

Royal Contract 751

Chapter 751: Died with a broken heart

Eida woke up the next day with a better grip on her situation. Although she still found it hard to initially opened her eyes, her mind was clear, and she remembered everything that had happened last night.

“Finally, you are awake.” A manly voice spoke up, probably seeing her moving on her bed.

She squinted her eyes against the bright light to see who was the man speaking to her. He did not sound familiar. But when her eyes gazed upon him, she only frowned, unable to put a name on the face.

She questioned if she suddenly had amnesia or something, but she still remembered her name. She counted up to ten and then recited the alphabet in her head. She still recalled the people working for her as she silently recited their names.

“Who are you?” She finally asked, glad her brain was still functioning normally. “And what are you doing in this room?” She shifted in her position, wanting a better view of the man.

She slowly dragged her body into a sitting position, careful not to fall on her ass this time, leaning her body on the pillow behind her, still slightly feeling the bruise on her knees.

“Let me help you with that.” The man sprinted towards her, fluffing the pillow at her back before arranging it so she could slant on it as she sat down. He also adjusted the bed so she could sit more comfortably. “Thank you,” Eida said, still looking at the man in question.

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He might have helped her, but he still had not answered her question.

“I am sorry, I got sidetracked.” He mildly smiled and walked toward her. “I am Evan Blake, a friend of Amelia.” Then, he extended his hand to her.

She stared at him again, scanning him from head to toe, wondering what he was doing in her room.

He did not look like a male nurse to assist with her needs. On the contrary, he looked like a man who just came out of a fashion magazine, ready to make his debut.

“Evan Blake?” She remembered hearing something like that last night, she believed.

“Yes, but I have not lived in this country for some time. But you might recognize my grandmother, Angela Blake.” When she failed to respond quickly, “She used to be a famous star.” He added.

Then, she finally remembered what the nurse said last night about Angela and Evan being Amelia’s friends.

Indeed, she had heard of the famous star. But she believed the actress had not performed in years.

“Yes, of course, Ms. Angela Blake is my aunt’s favorite actress,” Remembering seeing photos of her in her aunt’s things. But it still did not answer what he was doing in her room.

“Where is Amelia, by the way?” Suddenly, reminded of her absence. Eida needed her friend to answer all her questions.

He stepped aside, then moved his hands in the right direction, showing her a girl sleeping uncomfortably on the lone chair.

"Why is she sleeping there?" Pointing in the corner. "It must be quite uncomfortable in that posture." She could not imagine the pain she would feel after waking up from that awkward pose.

"I asked her to go home and rest, but she did not want to leave you alone after hearing that you woke up and Nurse Jane had to drug you to calm you down." He explained to her as she recalled last night's events.

"I was drunk. I have no idea what I was doing." She admitted, but she knew it was more than that. She recalled Lance's accident.

She wanted to run out of this room and look for him, but logic dictated that she would not find answers through that means.

She had to think this through, knowing that the Count must have guards planted all over the hospital, guarding his room against unwanted guests, especially those coming from the media.

More than that, she believed she must be at the top of the list of the people forbidden to see him. The Count would make sure of that.

"I know." Evan smiled at her as if he knew more than that. What did she say to him last night? Was she blabbering about her sob story while she was drunk? But that was not likely. She would know, right? Anyway.

She could only wonder, but she had no plan to interrogate the man about what he knew about her, but what she wanted to know was what he knew about the accident. Maybe Amelia told her something about Lance.

"Why don't you move our friend in this bed so she could sleep more comfortably?" Eida asked him, feeling she had enough of resting for one day.

Besides, she was not drunk anymore. She needed her clothes, but more than anything, she needed to investigate.

Finally, Evan became useful as he carefully carried her friend, gently laying her on the bed so as not to wake her up. Amelia looked exhausted, and her eyes were puffy, probably from crying last night.

Why?

Did something happen to Lance last night while she was unconscious?

Suddenly, fear gripped her, imaging all the worse scenarios she could conjure in her mind.

"What happened to her?" She finally turned to the man who was busy attending to her sleeping friend, tucking her gently under the covers.

Please, he could not be dead.

She hoped and prayed as she looked at the man. "Tell me that he is not dead." She finally dared to ask.

When he turned around with a solemn look on his expression, she confirmed that he knew who she was talking about, and he had answers.

But he was hesitating to tell her anything. Probably, he was waiting for Amelia to tell her the news.

But what was it?

"Is Lance still alive?" She did not want to wake Amelia. She believed just like her, she had been through enough, but she needed answers right now.

Because she could feel it in her heart that if Lance died, it was because of her. It was all her fault.

He must have died with a broken heart.

Chapter 752: The peace of mind

It was almost dawn when they came back from the hospital. Luckily, he convinced Dani to go home with him, promising to drop her back at the hospital once she had her rest.

Daylight had cast its rays on the windows, but Alex still could not sleep as he lay on their bed staring at the ceiling. He could feel the exhaustion in his body. Yet, he was still awake, thinking of the future ahead. Not a wink of respite coming his way.

What if Ethan died? How would he take the throne that his ancestors left him if he also had to take the entire responsibility of the company Ethan would leave behind?

Could he become King of two Kingdoms? Could he manage two without failing the other?

Alex gazed at her sleeping form, leaning forward until he could almost feel her breath on his face. "I need you more than ever, Dani." He whispered to his wife, who seemed lost in this sea of troubles.

Today, he was the tower everyone depended on, but he knew he was nothing without his wife, constantly by his side, giving him the support and strength to go on.

She had become the air he needed to breathe and the blood pumping into his blood. His heart would never beat again without her. She had become the very essence of his existence.

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"I need you to be strong for us." He leaned forward until his forehead touched hers.

Then, a little gasp escaped her lips, followed by slow, shallow breathing. She did not look calm as her face twitched and her forehead creased up on her hairline.

At first, he thought he might have woken her up. But no, she was still deep in her sleep. He already knew she might be dreaming, or worse, having a nightmare.

"Dani!" He called out her name, pulling her body close and wrapping her up in his arms. He needed to calm her down.

"Dani," Alex repeated in his soothing voice, not wanting to startle her, until she finally opened her eyes, tilting her head up, looking directly into his.

“Was I having another dream?” She asked, still dazed displayed on her expression.

He had no idea what she remembered, but she did not look like she had a good dream as tiny beads of sweat broke out from her skin.

“Yes, it is just a dream.” He assured her, hugging her tighter, slightly shaking her to make her feel more relaxed. “Come on, let us go back to sleep.” He told her, helping her get back to her back as they both lay on the mattress, silently contemplating their thoughts.

“Alex?” She slowly turned around to face him, her hand reaching out to him until it settled down on his chest. “Are you still awake?”

“Yes.” He answered, his eyes settling on her hand going up and down, tracing the muscles of his bare chest. “What is it?” He could only wonder what was going through her mind.

“I don’t want him to die. Not yet.” She calmly said as if she was saying it without any emotions.

He was unsure if it was the calm before the storm, but he hoped they could get through all of this, still standing in the end.

“Me, too.” He responded, not knowing what else to say to that as he turned to face her, gazing into those lovely eyes that captivated him from the first time he saw her.

“Can you make me forget about all this?” She softly spoke as her body shifted on the bed until she straddled him on his waist. “Even for a while.” Taking matters into her hands.

He believed he knew what she wanted as his hands automatically moved to hold her on her waist, supporting her, willing to grant her wish.

He felt her hands move again on top of his chest, tracing the contours of his muscles, allowing her fingers to explore each line.

Afterward, she planted her hands on both sides of his shoulders, her face inches from his. Her eyes stared at him, feeling the burning desire in their depths, most probably reflecting his own.

Then, his right hand moved upwards until it rested on the back of her hair, taking a bunch of it on his fingers, pulling her so gently down until her lips connected with his, locking them in a passionate kiss.

“Aaahhh!” Moans of passion escaped her lips when he finally let go to explore the other parts of her exposed skin, allowing his lips to glide down on the side of her chin and along her long slender neck.

While his other hand worked on the tie of her nightgown, letting it fall on her body until it bunched up on her waist, exposing her upper half to his hungry gaze.

“You are so beautiful,” Alex whispered, unable to help himself as he let his hands and lips move across her chest, taking pleasure in what she offered as she continued to hover on top of him.

On the other hand, she removed the remaining clothes from their bodies, discarding them carelessly all over the floor, wanting no more barriers between them.

Her lips finally took over, not allowing him to do all the action as she also began her probe of his body, making him groan loudly as her hands slid along his torso, going down on the heat of his blazing need.

He writhed underneath her lips, mouth, and hands, surrendering himself under her domination, allowing her the power. He grabbed a handful of her hair, not to hurt her but to guide her as she brought him to new heights, eventually finding his release.

But it was now her turn as he turned the table and shifted their position as he towered over her. With their eyes locked, his hands followed her lead and found the center of her desire.

This time, she moaned, burying her finger and nails at his back as he searched for the spot that would carry her to the peak until he could see gratification in her eyes.

As she found her first release, he knew it would never be enough, not for them. They needed more. They demanded the satisfaction of being one, not just by love but by the physical connection of the flesh.

This time, it was not who was taking control of the situation.

He believed it was both, the two of them working together, allowing their bodies to give and take until they could be one.

Until finally, he knew it was time.

He could feel her need was as strong as his. He swiftly plunged into her softness, burying himself deep inside of her, allowing their bodies to meld as one, before he felt her move, signaling that it was time to do the rhythm of love that would make them completely bound together.

She was right. They both needed this. The release of the tension, holding them captive, disabling them from acting and thinking more clearly because the pressure was too intense.

“Aaahhh!” Moan and groan of pleasures came from their lips as they finally collapsed after the heat of their passion.

“I love you, Dani.” He uttered near her ears, pulling her close before closing his eyes, allowing half of her body to settle on top of his chest.

Skin to skin as their hearts started beating as one. They finally found the peace of mind they both badly needed, even if it was just for a while.

Chapter 753: Scary turn of events

“Is he still alive?” She asked without blinking an eye, with no tears, no emotions. She stared at him as if waiting for him to confirm her fear.

Evan watched her, wondering if he had the right to interfere in this situation. First, he had no idea of the history behind this messed-up condition. Second, he was no expert in relationship troubles.

Lastly, this was not his fucking problem. Why did he find himself caught in the middle of this? But he had no choice but to answer her question.

Seeing that she was not going to give up, he finally responded. “Yes. He is.” The determination on her face was evident. If he did not answer her, she would find out in other ways.

He would have asked Alex to deal with this shit. But his friend was going through something much worse than this. It was the least he could do for now for his friends.

He had to control the flame before it became a wildfire that would be harder to contain.

“But he is still in critical condition. He is undergoing an operation at the moment.” He added, hoping she would not rush outside and create a commotion. That was the last thing he needed at the moment.

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Although his body was well caffeinated and pumping up adrenaline to keep him going, he was also starting to feel fatigued. When Amelia woke up, he was hitting the hay. He could not handle more of this drama.

She did not respond to him but just looked away, staring at the window outside, probably still processing what she just heard. She was not crying as he had expected, but she was in deep thought.

Evan still could not fathom why people would subject themselves to relationships when it only created miseries. Yeah, he saw a few who made it to the finish line, but they seemed to be the exceptions, not the rule.

A limited list of exceptions. That was hard to get in line. Eventually, everybody ended up with a broken heart and a shattered soul. Was it all worth it? He doubted.

Then, a soft knock on the door and a friendly greeting alerted them of another company. Nurse Jane walked in with a friend in tow.

“Good morning. I was wondering where you have been all night.” His grandmother sitting in a wheelchair, pushed by her trusted nurse, greeted him. “And who is this lovely lady?”

Angela’s eyes darted to Eida, who stood not far from him. Then, her eyes shifted to Amelia, who was still sleeping on the bed. “What happened to Amelia?” Her face suddenly frowned in confusion.

“Grandmama, this is Eida, a friend of Amelia.” He introduced the woman. “Eida, this is my grandmother, Angela.”

“It was nice to meet you, Ms. Angela. My aunt is a big fan of yours.” Eida smiled at her, finding her enthusiastic aura contagious.

“Amelia just needed some sleep.” Evan interrupted, seeing that her grandmother kept glancing at her. “What are you doing out of your room? You should be resting.”

As he suspected, his grandmother was not sick, just pretending to be one. She looked as strong as an ox by the way she was snooping around. Nurse Jane could only shake her head. She probably guessed he was already suspecting something.

“I could not rest until I see that you are ok. You looked agitated last night when you left.” Angela said concernedly.

If he had not known her throughout his life, he would have bought the act, but he could see through her dramatic skills. He could read her performance, and it deserved an award.

"As you can see, Grandmama, I am fine. I am just trying to help some of my friends here." He bent down on his knees before her and kissed her hands. "Why don't you go back to your room, and I will follow shortly. I will ask Amelia to come by later when she wakes up." He promised her, which made her smile.

"Ok. But make sure that these girls are ok before you leave them." Angela made him promise. "It was nice meeting you, dear." She turned to Eida. "I hope we can have a chat sometime."

His grandmother loved to make friends, and she seemed to see something in Eida that she liked. "Maybe introduced me to your aunt. I would love to meet her."

Finally, Angela was wheeled out of the room, leaving the three of them again. She turned to the window again, looking outside, but he could tell her thoughts were elsewhere.

"Do you want to see him?" Evan finally asked what he thought she might be contemplating, but he was surprised by her answer.

"I doubt they would let me near him." Her lips twisted, but it was a bitter smile. "You see, Lance's father disapproves of my relationship with him. The Count doesn't want me to see him again."

That now made sense.

He thought as he slowly put the pieces together. Or what he thought might be the possible answers to his questions. Again, another point of his theory. Relationships sucked.

"But what about Lance? What was his reaction to this?" He was a lawyer. He liked prying on things.

But it did not mean he had answers. He was not a therapist.

Love and relationship were not his expertise.

But before she could answer him, another knock on the door interrupted them. But this time, a woman in a uniform entered, carrying a tablet in her right hand.

"I am sorry to bother you, Ms. Eida Harlowe, I am Dr. Remy, and I am handling your care. I am assuming you are the patient." The doctor asked, seeing another person on the bed, but she was the one wearing the hospital gown.

"Yes," Eida answered. "I am glad you are here because I want to ask for my discharge papers. I want to get out of here soon."

She walked towards the cabinet, looking for her clothes, but it was still in the laundry. She only found a spare towel inside.

"I am sorry, Ms. Harlowe, but you might want to reconsider that for your baby." The doctor said.

"What? Baby?" Eida and Evan simultaneously asked, both bewildered by what they heard.

"I am sorry. I should have started with that. Congratulations, Ms. Harlowe." Then, the doctor turned to him. "Mister?"

"Blake." He automatically answered without thinking.

“Congratulations, Mr. Blake, you are now about to be proud parents.” The doctor announced cheerfully in the room.

But all he could do was stare at her and then at Eida, who was as shocked as he was or probably more. He could not even correct the doctor that he was not the father.

His mind was suddenly blank, thinking of what he had learned and pondering about his friend who was currently fighting for his life.

“You still need to undergo more tests to guarantee that your baby is fine.” The doctor continued as if clueless to what was going on between them.

Then, when they both failed to answer, that was the only time the doctor had comprehended the situation. “I think I should better let you discuss this among yourselves.”

“Thank you, Doc.” Evan finally snapped from his daze, seeing that Eida was still in shock.

Once the doctor was outside the room, he quickly guided Eida to the sofa and allowed her time to think. He just watched her get a grip on her situation, knowing that this was an entirely scary turn of events for her.

Chapter 754: A person of questionable character

Dani was thankful to Alex after what he did for her this morning. She had a nice, relaxing sleep that she badly needed. Now, it was her mother’s turn to go home while she took charge of keeping watch.

Her father was still not out of the woods. Although his condition was stable at the moment, it could suddenly turn for the worse, the doctors explained. But she still kept her fingers crossed that he would recover from this.

Dani walked toward her mother, sleeping on the lone chair next to her father, tapping her gently on the shoulders to wake her up. “Mom, I will stay with Dad while you go home and rest.” She softly uttered, not wanting to startle her.

Her Uncle Ben was already waiting outside to accompany her home. She did not want her to be alone in a time like this.

However, her mother needed time to rest, or else she might be the one next to get admitted to the hospital.

“I don’t want to go home. I want to stay with your father. He may suddenly wake up, and I want to be here.” Her mother stubbornly said as she maintained her position on the chair.

Her mother looked up at her with those tired, almost red eyes. She could tell that her Mom had been crying and must have barely slept last night or this morning.

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“It is not good for your body if you do not give it time to rest,” Dani said when her mother shifted her eyes to his father, who remained sleeping. “Uncle Ben said that you barely touched your food.”

She wished there was something she could do for her Mom. She would never dream of being in her mother's shoes because she could tell how difficult it was.

She looked so sad. She had no idea if her mother could survive if her father died. She also could not imagine living without her father. He had been a constant presence in her life. Without him, a part of her heart would be empty.

"I will eat later. I am just not hungry. Besides, I feel so much better after that nap." Laura spoke to her with a forced smile, but she was unconvinced. She could tell when she was lying. Her mother was not very good at it.

She knelt before her, taking both her hands, covering them with hers. She had to convince her mother that her action was not good for her.

"Why don't I get you a room at a hotel just across the street. Then, I will call you as soon as Dad opens his eyes." She hoped that her mother would agree to the compromise. It was the only thing she could think of at short notice.

She could see that she badly needed a long sleep and nourishment for her body. After a good hot shower, her mother could return and take over from her.

"That seems to sound better." Laura finally consented to her plan, and Dani immediately called her assistant to make the necessary arrangement.

She only relaxed when her Mom walked inside the elevator with her Uncle, assisting her. She took the chair her mother left and pulled out a book from her bag.

Then, she started reading it to her father, who was still unconscious. But she heard that patients still needed constant communication, and she remembered he loved reading this book.

"How was that, Dad?" She asked after reading several chapters of the book, but as expected, his eyes kept shut. There was no response at all.

She stood up from the chair, needing to stretch her cramped muscles and some water to wet her parched lips. She walked to the mini kitchen on the side where a fridge was located and took a bottle of cold water.

"Would you mind giving me one?" Someone suddenly spoke not far from behind her.

She gradually turned around, not surprised by his presence. She was expecting that he would be back to visit again. Besides, he was now part of the family.

"Gerald, I did not see you come in." Dani took another bottle from the cold storage and walked toward the narrow counter, placing it on top. "Here." Handing the bottle to him.

Then, she opened hers and drank a few gulps to quench her tears. But her eyes watched the other man behind the counter.

"How is father doing?" He asked, grabbing the water and doing what she did before turning around to look at the man that brought them to life. "What is his condition?"

She was surprised that he finally acknowledged her father as his. Last night, he was still referring to her Dad as Ethan. What could have changed his mind?

“Dad is stable for now, but we are hopeful he will push through this.” Despite the warnings by the doctors, she still did not want to relent to her father’s condition.

She could not allow her fear or the doctor’s words to give up on her faith that he might still recover from this. She would ask for a miracle until his last breath.

She returned to her seat while her brother walked to the other side of the bed and stood before him. He stared at their father’s face for a minute, not saying anything.

She could not read his thoughts, but she wondered what could be going through his mind. She wanted to trust him because they shared the same blood. But was that enough.

“I am glad to hear that. I also wish for Dad to get well soon.” Gerald again took another sip of the water before moving to the trash and disposing of the bottle.

“Are you leaving so soon?” She asked, seeing that he had moved closer to the door. If he was, she was not stopping him anyway. She was more than happy to be alone with her father.

“Yeah. I only stopped by to see how Dad is doing.” He strode forward toward her. “The company still needs us, so I am heading there to assure it is running smoothly.”

Her brother was right about that. Although David understood the situation, their clients might not have if they were both out of the office and not working.

She only nodded in acknowledgment but did not comment on the matter. After all, Gerald was the boss between the two of them. He knew what was best for their clients.

“I hope you will update me about Dad’s condition.” Gerald stood behind her, looking beyond her shoulders at their father. Still, she could not read anything from his expression as she stared at his face.

“Of course,” Dani finally responded when she felt his hands touch her shoulders, squeezing her mildly before he eventually strode away and said. “Goodbye. I will be back soon.”

She watched her brother exit the room, but she could not help but wonder what his intention was for taking a sudden interest in their father’s condition.

She could only hope it was pure love and concern, not something else. After all, she could not disregard that he was still a person of questionable character.

Chapter 755: An ugly scene

Alex was late to the meeting that morning, but luckily, Marcus handled it without a hitch, even without him. He still had two remaining appointments before he could drop by the hospital.

This time, he could not pass them off to Marcus. It was a crucial meeting he had to do himself, especially in their current situation.

“Do you have a minute?” His friend suddenly appeared on his doorstep, then continued inside without waiting for an invitation.

His friend did not need one since he would not bother him if he did not have a valid reason. Not when he knew he had an important client already on his way to his office.

“Just a minute, Marcus,” Alex responded, looking at his watch, which he did not have to but an old habit that was hard to forget. “What is it?”

He watched his friend pick a chair, sitting on it before his eyes focused on him. He dropped the folder in his hand and finally concentrated on him.

“I think something is going on with the board and the stockholders. One of them approached me earlier, saying that rumors were circulating about a new possible owner.” Marcus pulled out his phone and opened a news clip from the net.

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It was a blind item, saying something was brewing in the Hamilton Empire. Could it be a hostile takeover or a new heir? The speculations were growing, but the business industry is waiting for confirmation of what it could be.

He kept silent, thinking of the video clip he had just seen. He was expecting more stories like this would come up while Ethan was still in his critical condition.

It was still just a rumor at the moment, but this news could spread like wildfire, creating massive destruction in its wake if not contained.

“Do you think Gerald had something to do with this?” Marcus asked him, probably also thinking of the same thing as him.

Ethan had not yet announced to the world his relationship with Gerald. Only the family knew about this, not even the board. Therefore, it was either him or one of them.

But who would gain from this if the truth finally spread to the world? Gerald had already tried to gain power over the company before. Could he be doing it again now?

“It is likely, but unless we can get proof. We can never be sure.” Alex said, tapping his chin, finally standing up from his chair and slightly pulling his tie to loosen it.

It was what he was avoiding. Bad publicity could shake the company while Ethan was in his current state. It might create panic among the investors, stockholders, and the board.

But he was not afraid. It was the reason he was conducting all these meetings. He wanted to assure everyone that he had this under control.

He would not allow anyone to shake and rattle the company his father-in-law had worked hard to create for his family, especially Dani. He would safeguard this company as long as Ethan needed him.

It was Ethan’s legacy that had become his.

Suddenly his thoughts went somewhere else. But he quickly shoved it at the back of his mind. His priority was the task at his hand at the moment. His crown would have to wait for now.

"But who else knew about that. Who would benefit from this if it gets out?" Marcus questioned him, knowing that he had a point.

Alex turned to the buildings dominating outside his windows. Different business opponents who would want a piece of their success. Many would wish to take them down. But Marcus was right. Gerald could also have a personal agenda.

"I hope you are not talking about me. You two look very serious." An unexpected guest suddenly appeared by his door and stepped inside without an invitation.

"I am sorry, Sir, but..." His secretary was about to make her excuses about the sudden interruption when he waved his hand and dismissed her.

"That is ok. I will take it from here." Alex moved forward away from the window and faced his new guest.

He would have said speaking of the devil, but his friend already mouthed it silently in his direction. Still, this man was the enemy in his eyes.

Gerald had not managed to redeem himself since he had not done anything to prove he had no ill intention against his family anymore. Alex still believed he had to watch his back when it came to this man.

"I hope I am not bothering your busy schedule. Your secretary informed me that you are about to have a meeting with an important client in five minutes, so I will not take long." Gerald moved closer to the middle of his office, his head turning from left to right, clearly scouting the room.

"Why don't you sit down and join us?" Alex offered, pointing to the other available seat in his office.

As much as he did not like to entertain him, he felt he had no choice. He was now the brother of his wife. He had to show respect to a family member even if he did not believe he deserved it.

But if he found any evidence to prove that he was still scheming against Ethan, Dani, and his entire family, he would not hesitate to take matters into his hands to protect them.

"I was just at the hospital, visiting my father, and realized I might come by and offer my help." Gerald cockily stated as he sat down on the vacant seat, crossing his legs as he got more comfortable.

"I think we are managing just fine," Marcus answered the intrusive guest, clearly irritated with his presence. "Don't you have enough business to handle?"

"Under the hole where you crawled out of," Marcus whispered under his breath. It was low, but he heard it, and he was sure Gerald also did.

But Gerald did not respond but only smirked as if he was happy with the reaction he was creating. "I think my five minutes are almost up," Gerald announced as he stood up.

"I hope you know your way out." Marcus once again answered for him, evident that he did not welcome his presence.

“As I said if you need me in my father’s company. All you need to do is give me a holler, Alex.” Gerald addressed his statement to him, ignoring his friend but emphasizing the majority owner of this company was his father and not him.

However, he moved closer to Gerald, not about to let him say the last word in this short, unscheduled meeting. He did not like how his friend behaved around him, but he also did not like this man’s tone.

“Your father is still alive, and here you are, like a vulture circling his company. Could you not wait till he handed the reigns to you?” Alex whispered near his ears as he felt his blood boiling against this man.

He did not trust him even if a good man’s blood flowed in his veins. An evil man still raised him to be the man he was today. He might appear like a saint to everyone, but he could see through his disguise.

“Temper, temper...” Gerald taunted him as he walked away from him. “Who said I am waiting for him to die?” He spoke with a chuckle.

Then, the man did not wait for his response as he continued out of his office without looking back. He wanted to come after him, but he already saw his next appointment greeting Gerald by the door. He could not create an ugly scene.

Chapter 756: A recent friend

When the doctor’s diagnosis finally synched in her brain, she realized what was happening. She was about to have a child with Lance.

Eida had no idea if she should feel elated by the sudden news or terrified. She had never thought of having a child, nor ever dreamed of raising a family, not with her current situation or background.

She barely could hold on to a relationship, remembering her current status with the Prince. Then, her thoughts went to Lance, who was still in surgery based on this man before her, fighting for his life.

“Oh my!” Eida could only mumble as a few tears ran down her eyes, thinking of the complexity of her life. “I am pregnant.” As if saying those words would make it untrue.

But it only confirmed what she feared when Evan responded. “Yes, you are. What are you planning to do about it?” He asked, staring at her with those questioning eyes.

That was the million-dollar question.

She had never thought she would find herself in this kind of situation. She thought of the time frame where she could have conceived the child.

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She had always been careful when she had intercourse, not wanting to bring life to this world. But how come she still became pregnant. Then, she remembered that night with the audio recorder.

It was the only night she had allowed herself freedom and her emotions to take over and cloud her judgment. The only time she let herself stop thinking of the consequence.

Now, look at what she did.

"I don't know." She finally responded, but condemning herself for one night of not playing it safe would not make anything better. It would not change the present.

She closed her eyes, hoping it would give her some clarity, but different images came to her mind, which only had worsened her already messed up mind.

When she opened her eyes again, they landed on her friend, who had her eyes staring at the two of them. She wondered if she had heard their conversation.

"You are pregnant?" Amelia shouted in shock, suddenly answering her internal question. "I assume Lance is the father."

Her assumption was correct since she had not been with anyone else since Nick. It was just Lance that she had slept with unintentionally at first.

Amelia stepped down from the bed, immediately moving to her side, sitting beside her while staring at her face and then down her belly.

She doubted her friend would see anything down there. It was too early to tell. If not for the blood test, no one would have known about it.

When they tested her alcohol level, they also tested if she was pregnant. A standard procedure that hospitals do before administering medications.

"The doctor said I am," Eida confirmed to her friend. "Despite what you think of me, Lance was the only one who could have gotten me pregnant." She looked down at her hands that automatically touched her still flat belly.

She could not blame Amelia for assuming the worse about her. She did have a horrible record concerning her sexual activities. It was something she could never change, even if she kept regretting it.

"I was not thinking like that." Amelia quickly defended herself. "But I have to be sure." She still added, but her face was anything other than sympathetic.

Eida did not see any trace in her friend that she was judging or angry with her. When Amelia finally wrapped her hands around her shoulders and pulled her closer, she knew her friend had forgiven her.

"I think you should tell Lance once he is better," Evan suggested as he watched the two reunited.

She tapped her friend's hand, telling her she appreciated her support. But Evan was right as she looked at him. She should inform Lance all about their baby.

Lance deserved to know that he was about to be a father, and her child deserved to have a father. Even she did not deserve them both.

However, she would try her best to give this child a good mother, no matter how hard that would be to raise the child. With Lance at her side, maybe it would not be that hard.

She only hoped Lance would survive his operation and live long enough to be with her and their child.

"Yes, you should tell Lance all about the baby." Even Amelia tried to convince her.

But she had already decided, believing it was the right one. "I also think so. I want to tell Lance all about our baby." She said, finally hopeful for the future.

"But first, you need a shower and a change of clothes. Lance should never see you like that." Evan wrinkled up his nose at her as if he saw her as disgusting.

She suddenly laughed at his expression because she also realized what she might have looked like at the moment. She had never been drunk before, but she had seen many who drunk themselves to death. And it was not pleasant at all.

She ran her fingers through her hair and could not even make it run smoothly down the tip without entangling through the strands. It must look like a bird's nest.

"Well, Evan is right." Amelia nodded her head in agreement. "You looked like a mess." She touched the hospital gown she wore. "You also do not look good in this."

"You should talk." Eida finally countered, noticing and pointing at the dried drool on the side of Amelia's face and the ruffled hair on top of her head.

"Oh my!" Amelia expressed in shock when her fingers ran down her face. She hurriedly ran to the bathroom and checked on herself.

"Well. I guess I am the only one presentable at the moment." Evan stated proudly, but when Eida looked at him, she also laughed at him. "What now?"

"You should look at your eyes." She uttered in between her giggles. "You look like the actor in Sleepy Hollows. Not the main lead but the villain." She started laughing again.

It also made him run to the bathroom to check himself out, following Amelia inside. Finally, she could hear the two arguing like cats and dogs.

She could only wonder for now how that two ever ended up together. She could not remember Amelia mentioning him to her ever. Maybe he was a recent friend.

Chapter 757: Family man

After a few more hours after Evan discovered that his friend had impregnated a girl, he went to visit Lance after his very long operation.

The doctor said it was a successful surgery, but the recovery would be tricky. He would probably need years of therapy before he could fully recover.

"Evan, I am pleased that you are still here." The Duke suddenly appeared behind him while he was gazing at his friend, who was still unconscious with machines attached to him.

He wished he could talk to Lance and tell him to recover fast because he was about to become a father, but that was not his place. Lance needed to hear that from Eida, not from him.

"Just checking on Lance," Evan responded with a gentle smile, still sorry for what his friend was going through but glad that he was out of the woods.

He also heard Ethan had a successful surgery, but his condition was still touched and gone. The doctors could not give them the guarantee of his survival or recovery.

"I am glad that he has loyal friends like you." The Duke gently spoke as he placed his hand on the glass partition that separated them from the patient.

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At the moment, they could only observe his friend from the outside. They were limiting his exposure to people for possible infections. He did sustain several burns from the small fire that engulfed the car after the collision.

The tank leaked, and the friction created a small fire. Luckily the rescuer contained it and rescued him just in time before it had worsened his condition.

"I am lucky to meet him and your son." Evan honestly felt that way, especially Alex, who had been his mentor and friend for a long time. Despite not being part of royalty, Alex still befriended him and treated him like a brother.

He also helped him establish himself in New York, introducing him to his friends and establishing a good connection that helped him get to where he was today.

"Speaking of my son. How is he?" Fred asked, seemingly worried about Alex and his condition. "I know with Ethan's condition. Many would come after him, the business."

It was also what he thought when he first heard of Ethan's attack. "I know he could handle them. He was trained by the best." Evan assured the Duke that he had nothing to worry about Alex.

He wished he could also be there to assist his friend, Alex. But he knew of Lance's current condition. He was more needed here. However, he planned to go back home soon once he had helped Amelia and Eida with their plans.

"You have to excuse me, but I also had to check out my grandmother from the hospital." Evan tapped the Duke on the back as he started to move away.

"Say hello to Angela for me. Tell her that I love to see her in a few days." The Duke told him before shifting his attention again to the man behind the glass.

"I will." He responded as he walked away on his way to his grandmother's room.

They had met before, and somehow they had become friends. Even the Duchess loved his grandmother. But who did not love that adorable, lovely actress? She could always get away with her trickery by showing her sweet smile.

"Are you ready to leave, ladies?" He asked once he was inside his grandmother's room, looking at three pairs of lovely eyes directed at him.

He suggested that since Amelia did not have a home to go home to, Eida was not in any condition to be alone, and his grandmother should be on constant watch.

They should all probably stay in one place in the meantime, under his care. He had no idea if he was losing his mind, recommending such an insane idea.

Babysitting. Three women.

"Yes, we are," Angela answered for the three of them.

He nodded his head, ready to embark on this craziest idea he had ever made in his entire life.

He carried his grandmother's things while Nurse Jane entered the room to assist in pushing Angela's wheelchair out the door. The other two also followed behind.

The short ride home to Angela's place was silent, which he appreciated. It gave him time to think about this more carefully. He knew he had entered a difficult situation, but there was no taking it back now.

"Welcome to my home." Angela showed the two women to the vacant rooms where they would be staying while he took her grandmother's things to her room.

She watched the ladies enter their respective rooms while his grandmother also retired temporarily to her bedroom. "Well, make yourself at home. I need to lie down for a few minutes." Angela excused herself as she closed the room.

"Thanks again for letting us stay here," Amelia said before closing the room of her room.

Eida had already closed her door, so he walked towards the mini bar where he knew his grandmother kept her small stash of alcohol. She was not an alcoholic, but she used it when she entertained some guests.

At the moment, he badly needed a strong drink that could unwind the tension in his body. "Great." He finally found a good brand, pouring himself a glass full of the delicious scotch.

Then, he walked toward the balcony that overlooked the city below him.

He had lived in this city almost his entire young life. But he never felt at home. He might have been born here, but it had never been where he wanted to spend the rest of his life.

"Hey," Eida suddenly appeared behind him and walked closer to his position. "I hope I am not being a bother."

She hesitantly walked by the door of the balcony and stared at him. When he smiled, she walked further into the balcony and gazed at the other buildings around them.

"Hey, I thought you might be resting," Evan said, although it was still early for them to sleep. They still have not had dinner yet, but that could wait.

He could always order something from a nearby restaurant. At the moment, he was letting everybody have their time for themselves first.

"I could not sleep." She admitted, letting her hands glide on the metal rail, preventing her from falling from the highrise building. "Thanks again for doing this for us." Eida finally raised her eyes to him.

"It is the least I can do for my friend and his unborn child." Evan looked at her, feeling sympathetic about her situation.

He could feel that what she was going through must be worse than anything he had been through his entire life. He suddenly felt more blessed in his life.

"How is he?" Eida finally asked, looking away from him.

But he saw the fear in her eyes before she could hide it from him. She was trying to show a brave face, but he could feel that she was hurting.

"His surgery was successful. Doctors are expecting full recovery after his therapies." He told her what he had learned when he visited his friend earlier.

He could see that she made a sigh of relief after hearing that, probably thankful to hear that the father of her child would survive this ordeal after all.

Suddenly, he wondered if he would ever have someone who would worry about him just like that. Would there come a time when he would want to become a family man?

Chapter 758: Meddling with other affairs

Eida found it hard to sleep last night as she tossed and turned. She wished she could drink a glass of wine, it usually calmed her down when she was restless like this, but the doctor had warned her against consuming alcohol. It was not good for the baby.

If she wanted the baby to grow healthy and strong, she would have to change her lifestyle as the doctor had suggested, just like eating breakfast which she usually skipped almost every day. And then again, eating on time for lunch and dinner.

But it seemed her body was learning by itself as her stomach churned as if seeking food. She barely touched the Chinese food Evan ordered last night, finding it hard to eat. But this morning, she found herself quite hungry.

"Good morning!" Angela greeted her as she stepped into the kitchen to look for any leftovers.

Being a person, always on the go, cooking was the last thing on her mind. She either ordered out or ate out rather than placing herself in front of the stove and cooking her meal.

Although she had learned to do those household chores while growing up, she could not find the time to perform those mundane tasks when she had other things lined up for her.

"Good morning, Angela." Eida greeted back as she stood before the kitchen counter.

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She finally glanced around the kitchen, seeing it thoroughly for the first time with the bright lights coming from the windows. It looked beautiful, clean, and well used. She surmised that Angela must love to cook.

"Why don't you sit down. Breakfast is about to be served." Angela offered as she moved around the kitchen like a pro.

"Can I help?" She asked, although there was not much she could do inside the kitchen. She still would like to do something.

"Well, you can pour me a coffee, but I prepared a fresh glass of juice for you in the fridge," Angela told her, reminding her that she also was not to consume caffeinated drinks.

It was a bummer since she loved her coffee. She needed to consume it at least four or five times a day. But for the baby, she had to comply.

She walked towards the other counter on the corner and poured a glass of that delicious aroma of the newly brewed coffee. It was like being tortured. She could smell it, but she could not even taste it.

Then, she turned to the fridge, took out the pitcher of the freshly made juice, and poured herself a glass. It did not look appetizing unless she could add a touch of gin or something to it. But that was not an option either.

"Don't worry. It is just for nine months." Angela smiled at her, shaking her head. She could only assume she had noticed her expression upon seeing the juice.

"Yeah, I guess." She had no choice anyway. She turned around, handed Angela her coffee, and took a sip of her juice, which was tasty and refreshing. "Where are Amelia and Evan?" She asked, noticing she had not seen them yet.

"Evan is out on his morning run while Amelia is doing some errand. She said she would be back soon." Her sweet host answered as she placed some delicious muffins on a plate and placed them on the counter to cool down.

"That looks so delicious," Eida uttered hungrily, sniffing the delightful aroma from the freshly baked pastries. "By the way, thanks, Angela, for letting me stay here for a few days."

It was kind of funny.

She only lived a few floors down from this apartment, yet she was here, staying with this lovely woman that she barely knew also lived in this building.

"It is me who should be thanking you and Amelia for staying as my guests. It is nice to have some company once in a while." Angela smiled at her sweetly. "Besides, it had been a while since I last cooked for someone else or baked, for that matter."

She grabbed two small saucers, placed a slightly hot muffin on them, and put it on the table. "Come on, Eida. I know you are hungry because I am. Let us start breakfast. I am sure the two are on their way back."

She moved to join Angela at the table, bringing the juice with her as she made herself comfortable on the seat opposite the sweet lady. She suddenly missed her aunt, who also loved to care for her.

"Oh, this is to die for." She complimented Angela's baking skills, savoring every bite of that delicious tasting sweet pastry.

"I told you, I like to brag about my talents." Angela proudly said, happy to see that she was enjoying the food.

"What are your plans today?" Angela turned serious as she studied her.

She had been thinking about that all night. She wondered if she should go to the hospital and check on Lance. But she doubted she could ever pass the guards.

"I might go home after eating and get some things. Then, ask Evan if he could sneak me into Lance's room." It was the only thing she could think of at the moment.

She truly wanted to see him. She did not mind if he would not see or talk to her yet, but she only wanted to look at his face. See for herself that he was going to be ok.

"You do what you feel you must do. But remember, whatever happens, we are here, ready to help." Angela extended her hand on the table and grabbed hers.

With a friendly smile on her lovely lips, she squeezed her hands to assure her that she was not alone.

She suddenly felt lucky to meet a new friend to depend on in times like this. However, she could not abuse their kindness. So, the sooner she could decide what to do with her life, the earlier she could stop bothering these kind people.

"Good morning, Angela. Eida." Amelia walked into the kitchen, greeting them with a lovely smile.

"Good morning, Grandmama, Eida, Amelia." Not a minute longer did Evan walk behind her friend.

It made her look at Angela in question, suspicious of the way the two were behaving. But she had her problems to worry about at the moment. She should not be meddling with other affairs unless it was necessary.

Chapter 759: Love should never be selfish

Amelia was thankful that breakfast was finally over. She could hardly eat with Evan constantly looking in her direction. She wanted to shout at him to stop staring but did not want to make the others suspicious.

Still, she could not help but wish that what happened earlier did not happen altogether. It was a mistake. No, it was an accident that she had no control over.

"Excuse me, but I had to go to my room. I need to make a phone call." She stood up from the table, grabbing her things, not waiting for anyone to acknowledge her, keeping her head down, and avoiding any eye contact.

She just had to get out of there before the air became suffocating. But she hardly walked out of the kitchen when she heard Evan making excuses about hitting the shower.

He was indeed full of sweat from his jog.

Then, her mind reminded her how manly he smelled when she was enveloped in his arms just a while ago. "Stop it." She chastised herself for even thinking about that.

She quickly moved before he could catch up with her and entered her room, locking it behind her. As if he would follow her, but still, she needed assurance.

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"What was I thinking kissing him?" She muttered to herself. It might have been an accident, but she felt that she had responded to him. Her lips moved voluntarily, following his lead.

Why? Why would she kiss him? What was wrong with her?

She walked back and forth inside her room, trying to make sense of her reaction to him. Did she like it? Honestly, she did. But she was in love with Lance, even though Lance did not love her. It just did not make sense.

"Ooohhh!" She felt more frustrated. Then, her mind reminded her of what it was like to be in his arms. And remembering his lips on hers.

What about him? Did he intentionally kiss her? Did he like kissing her?

"Stop!" She pulled her hair in apprehension. She should not be entertaining these thoughts.

She sat down on the edge of the bed as she calmed herself down. Then, she found her body falling on the soft mattress, her eyes staring at the beautifully decorated ceiling.

If she loved Lance, she should not have kissed Evan like that. Amelia tried to analyze her feelings about the man she always thought she would marry someday.

Was she so focused on Lance that she never considered that he might not be the one and there might be someone else for her?

Was it possible that what she thought was her forever and ever was not Lance after all?

"But I always love Lance." She spoke softly in the air as if that should reassure her that she still did, but her heart and mind were now starting to question if it was true.

Then, her phone suddenly rang. She quickly rolled out of bed and grabbed her phone from her bag. But when she saw who was calling, she abruptly dropped it on the bed.

It was like she could not even talk to him, afraid of what he would say or what she might tell him. Suddenly, her mind was a big jumbled mess.

She wanted so much to believe that she could not be attracted to this man. He had admitted that he was a man whore. How could she trust a man like him? How could she even consider giving her heart to him?

Her phone beeped this time, signaling a message. She hesitated to look at it but remembered it might be something important. But when she scanned the incoming message, it still came from Evan.

I THINK WE NEED TO TALK

It was a short message, but she knew it meant a lot.

Was she ready to talk about this?

She grabbed her phone and started typing a reply but deleted it, thinking she might be making a mistake. But a knock on her door made her put down her phone, hearing her friend's voice on the other side.

"Amelia, can we talk?" Her friend repeated when she failed to respond on her first call.

"Wait." She quickly opened the door and allowed her friend entry inside. "Why don't you sit down, Eida?" Guiding her on the chair by the window.

"I hope I did not catch you in a bad time." Eida waited for her to take the other seat opposite her. "But I need to talk to you."

Her friend dropped her eyes on her lap, watching her fingers squeeze her palm. Eida looked like she was about to cry, looking so guilty as she sat across from her.

"Hey, whatever this is about, it is not worth your tears." Amelia extended her hand to her, holding her firmly in her grasp. "If this is about you and Lance, you have nothing to worry about because I understand."

Finally, her friend looked up to her, still teary-eyed but with a smile on her lips. She somehow looked relieved that they finally had this one-on-one talk they did not have the chance to do in the hospital.

"We never wanted to hurt you. When I learned that we were talking about the same man, I tried to stay away from him. But I have never been with a man like him. He is special." Eida started talking as her eyes finally shed tears.

"Yes, Lance is indeed a great man. That is why we both fell in love with him." Amelia finally voiced what her friend could not say to her.

She knew that Eida had never believed in love, but she could see in her eyes how much she loved Lance. Eida might find it hard to admit it, but she could feel it in her tears.

"Do you think I can see him today?" Her friend asked, hopeful.

Amelia could hear the desperation in her voice, feeling the anguish she was going through, not knowing what future lay ahead of her and her future child.

Until Eida could see and talk to Lance, the future still looked bleak for them, not when the Count was standing in their way. She knew the Count would not simply stand aside.

"We can try to see him today if that is what you want." Amelia would do anything for her friend, especially now that she needed her the most.

"How do you know that it is even love?" Eida suddenly asked her, confusion and fear written all over her face.

Eida finally let go of her as she stood up and stared at the window outside. Instinct must have kicked in when her hands automatically held on to her belly in a protective stance.

"You know when you would never want to hurt the one you love." Amelia instantly answered. "That you are willing to give up your happiness for him." She continued, speaking from her experience.

"But how about your happiness?" Eida looked at her as if she was asking her, not just a hypothetical question.

"I can always find happiness elsewhere, but I would not want him to feel obligated to love me because I am his responsibility," Amelia answered truthfully, thinking of the arranged marriage her father wanted her to take.

Besides, she believed love should never be selfish.

Chapter 760: The girl worthy of the crown

The Count watched his son transfer to his new private room, where he would continue his treatment and medications for his fast recovery.

It contained most of the state-of-the-art machines that would help him heal faster. One of the reasons they were thankful for Prince Alexander and his son. They had introduced this innovation in their Kingdom.

"Don't worry, Count Wellington, Prince Lance is in good hands. We are doing our best to treat all his injuries." The head surgeon assured him as he shook his hand.

"Thank you for taking care of my son." He complimented the efforts of the doctors and hospital staff who had assisted his son in his time of need.

Thankfully, all the doctors confirmed that the Prince was on his way to recovery. He was glad the injuries would not have a lasting effect on his physical health except for one thing.

But it was a secret he had to hide. Fortunately, he knew the doctor who diagnosed the problem. He guaranteed to bury the problem and eliminate all the test results. Or else it would destroy all his plans. No one should ever learn about it, not even his son.

"How is he doing?" A new guest arrived at the hospital to check on his son after the doctors had long left the room.

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The Count appreciated that his friend, Count Julius Ashthorne, came to visit his son. He would need all the allies he could get after this accident.

He almost had the Council and the other Lords convinced that his son would fit perfectly at the throne. But now, he felt he had to start over again. However, he was not giving up, not now, that he knew his son would fully recover.

He still had high hope that his son would be king of this country. They would finally get the title back to their family that was taken away from them through the centuries.

"The doctors assure us of his fast recovery," Thomas answered his friend as he looked at his son, who was peacefully sleeping. "Would you like to sit down?" He guided his friend to a nearby sofa where they could comfortably talk without disturbing his son.

Although the doctors told him that he was still heavily sedated and there was no chance he would wake up soon. Still, he did not want his son to hear what was happening around him.

Immediately, his assistant provided them with some tea for refreshment, asking if they needed anything else. But he dismissed her, wanting some privacy with his friend.

"I am glad to hear that Prince Lance is doing well. The Council was a little concerned when we heard about his accident."

Count Julius voiced what was going through the meetings he had attended recently.

Count Thomas knew what his friend was talking about since Count Julius was the head of the committee handling the succession of the throne. They were checking if his son would still fit to lead this country.

"I want to assure the Council and the King that Lance would fully recover from this incident." He told his friend, knowing that it was one of the purposes of his visit aside from supporting him.

He appreciated that he was giving him a heads-up about what the other Council members were doing. At least he could act accordingly and take action when necessary.

"Well, there is another issue that we need to discuss." Count Julius drank his tea and placed it back on the saucer. He looked at him as if checking his reaction.

But he already knew that there would be many issues regarding this latest accident. He had prepared to answer them all, especially now that he had science to prove that his son would still be capable of ruling after recovery.

"What is it? Tell me so I can address the issue right away." He asked his friend, who had also agreed that his son was the most viable candidate for the position if Alex refused his title.

"It is regarding your son's very active lifestyle." The other Count told him as he turned his head to his son, who still was unconscious.

He knew it had been an issue with the Council. The way Lance had precariously lived his life behind the wheels. But he had already proven to them how careful and safe he was when Lance conducted his race.

The police report would also establish that this was an accident and the offending party was the other vehicle that bumped into his son. The real culprit was the reckless driver behind the wheel who had beaten the red light.

"As you can see, my son had nothing to do with the accident. He was just a victim by the circumstance, and Lance was lucky to come out of it alive." Count Thomas was ready to plead his case or defend it if necessary.

He would not allow this slight issue to ruin his son's life and future. Besides, he could not see in their by-laws preventing their future Kings or Kings in that matter from conducting dangerous sports.

"I can see that, but we are not talking about his sport. We understand this incident was an accident and was not done deliberately or due to carelessness." Count Julius assured him.

“Then, what are we even talking about?” The Count was clueless about the issue at hand. He could think of several things, but that was not enough to ruin his son’s chances at the throne.

What else could his friend be talking about now?

“It had come to the attention of the Council members that your son had been dating a certain reporter.” Council Julius finally spoke what he did not expect to hear.

But it was in the back of his mind. He did not expect the Council members were aware of his son’s dating activity. It seemed that someone was taking an extraordinary interest in his son.

He wondered who it was and what his or their intentions were. Where they also seeking power or just a way to shut his wishes down?

“We all have our times of messing around when we are young.” Count Thomas tried to downplay the situation. He did not want his friend to suspect that the girl meant more to Lance than just a plaything.

“I hope so. Because as we all know, before Lance could sit on the throne, he had to present a wife that would carry the crown as his queen. It could not just be anybody.” Count Ashthorne knew this more than anybody.

When Prince Alexander first presented his future wife to the Council, everybody had to carefully scrutinize her background, assuring she would have excellent qualifications and a decent reputation.

“I assume you already know why we are strict about this. We need an heir that would come from a good family. Someone who would lead our legacy and our heritage to the future.” Count Ashthorne again reiterated what the Council members had discussed during his absence in the meetings.

“I assure you Lance knows well enough that he will have to marry someone from a reputable family.” Count Thomas smiled at his friend. “When the time comes, my son will wed the girl worthy of the crown.” Assuring his friend.