

The Duke 51

Chapter 51 - Proceed With Caution

I watched his solemn front as we headed towards our bed chamber. My heart kept pounding along with the echoes of his hurried footsteps.

When we were in front of our bed chambers, I gulped a mouthful of air. Once we entered this room, things unknown to me would happen.

Yet, I didn't feel scared. Sam wouldn't hurt me — no one would.

"My lord,"

Suddenly, Fabian's voice approached us from the side. I peeked to see this odd, solemn look plastered on his face.

Fabian was usually smiling politely. He smiled too much that his eyes were always squinting. But now, I could see the inked black orbs staring at us.

"You should have a good reason for interrupting me, Fabian."

Not a bit appeased by this unwelcome interruption, Sam moved his head in Fabian's direction. I darted my eyes from Sam and Fabian; both were staring at each other solemnly.

"My lord, I had prepared my grave for a long time. My apologies for my audacity. But, if his lordship plans to cheat his wedding night, please hear this humble one." Fabian beckoned a bow, his palm on his chest.

"Speak."

"I'm certain the Duke knows that her ladyship is human. As her ladyship's legal adviser, I forbid you to do so..."

"You forbid me?" Before Fabian could finish his sentence, Sam's fangs grew longer.

"Sam..." I tugged his chest, sensing the danger emanating from him.

I knew Sam wouldn't do such an absurd thing as to hurt Fabian. But, I didn't want to cause their peaceful relation to change because of... me.

"Mister Fabian, please don't blame his lordship. I gave him consent." I explained, moving my head towards Fabian.

"I know, my lady. That is why I could not neglect my duties as your legal adviser and the duke's servant."

"Are you worried I'd hurt her?" Sam's tone was flat and cold, sounding utterly new to me.

"No, my lord. This humble one is aware of the duke's fondness to her ladyship. Please hear me, my lord. I mean no harm." Fabian explained, causing Sam's brows to furrow.

"I don't have time for fancy pleasantries. Tell me the bottom line." Sam urged, giving Fabian another chance.

Please, Mister Fabian... don't anger the duke. I wished internally, knowing Fabian would bury himself tonight if the duke told him so.

"As I've said, as her ladyship's legal adviser, I forbid you from doing what I believed his lordship's plans tonight." Fabian paused as he took a deep breath.

This time, Sam didn't interrupt him. Still, I saw his jaw tightened as his eyes glinted with killing intent.

"Unless, you follow the proper procedure."

When Fabian's last remarks reached our ear, I furrowed my brows. Instinctively, I raised my gaze to Sam once again.

His expression changed, confused. Sam didn't know what Fabian was talking about?

"What do you mean?" asked Sam, and I moved my gaze to Fabian.

"Since her ladyship is human without agreeing a pact with you, we have to prepare her body: cleanse her from head to toe and let her drink a drop of my blood."

My already furrowed brows knitted even more. Did he say I need to drink his blood? What?

"Presumptuous!" Unlike me who was confused, Sam's voice thundered, which nearly made me jolt.

"Would you rather let her drink your blood, my lord?" Unfazed, Fabian raised his chin bravely.

Sam scoffed, as if he felt utterly insulted by Fabian's suggestion. I'm not a vampire. Since blood was essential to them, perhaps drinking blood of someone had a different meaning to them.

"I know you don't have intentions of hurting her ladyship. However, her frail body wouldn't be able to handle a vampire's heightened emotion and stamina. Would you risk it, my lord?"

Fabian pried. His eyes never left Sam's. Upon his last remarks, Sam remained silent.

I'm confused.

"No — no need." To my surprised, Sam backed down.

Huh?

His conceding tone caught my attention. I glanced at him once again, furrowing my brows upon seeing him let out a deep sigh.

"No need to send the maid servants. I'll clean her myself."

"Then, do I need to prepare my blood?"

"No. Nothing will happen." Sam answered. Looking at me with eyes full of gloom.

My heart instantly clenched upon seeing his pair of melancholic eyes. It was as if he had realized a painful truth.

"Then, I thanked his lordship for everything. This servant will —"

"You don't have to bury yourself tonight. You did it for her, I understand now." Sam muttered, kicking the door opened, and we trudged inside.

When Samael entered their bed chambers with Lilou in his arms, he kicked it closed.

Fabian stared at the shut door momentarily. He sighed heavily, shaking his head. He then turned around, walking away from the corridor.

Upon reaching the end of the corridor, Rufus was leaning over the wall. His arms crossed, giving Fabian a side eye.

"You failed." Rufus stated in a flat tone.

Slowly, Fabian raised his head. His solemn expression gradually returned to a smile.

"It's not a matter of failing or winning, Sir."

"Then, what is? If you risked your life speaking the duke's most hated word, forbid, and dared ask him to give your blood to her, showing you are hers to claim. What is your goal?" Rufus arched his right brow.

Even though they were brothers, each had unique characteristics and understanding of things. Rufus' actions were far different from his brother.

Thus, it intrigued him what were Fabian's goals for purposely hitting Samael's nerves.

"I have spent most of the time with the future duchess since she arrived here. Hence, I'm aware of how kind and naive she can be." Fabian explained with a subtle smile.

"While you, Sir, you've known the Duke more than anyone. Thus, you knew how terrifying he is as a vampire. But at the same time, he had a heart of gold far more humane than humans."

"Your point?" Rufus furrowed his brows as he narrowed his eyes.

"I am merely trying to remind them of their racial differences." Fabian's smile grew brighter. "So they can proceed with caution."

"Huh, you've gone soft playing as a butler, brother."

"You're here because you're also worried for her ladyship, aren't you, sir?"

"No. I'm worried about the duke accidentally killing her. I don't want him losing his rational and taking out his anger on the capital. Worse, forcing himself into an eternal slumber." Rufus scoffed as he lightly shook his head.

"Have more faith with our duke and the future duchess, Brother." Fabian chuckled before resuming in his strides.

As Fabian walked away, Rufus glanced at his back and sighed.

"The future monarchs, you mean?"

Chapter 52 - Do You Love Me, Sam?

I pursed my lips as Sam put me down on the edge of the bed.

"I'll prepare your bath." He said, standing up as he headed to prepare my bath.

I watched his back, noticing his change of demeanor. What did I miss between the lines?

Usually, Sam was arrogant and full of life. He had hurried back here to claim me as his.

However, after his brief argument with Fabian, he just changed completely. It was as if he had a lot of things in his mind, weighing him down currently.

Fabian used to tell me stories about the duke. In every tale of the duke, I had often noticed Fabian's adoration and respect towards the duke.

Yet he had stood up to him. What's more shocking was Sam conceded.

Sam seemed to be the type of person who wouldn't concede to anyone. But he did.

Was it because of me? If I understood them correctly, Sam admitted Fabian said and courageously stood up to him for my well-being.

Why? What am I missing?

While I was deep in my thoughts, Sam's voice snapped me back to the current lapse.

"They had prepared warm water for you." He said as he approached.

Slowly, I gazed up at him. "You will bathe me?"

"You don't want to?"

"How about you?" I asked, biting my tongue upon realizing my indirect invitation.

"You wouldn't mind sharing?" He arched his brow, yet his voice toneless.

I held back my immediate answer. Would I mind standing bare in front of him?

Well, I stood bare before the maid servants. With him, perhaps, it would be the same?

"I wouldn't know unless we do." I answered timidly.

Sam let out a sigh. He shook his head lightly, scratching his temple with his finger.

"I just decided not to touch you, but when you say words like that, you make that task harder." He shot me a frown. "Come. I'll carry you to the bath."

With that, Sam carried me towards the private room where I bathe and get dressed. The tub was placed in the middle. The steam streamed up into a mist, giving a warm atmosphere.

Slowly, Sam put me down, assisting me as I stood on my feet. When I was standing before him, his eyes scanned my dress.

"How do they..." He murmured, figuring out how to undress me.

Seeing him struggle made me smile. I wonder what would be his reaction upon witnessing the layers of clothes I wore.

"You wouldn't mind if I rip it apart, would you?" He clicked his tongue as he raised his gaze back to mine.

I shook my head. My hand reached to him, guiding his hands carefully as I turned around.

"You start from here," I said in a low tone as I brushed my hair from my back over my shoulder.

"Oh," He uttered.

I bit my lower lip as I felt his hand started unfastening the straps and buttons of my dress.

"I feel like I'm torturing myself." He muttered under his breath, successfully removing my dress as he welcomed another layer beneath.

"My lord?" I called out as he started loosening my corset.

"Hmm?"

"What did Mister Fabian mean?" I asked.

There was a long silence between us. I waited patiently, giving him time to explain the problem I missed reading between the lines.

"He is saying your human body might not handle it. So, he offered to give a part of him to you." After the long silence, Sam finally spoke.

"Part of him... to me?"

"By drinking a drop of his blood, it will grant you strength to keep up with my lust. You know a vampire can fuck for days. Sometimes, weeks." Sam explained, but it made little sense.

Fabian had explained that word, fuck — when I asked him about it. Heaven knows how that moment made me flush with beet red out of embarrassment.

Still, hearing it from Sam didn't give the same feeling. What I didn't understand was something else.

"Why did you get mad at him, then? If drinking his blood will boost me up, I don't understand what's wrong." I queried back, trying to make sense of his explanation and action.

"Because if you do, his life is yours to claim. In vampire's perspective, that's akin to making out. There's also a little possibility you'll get sired because a small portion of my life force is what's keeping him alive."

"Make out...? Sired?"

"If you are sired to him, that means you'd do everything for him. Even if it's against your morals or rational, you'd only yearn for him. It's basically a fatal, unbreakable attraction that even I couldn't fight."

After his explanation, silence ensued once again. What a frightening attraction.

Soon, he successfully loosened my corset and removed it. Taking his precious time as he removed the rest until I stood in my chemise.

Before he could proceed, I slowly turned around and faced him.

"This is the last one?" He asked with disinterest.

But I only looked at him in silence. I watched as he raised his brow, tilting his head to the side.

"I don't want to get fucked." After a moment of silence, I uttered.

"I won't." He reassured after taking a deep breath and exhaled it sharply. "I know my limits."

"Fucking comes from lust?" I queried, swallowing down to sooth my drying throat.

"Yes." He nodded.

"How about love?" I asked, not waiting for him to recover from my queries.

"Huh?"

"You kissed me." I said. "Did it come from lust or love?"

Perhaps it was the thought of being sired against my will gave me an odd courage to confront him. I breathed heavily, waiting for his response.

I didn't want to be sired, nor I wanted to get fucked for days.

"I do not know how tormenting it is being fucked for days that could lead to my death. But, if my understanding is correct, I won't die if you don't fuck me out of heightened lust, right?" I expressed and sought for clarification.

Sam remained silent, his eyes glinting with fascination and surprise. Again, I took a deep breath to have the courage to express my heart.

"I gave you consent because I like you... no, I love you." I paused, stabilizing my ragged breathing.

"Do you love me, Sam? Or do you lust for me?"

Chapter 53 - You're Not Perfect, Mister Fabian Is.

"Do you love me, Sam?"

There was a moment of utter silence between us. I said it and also asked him.

I never denied him. It was my heart, which I denied for a very long time.

I didn't know when it started or how it began. What I knew was no one had made me felt like this aside from him.

That night he came into my life. I wouldn't deny he frightened me out of my wits. Neither I would deny his action brought suspicion in my heart.

However, as time goes by, I learned to appreciate his small act of kindness. I kept my promise that night; that night he captured someone else's heart and shattered it into smithereens.

That night he asked me to see him as a man; I never saw him otherwise since then. I merely pretended and tricked my thoughts, trying to avoid it.

But ever since that night, I had taken notice of his sweet gestures and reserved actions towards me. Everything etched in my mind that now it was all crowding my head.

This may not be the perfect time to confess. This may not be the same, just like those fairy tales I've read. Our story might not end with a happily ever after.

But... does it matter?

Sam had time; a very long time to live. As for me? My lifespan was uncertain.

I'm tired of restraining myself. Fighting my own feelings drained me. Now, everything I've bottled up overflowed; I couldn't stop.

I wanted him, nothing but him. Not for lust — whatever that was. But for love.

I never considered our kiss as lust. Even when my body said otherwise, I knew I wouldn't do it with someone else.

Everything I did until this point, it was all in the name of love. I had took a while, but now I realized I'm in love with him.

"Do I love you?" After a long time, Sam repeated the question.

I said nothing. My eyes held his gaze, unmoving.

If he said yes, then I trust him. If he was lying, I would still entrust my life to him. If it was a no, then...

That would hurt, I guess.

"Do you know why you're still alive now, having a conversation with me?" Instead of a direct answer, Sam asked with a faint sigh.

"I killed a few noble clans for the crime of taking human as slaves, having a farm of humans as their livestocks, and turning humans into abnormal monsters. Those things are normal in the capital; I was raised to overlook at those what they call irrelevant matters."

My brows furrowed. I never heard of those. Out of habit, I bit my inner lip lightly. Why was he telling me all these vile things his kind does?

"I watched you struggle to teach those kids in the field. Despite knowing you have limited knowledge, that didn't hinder you on educating them." Sam paused as he took a step forward.

He continued. "Noble ladies didn't have the privilege to do as they pleased. Even my sisters are meant to be political tools for the king to expand his power. They never had the privilege to ride a horse or dream of having a career."

"But you..." He trailed off as his hand slowly cupped my cheek. His eyes still burning with a touch of affection mixing within.

"I want to give you the freedom to choose. Alas, I'm a selfish man and limited that freedom from everything else aside from a man of your choice."

After tightening my jaw, I spoke. "And I chose you."

"I'm a hypocrite. A jester." He replied almost immediately.

"Then, I'm handing my heart to a jester."

I answered back, boldly. My hands balled into a fist, fighting his stubbornness with my stubbornness.

"Are you trying to sabotage yourself by saying this? You could have said you the feeling is not mutual, my lord."

I gulped down as my heart convulsed. I had been brazen. I might as well keep it till the end.

"No, no, Love." Sam shook his head lightly, letting out a sigh.

The next second, he slowly leaned his forehead with his eyes closed.

"I'm saying I'm not perfect." He breathed his words out heavily.

Upon hearing him remarked, the side of my lips subtly curled up.

"I never said you are; Mister Fabian is, though."

I said as I slowly closed my eyes. I reached for his hand that was cupping my cheek, leaning to it to feel his warmth.

"Fabian? Do you like him? Tell me so you can start mourning for him." He whispered.

I let out a brief chuckle. "I would never fall for a perfect man."

Again, silence enveloped us. Still, his presence had never felt so strong like now. After a long forever, he spoke.

"What if I'd end up hurting you?" He asked in a low tone.

"Then, I'd tell you." I whispered back as I slowly opened my eyes.

Simultaneously, Sam also opened his eyes. He drew back slightly. His eyes never left mine.

"Aren't you afraid these hands will push you to your death?"

Silly. What a silly question from someone who told me he would chop me up so he wouldn't worry about food.

"Bury me alongside my shack. Mourn for me for a year and carry on with your life. I'll be haunting you, so travel the world for me to see it." I smiled, hiding the urge to giggle at my last sentence.

"You claimed me that night as yours. My life and death are yours to keep. Yet, you let me see life differently." I took another deep breath, carefully standing on the tip of my toes.

"I'm aware my life and death were yours to keep. But, I entrust that to you. Can't you trust yourself?"

I leaned in, closing the gap between us.

"I don't, but I'll try." He whispered as I saw him lean down, welcoming my lips once again.

But before our lips could meet, I halted.

"But you haven't answered me. Do you love me?"

I didn't see it with my own eyes, but I felt him smirk.

"If I had to save between you and the entire world, I would choose you." He whispered back, his arms slowly wrapped around my slim waist.

"Yes, I love you from day one until the end of the world. Happy?"

A giggle slipped past my lips. "Scarcely."

Chapter 54 - A Natural Tease**

[Warning: The chapter contains mature content. Proceed with caution.]

Once again, I felt his warmth enveloping my lips, shooting through my heart. Leaving negativity behind; racial difference, fears of the unknown, and broke everything that built the border between us.

Without thinking, I hooked my arms over his shoulders. Standing on the tip of my toes to feel more of him.

A repressed groan left his lips as he pulled me up closer. Our lips moved in sync movements, tongues dancing in the rhythm of my heart.

I could feel his fangs growing again. Each time it grazed my lips, I felt his sudden urge to ease. And my lips slowed down each time.

"Oh, Sam..." In between our breaks to breathe, I whispered in his mouth.

He replied with a low groan, his grip on my waist tightening. I'm losing my mind and I'm... loving it.

I want to feel more of him, was what filled my head at the moment. I don't know how, but my greed over him overwhelmed me. I wanted more. I wanted him deeper and closer.

Taking notice of my unspoken wishes, Sam held me tighter and closer. His lips demanding, the same way I yearned for more.

"I want you..." When his lips parted from mine, he continued on, leaving trails of kisses on my ear to my jaw, then down to my neck. Slowly and sensually etching the sensation of his lips on mine.

"... so bad, I'm losing my mind."

He added in between his kisses. I breathed heavily, stretching my neck, eyes closed. My heart tingling every time his voice caressed my ears.

"Then, take me." I breathed, panting, as I clasped on his shoulder.

"My pleasure."

Upon saying so, he lifted me up while I instinctively wrapped my legs around his waist. He looked up, and I leaned down, capturing those dangerously addicting lips.

He started walking, but I didn't care where to. Even if he took me to hell right now, I wouldn't care.

Because he was my heaven at this moment. It was scary that this foreign sensation was taking over sanity. I couldn't think of anything else but him.

I'm not sired. I'm in love; madly and deeply in love with him.

Even when my lips swelled a little and numb, I didn't want to stop. When he gently pulled away, I failed to conceal the frown on my lips.

"Why are you frowning, silly?" He chuckled, yet his eyes burned with passion.

Why am I frowning? The reason was the same as why his eyes were frowning. But I kept my thought inside my head.

"Let's take a bath first. I want to make this special." He whispered, leaving a quick peck on my frowning lips.

"Was that..." I trailed as a bit my lip. "... necessary?"

"If you ask me, I would say otherwise. But Mister Perfect hinted us, remember?" Slowly, the side of his lips curled into a playful smile.

Right. Fabian said about cleansing me previously, before drinking his blood. Since I wanted this just as much as Sam wanted it, we had skipped the second part. We might as well follow the first one.

"Alright," I reluctantly answered, inciting another wave of chuckles from him.

"Don't laugh at me." I murmured with a huff.

"Apologies. I'm merely indulging at the fact that the feeling is mutual." Sam explained, and left another quick kiss on my lips.

"Come down. Let me undress you before the water goes cold." He urged patiently.

Doing as what I was told, I slowly got down and stood on my feet. Sam offered a mischievous smile while I raised my hands up.

"Goodness..." When Sam hooked his finger on the hem of my undergarment, he huffed and let my chemise go. "Just go straight to the tub. I don't know what I would do if you stand bare right now."

He retracted his finger away. His eyes remained on me, demanding and pleading. I understood his will to make this special. Thus, I nodded despite being puzzled.

I turned around, trudging towards the tub. Carefully, I tiptoed my way into the tub and slowly soaked my body.

When I sat down, water over my chest, I moved my gaze back to him. Sam was watching me. His eyes glinted with an intense thirst.

"The water is still warm, but it will go cold soon." I muttered, slowly taking off my chemise.

When I undressed myself, I let him watch me; carefully holding that thin, damp dress with my finger. I stretched my arm out of the tub and then dropped the dress.

I didn't know why, but my instinct told me this act would make things special. And it did.

Sam gasped faintly, his chest moving in a heavy in and out motion. His eyes on me, watching me from start until when I tossed my undergarment out of the tub.

His expression amused me. A glint of suppressed excitement flickering across his crimson orbs.

"Aren't you a natural tease?" He humored as he chuckled in defeat. "Goodness. I hope I can make it till we're under the quilts."

He muttered as he shook his head. Sam then began unbuttoning his vest.

I gulped as he trudded towards the tub while dropping the first layer of clothes he wore. Sam perched on the rim of the tub, his hands busily unbuttoned himself.

Instinctively, I shrunk back. My back against the inner curved of the tub, my knees bent up until the top of knees were over the water.

"Tell me when I'm going too far, will you?" He requested, staring at me lovingly.

"How far?" I blurted out, and he sighed.

Suddenly, his hands stopped undressing himself. His left hand slowly reached my knees, his sleeve getting soaked with water. Squeezing my inner thigh lightly.

He just squeezed my inner thigh, but my lower region craved for more. Gracious goodness... I wanted him to touch me further!

"When you feel uncomfortable and in pain." He answered.

I glanced at his hand and then back to his eyes. "What if I enjoyed the pain?"

"Don't. Let's not indulged in hurting each other for pleasure." He said solemnly.

I lightly rocked my head and forth. "Alright."

He smiled upon hearing my agreement. Sam retracted his hand from my inner thigh, making me frown. But that same finger lifted my chin up. Before I knew it, he already bent down for another long and deep kiss.

Chapter 55 - Spellbound**

[WARNING: MATURE-CONTENT AHEAD. THIS CHAPTER MAY BRING DISCOMFORT TO OTHERS. NOT ADVISABLE TO AGED 17 AND BELOW. PROCEED WITH CAUTION.]

When he lowered his lips onto mine, our lips barely touched at first. His lips parted, just slightly, as if requesting me to do the same.

I did. And Sam kissed me firmly.

This kiss... it wasn't as controlled or wild just like the first or the third we had today. It felt... natural, igniting so many emotions I couldn't decide which was the dominant one.

All I knew was, I'm willing to go hell just to be with him.

I wrapped my arms around him, pulling his under shirt gently hoping it would come off. Honestly, I didn't know what I'm doing, but my body had been following my instincts.

Sam let out a small breath that sounded like a short laugh. I blushed, biting his bottom lips as a punishment.

His lips broke into a smile against my lips, but continued on. Each time his little fangs graze me, my heart raced faster.

I'm burning even when my body was underwater. Ironic, the water embracing me wasn't cooling me down. Instead, I felt like fire, about to make this tub of water boil.

Sam nuzzled me down without parting his lips from mine. Afraid to slip, I hooked my arms on his bare shoulder while he entered the tub.

Was he completely naked? I don't know, and it didn't matter.

When he was in the tub with me, Sam pulled my slim shoulders to him. I instantly melted into his arms, perching on his lap, both my sole on his rear.

I rested my arms on his shoulder, shivering as he run his fingers down my spine. Under his touch, he ignited a sensational... lightning in my body.

My breath shortened as desperation overwhelmed me. "Sam..." I whispered in his mouth.

Under water, his arms held me gently, but firmly, into his body. It snaked around my waist, pulling me even closer, as if he was just as desperate as I am.

I could feel his taut muscles working against me, feeling the strength of his arms and torso as he cradled my body.

My body frame which felt so tiny in his arms.

When he broke our kiss, Sam called my name, "Lil," that was barely a level above to a whisper.
"Stop me."

His voice was low, desperate, and pleading. The apex of his nose brushing my neck, breathing hot breaths on my skin.

Stop...? My mind buzzed. I was spellbound.

Sam began leaving small, passionate kisses on my skin, coupled by gentle licks from his tongue. As he did, his grip around me tightened.

"Stop me, Lil." Under his breath, Sam whispered again. "or I'll end up..."

He trailed off as I heard him suck air heavily through his gritted teeth. Slowly, he pushed me lightly, granting me to see his crimson eyes that were glowing dangerously.

"I'll end up sinking my fangs on your neck." He urged, panting as if restraining himself from what he wished to do.

I gulped, clasping his shoulder tightly before I loosened it. Biting my lips, I cupped his cheek and stared into his eyes.

I don't want to stop him, though. Seeing him upset on either desiring to drink my blood or failing to stop that craving brought pain into my heart.

His eyes told me about his struggles; that he didn't want to hurt me.

Without thinking twice, I bent down and left a soft but brief peck on his lips.

One...

Two...

Three...

I felt his shoulder tensed at my action. My kiss was brief and not deep, but I hoped he understood my actions.

Still cupping both his cheeks, my forefinger slowly reached towards the tip of his fang. They were sharp. If I pressed my finger a little, I'll bleed.

But more than how deadly his fangs appeared. My heart softened upon touching it.

"They're beautiful, Sam." I muttered as I moved my gaze back to his eyes.

His brows raised briefly, surprised at my words. What a sight to see him flinch, as it was his on his many hobbies to startle me.

"Your fangs, I mean." I added, as I bit my lower lip and pushed the tip of my finger against it.

As soon as I did, his eyes widened as blood oozed from my finger.

"It didn't hurt." I smiled as I wiped the blood on his lower lip.

"Lil." Sam's breath hitched as his eyes darkened.

Was I bold or foolish? It didn't matter to me either way.

"I've often thought I'd die being a vampire's meal in the past. It terrified me, Sam." I confessed, leaning closer to him, trailing kisses on his jaw to his ear.

"But if I'd have the liberty to choose of who would drink my blood, I would want you to be that person."

Upon my last remarks, I hooked my arms around him, leaving a last peck on his lips. His arms crawled up to on my back, pulling me closer as he buried his face on my shoulder.

"Tell me to stop," He whispered, the tip of his fangs brushing my shoulder to my jugular. "I will, no questions asked."

"Mhmm." I nodded, embracing the violent beating of my heart.

I held my breath as Sam began kissing my skin, sucking and licking my neck, soothing me from the slight fear creeping into my heart. When his fangs grazed me, I closed my eyes as I tilted my head so he could have a better access.

Slowly but surely, I felt my body relaxed upon his last reassuring kiss. And then finally, I felt him biting into my supple skin.

It felt different from what I thought. There was no pain or discomfort. My fear instantly disappeared.

I arched my back against him, running my fingers through his soft, argent hair. This sensation running through my blood was pure pleasure, leaving my mouth open, eyes closed in ecstasy.

Sam gripped my body tightly, drinking slowly to make me feel everything he was doing. He didn't need to; I was paying attention.

My breathing grew considerably.

From every blood of mine that goes through his mouth, to his every gulp that caressed my ears, I could feel and hear it all at once.

I never thought Sam drinking my blood would feel so intimate. I felt loved, desired, and valued.

When he was done, Sam slowly pulled away, licking his lips as he sealed his love marks with a kiss. After that, he drew his head back and his fangs grew back into small canine teeth.

His eyes brimmed with enthusiasm, satisfaction, and content. I could see my reflection flush as I bit my lower lip, grinning back at him like a fool.

I couldn't pinpoint this utter satisfaction circling around my heart. But I felt that we had broken a barrier together that cemented this bond between us.

We didn't speak for a while, just staring at each other smiling and grinning; and somehow, it grew to short laughs.

Why are we chuckling?

"Silly," Sam humored, pinching my both cheek lightly. "Come, you'll catch a cold. We'll continue it later."

Chapter 56 - Spellbound II**

[WARNING: MATURE-CONTENT AHEAD. THIS CHAPTER MAY BRING DISCOMFORT TO OTHERS. NOT ADVISABLE TO AGED 17 AND BELOW. PROCEED WITH CAUTION.]

Sam had bathed me, scrubbed my back and went through even the gaps between my fingers. I couldn't tell whether he did a better job than the handmaids that usually bathed me.

Either way, I was smiling the entire time. My heart kept on fluttering, making me smile like a fool. Just like him, I scampered my hands over his body, barely cleaning him, as I couldn't focus.

But unlike how steamy it started, we managed. With brief kisses in between, we finished bathing together.

When we both rinsed, Sam wrapped a robe around me before covering himself with another one. Standing in front of him, Sam dried my hair with a small towel.

I had my gaze fixed on him. Sam was smiling subtly, melting my heart at how he turned a simple task of drying my hair to something heart-warming.

"I'd go bald if you keep going on forever." I humored with a pout as it seemed he wouldn't stop.

Although his actions were gentle, I'm growing... impatient. The thought of it made me blush as I bit my inner lip discreetly.

"Just a little bit more, love." He muttered, casting me a wink, and smirked.

He's doing this on purpose. While he dry my hair with the cloth, I raised my hands and tied his robe.

As I did so, I could not help but notice his exposed, firm chest and collarbones. I've seen him topless; he faulted it proudly on my first day in this mansion.

However, seeing it up close made my throat parch. Sam's skin was pale and blemish free. It looked very pleasant in the eyes, as his skin looked so supple.

Suddenly, I noticed a faint red mark on his shoulder. Without thinking twice, I hooked my finger on the robe, sliding it aside to see faint teeth marks.

Was this the bite I did earlier? I wondered as I pondered.

I didn't notice it earlier, but it was certainly my teeth marks. Odd, I thought. But didn't dwell on it.

Sam's skin was pale and white like a snow. Perhaps his skin was sensitive? The explanation I came up with was lame, but I couldn't think of anything else.

To make it up to him, I tiptoed and kissed it. Sam instantly tensed as he stopped from drying my hair.

Slowly, he gazed down as I looked up and smiled. "I sealed my love bite with a kiss."

In contrast to my good intentions, Sam's eyes fluttered ever so slowly and dangerously. Such breathtaking beauty, I subconsciously awed as I stood back on my feet.

Why was he staring at me, though? I just mimicked how he sealed and healed my wound with a kiss.

Did he find it offensive?

"I didn't." Suddenly, Sam spoke.

I tilted my head to the side, confused at what he was talking about. He didn't what?

"I didn't find it offensive." He clarified. "I find it... arousing."

Without letting me process his explanation, he suddenly swept me off of my feet. In an instant, he was carrying me in his arms as he trudged back to our bedchambers.

On our way, I raised my shaking vision to him. "You can read my mind?"

"Right now? Yes." Sam glanced down at me, catching the surprise look on my face.

"I didn't mean to invade your thoughts. But your blood is still fresh in me, dominating my system, forcing your thoughts, and everything into me."

What...?

Suddenly, Sam halted in his tracks. "It'll settle down in a few days. Don't worry."

Sam offered a reassuring smile. I didn't know there's this effect after drinking my blood. Not that it displeased me. It just felt... strange.

I bit my lower lip and stared at him, blinking.

'Do you love me, Sam?' I asked internally, testing it for no reason.

His unsmiling lips broke into a grin. As if he didn't see that coming. Did he get my message, though?

"Oh, Lilove." Sam huskily chuckled, shaking his head lightly as he placed his knee on the edge of the bed.

In an instant, he laid me down as he hovered over me; emanating dominance. His crimson orbs shone dangerously. They were tantalizing.

He rested his palms on either side of my head, one of his legs spread my legs apart, the other one keeping my body between them.

Instinctively, I placed my hands on his chest as my breath hitched. I gulped at the pair of eyes hovering over me. My heart pounded faster and louder, deafening my ears as if it was drumming in front of them.

Just when my body cooled down a little from the fleeting break from our previous activity, his penetrating gaze suddenly ignited the fire within me once again. But what baffled me was this anticipation in my heart.

"I love you more than you can even imagine, Lilou." Sam stated.

I felt the weight of his sincerity in his voice. He wasn't just saying things, but was making a statement. It made me feel I had little understanding of him and his feelings.

But that reassured my heart in more ways than one.

"You're mine... and only mine." Sam whispered. "And I'm only yours."

Slowly, Sam bent down. I held my breath as I slowly closed my eyes, welcoming his sweet breaths that first wafted my nose.

Shortly after, his lips crashed against mine. My arms slowly hooked on his shoulder, pulling him down to feel more of him.

'You're mine, only.' I whispered internally, making my own statement.

He smiled against my lips before he discreetly untied my robe. Taking notice of his action, I slipped my hands down, barely fit on the gap between our body.

I pulled the tie of his robe, hauling it away from him. The fabric instantly fell down on his shoulder and he pulled his hand up, one after another, until we're skin to skin.

We may be different, and that fact might be terrifying. But at this moment, I felt otherwise. They made f*cking sounded like a scary thing; it was, though.

But I didn't think that we did that. For me, this was nothing but... love making.

Chapter 57 - Didn't I Say I'll Eat You... Alive?***

[WARNING: DETAILED MATURE-CONTENT AHEAD. THIS CHAPTER MAY BRING DISCOMFORT TO OTHERS. NOT ADVISABLE TO AGED 17 AND BELOW. PROCEED WITH CAUTION. I REPEAT THIS IS A PURE SMUT CHAPTER. IF YOU DON'T LIKE SMUT OR NOT AT THE PROPER AGE, SKIP THIS CHAPTER.]

Sam kissed me passionately, pressing me on the bed. My breathing deepened considerably. My face flushed.

I never knew what kissing was like aside from the true love kiss I've read. No wonder the princess, who slept for hundreds of years, awoke upon the kiss of the prince. No wonder the cursed frog prince broke free from the spell.

No wonder the girl who was poisoned by an apple returned to life. True love kiss was truly a wonderful thing.

It could make even a not beating heart beat back to life, racing, pumping, boiling blood that brought heat to one's body. Although what I've read wasn't detailed, they probably kissed as passionately as this one.

As I savored the sweetness of his lips, Sam slowly broke away from our kiss. I frowned as he drew away slightly. His eyes, so gorgeous but dangerous, flashed in adoration as he stared at me.

Even though I couldn't see myself, I knew my face was surely beet-red. My chest moved in and out, heavily panting for air.

Under his scrutinizing gaze, I pulled my arms closer to my bare chest. I gulped, discreetly skimming his chiseled body, which made me unconsciously bit my lower lip.

Such a breathtaking beauty... I wanted to kiss him.

"I can hear you, love." The corner of his lips tilted into a smirk.

Right... I pursed my lips in a thin line. How could I forget about that?

"You're gorgeous, love." Sam breathed, reaching for my arms to put them away from my bust. "You just don't realize it, but you are."

My heart fluttered as my cheek flushed. His eyes darkened, glinting with fascination and awe.

The way he looked at me, from then and now, made me feel I'm beautiful.

His gaze brought confidence in me. And I felt like believing his claims.

Sam's finger reached for my collarbones. The tip of his fingers traced down my shoulder, down to my chest.

As his finger traveled down, I couldn't stop the shiver running down my spine. My breath hitched as his finger stopped before it reached for my nipple. Frustration came over me as he smirked.

Slowly, he bent down and whisper. "Silly. I was simply checking."

Before I could inquire, my words rolled back as his lips trapped them back in my throat. This time, his kissed had lost the remaining restraint he had.

Fire. Now I'm — no, we're totally on fire.

I hooked my arms around his neck, pulling him closer. I could feel his palms sensually tracing my outline; from the side of my breast down to my hip.

My eyes rolled back behind my eyelids. My back arched as he drew away, kissing me on the neck, going down to my bust.

Sam kissed along the curves of each of my breast, stopping to suckle my nipples briefly. A moaned escaped from my lips, feeling every emotion of his lips left on my skin.

He held me down, leaving a trail of hot, open-mouthed kisses along my stomach and hips. I held my breath, running my fingers through his soft hair, and gripped it tightly.

Sam kissed my center, squeezing my thigh as he parted my legs in all its glory. My head was spinning, blinking weakly as he stood on his knees.

He offered me a gentle yet encouraging smile. Carefully, he guided my knees up, holding my ankle.

With his eyes not leaving mine, he leaned closer to my ankle, kissing it. I gasped as I watched him.

Good riddance... watching him made me all tingly with need.

His kisses journeyed to the north — to my inner thigh. Upon licking my inner thigh, he stopped once again.

Don't...

"Oh, love." Sam chuckled, placing one of his fingers inside his mouth, wetting it. "Didn't I tell you in the beginning I'll eat you... alive?"

Huh?

My mind buzzed momentarily. Why was he blurting out that terrifying thing?

"Haha, silly. But you'll enjoy it." He humored. Confusion enveloped my head from it.

Enjoy what exa...?

Before I could finish the question, I had in my head, he gave me the answer right away. Sam began tracing circles on my lips below.

Again, my breath hitched at the phenomenal sensation his finger was doing. A small part of me wanted to shy away.

But the dominant part? I begged for more.

Sam was happy to oblige. He leaned down, taking me to another world I've never thought I'd be with just lying down.

He spent his time running his fingers along on my flower; kissing it, parting it, and licking it for a taste.

But he didn't fully dive in.

It frustrated me. I wanted him to touch me more, deeper, and do something to this tension inside me.

I felt helpless. But before I could moan in pure frustration, his finger circled around my pulsating tiny bean.

I gasped and threw my head back, yearning for him to continue. Wish granted, as his finger gently caressed my sensitive nub and then finally his tongue.

A sharp moan slipped past my lips. My fingers gripping his hair tightly as my back arched.

He sucked lightly, flicking his tongue rapidly against my nub. Using just enough force to make me scream his name in pleasure.

I writhed on the bed, tugging and pressing his hair. Just when I thought this was the best, I thought wrong.

The next moment, Sam glided his finger, and it slipped inside. Another moan, much louder, broke free from my mouth.

I'm in heaven. His finger and tongue worked its magic. It started slow and steady, and then he quickened his pace, licking me furiously and fingering; both in the same rhythm.

I'm losing my mind, I feel like I'm losing my mind.

And then a sudden wave of pleasure washed over my body, screaming his name. It was only then he pulled himself from between my legs.

I felt wobbly, my body sweating as I panted, feeling as if I've run from hill to hill all day. I raised my gaze to him as he stood on his knees.

"Sam?"

Sam smiled in content. But his smile told me it wasn't over yet.

"That's what I meant when I said I wanted to eat you." He said with a smirk, bending down as his hand circled around my waist.

My breath hitched, as I never thought that was what he meant before. But, uh...

"But we're just starting, love."

Chapter 58 - I'll Still Love You Tomorrow And Days After That. ***

[WARNING: THIS CHAPTER CONTAINS DETAILED MATURED CONTENT. PROCEED WITH CAUTION]

"But we're just starting, love."

Just starting? I blinked my eyes in surprised. After everything, all emotions ignited into one... we were just starting?

Sam chuckled as he leaned down, his other hand on my side, while his other holding me firmly.

"Silly. You're not the only one who's in need."

He poked the tip of his nose against mine, grinning before tilting his head for a kiss. I clasped on his shoulder, shutting my eyes close.

I felt exhausted despite not moving. But oddly enough, I felt this strange enthusiasm to welcome him. He had kissed me patiently, as if waiting for me to recover some strength.

After some time, our kissed deepened once again and I'm reacting with the same enthusiasm as the first. His arms around my waist tightened.

Instinctively, I wrapped my arms around him. Inhaling his breaths, biting and licking his lips.

He cupped my breast, fondling them gently, stimulating me. I moaned inside his mouth, spreading my legs when he placed his knee in between.

When his our lips took a break to breathe, Sam whispered on my lips.

"They said it hurt for a first time."

I was uncertain of what he was talking about. But part of me had this vague idea of what was bound to happen.

Still, whatever it was, I'm certain Sam wouldn't let me be in an unbearable pain.

I smiled, feeling something poking me in my abdomen. "Will I be in pain throughout?"

"No, but tell me when—"

"I will." I pushed the rest of his words back with a kiss.

I'm ready for this. Although unplanned, I would give everything I had to him.

Can you hear me, Sam? You're mine and I'm yours.

I felt him smile against my lips. A bubble of glee sparkled in my heart as I felt comfortable in his arms.

The hard baton-like poking on my abdomen slowly glided down upon moving his hip. I held my breath as I held clung onto him tightly.

My arms over his shoulder, my hand on his back. Slowly, that hard rod positioned on my entrance, taking my breath away.

I felt all tingly upon its contact. How could it be painful if just a touch of it made my lady part overflow with need?

Our initial deep kiss grew short until it turned into brief kisses. Slowly, he attempted to slide inside, but it hurt in a strange sensual way.

Unconsciously, my nails dug into his skin, scratching his back.

It was way different when his finger slid inside me. It was rather easy, but this enormous mass... it wouldn't fit in. But part of me wanted it whole; for it to dive inside, deeper. My lady below craved for it — I, too, as well.

Sam stopped kissing my forehead to ease the pain. "Tell me when it's unbearable."

I nodded, and he attempted once again. I felt myself stretch ever so slowly, still painful albeit bearable and pleasurable.

He was patient, and his kisses soothed me magically. As he attempted to go in and out, both of us broke out in sweats.

I'm burning, panting, and desperate.

But we didn't care or even paid it attention. All our focus and concentration are on our lower body.

I stretched for him until he was deep inside. A hiss of satisfaction escaped his lips, caressing my ears, which brought this accomplished emotion into my heart.

Still, a slight pain remained as he moved, slow and steady. But when the pain subsided, I got to relish on the sensational ecstasy running through my veins.

Taking notice, Sam gained his momentum, holding my hips down while the other held onto the bed's headboard.

But as soon as he did, I heard a sudden crack as he broke a piece of the wood. I ignored it.

"Sam..." I moaned as he rocked against me, rattling me delightfully.

But little did I know, that single moan held such effect on him?

Sam growled, thrusting deeper, pounding into me with no restraint. I shook along with the bed's creaks with every thrust deep inside me.

Oh, Sam... I forgot I've even felt pain in the beginning as this was nothing but pleasure.

More...

And he did. His hips moved faster, startling me to the pleasure it brought.

I felt coming close to my peak, wrapping my arms around him tighter. Sam crashed his lips against mine, as if telling me the same.

I lost it when he reached his hand down and felt my nub once again, coaxing it to its climax. I screamed at the pleasure, wrapping my legs around his waist tightly, tugging his hair back.

Sam pressed me hard against the bed, groaning in his own pleasure, massaging my bean furiously. All at once, we reached the finish line, moaning and panting in synchronization.

I felt him jerk inside me while I pulsed around him. That was... unbelievably good.

Slowly, Sam collapsed to my side. Lying on our backs, slowly breathing and letting our hearts settle.

I blinked my eyes, staring at the dim high ceiling. What happened... it felt surreal. I never knew something so satisfying that could make my heart burst with unfamiliar emotion was possible.

I...

Sam rolled to my side, which made me turn my head to him.

"Come here." Sam invited, spreading his arms to welcome me.

Without a word, I moved closer and pressed myself into the safety of his embrace. I could still hear my heart beat so fast, and my knees trembling.

"Tired?" He asked. His fingers brushing my spine gently.

A smile turned up to my lips as I fluttered my eyes ever so slowly. "You?"

I didn't answer directly. Instead, I returned the question.

Although all I did was lie down, I still felt exhausted. What about him?

"No." Sam smiled, pressing his lips and shook his head. "I can still go on for..."

Sam paused as he calculated his stamina. "For a year."

Huh?

"Haha." Reading the surprised in my eyes made him chuckle and grin.

"I'm a vampire, a hungry one at that. But this one didn't make any less satisfying. I reached my orgasm far too fast; it'll be a shame if other vampires heard about this."

I blinked my eyes countless of times. I didn't get it.

"Silly. Don't think too much." Sam poked the tip of my nose by his nose. "I love you."

Upon hearing his last whisper, my breath hitched. I didn't expect that.

"Sleep, my love. I'll still love you tomorrow and the days after that."

Chapter 59 - The Forgotten Premonition

If sleeping for the past weeks was peaceful, I didn't know how to describe my sleep tonight. It was not just comfortable. It was... heart-warming.

Even in my sleep, I could feel Sam's warmth cradling me. I love this man, this vampire.

I never felt this powerful emotion in my heart. Even though I loved my father, loving Sam was just a different kind of love.

Who would have thought that a peasant like me would experience such a wonderful phenomenon? That after all the angst and fear for my everyday life, I'd find my solitude in this world reigned by vampires?

Here, in his embrace, was my heaven in this hell. It was as if this was where I belong. That I lived, survived, and thrived all this years just for this moment.

Can you see me, Father?

In my dreams, I stood in the middle of a beautiful field of blooming flowers. The soft wind blew past me, and then Father appeared from a distance.

I smiled at him. It's been a while since he visited my dreams. But all I could do was to offer him a smile.

However, unlike his previous visit, Father wasn't smiling. His expression peaceful, though. But his smile was missing.

"Sam is a good man, Father. I love him." I whispered, hoping he would hear me from a distance.

Father just stared at me. It was odd; I thought. But I smiled subtly, ignoring this strange feeling creeping into my heart.

As I blinked my eyes, snow came. I raised my hand, staring at the red flakes falling down, coloring the field of flowers with red.

Huh?

"What..." I trailed off as I raised my gaze back to Father. But the second I did, my eyes slowly widened.

Father stood there with a hand impaled in him from behind, through his chest. The hands had long nails akin to a claw. And then Father collapsed as soon as the hand on his chest withdrew.

"Father!" I yelled, clasping my dress as I rushed to him.

Alas, before I could, I halted. The man who killed my father stood still. I couldn't see his face properly, but his argent hair and crimson orbs, holding my father's heart in his hand left were distinct.

The corner of his lips tilted into a smirk, long, sharp fangs glinting. After a beat, I ran for my life. My beautiful dream escalated into a nightmare.

It brought back all the fears I've long forgotten. Run, Lilou. Run. I kept on running, panting, as my surroundings grew darker.

But my struggle was all for naught. Soon, the monster caught up. He grabbed my waist, pushing his nose on my nape, inhaling deeply.

"Stop..." I whispered, feeling his fangs slowly pierce my skin. "Stop..."

He didn't.

"Sam...!"

"Lilou!" I awoke, sweating and gasping for air, as a pair of worried crimson orbs hovered over me. He cupped my cheek, his eyes searching for my gaze.

"You're alright, hmm? I'm here, love. I'm here. No one will hurt you." He reassured under his breath.

Unconsciously, I clasped on his chest, nodding. My mind still buzzing at the dream fading away from my memory.

Sam pulled me back into his embrace. I'm scared. My body shaking and my heart racing for a reason I've forgotten. But this fear assured me how terrible it was.

I felt his hand stroked my back, soothing me. Sam placed soft kisses on my forehead, repeating the words, "It's alright. No one will hurt you while I'm here."

Hearing him chant those words slowly calmed me. I rested my head on his chest, closing my eyes as sleepiness took over me once again.

*

Morning came and the chirping of the birds woke me up. Slowly, I opened my eyes and my gaze immediately landed on the beautiful man before me.

Sam.

I smiled, raising my hand as I cupped his cheek. He looked so harmless while asleep. I fell asleep last night without realizing I did.

I felt too exhausted. But now, I felt this strange energy circulating in my blood. I never felt my body this light in my entire life.

"Morning." Sam muttered, still had his eyes closed. He moved closer, squeezing me in his embrace.

"Evening." I bit my lip, trying to humor him, which suddenly came into my head. After all, morning for me was evening for vampires.

"I changed my schedule." Sam murmured, shaking me in his arms lightly. "Though, I think you might want to adjust yours for now."

"Huh?" I furrowed my brows. What did he mean by that?

Slowly, Sam drew back, creating a safe distance between us. His eyes immediately caught my confused gaze.

"The Capital follows the vampire's schedule. Be it humans or vampires, everyone is nocturnal." Sam explained in his coarse voice. "I'm saying you might find it annoying to sleep at night since everyone was awake once we reach the Capital."

"Oh..." I nodded ever so slowly.

The Capital... what was it was like? It sounded as if the capital was far different from Grimsbanne. How huge the difference? I don't know.

I would be lying if I say I'm not a bit scared. I've never gone out of Grimsbanne. The life here was all I've ever known. Thus, traveling to another place... it was quite nerve-racking.

As I dwell on my thoughts, I felt a slight sting on my forehead as he flicked it lightly. I snapped back and raised my gaze back at him.

"Don't be afraid, silly. You're not going alone." Sam chuckled as he poked my nose with his finger.

"There's only one person who would dare touch Samael La Crox's bride."

"One?"

"The king." Sam grinned, as if that wasn't a problem.

The king...? Wasn't that supposed to make things more... dire?

"No, my lady. The king is not a fool to do such a stupid move. No one wants to see me mad, my love." Sam explained in confidence.

His conviction in his tone eventually calmed me. I didn't know why Sam was too confident. Whether he was pretending so not to worry me, or telling the truth, it didn't matter.

I believed in him.

"When are we setting off to the Capital, my lord?" I asked, blinking.

I expected it would be a week from now, or a month. That time was enough for me to ask Fabian more about the capital. But Sam's answer was akin to a clap in my ears that momentarily rendered me speechless.

"Tomorrow."

Chapter 60 - Lilou's Wake

When Sam dropped the news, I found myself a little out of it. No maidservants came to serve me in the morning to dress or brush my hair.

But I managed alone. Sam insisted on helping me, but I refused.

Watching the maidservants do everything made me learn this task. I'm a born peasant, a laborer. Hence, it was a habit of mine to learn simple task to add to my skills just in case.

I met Sam in our bedchamber. He offered me a smile as I approached.

"My bride is so beautiful without even trying." He sighed, meeting me halfway, and stopped a step away from me.

I bit my lower lip and avoided his gaze. "You're just saying that."

Have he seen himself in the mirror?

"Lilou, my little love, I was never smitten with someone my entire existence. I've traveled half of the world, and I've never met someone half as gorgeous as you!" Sam exclaimed, taking a step forward with his arms spread wide.

He held my shoulder, his gaze on me.

I hid the urge to blush, but failed miserably. Sam's way of staring at me without a word forced me to believe his claims.

"Are you still surprised that we're setting off tomorrow at dawn?" He asked, tilting his head a little to the side.

"Well..." I pursed my lips in a thin line. "A bit."

Who wouldn't? He just told me yesterday that he received a letter from the capital.

Knowing Sam's character, he would let them wait for him purposely. He enjoyed doing things that could inflict anger from the capital.

Thus, I expected him to delay it for a month or a week. The reason it surprised me that he planned to set off almost immediately.

I'm not ready yet.

"Silly." Sam chuckled, raising his hand, and placed it on my chin so I could meet his eyes.

"I simply wanted to marry you as soon as possible. Otherwise, the king would have to wait a decade or two for my response."

Out of habit, I bit my lower lip. He was rushing it so he could marry me?

Such moving words. How could I refute that? I felt so helpless because I wanted the same.

"Stop biting your lips, love. You don't know how it affects me every time." Sam's tone was low, his eyes glinting dangerously as he slowly lifted his gaze from my lips to my eyes.

I gulped, pursing my lips in a thin line. Sam narrowed his eyes.

The second he told me I didn't know how it affected him tugged my curiosity. How did my habit affected him? I... wanted to know.

"I can still hear you, love." Sam informed huskily. "Like this."

Suddenly, Sam bent down, tilting his head, leaning forward, and his lips immediately crashed into mine. His arms smoothly wrapped around my waist, pulling me to his firm chest.

Instinctively, I placed my fist on his shoulders in surprised. His lips begging, demanding, and commanding.

I slowly closed my eyes as I welcomed him comfortably, if not a little snugly. I felt like dressing up was a waste of time, as our clothes pooled on our feet not long after.

We just carried on; kissing and making love repeatedly. I never had so much energy as I lasted longer than last night. And I didn't feel exhausted as we did it over and over and over again.

*

At noon, Sam and I walked outside our chamber holding hands. My face flushed, still heating up from our morning activity. My knees felt a bit wobbly, but I managed, albeit now I'm famished.

Meanwhile, Sam was grinning, looking back at me constantly. Glimpsing at his content smile, and the warmth in his hand brought butterflies in my stomach.

I didn't feel sore or ache at all. I wondered why Sam would even ask me if I'm not feeling well so he postpone our plans to set off.

But I didn't dwell on it.

When we arrived at the great hall — going to the dinner hall — I furrowed my brows. Sam and I stopped as everyone was present.

From Rufus to Fabian to every maidservant and knights. They were standing in a proper arrangement.

But that wasn't what surprised me. What caught my attention was, everyone wore black clothes. It was as if there was a funeral.

"Uh..." I bit my lower lip, confused, as I turned to Sam to seek some answers.

Sam smirked before he slowly gazed down at me. "They're here for your funeral, my lady."

Huh?

Again, I blinked my eyes countless of times. Funeral? For me? Why? I'm alive!

"Have you prepared lunch?" Sam shouted, breaking the utter gloomy silence that filled the mansion's great hall.

Everyone, all at the same time, turned their heads in our direction. I saw their eyes lit with life as they all cast their eyes on me.

Instinctively, I stepped back and squeezed myself behind Sam.

What's wrong with them?

Sam chuckled as he shook his head. "Are you trying to insult the future duchess by mourning for her while she's alive?"

"My lady, I'm glad you're fine." Fabian approached with his usual smile that reached to his eyes.

"I..." I trailed off, clearing my throat.

"We had been waiting for his lordship and her ladyship to come out since this morning. But since his lordship didn't appear during breakfast and the entire morning, we had assumed for the worst. My apologies, my lady. We didn't mean to offend you."

Fabian placed his palm on his chest, taking a deep bow as he expressed. I glanced up to Sam, who had his lips stretched into a grin as he winked at me.

They were waiting and gone through all this because Sam and I didn't come out until now? I bit my lower lip in embarrassment.

How could I tell them the reason? That Sam and I were simply... beguiled?

"It relieved us to see that you are fine, my lady. Though, we haven't prepared a meal yet as part of our grieving process." Fabian explained.

"Please prepare us a meal now, Fabian. For now, serve us tea as my lady and I can wait in the study." Sam suggested, which caught everyone's attention — even mine.

What's this sudden modesty? I'm not the only person surprised, as I glanced at Fabian and everyone. They didn't even attempt to conceal the dismay in their eyes.

"Fret not. I had forgiven you for this, no need to lament." Sam added magnanimously. "Let's go, my lady."

With that, Sam held my hand and escorted me away. I glanced back at the people standing in the great hall, casting them an apologetic look for this wild misunderstanding.