

Royal Contract 601

Chapter 601: A new start for a family

“What do you think?” Alex proudly asked, letting his eyes roam around the empty space.

He wanted to see what she initially thought of the place before telling her what was on his mind. It would give him an idea of how he should proceed with his plans.

“Did you already buy this apartment for us?” It was the first question that popped out of her mind while Alex placed her feet down on the hard floor.

She immediately assumed that he had bought the apartment as a gift to her. It was the only logical explanation she could think of upon seeing the place.

“Before you completely reject my surprise, I wish you would hear me out first.” He knew that it was not likely, but it was a possibility.

He knew he promised to consult with her before deciding on matters that would concern their future together. But he was hoping that she would let this one slide, even just this once.

He gently pulled her into the middle of the room, where an old couch was situated. It looked like it had seen its better days, but it still had more to give, exactly fitting to the aura of the place.

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“Ok.” She could see that he was serious about what he was about to say to her. “I am listening.” Besides, she had no outright plan of refusing his gift without carefully evaluating everything.

She did not mind if he bought the place without consulting her. It was his money, and he could do whatever he wished to do with it. However, she also had the right to think about it and decide on the matter.

But she would not make any form of conclusion yet, not until she heard what he had to say. It was the least she could do for all his effort to surprise her and try to make her happy.

“Let me introduce you first to my favorite couch. I bought this when I first moved here in this country.” He explained, guiding her to the slightly tainted but still functional and comfortable sofa.

He could tell that she had many questions lingering in her mind, just waiting to be asked. He planned to answer them all once he told her the story of this place.

He thought she might still have many things she did not know about his life. He believed that telling her more about this place was like introducing what made him who he was today. It was like his big revelation of his past.

“Just like this couch,” Alex tapped the backrest of the old seat as he tried to make a point. “I bought this building a long time ago. It was the time I was still starting out to make a name in the business world.”

The previous owner of the building was the same man who owned the first big company that he bought. He would not sell any of his property to just anyone.

But he sold this and some more of his property to him at a reasonable price. Nobody knew why he would do such a thing, but only a handful did.

“Why would he do that?” Dani asked, curious when she heard his story. “Why did he pick you?”

She also remembered wondering about that when she first heard about the buyout. It was a phenomenon in the business community that baffled everyone.

“Because he believed that I look very much like my grandmother.” He stated, making her raise her brows higher, more confused than before.

“Yes, this was all about my grandmother. Nanna was his first love, but it did not work out for them. Nanna fell in love with my grandpa.” He continued, seeing the questions in her eyes. He narrated the history of his acquisition of the place.

The old man built his empire thinking that his Nanna would eventually return to him. But it never happened. He accepted his fate and tried to love someone else, but his wife only wanted his money.

He had three kids, but they were a spoiled, greedy bunch, just like their mother. Until the old man accidentally met him. Mr. Welsh befriended him, and soon enough, he became one of his mentors.

“One day, he just offered it to me, not wanting his legacy to go down the drain if he would just leave it to his kids.” He finished his narration, remembering the memory of the old man who he had learned had passed away recently.

“He built this building for Nanna. But when they never rekindled their relationship, he did not have the heart to live in this apartment anymore.” The reason why the space was never decorated ever since it was constructed.

“Wow, that was some love affair. I really wish I met your grandparents, especially your Nanna.” Dani could only imagine what Mr. Welsh had gone through, not getting the woman he loved. But loving her from afar.

She could not help but wonder if there was only one great love for each person. She suddenly felt sorry for those individuals who died without meeting the one for them or a chance to be with them.

Luckily, she did not suffer the same fate as some of them. She was thankful that she had finally met the one meant for her. Her one true love and soulmate.

“They would have loved you.” He assured her as he enveloped her hands in his and looked directly into her eyes. “The thing is. When I first saw this place. I never knew what to do with it.”

The only thing he had done so far with it was painted it white. Other than that, it remained a place where he just visited if he wanted to be alone.

“But when I went out here the other day, something occurred to me.” He stood up from his seat, pulled her with him, and guided her towards the window.

He was grateful that she remained silent, just listening. He still had a few more things he would like to say to her before showing her his other surprise.

"I want us to transfer into this house." He said as they both stared at the view of the outside of the city. He stood behind her, entwining his arms around her body, waiting for her reaction.

He knew that his present house was not what she wanted. He was hoping that if she put her touch on this place, it would turn out into something that would be good enough to call their home.

It was still in the middle of the city, just a few blocks away from her job. It had the same facility as their other home, but it was bigger and had more space for her and if they would expand their family.

"What do you think?" Alex asked when she still kept her silence. He could not help but worry that she did not like the place.

"I think the place has its own appeal." She smiled at him, contemplating his offer. She pulled away from his arms and walked back to the middle of the room.

She twirled around, scanning the place. If she was being honest, she seemed to like the apartment. She could not see why they could not move into this place.

"So, would you consider it?" He could not contain his smile from showing on his face. When he saw her nod her head, he pulled her into a hug.

It was not exactly about the place but the idea that they could start afresh with building their lives again. A new start for a family.

Chapter 602: Equal partners

"Uuummhhh!" She mumbled as she started moving around the spacious room.

She could see that it was almost double the size in comparison to their current place. If she climbed the next floor, she could already guess that it had more than enough rooms.

One for their bedroom, a few rooms for their guest, and even another room for a nursery. She could already picture it and could not help but smile at her last thought.

"Well?" Alex stood just a few feet away from her, watching her stride from one room to another.

"I like the idea," Dani finally agreed with him. "I think we should move into this place." Wrapping her arms around his neck.

"That is great." He expressed excitedly, glad that she warmed up to his plan. He placed a chaste kiss on her lips before stopping abruptly.

"I still have one more thing to show you before we leave." He pulled her to a much smaller hallway hidden behind a wall and into a staircase.

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Slowly, he guided her up the stairs and into a door leading to another floor. When he finally opened the door and revealed what was behind, she could not help but gasp at what she saw.

It was a garden full of red roses.

"Wow, this is beautiful." She whispered, in awe with the magnificent sight before her.

She stepped into the rooftop of the building, amazed at the scene created by the lights that surrounded the place. It highlighted the roses that were in full bloom.

It reminded her of the secret rose garden that his Nanna had in her little house back in his hometown. Suddenly, she was also thrilled to have her own little garden.

"Do you like it?" He asked, but he had already read her answer through her eyes. It sparkled as soon as she saw the area. Her smile said what her heart and mind felt.

"Yes," She turned to him, eyes sparkling, a smile that had almost reached her ears and her reassuring word. "I absolutely love it."

She lunged at him and hugged him tightly, resting her cheeks on his shoulders. It might not be the rose garden she envisioned, but it was close enough.

"I am glad." He pulled her into a wooden framed couch that looked like it was newly built.

Compared to the apartment below, the rooftop seemed to be slightly renovated. It already had some fixtures and furniture decorating the area.

In addition, she was surprised to see that a bottle of wine was already chilling on the center table as if he already knew that they would be celebrating tonight.

"Did you already assume that I will agree to move here?" She questioned him, staring at him as they settled on the soft cushion.

It was the only explanation she could think of for the celebratory wine waiting for them. She was not mad, not at all, just a bit curious.

"I was hoping that if the apartment downstairs did not convince you, the roses will." He smiled at her, wooing her by placing kisses on her hands. "But I am glad you love it."

He would never dare presume what she was thinking. But he hoped that he had finally figured out what she would probably like in a home. The garden on the roof was just icing on the cake.

"I do." She admitted. It might not be the house she dreamt of, but it was close enough. She could see herself settling in this place, if not forever, at least for the meantime. "I am happy that you suggested this place."

She looked around the open space and could already picture some things that she could add to make the place more lively. It was slowly looking more like a home in her mind.

"Shall we have a toast to our new home?" He poured two glasses of bubbly wine and handed her one.

He knew that moving out from one place did not mean that they could run away from their problems. But a new home would be the start of something new in their married life.

"I like that." She clinked her glass with his and took a sip of the cold amber liquid. Then, she rested her head on his shoulders as she stared at the beauty of the stars as they shone in the dark sky.

"Did you do all of this?" She asked as she sipped on her wine, interested to know if he had something to do with the design of the place or just paid a decorator to do it for him.

"I helped out here and there when I had some spare time." He confessed to her.

He used to volunteer in charitable institutions before, hoping to be able to help out in any way, whether it be in the kitchen or on a construction site. But it had stopped when he started dating Dani.

"Thank you for all of this." She whispered, snuggling closer to his body.

She finally understood the calluses on his hands. She just discovered what he had been doing in some of his spare time. And why he was physically built like he was working with his body.

"Thank you for loving me." He reached out for her hand and held it firmly in his, warming it up against the cool breeze enveloping them in the cold night.

For a moment, she felt at peace to be in his arms. It was a feeling that eluded her since the abduction. Suddenly, his warmth became a refuge for her.

After a few minutes of silence, her mind suddenly wandered somewhere else. A thought that frequently started bothering her lately.

She finally looked up and gazed at him. He seemed to be in deep thought, just like her. She wondered if they were thinking of the same thing.

"Alex, who do you think is coming for us? For me?" She finally asked the question that they had agreed not to mention to the authorities or with her father until they had more information about him.

It was easier to have an enemy that had a name. But someone who was hiding behind the shadows was a more dangerous nemesis.

"I am still investigating his identity. It is harder to find him because he is good at keeping his tracks clean." He told her, rubbing her shoulder for comfort.

He knew that it could not be easy for her not to talk about him. But until they had more information about their other enemy, he could not risk speaking about him with the authorities.

Samson had warned them about what he was capable of, but he could not provide them a name. But the big man had given him enough information to start his investigation.

Hopefully, it would provide them with a better lead to discovering who was behind all of it. Nick might be guilty of plotting this scheme, but he was not the only one who ran the show.

"If you find him, would you tell me?" She wished she did not have to keep looking at her back. But until the unknown mastermind was apprehended, she would never be safe.

From the way Samson had described him, he seemed to be more notorious than Nick was. A more dangerous enemy than her previous fiancé.

What she did not understand, from this entire scheme of things, was his interest in her? What did he want from her? At least, with Nick, she knew his motives. But with her unknown aggressor, she was clueless about his intentions.

"Don't worry about him. We will eventually catch him." He assured her, kissing the top of her head.

He purposely did not answer her question. Once he found him, he did not want her to know what he was about to do with him, remembering the doctor that tortured him.

Tim was already onto something from the data he had already gathered so far. It was just a matter of time, and they would be able to trace his known associations, the places he had been.

Then, they could finally triangulate his whereabouts and discover his identity. He would not stop until Nick and this big boss paid for their wrongdoings.

“Anyway, do you think we should rush the construction of the nursery room?” He abruptly changed the subject, dismissing the discussion of their abductors.

If he could help it, he would like to protect her from everything that could harm her, including his plans. If he was going down for this, he would not pull her down with him.

She raised her eyes at him, surprised by his words. But before she could react to him, he had lowered himself to her, trapping her underneath his body.

“I think we are already overdue for an heir to our kingdom.” He gestured to their small castle.

He touched his lips on her supple lips, tasting the bitter taste of the liquor still lingering on the surface. But he pulled slightly away, waiting for her to meet him halfway.

There were things that he might keep a secret from her, but it was for her own protection. However, in other things, they would always be equal partners.

Chapter 603: Accidental reunion

“I think it is only a minor concussion, but I still suggest that we conduct a few more tests just to be certain.” The doctor said, examining the wound that had already turned blue on the top of her head.

The wound had already stopped bleeding, but the cut was deep enough. It would require a few stitches for it to close. The doctor checked her other injuries, but it was not serious, just some bruises.

“Do I really need that?” Jacky asked the doctor. “Can you just stitch me up and send us on our way?”

She was still hoping that she could catch up with the dinner party. She was not too keen on attending the celebration. But she would like to be there for her friend, at least give her moral support.

However, she ended up in the emergency room because of a minor casualty. She had no one else to blame for this except herself. She should have been more careful.

She did not see the piece of an object lying on the floor. It must have fallen from her things by accident. Unfortunately, she was rushing around the room and had stepped on it. Then, she slipped.

“Did you blackout or feel any dizziness?” The doctor asked, continuing his evaluation by asking several more questions.

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“Well, a slight dizziness and a lot of pain.” She answered the old man in the white coat.

She did not remember blacking out. She had braced herself for the impact with her hands, breaking the fall. Although she still failed to protect her head from banging on the edge of the bed.

It produced a broken skin above her head, producing a lot of blood which slightly caused her alarm. But it was still not something that would make her panic and send her running to the hospital.

"I still recommend that you take the tests." The doctor insisted, wanting to rule out head trauma.

Still, she did not agree that she had to stay for further tests. She had been in worse conditions than this, but she did not see the need to go to the doctor.

She could just patch it up and continue with her day. But Marcus insisted on bringing her into the emergency room as if she was in critical condition when he saw her hands and hair covered in blood.

"Just do what you think is necessary, Doc. If you think she needs the test, please schedule it now." Marcus finally interrupted the consultation.

He believed if he did not step in, she would check herself out of the hospital without getting tested. He did not like to put her health at risk, especially with a head injury like hers.

She could treat her situation lightly, but he would not. Her safety and wellbeing were his priority, and he would have her tested whether she agreed with him or not.

"But..." She was about to protest, believing that she did not need any test. She might have been slightly dizzy earlier, but she currently felt normal.

She did feel a little soar on her knees and hands since they bumped on the floor. Other than the small cut in her head, she did not see any other reason for concern.

She could walk out of the hospital without any assistance if she wanted to, and nobody could stop her. However, the look on his face made her halt with her plans.

"Please. Have yourself examined thoroughly. If the test comes back and finds nothing wrong with you, we will immediately leave the hospital." He promised her, but until then, they would have to stay and wait.

He still felt lucky that he decided to come early to pick her up. He found her in her apartment bleeding with a handtowel placed on her head as she tried to stop the gush of blood from the open skin.

He immediately called the emergency hotline and helped her apply first aid to the affected area. Then, waited. He also did not like going to the hospital, just like her, but he believed it was necessary.

"Fine. But I am telling you now that there is nothing wrong with me. You will see." Jacky stated, telling not only Marcus but the doctor as well.

"I am sure you are right, but nothing wrong with being extra careful." The doctor still insisted in his calm voice. "Let me schedule the test right away, and I will get back to you shortly."

The doctor temporarily left them after finishing cleaning her wound. He called one of the nurses to arrange the test and assist them while attending to his other patients.

As soon as the test was done, she returned to her bed to wait for the results. The doctor also suggested that she could have herself admitted so they could observe her overnight, but she adamantly refused.

"Excuse me, but I will just call Alex and inform them of what happened," Marcus told her, moving to a chair near her bed.

He immediately took his phone out of his pocket and called Alex to inform them of the situation. He knew they would be expecting them at the party, but he doubted that they would make it in time.

"Can you also pass me my bag?" Jacky asked him, seeing that she had no choice but to call Dani about her condition.

She did not want her friend to worry about her when there was nothing to worry about. She still believed there was nothing wrong with her. But she understood Marcus. He was only looking out for her.

She also took her phone inside her bag and called Dani. She had to make her excuses and just made it up to her next time. In the meantime, she would wait for the test to come back, clearing her of good health.

"So, what seems to be the problem...?" The doctor who opened the curtain separating her from the other patients was not the same doctor that checked her earlier.

He suddenly stopped, slightly stunned to see who was the patient behind the curtain. He immediately double-checked the notepad in his hand and realized that she was his next patient.

He had been thinking about her recently, hearing about the news regarding her friends. He had planned to visit her, but he guessed fate could not wait and had decided to meddle with their accidental reunion.

Chapter 604: The worse boyfriend

"Jacky, what happened?" He immediately rushed to her side as soon as he realized who she was, not noticing the other man on the other side of the bed, quietly waiting for the doctor.

It was not that he was still pining over her. But he still considered her as a good friend. Although it had been a while since he had last seen her.

Still, he would like to make sure that she was ok and her friend too, Dani. Although he only met her a few times, he still felt that he had also bonded with her as friends.

"It is just a small bump in the head, but it is nice to see you too, Sebastian." She mumbled, downplaying her accident, but she was also surprised to see him inside her cubicle.

However, she expected that she might bump into him here since she knew he worked here. But she thought he was not on duty tonight when she did not see him around the place earlier.

"Let me see," Sebastian leaned over to her head, checking at her wound.

He gently touched her hair with his fingers since the cut was buried underneath and carefully inspected the extent of the wound. He had no choice but to be closed to her and slightly breathe in her scent.

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"The earlier doctor said that I will need stitches." She told him, wanting confirmation of the procedure as she waited for him to finish.

Although she could tell that the earlier doctor was good, she still trusted Sebastian more regarding her condition. She would rather hear from him what her prognosis would be.

She still considered him a friend. But still, it saddened her heart to know she broke his heart. He was a good man and deserved a woman who would be fully committed to the relationship.

"Well, it is indeed a nasty cut. I will need to stitch it up." Sebastian concluded after careful examination.

He explained that the other doctor assigned to her was called for an emergency. Therefore, he had to take over her case. He asked her some questions about the accident, but the topic shifted, and they ended up chatting about something more.

"Excuse me, will that take long? The stitching?" Suddenly, another voice joined the conversation. "And what was the result of her tests?" He asked a little bit impatiently.

He had met the doctor before, but they never had the chance to talk. He knew that the other man courted Jacky, but he was still unaware of the entire story.

However, he could not pry on her past, knowing that his own was worse. He had no right to question her previous relationship when she accepted him despite his history.

"Oh! I am sorry, but I am Dr. Reece. Call me, Sebastian." He immediately introduced himself to the other man in the room, extending his hand across the bed to greet him.

He felt slightly embarrassed that he did not see him when he walked in. He did not intentionally try to ignore him. He was simply surprised to see Jacky that all his attention went to her.

"Well, we have met before," Marcus stated with a tinge of edge on his voice, but he still took the extended hand out of common courtesy. "Marcus, Jacky's boyfriend."

He did not know what made him add the last part, but it sounded good in his ears. He only hoped that the other man would heed the warning embedded in it.

"Oh, I am sorry I forgot to introduce the two of you." Jacky suddenly realized the awkwardness of the situation.

Although she thought that she had nothing to worry about since she and Sebastian was never a thing, the way Marcus acted felt like he was jealous.

She did not know what to think of her discovery if her suspicion was correct about Marcus. She never expected that she would see him jealous again with another guy.

"That is ok." Sebastian quickly replied, slightly sensing the hint that his presence was not welcome. However, he could not blame Marcus for feeling threatened.

Jacky had always been a good catch, and many would be interested in a relationship with her. Unfortunately, he did not win her heart. Now, he accepted that she was not the girl for him.

"Anyway, let me check if the results are available." He opened the screen on his notepad and started navigating the system. After a minute, he nodded his head as if he had finally seen the result.

"What is it, Sebastian?" She asked him when he finally looked up from the screen.

She could not tell if he saw anything seriously wrong with her from his expression. But she was anxious to know if she could finally go home after her stitches.

"You are lucky that nothing serious happened to you. I did not see any blood clot or damage in your tissue cells." He concluded upon careful review of her results.

"I think all you need now is the sutures." He quickly called for the nurse to prepare the materials he would need to perform the minor procedure.

It was a quick process, but he still needed to put a little anesthesia around the wound to make it less painful. The only thing he discovered about Jacky that scared her the most was needles.

She was a tough person to crack, growing up in the street. But when it came to injections and needles, she trembled in fear. It was a discovery that he learned by accident.

"Can you just put a bandaid on it and be done with it?" She questioned, realizing that her ordeal was far from over.

It was why she did not want to go to the hospital. She already assumed that the doctors would recommend sticking those prickly metal thingy on her skin.

She had a bad experience with them during her childhood, and she did not like reliving it by being reminded every time she would see it on her skin.

"I don't think a bandaid will be enough to heal your wound," Marcus commented, hearing the sound of agitation in her tone.

If he heard it correctly. It sounded like Jacky was afraid of being injected or stitched by a needle. Well, it was the first time he was hearing about it.

He could not help but think about the back story about that one. Usually, when he feared something. It had something to do with a traumatic experience.

"Marcus is right. I need to stitch it up, so it will heal properly and quickly." Sebastian seconded the other man, agreeing with him. "It will also prevent it from bleeding again."

He knew he had to convince her to agree with the sutures, but he would need Marcus to help him. Maybe he could provide her some support and strength to get through her fear.

"You know I am afraid of needles." She finally said, reminding her friend of her phobia.

She could face a gunfight and not tremble at its sight, but a small pricking tool, she immediately shut down. She did not understand the concept, but that was her experience.

"You are?" Marcus asked in astonishment.

"I know." Sebastian also simultaneously answered her, perfectly understanding how she felt.

“What is so scary about a needle?” Marcus asked, curious about the way the two were interacting.

He seemed to be the only one who did not comprehend the severity of her situation. He always thought of Jacky as fearless, so finding out about her weakness was surprising.

Nevertheless, he still felt odd seeing them together, interacting like they knew more about each other than he and she did. He did not like it one bit.

Then again, he could not blame her. It was probably his fault. Maybe it was his insecurity, eating at him, knowing that he had been the worse boyfriend she had in history.

Chapter 605: Hated to lose a good friend

He was still watching the two interact like he was the odd man out. He felt insecure as he failed to relate to what they were talking about.

“I think it will be better if you hold her hands.” Sebastian looked at Marcus, instructing him to stand closer to the patient. “Now, you just have to be brave and trust me.” The doctor then turned to Jacky, who was sitting on the bed.

He could already see the anxiousness on her face as the nurse entered the cubicle, carrying the tray that he would use for the mild procedure.

“Hey, come on, relax. I am here. I am not leaving your side.” Marcus finally took that as his cue to take control of the situation. He was not standing by and allowing the doctor to believe he knew his girlfriend more than he did.

However, he was surprised to see her face suddenly turn pale as she stared at the tray on the other side of the bed. Finally, he understood that her fear was not superficial but authentic.

He quickly stood by her side and grabbed her hand, holding it firmly against his. He figured it was his opportunity to show her that she could also depend on him.

“Well, are you ready?” Sebastian asked after he had prepared everything he would need for the stitches.

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“No.” She sarcastically answered, but her voice was slightly trembling.

“You can close your eyes if you do not wish to see the procedure. I will try to be gentle as possible.” He tried to assure her, putting his hand over her other hand.

He noticed that her hands were also too pale as she held tightly to the edge of the bed. He decided to avoid showing her the injection that he would use to anesthetize the affected area, hoping to lessen her fear.

It was not the first time he encountered patients who never liked needles. A lot of them were not kids either, just like her. But he could not blame them. Trauma and phobia were illnesses that could not be easily fixed, while many remained uncured.

“Come on. I know you can handle this.” Marcus whispered in her ears as he pulled her gently closer to his body, wrapping her shoulders in his arm.

He wanted to assure her that she would be alright, hoping that this simple act would be enough to show her that she could always count on him.

However, his eyes sharpened at the way the doctor was holding her other hand. He knew that he should not feel threatened by another man, but he could not help it.

"Thanks, both of you." She looked at Marcus and then Sebastian for comforting her. She never liked feeling vulnerable. But at the moment, she could not control it. "I am sorry about this."

As much as possible, she never showed anyone her fear. Always putting her brave front in everything she did. It was the only way she had survived on the street and during her stay in those foster homes.

But, just like the rest of the human race, she was not perfect. She finally showed one of her weaknesses, and it was not something she was comfortable with.

"No need to say sorry. We all have our weak moments." Marcus finally found the right words to say. At least, he thought that was what boyfriends should say in a time like this.

He admitted that jumping into this committed relationship was not easy for him. He had never been in one and had no prior knowledge of handling a situation such as this.

"Are we ready?" Sebastian asked, squeezing her hand again for confirmation.

When he saw her nod her head and close her eyes, he gently positioned her on the movable table on the side of the bed and checked her wound.

It was a relatively simple procedure, so he had nothing to worry about. Carefully, he started with the numbing injection before closing the wound.

"Tell me if you feel any kind of pain." He reminded her as he continued to sew the wound.

He could see that she was struggling to fight her fear. He could not help but be proud of her. She was still the Jacky he had met not a long time ago.

"Just hold on to me. Squeeze my hand if you have to." Marcus also told her, slightly competing for her attention. He felt like he should do more to show her that his presence was also relevant in this situation.

He assumed that she would use his arms for support as she waited for the procedure to finish. But he did not expect she would wrap her fingers around it and grasp it tightly.

Her grip was forceful but not enough to make him wince. He could see a tinge of pinkish marks caused by her fingers burying on his skin. He did not mind that at all.

But the nails digging into his flesh was another matter. He could expect punctured wounds later on when this was all over. But those sorts of things were not something he would be concerned about.

"That was not that bad." Sebastian finally said after putting his metallic tools back on the tray. "I am almost done."

He made a final check on his handiwork and felt satisfied. One thing he was getting good at was his surgical skills. Soon, he was hoping that he could finish his fellowship and be a specialized surgeon.

“Can I open my eyes?” She asked, still a bit shaken by her recent experience.

She still could not figure out what made her fear injections or anything with needles. That was why she never tried sewing any of her ripped clothes.

She had no prior memories of being in a situation where she had a traumatic experience with it. Anyway, she was glad it was over, and she could finally breathe easily.

“Yes, it is done.” Sebastian patted her hand to confirm that the ordeal was over and she could relax.

He was glad that it was the only problem he had to fix. If it had been something worse, then Jacky might have an early heart attack, he thought with a smile, shaking his head with his internal joke.

He was not about to share that with her. He did not want her to take it the wrong way. Besides, he was still her doctor, and he should practice proper decorum inside his workspace.

Another thing he had noticed, Marcus was looking at him in not such a friendly way. He could only presume that the boyfriend was not particularly keen on his presence.

“You did great, Jacky.” Marcus pulled her again in a tender hug, kissing the top of her head but avoiding the newly stitched-up wound. “Can I now take her home?”

He could not wait to take her home and leave the place. He did not like hospitals, but who in their right minds would, except for doctors and hospital staff, of course.

At the same time, he was not comfortable watching how the two were communicating. The only thing missing was for the two to finish each other’s sentences.

“Of course.” Sebastian could see his eagerness to leave. It was written all over his face and could be heard from his tone.

He hoped that his friendship with Jacky would not cause any problem because he would like to keep in touch with her. He already had decided not to pursue her, but he realized that he still enjoyed her company.

However, if Marcus kept seeing him as a threat to their relationship, then maybe, it would not be wise for him to check on her once in a while. Although it would be a shame if that was the case. He hated to lose a good friend.

Chapter 606: Guilty as charged

“You are awfully quiet.” She questioned, sitting just next to him in the backseat of his car as his driver drove them back to her apartment.

She heard him call his driver to follow them to the hospital earlier as he had ridden with her in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. He said that he did not want her to be alone.

However, she had noticed that since they had left the hospital, he barely had spoken a few words to her. He only asked her if it still hurt, but when she replied that she was fine, he had returned to his silence.

“I am just probably tired. Aren’t you?” He asked, avoiding answering the silent question in her eyes.

He could see that she was trying to read his expression, but he was not entirely sure of what he actually felt at the moment. In truth, he was frustrated, guilty, then mad at himself for letting the first two emotions control him.

He felt that he was failing with this relationship. He had no idea what he was doing or if he was doing anything at all to make sure that this relationship was going on the right track.

"I am. But still, I think we can still talk about anything." She told him, sensing that he was not in the mood for any form of conversation. Still, she would like to try to lighten the mood.

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She had noticed the tension inside the emergency room while she talked to Sebastian. Well, it mostly came oozing out of him. But she was too wrapped up in her fear to deal with him earlier.

Now, she could see that he was still bothered by it, and she did not like that he was keeping it bottled up inside him. One thing she learned from Dani and Alex, communication was the key to making things work between them.

"You have been through enough for one night. You should rest for now. We can talk later." Marcus insisted, wrapping her in his embrace as he closed his eyes, indicating that the conversation was over.

He also wanted to talk about his feelings, but he was unsure how to convey them to her without sounding accusing. He did not want any misunderstanding between them.

He could not afford to lose her again. He had been in that situation, and he did not want to go back there. But he still had no idea how to deal with his current predicament.

"Ok." She conceded, keeping her eyes focused on the view outside her window.

She decided not to insist on talking about it during the car ride. But she planned to tackle it again once they were back in the privacy of her apartment.

She would give him this moment to think about whatever was bothering him and deal with it by himself. But she would not allow it to sit and rot before they resolved whatever was the issue.

She might have an idea what it could be, but she was not about to preempt his feelings. She would not jump to conclusions and assume anything.

"Hey, we are here." She tapped him on his thigh, notifying him that they had arrived at her apartment.

It had been a short ride, so she knew he was not sleeping. He assisted her out of the car and instructed his driver to take the night off. He was planning on staying with her for the night.

The doctor did give specific instructions that she should not be left alone. Although she seemed fine, she was still under observation for twenty-four hours.

"Do you want something to drink? I am going to get myself a glass of water." She offered once they were inside her apartment.

She suddenly felt her lips parched and her throat itching. She assumed it was because she had been silent and tensed the rest of the ride.

“Why don’t you sit down and rest? Let me get the water for you.” He ordered, guiding her to the couch while he proceeded to the kitchen.

He felt he needed a drink to lessen the anxiety boiling inside him. He could sense that Jacky was not done talking, and he was still confused about how he was handling his emotions.

He left her on the couch, using the few minutes to get his thoughts straight. At least an idea of what he would say to her once he returned to her side.

“What is wrong?” She finally voiced out her concern once he returned with her water. “I can tell if something else is bothering you.” She was not going to accept any more excuses.

She could see the bottle of beer in his hand, she would have joined him, but the doctor advised against consuming alcohol in her condition.

“Honestly, I am not too sure.” He admitted, looking at the window behind her instead of directly at her.

He finally sat on the chair adjacent to her, rubbing the back of his neck with his fingers, easing his nerves. He suddenly remembered the first time that he courted a girl. It was something like this.

He took another swig of his drink before placing them down on the table. He stood up again and paced around the living room as if he was figuring out what to say.

Today’s event seemed to be an eye-opener to him. He discovered things that he had never thought of before. He seemed to be lost, at the same time, enlightened.

“What about? If it is about Sebastian, I assure you that nothing is going on between us. We are just friends, and...” She tried to explain her relationship with the doctor, thinking that he might be bothered by their friendship.

She did notice the way he had been looking at Sebastian. She sensed that he might be jealous or something. But there was nothing between them, never had been and never would be.

“It is not that.” He interrupted her, immediately reaching her and kneeling before her. “I am not jealous in that kind of way, but I envy the closeness that the two of you seem to have.”

He knew many things about her, but not on a deeper level. He did not even know that she was afraid of needles. He was so clueless about her and her likes and dislikes.

“He seemed to know more about you than me.” He quickly added, eventually disclosing what had him twisted in a knot.

He knew he had to work harder into this relationship if he would make it work. However, he still had a lot to learn about being a boyfriend. A good one.

“Well, all you have to do is ask.” She smiled at him, realizing what was bothering him.

She ran her hands on both sides of his cheeks, relieved that it was not what she thought of initially. She gently pushed his face up until his eyes met hers.

She was not taking his apprehension lightly, but she believed it could be resolved through good communication. Anyway, all p

"I felt like he seems to know you better than me, and it sucks," Marcus explained, referring to the doctor. "I guess it is as simple as that."

He finally realized that he should give more time to get to know her. Not just giving her gifts and things that he thought would make her happy.

"I don't even know what color you like or if you even like the things I have been giving you." He mumbled, feeling slightly ashamed of his actions.

"Red and bold colors." She answered him, but he looked at her, slightly confused. "My favorite colors." She clarified.

"And, I love most of the gifts you sent me because your secretary asked me frequently what I wanted." She answered him, slightly reprimanding him with her stare.

Once he heard her response, he smiled at her with those seemingly innocent eyes but underneath, he knew it was a lie. Then, both of them ended up laughing. Because admittedly, he was once again guilty as charged.

Chapter 607: A piece of crap

"Damn!" He expressed frustratedly, banging his hand forcefully on the wooden table, making the computer and other objects on the surface rattle a bit. "Ok, I will get back to you later."

He abruptly ended the call, dropped the unit on the table before turning away from his work to stare outside the window. He just could not understand why they always came up with nothing.

He was absolutely sure about the lead they were chasing, but it seemed they were heading again toward another dead end. Like the rest of the evidence they gathered, it did not get them too far.

"Another bad news?" Ben walked inside the room, sensing his boss was again in a bad mood.

He had been working with him closely on the case, hoping to find some more evidence to seal the fate of Nick behind bars. Well, that was the other plan.

On the other hand, they were also secretly investigating another lead that was supposed to reveal the identity of another criminal mastermind. However, the big boss apparently was better at covering his tracks.

Well, they already suspected it since they had heard from the grapevine that he was a man that was not seen by just anyone. No one knew his identity except his most trusted people.

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"Yeah!" He turned around and faced his second in command, shaking his head to clear the irritation out of his system. "I think our latest lead is once again taking us nowhere."

It had been the story of their investigation since he started going after the phantom who had made everybody dance to his tune.

Nobody could point them to the source of the song. But the music kept playing, just strong enough for them to hear. Everybody was amazed by the performance. But nobody had seen the real star of the show.

"Don't worry, Tim. We will get this guy and his associates." Ben empathized with his boss, sharing his sentiment.

He also wanted to catch this man just as much as his boss. He also had a few scores to settle with him. He would like him to pay for putting the lives of the people he cared about in danger.

The sooner they found him, the better. They could not risk the lives of their boss and his wife in danger with a big syndicate going after them.

"We better," Tim answered with a big sigh, thinking that this unknown enemy was not someone they could mess around with easily.

This time, they were not dealing with a common criminal like Nick. From what they gathered so far, they might be chasing after the leader of the biggest underground syndicate in the city.

His association with Nick was still vague, and his interest in the royal couple was still unknown.

But all evidence was pointing to the man, who was running the show under a very elaborate disguise. He might be anyone from the upper class to the highest member of the government.

"For now, I have something for you." Ben changed the topic and proceeded with his reason for visiting him.

He dropped some files in his hand onto the table. Then, he sat down on the available chair in front of the desk, making himself comfortable as he leaned on the backrest and crossed his legs.

"What is this?" Tim asked, raising his brows at Ben in question.

But before opening the folder, he stood up from his chair and walked towards a smaller table with a brewing coffee pot. He poured himself one and turned to Ben. "You want one?" Offering one to his partner.

He would have preferred something a bit stronger like alcohol, but he never allowed drinking while on the job. It was not ideal, especially when lives were on the line.

"Yeah, I can use one," Ben responded, needing something to boost his energy. "I had been up all night, probably slept only a wink." He continued, shrugging his shoulders, feeling the fatigue setting in.

He had been working on a lead assigned to him when he stumbled on the pictures sent to him by one of their sources. It would seem like it was nothing out of the ordinary.

If he simply looked at the pictures, he would assume that nothing was wrong with them. But somehow, he felt something odd about it that he could not understand.

"Why? Did you find something useful?" Tim asked, suddenly curious about the file on his table.

He could use any kind of good news today. He had been running on bad luck and was getting tired of telling his boss nothing. He could tell that Alex was also getting frustrated by the situation.

“Well, I ran another check on the visitors who came by to see Samson.” Ben began to explain as he took the coffee out of Tim’s hands.

First, he took a sip on it, taking his sweet time savoring the hot liquid as it passed through his lips down to his throat. He could certainly use the extra kick of the caffeine in his system.

“And?” Tim drank half of the coffee in one gulp before setting it down on the other side of his table. Then, he began to sort through the file that Ben had placed before him as he waited for Ben to continue with his report.

He saw a document inserted at the top of the file, but he did not see anything unusual with them. Then, he scanned the rest, finding pictures but nothing that looked suspicious.

He could not tell what could have caused Ben to stay up all night with this. But maybe he was looking at it in the wrong way. He might be missing something that Ben might have spotted.

“Are you going to tell me, or will you keep me guessing?” Tim looked at him impatiently, but they both knew that he was all bark with no bite.

He still could not figure out what Ben was trying to say as he skimmed through the file one more time. Then, he scattered the files across his table, going through each one at a time, he saw it.

“I want to see if you can also spot the same thing I did,” Ben told him as he remained in his position, not planning to help him at all.

He was still unsure of the information he wanted to share with him. He might be putting two and two, coming up with ten. Well, lack of sleep could do that to a person.

At the moment, he was one perfect example of a person who was floating in space. Luckily, the coffee was finally helping him keep his feet on the ground.

“Fine.” He could see that his buddy was already at the edge of his limits.

He could not blame Ben. His team, including him, were exhausted and frustrated since they were all worked twenty-four-seven to solve this case.

He kept studying the different files before him until he saw some connections. Still, it was all speculation until they could find more substantial evidence to back it up.

It must be what Ben was talking about as he kept his silence, just observing him. “I think I know what you are talking about.” He believed he figured it out.

It could be a piece of the puzzle that could be significant in their investigation. This information could either make or break the case, but at the same time, it could also be nothing at all but just a piece of crap.

Chapter 608: Loose cannon

A clanging sound woke him up from his deep slumber. Then, another louder banging of metal to metal reverberated in the four corners of his confinement.

“Wake up, Travis. You have a visitor.” The guard yelled at him on the other side of the cell. “Hurry up. We do not have all day.” He added as he struck his metallic baton on the parallel bars again.

Nick opened his eyes, still groggy from his sleep, and moved to a sitting position. He looked up to the man on the other side and smiled.

He could not afford to piss off another guard. The last time he backed talk to one of them, he ended up with a busted lip and a bruised stomach when hit by his baton.

“Just give me a second,” Nick asked the jail guard as he scrubbed his eyes and stretched his arms. Then, he was up and ready to move out of his cell.

The guard opened his cell door, commanding him to face the wall as he placed a handcuff on his wrist. Afterward, he was out of his cell and walking towards the long hallway.

He could not understand why the guards were treating him this way. He asked his lawyers to do something with them. Pay them a large amount of money if necessary so that he could freely move in this confinement.

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However, it seemed that what he had asked was not working. Or his people were not working hard enough to make it happen. Whatever the reason. He would make sure that they would know that he was not happy about it.

“By the way, who is it?” Nick asked, slightly turning around to the burly man walking closely behind him.

But as usual, his voice was drowned in the loud noise coming from the different cells around him. Still, the man refused to answer his question.

He only hoped that it was his lawyer, back with some good news, because he could not stay any longer in this hellhole of a place.

“Sit down and don’t make any problems.” The guard guided him to the table with two chairs on opposite sides. Once sitting down, he was handcuffed to the table, with no choice but to wait for his guest.

He looked around the room, wondering if someone was watching his every move and listening to what he had to say. He was unsure if it would be safe to talk in this room.

“Hello, my friend.” A man suddenly walked into the room and greeted him as if they had known each other quite well.

He recognized the man and met him a few times, but he would not consider the newcomer one of his friends. He might have seen him with some of his friends or on the news. But they never had any business together.

“What do you want?” Nick immediately asked suspiciously. He did not trust the sudden appearance of this man in his presence.

He wanted his lawyers and not some lawman in a fancy suit playing games with his case. He heard good things about him, but he did not need some idle chitchats. Unless the man was here to help him, if not then, he had no time for him.

“For starters, what do you want?” The man returned the question back to him. “But I am quite sure that I have an idea of that.” He continued as he sat down on the other chair in front of the desk.

“But before I continue, let me introduce myself again. I am Mike Carter.” He extended his hand on top of the table, reaching for his hand, but Nick refused to shake it. “Anyway, I work for the District’s Attorney.”

He watched Nick’s eyes turn into a slit, fuming in rage upon hearing his introductions. He could not blame the man. He knew what jail time could do to such a man like him.

He wondered how long it would take to break him in a place like this. He could already notice the toll his body had taken from the beating, considering the little time he only had been inside this facility.

“I have nothing to say to any of you without the presence of my attorney.” Nick hissed at the man who had just completely ruined his day. “Now, I think you should leave.” He rammed his hand on the table to show his displeasure with his visit.

His unwanted visitor had no choice but to stand to avoid his assault. He moved a few steps away from him, observing the handcuffed man try to break free from his chain.

He was about to call for the guards to escort him out of the room since he believed he had no more business to discuss with the district lawyer.

But he abruptly stopped when the other man suddenly pulled an envelope out of his jacket. Then, the man waved it in front of his face. He had recognized the emblem on the side of the envelope, and it was not a good sign.

“Not until you read this.” He could tell that Nick recognized the seal on the piece of paper. His eyes suddenly bulged, and fear was written all over his face.

He carefully pulled a paper out of the envelope, opened it, and placed it on the top of the table. He had already read the content. Now, it was time for Nick’s turn.

“Are you working for him?” Nick asked, suddenly alarmed by his company.

He had wanted to communicate with the big man since he was incarcerated. But now that he had finally sent him a word, he could feel the chill go through his spine.

He took the paper in his hands and started reading the content. He still waited for Mike to answer his question, but he kept reading the letter that had specific instructions for him to follow.

“This is preposterous.” Nick finally shouted after reading the last word on the paper. “Is this some kind of a joke?” He pulled the chains on his wrist, lowering his head to the table.

He cradled his head in his two hands before running his fingers through his hair. He felt frustrated and angry with the content of the letter.

“You know very well that he doesn’t joke around.” Mike finally spoke up after seeing him break down.

He could already guess that Nick was calculating the risk of not following what was being asked of him by their big boss. He seemed to think that he still had a choice in the matter.

Nick failed to realize until now that once he entered the organization, there was no way out except in a body bag.

“But he could not expect me to do this,” Nick shouted, crumpling the piece of paper in his hand and throwing it at him. But Mike had easily caught the crumpled letter and placed it back in his pocket.

“I want you to tell him that I have to see him and talk to him personally.” Nick ran his hands on his face, suddenly agitated that everything was falling out of his control.

“You know it is not possible.” Mike walked a bit closer to the table and planted his hands on the table as he stared down at him. “Just do what he asks of you, and you will be fine.”

Based on his observation, Nick had become very unstable. He had not liked how he had handled things from the start, and he was glad that his boss did not trust him.

He believed that Nick might drag the entire organization down if he was not dealt with properly and soon. In his opinion, Nick was a liability than an asset. He was a loose cannon.

Chapter 609: A royal decree

He walked into the massive hallway and into the grand foyer, meeting the gazes of the various people anxiously waiting for any news.

But he did not stop for anyone as he continued on his way towards the long staircase that would lead him to the left-wing side of the palace. It was the part that housed the King and his staff.

“How is he doing?” The Duke asked once he was inside the room of the King. He faced the doctor, who quickly met him by the door.

He could see his brother rambling against a nurse that was only trying to put a needle on his arm. He seemed to be far better than he expected.

When he heard that his brother, the King had a heart attack, he quickly rushed to get to him. But judging from the way he was acting, he hoped it was not that serious.

“Luckily, it was just a mild attack.” The doctor stated, looking over his shoulder to gaze at their supreme leader. “He experienced shortness of breath and dizziness.”

The doctor also explained that the King had to undergo further examination to confirm their initial diagnosis. They had to guarantee that the King would remain in good health.

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“Do what you have to do?” Duke Frederick instructed the doctor in charge of the medical health of the King and the royal family. “Make sure to run all the necessary tests.”

He did not want anything to happen to his brother. They might have some disagreements, but he was still his flesh and blood. He wished that he would still live a long life and continue to rule them as their King.

But there was another concern that was bothering him. Once the Council heard about this, he was sure they would insist on naming an heir to the throne. With Edward, now out of the picture. He was conflicted about what to do with the situation.

"Fred, would you tell them to stop?" King Edward finally noticed him talking to the doctor and beckoned him to his bedside. "Please, explain to them that I am in good shape."

He did not like how they were fussing around him as if he was some sort of cripple. He only had some dizzy spells and not what the doctors were insisting happened to him.

He was not ready to step down from his throne or die. Not yet. He had several more things to do. There were things he had initiated that he wanted to be accomplished before he left this world.

"You did have an episode, Edward." Fred began defending the medical staff. "Let them do their jobs. Besides, I am sure that they would find nothing and declare you with a clean bill of health."

He could sense his brother's concern. If it was him in his condition, he would also feel nervous. Not for his life but for the people he would be leaving behind.

In his brother's case, he could only assume that he was afraid for the fate of his son if ever he stepped down as the King of their nation.

Since he was his big brother, he was still responsible for him even if he was the King. He had promised their mother that he would always stand by his younger brother just like he also stood by his side.

"Fine." The King finally conceded to go take the examination. He could not say no to his brother anyway. "But stop acting like I am paralyzed. I can still go to the bathroom if I have to." He insisted. "Without any assistant." He added.

Besides being his brother, he was also the head of the Council. He needed the support of the Council and his brother in the future of the kingdom and his son.

His son might have done terrible things against their law, but he was not a criminal. He did not deserve to be punished as such. But he understood that he could not follow in his footsteps.

"Don't worry about that. I will tell the doctors to take it easy on you. But try to follow them because it is for your health." Fred knew that his brother was acting out because of his own fear.

Under normal conditions, he would be rational and be compliant. But in his situation, the stress and the tension in the palace might be getting into him.

He concluded that it could have been the cause of his mild heart attack. However, his brother had to stay strong and healthy if he would continue to rule over them.

"Do you mind leaving us alone for a few minutes?" The King announced to everyone. But the staff only looked at each other, afraid to leave the King to his own devices.

"You see." King Edward pointed out to his brother. "They would not even give me some peace. I am your King." He hissed in frustration, putting his arm across his face to block the light from shining on his eyes.

If he was being honest, he was shaken by the experience. He always thought of himself as healthy as a horse. But sickness could come at a terrible time, whether he did all his best to stay in good shape.

"Give us a few minutes." Fred finally asked the doctors and the rest of the staff inside the room. "Don't blame them. They are only here to assure you are not about to drop dead at any second."

He sometimes teased his brother, just like in the old times. They would run around the palace and make some silly faces. Unlike now, there were no modern technologies or gadgets to entertain them. They had to improvise to pass the time.

"Well, it will take more than that to take me down, my brother. I assure you." King Edward responded with a laugh, enjoying the banter they were sharing as the people finally left them alone.

Enough of the joking around, he thought. Although he loved to go to memory lane to reminisce some old happy childhood events, he had a more serious matter to talk about.

"So, what is it?" Fred knew that he had a reason for wanting everybody gone. He could see in his brother's eyes the concern despite the tough, strong, and cold front he had displayed in front of the staff.

"You know I can be stubborn as an ox, but you always put me in the right place. Thank you, my brother, for not leaving my side." Edward stated as he brought down his arm to look his brother in the eye.

He shifted in the bed until he was in a sitting position. Then, he tapped the side of the bed for his brother to sit down. He did not want to keep tilting his head as he talked to him.

"Well, you have been a good brother. A little misunderstood sometimes, but still, you do your best as our King." Fred said, changing his tone into a more serious one.

He was unsure what this was all about, but he could guess it might have something to do with Edward, the prince, and Alex, his son.

"It is time for your son, Alexander, to take over the throne." King Edward announced, not in a tone that suggested the Duke had a choice. It sounded more like a royal decree.

Chapter 610: Secret life

"Do you think Nick will do what I ask?" He turned around on his table and stared at his window. He put his feet on the shelves, leaning back on his chair to find a more comfortable position.

Except for the buzzing street below, nothing was interesting to see outside. It was just tall buildings after another, trying to tower over the other. There seemed to be no sign of life that could be seen in his view.

But it was better to look at the glass pane and the tall columns than the cases occupying his table. He still had a few that needed to be reviewed more thoroughly and some he wished to end as soon as possible.

"I am not too sure." Mike finally answered him with doubt in his voice. "He seemed to be loose in the head." He added before he went silent on the other line.

Based on Nick's reaction, he did not know if they could still trust him with his silence. Although Nick had no idea who the big boss was, he still had knowledge of their organization and operations.

He believed, at this point, Nick was a dangerous man to be an ally but worse as an enemy. He was an unstable man who might be losing his sensibility.

"What do you recommend we do with him?" He asked his friend, valuing his opinion on the matter. He switched the phone on his hand to the other side as he repositioned himself on his seat.

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He also believed that Nick had always been erratic with his behavior. It was the reason he did not trust him before. And had doubts about relying on his commitment now.

He could never trust a man whose loyalty only lay on himself, and his interest was more valuable than the rest. A man like that, just like Nick, would sell his soul to the devil and double-crossed him in an instant if it would suit him.

"Give me a few days to assess him. What he might know, and what he had said to the authorities?" Mike said to him on the other line. "Gerald, it is important that we do this right."

He was still working on the case. Being new to the team was not easy for him. He had to play catch up with the information already evaluated by the others.

Then, he suspected that their team leader was still withholding information from him. He still needed to prove to them that he could be trusted with valuable information.

"I can only give you a limited time to do what you have to do. But after that, my hands are tied." Gerald answered him, thinking that the clock was ticking. "Then, what are you going to do?"

The longer Nick was locked up in jail, the more the situation worsened. If only they could depend on him to keep his silence and agree to take the fall in exchange for just compensation. Then things would be less complicated.

In his opinion, it seemed that Nick would not cooperate with their plans. It was more likely that he would have to resort to another means of cleaning up the mess.

"That is all I need," Mike answered confidently, believing that it was enough to conduct his plans. "Let me handle this for you. My gift to you for bringing me back to the fold."

He did not mind getting his hands dirty, especially if he was doing it for his friend. It was the only way he could repay him for the many things he had done for him.

"Ok. I trust that you know what you are doing." He was not skeptical. He knew what his friend was capable of doing. He had seen them firsthand during the time that they were still together.

"But, at any time, you will need help. Don't forget to call," Gerald added, always believing having a backup plan was better than working blindly on a situation.

It was just like when he went to battle with his cases. He would always prepare for his day in court, but first, he would try to make a settlement. If he failed to make an amicable deal, he would just have to resolve it before a jury.

Although, he did not believe in winning all his cases in court. Not everything was required to be conquered on the battlefield. Some were better dealt with on the table and won by avoiding conflict but through a favorable resolution.

"Then, I better get back to work," Mike said as he finally said his farewell.

He still had much investigating to accomplish, and it was not an easy task. But it was a challenge that he was willing to take. He had an exact idea how he would play this.

On the other hand, Gerald dropped the phone in his hand back into his pocket before letting his feet down on the floor. But he did not turn around quickly as he continued to stare at a blank space.

"Excuse me, Gerald." A knock on his door, followed by a familiar voice, startled him. He was not expecting company, especially her.

He immediately turned around, twirling his seat to its original position, facing his unforeseen visitor. He quickly stood up from his chair to greet her.

"Dani, how long have you been standing there?" He questioned her, concerned that she might have overheard his conversation on the phone.

He did not notice her until she knocked and spoke up. She might have been standing by the door even before he had ended the call. If that was the case, he wondered what she might have learned.

"Just now." She answered reluctantly, seeing that her boss seemed to be busy. "Your secretary was not at her station, so I proceeded to knock on your door." She explained, hoping she was not disturbing him from his work.

"I hope you don't mind. But if you are busy, I can always come back later." She suddenly regretted knocking on his door unannounced.

She believed she should have waited for his secretary to check on his schedule before barging into his office like that was only natural.

But she had something important that she wanted to ask of him. She had thought about it since she had seen him the other day. She even consulted Alex about it, and he finally agreed.

"Of course, I do not mind. Come in." He gestured for her to enter the room and take the empty seat. "Do you need something? Do you need any help on a case?"

He went back to his seat and gave his full attention, wondering what had brought her to his office. He could only think of one thing. She might need help on a case. More likely a pro bono case.

He noticed that it was one of the things she loved to discuss with him. He liked indulging her whim. Although he never truly enjoyed doing pro bono, at the very least, he loved spending time with her.

He welcomed her presence, but he did not like that she almost caught him. He had to be more careful, especially when dealing with his secret life.