such as this. He never believed that a lawsuit was lost until he had exhausted all his effort and resources.

Despite the overwhelming evidence against a client, he could turn the tables around and win the case if he had enough resources to work with.

His concept of the law had nothing to do between right and wrong. He worked along with the gray areas of the justice system, manipulating the result in his favor.

"I have been sitting my ass for you. I want results as soon as possible." He demanded, running his hands through his hair in frustration.

He was paying his legal team an outrageous amount of money to work non-stop to get him out of jail. He did not like to be treated like a common criminal.

So far, he was still treated well inside the jail cell due to the money he paid the guards and the other cellmates. But he was not content to be confined in the square room that was now his temporary lodging.

He wanted out and free as soon as could be arranged by his team. He would not allow his current situation to become a permanent thing, not when he could still do something about it.

"Just give us a few more days to work on your defense. So far, the case looks promising." Arnold closed his files, already concluding the meeting.

He had dealt with arrogant and wealthy clients before. Just because they had the means, these people believed they were entitled to a favorable outcome. Nickolas Travis was no different.

He had defended criminals like Nick because of the challenge. He did not care about the moral value of the case. In addition, he valued more the financial benefit it provided not only to him but to his law firm.

Besides, as a lawyer, he was obligated to defend anybody regardless of their criminal liability. Well, in his case, that was what he used as an excuse whenever questioned about why he took such a controversial lawsuit.

"I want you to get me out of here soon," Nick said in a threatening voice, not caring if the man was on his side.

He could not allow his enemies to laugh at his expense. He was also worried about the fate of his company. Although his board assured him that everything was still under control, he had to be on top of the situation.

His company was already standing on shaky grounds even before he was incarcerated. It might finally tumble down if he could not do anything to stop the bad publicity from ruining his reputation.

He might be guilty of the crime, but he was not stupid enough to admit to any of it. Many criminals he had known never paid for their crimes in jail since money could tip the balance of the justice system to their favor.

"I will see you soon." His lawyer stood from his chair and bade farewell to his client.

He grabbed his bag and walked to the door, knocking lightly to notify the guard outside that the visit was over. This room in the precinct had no cameras and microphones inside, providing privacy between a lawyer and their clients.

He nodded to his client before walking out the door once the door opened, thanking the guard for providing assistance. He did not wait for his client, walking straight toward the exit.

"Come on, Mr. Travis. Time to go back to your cell." The guard who opened the door walked towards him and unlocked the chain bounding him to the table.

The uniformed man assisted him to the door and walked him in the opposite direction. He walked alongside several cells with men also facing their charges were locked, also waiting for their judgment.

He continued walking to the farthest part of the room, where he would be locked again. Luckily, he had worked a deal to allow him to occupy the cell by himself.

"Here you are, Mr. Travis." The guard said, stopping in front of the small room with iron bars, serving as its divider and entrance inside.

He guided him back inside the room, asking him to hold his hands high so that he could remove the chains on his wrist. Afterward, the guard left him, locking the door behind him.

He was again alone in the room, pacing around the small space. He stared at the small window with bars at the top of the wall, unable to accept his condition.

"I would make all of you pay." He mumbled to himself, sitting on the edge of the bed provided for him.

It was a small cot with a top bunk, but nobody occupied the upper portion. He did not want anyone to share his space, not those criminals who had no business going near him.

He laid down on the bed with nothing else to do in this jail cell. His mind wondered where his plans had gone wrong. Who could he blame for its failure?

"Who are you?" He pictured the man in his mind, but a blank face was all he conjured as he stared at the empty space.

He believed that the man they called the big boss was behind all of this. If he could only determine his identity, he could use him as leverage for his freedom.

He would not stop until he had made him pay, just like the rest of his enemies. He was a fool to believe that he could use the man behind the shadows to his advantage.

Now, he was the one on the hot seat, with his life hanging in the balance.. While the real mastermind was out there laughing at his expense.