

# The Duke's Passion

## Chapter 18 - Boosting His Ego

"Tsk. That innocent look on your face is infuriating, just in case you don't know."

"Milord," After clearing my throat, believing this negotiation could still ensue, I took another step forward.

However, after taking a step forward, he took a step back. Right, he didn't like my odor.

"I think it's impossible to attain romance with your food. But, perhaps, I can help?"

I beamed him a smile, casting him a hopeful look.

I knew he was just being greedy. But it was impossible for him to have a romance with his food. Even nobles wouldn't eat their pets, and they hold a proper funeral for their pets.

Ironic that noble pets had proper burial than humans.

"Help?" Samael raised his brows once again.

His expression told me this was my chance to explain my plans. Thinking of Old Olly's advice and the lessons I've learned from my father's stories, I truly think I could help him.

If I helped him, perhaps he would agree to my condition. After all, I needed to prove I am worthy to receive the promise of the duke.

"Milord, as a woman, capture the heart of the lady you fancy." I said, raising my brows as I beamed him a grin.

"Capture?" He asked with a complicated look. "You want me to capture your heart?"

"Milord, we're talking about your wonderful romance tale and not how to cook my heart." I corrected almost immediately, feeling a little nervous at the thought.

"Oh... I see. I thought its strange you want me to capture your heart." He mumbled, and I heaved a sigh of relief, knowing we finally agreed about something.

"So, you're telling me to capture anyone's heart to start my romance?"

He asked after a moment of contemplation.

I nodded and corrected, "Not just anyone, milord. You should capture the heart of the woman you fancy."

I stressed the word 'woman', so he wouldn't mix me into it. After all, I'm just now a food who needed to get healthy to be served as a proper meal.

Upon my correction, Samael looked at me blankly. He seemed lost at my explanation.

What was so hard to understand with my explanation?

"I can capture anyone's heart as I pleased. It's an easy feat. However, I didn't think its has anything to do with romance, silly."

"But..." Out of words to persuade him, I unconsciously bit my lower lips.

Does this mean he wouldn't give me his word to protect everyone in the field?

The thought of failing my first, and perhaps, the last negotiation which I was confident to attain caused me to hang my head low. I failed everyone.

Just as I was feeling gloomy, Samael spoke.

"Fine!"

As soon as he uttered those words, I raised my head. He still seemed annoyed, ruffling his unruly silver-hair.

"I'll show you I'm good at capturing hearts and it had nothing to do with romance, alright?"

"Then... does that mean..." I pursed my lips, hesitant to push my agenda further.

"Well, since you've stressed me enough and I know you would do everything just to get what you want. Therefore, you got my word, lady." Samael waved his hand, sounding defeated for whatever reason.

Regardless of how he sounded, I could feel my vitality seeping deep into my bones.

"Really?" Out of excitement, I asked to confirm.

"Yes, really." He stressed each word while nodding.

I restrained myself from jumping out of happiness. Now, I wouldn't have to worry about everyone in the field. If the Duke favored their land, perhaps my death wouldn't be in vain.

Now, I finally had a purpose to do better and please this crazy duke.

"However," Amid my celebratory emotions, I paused when I heard him speak again.

"I wouldn't exert effort in capturing hearts for nothing."

I gulped, all ears at the exchange he wanted in return. I'm ready, I should be.

"If I've proven that romance has nothing to do with me capturing hearts, you'll have to see me as a man. It is a test for you and I." He explained while I remained puzzled.

A test for him and I? See him as a man? Well, I never looked at him as a woman.

"Treat it as what, I, Samael La Crox, could do. I'm telling you, though. I'm good at capturing hearts."

He added confidently with a shrug.

"What do you say?"

"I think his lordship is charismatic and could do it properly.?" I said, flattering him just to boost his motivation.

"Hehe! Certainly, I am!" Pleased at my answer, Samael radiated with imaginary sparkles.

"Without a shadow of doubt, milord!" Again, I praised him to boost his ego.

Samael seemed he liked flattery more than anyone. Well, he was a little... no; he was a complete narcissist. I should start thinking of praising him to the heavens to survive longer.

After he laughed, he suddenly turned his back against me and raised his hand. Walking towards the entrance and exit of the shack, he said,

"If I passed your test, you'll accept my invitation for a proper date, alright?"

"Huh?"

"I'll tell Rufus that we're staying in my mansion tonight. He'll escort you to my mansion. See you later!" He said without looking back.

I stared at him, retreating with myriads of question in mind. Did we really agreed the same thing?

He sounded like he meant something that was far different from my advice. And... did he just say I would have to stay in his mansion tonight?

Unconsciously, I bit the nail of my thumb as I paced back and forth. Well, he must probably feel very uncomfortable in this small shack.

Unlike his mansion, which spanned hundred of acres, this shack was smaller than the chambermaid's room. At least, what I had believed.

"Nevermind, Lilou. You should've learned that thinking about your safety is all in vain." After pondering about things I never get to have an answer, I snapped my tongue and shook my head.

"What's important is the Duke promised to protect everyone. Whether he kills me tonight..." I paused, swallowing as I forced a smile on my lips.

I couldn't say it. It still hasn't fully sunk into me, I'm a dead person whose breathing.

"My lady, His Grace, had ordered us to escort you back to the mansion. If you please, we'll set out before dusk."

Suddenly, I heard a man — which I assumed to be one of the knights — announced. It was odd to be addressed as a "Lady", but I didn't dwell on it.

Slowly, I turned and faced him.

With a subtle smile, I answered. "Yes,"