

20. "Nothing's Free."

"Speak when you're angry and you'll make the best speech you'll ever regret." - A. Brierce

Chapter Twenty

Adonis' POV

I woke up and noticed Elena staring at the ceiling.

"Hey," I pulled her closer, and planted a kiss on her temple.

I felt her stiffened.

I followed her gaze as she continued to look at the ceiling. When there was nothing in there, I asked, "are you okay?"

"Um... yeah," she moved, stirring away from me.

I felt her sudden aloofness, making my eyebrows rise.

I caught her hand when she was about to stand up, "where are you going?"

"I-I have to go to the bathroom."

I clasped her face, and gave her a proper morning kiss, "hurry up," I said, teasing her.

Her smile was forced. She stood up, all naked, and ran to the bathroom.

I smiled, thinking she was shy. She shouldn't be a virgin last night. We bare not just our bodies, but also our souls.

I admit, our love makings were the best that I ever had in my entire life. The more we did it, the more it became addicting. Crazy, but Elena blew my mind away. All my nerve endings were on fire with her touch.

My eyes caught the blood stain on the bed sheet.

My suspicion was right. It was her first time. I felt her tensed when I entered her for the first time.

I groaned. The thought of hurting her made me feel bad. I should have made her first time very special. But on second thought, she denied it last night. It probably embarrassed her and I guessed, it was not right of me to ask while we were on the verge of doing the act.

Elena came back wearing a white bath robe. She looked more composed and confident than earlier when she was naked. Her eyes were cold and she had a blank facial expression.

"Come here," I extended a hand, but she shook her head and clasped her arms together.

"What's wrong?"

"This is so wrong," she raised her hands briefly in exasperation, "last night shouldn't have happened. I was not myself!"

"Hey, hey, calm down. What are you talking about?" I sat down on bed, leaning my back against the headboard.

"That tea last night is an aphrodisiac, and I drank two cups! I lost my mind. I did things that I shouldn't be doing."

My eyes immediately darkened. I yanked the blanket open, all naked, I walked to a closet and put on cotton shorts. Without turning to Elena, I asked.

"Are you blaming the tea for what happened between us last night?"

"Yeah."

Her answer made my heart sink.

Pressing my lips together, I felt the screams of frustrations at the back of my throat.

"So, you regretted it."

"That shouldn't happen. It messes up this arranged marriage deal. What will happen to my plans, my life... and everything now!"

"Wow. So your concern is solely for yourself. What happened last night was our own free will. You wanted it as much as I did."

She shook her head vigorously, "I acted crazy, like a wanton woman. That was not my behavior at all. The tea was responsible for it, Adonis. Not me. No wonder, the old woman only served one cup per person."

"It was just plain green tea. They ran out of supplies last night, the reason she was giving only one cup per person. I know because Peter asked and she could not give him anymore."

"Then why was I sober after I drank the tea. Remember? You saw it yourself."

"Yeah, but I made you drink plenty of water before you drink that tea. So don't blame the tea, Elena... or the water. It was all you."

I waited for a comeback, but there was none.

She was silent, thinking. I wished I knew what was running inside that pretty head.

My heart melted seeing her facial expression. She looked really confused,

"It already happened, and we just have to look at it from a brighter side," I continued, easing the tension between us, "what's important is, you and I have this kind of connection. Just like you said last night, let's get the most out of this marriage."

"I can't do it."

"Why not? We're good together."

She closed her eyes briefly, then heaved a sigh, "you're right. It was not tea. I planned it all along."

I frowned. It was my turn to get confused.

"I seduced you intentionally, and I succeeded," her chin lifted a little.

I moved closer to her, not liking the tone of her voice, nor her aloof attitude.

"Careful what you're going to say, Elena. I swear, I'm not in the mood to play games."

"Who says I'm playing games? I'm laying my cards in front of you, Adonis," she looked up at me, straight in the eyes, challenging me, "this is all about business."

"What do you want?"

"I want you to finance my fashion company, in return for my services last night."

I was speechless. I stood there staring at her in shock. I tried to process what she had said, wondering if I heard her wrong.

But I heard her loud and clear. She wanted payment in exchange for sex last night.

My temper escalated, turning into fury. I grabbed her neck abruptly, making her gasp. Her eyes widened in fear.

That's right, Elena. You should fear me. No one messes up with me. Even you, my rebellious bride, is not exempted.

"Are you saying last night did not mean anything to you?" I spat out the words contemptuously.

"You're right. It meant nothing!" She grabbed my wrist with both hands, her eyes hostile as she glared at me.

"My dear, Elena. You shouldn't have used your body just to get money from me. I'm your husband, all you had to do was ask. I would have handed it to you on a golden platter."

She pushed me away, and stepped backward, "as if you would give me a dime! You're like grandpa. Greedy for more wealth and power."

"You surely don't know me well," I threw the words at her like stones, "I'm very disappointed. My very own wife, using her body for money."

"You're my husband, I have nothing to lose."

"Except your virginity," I chuckled nastily, "I wonder if that cost me too high. Or should I be flattered that I'm the first client?"

I knew what was about to come. I caught her wrist before she could slap me.

"You want to play games? Then I'll give you a good one. From now on, nothing's free between us. Everything demands payment."

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