

# The Duke 261

Chapter 261 - Princess Beatrice Le Blac

"Oh, my apologies. It seems I walked in at the wrong time."

Sam smiled in annoyance, but his grip around me didn't budge. Even without turning his head back, it seemed he had already known the person who interrupted us.

"If you know you're interrupting with other people's quality time, shouldn't you go now?" he sassed without looking back, making me shift my eyes to him.

Was he trying not to look back because he was not interested in whoever it was? Or so he could have an excuse that he didn't know the person he was talking to? Either way, I should go down... or maybe I'd stay just to spite this Zero.

A playful smile resurfaced on my lips as I buried my face in Sam's shoulder. "I'm shy, husband."

"It's alright, wife. I will hide you in a safe place..." Sam caressed my hair that went all the way down to my back. "... like always."

What? Was he referring to how he kept me in Grimsbanne all this time? Whatever. I prefer Sam than Stefan or this twisted Zero.

"What should I do? I came here because I have an important matter to discuss with... the third prince?"

He wanted to talk to Sam? Was he trying to get offended by my husband, so he had a reason to cause a problem? I frowned as I raised my head and glared daggers at him.

To my surprise, the smile on Zero's lips previously was nowhere to be found, and only the coldness in his eyes remained. What was wrong with him?

A sigh escaped my lips as I shifted my attention to Sam. "Let's continue this later, alright?" I patted his shoulder lightly, making him look up at me.

"Later, then." He reluctantly nodded.

To appease him, I placed a quick peck on his lips, but he was still frowning. So, I kissed him three more times until he let me down. If one was not enough, I just had to give him more kisses until he listens to me.

Sam cupped my cheek and stared at me for a moment, his thumb caressing my jaw. "I'll come and find you later."

"You always find me wherever I go, so I'll wait for you... like always."

He smiled at me as he understood my words. I smiled back and nod at him before he withdrew his hand and turned around. As Sam marched towards Zero, I caught the latter's eyes on me. His gaze sent a sudden chill down my spine, but I didn't back down as I raised a brow with a taunting smirk on my lips.

'Fiance, you say? A promised marriage? Don't make me laugh, Zero.' My smirk stretched into a grin as I straightened my clothes. 'If worse comes to worst, a marriage between us will be your worst nightmare.'

"And who might be this honorable one?" Sam uttered several steps away from Zero.

Really... everyone in the palace was treading on thin ice so as not to offend this man. But what else can I expect from my husband? I hope he aggravates him more since Zero wouldn't start a war just because of a diplomatic discourtesy.

The two of them exchanged pleasantries as they walked away. I saw Zero glanced at me for the last time, catching the stony expression on my face.

"Should I meet him in secret?" I murmured, rubbing my chin as I took into consideration how many eyes and ears were planted in every corner of the palace. 'It is only a week before the start of the founding week. I think I should meet him in private.'

After that thought, I fixed myself to leave. But before I did, I touched my lips, still feeling Sam's lips on mine. Even the taste of his blood lingered in my mouth.

"Now, I'm more frustrated about the interruption," I grumbled before trudging away from the isle.

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"Your Majesty, please refrain from looking at my wife that way," Samael warned calmly as they waltzed through the hallway. "Don't forget you are in our territory, and not in some land neutral land for peace talks."

Zero chuckled as he glanced at Samael's side. "My apologies, Lord Samael. I was merely intrigued by what kind of lady who captured the heart of a great man such as yourself — it was quite a news that reached even our small kingdom, you see."

"Is that so?"

"Haha. So, the rumors about you being indifferent aren't baseless." Zero crooned as he held his hand behind him, smiling. "I guess you won't even bat an eye if I regard this discourtesy as treason?"

Samael remained silent as he kept his eyes ahead. He had been investigating the undead, and some information traced back to the Spade Kingdom, while the others to Stefan. Which made him wonder if these people had been working together.

"Say, Your Majesty, it is not me who you wanted to talk to, isn't it?" Samael broke his silence as he stopped in his steps, turning to face him. "Did you just say that to separate me from my wife?"

"Oh, please. Why would I do such a thing?"

"Then, what important matters does Your majesty want from me?" Samael didn't beat around the bush as he stared at him coldly. He watched Zero smiled brightly before his lips parted.

"Why don't we talk about it over some tea, Your Grace?" Zero kept his smile while his brows arched and his eyes scanned their surrounding. "It'll be a very long discussion."

"A long discussion, huh?" Samael let out a faint scoff as there was a conclusion in his head.

"Shall you spare me some of your time? Your Grace Samael?"

Samael studied the playful glints flickering across Zero's eyes. Although he had already concluded what it was about, he still nodded and accepted this invitation.

"Great!" Zero exclaimed in delight. "Then shall we..." Zero trailed off, but his smirk stretched wider upon hearing a woman's voice chiming in.

"Isn't this Your Majesty Quentin and Your Grace Samael?"

Both men turned their heads in the woman's direction. Her every step as she approached them exuded elegance.

"Princess Beatrice Le Blac! We've met and here of all places!" Zero greeted cheerfully as the woman stopped steps away from them.

"Is it not the best place to meet, Your Majesty?" Beatrice smiled, but her eyes bore contempt, and then she cast Samael a look. "It's also been a while, Hell, and I'm glad to see you."

"Beatrice," Samael smirked. "It's really been a while."

## Chapter 262 - The Letter

The day had passed just like that, and it was already nighttime. Once I returned to my husband's quarters, Mildred was there to welcome me.

"It's been a while, Mildred," I said as I plopped down to the divan, lifting my legs over the other as I leaned back. "How have you been?"

My eyes fell on her, who stood before me. Since that time I punished her, I kept giving menial tasks to Mildred just because I didn't want to see her.

"I'm doing better, Your Grace. Thank you for your concern." Mildred hung her head low.

Mildred and I knew I wasn't concerned about her. Still, her obedience redeemed herself a little. I had tasked Yul to figure out what Mildred had been to lately, and he told me she was living as quiet as a mouse.

"Mildred, can I really trust you now?" I cocked my head, watching her raise her head to meet my gaze.

"This servant had learned her lesson. I will never betray you, Your Grace."

"That's not what I had asked, Mildred." I scratched my temple. While Lena wasn't here, I should use this opportunity to get Mildred on my side.

Mildred pursed her lips as she clutched her skirt. "No, Your Grace."

"Oh? Why?"

"My blood never lies, Your Grace." Mildred took a deep breath as her eyes studied my expression, hoping I would understand her good intentions. "I am physically weak and if by chance, someone wanted to extract information from me, they can easily know everything. So, I don't think Your Grace can trust me, but what I can assure you is I will never betray you... purposely."

I nodded my head in understanding as her answer hit the bullseye. Not that I was planning to put my complete trust in her, but I need more people on my side. People I handpicked, and not the people my clan had picked for me.

"I can't tell if they were trying to spoil me, really," I murmured with that thought crossing my head.

"Pardon?"

I snapped back from my thoughts and refocused my eyes on her. "Nothing. I like your answer. So, can you deliver a letter to someone?"

"A letter?"

"Yes." My hand grabbed the armrest and assisted me up. "I would like to send someone a letter, but don't tell anyone about it especially, to my husband and Lena."

"Lena?" her voice laced with confusion but still agreed. "Yes, Your Grace."

I walked towards the desk while Mildred remained standing behind me. I grabbed a parchment, smoothing it out while she prepared my quill and ink.

"You haven't been on my side for a long time, so you don't know what's happening," I said as I prepared on writing a letter. "But since your performance gained a bit of my trust, I'll try to see you in a different light."

"Thank you, Your Grace."

"As such, keep what I speak to you to your grave." I glanced at her and saw her hung her head low.

"Yes, I will."

I nodded in satisfaction. "Don't trust Lena or Sam... no, don't trust anyone."

"Your Grace, I will do everything as you ordered. But, may I know the reason you had to keep His Grace in the dark?"

My hand that was holding the quill paused. I stared at the blank parchment until a drop of ink dripped on it.

'Why am I keeping Sam in the dark? I don't think I was keeping him in the dark. Sam is smart. Even if he doesn't tell me, I knew that he already figured out I retrieved my memories. So, it was not me who was keeping him in the dark, it was the opposite.' But I didn't tell her that.

"Don't trust him, but don't betray him as well," I said as I started inking the parchment with my letter. "Someday, Mildred, when you can protect yourself from harm, I will tell you everything you need."

"I will keep that in mind, Your Grace."

Silence enveloped the room as I wrote. When I finished the letter, I wrapped the letter but stopped when I was about to seal it. Until now, I never sent a letter to anyone.

"Your Grace?" Mildred called out in confusion as I stopped before I could seal it with the duke's seal.

A deep exhale escaped my lips, tossing the stamp of my husband, and used my thumb instead. Gasps from Mildred caressed my ear, but I endured the heat of the wax before withdrawing my thumb.

"Your Grace, why did you..." Mildred rushed to my side in worry, staring at my thumb.

"That's my seal, for now, Mildred." I waved nonchalantly before picking up the letter and handed it to her. "Send this to the king of Spade kingdom in secret."

"Your Grace? The king of..."

"Just do it, Mildred." I urged firmly. "Don't let anyone know about it. Make sure, not a single would will know about it."

Mildred stared into my eyes for a moment before she accepted the letter. "You can count on me, my lady."

"Do it now."

"Yes."

Just as Mildred turned around and walked away, she halted when I called her. Mildred turned her head around.

"Mildred, be careful."

A weak smile resurfaced on her lips as she nodded. "I will return with a response, my lady."

"You don't have to. Just return in one piece."

"Yes." And so, Mildred left the room while I remained seated in the chair for as long as I could remember, staring outside the window.

"Sam... please bear with me just for a little while," I whispered as Fabian's words from the other night hovered over my head. "I won't let you do what you are planning... it won't happen, my love."

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Meanwhile, in the east wing of the palace, Zero chuckled as he read the letter in his hand and a glass of wine on the other.

"Oh, dear, does she really hate the idea of marrying me that much?" he chuckled, tossing the letter in the fireplace and watched it burn into ashes. "She and that little duke... those two really know how to annoy me."

"Did she threaten you, Your Majesty?" Tristan inquired as he stood motionless behind Zero.

Zero turned around with a smile. "No, she is... seducing me."

## Chapter 263 - Let's Run Away

While I waited for Sam, I decided to take a stroll in the third princes' garden. My eyes scanned the not-maintained garden. It was very unlike the Avolire Garden or the other gardens in the palace. This place looked more like a cemetery. We just needed more corpses to bury... wait.

Now that I thought about it, Fabian liked gardens, and every garden he had worked on was beautiful there was no doubt about it. But why hadn't he focused on this garden? I brood over it while rubbing my chin until an idea popped up in my head.

"Don't tell me... he didn't touch this garden to keep it pure?" By pure, what I meant was, Fabian had this habit of burying people alive. I cringed at the dark conclusion I came up in my head.

"I shouldn't concern myself with it that much." I shook my head to shrug off all the other thoughts crowding my head. There were too many important things to think about instead of these gardens.

My eyes fell on the spot where Sam and I lied down under the pouring rain. "Sam..."

That day, had it not been for him, I wouldn't be standing here calmly with a barely sane mind. A lot had happened, making me smile bitterly.

"Back in Cunningham, Sam and Rufus told me that this place will take away my smile." And I told them I would store the little innocence left in me for Sam. However, I was never innocent to begin with.

"The innocence we all knew... is superficial," I whispered as I stopped in the middle of the practically dead garden. Back then, to keep me from fooling around, Stefan had taken even my common sense.

He had robbed everything from me and yet... my desire to protect my husband exceeded my desire to settle scores with him. Not that I didn't trust Sam's capabilities, I just knew his enemies had come prepared. Sam had slept for centuries, and his enemies had taken advantage of it.

"If he hadn't fallen in love with me, he would be freed from this problem," I murmured as my eyes softened, gazing down and saw the image of the two of us lying in the pouring rain. "But alas... not only he had fallen in love with me, but he also married me, accepting everything that comes after."

Yes, Sam had accepted me. Despite my past, my roots, my flaws, the problems that would arise; he still wanted to build a future with me. So, how can I not love him?

'The secret engagement with Zero... the will of my clan, Yul, Lexx, what should I do with them?' I wondered, and gazed up at the clear night sky. 'I was certain I could do something about Zero, but until now, I hadn't seen the entire layout of my clan's plans and it scared me even more.'

I had this gut feeling that once I knew everything, somebody had to pay... that I also had a price to pay for it. Be it my humanity, or my emotions, or the people I had to sacrifice, just the thought of it was enough to shake me to my core.

"I feel suffocated... this palace, no, this kingdom is suffocating me." I held onto Lakresha tightly, hoping she would understand how heavy the weight my clan had put on my back. "I just want... to go back."

As that thought crossed me, I finally realized why I didn't hate Stefan just as much as I thought I would. By taking away my memories, my experience, my knowledge, and skills, my trauma, I got to live in the bliss of ignorance and met Sam. I got to enjoy my time in Grimsbanne and see things differently.

The peace... the smiles of the children... Old Olly's nagging... the kind servants in the Duke's Mansion... Rufus dragging Sam to work... Fabian teaching me all this strange stuff that only now I realized they were quite disturbing... those new memories I made kept shattering piece by piece in my time here.

I ground my teeth, making my jaw tightened as I balled my hands into a tight fist until my trimmed nails dug into my palm. "Ugh..." I pounded my fist against my temples lightly, trying to knock some senses into me.

"I had to..." I trailed off, stopping by my actions as two large hands grabbed my wrist.

"Don't hurt yourself," Sam's voice came from behind me, letting me go, and I immediately turned around.

"Sam!" A sigh of relief slipped past my lips as I leapt towards him, wrapping my arms around him, eyes closed. "You're here?"

"I told you I will find you." Sam stroked my back gently, resting his chin over my head.

A subtle smile resurfaced on my lips as I indulged in the little warmth of his body. My hand clutched his back, desperate to be held by him.

"First your thumb, and now your head. Which part of you do you plan to hurt next?" his tone was low but his concern was very distinct. "You're picking up bad habits. Not good."

"It didn't hurt, though."

"It doesn't hurt now, but it can in the future," Sam argued calmly, silencing me. "I won't let anyone hurt you, even if it's you, yourself. However, that is quite a hard task, you see."

"I won't do it again," came a tiny voice.

Sam let out a hum, still stroking my back. "Please. Seeing you like that drives me mad."

I pursed my lips into a thin line, placing my fist on his chest to push him away. But Sam pulled me closer and secured me in his embrace.

"Sam?"

"I'm angry, Lilou," He explained along with a sharp exhale. "I don't know if I can face you right now. Let's stay like this for a moment."

I bit my lip, recalling how sharp and bright his crimson eyes were earlier. I was excited to see him, that I ignored that little detail.

"Did that man earlier say something?" I asked, referring to Zero as Sam left with that damned king, but his answer was silence.

"Sam?" I called once again, but nothing.

We stayed like that for as long as I could remember until Sam finally broke his silence. "Lilou, my wife, should we just go back? To Grimsbanne, I mean, or maybe, somewhere far away."

"Huh?"

"Let's... run away."

Chapter 264 - Let's Run Away II

"Let's... run away."

My eyes widened as my mind buzzed momentarily. Did I hear what I just heard? Sam? Was he asking me to run away with him? My heart throbbed loudly against my chest as my entire body froze. I did hear him say that.

"Back then, I didn't understand the reason Dyrroth and Lucia chose to run away, leaving everything behind; power, influence, wealth... I didn't understand what's so great to give up those things," Sam

uttered in a melancholic tone as his grip around me trembled. "I supported them just because that was what they desperately wanted, but I honestly thought they had lost their minds due to lust for each other."

I bit my lower lip as I had heard this story at least once or twice. Dyrroth was the late crown prince, the rightful heir of the throne. However, his love for his sister, Lucia, who was at that time, was set to marry, weighed heavier than the crown. Thus, the two eloped.

"But now, I fully understand why they were driven to make that decision." Sam let out another deep exhale that caressed my ears. "It was no secret to us that Dyrroth favored and looked at Lucia differently, but because of his position as the crown prince, his duties must come first. Being the king, the person standing at the top, having a weakness cannot be tolerated. So, my father arranged a marriage for Lucia to keep her out of his sight."

Sam paused as his breathing grew heavier. Now, I'm more concerned about what could have happened to someone unshakable like my husband act so terrified.

"Sam..."

"Dyrroth... that fool was the happiest when I sent them off. Now I understand everything." A soft ridiculing chuckle escaped his mouth as if he found it hilarious that he only understood his brother after all these years.

"Power, influence, and wealth, those things are not easily obtained, but not impossible... happiness and peace of mind are. This palace... the throne and crown, they are not merely bathed with the blood of those innocent and corrupt, but also a reminder of the price they had paid to attain it."

Silence enveloped the two of us as I fully agreed with that. It reminded me of Stefan. I was not so stupid to think he didn't love me, even just for a tiny bit. However, because he was the king, he had to choose between duties and my old self.

So, this story of the late crown prince and the princess was more understandable and relatable. This palace was, indeed, suffocating, and every passing day was just getting worse. Can we really just run away and forget about everything?

"I know by running away, it also means turning our backs on everyone. Our people in Grimsbanne, those who had put their stakes on us, our comfort, and everything." Sam uttered solemnly, gripping my shoulder tightly, but not tight enough to hurt me. "It was cowardly as well, but... I don't want to lose you, my wife."

"Sam." My brows creased as I felt the heaviness and sincerity in his voice.

"I was ready, Lilou. To burn everything, just one word, and I will burn this entire place. However, my desire to put a stop to this unstoppable ordeal is not as strong as to my desire to keep you from harm."

I bit my lower lip and closed my eyes, taking deep breaths before burying my face in his firm chest. "Is running away the only way we can do, Sam?"

"No... but I'm on the brink of madness." Sam hung his head low, resting his forehead against the top of my head. "And I'm about to make an enemy of the entire world... but that won't keep you safe, will it?"



"If we run away... will that keep both of us safe?"

Sam remained silent for a moment, inhaling the natural scent of my hair. "For the meantime, yes. But Stefan will surely search every nook and cranny for you. So we will have to move from place to place."

This time, I was the one who couldn't utter a word. I already knew that Sam had figured my relationship with Stefan, but until now, I hadn't asked him about the myriads of questions I had in mind.

"Sam? Why aren't you mad at me? If you knew about my history with the king, why hadn't you said a word until now?" I asked after mustering the courage to throw the question that had been stuck in my throat.

"Because..." Sam trailed off, not surprised, as if he had anticipated this day to come. "... I can only see your memories, but I don't know about your feelings behind every memory. Did you love him? I know you did, but what kind of love was it? It does not give those little details when peeking into someone else's memories. It only showed what the eyes had witnessed and what the ears had heard."

So, that was the reason, I thought. It made sense.

"And even if I know your feelings behind it, does it matter now? You're my wife whom I wanted to start a family with. What you did before I came into your life had nothing to do with us, also... it's not like I was innocent. I approached you for a reason, not knowing you will be my karma."

Karma, huh?

Sam slowly let me go and held my shoulders. He bent over, searching for my eyes until locking eyes with me.

"Let bygones be bygones. Do you still trust me?" he inquired solemnly, without looking away from me.

"I never lost trust in you, but..." I took a deep breath, biting my lower lip hard. "Are we really going to run away?"

"Do you not want to?"

I took a long time to answer. Of course, I wanted to run away from here. Maybe, I thought, just maybe, this would be the best for all of us. Ditching my clan's plans, forgetting about the palace, the Divine Order... but how about those people in Grimsbanne? The future of those children? I was hesitant.

Sam let out a shallow breath and chuckled bitterly. "You don't have to answer now. It's alright."

I gazed up at Sam and he smiled at me. His eyes, though, had spoken otherwise. He wanted answers now, but he didn't want to force me.

"Sam," I called out of impulse, clasping his chest. "Let's... do that."

"What?"

"I was hesitating because I was thinking about everyone... but they are not as important as you, us."

I knew this was a selfish and cowardly decision, but that's all I wanted. Not the throne, not the power, not the will of my clan, but just a life with my husband and our children. It won't be easy, but with him, we could do it.

"Lilou." Sam's eye softened as a weak smile resurfaced on his lips. He cupped my cheek. His touch was warm.

"I'm sorry you have to go through it," he muttered, an inexplicable glint flickered across his eyes, but I didn't dwell on it too much. "Please forgive your husband."

I shook my head, holding the back of his hand that was on my cheek. "You don't have to apologize. This is a decision I made on my own."

Sam remained silent as he gazed down momentarily before raising his gaze. Again, I noticed the strange melancholy expression in his eyes.

"I will make preparations. I'll be busy for the next three days, and we'll set off in after that," He smiled, nodding encouragingly.

"Yes. Four days it is." I nodded with a smile, throwing out all heroic reasons that could make me waver.

#### Chapter 265 - I Love You Either Way

Right after our talk, we didn't mention it as we resigned to bed. Mildred also returned, but only to announce she did and said nothing further with Sam around.

"Sam?" I rolled to my side of the bed, staring at Sam, who was also lying on his side with his knuckles propped on his temples, facing me.

"Hmm?"

"Which place are you planning to take me to first?" My voice was low, but it was enough for his ears to hear.

Sam pondered for a moment. "In the eastern continent, maybe? People in the west called them barbaric, but they're more than what they had branded them. The easterners had a refined taste for art, their culture is also fascinating and different from ours."

"Did you stay there for a long time?"

"I don't know what you consider, 'long time', but I spent a few years there," Sam stroked my hair before pulling the quilt up to my shoulder. "When we've become mere travelers, you'll see many fascinating things this vast world offers. For example, and an oasis in the middle of the desert, colored lights visible in the night sky, mountains in the middle of the lake, different cultures, beliefs, and the list just goes on."

Listening to him bubbled up the excitement in my heart. We hadn't had this type of talk for a very long time, so thinking about it made me want to listen more.

"Do you speak other languages, as well? How was it traveling from place to place?" I asked with my eyes glimmering.

Sam let out a soft chuckle as he played with my hair. "Well, since I have a long life span, I don't mind staying for a couple of years. Learning the language and absorbing their culture comes naturally."

"Don't get the wrong idea, though." Sam continued, "Discovering things and adventures are thrilling, but traveling can be draining and a hassle."

"As if I was born with a golden spoon." Did he forget I was raised as a peasant?! I literally crawled my way up the ladder... well, it was strange to put it that way, but it was almost like that.

"Right, haha! I remember how dirty you are and how I can smell you from a mile." Sam humored, chuckling gleefully while my expression died down. "You stink... ah!"

I punched his chest lightly with a gloomy frown. "I'm not ashamed of being peasant, but if you say it like that, it makes me feel embarrassed."

"Well, can't you see I'm trying to tell you I loved you even in that state?" Sam exclaimed proudly. "You looked like a witch back then. I almost mistake you as one — ah!"

"Sam!" I pinched his shoulder with my face flushed in red.

"Ah! Ah! No more! No more!"

A sharp exhale escaped my mouth as I let him go. "Do you really have to make fun of me?"

"But I am not, my darling!" Sam cajoled with brows raised. "I was stating facts, I mean, isn't it romantic how my heart throbbed at first sight?"

"I know it's a fact. Just don't laugh like that. It's annoying." I pouted and looked away.

Sam chortled and stroke my cheek with his thumb. "Alright, that's enough teasing."

I glanced at him and see how he was smiling so gently. It had been a while since Sam started acting like himself and not as Hell.

"Sam?" I called, and he raised a brow. "Are you Sam or Hell?"

The corner of his lips curled up into a smile. "Guess."

"Hmm... both?"

"Why, so?" his brow raised higher as he narrowed his eyes.

"I don't know. I feel like you've been acting more like Sam, but there's this part of me that tells me that's not it." I shrugged my shoulders, as it was really hard to tell.

"I see." Sam nodded with a smile. "Either way, does it bother you whether I am Hell or your beloved Sam?"

I shook my head. "Not at all — not even the slightest. I love you either way."

"Good," he intoned as he tapped my forehead lightly. "As long as I'm the only one in here and in here," his finger moved to my chest before he continued, "I'm all good."

"You took so much space in my head and heart I can't even remember other people's names."

"My wife, you know how to make my heart flutter!"

I smirked a bit proudly. "Sam, were you worried before? I mean, were you worried that once I recover my memories, something will change between us?"

"Do you want to know the truth? Or just half of it?" he raised a brow as if I would get disappointed with his answer.

"The truth!" I slapped his chest and glared at him. "Be honest!"

"Well, I'd be lying if I say I was not, but not because I was afraid you will return to Stefan." Sam hummed a long tune as his fingertip traces the bridge of my nose to its tip. "I was more worried that you'd hate me if I locked you up somewhere where no one can take you away from me."

I didn't know what to feel about his reply. The old me who hadn't recovered her memories wouldn't understand his possessiveness, but not the current me. I neither liked nor disliked his answer, though.

Sam continued, "Of course, I might end up letting you be with another man and then kill the both of you."

"Now that's more disturbing," I blurted out but didn't regret it when I realized it. Sam chuckled at my response before he slipped his arms under my neck.

"That's enough, wife. You go to sleep."

"Aren't you going to sleep?" I looked up as I planted my arm over his hip.

"Maybe, maybe not. I don't know." Sam shrugged as he closed his eyes, moving his head to find its comfortable spot on the pillow.

I studied his face and my lips parted, but no words came out. Instead, I kept my thoughts in my head and also closed my eyes. In a few days, I'd bid my goodbye in this damn place, and the more I thought about it, the more my excitement grew than my building anxiety.

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When Lilou had fallen asleep, Samael slowly opened his eyes and a glint immediately flickered across his eyes. The corner of his lips slowly curled up bitterly as his eyes shifted to her sleeping face. Only but him knew the things in his head.

"You shouldn't trust me that much, wife," he said, but his eyes spoke otherwise. "I told you... to always observe."

Chapter 266 - [Bonus ]A Response

Ever since that day, I now found myself counting down the days before the founding celebration. It was now five days until the start of the festival. For the past days, Sam had been very busy, and I knew the reason, and like usual, I did my duties and just repeated everything in a blur.

"The palace had been rather calm despite that the delegations from other countries had arrived," Yul said while he walked me back to my quarters. "I heard the princess of the Cross Kingdom had been spending too much time with the king."

"I heard." Only deaf wouldn't hear about it as everywhere I went, that's all I heard about. "It won't be a surprise if Stefan and the princess came to terms and joined forces."

"And you look rather relaxed about it."

Well, that was because I'm about to bid everyone farewell, but I wouldn't tell Yul about that... or should I? That thought caused me to halt abruptly as a deep exhale escaped my lips before facing him.

Yul furrowed his brows as he stared at me straight in the eye. "Lilou?"

I didn't speak for a moment and studied him. Yul was my blood brother — he was my last kin. Hence, I felt bad about abandoning him after waiting for me in this hellhole all these years.

"Yul." I took a step forward while he tilted his head to the side. "Give me your hand."

I raised my palm, waiting for him to place his hand on it. Yul seemed a little puzzled but still placed his palm on mine.

"Yul." I took a deep breath, sensing if there were people around us. Fortunately, there wasn't. So I opened my eyes and gazed at him solemnly.

"Will come with me?" I asked, and his brows knit even more. "You said you will support me whatever my decision, so..."

"So?"

"If, I..." My hand instinctively squeezed his hand. This was more difficult than I thought. "... if I don't want to do what our clan wants and just, you know, turn my back on it... what will you..."

"You want to run away?"

My breath hitched at his straightforward inquiry. I bit my lip and gazed down, keeping my silence.

"Lilou," Yul called before placing his other hand to our hands, making me raise my head to him. "I told you, I'm merely a pawn and you are my Queen. Thus, whatever decision you make, I will respect it."

"Yul..." A weak smile resurfaced on my lips until his expression suddenly grew solemn.

"However, it won't be easy, Lilou. Entering the palace is easy, but getting out is impossible. Even Hell who had tried to leave this place always finds himself coming back."

I bit my inner lip because deep down, I knew that. Leaving the palace was the easiest step. The chase that would come after was a different case.

"Come with me, Yul. I don't want to leave my only family behind." I squeezed his hand and smiled weakly. "I know it's cowardly, and it's insensitive of me to say all this, knowing that you've endured everything until now. But... I don't want this."

Yul smiled faintly as he raised his other hand and placed it on my head. "Thank you for thinking of me, sister. Your concern and sincerity are good enough for me."

"So, will you come with me?"

He shook his head, closed-lipped. "I'm sorry, but I had to refuse your offer."

"Yul."

"Lilou, look at me." Yul bent over as he stared at me straight in the eye. "I told you I will protect you, no matter what. It's not that I don't want to come with you, but someone had to stay behind and

keep an eye on everything. Claude's parents, Lucia and Dyrroth, made the same decision, and I had to witness their deaths."

My eyes dilated as that news was new to me. I've been wondering whose child Claude was, but it wasn't my top priority, so I didn't ask. Now that I thought about it, Claude had told me about his parent's death in the past.

"That happened to them because they didn't know what was happening in here. I will keep in touch if leaving is your final decision." Yul explained, giving me mixed emotions as I gripped his hand tightly.

"Yul, how can you —"

"It's my decision." He smiled and stroked my hair. "As I've said, you, considering me as your family, is good enough for me. I am doing this not because I'm your subject, but because you are my sister."

Yul and I stared at each other for a long time. It was painful to hear that kind response despite my insensitive, cowardly, and selfish words. But there was no turning back now. I had agreed with Sam, and I was prepared to leave everything behind.

"Don't feel sorry for me, sister." He let out a soft chuckle as if he could read my thoughts.

"Sometimes, choosing what is right and what makes you happy is hard. But know that I made this decision because it is what makes me happy. I hope your decision will make you happy as well."

"Yes." I nodded as my eyes softened while staring at his pair of calm azure eyes.

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When Yul left, Mildred was waiting for me in my chambers. Lena had asked me permission to leave as she had to go to her hometown and would return before the founding week. Her timing was perfect as I had planned as well, before the founding week.

"My lady." Mildred followed me behind after she shut the door. I stopped when I was in the middle of the room and faced her.

"Someone from the Spade Kingdom came earlier to give you this." She handed a letter with Zero's family seal on it.

The corner of my lips curled up as I immediately tore it apart to read it. My smirk stretched wider upon skimming through it, before I trudged towards the desk, and hovered it over the candelabra, burning it.

"Mildred, I will go out tonight," I informed her as I faced her.

Her expression was aghast, wide-eye. "But my lady, what will I tell to His Grace if he asked me where were you?"

"I will return as soon as possible. Tell him if ever he returned I was on the training grounds." I explained and waved.

"My lady... what are you... yes, my lady." Mildred hesitated but ended up just not prying on things too much.

My eyes glinted as they squinted. Zero... he had answered my letter and agreed to meet.

'Sam proposed our current plan after meeting that guy.' I thought as my eyes sharpened. 'I don't want to know whatever they had discussed, but what I need to do is to refrain him from doing something stupid before the founding week.'

"Just one more day and night, Lilou... you'll be free," I whispered while my hand curved into a ball.

#### Chapter 267 - Secret Meeting

Once again, I snuck out of the palace, letting no one know about it aside from Mildred. From Zero's letter, he would meet me in that underground meeting room where we first met. Since it was just the two of us, I came prepared.

'I'll just kill him if he pulls off something funny,' I told myself as I raised my hand, about to knock on the door. However, before I could, the door creaked open from the inside.

My eyes slowly raised and caught the playful smirk on his lips. "That's unexpected, but thank you, Your Majesty."

"I was looking forward to meeting you, Duchess." He grinned as he stepped to the side to make way. "Did I look excited about our... date?"

"Date?" I chuckled as I trudged in. "Sure, call this however you liked."

"I've charmed too many women in my life, but your nonchalance breaks my heart, dear." His tone was playful as he closed the door and followed me in.

"You must've had a frail heart then, Your Majesty." I pulled down my hood and glanced at him.

"That's also a new discovery for me." He smiled and beckoned me to sit. "I'll make you some tea. Please, sit and get yourself comfortable."

"Thank you." I bowed slightly and trudged towards the chair while Zero busied himself by preparing tea.

I studied him before scanning the room. There was not a single person here, but I knew someone was just around the corner, protecting him in the dark. I would've brought Yul with me, but our increasing time together would surely garner unwanted attention.

'Even if Zero had ulterior motives, he wouldn't cross me just yet,' I thought as I watched him approach the table with a tea set on the tray.

"Here." Zero happily offered me a cup of tea before taking his, sitting comfortably in the chair across from me.

I locked eyes with him for a moment and offered a weak smile. "Thank you."

"It's nothing, my dear. I can make you different teas," He humored as he quirked a brow. "Just visit me anytime, and I will always make time for you."

My lips parted, but no words came out. I wanted to tell him how I underestimated his infamy, but never mind. I'll play along with him just a bit more.

"My Duchess, how can you be so cold with your fiance?" he gasped with my lack of response.

"I'm married," I answered after a sip, and placed the teacup on the saucer. "I think you already know the reason I asked you to meet me in secret."

Zero let out a low and soft chuckle. "Yes. You want to break our engagement, correct?"

My eyes narrowed as I couldn't hide my dismay flickering across my eyes. How could my marriage with Sam not bother him? Even if I was engaged to him even before I was born, there were other means of sealing this alliance aside from marriage.

"My dear Duchess, do you hate the idea that much?"

"To be frank, I do. I suppose you had heard about the environment I was raised in, so even if you don't care about my marriage, I do." My eyes were full of conviction as they were fixed on him. "You don't understand, but it feels awkward when you are showing a bit of affection to a married woman."

"Haha! You're frank, indeed, but yes, I do not understand what's so wrong in charming a married woman."

I opened my mouth to enlighten him, but I figured it was pointless. Arguing with him about it would be an endless discussion and a waste of time.

"Duchess, I have this habit that the more challenging something or someone gets, the more determined I am to have it." Zero smiled, but his eyes glinted. "However, since we are allies, I am trying to respect your relationship with the duke."

"If the vessel of the core is a woman, a marriage will seal the alliance. But, if it was a man..." I raised a brow and cocked my head to the side. "... I know there is a separate way for that."

The corner of his lips curled up into a smirk. "You're correct. If it was a man, he will swear allegiance to me by forming a blood contract."

"A blood contract?"

"That he and I will be sworn brothers. Just like how sire works, we will blindly support each other. Your clan is a bit cunning, you know." Zero explained before sipping on his tea.

Sire... that word had grown painful in my ear. By recovering my memories and knowing where my core at, Stefan's words wouldn't be as powerful as they were initially. However, to get myself involved in something that was similar to that was the last thing I would do.

"Of course, you will not want that, and neither do I," Zero continued. "Supporting someone blindly is the last thing you and I want."

"That's why you want this marriage?"

Zero nodded and smiled politely. "With our current plans for you to usurp the throne and we starting an empire, you can always keep your husband as your lover. I do not mind sharing."

'Well, you better asked my husband about that.' I chuckled, as my husband was not the type of person who wouldn't even share what was his, even just for an example.

"I keep wondering ever since our first meeting, which kingdom will absorb which?" I asked, diverting the subject as I might flip the table at him if it continued. "Are you perhaps, thinking, that once I usurp the throne, it'll be easy for your kingdom to build an empire by putting our kingdom under your reign first?"



His expression brightened up, and that was enough of an answer for me. I knew it. After a long of pondering, I knew that was his plan all along. In conquering territories, one should conquer the strongest threat, so it would be easy to unify the other lands, since many smaller kingdoms would avoid war.

"Are you also thinking of doing the same, my Duchess?" he asked with an amused smirk, and I only smiled back, and kept my silence.

It would be the other way around if my plans didn't change. However, I would have to keep that as a secret and keep making him believe about my 'ambition'.

"On the first day of the founding week, I will fill the seat of the Bloodfang that had been empty for many years," I said as I assisted myself up. "Until then, I don't want a word about this engagement or this blood contract."

#### Chapter 268 - Secret Meeting II

"On the first day of the founding week, I will fill the seat of the Bloodfang that had been empty for many years," I said as I assisted myself up. "Until then, I don't want a word about this engagement or this blood contract."

I walked away as I had said my piece, but stopped after taking a few steps upon hearing his remarks.

"My Duchess, I already forgot how long has it been since someone dared ordered me around. However, the palace seemed to have nurtured people who had this habit."

My lips curled up into a smirk before I turned my head back. "Were you offended? Why haven't you berated the king about this discourtesy of his people?"

Zero chuckled, placing his palm on the armrest, and pushed himself up. He walked towards me, while I fought the urge to take a step back, keeping my brave exterior.

"It's because I am your fiance, my Duchess." He bent over me with his eyes glinting. "The only person who can give you that throne. Do you believe your husband will support you in usurping the throne?"

"Well, he had kept me hidden all these years. Alas, things had changed. But even so, do I need his support for this conquest? I had you."

"Well, that is correct. You only need me in this conquest." He chortled as his eyes studied my face. "Just me, so why don't you treat me well, my Duchess?"

His brow raised before squinting his eyes, raising his hand to touch me. However, before he could, I placed my forefinger on his palm.

"It's a fact that I will have to need your support in this plan, but don't you also think you need me for your dream empire as well?" I inquired, eyebrow raised. "This situation gives us the same benefit, Your Majesty. Don't make it sound like you are doing me a favor when we're merely acting in our best interest."

"Your straightforwardness is already growing in my heart."

"If you still want this to happen, keep aggravating the people as much as you pleased, but take your hands off of my husband." This time, my eyes darkened as my voice firmed. "Be it out of love or something else, the only person who may touch him is me, Your Majesty."

"Be it love or something else? I'm intrigued."

"You don't have to." I chuckled as I pushed his hand down by my finger. "I'm just not like you, Your Majesty. I don't enjoy sharing. Be it wanting someone or getting rid of someone, I want to do it myself."

"That was quite something. I now believe opposite attracts."

I ignored his teasing. "I'm sorry if you find me rude, but as I've said, I was raised in a different environment where manners and tact in the palace don't apply to me." I smiled faintly and watched him draw his head back. "I'm just glad we have other options to keep this alliance."

Zero didn't reply anymore and just smiled. So, I walked away and left him alone.

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That was what my short meeting with Zero concluded. By showing him my ambition to usurp the throne still remained, he wouldn't be suspicious about my plan. I just had to survive tomorrow and... it would be over.

"Yes, everything will be over," I whispered, staring at the ceiling while I lied flat on the bed. "Sam didn't return tonight and Mildred said no one came looking for me."

If this kept up, we wouldn't have a problem until the day after tomorrow. "I wonder what is Sam doing? Just what kind of preparation was he doing?"

I brood over it with my eyes closed, but I couldn't think of any. Hence, I tried to get some sleep. If I could sleep for an entire day and wake up the day after tomorrow, it would be even better.

'For some reason, the closer our plan approaches, the more I feel anxious.' I didn't know if this was because I kept thinking if our plan would work out well, or because of something else. Either way, I wouldn't know until the day arrives.

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"Your Majesty, you're still here?" Tristan Willow suddenly appeared in their underground meeting room and saw Zero was still there. He stared at his king, who was busy drawing something on his desk.

"Tristan, you should leave for now," Zero uttered without taking his eyes off of his sketch. "Your scent is mixing along with hers."

"Your Majesty, the Duchess will become your strongest supporter. Even though we can't trust her, you shouldn't..." Tristan trailed off as Zero raised his head, eyes glinting menacingly.

"She may be my strongest support but also the biggest threat," Zero corrected in a knowing tone. His eyes fell on the sketch and then shifted to the rest of the sketches, scattered on the desk.

"Either way, I just had to make sure everything will go as planned," He added as the corner of his lips curled up into a smirk. "Now that I think about it, the duchess and the duke of Grimsbanne are matched made in heaven. They are both arrogant."

Tristan stared at Zero's twisted expression and was a bit worried about it. It had been a while since Zero sketched something... no, it had been centuries. So for Zero to sketch now of all times, the person whom he was using as a model would surely face disaster.

"What do you think, Tristan?" Zero raised the sketch and showed it to him. "Do you think this is the body she was hiding behind her uniform?"

Tristan narrowed his eyes and could immediately tell who it was. Lilou. It was a sketch of her lying naked. He shifted his eyes, stretching his neck to check the other sketches. Zero's obsession was triggered, as all of them were Lilou in different poses and angles.

"Your Majesty, about Princess Beatrice..." He paused, studying Zero's indifferent expression.

"What about her?"

"It seems she is planning something with the king of this land." Tristan bit his tongue as he merely wanted to test Zero, but it seemed the princess of the Cross kingdom didn't have the same effect as before.

"Everyone was planning something, Tristan." Zero chuckled as he leaned back in his chair comfortably, staring at the sketch in his hand. "The duchess... still didn't know the plan of her clan. Before she knows about it, we have to move now before the start of the founding celebration."

"Your Majesty, do you mean..."

Zero smiled as he cast him a look. "I want to express my newfound love to my fiancée."

Tristan hung his head low but said nothing. If he was correct, Zero's next order would be something huge... something planned.

"I want to give her something... something she won't forget." Zero chuckled as he set his eyes at Lilou's sketch once again before he tore it apart slowly. "Bring me the duke's head."

Chapter 269 - Shall We Have An Affair?

In the middle of the night, I opened my eyes, only to see it was still dark. My throat felt parched and I dragged myself to sit up straight, looking around at the dim room.

'Sam didn't return tonight again.' I thought as I rubbed my eyes. I checked the side table, but a glass of water wasn't there.

Lena hadn't been here, and I dismissed Mildred immediately earlier. A deep sigh slipped past my lips as my urge to drink water increased.

'I'll just grab one, then.' I told myself, flinging my legs out of the bed, and walked towards the door. The third prince's palace was like a cold palace, as it was almost deserted of servants. I preferred the quietness, though, and the privacy of the lack of servants.

'The last time I fetched some water in the middle of the night, I overheard a conversation I didn't want to hear.' That memory of that night when Cassara snuck here suddenly hovered over my head as my hand reached for the door handle. 'I just wish nothing like that will happen.'

With that thought in mind, I opened the door, hearing its loud creaking noise. As soon as I did, I once again questioned whether God ever listened to my prayers, or it was just my terrible luck.

"What are you doing here?" I asked and felt a painful scratch in my throat while my eyes panned up to see the person standing in front of my chambers — in the middle of the night.

Stefan.

His fiery crimson eyes met mine, making me flinch at the aura he exuded. "Where are you going?"

My heart suddenly throbbed loudly against my chest. Was he asking me about our plan to run away? Or was he merely asking me where I planned to go in the middle of the night? I would think it was the latter immediately if Sam and I didn't have this secret plan!

"Why are you still awake?" he asked once again, receiving no response from me.

A light scoff slipped past my lips as I raised my chin. "Your Majesty, I don't think you should be the one asking that question. You are standing in front of my chambers in the middle of the night, so, shouldn't it be more logical for me to know what are you doing in front of my chambers?"

"I want to talk to you."

As if. I mentally rolled my eyes. "You can always summon me if it's that important, Your Majesty."

Stefan didn't speak anymore and just took a step forward. His action made me step back, but my brows furrowed upon getting a whiff of wine.

"Are you drunk, Your Majesty?" I asked as I sniffed harder and he reeked of alcohol. Just how many barrels of wine did he consume to be drunk and come here? Had he lost his mind?

"Lilou." Stefan placed his palm against the door and the other on the jamb. "Let me in."

"Your Majesty, have you lost your mind?!" I yelled in disbelief, grinding my teeth. "Even if you are the king, how can you request to stay inside a married woman's room? Your brother's wife, of all people."

"My brother's wife... right." A ridiculing chuckle escaped his mouth as he hung his head low, shaking it lightly. "Does it matter, though?"

My jaw tightened as my hand clenched. 'Just one more day and night, Lilou. Don't let him know you already retrieved your memories.' My mind advised as I fought the urge of calling out Lakresha to slice him in half.

I took a deep breath and calmed myself. "If you wish to rest in here, then I shall stay in the guest room."

I opened the door wide and stepped aside. Avoiding any confrontation was my top priority... as long as he wouldn't cross the line further.

"Can you join me?" he requested, making me cringe in dismay. "I need some company tonight."

"Your Majesty, I don't want to be rude, but us, talking right now, considering how late it is, can cause a misunderstanding." I breathed out sharply, but couldn't conceal the contempt in my eyes.

"Our palace is not as grand as the main palace, but I hope this humble place can still give you some comfort."

I bowed politely before gliding my way to the side discreetly. If he planned to do something to me, he wouldn't just stand outside my chambers. He could've just trudged in, but he didn't.

Just as I walked past him, Stefan suddenly grabbed my wrist and spun me around to face him. "If you go now, I will really lose my mind."

My mouth immediately opened, as I was ready to argue with him. However, I noticed how he looked so wasted and desperate.

"I don't plan on doing anything to you... I just need some company." Stefan's eyes glimmered with longing as if he was desperate to be heard. "So, stay... will you?"

My pupils constricted as my eyes darkened hearing his last remarks. STAY? I suppressed the hysterical laughter that was tempting to come out from me, as those words were akin to a key to opening a bitter memory I purposely buried.

"Please." I exhaled and gazed down, hiding the evident hatred on my face. "Let me go."

I thought I could be indifferent to him. However, it was hard to ignore everything he had done in the past now that he was right in front of me... now that he was acting so shameless in front of the person who promised to kill him if he ever showed his face once again.

"I don't care if anyone misunderstands us right now. I even prefer it. I think I really lost my mind..." His grip around my wrist tightened as he took a step forward while I gazed up at him. Stefan's eyes were blazing red as they stared into my eyes as if they could even penetrate my soul.

He bent over, inching closed as he stressed each word. "Say... shall we have an affair?"

Chapter 270 - A Piece Of Shit

"Say... shall we have an affair?"

My eyes slowly grew wide as my mind stopped functioning for a second. His words just killed half of my brain cells. Stefan really lost it, did he?

"I never liked sharing, but having some is better than having none."

"!!!" Did he leave his brain somewhere? Or was this just the alcohol? Either way, his words still stung my heart.

'Why, now?' my mind asked in disbelief.

"I asked you before, if I met you first, loved you first, cherished you first... and chose you, do you think we will be in this situation?" he inquired, with his grip tightening.

I stared at him for a moment, clenching my teeth as hard as I could. "I will pretend I didn't hear you, Your Majesty. Please let me go."

Stefan glanced at my wrist as I tried to pull it away, but he clutched even tighter. He shifted his eyes back to me while the corner of his lips curled up.

"Do I really have to let you go? Again?"

"Your Majesty, I don't understand why you are acting like this. However, you're hurting me." My eyes sharpened as my hand balled into a fist. "Please. Let me go or I might commit treason."

"By committing treason, do you mean you will kill?"

"Definitely." My answer came out as quick as a bolt of lightning.

I just wanted him to let me be, just like what he did for the past seven years after abandoning me. If he had chosen his duties over me, he should keep acting that way until the end. There was no need for us to live in the past as what happened in the past shall remain where they belonged.

If only I could say that aloud, I would've done it. But doing so would expose the fact that I retrieved my stolen memories.

"I don't want to do this, but let's go inside." Stefan let me go and cocked his head towards the room.

"Have you been listening —!" my breath hitched as my eyes dilated. He was testing me by the power of sire! If I didn't listen to him, he would know that his words didn't influence me anymore.

"Hah! Haha!" A scoff followed by a ridiculing laugh escaped my mouth as the little respect I had for him pummeled six feet under the ground. "Sure. Let's go in."

My tone laced with clear dismay as I ground my teeth and stormed my way inside. I pinched the bridge of my nose as I stopped in the middle of the room while hearing the door close.

"You really are a scum, a trash, and a piece of shit," I mumbled as my patience started to run thin.

"I can hear you."

I turned my head back to him. "Good. I want you to hear it."

"Calm down and take a sit." Stefan only glanced at me nonchalantly as he perked his chin towards the set of divans in the room.

The nerve to act as if this was his room. I watched Stefan walked towards the long divan and plopped his butt down comfortably.

'Calm down, Lilou. Just play along. Calm down.' I told myself and dragged my feet towards the opposite sofa to sit on.

Stefan and I didn't speak for a very, very long time. He was just there, staring at me while blinking ever so slowly.

"Your Majesty, I am a human who needs some sleep." I broke the silence that dawned upon us when I couldn't take it anymore.

"Then sleep."

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. "How dare I sleep in the presence of the king?"

"The king you called a scum? A trash? And a piece of shit?" Stefan raised a brow and cocked his head to the side. "You really are very polite, huh?"

"This jer..." I bit my tongue, suppressing the urge to curse him like how I used to do.

Stefan chuckled in amusement. "Even before, you really are quite entertaining to watch."

"Even before...?" I pointed out, despite knowing what he meant. "... what do you mean by that, Your Majesty?"

"Back when we're still lovers?"

"Lovers?" I scoffed and gazed at him with disdain. Although he wasn't lying, both, and I knew that our relationship was barely called a relationship between lovers. It just sort of ended up that way.

"You can't remember it, but you used to cling to me as if I was your dear life." Stefan leaned back, crossing his arms with his eyes still on me. "Those times that you only look in my direction. Only smile for me, and would give your life to me."

"I don't remember any of them." I denied it without batting an eye. "Are you sure you're not mistaking me for someone else?"

"Are you deaf? I just told you, you can't remember it right now." Stefan cast me a look of pity that was surely aggravating.

A defeated sigh slipped past my lips. "If I can't remember it, that only means you had robbed it from me. So, why are you telling me that now?"

"I don't know? Maybe, because I dropped my brain on the way here."

"Maybe? But I can tell that's what happened for sure?"

"You make me want to think you are just denying not to remember, Lilou." My breath hitched with his remarks. "But that's impossible... right? I guess a person's nature is hard to change."

"Your Majesty, how can you expect me to be polite when you are inside my room in the middle of the night? Refrained me from fetching water to drink, making me stay up late, and used to power of sire to make me obey?"

"You're right. You always hate being underestimated and people deciding for you." He nodded in understanding, making me heave a sigh of relief. "Anyway, I came here to seduce you."

My expression finally bid me goodbye. "Did you consider failing?"

"I didn't. I just know I will seduce you and fail." Stefan shrugged, making me wonder if he finally sobered up.

"Good."

Stefan quirked a brow as he gazed at me. "I saw Hell's future," He said, breaking the silence before it would consume us.

"Sam?"

"Mhm. I saw his head... served to you on a silver platter."