

## Royal Contract 901

### Chapter 901: Estranged relationship

Alona had him following her to the elevator as instructed by his new boss. He had two options at the moment as he entered the small space with the other employees of the company.

The first option would be to proceed to the parking lot and ride his car far away from this place. But that would piss his father off, which would be bad for him. The other option would be to stay.

"Here we are, Mr. Andrews." Finally, Alona informed him, hearing the dinging of the lift as it stopped at the lower level floors. "This is your floor. You are to report to Mr. Lee. He is already waiting for you."

He expected he would work with the top executives on the upper floors. Therefore, he was surprised to end up at the bottom of the food chain.

He looked at the chaotic room, full of shelves, boxes, papers, and people who were busy stocking things, a position way below his pay grade. It was an insult to his social status.

"Are you freaking kidding me?" He furiously shouted, realizing that Mr. Alexander Blackstone had decided to play with his life. "You expect me to work in the mailroom."

He looked around the room, shocked that his new boss would dare do this to a Senator's son. If it had been a friend standing in his shoes and not him, he would applaud his boss for his balls. But at the moment, he could not find anything humorous about his situation.

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"Not me, but Sir Alex does," Alona answered him, without a doubt, knowing what her boss had instructed her to do.

When her boss ordered her to do something, she never took it lightly, treating it as a delicate matter that she had to do with precision and accuracy. She did not want to make unnecessary mistakes that might cause her boss problems.

"You must be crazy." Then, he stopped and corrected himself. "He must be crazy if he thinks he can force me to work down here," Zach answered Alona, turning around to go back to the elevator.

He quickly pressed the button, waiting for the doors to open. He still could not believe that his father would agree to such insanity.

Then, he felt her presence beside him. "Sir, Alex said that you might say that. There is no need to return to his office once you set foot on that elevator." Alona pointed to the inside of the lift when it simultaneously opened.

"What do you mean? Of course, I have to talk to him about this arrangement." He looked at the secretary beside him, demanding an explanation.

"Once you set foot on that elevator or fail to report for the rest of the week to Mr. Lee, you are no longer working for Mr. Blackstone," Alona told him as she stopped the elevator from closing and stepped inside.

She kept her hands by the door to prevent it from shutting as she waited for him to decide. She wanted to laugh at him because she believed he deserved it.

"Are you leaving or staying?" She had seen many self-entitled rich boys and even girls who thought they were the rulers of the earth, but, of course, they were just lucky to be born into such a family.

"Are you serious?" Zach looked at the elevator and gazed back at the other room, debating whether to leave or stay.

But he knew he could not get fired from this. His father had already given him an ultimatum. One more stupid stunt and he was cutting him out of his life. Could his father do it? He would not dare.

But was he willing to take that risk? What would happen to him if his father did? What did he know about being poor?

But if he did this, his father would continue to support his lifestyle until he received his trust fund, which was just a few months away. Then, he could go from there. So now, all he had to do was get through these two months of working under this man.

"Are you leaving or staying?" Alona asked again when he failed to answer the first time.

He turned away from the elevator and faced the room he would work on for the rest of the week. "Good choice." He heard the woman behind her say before the door closed behind him.

"I must be crazy too." Zach thought as he walked towards the room where the manager's name was on the door.

But one thing was true about what Alex said. His clothing did match the workers down there. The only difference was that his clothes were much more expensive.

Soon, the manager welcomed him to the group. "It is great to have you join us, Zach." Then, the manager escorted him to the receiving area, where the packages and mail were initially dropped off and picked up by the delivery trucks.

As if that was not bad enough, the manager asked him to wear a vest with the company logo while working on their floor. It seemed he had to learn every aspect of the job before he could transcend to the next level.

He believed working down here was an insult to his intellect. He would report his boss to his father for making a fool of him. But for now, he had no choice but to carry the boxes and bags of mail that his other boss had asked him to do.

It was not a hard job since he had been working his body in a gym. He could carry weights heavier than most of these packages. However, his situation was humiliating in his stature. He was the son of fucking high ranking politician. He should not be doing this.

"Once you have brought in the boxes, Miguel here will show you what else you need to do today." The manager pointed to an older man. "He would guide you to most of your work down here." His boss said as he left them and returned to his office.

He could only surmise that Mr. Lee would be calling the big boss and laughing about him. But he would prove to him that he was not giving up. Not when his future was on the line here.

"Zach, right?" The older man looked at him. "Call me when you are finished." Then, he moved to the other side of the room, leaving him at the underground entrance.

He was not even aware of this place. But that was not relevant now. He only had to do this job without his friends knowing about it or the press. So far, nobody seemed to know who he was. They only called him Zach and nothing more.

"Sure, Miguel." He answered, deciding not to make too much attention to him. The last thing he needed was for one of them to take his picture and sell it to the press or post it on the internet. That would ruin him.

"So, you are the new guy. I am Mario." Another man approached him, putting his hand before him.

"Don't mind if you start here. Many without experience usually used this place as a stepping stone to promotion into a more suitable position."

"Zach, the new guy." He responded, taking the hand of the man. "How long have you been down here?"

Any information he could gather against his boss would be worth his while. He would dig as much dirt on him as he could find, much more, much better. He would not let Mr. Blackstone get away with tainting his reputation.

"A couple of weeks, but I had seen how the boss valued his employees." He answered him, proud to be working in this company. "Let me know if you need anything. I am your guy." Mario told him as he moved away to handle his obligation.

"You had made many mistakes, but we expected that since it was your first time working in the department," Miguel told him, clapping him on the back. "It is time to go home. I hope to see you again tomorrow."

The older man waved goodbye to him and proceeded to the elevator. He realized he had not noticed the time. But when he checked, his shift had ended.

He quickly dropped the vest and proceeded to the elevator, where everyone was already gathering, waiting for their turn to leave.

When he finally reached his car, all he wanted was to roll over on his bed and sleep. He had never felt this exhausted before in his life. Yet, he barely lifted anything heavy today. However, he had never done remotely similar to this.

"Where to, Sir?" His driver asked as he lay flat on the cushion of the backseat of his car.

"Home." He answered that might have surprised him and even his driver.

He rarely came home to see his father, hating that he never understood him as his mother did. He only saw his failures but ignored his accomplishments. The only thing he had in common with his father had to be their hatred for each other.

They had always had this estranged relationship.

## Chapter 902: Take a leap of faith

"I want all the flowers to look fresh." She pulled the withering stems of the lilies from the vase and threw them into the trash bin. "This is not just any charity. Replace those over there." Amelia barked orders left and right, hoping to remedy the situation.

A close friend made a last-minute call to her, asking for help when her coordinator had an accident, confining the woman in charge of the event in a hospital with a broken hip. She needed someone to take over the party she had organized for a good cause.

Now, she was trying to remedy the situation by taking over from an incompetent assistant who, in turn, had run the show. The initial program was great, but the assistant made changes when she took charge, messing up the entire plan.

"What do you think? Would we make it in time?" Her friend asked since the party would be later that evening.

Luckily, it was not a ballroom party but a small social gathering in a private club featuring several works of art that would be the event's highlight and be up for auction for fundraising. At the least, the pressure was less, and the job was manageable.

"Don't worry. Everything will be fine." She assured her friend, seeing that she almost had it all under control. It helped that she had been doing this for a long time and had connections with reliable resources.

"If you think so." Her friend smiled at her, looking relieved compared to when she first arrived at the scene. It was just as she had expected. The party went without a hitch.

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Her friends commented that she was a miracle worker. It was one of the things she was good at, and she was proud of herself. She was giving it another hour before she should leave the party when her services would not be needed by then.

In the meantime, she strolled away from the commotions and into the garden, where the music slowly toned down. Her eyes ended admiring the beautifully kept lawn and the landscape before her. It was indeed magical as the strategic lights created that enchanting feeling.

She suddenly found herself sitting on a bench, daydreaming about a man. She would have loved to sit on this bench with him beside her. She could not keep denying it, not even to herself. She missed him.

"What now?" Amelia asked, pulling her phone out of her bag and staring at the screen. But it had no activity on it.

No calls. No texts.

Everything was quiet on his end all day except for the flowers that arrived this morning. Of course, they had chatted on the phone last night. It had been more than an hour, but it seemed it was not enough anymore.

Honestly, she was enjoying his late-night calls and them sharing what happened to them for the day. Now, she was anticipating his ring, which should be any minute now. She could not wait to tell him about this garden.

A few minutes later, staring at the stars, her mind rewound to the memories of that eventful weekend. Amelia admitted that she had a great night. She loved the show, enjoyed the delicious meal, and had a good time with a perfect gentleman.

She could not remember the multiple times she laughed while he worked his charms on her. But disappointingly, he never made a move to kiss her. She could sense that he wanted it by how he reacted when they accidentally touched or when he escorted her, holding her close.

Still, he had held himself away from her for some reason. Although she caught him staring at her when he thought she was not looking. It was enough to send fire throughout her body.

It was clear he wanted her, but he did not make a move.

Eventually, they rode on his plane, and he took her home, saying goodbye with a kiss on the cheek. Then, he walked away while she closed her door, regretting that she did not run after him and stop him from leaving.

"It is my fault." She mumbled to herself. She had practically told him that she was not ready. And now, he had put a barrier between them.

But was she ready now to accept him back into her life? After what he did to her, could she say that she had forgiven him and welcomed him back into her arms? Should it be that simple?

"I am stupid." She muttered under her breath. She tapped her cheeks with the palm of her hands, realizing she had made a mistake.

Instead of playing hard to get, she should have pulled him into a kiss when she had the chance. But was that the right thing to do?

"Be honest with yourself." She spoke aloud. "Could you leave without him?" She asked loudly. Seconds then minutes ticked by as she thought of her answer.

"No." She released a large bulk of air out of her lungs. "I want him to be in my life." But could she make the first move? Could she tell him that she had changed her mind?

Then, she sprinted out of the party, saying goodbye to her friend. "I am sorry, but I had to go."

She grabbed her things, in a hurry to deal with something personal. "Is there a problem?" Her friend asked worriedly, seeing that she was slightly agitated.

"Nothing is wrong. Actually..." Amelia widened her lips, showing a nervous smile. "Everything is perfect." She answered her friend as she rushed to her car and made the necessary arrangement.

She did not even bother to go home and pack up some things. She drove straight ahead to her destination, stopping only at the red lights.

"I must be going out of my mind." She stepped on the gas when the light turned green, both nervous and excited about her plan.

After almost an hour of haggling and begging at the counter, she finally sat in a cramped and crowded room. "Am I going crazy?" She whispered, asking herself as she looked outside her window.

Yes, she was. There was no turning back now.

Is she ready to take a leap of faith? Yes. It is now or never.

Chapter 903: The time and the place [Bonus chapter]

Stop!

It was not me.

I could never betray you, Sir.

Please!

A voice of a man echoed in the dimly lit room. His cries of agony bounced onto the four brick walls surrounding the area. But it was not enough as one of the men standing before him grabbed his hands and spread his fingers on the table's wooden surface.

His eyes almost bulged out of their sockets when he saw the butcher's knife. Then, he peed on his pants when the sharp, metallic object swung and stopped just on top of his fingers. He could probably guess what would happen next if he did not start talking.

"So, who paid you?" His head of security asked as he sat in the shadows, watching one of his former men tied on a chair under the bright light tremble in fear.

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They had barely touched him, and he was already breaking down. No wonder his enemies had easily bribed him to betray him. Unfortunately for him, he was not good at his job.

It did not come as a shock to him that someone would try to sell him out. In this line of business, he had to watch all angles. Only a fool would trust the person around him. Of course, he was not a fool.

"They would kill me." The man shouted in pain as another man smacked him across his face before letting the knife drop on the board, missing his fingers by a quarter of an inch.

"What do you think would happen to you if you don't start singing?" The man holding the knife asked the man who was still tightly secured on his seat.

He finally had enough of watching the show. It was getting late, but they were still far from getting anywhere. He was not scared of the dark, but he never liked the stench of the small basement room. It smelled of dried blood, rotten flesh, and stinking urine.

"Enough!" He shouted, catching everyone's attention. His men moved aside, giving him room to come closer to their captive. Then, one of his men pulled a chair for him, so he could sit opposite the man who still had his hand displayed on the table.

"Sir, I swear I did not betray you." The man pleaded with him, begging him to let him go. "Please, Sir. They are mistaken. Let me prove myself to you. Just set me free."

He laughed at the man's audacity to lie on his face when he had all the evidence pointing to his treacherous ways. He clicked his tongue and smiled at the Judas before him.

Without saying another word, he took the butcher's knife from the table and raised it above his head. When it landed on the table, blood splattered on the table as a finger flew in the air.

The man shrieked in tremendous pain, looking like he was about to faint. But his men repositioned him back in his chair and tapped him on the face to wake him up.

"I have no more time to play games with you. I will chop your fingers one by one. Then, I will proceed with every limb of your body until you say what I wanted to hear." He told the man, who was shaking like a leaf.

"Or I can put a bullet on your head right now and save you from the suffering." He wiped the knife on the man's sleeve, cleaning the metallic blade off his blood.

"Sir, please kill me now." The man begged him as he bit his lip in pain.

But he was not merciful today. He repeated his earlier action, aiming at the thumb this time. Of course, he did not miss as blood oozed out of the wound once again.

His captive was now hysterical as he fought like a wild animal, trashing on his seat. However, his men could easily overpower him, giving him no chance to escape.

"Not until you give me what I want." He repeated the motion of cleaning the knife. But he was losing his temper as his patient ran thin. "Ok. Let us do this two at a time."

He raised his hand again, about to chop two fingers, but the man stopped him. "Ok. Ok. Ok." The man repeated. "I will tell you. Just don't kill me." Then, the man whispered something that nobody could hear.

"I could not hear you." So, he moved closer until his ears were closed to his lips. "Who?" He hissed, controlling his temper. He could not kill him before he could tell him what he needed from him.

Finally, his traitor whispered a name he was not expecting. Would he believe his word? Maybe or maybe not. But it was a start. At least he had an idea where he had to look.

"You did a good job." He threw the butcher knife on the wall, watching the metal blade buried on the wooden beam. Then, he tapped the man on the shoulder. "Give the man a glass of water." He instructed one of his men before he grabbed a clean towel, wiping his hands off the blood.

He stood up from his seat and walked away. From the corner, he grabbed his coat before proceeding to the basement stairs. Once on the top landing, he turned to his men.

"What should we do with him?" His security head asked, standing up behind him as he waited for instructions.

"You know what to do." He instructed. "But make it fast and painless. Then, clean up afterward."

He did promise the man that he would give him a quick death. Moreover, he was feeling generous, so he was adding a bonus. His men would make sure that the traitor would not suffer anymore. He might be the devil, but he still valued his word. At least when it suited him.

He quickly rode his car, hoping to be back at his estate. However, he could not shake the name and the face that popped into his mind. If they came for a fight, he would give them a fight. But he would dictate the time and the place.

#### Chapter 904: Insensitivity and immaturity

She needed a break. Her back and feet were killing her.

She would love to run a marathon but not today. She touched her head wet with perspirations, and her waist, aching with every step. She loved the view before her as the sun rose from the east, but she needed her rest.

"Enough." She complained as she eyed the bench a few feet from where she stood. Immediately, she made her way to the wooden chair and made herself comfortable with her husband assisting her.

As part of the order of her doctors, she had to take a few minutes of walking every morning. They said that it would help her in her labor. But it did not mean that she had to overdo it.

Luckily, their garden on the rooftop of their apartment had ample space for her to take her stroll. She did not need to go too far to absorb a little sunshine and breathe fresh air.

However, the closer she was to her term, the harder it was to move around. It felt like she swallowed a gigantic watermelon that was weighing her down.

"But we barely..." Alex was about to argue with her, but she would not hear it. It was her body, and she was saying enough. She would walk again when she was ready.

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She had finally agreed to stay at home after she felt an unusual cramp in her belly. Then, her body acted alarming with the dizzy spells and the high blood pressure.

Her doctor thought it could be nothing. Some pregnant women experienced these symptoms. Or, her doctor might have said that so she would not worry. Still, her physician suggested that she should take it slow and stop working in the meantime.

Of course, for her baby, she had to comply. But she would go crazy if she had nothing to do but stare at her apartment. So, she agreed to a compromise of taking a little work at home but resting more.

"Hey, there you are." A friendly, familiar voice interrupted their quiet morning, making them look at their visitor. "I like what you have done to this place." He complimented as he touched a rosebud that was about to bloom soon.

"Evan." Alex beckoned him to join them as he sat beside his wife, taking her hands in his.

After they had been to the doctor, the couple had decided to make some changes in their affair. Since they had been busy with their careers, they had forgotten to change their wills and other arrangements.



Now that they were having a baby, they felt they needed to update their plans for the future, including their unborn child in the equation. They had to secure their child's future if anything should happen to them.

"I am glad that you came. I would have dropped by at your office, but as you can see, I am under house arrest." Dani jokingly said as one of her hands automatically touched her swollen belly while the other stayed connected with her husband.

Since Marcus was away on vacation and David was busy with an urgent case, they had appointed Evan to handle their personal affairs. Aside from their two friends, Evan was one of the people they trusted most in their lives.

"You know I never have a choice when it came to you. I believe you will hunt me down if I have not shown up." Evan replied, shaking his hands out of fear, but they all knew he was only teasing her back. "But I am happy to see you are looking great."

He was happy that his friends were having a baby. Lately, the thought of having his own had been surprisingly not so frightening anymore. The idea of building his family had been keeping him awake at night.

He could not wait to see Amelia again and win her back. So far, he believed that he was making significant progress. He did not want to rock the boat by messing up again.

However, he remembered that last night when he called her. She sounded weird. It was like she was keeping something from him. She said it was nothing, just busy with the party.

Then when he called back, she was already exhausted and had to go early to rest. He did not want to put too much thought into it, but it was still nagging at him.

"Thanks, man, for coming on short notice." Alex pointed for his friend to sit down on the other available bench.

"So, why am I here?" Evan asked his friend, having no idea why they summoned him.

The couple talked about what they had discussed the night before. They wanted Evan to draw a will that would include their child in their future and some contingency if something would happen to them.

They knew it sounded morbid to talk about their deaths, but it was necessary since nobody had any control over when somebody would die. They still could remember when they visited Jacky at the hospital. They overheard someone talking about a couple who died in a car accident, leaving their small child orphaned. They only wanted to be prepared for any eventuality.

Soon, they moved to Alex's office to discuss the situation more, while Dani went to the kitchen to ask their helper to prepare breakfast. While she was in her late trimester, Alex had insisted that she had some company in the house while he was away.

He was not comfortable leaving her alone in the apartment with her condition. Of course, she agreed with him, remembering what happened to Jacky, who had no one to help her when the accident occurred.

Then, Dani returned to the other room to join the meeting but stopped by the door when she heard Evan talking about something else. She did not want him to stop if he saw her, so she stayed hidden by the door, eavesdropping on their conversation.

"We all make mistakes. Even I fumbled a few times when Dani and I started. I am sure you know Marcus made a big mess before he and Jacky ended up together." She heard her husband tell Evan, trying to give him some advice.

She could not agree more with Alex. She remembered how men could easily ruin relationships with their insensitivity and immaturity.

#### Chapter 905: Impossible

"I know I kept messing up, but I am doing my best to do it right this time." Then, Evan pulled the box out of his pocket to show it to Alex. "I even tried proposing, but I never got the chance."

Dani was surprised to hear what her friend said, noticing the glass box in his hand. She was not even aware that Evan was in a relationship. Now, he was thinking of proposing. That was huge.

"And I am hurt." Dani finally made her presence known, striding into the room with her big belly protruding before her. "I thought you said I was like your sister, but you never shared this with me."

It was probably the hormones that were making her emotional, but under a different circumstance, she would not be acting like a child left out of a secret. But at the moment, she could not help the feeling of wanting to smack him in the face.

"Dani!" Evan was a little startled, thinking it was just him and Alex. But more than that, he was not expecting the outburst from Dani. "I just never thought to bother you with my problems."

True, he had thought of Dani as a little sister. But with her condition, he never wanted to bother her with his dilemma with his love life. He never wanted to share this with his friends, feeling embarrassed by his stupidity.

Of course, he did not want to hear their friends say I told you so. He still had a little pride left in him back then. But now, he was desperate to know how to make things right.

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"Well, now tell me everything." Dani sat beside her husband, ready to listen to his story.

Once, she had heard his story. She did not laugh or comment but stayed quiet, digesting what he narrated to her. She had met Amelia, and she believed she liked her.

She was glad Evan was referring to her and not some bimbo he used to date. Then, she faced her friend, carefully watching him. "Do you want my advice?" She asked him.

"Of course," Evan answered, knowing he always valued her for always being reasonable and making sound decisions.

"Next time, if you have a woman issue, come to me, Jacky, or Rosella, and not our husbands." She initially told him. "As much as you think they can help you, they can't. You will just be burying yourself deeper in the gutter."

"No offense." Dani turned to her husband, but she was only speaking the truth.

"None taken." Alex raised his hands, accepting her opinion as correct. "Honestly, Evan, you should listen to her." Her husband agreed with her.

"Ok. So, what should I do?" Evan asked, still lost about how to deal with Amelia without driving her away again.

"Be clear about your intentions. Stop beating around the bush and acting like you are just playing around." Dani explained to him, remembering that the last thing a woman needed was to second guess what the man was feeling about her.

No woman serious about her feelings for a man would like their time wasted. When a woman reached the prime of her life, she needed a committed man who would be determined enough to put a ring on her finger and build a life with her.

"So, you think I should propose to her as soon as possible," Evan asked, excited and confused.

"If that is what you feel is right. But if not, let Amelia go right now." Dani advised him. "Now, if she is not ready, ask yourself if you are willing to wait. If not, move on."

However, she wished that the two would be honest about their feelings, but that would only happen if they would confront them and not keep hiding because of fear.

Evan's phone ringing broke their serious conversation. He quickly took it out and saw that it was his secretary calling. She was only reminding him about his other appointments.

"I guess I better work on your papers and send the first draft later." Evan checked his watch and realized he was already late for his next meeting. "But thanks for all you said. I will seriously think about it."

As much as he wanted to stay and talk more with his friends, his other obligations were waiting for him. But what Dani told him made sense. If he wanted to propose to her, he should do it soon.

As he drove off to his office, he could not help but contemplate the different ways he could propose to her. The last time was almost perfect, but he must make it better. He had to think of a way where she could not say no.

But how?

He could ask her out on a date. But that was a cliché. There was nothing special about going to a restaurant and asking her in front of a bunch of strangers.

Should he kidnap her, bring her to an island where he would keep her until she had agreed? That was stupid and could backfire on him in the end. But it could be his last resort.

He went straight to his office without looking at his secretary, still trying to come up with a grand idea of how he would propose to her. Once inside, his secretary followed him, reminding him he had a client waiting for him at the conference.

“She said she must talk to you urgently.” It was the only thing that he understood from what his secretary said.

“Give me a few seconds, and I will be out.” He pulled out his phone, ordered several dozen flowers, and sent them to her. Then, he sent a message to her, inviting her for dinner on the weekend.

Then, he was out of his office with his client’s files, whistling, glad he talked with Dani. Somehow, he felt that he was on the right track. Suddenly, he could not wait for the weekend to see her again.

He looked at the conference room, slightly confused because it was empty. He checked his file and knew he was in the correct room, but where was the panel of lawyers that was meeting with him?

He was about to turn around and call his secretary, thinking there must be a mistake. But before he could move, one of the swivel chairs at the other side of the room turned to face him.

His eyes had to blink twice, believing that he might be hallucinating.

What he was seeing could not be for real.

It was impossible.

Chapter 906: No God

He ran out of his room as soon as he finished his first project for the day. His teacher had asked him to draw his family picture, but before submitting it later, he wished to show it to one of his favorite people.

Even though she was the newest member of his family, his baby sister was now among the top two most significant people in his life. Of course, his Grandpapa was still the first because he loved him. Moreover, he was a great, loving grandfather who was always at his side.

“Althea, look at what I did for you.” Liam ran into her room, putting the picture he drew in front of his baby sister. “You see this. It is you and me. And, of course, Grandpapa.”

He pointed to the stick people he had scribbled on the paper as they stood in the garden. At least what he thought was the replicate of their backyard. Anyway, he was not Picasso, but it was his best work.

“What do we have here?” He heard a voice speak behind him. Quickly, he glanced at his back, recognizing his grandfather’s voice as he followed him into the nursery room.

Liam saw his sister move her lips in what he thought was a smile and quickly showed his work to his grandfather, proud of what he had accomplished. “You see, even Althea loves it.”

His grandfather took the picture from his hand and carefully scrutinized it. It was not a masterpiece, but he loved how his grandson had valued his sister and him to consider putting them in the picture.

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Nevertheless, it depicted how his grandson had been growing up without a father and a mother in the picture. At least literally. His son was an alcoholic with a gambling problem that would not be bothered to think about his kids.

Then, his daughter-in-law was a socialite who only valued what society thought of her. It was sad enough that his grandson had to grow up with them as his parents, but to bring another innocent child into this kind of world was just cruel. But he had no more choice.

"I love it, and I am sure your sister also does." All Count Julius could do now was do his best to act as the parent of his grandkids.

It was not what he would like for them, but he could not abandon them in the hands of two incompetent parents who were both selfish and could only think of themselves.

Besides, this was his chance to correct his mistake in raising his son. It was his do over. And this time, he would do his best not to make the same errors he made in raising his son.

"Goodbye, Grandpapa. I don't want to be late for class." Liam kissed Althea on her chubby cheeks, then turned to his grandfather, doing the same thing. Afterward, he took the picture and rushed out of the room.

"Do great in school." Julius reminded his grandson as he disappeared out of his sight. Then, he picked up his grandchild from her cradle and held her in his arms.

She was getting heavier, but the doctor said it was because of the formula and medications she took. It would have been better if her mother would breastfeed her, but his daughter-in-law would not be bothered to hold her in her arms, much less pick a breast pump to feed her daughter.

He had to hire a nanny to care for his granddaughter all day and night because her mother was busy with her social calendar and partying all night.

Whoever said that being born into a wealthy family had an assurance of good fortune was lying. Truthfully, in his opinion, he believed that most of them were the unluckiest ones in the world. But that was still debatable to most.

But her princess would not have a terrible fate. Not if he could help it. "I will try my best to give you and your brother a good future." He whispered to the little angel in his arm.

"Sir, I hope you don't mind, but it is time for Althea's bath." The nanny walked toward him and took the child from his hand.

"I am sorry, Sir, but you have a meeting in fifteen minutes." Wesley caught his attention as he watched his granddaughter being whisked away by the nanny.

"I will be right over." He answered his assistant, a newly hired, eager-to-please, enthusiastic young man.

The Count's old assistant had finally tendered his resignation after working for him for years. He was one of his most trusted men, but he wished to rest and enjoy the rest of his life with his wife. Then, his old assistant recommended that his son take his place as his replacement.

Wesley seemed trustworthy, seeing the young man grow up under his watchful eyes. So, he was giving him a shot as his new assistant, testing what he could do for him.

He walked towards his office, passing by a large portrait on the way. It was of his late wife. If only she did not die young, she would have been a good mother. His son probably did not end up in this situation.

However, he might not also end up with Liam as his grandson. One of the few things that he would not exchange for anything else. Even the chance to go back to the past to change things for him.

"You would have loved and adored our grandchildren. Liam is so full of life, and Althea gives me hope." He whispered to the image of his wife, missing her until now.

A few minutes later, he marched into his next meeting. He was now facing in his office the future King of their Kingdom. He had no appointment with him today, but it did not matter.

"Prince Lance, what can I do for you?" He was not yet King, but he would soon be. Therefore, he had to tread lightly around him.

He had known the Prince since he was born. Still, he felt that many things could change a man. Traumatic experience, pain, anger, and even time could alter the views of anyone.

The Prince was no different. He might soon become King, but he was no God. He was just human like everyone else.

#### Chapter 907: Moral dilemma

The Count stared at the Prince, wondering what he was doing in his office this early morning. He had no record in his schedule that he had an appointment set with the young man, but it did not matter. He still had to make time for the future King.

"There are things that I wish to discuss with you, Count Julius." Prince Lance settled himself on his available chair and unbuttoned his coat as if he was not going anywhere soon.

On the other hand, he occupied the other seat next to him to make the meeting a bit informal. He could sense that the Prince was here not for official business but a bit personal.

"We have the Council Meeting by next week. We can discuss your concerns by then." He offered, testing the waters if his theory had a basis. But the way his face reacted, he knew he had the right idea.

It would be the first time he would be alone with the Prince since the accident, so he was curious about the purpose of his visit. Although he also wanted to talk to him about a subject matter, he was in no hurry since he could still wait for the right timing.

"I think I have some clarifications that might not need the entire panel to answer. I would rather discuss it privately if that is fine with you." The Prince asked him, looking calm and relaxed in his seat.

"Of course, I am open to all your concern. Could you give me a second?" He called his secretary to serve them some tea and to move his next meeting to a later time.

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"Thanks for squeezing me into your busy schedule." The Prince began, "But let me try to be quick. I don't waste much of your time."

As the future King, he had a few matters he wanted answers to before he sat on the throne. For one, the subject of producing an heir. He wanted to know his options.

Their tradition stated that he had to produce an heir. What if he did not wish to consummate his marriage with Camille? What were the repercussions? Who would be the next in line if he had not had children?

"I will try to illuminate all your questions and doubts to the best of my ability." As the head of the committee handling all the succession, he was the best expert who could explain to the future King any of his concerns.

They had discussed first the lineage of succession, explaining why Edward was the first choice, down to Alex, before they had to consider another royal family.

"Therefore, if I have no successor, you will have to consider one from the previous King's line as the new King." Lance had to make sure that he understood his situation.

He might be protecting the Kingdom from its downfall, but what about its future? He did not want his sacrifice to go down the drain if the Kingdom would only fall to a man who did not deserve the title.

"Yes, we will base everything on the line of succession

But basically, only male children had a right to succeed on the throne. No daughters had ever been considered to heir the crown. At least in their history, nobody had dared to contest their tradition.

"Yes, if you would fail to produce a son during your reign, then we would resort to other means." Count Julius answered him in his most honest opinion, basing it on their current laws.

The Count could somehow guess what the young Prince must be thinking about, having privy of his secrets. He could not blame him for not wanting a child in a loveless marriage.

He could already site an example in his own family. He would admit that he was partially to blame since he had forced his son to marry his daughter-in-law out of obligation. Now, their kids were the ones suffering because of this arrangement.

"What about if I decide to have children, but unfortunately, they turned out to be all girls? What then?" Lance would like to explore all possibilities.

He was not a monster or an opportunist when he accepted the position of King. He did not intentionally wish to hurt his future wife by marrying her even if he knew he could not love her.

However, he had to safeguard the Kingdom from those that could harm it. He would do what he could to protect it, even if he had to use other people to accomplish it. He did have his intention. He only wanted to preserve their Kingdom for the future generation.

"As we all know from the beginning of time, we had to consider the firstborn son as the rightful heir. Then, the succeeding male lineage afterward." Count Julius informed him.

It was a custom that he felt had been outdated with the changes in time. In his opinion, he would like to revise some provisions in many of their laws and tradition.

One of them was to give more rights to the female born and update their methodology in the selection process of who should have a right to their highest position.

“But no daughter had ever sat or even considered to sit on the throne as far as history was concerned or our current laws.” Prince Lance finished for him.

He had always found that unfair to the female children of the royal family. They had always been looked down upon because of their sexual orientation. But in his opinion, they should have an equal voice inside the Council and a chance to rule their land.

“Yes, sadly, that is true.” The Count acknowledged the Prince’s summation of their current situation.

He would like to suggest a change, but it would be better if he took it easy. A drastic change in their constitution might be welcome by the King, but many conservative members might see it as a hostile act.

It was better if he proceeded with his plans cautiously until he could proceed with the change with the blessing of the King and most of their members.

“That was sad indeed.” The Prince seemed to be in deep thought as he stood up and prepared to leave. “I hope we can have this kind of talk again sometime. But I am sorry that I have to go.”

The Count could tell that the young soon-to-be King still had many questions in mind. But they could always continue this conversation some other time.

“Of course, my doors are always open to you, Prince Lance.” He walked the Prince outside his office, unable to take his eyes away from his face.

Suddenly, his thought brought him back to the picture of an adorable baby girl. It was like he was looking at two identical features. Should he tell the Prince about his child? But that would surely ruin everything.

First of all, the wedding was already underway. Second, the crowning ceremony was in motion. Telling the Prince about his daughter would no doubt delay the proceeding.

But worse, the Council would deem Prince Lance disqualified from the running to be King. In turn, the Council would either pick the disgraced first Prince as their new King or choose from the other losers who were next in line.

Which would be the lesser evil in this scenario? Once again, he faced a moral dilemma.

Chapter 908: At the drop of a hat

He had stood frozen in his place as his eyes kept staring at the other person in the room. What was she doing in here? She was supposed to be thousands of miles away from him. Was this a dream, a play of fate?



"Is there something wrong?" He could not help but think that there was an emergency, that was why she was here. She did nod. "Is it Grandmama?" When she shook his head. "Is it Eida? Luisa?"

He walked further into the room, standing closer to his visitor. He still believed that his eyes were deceiving him. That by the time he touched her, she would suddenly disappear in a puff of smoke.

"Then, what is it?" He could not stand the silence as her eyes remained fixated on him.

Finally, she left the chair and stood before him. He could almost touch her if not for the few inches of air that kept them apart. She was too close but not quite.

"I think you should come with me." She asked him politely as her fingers fidgeted at her bag dangling at her side. It was the only thing she had brought with her. "We have things to talk about."

Until that moment, she wore the dress she had worn at the party yesterday. After a little mishap at the airport, which had delayed her arrival, she went straight to Evan's office only to discover he was running late.

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Then, she had to beg his secretary to squeeze her into his busy schedule, pretending to be a desperate client. Luckily, she had convinced her, allowing her to wait in the conference room.

"Can you wait?" He asked, checking his watch. He had several clients lined up today. Then, there were the papers he had to do for Alex and Dani. "I also have things to tell you."

He could not just leave the office at a time like this, especially when David had asked him to step up. The company needed him too as the other partner, so he could not simply abandon his responsibility.

"No. I can't wait. Then, I guess I have no choice but to kidnap you, Evan." She said without a hint of a smile on her face. It was like she was serious about her plans. "So, I hope you will cooperate." As her gaze never left his.

He chuckled a bit about what she said, finding the entire scenario hilarious. Did he hear her right? She would not take no for an answer. Therefore, she would force him to come with her.

Suddenly, he remembered thinking of the same thing earlier, contemplating whether to take her against her will until she agreed to accept him back. Then, here she was voicing out his plans.

If this was a dream, he wished he did not have to wake up soon. He was enjoying it too much as his lips turned into a grin. At that moment, he only shook his head and stared at the woman before him in disbelief.

"And how do you intend to do that?" Still, he believed that it was a joke. He scanned her from head to toe, checking whether she had any concealed weapon, "Where is your gun?"

She spread her hands, showing him that it was empty. "I have none, but I have words." She calmly spoke as if she knew what she was doing. "I think that should be enough."

She stepped back a couple of feet away until she had enough space to maneuver herself from her tight position. Then, she made her way to the door.

"What now, Amelia?" Evan asked, confused as he watched her walk away. He did not understand the puzzle that was before him.

He wanted to grab her by the arms, but he controlled himself. He reminded himself that this was her show, so he should let her run it according to her wishes.

"Now, it is either you drop everything you are doing and follow me, or we just forget that we ever met." Amelia strode outside the room and straight to the elevator.

She just gave him an ultimatum. If she ever had any value to him, he would not put her as his last priority because she deserved to be the first this time.

She pressed the button, hoping that he would follow. But if he did not, she would finally know where she stood in his life. She had made her leap of faith. Now it was his turn.

"Wait, Amelia." She was already inside the lift, about to close its doors, when she heard his voice.

Quickly, he stuck his hands through the slit, stopping it from completely closing. Then, he entered the door without saying a word. He just silently stood there, waiting for the doors to open.

He would admit he was surprised by her sudden appearance. It took him a few seconds to process that she was serious. Luckily, he could sprint fast and catch up with her.

"So, what now?" He asked as they walked the lobby towards the exit of the building. At the moment, he was the captive, and she was his captor. Therefore, she was in charge.

"For my first demand, you have to feed me." She suddenly felt her stomach grumbling. She barely ate dinner and had nothing for breakfast.

"Any particular request." He sweetly asked. But before he could wait for her answer, his mobile phone buzzed. He quickly pulled it out of his pocket, seeing that it was his secretary. He could already guess it could be about a client.

"Don't answer that. Turn off your phone," Amelia commanded, seeing that electronic devices would beat the purpose of her plans. "And I am not open for a negotiation."

"But..." Evan was about to plead his case, but seeing that she was not budging, he stopped.

She was right about all of this if he thought about it. If he was serious about her, then this was the only way he could prove to her that he was. He had always told her that his priority was his job.

Finally, he could prove to her that he had changed and she would always be his priority by showing her that he could leave everything for her at the drop of a hat.

Chapter 909: The first move

Damn! It was so good.

His lips were soft but intense as they pressed hard against her skin. His hands gently held her close but just enough to create friction against their bodies.

Was she dreaming? Of course, not.

She basked at the feeling of his lips along her jawline and down to her neckline. She did not want it to stop. However, he suddenly halted, pressing his forehead against hers as they both caught their breaths.

"We are here." He breathlessly whispered against her skin as he held himself and finally pulled away. He took a few bills from his pocket and handed them to the driver.

He could feel that both of them wanted more, but he believed he had to control himself around her. She was right. They had to talk first.

"Where is here?" Amelia hesitantly asked as she fixed her hair and straightened her clothes while looking at the imposing building outside the window.

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She was also slightly embarrassed at how she was behaving around him. She had barely settled beside him. She was already ready to jump him. But that was not supposed to happen since she was here to see him discuss their situation.

"My home." Evan took the liberty of bringing her into his apartment. This way, they could talk privately about their situation without interruption.

After a few minutes, he was escorting her in the elevator, both silent with their thoughts. Nobody said anything as both waited for the lift to bring them to the top floor.

If a pin should accidentally drop on the metallic floor, she was sure to hear it vibrate in the small confinement. A few minutes later, they exited the elevator and entered a luxurious apartment.

"You have a nice home." Her eyes roamed around the room, fascinated by the unusual decorations. It was spacious for just one man, but what could she expect? He could afford it.

However, she did not doubt that it was a haven for a bachelor like him with its minimalist style and the pattern of monochromatic colors that painted the room.

But what could she envision of a guy who never had a steady woman in his life, except for his grandmother, who lived miles away? Could she dare believe that she would become the only woman in his life?

She hoped so. It was the precise reason she was here now in the first place.

"I have a good decorator." He spoke to her, standing behind the kitchen counter. He was no gourmet chef but could whip up a quick meal. She did say she was hungry.

He took off his jacket and tie and rolled up his sleeve. Then, he poured both of them a cup of coffee. "But I don't think that is what you came here to talk about." Then, he continued with the process of making them a cold sandwich.

"Yes, of course, you are right," Amelia answered as she watched him move around the kitchen. Although, she could not say that he was the cleanest worker in the kitchen, judging from his workstation.

Still, she found her mind drifting to her unwanted thoughts, having her naughty imaginations about him. Truthfully, she currently pictured him naked with only an apron blocking her view.

"I know you are hungry, but you should wipe your lips. I think you are drooling." He teasingly said as he handed her the sandwich he had just finished preparing.

He watched her ogling him. He knew she had always been prim and proper. Even if she had feelings for him, she would never be the first to admit it.

"Well, I am starving." She quickly looked away, slightly embarrassed to be caught staring this time. She took a bite of the sandwich, feeling satisfaction in her stomach. She was not kidding about lacking sustenance.

At the same time, she was using this time to gather her wits and courage to proceed with her next move. What was her next move? It was clear she had not thought of that thoroughly.

"You know I am happy you decided to visit me unexpectedly." Evan ran his fingers through his hair as he tried to piece this puzzle before him. "But should I be concerned?"

He did not want to jump to any conclusion and believed she was here because she had forgiven him. But a man could dream. Still, he tried to read what she might be thinking.

But one thing he learned from his dealings with women. They could be fickle-minded, and he doubted Amelia would be so different. So, he could never trust his instinct when it came to her.

She was silent for a few seconds, nibbling on her sandwich. She could not blame him. In a way, she did kidnap him and had asked him to drop everything for her. Now, he deserved some explanation.

"No, I don't think so." Amelia dropped the small sandwich on its plate and wiped her hands clean. Then, she faced him. "I am here because I..." Suddenly she felt her lips had gone dry.

Her tongue automatically licked her lips, but it was not lost on her how his eyes did not miss the small action. She could see how her every movement affected him.

"Because what?" Evan could not keep up with the suspense, feeling frustrated to touch her. He wanted to savor those lips and continue what they had already started a while ago at the cab. "What do you want from me?"

He moved closer, leaning over until his fingers touched the bottom of her chin. Then, he carefully tilted her head until she looked directly into his eyes.

"I want you." There she finally said it. But she was far from over, confessing her feelings for him. She was only beginning.

In her world, a girl was not supposed to be the hero but should remain the damsel in distress, waiting to be rescued by a courageous and noble man. But in this modern age, that belief had rendered obsolete.

Although she grew up believing that typical bias against the female population, she could not accept that absurdity anymore. Today, she was fighting for equality and her chance to make the first move.

Chapter 910: Not wearing protection

It was now her turn. "You have something on your..." She extended her hand to his face, letting her thumb slide across the edge of his lips. "This." She showed him, but before retracting her hand, he caught it with his.

"I don't understand, Amelia." He softly spoke as if afraid that he would scare her away. But she was done running.

"I want you, Evan." She never broke their eye contact, allowing him to read what she felt at that moment. She hoped she was transparent about her feelings, but if not, she could spell it out for him.

"I mean..." She stood up from her stool and walked around the counter until she stood before him. He still did not let go of her hand, so with her other hand, she used her fingers to tilt his head up until his gaze returned to her eyes.

Without using words, she showed him through her actions what she meant. Her lips gently skimmed through his lips, waiting for a reaction. She could see that he was baffled by her actions. He was still debating whether he should kiss her again.

"I want you." She remembered telling herself that they had to talk, but at the moment, it was the last thing on her mind. She believed that actions spoke louder than words.

She lowered her lips again into his lips but this time put a little more pressure on them. It was barely a few seconds when she felt his lips move.

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Then, her fingers slid down his throat, working on the buttons of his shirt. A few seconds later, she had managed to remove his shirt while he had worked on her dress.

"Wow, you never failed to surprise me." He slightly whistled as his eyes feasted on her pink lacy bra and matching panties.

She stood before him, wearing the new sexy lingerie she remembered buying for him. It was just fortunate enough that she thought of putting them on yesterday, not aware this would happen today.

"I am glad you like it." She unhooked her bra, freeing herself from the restraint and deliberately exposing herself to his eyes.

Then, she held the lacy material, dangling it in front of his face before throwing them at her back. Her last remaining clothing followed next, leaving her naked before him.

As she had said earlier, she was taking matters into her hands and not leaving the decision to fate. She was not waiting for him to make the first move. This time, she would take the risk.

The hell with the consequence.

"I think I finally understand." He hoarsely answered as his fingers crawled at the back of her neck, gently tugging on her hair until his lips could claim her lips.

However, his lips did not stay long in one place as they traveled down her body until he had captured one of her mounds into his mouth. Then, his hands glided down on her body, stopping at the top of her thighs, holding her in place.

She believed if not for his hands, she might have slipped into a puddle of mess on the floor as her legs barely kept her steady on her feet. Probably sensing this, he stood up from the stool and lifted her along with him.

The next thing she knew, her ass was sitting on the cold counter while he stood before her. "What do you want, Amelia?" He asked as his lips continued sucking and devouring her breasts until they started a fire that continued to engulf her in flames.

Her entire body was shivering, not because she was cold. On the contrary, her body was burning up. "I want all of you." She knew what she meant by that, but he might have a different interpretation. Nevertheless, that was the least of her worries at that moment.

Then, she felt his hands on her knees, pushing her legs apart and gently pulling her to the edge of the marble table. She did not expect what he would do next as she shouted in shock and ecstasy.

She never thought that sex could be this great since she had shied away from this experience for too long, but she did not regret it. She had given herself to the man that she loved. And it was worth the wait.

"Oh my!" She had no words to express what she was going through as his head remained buried and dipped between her legs.

Her fingers tried to hold on to his hair, pushing and pulling at him as her mind debated whether she should let him continue his onslaught on her body as he carried her to unimaginable heights of pleasure.

Or should she stop him?

Honestly, she did not want him to stop. She could not explain the feeling of all this tension as it built higher and higher until she thought she could not take it anymore. It was like torture but only by pleasure.

"Aaaggghhh!" She could not keep her silence as the full impact of his tongue on her core drove her to her limits. She never imagined that she could climax like this, not by a long shot.

But she realized it was far from over as he heard the clink of his belt and the sound of his zipper. She pulled herself up by her elbows and saw him lowering his pants.

"I am sorry, but I need you now." He groaned. In an instant, he was inside her, pushing in and pulling out.

The impact of his movements had her twisting and turning on her back. It felt so odd, comparing the cold marble tiles on her back and the warm, hard body in her front.

She felt his hands touch her cheeks, then let his fingers glide across her lips. Then, it went on a downward path, ending on her breast. She knew she was climbing higher again. She could almost touch the clouds.

He kept pushing her higher. Eventually, she released her third, or was that her fourth? She was not sure as she had lost count. However, she thought there was no way she was going down. Until.

He suddenly stopped and pulled out of her. "Oooohhhh!" He groaned loudly. Then, his seed spilled all over the floor. She suddenly realized why it felt different. He was not wearing protection.