

The Duke 71

Chapter 71 - Was He Trying To Sell Me?

"Excuse me." Sam took a large step over the body, bleeding on the floor, and then escorted me as well!

This dumbfounded me to the core, and my body could only follow. Sam... can't you read the situation?

"Ha!" The red-haired man chuckled, but Sam and I didn't stop.

Why? Because Sam didn't think that mocking laugh was meant for us.

"Interesting." The red-haired man commented.

I snuck a glance at him, and he was staring at us. My hand around Sam's arm slightly trembled.

Those pair of scornful eyes sent a chill run down my spine. It reminded me of those tough years where...

I stopped my thoughts and looked down. I should forget about those almost forgotten years. Forget about it, Lil.

Suddenly, Sam stopped and moved his attention to me.

"Are you alright, love? You're shaking." He asked.

Slowly, I raised my head. Sweats broke out from my forehead.

With a nod, I sported a force smile. "I think... I'm just hungry."

Lies.

Sam narrowed his eyes suspiciously as his brows furrowed. I looked away, afraid he would be able to read me at this moment.

"What a lovely couple!" Suddenly, I heard the red-haired man exclaim, which was followed by a clap.

Yet Sam's attention remained on me. I tried to ignore the other man as well.

"Haha! You there! The white-haired man and that beautiful young lady!" Getting no response from us, the red-haired man called us by describing us. This time, he was successful.

Sam slowly turned around, blinking. "Beautiful young lady?"

He asked, tilting his head to the side. I tugged Sam's sleeve, as I was afraid he would be in a fight.

However, unlike what I had expected, the corner of his lips gradually stretched into a grin. The next second, Sam raised his hand and snapped his fingers.

"You mean my wife?" Sam's eyes brimmed with pride. "I know, right? She's the most beautiful woman a man could ever lay their eyes on and she's mine!"

Silence. The establishment fell into nothing but silence. I nearly choke on hearing him boast.

Even the red-haired man's smirk instantly died down. I discreetly looked around. Sam's carefree attitude dumbfounded others; while the rest of the crowd looked at him as if they were looking at a foolish man.

Just moments ago, those sorts of gazes were for the woman and that man lying over there. But now, those eyes were for us.

I could not help but shrink behind Sam. I tugged his sleeve lightly. Alas...

Sam suddenly stepped aside. His hands spread open as if presenting an excellent product.

"See? From head to toe, she's perfect! No matter what angle I look, my wife is just perfect! And we're just talking about appearance here, we haven't gotten to her character! I can talk about her all day — no! For years! I don't think I can ever stop complimenting her..."

Sam went on and on without a pause to breathe. He sounded so proud, but...

I gripped my hand tightly and bit my lower lip. My fear gradually transformed into embarrassment.

He was praising me to the heavens. Goodness... I believed Sam was the only one who could see the "beauty" in me. I couldn't even see the beauty he had been saying all this time whenever I look in the mirror.

"What a fool." Amidst Sam's tattling, the red-haired man sneered.

His comment abruptly halted Sam. "I am, indeed, foolishly in love with my wife. Isn't that obvious?"

"Sam..." I whispered, reaching to his sleeve. Sam turned his head to me and tilted his head, baffled.

I sighed, seeing his clueless expression. So, instead of explaining it to him, I pointed my chin towards the man lying down.

Sam slowly shifted his gaze from me to the "strange floor decoration" he commented about. Still didn't understand my point. Sam looked around. All eyes from the restaurant's establishment were all on him.

But Sam didn't seem to care. Instead, he continued to travel with his gaze. When it landed on the woman who stopped stripping, a disdain expression resurfaced on his face.

"This is a whorehouse?" Sam gasped faintly and immediately faced me. "Oh, goodness, love! I think they deceived us...!"

Silence. Again, silence enveloped the entire restaurant. They were as dumbfounded as I was.

Sam's obliviousness confused me whether to laugh or cry. But what I'm certain, his oblivious behavior soothed me.

How hypocrite of me to say I'm not afraid because he's with me. There would always be this fear in me that would never go away.

"Hahaha!" After a long silence, the red-haired man burst out in laughters. "What a great idea! How about we make this a whorehouse for real?"

A wicked grin plastered on the man's lips. He gazed at the woman earlier with those scornful eyes.

"You. Why did you stop?" The red-haired man queried. Now, we've returned to square one as his attention returned to the poor woman.

The latter trembled and gritted her teeth. Her shaking hands continued where she left off. However, the cheers and eager eyes from earlier already vanished.

The red-haired man didn't care, though. Instead, his attention returned to me and Sam.

"How much?" He asked.

Sam furrowed his brows in puzzlement, tilting his head to the side.

"How much?" Sam repeated in a baffled tone.

"Your wife, I mean. Since you praise her to the heaven, telling us she's perfect at any angle, I want to see it for myself." The red-haired man smirked, shrugging nonchalantly.

"Oh." Sam nodded in understanding. "She's not for sale."

"We can buy everything or anyone in Whistlebird. Can't you see him?" The red-haired man cocked his head towards the man lying in his own pool of blood.

Sam gazed at the man. "Obviously, I have eyes."

"Sam." Again, I tugged Sam's sleeve, which caught his attention. I said nothing further and just looked at him in the eye.

After sharing eye contact with him, Sam finally nodded as he understood the current ordeal. However, his demeanor didn't change. Instead, he offered me a reassuring smile.

"Ahh! My wife is so pretty I didn't notice this situation!" Sam chuckled and clapped his hands.

"Now that makes sense! I was wondering how come this vampire is lying here bleeding! I thought it was his occupation! Playing dead for a change! How silly of me!"

What? I furrowed my brows. Did he say that the man on the ground was a vampire?

Just then, I recalled the red-haired man shouting about, showing fangs. This realization shook me to the core.

This man...? This man who was beaten almost to death was a vampire? But how come?

"Hah." Not pleased at Sam's attitude, the red-haired man sneered viciously. "It seems you're not from here."

But Sam paid him no attention. Instead, Sam trudged towards the man on the floor. He pulled him by the shoulder and roll it around.

"How pitiful. How did you end up like this?" Sam mumbled, tilting his head to the side.

"Please..." The man struggled to breathe. And yet, he was able to clasp Sam's chest with his mangled hands. "Sa... save her."

"Tsk tsK tsK." Sam shook his head lightly, clicking his tongue in disappointment. "You mean that girl stripping for you? Why would I?"

Cold and remorseless, Sam refused. I didn't expect him to agree. Still, deep down, I felt... disappointed.

Sam squatted down lazily. His arms on his leg as he just casually chatted.

"Are you not ashamed? That girl is doing this to keep you alive from that psycho. Her situation is your fault because you can't protect her. I don't like the likes of you."

Chapter 72 - I Assure You

"Are you not ashamed? That girl is doing this to keep you alive from that psycho. Her situation is your fault because you can't protect her. I don't like the likes of you."

"Sam..." I called out under my breath. However, Sam had a point — a strong one, at that.

If he was a vampire, shouldn't he supposed to be strong? How come he was bullied to this degree? There might be a reason. Perhaps the red-haired man was just stronger than him?

Instinctively, I shifted my gaze to the red-haired man. He seemed pleased at Sam's refusal.

"See? You should be like this lad! Smart and wise!" The red-haired man complimented Sam for the reason I couldn't comprehend.

Smart and wise? For refusing to help? Don't make me laugh.

Deep down, I felt this fury slowly building up inside me.

Not towards the red-haired man. But a fury at how this society was the same everywhere.

The strong bully the weak just because they're strong. It had become a norm that one should look away so not to get involved.

I learned that hard lesson in the past. Regardless, I hated the fact that I'm... weak. I couldn't do anything and could only look away as well.

How am I different from everyone in here? What right do I have to get disappointed at Sam?

"Your sin is being stupid. Even if you're against a powerful opponent and were certain you can't beat that whiner over there, make sure she fled to safety, at least!" Sam spoke again. His attention fixed on the man, sighing in disappointment.

Was this a time for a lecture? A fellow vampire is dying right in front of him!

"Whiner?" Sam's snide comment didn't go unnoticed as the red-haired man scoffed.

In a blink of an eye, the red-haired man approached Sam. It happened too quick my eyes barely followed.

However, before the red-haired man could grab Sam, the latter grabbed him by the wrist. Gasp from everyone resonated in the air.

Although I didn't see what happened in that short time frame, Sam blocked the attack without looking away from the vampire on the floor. I heaved a sigh of relief. Goodness.

"Tsk. I've never been so disappointed in my life... oh, I was disappointed that my wife refuses to smooch smooch for information. But I mean — "

"Sam!" As Sam continued his chat with the other man, I yelled.

The red-haired man was trying to launch another attack. However, before his blow could land on Sam's neck, he stopped on his own when Sam turned his head towards him.

"How come you're so rude?" Sam inquired, tilting his head to the side. "Can't you see I'm still talking to him?"

For reasons unknown, despite Sam's unchanging, laid-back tone, the red-haired man's hand trembled. He had frozen and couldn't move.

What...?

Sam clicked his tongue, raising his brow as he stared at the red-haired man.

"Do you really want my attention so bad?" Sam asked, genuinely intrigued by the answer.

When the red-haired man didn't answer, Sam nodded in satisfaction. "Give me a moment."

With that being said, Sam returned his attention to the vampire on the floor. He laid his palm towards him — not to help him up, but as if asking for him to hand over something.

"You need to pay me for lecturing you. I heard money is everything in Whistlebird. So, I'm charging you for my wisdom." His fingers wriggled. Waiting for money?!

I covered my lips with my palm, stumbling back. My groom... is the most ridiculous man ever! How could he exploit someone in a brink of death?

I just wanted to weep in the corner. How did I fall in love with him?

"Hah..." Finally, the man whom Sam was talking to scoffed in disbelief as well. This level of ridiculousness would probably kill him first.

My apologies.

"This restaurant... I'll give it to you." To my dismay, the vampire agreed!

Oh, good lord.

"Sweet!" Sam grinned brightly as he sprung up to his feet. "Did you hear him? I'm the new owner of this restaurant! So, give me and my wife the best spot; I want everything special for our dinner!"

He announced, rendering everyone dumbfounded. From the beginning until now, Sam never lost his sight of his priorities.

I didn't know whether to cry or feel moved. I didn't even know whether to commend him for gaining a restaurant or condemn him for taking advantage of the situation.

I'm at... lost.

When Sam turned and faced in my direction, he smiled proudly. Just as he took a step towards me, he halted upon hearing the red-haired man's voice.

"You... who are you?" He asked, almost stammering.

The red-haired man had been arrogant all this time. However, he changed after looking at Sam closely. What happened?

"Oh, right? The whiner." Sam snapped as he cocked his head towards the red-haired man.

Slowly, Sam trudged towards the red-haired man. Each step thud loudly in my ear as the air suddenly grew thicker.

Sam...?

The red-haired man slumped on the floor. Slowly looking up to Sam, who stood before him. Sam was already intimidating vampire in his best days. But now, he's... displeased?

"Is that a question?" Sam inquired. His tone was firm, level, and low. A shiver run down my spine upon hearing him.

"Or a confirmation?"

Sam added, raising his leg and placed it on the red-haired man's shoulder. Slowly, Sam pressed his foot, that caused the man to slowly bow.

As he did, Sam spoke in the same tone. "Either way, how dare you look at what's mine with those covetous eyes?"

The red-haired man struggled, but he ended up crashing his forehead on the floor. Sam didn't seem he was exerting effort, but he forced the red-haired man to bow before him with only his foot.

Although I couldn't see Sam's eyes, I never felt this relief of not seeing them. Just his tone sent a shiver down my spine.

"I don't care about the Remington clan's petty means of enjoyment. However, the second you look at my wife again, that's the last time you'll ever see; I assure you." Sam stated.

It was neither a threat nor an order. It was simply a statement which Sam made it sound so dangerous.

Everyone, including me, was rendered speechless at the sight before us. The red-haired man cowered, just like that. It was a turn of events I've never expected to unfold.

"Also, apologize to everyone for causing a scene and delaying our supper. Don't go ruining people's meal. Have some manners, will you?" Sam clicked his tongue as he retrieved his foot back.

When he looked at me, it was as if nothing happened as a bright smile turned up on his lips.

"Oh, my Lilove, is probably starving! Forgive your husband for being friendly..." Sam exclaimed, rushing to me as if he realized he did something wrong.

Being friendly...? Was that how he befriend people? I'm probably not the only one who asked the same thing in my head.

Chapter 73 - Teddy Brown

After all that ordeal, the entire restaurant returned to what it used to be. They served us a sumptuous meal, just like what Sam requested. It was as if nothing happened, but the murmurings about the incident still reached my ear.

It would be more odd if they didn't take an interest in Sam. If my eavesdropping heard them right, that red-haired man was a member of the Remington Clan; the only noble family in this town.

I raised my gaze across to me. Sam was cupping his cheek with both his hands, grinning at me brightly.

As usual, Sam was as carefree as ever. I still didn't know whether to be thankful for teaching that red-haired man a lesson, or get worried he offended people that might cause him trouble later.

"Did you see me?" Sam queried with a full grin.

"Mhm?" Did he mean how he helped the owner of this restaurant and his lover?

"I'm strong, aren't I?" His grinned brightened even more.

Obviously, he wanted paired. I nodded lightly, but said nothing further.

"Huh? Why do you look so unhappy, my wife? Did you get hurt or anything?" The smile on his lips gradually vanished as he frowned.

Sam's eyes remained on me while I stayed silent. I stared at him for a long time.

After some time, I raised my hand and reached for his hand, that was cupping his chin.

"I'm sorry." I muttered with a subtle smile.

Sam's bafflement immediately resurfaced in his face. He cocked his head to the side, blinking, waiting for me to explain.

"Earlier, I felt disappointed because you refuse to help them. I couldn't help but be reminded that you're like other aristocrat who wouldn't bat an eye to help the weak."

I paused as a bitter smile turned up on my lips. Sam deserved to get this apology for doubting him. Admitting this was my way to be responsible for my jumbled thoughts.

"I said nothing terrify me because you're with me. I lied. There would always be this small fear inside me, that won't go away no matter how I make myself believe it doesn't affect me. Above all, I realized that doubting you even for a second just makes me question all the words I've said. So, I'm sorry, Sam, for waning."

"Heh. You're not Lilou if you're not doubting everything." Yet Sam's reply was a chuckle.

"Huh?"

Sam held my hand, guiding it down on the table, but didn't let it go. His eyes on me as he leaned forward, resting his jaw on his knuckles.

"I mean, it's already your nature to question things based on your experiences. When something is too good to be true, you raise your brow and take a step back. Even when things were explained to you, you raise more questions inside your head. You always had your guard up, and that's makes you, you."

The corner of his lips curled into a smile. Sam wasn't angry or displeased. His smile told me he just understood, and that's alright.

My heart and eyes softened instantly. How could he be so kind to me? What did I even do to be loved to this extent?

"Sam," I whispered, shifting my gaze towards our hands on the table. My thumbs caressed his knuckles gently.

I asked previously why I fell in love with him. This was just one of the many reasons.

"But you know, not everyone on the ground is the bullied ones. Sometimes, step back and think if helping them was actually helping them, or..." Sam paused purposely and waited for me to raise my gaze back to his eyes.

"Or, you're just interrupting their karma."

Momentarily, my mind buzzed as it process its remarks. My lips parted, but no words came out.

Interrupting their karma?

"People had their own darkness. Especially, in the Capital, everyone had their own secret and greed hidden within them. You can't always trust what you see on the outside." Sam explained, taking our destination as an example of what happened in here.

"So, did you interrupt the karma of the owner of this establishment?" I asked, out of curiosity.

"Who knows?" Sam shrugged nonchalantly. "I don't care whether he dies or live, honestly."

"Sam."

"Ahem!" Sam cleared his throat. "I mean, the only life I care about is yours. In a war, there's this phrase: it's moral to sacrifice one life to save a hundred. For me, if that one person is you, I'd sacrifice even a thousand to save you."

"Pfft—!" Normally, I wouldn't find this funny. However, I'd be a hypocrite if I acted I didn't feel move by his words. "Silly."

"You, that's my most used and precious word. Don't take it away from me, silly." Sam complained with a frown.

"It's not like you own it." I chuckled, which made his frown even gloomier.

Seeing him sigh still made me concede. "Alright. Goodness, you're so possessive."

"Of course! If I hear other people say that word, I'd chop their heads off!"

Goodness. There should be a limit to this, right? I shook my head lightly, hoping Sam was merely joking...

But was he?

Just then, someone approached us, which instinctively made us turn our heads towards him. I furrowed my brows as I slowly gazed up.

"I know it's a bit late, but I wanted to express my gratitude for helping us in that crisis." The man didn't beat around the bush and smiled.

"Huh?" I blinked, confused at who was this man thanking us.

"I didn't help you, though. I'm just showing my wife she can be rest assured that she won't be in that same situation." Sam raised his brow and cocked his head to the side.

"Even so, you offended a family of His Grace." The man argued apologetically.

"Wait..." I furrowed my brows as I studied the man. "You are the...?"

"Yes, my lady." The man nodded, confirming that he was the man who was nearly at the brink of death previously.

How come he could walk and talk now? Oh! Silly me! He's a vampire, and it had been an hour since then. Still, that's fast.

"So what?" Sam furrowed his brows.

"My lord, you may be strong to intimidate Lord Noah, but he's still a Remington. The clan wouldn't let this humiliation slip." The man explained, along with a deep sigh.

"As you can see, most of the folks here had left the establishment. One must know that the Remington let no one humiliate their name."

He added as he looked around. Just like him, I also looked around. The restaurant was nearly packed earlier. But now, there's more empty table and fewer people around.

"Is that the reason you let that man do all that?" My inquiry slipped past my lips before I realized it.

The man sported a bitter smile that made him look ashamed. "At first, I let him be. I served everything he asked us to, but it didn't satisfy him. But, when he involved my wife, I lost control and showed my fangs."

The man looked down. He was obviously blaming himself for everything. Even though he didn't detail everything, I could tell he tried.

"If you showed your fangs, you should've torn him apart and hanged his limbs in front of your establishment as a warning to others not to mess with you!" Sam muttered nonchalantly.

"That's bad for business." The man informed. "But, indeed. If I showed my fangs, I should've fought to death. But... if I lost, my family will also pay an enormous price."

"So you conceded when you collected your thoughts?" Sam raised his brows, not sounding sorry for him. "It's still the same, though. Those types of people would give you hell for the rest of your life. Unless they found another plaything."

The man smiled bitterly, aware of what the future he could hold.

"I can endure a bloody hell of a life if that means protecting my offspring from sharing my fate."

I bit my lower lip as I stared at the vampire. I was so wrong to consider all vampires were evil. There were still a few of them who were like Sam and this man.

Who could love and care like humans. This man reminded me of my father. Father would literally sacrifice his arm for me. Fatherly love... it was not just exclusive to humans.

I moved my gaze to Sam, who remained silent after the man's last remarks. I squeezed his hand to get his attention.

Sam blinked and gaze at me. Upon meeting my gaze, he smiled subtly.

However, his smile instantly vanished as he looked at the entrance of the establishment. Instinctively, my gaze followed and glimpsed of the vampire standing on the side.

"My lord, flee. I appreciate your kindness, but, my family and I agreed to stand up for our family as one." The man smiled. His eyes brimmed with determination.

"We can't let the only individual who helped us be in a predicament because of us."

The man added. Unconsciously, I looked around to see some server and people scattered around the restaurant staring back at us with a smile.

Why do I feel this strange feeling that something bad would happen?

Yet Sam remained indifferent as he leaned back comfortably.

"What's your name?" Sam asked.

The man hesitated for a bit before taking a deep breath and released it sharply. "The name is Teddy Brown."

"Mister Brown, I'm not staying here that long. That's why even though it pains me, I can't accept the ownership of this establishment. And I'm bad at business too." Sam paused, studying Mr. Brown from head to toe.

"But, I'm returning this restaurant to you in one condition."

Teddy was a bit baffled at what was Sam was saying at this moment.

"Feed anyone who comes in here. Whether they have money or don't, be it vampires or humans, treat them all fairly. This establishment's purpose is not to make profit, but to serve its people."

Both Teddy and I were momentarily stunned. Did we hear what we just heard?

Before we get our answer, the entrance door flung away with a loud bang.

Chapter 74 - A Devil In Disguise

"Feed anyone who comes in here. Whether they have money or don't, be it vampires or humans, treat them all fairly. This establishment's purpose is not to make profit, but to serve its people."

BANG!

A loud sound of the entrance being burst open startled me out of my wits. Slowly, I moved my gaze at the entrance.

The door flew to a certain direction while the other barely hanged still. There was a group of five people standing by the door.

One of them was Noah Remington. But he stood behind. My eyes shifted to the other red-haired man standing at the front.

Unlike Noah, the other red-haired man emanated power from his well-built physique. He looked more matured, keeping his chin up, while his eyes scanned the establishment.

"Sam..." I whispered, and turned in his direction. However, Sam remained nonchalant as he stared at Teddy.

"If you agree with my condition, the restaurant is yours." Sam uttered in a flat tone.

Teddy sported a conflicted look. Was this the time to negotiate?

"But... about you, the—" Teddy stammered before he abruptly halted as he gritted his teeth. "Will you flee to safety if I agree?"

"Obviously." Sam nodded with a shrug.

"Then, I'll pass my will to my offspring." Teddy heaved a sigh of relief before he slowly turned around.

Teddy stood in a protective stance as he faced the group of intruders. I gazed at Teddy's back.

"Lord Arthur, Lord Noah, I wouldn't beat around the bush. Our clan had been supporting and abiding by the laws of Whistlebird. However, I can't let you trample on our family's pride anymore."

Teddy's voice thundered. His tone laced with determination.

"Teddy Brown." Arthur let out a scoff that sounded like a brief chuckle. "The Brown Clan, a former noble family, banished from the capital after committing treason. Us, the Remington had granted you mercy. Alas, you're repaying our mercy by humiliating my little brother?"

Teddy chuckled with ridicule. He shook his head as he raised his gaze back to Arthur.

"Mercy?" Teddy scoffed once again. "If what you call mercy is humiliating our family's name, making us your slaves to make your own wealth, and toying us whenever you please, I don't need your mercy!"

Teddy yelled firmly. His voice rang across each corner of the establishment. I noticed some server and people around as they stood on their feet; their eyes focused on the five men standing by the entrance as their fangs gradually came into sight.

"You're showing your fangs..." Arthur smirked, raising his hand as he slowly removed his black leather gloves.

"It seems the Brown Clan had decided to end their line."

"Sam..." I turned my gaze across me. I could feel the air grew thicker with every passing second.

If nothing was done, they would shed blood. To my dismay, Sam was looking at me brightly.

"Are you done eating, love?" Sam leaned forward, cupping his cheek, bearing a bright smile on his lips.

"Sam!" I bit my lower lip, hesitant to speak my mind. However, I figured being honest with him was the least I could do.

"I don't want to flee. Can't you help Mister Brown?"

Sam blinked innocently. The more he remained silent, the more I could hear my heart sinking.

I'm aware Whistlebird was not Sam's fief. This land was out of his jurisdiction. However, how could I sleep peacefully, knowing someone sacrificed their life for me?

"I — I know you've given your word and agreed to Mister Brown's request. However, I don't want him to —" I choked, grinding my teeth as I mustered all shamelessness to ask him to turn back on his own words.

It may be too much to ask, but... I felt helpless.

"Haha." Sam chuckled brightly. "I've agreed to flee, but you didn't."

"Huh?"

"The reason I agree is that you'd disagree. And that Teddy will also disagree to agree with me if I disagree." Sam explained, but my mind buzzed.

What did he say? Was this a riddle or an explanation?

"Silly." Sam grinned as he bent over. His arms extended as he pinched my cheek. "Ah, you're so cute."

"Sam." I looked at him in puzzlement. Even though I couldn't comprehend what was going inside his mind, his smile soothed my heart to ease.

"Now, can you do me a favor, love?" I raised my brows as I waited for his next word.

"Close your eyes and cover your ears for me."

"What?" I asked. "Why?"

Sam smacked his lips. "Because I don't want you to see me... just yet."

As soon as I heard his explanation, I pursed my lips in a thin line. I wanted to say no. But, I ought to respect him just like how he respected my decision.

With that thought in mind, I nodded. Sam smiled and patted my head lightly.

"Good girl."

After a beat, I reluctantly closed my eyes and covered my ears. Mysteriously enough, I couldn't hear anything. I thought I'd still hear, albeit faint since I'm here.

But nothing. It was just silence.

"Good girl." Samael patted Lilou's head without looking away from her eyes.

Upon seeing what he was eager to see, Samael retracted his hand away as Lilou did as what he instructed.

"It seems the Brown Clan had decided to end their line." Arthur removed his glove ever so slowly. "Be it from the old generation or the newer generation of your clan, you're all foolish. I guess foolishness is hereditary."

"The Brown Clan were not foolish, Arthur. We are proud vampires who supported the rightful heir of the throne!" Teddy hissed as his fangs came out. His eyes glinted with killing intent as his nails grew into sharp claws.

"The rightful heir of the throne?" Arthur smirked.

In a blink of an eye, Arthur appeared in front of teddy. He was too fast that Teddy was a second late to avoid the attack right in front of his chest.

Arthur's hand smoothly penetrated Teddy's chest as if it was as soft as a jelly. His fingers immediately wrapped around Teddy's beating heart.

Without a shadow of doubt, Arthur was on a different caliber than Noah. He was better and stronger in every aspect.

"Pity. The Brown clan's head couldn't even put up a fight." Arthur mocked as he looked around at the Brown's family members hissing at him.

"Fret not, Ted. I will treat all your clan members dearly." Arthur smirked, stressing his words that intensified the desperation in Teddy's heart.

"You...!" Teddy ground his teeth in disbelief, as he couldn't even put a fight before dying. In his mind, Arthur was right. He was a foolish vampire to stand up against the Remington after sucking up to them for hundreds of years.

Teddy's eyes welled up as he looked at his clan members. He regretted it. Those were his last words, as he had realized that none of them would survive tonight.

"You lived a long, meaningless life, Ted." Arthur pulled his hand back.

However, Arthur and Teddy froze. Teddy's mind momentarily stopped functioning as he blinked and still conscious.

Meanwhile, Arthur's fangs slowly came out as he gazed at Teddy's chest. His hand was still inside, but his arm... it was severed.

"If you show your fangs, that means you're putting your life on the line, no?" Suddenly, a malicious voice tickled Arthur's ear.

Arthur slowly turned to where Samael stood. Samael's eyelashes fluttered, staring at him with a subtle smile.

Samael's tone was neither cold nor flat. His eyes didn't bear a grudge or killing intent.

What pooled beneath his deep crimson eyes was... pleasure. And when the side of his lips stretched into a smirk, a veritable devil came out of his disguise.

"Shh... don't be afraid, little one. I just want you to humor me."

Chapter 75 - The Face Behind His Disguise

I closed my eyes because I respected and felt Sam's eagerness for me to listen. Even when questions of how I temporarily turned deaf without explanation, I stuck with my words.

However, part of me wanted to see what he was so afraid to show. Deep down, I knew I could accept any side of him — even his worst.

Slowly, I opened my eyes. It was dark.

As I blinked, I furrowed my brows and looked around. This was not the establishment anymore. It was a chamber and I'm on a bed.

A dark room with only the light from the radiating moon through the window granted me to see. Where am I? Where's Sam? Did I faint?

"My head hurts." I whispered, massaging my temple lightly.

Myriads of questions rose in my head as I assisted myself to sit up.

"Sam?" I called out, my voice shaking. Biting my lips, I flung my legs out of the bed I've never slept on before.

This bedchamber had similarities like ours. Although there wasn't much light to see around, I could tell, as the air felt eerily different.

My eyes caught the faint light from the gap under the door. Hence, I treaded carefully towards it.

I didn't know why I'm tiptoeing and being overly cautious. But I kept wary of my unfamiliar surrounding.

Slowly, I opened the door. It creaked as I did. I peeked my head out, looking from left to right.

No one was around. Where did everybody go? I wondered.

Sam wouldn't leave me alone. Unless he had something important to do. I didn't know how I ended up here.

The last thing I remembered was I agreed to close my eyes. And then... nothing.

"Huh?" I tilted my head to the side as I knitted my brows. I blinked and blinked, hoping this would clear my recollections.

But, nothing. My mind went blank after that and now I'm here.

"How did..." Suddenly, I trailed off as I stood in stunned silence. "He didn't get..."

I gasped as my heart suddenly pounded against my chest. Did Sam get defeated by that man named Arthur?

Upon that thought crossing my head, my knees went weak. They trembled as I held on to the jamb to support myself.

"That's... impossible." I murmured, but my thoughts jumbled inside my head.

Even though I didn't know the capacity of Sam's strength, there's this possibility that his opponent was stronger. My breathing grew shorter as I pounded my fist against my chest.

Get it together, Lil. That wouldn't happen to Sam. I chanted those words like a witch casting a powerful spell.

Being despondent at this moment wouldn't help. I believed in Sam.

I bit my lower lip as hard as I could to wake myself up. Shaking my head to get rid of unnecessary negative thoughts.

"Yes. That's impossible." I convinced myself, nodding in agreement with myself.

As I swallowed down all negative thoughts clouding my head, I gritted my teeth. Maybe if I look around, I'd find him.

With that thought in mind, I looked outside again. Upon confirming no one was outside, I mustered the courage to step out of the room.

But there's this sudden uneasiness in my heart. I'm unfamiliar with this place. I should wait for Sam inside, right?

For a good minute, I stood here motionlessly. Unconsciously, I was biting the nail of my thumb as I pondered. When I realized what I was doing, I immediately retracted my hand from my lips.

"This won't do," I muttered in distress as I exhaled sharply. "I'll look for him."

I knew if I stayed here, I'd die out of worry. I wouldn't have peace knowing something might have happened to him.

Even though the chances were low, I would always have this constant worry about his well-being. He's the man I chose to marry, to spend the rest of my life with, and the only person who accepted my silliness.

As I gathered my thoughts, my breathing stabilized. That's right. I wouldn't sit still, especially after having this uncomfortable gap in my memory.

So, because of this determination, I trudged towards the long hallway. There were a few candelabras that lighted the way.

I followed my instinct, treading carefully not to make the slightest sound. As I walk, my hands traced the wall.

I won't lie. The farther I get from the bedchamber I came from, the stronger this uneasiness in my heart built up.

I walked and walked, looking ahead and behind every so often. Turning left or right, following my instinct. Sometimes, I got to a dead end, causing me to walk back to choose another path.

This place felt like a maze. I wonder how huge this mansion as it felt double the size of the Duke of Grimbanne's mansion.

Or did I just get used to Sam's place that it felt smaller? I remember having this feeling when I stepped foot in the duke's mansion.

That's not important. As I shook my head to get the irrelevant thoughts out of my mind, I heard a faint noise not far away.

"Huh?" I raised a brow.

Instinctively, I followed the sound. The hallway towards it was dark without a single candelabra lighting it up. But the end of the hallway brought a faint light.

Hence, I carefully marched towards it. The sound of voices grew distinct and it same louder as if someone were arguing.

When I reached the end of the hallway, I cautiously peeked. However, as soon as I did, I immediately hid behind the wall while covering my lips with my palms.

My eyes went wide as the beating of my heart drummed in my ear. My breathing turned ragged as my shoulders trembled uncontrollably.

What did I just see?

I choked, nearly choked, as I forgot to breathe momentarily. In the great hallway that was barely lit, I saw people... alive and dead; severed and barely intact. Blood was everywhere, as if a massacre took place.

But that wasn't shook me to the core. What startled me and filled me with dread was that Sam had his fangs buried in a man's neck, tearing his head apart upon tossing its body. Blood dripped from the corner of his lips as his bright crimson eyes glinted with... satisfaction.

"I told you not to open your eyes, didn't I?" I froze and held my breath upon hearing Sam's eerily low voice from my side.

Chapter 76 - Lilou Is Mad

Have I ever felt actual fear? Right now, all the fears I've known in my entire life felt shallow.

"I told you not to open your eyes, didn't I?"

The difference in his demeanor was far too distinct not to compare or notice. I crept my gaze to my left and wondered if I have ever truly know the man I'm about to marry.

No. And I'm aware of that.

Sam's crimson eyes fixed on me, drooping low. He licked the blood on the tip of his sharp fang.

My throat instantly felt parched. My lower lip trembled as my breathing grew short.

Specks of blood smeared on his cheek and jaw. When he raised his hand, it was covered with nothing but red.

As if he had dipped his hand in a tub of blood. And that hand was reaching out to me.

I'm... scared.

I held my breath as the tip of his finger that was akin to claws, came closer. But it halted midway.

"You're scared." He uttered under his breath.

I am, was what I wanted to say.

However, my words were stuck inside my throat and my tongue kept rolling back. All I could do was stare at him in fear.

"I've always wanted to show off how I committed genocide in the upper echelon in Grimsbanne. I thought you'll like it." Sam muttered but I could barely grasp his point.

"But after consulting with Fabian, he told me the result might be the opposite of what I'm expecting. He's right."

"Sam, wha — what is going on?" I mustered my courage to ask, despite stammering. "Why — why are you doing this?"

Instead of answering me, Sam slammed his palm against the wall. I stiffened and squeezed my back against the wall, tiptoeing to move back.

Sam walked in front of me, his palm on the side of my head. Again, I held my breath as those eyes filled with intense, jumbled emotions.

His eyes locked with mine until I could see the reflection of myself in them. Although not quite clear, I could see how frightened I looked at the moment.

Sam appeared and felt like a totally different person. He terrified me.

"Do you..." He trailed off, trying to get himself to ask whatever he wanted to ask. "You shouldn't have to see this."

"Did you... knock me out?"

Sam remained silent. I took that as a yes. My fright and dissatisfaction tangled, confusing me with which one to feel.

"Why?" I asked under my breath.

"Because of this." Sam answered as his fangs grew back into small canine teeth. "The way you look at me changed. Was it a look of fear again? Hate? Disgust? Or, all the above? Regardless, I hate it."

"What?"

Sam's gaze turned colder as it sent a chill down my spine. "Forget this had ever happened. I'm selfish, love. I'd rather rob all your memories to keep you by my side at all costs. That is the man I am."

His tone was especially low and heavy. The weight of his words was heavier than anything I had carried on my shoulder. But, there's this hidden touch of melancholic mixed in it.

Regardless, my mind buzzed as I listened to his remarks. It's frustrating.

"Rob all my memories?" I repeated in disbelief. "You want to take this memory out of my head and leave another gap in my memory?"

Although he didn't explain this nor did he confirm, I didn't spend my time studying to not use my head. If this was the old Lilou, she wouldn't even consider this.

However, Sam changed me. He showed me the world that was beyond my imagination. That's why... this felt more painfully insulting.

Sam's expression didn't change as he leaned forward. "That's right. I told you, I might hurt you in some way because I'm greedy. I'm a jester and you fell for his tricks. That's your fault."

"Then, why don't you let me take responsibility for my decision?" I argued, exploding from the overwhelming shock, frustration, and many emotions clamped into one.

"When I saw you, I asked myself if I have truly known you. This is not the first time I asked the same thing, but the answer is always a no. Deep down, I knew I never truly know the entire you. That the part I've been with is just a part of you. I'm aware of that, Sam."

I took a deep breath as I placed my palms on his chest. Slowly, I pushed him back, creating a distance between us. And then I refocused my gaze on him, raising my chin up.

"I'm scared, yes. Not because of what I've seen. But because I'm scared that I'd lose my value to you. You showed pleasure in violence, I'm scared you'd get blinded and not see me anymore."

Again, I paused as I swallowed down any lingering restraint I had. I would say this once and for all, to clear things up before he could erase this memory.

"I loved the Sam who intruded in my home and spoke terrifying things to horrify me. I loved the Sam who pats my head while expressing his satisfaction in my achievements. I loved the Sam who would lay his head on my lap, unguarded. I love the Sam who never slips a chance to tease me. I know that's not your all; that there are parts of you which you hadn't shown me yet. But, I love you, regardless. That's why this feels... insulting and makes me mad."

I spat in one go, barely breathing. I balled my hands in to fist. People had been insulting me all my life, and I didn't care. But this one was a different insult I couldn't just ignore.

That's why I didn't think twice about the words coming out of my mouth.

"I know I'm not in the place to act righteous after constantly doubting you. But... just like your words, this side of you, you don't want to show is what makes you, you." I paused, looking into his eyes, hoping my words would get through his soul.

"I'm not an optimistic person, Sam. So, while you give me your best, I'm also preparing myself to accept your worst." I let out a faint sigh as the stiffness on my shoulder eased.

I felt more relaxed after letting all these thoughts out of my chest. Sam also calmed down as he looked at me, stunned.

"So, never decide for me again. Whether I love you or hate you, that's my option. The option you, yourself, gave me. That's your fault."

Upon dropping my last remarks, I walked away. Sam didn't seem he would follow me. I also needed some time to gather my emotions and thoughts.

Chapter 77 - Sorry

In the past, I've spent countless nights awake. Wondering why life was called life, if living was akin to an endless loop of the night?

I've never had an answer, nor I think I'd ever have one.

Tonight was different. Staring at the high ceiling with a blank mind.

It would be better if I had something to think about. But no, I had nothing but this heaviness in my heart.

Was I upset? Angry? Sad? Disappointed? Which one was it?

But what I know was that I hated the fact that I have this gap in my memory. No matter how I tried to fill that void, I couldn't. There's just this missing piece I couldn't take back.

Do I hate Sam for it? Definitely not. I loved him, so I forgave him even before he comes and apologizes. Not that I'm expecting him to apologize, anyway.

After all, I'm just... Lilou. A peasant he clothed, fed, and granted education. Still, I didn't want to consider that now.

"I'm so... sad." I expressed under my breath, placing my palm over my chest.

My heart had calmed down after I exploded at Sam. But ironically, it wasn't really at ease — not in the slightest.

"I feel like crying," I mumbled, raising my fingers to touch my cheek. "But, I'm not."

Now that I thought about it, it had been many years since I shed tears. Even before death, I didn't remember crying actual tears.

And I'm never frustrated, just like right now.

I should cry now that Sam and I argued, right? Why don't my tears not coming out?

"Tsk!" I clicked my tongue out of annoyance. Out of frustration, I forced myself to sit up and kicked in the air.

"I think I'll have a heart attack at this rate." I muttered and slapped my cheeks lightly.

Am I annoyed? Upset? Sad? And Disappointed? Yes! I am feeling those emotions all at once right now. But what was truly frustrating was, I felt like I'm in no position to feel all those.

"After all, I always doubted him whenever I get the chance. What a hypocrite."

My words slipped past my lips, coming out above a whisper. I knew Sam was not perfect, but what I told him earlier was too harsh.

"You know him better. He always does things for his own reason." I mumbled as I turned my gaze towards the window.

A sigh escaped my lips as I flung my legs out of the bed and walked towards the window. As I stood in front of the window, I looked up.

The moon was as bright and mesmerizing as ever, bringing light into the darkness of the night. How pretty.

My life before was like an endless night. No matter how bright it was during the peak of the day, it was never enough to bring light into my life.

The moon was different. It soothed me, calming me to sleep.

Perhaps it was because the moon and I were alike... and completely opposite at the same time. We're both alone in the night.

However, while the moon gave light in the dark, I merely stared at it from afar. Or maybe I had a wrong perception.

Maybe I had it all wrong until now.

"The moon has always been alone, but I wasn't." I corrected through a whisper. "It was always there for me."

A subtle smile resurfaced on my lips upon the realization. My eyes softened as my heart felt at ease.

The colors of the moon were like Sam. The moon and I were not the same; Sam and the moon were alike.

Both were creatures of the night. Both were alone... up there. Still, they showed light and beauty throughout this long, dark night.

Also, they're always there for me. Listening and watching over me from day one.

As I adored the beauty of the moon, all the negative emotions gradually vanished. My thoughts slowly gathered together, and so was my rationale.

"Regardless, they were not perfect." I uttered as my eyelashes fluttered ever so slowly. "They had their flaws... but, does it matter, Lilou?"

I asked myself once again. I told Sam I loved him because he was not perfect. But the way I see things, part of me was expecting him to be one.

What a pain. I loved him because he was who he was. A possessive vampire who nearly gave me multiple heart attacks with his words alone.

His light might not be as blinding as the sun, but it was definitely as soothing as the moon.

"I prefer it that way." I smiled subtly, nodding encouragingly at the moon. "This won't do. I'd die in frustration if we prolong this further."

I took a deep breath and exhaled it sharply. My eyes glinted with determination.

"If he doesn't want to talk, I'll force a conversation out of him. I also have things to apologize for." I grumbled as I stomped my way towards the door.

If he didn't want to apologize, I'd force an apology out of him. But, before that, I had to take initiative first.

My love was bigger than my disappointment and frustration. How could he let me sleep with all this heaviness in my heart?

"I'll definitely teach him a lesson. Just you wait, Mister La Crox." I threatened as I approached the door. "I also have my ultimate move."

When I stood before the door, I paused for a while. Taking deep breaths to solidify my resolve.

And then, before I wane, I reached for it and forced it open. "Just you —"

I halted, abruptly. I blinked my eyes many times as I saw Sam pacing back and forth outside the bedchamber.

When he noticed it opened up, Sam slowly turned his head towards me. He stood there in stunned silence, massaging his nape.

His lips kept parting and closing. No words came out.

"I..." My words trailed off as my tongue rolled back.

What happened to all the words I wanted to tell him? Everything was stuck in my throat! Again, I cleared my throat and forced myself to speak.

"I'm sorry!"

"I'm sorry." We uttered in chorus.

Chapter 78 - Sorry II

"I'm sorry."

Sam and I halted upon dropping those two words simultaneously. I pursed my lips into a thin line while Sam awkwardly rocked his head back and forth.

"I..."

"I..."

Again, we spoke at the same time. I bit my lower lip, repressing the smile from resurfacing on my lips.

Sam gestured to me to speak first. "Ladies first."

"No, you can speak first." I beckoned, stopping the giggle that was tempting to come out.

"Alright..." Sam nodded as he took a deep breath. "I'm sorry..."

Sam trailed off as he remained silent momentarily. When he opened his lips once again, he raised his eyes and looked me in the eye.

"I was... afraid." He said.

I furrowed my brows. That wasn't what I expected him to say. Sam being afraid? That sounded unbelievably... odd.

Sam was the type of man who enjoyed bragging. All the things he bragged about were facts, though. So, no one could really argue about that.

"In the past, I didn't mind going to the capital. Even when I received the royal summoning from the king, I felt nothing." Sam explained, without looking away from me.

"But when we set off, knowing we're getting closer and closer to that place, this fear crept into me. Deep down, I know that to keep you safe, you're bound to see the Samael La Crox, I've despised."

Sam paused and let out a faint sigh.

"And that... scares me."

"Sam..." My heart warmed up upon hearing his honesty. Perhaps this restlessness within me was not because the capital terrified me.

Perhaps it was because I instinctively felt his unspoken worries. Things that we needed to discuss and deal with before we reach the Capital.

"If I detest it, I'm scared you would as well, Lil." Sam winced slightly, clenching his teeth. The desperation in his tone sounded distinct.

"I didn't want to lose you because of it. So, when you saw that part of me the first time, I didn't think twice and rob it from you. I'm sorry."

He then looked down. His voice laced with genuine regret and lament.

Slowly, I took a step forward. I reached out my hands to his hands tainted with blood.

A subtle smile turned up on my lips upon holding his hand. I guided it towards me, placing it on my cheek as I looked up.

Sam's eyes slightly went wide before they softened. These were his eyes, as well as those eyes full of killing intent.

They're all his. And that was what made him Samael La Crox.

"You were right. I should've trusted your heart and let you decide whether you'd accept it or don't want to." Sam acknowledged, humbling himself in front of me.

A man who would never bow down to anyone humbled himself. He was the bigger person than I thought.

"And then decide whether to erase your memory if you didn't like that part of me." Sam added.

I chuckled as soon as I heard his last remarks. That's the Sam I knew; straightforward and possessive.

"I'm trapped with you, aren't I?" I muttered, recalling his very words on the first day of our engagement.

"You are. You're practically a bird in an enormous cage." Sam admitted, not denying how my life looked in his perspective.

He caressed my cheek with his thumb. Offering a gentle smile.

It might sound terrible — it was. But a peasant was never ambitious.

"I'm the freest with you. So, as long as you're inside the same cage, I don't mind." I shrugged and relayed my honest thoughts.

"I like you when you're being gentle and considerate. And I will still love you even if you sacrifice a thousand just to save me."

I smiled, and my other hand reached to cup his jaw. "You're not the only one who had their dark side, Sam. You don't have to change for me. I will love all of you, regardless."

"Lil." Sam's voice softened, moved at my words.

"So, let me see them all. Even if you despised that side of you, I'll love it harder for you. I'd break my heart in many pieces if that means to complete you. So, don't hide from me, hmm?" I shot him an encouraging look, nodding slightly.

"Trust me. Just like how you always want me to trust you. Because... you're mine, and I, yours."

"Goodness." Sam let out a heavy sigh, grabbing my wrist, and pulled me into his embrace.

That second, I melted. This was all I needed all along. Not his apology, but his warmth.

I found my comfort in his chest, resting my head on it. Slowly, my arms wrapped around his waist.

The scent of blood from his clothes wafted my nose. But I didn't care, nor did it bother me in the slightest.

"How foolish of me to forget you're a silly bunny." He whispered in relief.

I smiled and pouted. "But I will really get angry if you erase my memory once again. I don't even know you can do that."

"Well," Sam cleared his throat, stroking back back gently. "I didn't know you didn't know. Fabian is a chatterbox."

Chuckles followed from the two of us. How nice it was to make up after arguing. I didn't know if this was normal, but it felt good that we dealt with it like this.

"By the way," when Sam broke away from our hug, he spoke. "Where are you heading just now?"

He asked. I looked up, furrowing my brows, wondering what he meant.

"When you open the door." Sam clarified.

I nodded in understanding. "To you." I answered, unhesitatingly.

"To talk to me?" He raised a brow.

"No." I shook my head. "To force out an apology from you."

Sam's eyes fastened with fascination. But I sighed. "But you're here and said all that. I can't abuse my power now."

"Abuse your power?"

"Mhm! Even though I'm your bride, I'm still your reserve meal! Losing your reserve meal means you will starve you! We still have a long way to go before the Capital. You'll starve, you know... doesn't that terrify you?"

Silence. The air fell into nothing but silence.

I looked away because now that I said it; it sounded embarrassing and not threatening. I still have a long way to go to actually sound intimidating.

"Pfft—!" Sam broke into laughter, which startled me.

Goodness gracious. Let me evaporate right now.

"Oh, Lilove." Sam shook his head, and in one swift movement, I shrieked as he carried me into his embrace.

"That actually sounds... scary." He cocked his head to me, grinning wickedly.

"It is?"

"It is." Sam narrowed his eyes and nodded. He then kicked the door open and marched inside.

"You know what I think best to do after having a quarrel?" He asked, closing the door with his foot.

"What?" I asked with a furrowed brow. The corner of his lips stretched from ear to ear before he laid me down on the bed.

His hands on either side of my head. His eyes hovering over me as they gradually grew darker.

"Make love." He whispered as he bent down, crashing his lips against mine.

Mhm... he's right.

Chapter 79 - The Actual Face Behind The Mask.

It was a long night, indeed. Sam and I quarreled. We made up. Then we made love.

But the night hadn't ended yet. I moved and rested the side of my head on his chest.

"You're not tired?" He asked, caressing my spine with the tip of his fingers.

I shuddered slightly, but ignored it. "No. You forced me to sleep hours before my bedtime."

Again, silence ensued. Not the suffocating kind of silence. The serene silence.

"What are you thinking?" I asked under my breath, looking up at him.

Sam pressed his lips together, smacking his lips. "You."

"What about me?" I blinked, curious. Using my elbow to assist me up to look at him in a better position.

Slowly, Sam moved his gaze towards me. His hand tucked the stray hair behind my ear.

"That I love you more than I loved you one second ago. That I love you more every passing second, it's dangerous."

His tone was low but firm. His eyes studied my facial structure, as if etching every little detail in his mind.

I could not help but smile, flattered at his words. Who wouldn't? I felt like I'm the prettiest whenever he looked at me this way.

"Why is it dangerous, though?" I asked, raising my brows.

"I don't know." Sam shrugged. His eyelashes fluttered ever so slowly.

He's breathtaking even without trying.

"Fabian is taking too much of your time and tells you whatever he wants. So I don't know which one you already know about me." Sam sighed as he clicked his tongue faintly.

"Why don't you just tell me whatever you want as well?" I tilted my head to the side before dragging myself up. "I'm all ears. Even if you repeat everything Mister Fabian said, I like your version more."

Sam chuckled, pinching my cheek lightly. He then moved up, half of his back on the headboard.

After a moment, Sam pondered on how he wanted to start his story. When he did, my brow uncontrollably twitched.

"The king wants me dead."

What a way to start it. Yet, although Fabian never worded it this way, part of me had this conclusion at the back of my head.

"I felt like we haven't had a decent talk of what you have to expect in the Capital. To be honest, I didn't want to take you with me." Sam sighed as I stayed silent, listening.

"But I'd rather take you to a dangerous place where I am so I can protect you. Instead of leaving you behind far away from me."

"Do you think the King will cause trouble for Grimsbanne again?" I asked.

Sam arched his brow. "Again? Did Fabian tell you that?"

I cleared my throat. Right. Fabian said it was the Bloodfang's doing, not the king. Silly me.

"No." I chuckled subtly. "But do you think he will cause trouble for Grimsbanne again?"

Sam remained silent for a while. I held my breath as my heart thumped loudly.

"Maybe." He shrugged. "Maybe not."

"Huh?"

"Before I went to my slumber, I had an agreement with him." Sam explained, which piqued my curiosity even more.

"An agreement? With the king?"

"Fabian told you about what happened to Grimsbanne, I presumed?" Sam raised a brow, and I nodded as a response. "That war from the Bloodfang..."

Sam trailed off as he pondered on which detail to tell me. I waited for him patiently until his lips parted once again.

"After the former crown prince, my older brother, I was next in line." Sam cast me a look. "If anything happened to my older brother, I'd be the one who should sit on the throne. I didn't like the idea, mainly because I didn't like the idea itself. Also, sitting on the throne means the only brother I respected is dead."

"Oh..." I nodded in understanding, but not surprised. Sam was like that.

"So, instead of taking the throne just like what the Bloodfang wanted, I passed it to the current King."

Huh? I blinked my eyes in surprise. Did I hear what I just heard?

"Isn't the king already king when you came back?" I blurted out as that was how I understood Fabian's words.

"No." Sam shook his head. "He's merely there to protect the throne until my return."

"What?"

"The royal protocol is more complicated and complex than you think. That's why I didn't like it. But to put it simply, when I returned, I refused the title and recklessly passed it to the second prince." Sam explained in one go.

This was a version that only the people involved knew. It was the truth, and not just what it seemed from the surface.

Fabian didn't know this, and it was quite surprising. But what was surprising was not the fact that Fabian's truth was far from the actual story.

It was something else.

"If you are the third prince, and the current king is the second prince, why are you second in line for the throne and not third?" I asked, tilting my head to the side.

I thought that was how it works. But it was, indeed, more complicated than that. I'm not an expert in politics, but it made little sense.

"Because the current King is..." Sam paused, choosing a correct word to speak. "He excels in everything but lacks in one area."

"What is it?"

"Empathy." Sam stroked my hair lovingly. "We're pretty much alike, to be honest."

"Mister Fabian told me the Bloodfang didn't want you to take the throne. But you're telling me they want you to take the throne instead of the current king?"

I felt like going back into scratch about it. It was confusing even more now.

"Fabian is right. I'm not saying what Fabian told you is not the truth, but it was part of the truth. What he knew was what the mask looks like, not the face behind it. They don't like me, but if they have to choose between me and the current king, they'd prefer having to serve me." Sam shrugged.

Usually, Sam would say it in a boastful manner. But now his tone was... indifferent.

"But why did you fight against the Bloodfang in the war?" I asked with a furrowed brow.

"The Bloodfang asked me to."

"Huh?"

Chapter 80 - The Actual Face Behind The Mask II

"The Bloodfang asked me to."

Momentarily, my brain stopped functioning. What did he say again?

"The Bloodfang asked you to fight them?" I asked clearly so I wouldn't misunderstand this piece of information.

"Mhmm." Sam hummed a tune as he nodded. It rendered me speechless. "Personally, they're more suited to become rulers if you ask me. But, since I don't have interest in the throne, they asked me to keep an eye on my brother."

"The Bloodfangs are aware the king wanted them dead. And they're also aware they wouldn't stand a chance, even with some noble vampires supporting them. Even without me, the result would be the same. They're pure-blooded vampires but their blood is far inferior to ours."

Sam pinched both my cheeks and then wiggled it a little.

"But with pride and honor on the line, they had to do what they had to do. The clan leader secretly visited me and told me about their plan."

"Plan?" I inquired, before drawing my head away. I felt dizzy with him pinching my cheek and moving it in a circular motion.

"To revolt?"

I added, glaring at him as if warning him to stop.

"No. To announce they'd choose death than serve the current king. They do things grandly." Sam chuckled, reaching his hand to my cheek which I slapped lightly.

Sam frowned, but continued. "But also, to protect their family line."

"Huh?" Upon hearing his last remarks, I could not help but get confuse again. "That makes little sense."

"To protect the future generation of the Bloodfang, they had to sacrifice their lives for a greater cause." Sam shrugged as he rubbed his chin. "Their words are... until the rightful king arrives, the Bloodfang will live in silence."

"Live in silence..." I murmured with a furrowed brow. It sounded familiar; I forgot where I heard it.

"As I've said, they do things in a grand and sneaky way. To protect what they wanted to protect by sacrificing their lives, they facade it behind their defiance of the king. It's like hitting two birds with one stone. Those folks had a great humor."

Sam chuckled as he shook his head. By the looks of it, Sam didn't really hate the said clan. If anything, it seemed he wasn't entirely on bad terms with them.

"That's why Fabian is not entirely wrong, because what he told you was what it actually looks like."

"Why didn't you tell Mister Fabian about this?" I queried, out of curiosity. "Don't you trust him?"

"I trust him that's why he knew a lot of things. However, knowing some truths can put a person in danger. A vampire's ability is complex, Lilove. By sinking our fangs into someone, we can see everything; a person's past, secrets, even their origins. I didn't want Fabian to blame himself if the king forced the truth out from him."

Sam smiled gently, poking the apex of my nose with his finger.

"But I'm telling you this because you're special."

"Special? In what way?" I frowned as I didn't really understand it. But Sam only offered a subtle smile and enjoyed pinching my cheek again.

Since he didn't want to tell me, I clicked my tongue and asked another question.

"How about the massacre in Grimsbanne?" I perked up. "Didn't the Bloodfang caused that?"

"That..." Sam nodded in understanding. "More or less. The King found out about the Bloodfang's scheme in the end. So, he wanted to kill everyone in Grimsbanne, to annihilate the Bloodfang completely. They're really clumsy folks and put my people in peril."

"Huh?" Scheme after scheme, this story was just filled with nothing but scheme, lies, and multiple truths.

"I feel like I'm having a headache." I blurted out with a sigh.

Fabian's explanation was just what it looked from the outside. But Sam's explanation was the actual truth from a different perspective.

I wonder if the King had a different side of truth as well.

"Haha." Sam chuckled as he cradled my body in his embrace. "That's why, once you set foot in the capital, don't trust anything you see and hear. There are always multiple truths."

As I rested my head on Sam's chest, I let out another sigh. "Don't trust what you hear and see, huh?"

Sam and I remained silent until my eyes felt heavy. I'm about to fall asleep when a question slipped past my lips.

"So, what's the other truth behind your slumber?"

He didn't answer immediately. Instead, he stroke my back until I felt like sleeping more.

"Because I..." When Sam answered, the rest of his words drifted away as I fell asleep.

Samael gazed down at her, who was sleeping peacefully in his chest. A subtle smile resurfaced on his lips as he adjusted so she could sleep comfortably.

"I'll keep you safe, regardless." He whispered as he leaned closer and left a peck on her head. "Like I always do."

His words came out as a whisper. However, they held a heavier weight as if a promise he had been keeping for a long time.

The next day, it was not like what I've expected it to be.

At this long table of the mansion's dining hall, I gaze at everyone seated around the table. Sam was positioned at the end of the table; I was on his right.

The two seats next to me were vacant before the next person. From across me, there's this empty chair and all the seats after that were occupied.

Red hairs... some had a mixed of black stroke. Be it men and women, their facial features screamed elegance and beauty.

Vampires were all good-looking. But I've never met an entire family of vampires sharing a meal together.

This was the first. And it surely intimidating. I'm the only one who looked... average.

Didn't Sam... kill everyone last night? But that Noah from last night was also here.

Everyone wasn't speaking and barely making a sound as they ate.

I glanced at Sam, who finished slicing the meat into small pieces. Like usual, he wordlessly switched plate with mine.

"Tha — thank you." I stuttered.

His action caught everyone's attention from the table. I gulped upon sensing their eyes on me.

I'm sweating, sweating a lot. Please don't look at me.

It wasn't Sam's family yet, but I already felt like hiding under the table. Calm down, Lilou.

I tried to ignore the eyes cast upon me as I forked out a piece of meat. However, just as it was right in front of my lips, Sam broke the silence.

"By the way, that meat is their big brother. You remember that Albert from last night, right?"

I froze. What did he say...? Horrified, I slowly turned my shaking eyes towards Sam.

"Hehe. Sounds scary?" Sam chuckled, pleased to see my pale complexion. "I'm kidding."

I heaved a sigh of relief upon hearing his last remarks. Still, that moment caused me to forget there were people eating with us.

"How can you joke about that? Also, it's not Albert. It's Ar... thur." I trailed off and pursed my lips into a thin line.

I discreetly shifted my gaze to the people around the table. They didn't appear surprised or did it seem they really mind such insensitive remark.

What an odd family. I didn't understand the reason, but with a large family, it felt... lonely.

"Please, Your Grace. You don't have to look at us with pity in your eyes. The Remingtons don't need it." Suddenly, a beautiful red-haired woman uttered without looking away from her plate.

Was she talking to me?

"But you are a bunch of pathetic people." Sam replied nonchalantly.

BAM!

I flinched as someone suddenly slammed their palms on the table. My eyes instantly searched who did it.

It was an old man at the end of the table. I felt too intimidated by his powerful aura.

I started stress eating.

This was Sam's fight. I'm just eating here.

How coward of me... it's embarrassing.

"Your highness, not only you massacred half of our family. But you also forced us to eat with the murderer of my sons." The old man ground his teeth, glaring daggers at the nonchalant Sam.

"Just how far will you humiliate the Remington?!"

"Please, watch your tone, Lord Anton." Suddenly, Fabian chimed in and urged politely.

And here I am, stuffing my mouth with meat. Just in case this would be our last meal. The tension was growing intense, after all.