

Royal Contract 861

Chapter 861: A black heart

He had been busy since waking up this morning. Work had occupied most of his time as he stared at the papers on his desk. Appointments lined up for the day, giving him no time for anything else.

But he knew that was a lie. He had barely performed his jobs since he arrived at his office. He was too distracted to concentrate on anything else.

“Can you get me an espresso?” He called out to his secretary, needing something to boost his energy and yank him out of his slump.

He had been very active last night, barely sleeping until the light had broken to dawn. Somebody had kept him awake, making it hard for him to get any sleep, not that he was complaining. He loved every minute of it.

He could still feel her body underneath him, writhing in pleasure under his touches and kisses. He could not get enough of her. Not even after all this time, he still craved for her.

He had told himself that this relationship with her was temporary. He only needed something from her family. After he had taken what he wanted, he would dump her and move on.

“Damnit!” He knew he had to get rid of her. Soon.

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It was dangerous for him and his business to get involved with a woman, not seriously, especially in his line of work, but he still could not let go of her.

It was insane.

He knew that it was not the truth.

He already had what he needed from her father and their company. Although it was not enough, he could already work on that without needing her. Yet, he was still obsessing about her.

“Sir, your next appointment is here.” His secretary knocked on his door, alerting him that he had been daydreaming about her while on the job. “Sir?” She repeated. “Should I send him inside?”

Finally, he turned to his secretary and told her to bring his guest inside. He needed a distraction from his thoughts. His next appointment seemed a good start.

“Gerald, I am sorry for the short notice. But I am glad you could squeeze me into your busy schedule.” The man in his impeccable suit strode into the room with a friendly smile.

He was an old friend of the family. He was a man who owed his father and still had a debt to pay. He got in bed with his father, wanting power and wealth. Now, it was his time to pay up.

He quickly walked toward him, extending his hand to greet his visitor. “It is always a pleasure to have you here, Governor.” He gestured for the man to sit on the long couch on the other side of his office.

But he did not offer his bodyguards a place as they continued to stand by the door until the Governor dismissed them to wait outside. They could not discuss any transaction with other people inside the room. That would not be good for the business.

In his line of work, discretion and respect for privacy were factors they always had to consider. Well, aside from the secrets they had to keep from spreading to their enemies.

"You probably have an idea why I am here." The Governor accepted the drink he offered him, taking a sip of the expensive scotch delivered to him just this morning.

It was a gift from one of his partners in his other businesses, just another perk for being the big boss. But it was nothing compared to the millions he earned from all the illegal trades in his underground organization.

"Unless you spell it out, we might come up with two different things." Gerald looked at the man who held one of the highest positions in their city. "I think it would be better if you tell me why you are here."

He had no time to play a guessing game. Although, he had already heard rumors from the grapevine circulating in the political arena. He still would not dare to assume anything.

Rumors might have a fuel that started them, but it might not always be the real deal. Someone could have baited it, hoping to catch someone in a trap.

It would be better if he heard the truth from the horse's mouth rather than believe an unknown source. Still, he could not wait for his intention.

"Ok. Fine." The Governor shifted in his seat as if preparing for a grand speech. Then, he pulled a folded paper from his inside pocket. "I guess you have heard this is my last term in my position."

He nodded in understanding. That was one news he had heard before, but he had been expecting that he would be running for a higher office. Still, he did not see the relevance of this to him.

The Governor in a higher position would only be beneficial for him. Was that why he was here? Was the man before him asking for support? Of course, he would gladly provide him one.

"I heard the Senate is in play." He just confirmed the rumors. "That is a big move, but I think it is the right one." He might not be a politician, but his organization had put politicians in their positions for decades. It was one way of securing their business had protection.

He believed that the Governor had the potential to win. He had the money, the power, the influence over the people, and the connection in the higher offices.

"Yes, I think it is time. I am not getting any younger. It is my last chance." The Governor had that hunger in his eyes. He wanted this very much. "But that is not the only reason I am here."

Suddenly, Gerald believed that he would be asking something from him. He had no issue giving it to him as long as he understood that nothing comes for free anymore.

"Whatever you need, my door is always open to you, Governor." He never turned his back on people who knew how to return a favor.

That was how his father had built an empire. It was how he had created allies. It was also the way he would put his enemies at bay. Overall, it was weaving intricate connections with the right people and putting them on a leash.

As the saying went, you scratch my back, and I scratch yours. But if anyone dared to betray a man like him, he had a simple solution. A single bullet right between the eye would put them in line.

“About that. I have seriously contemplated this, but this is not just me who believed that someone we trust should take my place.” The Governor stood up from his seat and looked outside the window.

“We are talking about another kind of power that had this city bending on its knees.” The Governor continued as his eyes scanned the view outside. “We believed that should be you.”

He did not expect him to say that. He had heard that he had been grooming the Attorney General to take his place. He wondered what had changed his mind.

He was not exactly aiming for the position since he already had several obligations. Besides, he still had several issues he needed to clear with his organization before he could tackle another enormous endeavor.

“I am flattered that you would consider me for the position.” However, he was not about to take on another challenge that was not in his plans. “But...”

“Before you decline my offer. Give the idea some time to sink in.” The Governor stopped him from continuing his plan to reject the offer. “You don’t have to decide at this moment. Give me your answer in a week.”

The old politician stood behind where he sat with a wide grin on his lips. Then, he placed his hands on his shoulder, patting him on the back. “Trust me. It is for the best. It is what your father wanted for you.”

The mention of his father in the conversation brought a bitter taste to his mouth. He knew who the Governor was referring to, and that was not Ethan.

“Probably so.” He acknowledged, still claiming to the world that Joaquin was his father. “But I still need time to think about this.” He would never commit to something that he had not studied thoroughly.

“I know you will be the best candidate for the position. Your track records would help you secure the seat. We have no doubt.” The Governor moved away from him. “Just think about it.”

Then, he walked towards the door, carrying a satisfied smile on his face. His idea was not unsound. He believed the Governor had a point for choosing him to run with him.

His background would work in his favor if he decided to take on the added challenge. But that was it. It would be an additional workload on his part. But the benefits it would provide for his business were exponential.

However, he could not serve two masters at the same time. He would need a man who he could trust with his life. Someone who would take his place when he was unavailable.

“Hi, honey! I hope you can spare me a few minutes of your time.” Another voice came into the room after a few minutes that the Governor had vacated the premises.

“Haley, what are you doing here?” He was surprised by her sudden appearance. He was not expecting to see her until later tonight.

She quickly moved toward him, sitting on his lap. If people saw them, he had no doubt they would conclude that they were in a happy relationship.

But were they?

Because when he started this, he only had one thing he wanted from her. He would use her to get to her father. Everything she despised about men, he would admit that it was him.

He was a monster who would devour everything in his path. Take what he wanted without thinking about who he would hurt in the long process. He was nothing more but a beast who only possessed a black heart.

Chapter 862: The Delilah in Samson’s life

He thought that his time with the Governor would be enough to distract him from his thoughts. But he was not expecting that the person he wished to forget would suddenly walk through his doors.

Talking about irony as it brushed through his mind. It must be his unlucky day. Or fate decided to play with him. Though he did not believe in such a non-sense, he chose to acknowledge them today.

“Dad would like to see you tonight. He will be hosting a dinner party at home and asked us to join him.” Haley held his face in her soft hands, caressing his jaw, running her fingers through the soft stubbles growing on his chin.

In his eyes, she had a face of an angel. But he was the devil. So, how could his mind even consider that they could have a relationship? He was only using her. All this was just an elaborate plan to seduce her until she gave him what he wanted.

Then, at the end of this charade, he would leave her, taking what he only needed. He would toss her aside, crying, hating him for his cruelty. But that was who he was. He was not a lover but a monster.

“Why?” Gerald had met the man before, and though they had been civil to each other, he still felt the tension between them.

He could tell it had nothing to do with his other hidden career because if her father discovered that, he would never allow his relationship with his daughter to continue.

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He believed it must be about a fatherly instinct, wanting to protect his daughter against the predators out there. From what he had heard of Haley’s past relationships, nothing good came out of those.

They all ended up breaking her heart.

Would he be any different? He doubted. Maybe he might be worse than any of them.

"I think my Dad is warming up to the idea of us." Haley had been vocal about her feelings for him.

As their relationship continued, she had fallen for him, deeper and deeper. It was supposed to be the idea. He had to make her fall deeply in love with him until she could not say no to all his plans.

But now, was he having some second thoughts?

No. Of course not.

He could not allow emotions to factor in this situation. It was just a transaction he had to accomplish to get his goal. To infiltrate his father's business and take as much as to accumulate his wealth.

It was the only way he could prove to the organization that he had what it took to be their supreme leader. After failing to acquire the Hamilton Empire, the other group leaders began questioning his leadership.

He had to prove that he had not gone soft by allowing Dani to slip through his fingers. He had to show them he was still the shark that could devour any business he had set his eyes on, even if it was a whale.

"What is the occasion?" He could not think of one, but most of the time, wealthy people did not need a reason to waste their money.

And Haley's father was no different. But who cares, as long as he was willing to lose it to him? He would gladly join the games these wealthy people loved to play.

He reached out behind her, taking off the pin that had bonded her hair on top of her head. It cascaded beautifully behind her back, entangling in his fingers. He loved it when he could grip it firmly, using it to gain control.

"He wants to introduce you to his partners." Her words made his hands stop in their movements, making him gaze into her face.

Gerald was unsure if he heard her right. It was a bold move. He wondered if her father was welcoming him to the family. But it could also be a test to check his intentions with his daughter.

At the moment, he would lean into the notion that it might be a trap rather than come unprepared. He could not trust the great Mr. Rosley, just like Haley should not have trusted him.

"Why would he do that?" Gerald asked, suddenly confused by the sudden change of heart. He suspected that her father might have something up on his sleeve.

Then, she pulled him into a deep kiss. As much as he wanted to concentrate on what she was saying, her kisses had been distracting. If he was honest, he could not get enough of her as he finally took control.

"Because I told him how much I love you," Haley uttered, moaning against his kisses. "I know that saying I love you is not your style. But I can feel in the deepest part of my heart that you feel the same way."

She was a foolish woman, believing in the illusion he had painted for her. He knew Dani had warned her against him, but this woman in his arms still refused to accept that he was the villain.

She proclaimed that she was deeply in love with him, despite his incapability to say it back. She believed every lie he told her as the truth. He could tell that if he proposed to her, she would say yes instantly.

But tying himself to this woman was not in his cards.

Marriage was not part of his plans.

He had no plans to commit to anyone because he was incapable of love. But eventually, he might consider it, knowing he would need an heir for all of this.

"Then why not her." His mind told him. Suddenly, he pushed her away, not liking the idea that popped into his mind.

"Is there something wrong?" She looked puzzled by his abrupt rejection. Her hands remained on his chest as her eyes checked his expression.

"Nothing. I am sorry, but I think we need to stop before I ravage you on my desk." He quickly came up with an excuse. He could not tell her that he was surprised by his thoughts.

"What is wrong with that?" She questioned him with those doe eyes. "It would not be the first time." She reminded him, which was not helping, feeling himself going hard underneath his pants.

"The difference is..." He tried to recover from the situation. "I still have my next meeting in a few minutes." He touched her nose, loving her adorable face. "I don't think I would appreciate someone else looking at what is mine."

The blush on her face told him she finally understood what he was saying as she ran her fingers through his hair. "I guess you are right." She still planted a single kiss on his lips, but she made sure that it would count.

Then, her fingers wiped the lipstick, smudging his lips, before tapping him gently on the cheeks. It took everything in him to stop himself from taking her on this table and the heck with his appointments.

But with her, he never liked sharing her with others. He hated seeing her with another man. It was like he was possessed, ready to kill for her. He confessed he was obsessed with her.

Then, he noticed the door opened. He had heard his voice before he saw the man who would be his next appointment. "Your secretary said you were still busy, but I am sorry I can't wait."

His friend walked further inside the office, not minding if he still had company. They already knew each other. But he was aware of how much his friend did not approve of this plan of his.

"Mike, how are you today?" Haley sweetly greeted his friend, not minding his animosity.

She was friendly to him, despite his dislike of her. She always said she would someday win him over to her side. She was not giving up on him until they became friends.

"Busy. What are you doing here? Aren't you busy working on some charity houses?" Mike countered sarcastically, but she only smiled.

"I am, but I was in the vicinity, so I thought I would visit him." She answered, pulling herself off his lap and standing beside his chair. Then, she looked at her watch, deciding it was time to leave. "I would not keep him. I know you still have some business to talk about."

She turned to him, kissed him briefly, and said goodbye. "I will call you later for the rest of the plan." She said as she moved away and out the door.

"So, what was that?" Mike asked, but he knew what he wanted to know.

However, he had no time to explain himself to his friend. They had more pressing matters to discuss, like the latest shipment coming tonight.

"It is nothing." He answered, not wanting it to become another argument between them. He knew what he was doing despite what his friend was implying. "So, is everything prepared for tonight?" He asked his friend.

He had been coordinating this operation with the different teams for weeks now. He did not want any hiccups that might complicate a simple transaction.

"Fine." He gave up questioning him about the other matter, probably seeing the seriousness on his face. "Everything is in place. The crew is well aware of the plans." His friend continued to explain his plans since he had given this task to him.

He wanted to see if his friend could handle this operation because his responsibilities were growing. He needed a reliable right-hand man. He could not think of a better man to do the job than him.

"Good!" He nodded. That was all he needed to know, approving his friend's plans. "Update me with the rest of the movements. I don't want anything to ruin this night."

He could not oversee the operation tonight since he had to attend the dinner party at Haley's childhood home. But he believed he could trust Mike to handle this with flying colors even without him.

"Where would you be?" His friend asked.

He knew his friend would not like his answer because he never liked his plans. Although the Rosley Empire was one of the most lucrative businesses in the world, Mike did not like his association with Haley.

Mike believed that she would be his downfall.

She would be the Delilah in Samson's life.

Chapter 863: Now, what?

Amelia had never wanted anything in her life aside from Lance. She always thought that he was the only dream she would need in her life to be happy. But she was proven wrong when she did not end up with him.

Losing Lance might have hurt her, but it did not stop her from wanting to be happy, for wishing to meet the right man for her. But at the moment, she had to put that on hold as she dreamed about something else.

She believed that she had no luck with man, but maybe, fate might have something else destined for her. Suddenly, she had new hope that she might still find happiness.

"You are so beautiful, Luisa. You look just like me." She played with the chubby cheeks of the baby in her arms. "I am your godmother, Amelia." Introducing herself to the lovely child.

She touched her nose on her pinkish skin, loving to sniff her baby scent. She believed she could hold her in her arms all day and never get tired of her. She could not get enough of her.

"Of course, she is as beautiful as us," Eida interjected as she rested on the sofa, just like the doctor had ordered.

She had a difficult labor. Although the doctor had discharged her from the hospital, she still required her friend to take a few days' rests before returning to her routine.

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"She certainly had your eyes," Amelia told her friend, but the predominant feature of her face came from Lance. She could already see that she would be a beautiful young lady.

Suddenly, she also wanted what her friend had, an adorable baby to care for and love. She had never envied her friend, but at that moment, she coveted what she had.

But for her to have a child, she would need a man. But, of course, it could not be just any man. Her baby had to be born out of love, not just from some random guy.

But when would that time come? Will that dream ever going to happen?

"Hey, I wonder what she got from me." Angela joined in the fun as she immediately stood beside her. "Let me look at my grandchild." She excitedly took her from her hands, holding her carefully in her arms, fighting for her attention.

"I think she would be a fighter just like you," Amelia commented as she watched her sweet friend adore their little angel.

One more woman in her life, and all of them would be the three godmothers of this beautiful princess, granting all her wishes, making her safe and protected from all those who would wish to harm her.

"If you need anything, all you need is to ask me, and I will give you everything you want." Amelia slightly whispered into her delicate ears.

She believed the baby smiled from what she said, appreciating her promise. However, it quickly disappeared as her face returned to its tranquil state.

"Hey, I heard that," Eida shouted at her from her position on the couch. "No one can spoil my baby." She reminded them, blowing kisses to her child. "And that goes for you too." She warned Angela, who had a wicked smile on her lips.

Sometimes they wondered if Angela's parents knew what they were doing when they named her after a pure-hearted being. She had a kind heart, no doubt, but sometimes she could be quite mischievous.

"That is too bad for you." She pouted her lips to Eida. "But that is the role of a grandmother. I am here to give everything to my sweet baby." Angela countered, not bothered by Eida's threat.

“On the other hand, disciplining is your role. Not mine.” She continued, pointing out Eida’s role in her baby’s child while she played with their little angel in her arms.

Eida could only look at their aged friend as disbelief covered her face. But who could go against a sweet old lady like their dear friend? She would always insist that her way was the best.

“Isn’t that right, Luisa?” Nuzzling her nose on hers until she produced an irritated reaction. Her face scrunched up, her lips pouted, and her nose turned red.

Suddenly, Luisa cried, whining like she was a big baby. She might be a tiny and adorable angel, but she packed up quite a punch as she filled the room with her shrilling voice.

Angela tried to soothe her as she danced with Luisa in her angelic voice. She sang one of her favorite songs, hoping it would make her stop crying. Fortunately, Luisa appeared to enjoy it as her face eased up and grew silent.

But the silence did not last long as someone suddenly entered the room. “Do you mind if I see my godchild?” A voice interrupted them before Angela could hand the baby to Eida, who was anxious to have her baby back in her arms.

Amelia did not need to look at the man standing by the doorway. She could recognize his voice anywhere, even with her eyes closed. Suddenly, all the memories of the two of them rushed back into her mind. It reminded her of the pain he had brought to her life.

But he was not here for her. After months of not seeing or hearing from him, she had already concluded that he had already moved on. She thought she also did the same, but she might be mistaken as the pain lingered on, and her heart squeezed at the sound of his voice.

“Evan, come in.” Eida saw and greeted him first, but she could not stand up, so all she could do was wave at him.

Then, Angela turned to his grandson, bringing the baby close to him as he moved further into the room. “It is nice to see you, Evan.” She greeted him, offering her cheek to him for a kiss.

“This is Luisa.” Angela showed him the baby. “Do you want to hold her?” She offered, but he declined, appearing afraid to touch the child. She could only conclude that he had never been around kids before. He was the typical bachelor, allergic to being even near a crying child.

“I don’t think I am qualified to hold another life in my hands,” Evan admitted as he exchanged looked with his grandmother, refusing to take the baby from Angela. He was probably afraid he might hurt the delicate child.

Luisa was, after all, just a newly born and looked so fragile. Someone like him who had no experience taking care of anybody else besides himself would not know how to handle a child. At least that was what she thought.

“Nonsense.” Angela did not accept his excuse as she forced him to take the child in his arms. “Just be careful with his head and support it with your palm, then hold the body gently around your body.”

Angela taught him how to hold the child, teaching him every step of what he was supposed to do. Finally, he held the child, cradled in his body like he had been doing it for a long time.

The smile on his face as he took the child was adorable. Suddenly, she imagined him holding their child, a beautiful child born out of love. But she quickly wiped the thought away as rubbish.

"Hi, Luisa. I am happy to meet you." Evan said in his low tone, afraid the child would get spooked with his big basal voice. "I am Evan, your godfather."

She had no idea that Eida had offered him the role of being the other godparent of their sweet angel. But under the circumstances, she could not blame her friend since she hardly knew anybody else who could take on that role except him.

However, Luisa did not seem to like the idea as she began crying again. Like the first time, she was shouting at the top of her lungs. "What is wrong with her?" Evan stared at Luisa before looking at Angela.

She could see the panic in Evan's eyes as he attempted to soothe her, gently swaying the child in his arms. But the baby was worse than before.

"I think she needs her mother," Angela concluded as she came to his rescue. But as she stood before him, her nose bunched up as if she sensed something unappealing.

"I think I am too old for that shit," Angela answered as she suddenly refused to take the child from Evan. "I think you are old enough to figure that one out."

Amelia already might have had an idea of what was happening, but she could not help but observe what Evan would do in such a situation. Besides, it was fun to watch him seemingly out of control. It was rare to see in this condition.

"Angela watched your language." Eida chastised her upon hearing her words.

"Oh! Lightened-up girls. Our little angel still could hardly understand what I was saying." Angela answered exasperatedly, raising her eyebrows at them as if they were exaggerating.

"Amelia, could you help Evan with Luisa? I would do it, but as you can see." Her friend requested with a pleading face.

How could she say no when she swore to help while still incapacitated? But that would mean she had to go near him. The last thing she wanted was to get close to him. But it seemed she had no options left.

She could not read what expression was on his face, but she did not want to dwell on it as she escorted him to the nursery room. Soon, it was just them, alone inside the room, not counting the innocent child still in his arms.

Now, what?

Chapter 864: Back to square one

Being trapped in the same room as him was not something she had imagined she would be doing today. Nobody mentioned to her that he was coming to visit, so it was a surprise to be caught unaware of his sudden appearance.

However, Amelia felt slightly out of sorts, sensing eyes at the back of her head watching her. She tried hard to ignore it, knowing there was no reason for him to stare at her.

She believed he was way over whatever happened to them in the past. She should not expect much from his visit except that he was here for the child and not for her.

"Can you set him down on the changing counter?" She asked, using a voice that seemed not to care. At that moment, she had no choice but to talk to this man even if it was the last thing she wished to do.

She thought she would not be this affected by his presence after the months of not seeing him. Somehow, she was under the illusion that her heart had slightly healed with time.

Crazy, stupid heart.

Unfortunately, she realized she was far from being over him. She still ached for him, wanting him so much but knowing she could not have him. She had already decided that she would forget him.

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"I don't know how." Evan moved beside her as he watched her arrange the things she would probably need for the baby.

He had no idea of how to handle a baby. The last thing he had on his mind was having one. He only came here to see the baby, not take care of a child. But the main reason he was here today would be to see her, more than anything else.

Now, having her beside him, all he wished to do was pull her into his arms. But, of course, having a child in his arms prevented him from doing anything else but staring at her.

"It is easy." She told him, moving slightly to her left to give him room to come closer to the table. She needed to distract herself before she did something stupid that she would regret later.

But the baby gave her no options, and ignoring him became impossible. When she looked up, he seemed genuinely clueless about what he had to do with the baby, seemingly afraid he might hurt their little angel.

"Maybe for you." Evan could not keep his eyes away from her face, missing seeing her beautiful smile. But it was absent from her lips as she did her best to look away from him.

However, he could not blame her for feeling that way. It was him who had messed up. But he was here to try again. This time, he was not easily giving up.

"It is." She insisted. "You cradle her head like Angela showed you, then support her body with your arms as you carefully put her down." She instructed, tapping on the blanket she had set up on the table.

She could take the baby from him, but that would mean they would have some physical contact. That was not happening. She was not ready for that. Besides, he had to learn how to handle Luisa as his next legal guardian.

She waited as he gently laid the baby on the small table, but she watched like a hawk in case he made a mistake. But somehow, she trusted that he would be extra careful, avoiding hurting the baby.

"I guess that was not that hard." He breathed a sigh of relief once Luisa was comfortably on the table. Thankfully, she had lessened her crying to a minimum compared to earlier.

He was afraid he was hurting her with his grip, but he could not loosen his hold, afraid she might fall. But Angela assured him that her cries had nothing to do with him but more on the problem underneath her clothes.

She still looked uncomfortable and unhappy with her situation as she kicked her feet and moved her hands in the air. But who would not be under her circumstances?

"The hard part has yet to begin." She responded to his statement, not letting him off the hook that easily. He asked to be part of this child's life. Then she would give him that chance.

Yes, being stuck with him in this room was turning into a very uncomfortable situation for her. But it also had some perks, seeing the discomfort in his face. Somehow, she felt a little satisfied, getting her little, sweet revenge as a small smile crossed her lips.

But she quickly wiped them away, not wanting him to see that she was enjoying this small payback. But it did not mean that she had forgiven him. This situation had nothing to do with what happened to them.

Besides, he did not seem like he was asking her for anything.

"What do you mean?" He asked, looking like he had no idea. But he would soon find out as she turned to her other side to get what she needed.

Then, she faced him, handing him the cleaning materials he would need to change Luisa's diaper.

From what he had seen, he knew he would not like what she had planned for him. First of all, that was just disgusting. He could already imagine what she had in mind.

Second, it was disgusting.

Lastly, it was disgusting.

He could not do it as he felt something crawl underneath his skin.

"This..." It took her tremendous control not to lose her composure as she gazed at his shocked face. She wanted to laugh at his pale face. They had not yet started, and he seemed ready to faint.

As if he could not believe she was asking him to clean the poop on the baby's bum. But it was something that he had to learn eventually. That was if he would have a family of his own.

Once again, her heart was gripped with sadness, thinking he would build a life and family with someone else. Suddenly, she wondered why losing him was more painful than losing Lance when she had been in love with Lance for years, more than him.

"No, I am not doing that." He pulled his hands away from the baby. "Ah ah..." Stepping back away from the table, wiggling his fingers to emphasize no. "I don't know how, and besides, that is a girl's job." His gaze landed on Luisa first before looking at her.

Honestly, he liked looking at babies. He found them adorable. But other than that, he could not imagine himself having one himself. At least not in the foreseeable future.

Looking at the enormous responsibility of having a child, he knew already that he was bound to fail as a father. Financially, he had no problem supporting a dozen kids if he had to, but the emotional part was his problem.

"Yes, you are," Amelia replied, shoving the cleaning materials into his hands. She was not about to let him talk himself out of this one.

Then, she stepped slightly a couple of feet away, giving him room to work on the baby's diaper.

"A little help, please." He finally surrendered, moving closer to the baby. She looked determined to make him do it, so he felt he had to do it.

He could not afford to disappoint or antagonize her anymore, especially if he had plans to woo her and asked for her forgiveness. He had to do what he could to gain her understanding.

"Fine." She moved back closer to him but still with a space between them.

She could see that he seemed out of his element as he stared at the baby, unable to do anything. She knew then that she had no choice but to help with this slight predicament.

"Thanks," Evan could not help the smile that grazed his lips, claiming the small victory. But he knew he was far from winning this battle. He needed a larger strategy to win this war.

However, his little triumph was short-lived as his eyes watched Amelia demonstrate what he had to do. He had hoped that she would continue it and finish the task, but she stopped and gave the floor to him.

"Your turn." She instructed what he had to do, telling him each step. But looking at the soiled diaper still worn by their little angel, he was almost afraid to touch the adorable angel.

How could someone so little produce such a gross thing?

As he attempted to hold the diaper in his hands, he could feel his stomach churning, smelling the horrid odor from the offending material. "Are you sure this is normal?" Pulling the dirty object between his fingers while pinching his nose.

"That is not how you should dispose of those?" Amelia quickly took the diaper from him, placing it in the wastebasket.

"Move aside." She tapped him on the shoulders, making him step away from the table. "You are only making things worse," Amelia irritatedly said as she attempted to clean the mess he had made.

"I am sorry." He had no idea why he was apologizing. It might be because of the chaos before him. But honestly, he was subtly repenting for his sins. "Let me try again. This time I will do better."

Again, it would seem it was his fault, messing up again. But he was not giving up. He would do everything to stop making it worse for him. One victory and one blunder, and he was back to square one.

Chapter 865: A valuable person

It was already late afternoon.

She had already finished all her appointments for the day. Her husband had left strict instructions with her secretary not to overbook her schedule.

Of course, as his previous secretary, her loyalty was still inclining to her husband as she followed him more than her. But she did not mind since she knew it was only for her good and the baby that her husband, her best friend, and her secretary had conspired against her.

She found it adorable that they loved her so much to go to such length as to check on her every chance they had. Although she would admit that it could also be slightly suffocating, still, she appreciated what they were doing.

"You should go home." She heard her friend, who was standing by her office door. Her face looked like she was about to scold her as her arms folded across her chest.

Jacky told her she should go on a vacation, or at least a few days rest just while she was in her late trimester, but she could not leave the office unattended. She wanted everything arranged before she took her maternity leave.

Although Alex had volunteered to take over her responsibilities while on leave, she felt she could not dump all her obligations on him just like that. After all, Alex also had other companies he had to manage.

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Her father had already put his dreams on hold when Ethan asked Alex to take over from him. She could not ask him to do the same.

She knew how important it was for Alex to achieve his dream without the backing of the Hamilton Empire. He needed the satisfaction of earning the title of King because of his effort, not because someone gave it to him.

"I will as soon as I finish these papers," Dani informed her friend as she signed another document she had finished reviewing. "Then, I am leaving." She promised her. It was just a few more, and it would not take her an hour to get through them.

Her friend remained by the door, just watching her. She could not help but notice the worry lines etched on her face. But she believed her friend was exaggerating the state of her condition, just like her husband. They were worrying over nothing.

"I don't think you should take your dizzy spells lightly. The doctor said that you should take it easy with work." Jacky could not help but be anxious about her health.

She had read from books and witnessed from her other friends how complicated pregnancies put mothers and children in a dangerous situation because the mother refused to acknowledge they had a problem.

It was avoidable if the mother was extra careful and would heed all the doctors' warnings. But her friend seemed too lax about her situation. She was afraid Dani was ignoring her symptoms.

"I plan to take it easy. I am considering going on a vacation." Dani had thought about it earlier. After having some serious discussion with Adam.

She had come up with an idea and planned to surprise her husband about it later over dinner. But before she could do that, she had to get rid of these papers, not wanting to leave any loose ends before abandoning her post.

"That is great." Jacky smiled after hearing her announcement. "You should also see your doctor soon." She did not want to see her friend having some complications with her pregnancy just because of her stubbornness.

"I already scheduled an appointment for tomorrow." Dani proudly told her friend as she leaned on her chair, stretching her legs underneath her table. "Now, get out of here. You also have a lot of work to do once I am on my relaxing spa vacation." She teased her friend.

Sitting down for long hours had started to become a struggle for her. But she believed it was usual for pregnant women to suffer such a condition. Still, it was the least of her favorite about having a child.

However, she enjoyed the backrubs and the foot massages Alex gave her every night. That was something she looked forward to before they went to sleep.

"Fine. I am going before I envy you and trick Marcus into getting myself pregnant." Jacky laughed a little before waving to her, even blowing her a kiss as she disappeared behind the door.

Jacky had told her that she and Marcus had considered holding their plans to have kids until next year. At the moment, they wished to enjoy their newlywed state and had no plans to leave the honeymoon stage of their relationship.

"I am sure motherhood will suit you." She shouted even if her friend had closed the door. She knew her friend still heard that. Nevertheless, despite Jacky's fear, she believed her friend would still be a great mother.

However, she could not blame Jacky and Marcus for taking some time. After the rocky road of their relationship, they needed time to build their relationship and develop a solid foundation before adding a child to the mix.

She could already tell the tremendous responsibility of having a child in a relationship. She had seen how a child had broken marriages because the couple was not ready to build a family.

She could only hope that she and Alex could pass the test with flying colors and enjoy being parents to this child. She knew how much she wanted to have a child. Alex also expressed the same. So, hopefully, it was enough.

"Ms. Dani, I hope I am not disturbing you." A middle-aged lady knocked on her door before entering. "I told your secretary I am just taking your trash, but I was hoping I could also have a few minutes of your time."

Her face automatically looked up from the papers before her. She initially thought that Jacky had come back, but when she heard her voice, she knew it was not her friend. But the tone was familiar.

But she looked like a woman who badly needed help, so how could she turn her back on the person before her? She might not have expensive clothes, but she still deserved her time. She was still a valuable person.

Chapter 866: Justice should be blind

“Magda, come in. What seems to be the problem?” She invited the cleaning lady inside the room and offered her to sit on the empty chair before her desk.

She could see the slight hesitation in her eyes as she thought of how to broach the topic with her. But it was clear that something was heavily weighing on her shoulders. She could tell that there was a problem.

If she could help strangers with her pro bono cases, how could she turn her back on her employees who had worked for her father for as long as she could remember? Especially Magda, who had been loyal to her father.

“Well, I don’t have much to offer, and I know you are a very busy person and a soon-to-be mother. So I know I should not be bothering you.” She paused, still slightly shy to continue as her face looked down on her lap where she was playing with her fingers.

She had worked for her father since she first set foot in this country. Her previous employer had helped her with her immigration papers, making her a legal citizen of this great nation.

But Mr. Hamilton did not stop there. He also included two of her children in the petition. If not for him, she might have faced deportation long ago. Besides that, she had many to be thankful for with this family. Even Ms. Laura had helped her kids go to college.

But since her husband died several months ago, it had not been easy for her and her son and daughter. But it was no reason for her kids to forget what was right and wrong. So, she could not accept what her son was facing today.

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“Hey, Magda. Whatever it is, you can tell me. Then, let me decide if I can help or not.” Dani assured her. “Deal?” She did not want to shut her down without hearing her problem. It might be just a simple case that had an easy solution.

Her employee looked slightly relieved after hearing her say that. But she could still see the apprehension in her expression. Whatever it was, she realized it was not what she initially thought. It might be something more complicated than that.

“Ok. But I will understand if you are unable to help me. I will not take it against you.” She rapidly said. “Your father and mother had done so much for my family already. I don’t know how I could repay them for their kindness and even you and your husband.”

Then, she started relating the situation that his son had found himself entangled with, telling her boss that he was now in the custody of the police.

His classmate accused him of taking something from him. But his son had promised her he did not do such a thing. She believed him because she had raised her kids with fear in the Lord and respect for the law.

But they could not afford a fancy lawyer. The free lawyer assigned to take their case already told them that they would not win the case. Yet, he had barely studied his son's case. Now, that lawyer asked his son to plead guilty.

"So, you are saying he is innocent of the charges the police filed against him." Dani had heard many cases like this before. But what criminal would plead guilty to a crime?

But under the law, everyone should be presumed innocent until proven guilty, not the other way around. So, she was ashamed that a lawyer would not do his job to protect the vows they had sworn to uphold.

Unlike the other lawyer, she would like to give her and her son the benefit of the doubt. If her mother, Laura, trusted her two kids and sponsored their education, maybe they were good kids who stumbled on with a rotten crowd.

Maybe it was still worth investigating and not just dismissed outright. "I will not promise anything, but I will ask a friend to look into it." Immediately, Adam came to her mind. Maybe this was a perfect start for their collaboration.

She believed that if anyone could help this kid, Adam would be the perfect one on the job. She would have volunteered herself, but her circumstances prevented her from doing it.

"Thank you so much. You don't know how much this means to me. I am not asking for a miracle but a fair chance for my son. Thank you." The woman repeated as she stood up from her seat and approached her table.

She reached out her hand and shook her hand. "Thank you." She kept repeating.

Soon, the woman left her, going on her way with hope in her eyes. At least she might be able to sleep tonight, knowing someone else was willing to take a look at the case before passing judgment on it.

She had seen many cases with folks like her, whose cases got buried and then misrepresented because they had not enough money to fight for justice. She did not want that to happen to her child.

"Adam. I have a favor to ask of you." She immediately called her friend. "Would you meet me in an hour?" Then, she halted. She would have met him in a restaurant, but she remembered Alex was picking her up in a few minutes.

She doubted he would agree that she made a side trip to a restaurant because of work. So, she decided to come up with something else. "...or better yet, can you just join us for dinner tonight?"

Dinner with a friend seemed to be a good alibi. And besides, it was a good time for Alex to catch up with his friend. She knew they had also been closed back in the old days but had to separate because of their different goals in life.

But she was sure Alex would understand why she had to help this woman. She could not allow this woman's son not to get a fair trial. She believed in the saying that justice should be blind and the tip of the balance scale should differentiate the truth from the lie.

Chapter 867: Bending the law for love

Amelia had tried her best to avoid being cornered again and left alone with Evan. After their unexpected encounter earlier, the last thing she needed was to be placed in a similar situation again.

She kept busy with the baby, using her as a distraction until she decided she could not stand being in the same place with him. She just needed some space to breathe without smelling his musky perfume.

"I am sorry, but something urgent came up with the foundation. I have to leave." Amelia excused herself from the group after going to her room and grabbing her bag.

"But I am about finish with the meal. Aren't you joining us for dinner?" Angela asked, concern written all over her face.

"I am sorry, Angela, but I can't," Amelia quickly responded, not letting her friend sweet talk her to staying. "Don't wait for me. I might come back late." She continued as she strode to Eida's side, kissing Luisa, cradled in her friend's arms.

She knew that her friends did not buy her alibi, judging from their expressions, but they would have to accept it as it was. She knew if she stayed, she might break down and cry.

She did not bother to look at him, but she could feel his eyes burn through her back. Or maybe it was just her imagination. She wanted him so much that her heart could not help but hope that he was here for her.

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That was just utterly insane.

Her heart was a fool.

Every minute she was with him made her crazy, longing for something she could not have.

"Ok. Drive safely." Eida looked at her friend with sadness. She wanted to help her, but how could she?

She had kept her secrets to herself, so how could she ask Amelia to reveal what was going on with her life when she could not do the same? But she might have an idea what is going on with her friend.

She watched her friend leave the room, but she also noticed that her other friend had stayed quiet. Yet, his eyes never left her friend's face. She could see how much he loved her, but both seemed stupid enough to let it slip away.

She could not allow them to follow in her footsteps. Not when they still had a future together. She had to do something about it before everything became too late for the two important people in her life.

"Evan, I know this is not my business, but are you just going to let her get away again? I don't know what happened between you guys, but if you love her, fight for her." Eida could not sit idly by while she watched her friends become miserable just like her.

Not when she could still try to do something for them.

"Eida is right, grandson. Don't torture yourself because of a mistake you made in the past. As long as you swore never to break her heart again, I think it is time that you be a man and show her that you love her." Angela also faced his grandson.

"I don't know if she will ever forgive me or believe me that I did not do what she accused me of." Evan finally shifted his face to his grandmother. "But I guess you are right. It is time that I face the consequence of my action.

He abruptly stepped away from her grandmother but immediately spun around to her side. "Thank you, Grandmama." Kissing her on the cheek. Then, to Eida. "Thanks for forgiving me." He knew that he did not only hurt Amelia with his stupid stunt but also the other two people in his life.

He quickly moved to the door, hoping he could catch up to her before she left. But by the time he had reached her car, she was already driving away.

"No, I am not letting you go this time." Quickly, he ran to his car rental and rode it like a mad man. He could not let her slip from his fingers again.

He was a fool the first time he lost her. He would be crazy to do it over again. He revved his engine again, speeding up in the slightly light traffic. He could finally see her car on the street ahead of him. But the light turned red before he could cross the crossroad.

Now, he was losing sight of the car. He was following the other cars blocking his view. He tapped on the steering wheel, anxious for the light to turn green.

There was a point he wished to beat the red light, but he remembered what happened to Lance. He did not want to take that risk. He was not going to rush this. If he had to beg for all eternity for her to forgive him, he would do it.

"Finally!" He shouted, slamming his foot on the gas pedal when the light said go. He had to find her. He had to do what he was here to do.

But he was not yet far when he heard the blaring siren. He looked at his rearview mirror and saw the flashing lights. He did not doubt that the car was after him as it tailed behind him.

He had no choice but to pull to a complete stop, going to the side of the road. There was no point arguing against the cop when he knew what he had done wrong.

"Good afternoon, officer." Evan quickly greeted the man in uniform as he stepped beside his side window.

"Good afternoon, Sir. Are you aware you were over the allowed speed limit in this area?" The officer checked his car and then stared at his face. "Can I see your license and registration?"

"I am sorry, but I am in a real emergency." He attempted to plead with the cop, hoping that he might see reason. But he took his registration from the glove box on his dashboard and handed it with his license.

“What kind of emergency would that be that you would need to break the law?” The cop took his papers. “Are you sick, in imminent danger, or something? Mr. Blake?”

Of course, the officer did not believe his explanation because he did not understand what he was going through. Who would when all he kept doing was messing up?

“No, nothing like that, or maybe all of that,” Evan responded, a little frustrated since he could not explain that he was dying of a broken heart.

He had many opportunities to talk to her, but he kept waiting for the right moment. Now, he might have lost that chance. But, of course, he should not give up. One day, he would get this right.

“Is there a problem here?” The officer’s partner asked as she stepped into his line of sight. He believed she recognized her from somewhere. “Mr. Blake. I know this guy.” The female police officer told her partner.

Maybe there was still hope as an idea crossed his mind. That was if fate would favor him even this once. But he would need the aid of these helpful police officers to accomplish his plan.

Now, all he needed was to convince the two to help him. It might not be above board and a bit bending the law in his favor, but he had to do this if he would like to catch up with her.

Chapter 868: The one in charge

Amelia knew she had to get away from that house before his presence consumed her, and she did something stupid she would regret later on. She never wanted to leave Eida and Angela when she knew they needed her. But she had to think of herself this time.

Suddenly, she thought that maybe it was time that she moved on with her life. She already had put on hold her career, babysitting her friends. Not that she did not enjoy her stay with them.

But she realized that now that the baby was born, Evan would probably have reasons to visit the house more often. Honestly, she had discovered that she could not handle seeing him and not being able to have him.

Then, her feet suddenly hit the breaks as her eyes noticed the sudden change in the traffic lights. She felt like her heart almost jumped out of her chest from the strong impact. Luckily, she had her seatbelt on her body, or she probably flew outside her window.

Honking!

Swearing!

That followed closely behind as she stared at her side mirror. The other driver behind her was giving her the finger. She probably deserved that for not paying attention to the road. She almost had an accident and probably put others in danger.

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“I’m sorry!” She tried to shout back to the other car. But she doubted he heard her. Then, after a few seconds, the lights turned green again, giving her the ‘GO’ signal to move.

However, the earlier event had her still calming her nerve as she tried to recover. As expected, the driver behind her had to swerve to her other side to get passed her. Of course, he had something to say about female drivers as he overtook her car.

After two more deep breaths, she stepped on the gas and moved on her way. She should not let one incident stop her from where she was going. But the funny thing was, she had no idea about her destination.

There was no foundation meeting. It was just a lie to get out of the house. But before she could think about her situation, something caught her eyes. Blinking lights were not far behind her.

She hastily turned her steering wheel, moving aside, thinking it was probably some emergency. But as the sound increased and the police car came nearer, she realized that it was tailing her, asking her to park her car on the side.

Suddenly, dread washed over her, believing she might have committed a violation. The other driver might have reported her. Now, the police stopped her, probably to question her about the earlier incident.

"You have nothing to worry about since no one was hurt. It was just probably the ego of that man." She thought of the very inconsiderate driver.

As soon as she pulled over on the curb, the police officer stopped and got off the car, walking to her side. She would be crazy not to feel nervous as she tapped on her window. At least it was a female officer, making her less anxious if it was a man.

"Do you know your violation, Miss?" The police asked, making her think if this had something to do with the stop light incident. The uniformed woman leaned down to check on her, asking her name.

"I am not sure. Can you enlighten me?" She asked after giving the officer her information, still unable to think of any other possible reason the officer would stop her.

"Well, Ms. Stewart, it would seem that you were speeding away." The police officer said.

"Excuse me, but I don't understand. I don't think I was that fast." Amelia was confused, not comprehending what the officer accused her of doing.

"Let me call for backup so that you might understand it better." The officer waved to her back, signaling for his partner to come to join them.

"I don't think that would be necessary. If you want to issue a ticket, that is fine with me." She did not want to worsen her situation, pulling her wallet from her bag to get her license.

The faster this was over, the better.

She believed her day just had gone from bad to worse. All she wanted to do now was to check herself into a hotel room and cry until she fell asleep. At least, if that was even possible.

She was talking about having the worse day ever.

"No need for that." A familiar voice spoke as she handed her license through the window. When she looked up, imagine her surprise when it was not a police officer in a uniform who stood outside her door.

"I am sorry about the mixed up, but I need to talk to you. It is the only way I can think of." He paused, rubbing his head in frustration. "I know you are running away from me, but I need to stop you."

She could not believe that he could do this, even using police officers to do his dirty tricks. She did not know if she should be flattered that he would go to all this length to talk to her or be mad for scaring her half to death.

"Are you crazy? You almost gave me a heart attack." It might be an exaggeration, but she needed her message sent across.

She did not like the stunt he had just pulled. From all the stupidest things he had to do, she believed this beat all the rest. But she would give him credit for his creativity.

"I am sorry, but there was no way I could catch up with you." Evan could see that she was pissed. He would face her wrath if, at the end of it all, was a chance for her to forgive him. "Please, give me a chance to explain."

This time, he knelt on the pavement, just outside her window, before the police officers, begging her to forgive him. It was certainly starting to attract attention as passersby on the street stopped to watch.

"Fine, get inside my car before everybody takes pictures, and we find ourselves on the internet." Amelia could see several people converging on the other side of her car to snoop on their affair.

Immediately, Evan said thank you to the two officers and climbed into the passenger side of her car. Once he had his seatbelt, she started the engine and pulled out of the sidestreet.

"Thanks for letting me explain." He quickly said as silence enveloped the small space. He could sense she was fuming, but at least she was willing to listen.

"It was not as if you gave me a choice," Amelia answered, thinking that it was like he held her against her will at gunpoint, but it was ok.

She needed this to be over soon as she drove somewhere where they could talk privately. This time, she was taking over the narrative. She would be the one in control.

"But just a reminder, no more tricks..." She paused as she looked at the street before turning to him, glancing directly into his eyes. "...no more lies." For a change, she was the one in charge.

Chapter 869: It was just an act

Now, they sat on the opposite side of her car, parked in a crowded supermarket parking lot on the far side where nobody would notice them or hear their conversation.

It was the most convenient place she could find under their circumstances, where they would have the chance to talk without too much interruption or someone eavesdropping on their conversation.

“So, you have five minutes to explain yourself,” Amelia said as she turned the engine off, looking at her watch before scanning the place for other people nearby.

She could see a single woman carrying two paper bags in her hands as she struggled to place them inside the backseat of her car. Another older woman, pushing a trolley of groceries, passed their car, probably going towards the end of the line.

“Thanks. I hope that is all I need to convince you that I am truly sorry for leaving you in your room that morning. I was stupid and a fool for thinking that one night with you was all I needed to forget you.” Evan had no plan to cover his ass and come up with more lies.

If he wished for a future with Amelia, he had to come clean and hope she would forgive him. He believed it had always been what he had wanted since he met her. He was just too afraid to admit it to himself.

He thought that by accepting Amelia as the only woman in his life. He would be ending his future. But he now believed that it was the other way around. If only he could win her back, he would build his entire life around her.

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“What made you change your mind? After all, that was how you see all women. Right? Just an object.” She answered him with a tinge of anger in her tone. “As I remembered, you describe us as a piece of clothing that you can easily discard and replace.”

She did not wish to lose her temper, but thinking about that morning reminded her of how he had disregarded her feelings. He hurt her, and a sorry could not easily change what happened or mend her broken heart.

It had nothing to do with losing her virginity but more on the fact that she gave her heart to him and then realized it did not mean anything. Besides, it was just icing on the cake. What he did next was worse?

Her mind reminded her of one morning when she received a package sent to the apartment addressed to her. It had no return address or the sender’s name, but she was curious to know what was inside. S.o, she opened it.

“What is that?” She remembered Angela asked as she returned to the kitchen to finish their breakfast.

As she sat down on her chair, she pulled the contents of the envelope out until she saw a note on top of another smaller envelope. She was both skeptical and interested to know the rest of the content.

LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT YOUR SO-CALLED BOYFRIEND DOES WHEN YOU ARE NOT AROUND. I DON’T LIKE SEEING YOU GET HURT. The note said in big, bold letters.

She might already have a clue who might have sent the package. “Tony!” He did not need to write his name on the bottom to know who would have a grudge against Evan.

Tony had made it clear during the party that he was interested in her. But when she told him that Evan was her boyfriend, he had this look that said he was not yet through with her.

Even if she did not use Evan, she had no plans to go with that man. She did not trust him and would never will. She always saw him with those lascivious stares that had always given her the creep.

Now, she was afraid he was stalking her, learning that Tony had discovered where she was staying. How else could he have sent this package to her?

"That seemed creepy." Eida stood at her back, eavesdropping on her note. "Who send that? And what is inside that envelope?" She continued as her friend sat beside her.

"I think it is Tony. I saw him the other night at the party." Amelia explained to them but did not go through the full details of the story, hoping that Eida would just let it go.

"Why would he send you that? And who is your boyfriend?" Her friend had this smile telling her she did not like it when she kept secrets.

Amelia never liked to keep anything from her, but after what happened, she was ashamed to tell them about that night and her short-lived relationship with him.

Anyway, what could he have sent her? It was also her question as she stared at the parcel in her hand. From the feel of it on her fingers, she would say it might be a bunch of papers or something.

"You have a boyfriend." This time, Angela also butted in. Of course, she had heard what Eida said. Now, she was curious to know if they were talking about her grandson.

She could only hope because she knew they were perfect for each other. But, if that was the case, she also wondered why Amelia had not mentioned any of it to them.

She already suspected that they had seen each other at the party. Could it be possible that Amelia was talking about another guy? She certainly hoped not because she truly wished for her grandson to end up with this wonderful lady.

"Not exactly. It was a long story." She reasoned, but it seemed the two were up for a storytelling time as they both sat comfortably before her.

"You can't expect a pregnant woman to sit and wait. Do you? Come on, spill..." Eida had not given birth yet back then.

To make the story short, she told them the first version, that part where she used Evan to pretend as her boyfriend in front of Tony. "Evan even bid for me from the auction so Tony would buy the act and leave me alone."

It was just an act.

Chapter 870: It was the truth

That was what she told them, but she kept the rest of the story to herself, not wanting them to blame Evan for her stupidity. Yes, she believed it was her fault for falling into his act, knowing well what he was.

She had no one else to blame but herself for ending up in this situation, hurting and mending a broken heart. She could not blame Evan because he had never promised her anything. But he had been true to his word. He had pretended to be her boyfriend for the night.

Unfortunately for her, her bubbles popped by morning, finding herself in the real world with no prince charming, no fairy godmother, and riding in her pumpkin carriage. She was no princess with a happy ending.

"So, you are saying he only pretended to be your boyfriend to protect you from Tony? That doesn't sound like my grandson." Angela had that look of disbelief. She felt like something was missing in the story.

"Yes, it was all a charade." Amelia insisted, not wanting her friends to catch her with her lie.

"I would not say that I am a bit disappointed with Evan and you. Because it is clear that you two belong together, but you are both too stubborn and blind to see it." Angela frustratedly expressed as she shook her head at her and raised her brows.

"I can't agree with you more." Eida seconded as she placed her hands on her belly, rubbing it in circular motions.

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Suddenly, a thought occurred to her. She immediately replayed the other night's event, trying to remember their night together. Was it possible to get knocked up with one night of passion?

It was but not in her case, remembering that Evan had come prepared. She recalled that he used protection, and there was no way she would get pregnant unless those broke. But she doubted that Evan would allow it.

Evan would not allow any woman to trap him in marriage by using a child against him. Thus, the condom was always in his wallet for any eventuality.

"I don't think Evan shared your sentiment," Amelia answered resignedly. "Anyway, stop setting me up for your grandson because it will never happen."

It already did, but it did not work out the way they all wanted. However, her friends did not need to know that. It was an event in her life that she did not wish to remember.

"Fine. Just open the envelope and let us see what Tony sent you." Eida interrupted her thoughts, reminding her of the envelope still in her hands.

She quickly opened it, wanting to get over the crazy thing Tony had sent her. She had already imagined all sorts of things she might find inside, but when she finally saw it. She was speechless.

Her heart twisted inside her ribcage while her lungs refused to take on air. She seemed frozen in time, but she could not keep her eyes away from those pictures as her fingers flipped from one to another.

When she saw everything, she finally let it drop on the table as tears covered her eyes. She did not want to believe it, but the evidence would not lie to her.

“What is this?” Eida took the pictures and looked at them. “Why would Tony send you these pictures? What are you not telling us?”

But she did not answer her friend right away. She kept crying that night, rehashing all that happened and then recalling those pictures of Evan with another woman the night after he left her.

There was no denying it since it had a time stamp. It was the following night after something happened to them. He had already moved on to his next conquest. He was in a club, making out with another woman.

It took her another couple of days before she finally confided with Angela and Eida about what happened. She did not expect the support that they provided for her. Her recovery was easier and faster because of them.

“That is not me anymore. I promise you I have changed. It is all because of you. I am a different man.” He snapped her out of her reminiscing, bringing her back to the present.

She was still sitting in the driver’s seat while he was on the other side. They were still in front of a grocery store, talking about him. But could she believe any word that he would say? Was she still willing to trust him?

“Why come back now?” When she felt she was starting to move on. “How would I know that you are serious this time?” Then, she remembered what he said.

“Why should I believe you are not just doing this to get me off your system again? And once you get tired of me, you will not leave me again.” She continued with her line of questioning.

This time, she faced him, letting her eyes focus on his, watching every twitch and movement of his face. She wanted to see if he was lying to her again.

“I know it would not be easy to believe me after what I did. But I swear that those photos were all a lie. Yes, I was at the club that night with my friends, only because we were celebrating my friend Marcus.” Evan explained as his eyes beseeched hers to listen.

“Then, a girl suddenly came on to me. It happened fast.” He told her the detail of that event as he remembered them. “But after kissing her, I felt nothing. That is the precise moment I realize that you are the only one I want and need in my life.”

“You are lying.” She felt confused because her mind kept saying she should not trust him, but her heart was saying another thing.

He had easily thrown whatever happened to them that night as nothing but thrash as soon as he woke up the following morning. He could not be bothered to leave a note or a text to say goodbye.

Now, he was saying that she was all he wanted and needed. Honestly, that was all she ever wanted to hear, but hearing it now seemed to be unbelievable.

“No, I am not.” He moved closer to her and grabbed her hand. She tried to pull away, but he would not let her. Then, he placed her palm on his chest, allowing her to feel his heart.

“You ask me why now.” He lifted his free hand and took her other hand. He could feel her struggling underneath his touch, but he secured her hand firmly in his. “Because now, I would die first before I hurt you again.”

“Evan...” She did not exactly know what she would say to that.

“My hearts beat only for you.” Evan cut her before she could say more.

He had dreamed of this moment, thinking he would finally tell her how he felt in a very romantic setting, with flowers and candles over dinner. He was not exactly expecting that he would finally disclose his feelings to her in the parking lot of some grocery store.

But beggars could not be choosers as he waited for her reaction to his confession. “I love you, Amelia.” Evan proclaimed inside the car, holding both her hand across his heart.

This time, it was the truth.