

# The Duke's Passion

## Chapter 12 - Do You Want Me To Prove That, Lilou?

"However, after centuries of nothing but silence and darkness, I heard a child's cry."

I gulped, hearing myself swallow. I couldn't look away from him as I pursed my lips in a thin line.

"I never thought I'd found glee in hearing a child's cry. But, during that time, that child saved me."

He smiled subtly while I suppressed my hiccup. I still had tons of questions in my mind, but I couldn't contemplate any of them at the moment.

"From then on, I'd listen to her cries all the time. Until she started learning to speak and cried less. I knew just listening to her, she's such a bundle of joy."

His eyes started gleaming with delight while my fist and shoulder felt at ease.

"Even when she hit adulthood, she was very lively. Every day, without fail, she'd tattle about her day nonstop."

Upon hearing his last remarks, sweats started breaking out from my forehead. Until this point, I never considered the person he was talking about was me.

However, the more I listened to him, the more I discerned the similarities.

My heart started pounding very loud as I tightened my jaw.

"Even when she lost her father, she didn't let go of that habit. She would announce whenever she comes home and starts talking alone. She even thought she had gone mad for talking alone. It's funny, because I thought otherwise."

Samael chuckled, giving ease to the tension revolving around my heart. I did mumble about being insane as I couldn't let go of this habit.

But the way he spoke about it brought warmth to my heart. He made me sound like a sane, remarkable person.

A person who wouldn't be easily brought down by poverty, starvation, or even a loss of a loved one. He made it sound like the person he was talking about was nothing but amazing.

But I wasn't.

"I think... deep in her subconscious mind, she knew someone was listening. That someone is looking forward to hear her say, 'I'm home', and eager to listen to her daily tales and rants."

At this point, Samael locked his gaze with mine. Meanwhile, I could only listen like a fool.

The thought of someone listening to me every day brought relief and horror within me. It was relieving to know my habit saved someone.

On the other side of the coin, it terrified me as I've badmouthed a few nobles many times. Only when I talk to myself, I could be real and express my dismay and happiness aloud.

The thought that he had heard everything mortified me. I felt like he just stripped me naked and knew me more than I know myself.

"So, I promised myself, I would return the favor once I wake up."

Slowly, Samael leaned closer to the edge of the table. He rested his arm against it, cupping his jaw in his other hand with his eyes still on me.

"Did that answer your question, Lilou?"

He asked, bearing his unwavering resolve that flickered across his crimson eyes.

I tried answering, but to no avail. My words were stuck in my throat, suffocating me. What should I say in moments like this?

What should I feel?

"How can you say you'd return the favor by killing me?" Before I knew it, my question suddenly slipped past my lips after struggling to find my voice again.

"I didn't want to kill you, you did."

"So, you just want to marry me because I — I saved you? If you really listened to everything, then, you'd know..."

"You want a wonderful romance that could touch even the most callous heart?"

Before I could end my sentiments, Samael continued it for me. Just then, I recalled him saying the exact words this morning and my jaw dropped instantly.

"Even I thought that's ridiculous, silly." He humored, chuckling lightly, which made me felt very awkward.

He might think I was absurd to even dream of marrying. Not that it was one of my priority with how tough life was.

However, I'm just a girl.

It was just normal for a girl like me to dream to be loved unconditionally and love him the same way, right? He didn't need to make fun of me because of that.

Deep down, I felt very awkward and humiliated. He made me sound so amazing, and I could not help but wonder how disappointed he was after finally meeting me.

Unknowingly, I hung my head low out of utter disappointment. He probably didn't expect that the person he thought I was, was not actually that... amazing.

Instead, I was just...

"However, when I saw you, I knew I was wrong."

I know. You had the wrong perception of me, and I understood it clearly.

"Perhaps, I was wrong for thinking that kind of romance is ridiculous."

"Ah?"

"Because I suddenly want the same when I laid my eyes on you, silly."

"What?" I blinked, just asking randomly as my mind was too little to understand everything.

"Damn it, girl! Do you really want me to say it loud and clear?"

All of a sudden, he frowned and clicked his tongue in annoyance. Yet, I couldn't understand why he suddenly turned aggressive.

"Say, say what?" I asked purely because I didn't think I understood him that well.

Part of me was assuming unnecessary thoughts. However, for someone like me, I could never hop into that conclusion.

Samael just stared at me, still cupping his jaw before he let out a sigh.

"I like you the first time I saw you. Happy now?" He said, looking away with a pout.

I blinked my eyes, trying to see if my eyes weren't deceiving me when I glimpsed at his flustered cheek.

"This girl just understands everything in literal terms, tsk." He mumbled, but the tip of his ear reddened.

"..."

I think I was going blind and deaf. I should eat so I would stop hallucinating.

Just like what I thought. Instead of answering and processing his words, I started eating. I chugged the entire bowl of cold soup to ease my racing heart.

When I drank the last drop of soup, I slammed it down against the table and awkwardly laughed. Samael was looking at me with puzzlement in his eyes.

"Milord, please forgive my manners. Hunger made me hallucinate and I..."

"I like you." Before I could finish my explanation, he said blankly.

"Neither my existence nor my feelings are part of your imagination. I'm real, I'm here, I said I like you, and I want you. Do you want me to prove that, Lilou?"

This time, although his tone was nearly the same, he stressed each word with conviction which bore weight I could never carry.