

The Trap Of Ace

The Trap Of Ace

Chapter 21

Stepping out of the VIP elevator, I blew out a breath eyeing the doors of the penthouse. And the big guards stood at the both sides of the elevator like a statue, statues with dark glasses.

My heart drummed down my chest as I approached the entrance, standing before the fingerprint scanner. I still couldn't know how he got my fingerprint.

Though the nervousness of meeting him after that night was overwhelming, the eagerness to see him and find out if he was alright won over my hesitation.

Once I was inside the doors, to my surprise, it automatically closed behind me. And the feeling of getting locked with the devil of my dreams was knee weakish. But I walked ahead, the memories of my last visit here rushed into my mind.

Oh, I forgot about the blouse I left here.

I made a note in my head to grab it before leaving.

When I entered the living area, I stopped at my track.

There he was. Sitting onto the grand couch, his form was bent over, elbows resting on his knees with hands joined together before him. And his stormy eyes were set on me, freezing me in my place.

Those grey orbs were dark today. Shoulders tensed.

"Took you long enough, Miss. Hutton." Greek accent deeper than usual.

The boss was extremely mad for some reason.

But that didn't stop me from running my eyes on his face. It oddly was like an ice to my burning heart.

"Well?" Again that tilt of his head. But today it didn't irritate me.

"I could ask you the same," I said, walking closer. Black full sleeved high neck t-shirt fit him well,

manifesting the cuts of his hard muscles to me. "What took you so long to come back?"

Surprise flashed over those grey pools, but it was fleeting.

"I didn't think you cared if I were here or not." He observed me, as if waiting for my answer.

Another skip of heart. The words 'I do care' was at the tip of my tongue, but I held myself back. "It's not suitable for a businessman to leave his companies behind for days like that."

He stayed quiet. The anger behind the calm facade threatened to blow out as he watched me. But I could tell he wasn't mad at my comment, it was something else. Come on, Ace. Get out with it.

When he managed to keep calm for another half a minute, my patience ran out. He couldn't just stay quiet when I was in a constant hell worrying my ass for him.

"Why did you leave like that?" I spilled. "You weren't even picking up your phone! I called you like hundred times! What the hell were you doing?"

Are you okay? I wanted to add, but held myself back.

Both surprise and shock flickered over his face. But again, he was quick to cover it. Damn him for such control where I was a mess here.

He stood up, strolling towards me making my legs urge me to step back. Grabbing my chin gently, he peered into my soul. "And may I ask you what the hell you were doing last night, sweetheart?" The edge of his deep voice sent shivers down my spine. Grey eyes flashed with rage. "I was away just for one fucking day, and you managed to get yourself into trouble already?"

My eyes widened. Last night? How did he know about that?

"How- how do you know?" I blinked.

"Do you really think I'd leave you behind just like that? Without anyone to watch over my Rosebud?"

A gasp left my lips. "You had someone to stalk me around? How dare you!"

"And how did you dare to put yourself in such a risk by going in that shady place alone! Anything could've happened out there and nobody would even get to know where you're! Damn it, Emerald!

What hell were you thinking?" His nostrils flared, stepping back. "Thank God, my men were there watching over you! Otherwise- I..."

His hands balled into fists as his intimidating form shook with rage, jaws clenching and unclenching.

The flaming of his eyes told me he wanted to destroy something, a volcano inside him wished to unleash. I never saw him that furious before.

Remembering last night's event sent chills down my neck. He was right, anything could've happened

to us over there if those men suddenly didn't get...

So it was his men who did the miracle last night.

Though it was ridiculous for him to hire bodyguards for me, I was grateful deep down. But I'd

definitely talk to him about it later when he's calm.

"I... uh, I went there to get Beth. She needed me."

"Then you could've just informed Caleb or Tobias. Why did you go there all by yourself?" A muscle of

his jaw ticked.

Pressing my lips, I narrowed my eyes. "I know I shouldn't have gone there alone. But I didn't know

where that bar was exactly located, alright? I'd no idea that area would be that eerie at that time."

"You..." Letting out a sigh, he pinched the bridge of his nose. Then my gaze fell onto his knuckles, they were bruised.

"What happened to your hands? How did they cut?" Rushing near him, I took his hands in mine.

"They're nothing!" He tried to retract them but I held them firm.

"Hold still! Where's your first aid kit?" I asked, checking the bruise and cuts. They turned blue and

badly injured. How did he get them?

When he stayed quiet, watching me in silence, I cast him a look.

A sigh left him. "In my bedroom."

Dragging him in his bedroom, I made him sit at the edge of the bed and got out the first aid kit from

the washroom cabinet as he mentioned.

Sitting beside him, I grabbed his hand and sanitized them first and then applied balm on the spots.

And during the whole process, he didn't even flinch for once; he just kept watching me with

something intense swirling in his gaze.

"How did you get them? And why are they still unattended?" I tried my best not to look into his eyes.

"They weren't that serious. So I let them be," he replied, not answering my first question. "And I'm

glad I didn't, otherwise you wouldn't be here treating me."

This time I did look up into his grey pools.

"T-that's ridiculous! You could get infected!"

A shrug. "I'm used to them."

Used to these pains? Why?

"You didn't tell me why you left all of a sudden." I wrapped the bandage around his right hand.

After a moment of silence, he answered, "I needed some time alone."

"For what?" I whispered.

"To clear my head and think straight."

Just as I thought talking to him gently gets him to give straight answers, he proved me wrong. He was

back with his complicated replies.

"Is- is everything alright?" I cast him a hesitant glance, completing his bandaging.

Silence.

And then a gasp slipped through my lips as he hauled me onto his lap.

"Ace!"

Snuggling his face into my neck, he inhaled deep. "Now, everything is alright."

With blood rushing up my cheeks, I wiggled into his arms. "W-what are you doing? Let go of me!"

His hold tightened around me. "Never. I'm not letting you go away from me, never again."

Again?

A shiver ran through my whole body when his hot lips touched the sensitive skin of my neck.

"My Rose," a groan left his mouth as his hand roamed around my curves, littering sensual kisses

behind my ear. As embarrassing as it was, a whimper sneaked out of me.

"A-ace," I wanted to stop him, but my voice came out much like a moan with his hot tongue directly

against my burning skin.

My hands gripped his strong shoulders when he turned me to him and our eyes met. The intensity and

desire in his stormy grey eyes had me stop breathing.

"Those turquoise eyes of yours, they've captured my heart and locked it under their spell the moment they fell on me," he whispered, kissing my closed eyelids one by one. And then on my forehead, then both of my cheeks, sending my heart on skyrocket. When he pulled me whole against him, not even an inch between us, I closed my eyes, snuggled my face against his. Warmth and many emotions soared into my chest. My arms around his neck as a whisper left my lips.

"Ace."

"My Rose." A breath escaped my lips when he placed a lingering kiss at the corner of my lips.

Sagging against him just as I let myself loose into his warmth, the blare of my phone pulled me out of my bubble.

Blinking, when I jerked away, he didn't let me. His brows furrowed in disturbance.

Fighting with him was useless, so I fished out my phone from my pocket and checked the name of the caller.

Guilt hit me like a truck seeing Warner's name flashing on the screen. We were still in a relationship when I was...

I felt Ace getting tense against me, his eyes set on the phone, strong jaws locked tight.

"I've to take this," saying, I leaped up from his lap. But a hand stopped me, grabbing my hand.

"Where do you think you're going?" he asked, voice rough.

I was surprised seeing the sudden malice in his eyes. Was that- jealousy?

"To talk to Warner."

"Ignore it."

I frowned. "I can't. He..."

"He's more important to you than our moment?" Eyes flashing, he cut me off, his grip tightened on my hand.

"He was always important. He's my b..." I squeaked when he tugged me to him and the next thing I found was, I lay flat on the bed, with him above me.

"Ace! What're you doing..."

And again he cut me off. But this time, with his lips. Right against mine.

"He's nothing to you, you understand?" he growled against my lips, biting my lower one hard.

"Nothing! You're fucking mine!"

My mind was on a haywire. Shock, surprise, rage, warmth and... desire shot through my veins like a wildfire. Pushing against his hard chest, I attempted to snatch my lips from the capture of his scorching ones, but he only deepened the kiss.

Grabbing my wrists, he placed them above my head with one hand, while the other went to run over my body with freedom, raising a painful tug in my abdomen.

"Only mine!" An unintentional moan left my mouth as he sucked my lower lip into his mouth with ferocity. My body was on fire. His free hand ran down my leg and then my thigh. And then sneaking behind, he grabbed my butt, getting another gasp from me.

He took this chance to enter his tongue in my mouth, devouring me. Just as his hot tongue touched mine, a jolt of pleasure ran through me, my body hummed into delight. My eyes closed on its own as I kissed him with equal urgency and desperateness.

I've never been kissed like this. Never this deep, rough and intense. My hands struggled into his hold. This time not to get away, but to pull him closer, to feel him.

It wasn't enough. I wanted more. I needed more.

"Ace," I managed to whisper out in between his earth shattering kisses. And he understood as he released my hands.

And then there was no going back. I clung to him like I was falling and he was the only thing to grab on in this whole world. Moulding our lips around each other, we got tangled into a momentum of want and desire.

And then another ring of my phone reverberated across the room. At first both of us didn't acknowledge it, but then senses started to kick start in my brain. Disbelief and shame fell over me as I realized what I just did.

How could I do this?

Pushing him away, I grabbed my phone and ran out of the room, not even waiting to see his

expression.

"Emerald, wait!" He called out behind me, but till then I was already out of the room. I heard him coming after me, but I didn't stop.

I ran and kept running until I was safe in the four walls of the elevator. Clutching my chest that was still pounding from his touches and kisses, I leaned against one of the walls and closed my eyes. A tear slipped down my cheek.

I cheated on Warner. Though it was unintentional, though I didn't love him and soon was going to reveal it before him, it didn't justify my actions. I did wrong to him. I did wrong to the person who was always there for me in good and bad.

Why couldn't I just control myself? Why couldn't I just push him away? Because I can't. I can't resist him. I never could.

With still weak knees, I let out a choked breath and rubbed my face in frustration and guilt. It was wrong. I couldn't do this anymore.

I knew it could happen again. Because my heart just didn't know where to stop around him. I'd have to fix this.

I've to talk to Warner. As soon as possible.

Wiping my cheeks, I dialled his number. But it went busy.

I dialled again, but it still was busy.

Getting out of the elevator, I sent him a message.

Sorry, couldn't receive your call. I called you but it went busy. Call me as soon as you're free. I need to talk to you.

It hurt to even think of breaking his heart, but I couldn't lie to him anymore. I needed to tell him everything about my feelings, about Ace and... about the kiss.

I hope he can forgive me. Because I don't want to lose a friend like him.

Putting back my phone, as I was about to walk away, I caught a figure around the corner that led to another hallway. Half of their body could be seen from where I stood, other half covered by the wall.

Nearing slightly, I recognized her.

It was Liza.

She was on the phone with someone, eyes flickering her left and right. As I was behind her, she didn't see me.

I frowned at her tensed shoulders and alert movements.

I took a few more steps ahead.

"Yes!" she hissed over the phone. "The job is done. Everything happened just as you wanted. Now I want you to fulfill your promise."

She listened to whatever the other person said and then nodded her head.

"Alright. I'll call you later. I've to go now. Bye!" Disconnecting the call, she glanced around again. I

squinted my eyes when she took out something from her purse with shaky hands and threw it into the bin.

As she rushed away from there, I went to the place where she was just a second ago, my eyes still on her.

What's wrong with her? She looked extremely nervous and tensed.

Looking down into the dustbin, I saw a big white crumbled plastic packet. Some white substance lied at the bottom corner inside it.

My eyes narrowed.

What's that?

My gaze went back to where Liza just disappeared.

Something was wrong with her. Maybe I'd just talk to her later at lunch.

Then my mind went back to what just happened upstairs. My hand went up and touched my still

tingling swollen lips. Warmth and guilt washed over me at once.

The worst thing was, I loved every second of it. And I hated myself for that.

Letting out a sigh, I headed back to my cabin, with a lot of thoughts jumbled into my brain.

When I was just outside my cabin, I saw Tess rushing in my way.

My eyes widened seeing her disarranged state.

"Tess?"

She grabbed my hands with her cold ones, her face pale with panic. "Em!

Where's Achilles? I've been

calling him for twenty minutes but he's not picking up his phone!

Where's he?"

"Hey, shh, relax first. What happened? Why are you so riled up?" I grabbed her shoulder, trying to comfort her.

She shook her head, her blue eyes moist with unshed tears. "Caleb..." A bad feeling loomed over me. "What? What happened to him?" Her lips quivered as tears left her eyes. "He's in jail."

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"What?" I gasped. "How? How did this happen?" She shook her head, wiping her tears. "I don't know. I just got a call from the police station a while ago. And since then I was calling Achilles non-stop, but he wasn't picking up his phone! Even our lawyer called him. Where's he?"

A while ago, means we were in his bedroom then...

Blinking away those thoughts from my mind, I said, "Don't worry, Tess. Everything will be fine. He's in his penthouse right now."

"Alright, let's..."

The ring of her phone cut her off. Receiving it, she listened to whatever the other person said and then cut the call.

"It was him. He's waiting for me outside in the car. I gotta go!"

"Wait! I'll come with you!" I insisted. I didn't want to leave her alone right now.

She nodded, sniffing. "Alright, let's go!"

Once we were outside, we found him in the driver's seat with a rigid form. Though his grip on the wheel was tight, his expression gave nothing away. Ignoring the memories of what happened up in his penthouse and the flutterings in my tummy, we got into his car and then drove away.

When the car came to a stop outside the police station, flashes of blinding lights blinded my vision. A small crowd of people with cameras in their hands huddled outside of the car, throwing bunch of questions at once.

"W-what the hell? Who called them here?" Tess exclaimed, some more anxiety paled her already pale face.

After a moment of silence, he spoke with his jaws tight. "Let's go."

"But Achilles..."

He turned to Tess who sat beside him, features softening. "Don't worry, everything will be fine."

At his assurance, she nodded her head and got out after him as four bodyguards that came along us- I

didn't even notice them earlier- and protected them from the crazy paparazzi. And as soon as I got out

behind them, an arm immediately wrapped around me, pushing my face into a warm chest.

"What're you doing!"

I was ready to pull away as he guided me through the chaos with his protective arm around me, but

then I decided against it. His hold and the way hid my face from those hungry cameras told me the

reason behind his act. And I really didn't want my face to be printed in tomorrow's newspaper

anyway.

Even in this situation, he didn't forget about my safety. He didn't go to Tess, but he came to me...

A warm sensation spread across my heart.

Once we were inside, I created some distance between us. The officer behind the big desk was up on

his feet as soon as we strolled in, or should I say Achilles Valencian walked in. Because the draining

color from his face was instant.

Carter and a middle-aged man in a black coat and a white shirt with some files in his hand - maybe the

lawyer - was already present there.

Tess rushed to Caleb who stood behind the bars. With a disheveled shirt, messy hair, and dimmed

eyes, he looked pretty shaken. When Tess reached him, he wrapped his arms around her as much as

he could with the bars in between.

"Oh God! They put you behind the locker. Are you alright, baby?" she asked, eyes sparkling with tears.

He nodded, kissing her hands. "Yes, I'm fine. Don't worry." Even after his statement, he'd an edge in his voice. "Achilles is here, he'll get me out of here. Everything will be fine."

The urgency in his eyes confused me. I knew staying behind the bars wasn't a good thing, but his desperation of getting away from here hinted to something else. "How did it happen? Why did they arrest you?" she asked, wiping her wet cheeks.

A long exhale left him as he rubbed his face. "They found drugs in the trunk of my car."

Both of us gasped at that.

"Drugs? But how did they get into your car?" I queried.

"I don't know. They stopped my car at the road out of nowhere and started searching. And when they found them in the trunk, they accused me of drug dealing and brought me here," he replied.

"I don't believe this! Someone is trying to trap you!" Anger flashed into Tess's eyes.

He nodded. "I know. But they won't just listen to any of my justification."

"Why don't you sit first, Mr. Valencian. We can talk then." The timid voice of the officer made me turn around.

With hands in his pockets, Ace stood before the desk, melting the officer under his steely gaze.

"Why don't you release my cousin first? And I'm not here to chat with you. Let's come to the business, shall we?"

"Yes, yes, of course!" The officer eagerly nodded his head and instructed one of his men to let Caleb out. "I'm extremely sorry, Mr. Valencian. I just got here and got to know that our junior officer charged your cousin with drug dealings. If I knew earlier, I wouldn't have let him do it."

The moment he mentioned drugs, the sudden stiffness of Ace's shoulders didn't go missed by me. But he managed a blank face.

"Then what was he still doing behind the bars when I came here? I believe my assistant and lawyer

arrived much before me, am I right? What were you doing until then?"
He cocked his head, a muscle
of his jaw ticked.

"Uh!" The officer gulped. "Actually, Mr. Valencian, it's a case regarding
drugs. So we've to do some
procedure before releasing the accused."

"Very well then. My lawyer is here. Read the papers and release him."

He pointed to the black coat
man as he came forward and showed some papers to the officer.
That man didn't even read them properly before returning them back.

No one could with Achilles

Valencian's stormy eyes set on them like a tiger ready to jump.

Once Caleb stood beside him, he gave him a look and they both
exchanged nods among them. The

always happy Caleb didn't have his smile on today.

Though Ace was a closed off person, even with his family, his love for
them wasn't any less. His

actions spoke it more than his words.

Looking down at his watch, he glanced at the officer. "Where is your
phone, officer?"

The dark blue uniformed man frowned. "Why?"

And then his phone rang in his pocket. When he fished it out, his eyes
widened seeing the name

flashing on the screen. And they literally came out of his sockets after he
heard what the other person

had to say on the phone.

"I hope you understood what you're instructed to do?" Ace asked,
cocking his head.

The nod was hesitant. "Y-yeah, Mr. Valencian. The termination letter will
be sent to our junior officer

as soon as possible."

Termination?

Of course! The result to cross Achilles Valencian's path.

I shook my head.

"Good! Now find out who planted them in Caleb's car and get back to
me within two days," he

ordered. "And you know what to tell the media, don't you, officer?"

"Yes, of course, Mr. Valencian! Your family's name will be cleared, don't
worry. And, we'll try our best

to find out who was behind it as soon as possible," the officer replied.

Nodding his head, he put his glasses back on and grabbed my hand in his. But before we were out of the door, he stopped and looked over his shoulder again. "And yes, Mr. Blake. Be careful of whose family you're dealing with from now on. Because next time, who knows, it could be you in your junior's place." As all the color drained from the officer's face completely, he pulled me into his chest again and walked out of the door.

Once we were secured in the car and drove away, I turned to Caleb who sat on the back seat along Tess with her arm clutched around him. She got really scared about all of this. "Do you know who could be behind this? Who tried to frame you?" Though we didn't meet for years, I trusted him enough to tell that he wasn't a person to be tangled with such issues. He was this happy and positive person, not a drug dealer. His gaze met his cousin through the mirror for a fleeting second. "I'm not sure, but it could be Antonio Reymond." "It is him! I'm sure!" Tess hissed. "This time he has crossed all of his limits!" I frowned. "Who's Antonio? And why'd he do that to you?" "He's the owner of our biggest rival company, AR Industries. That man lives with the agenda to destroy our fame and image to get back to the top in the market, the place that was snatched by Valencian Corp from them." The same company who was competing with our every deal and using the leaked information? Now it all made sense. "We're in progress with the Arabians regarding a mega project. If we get this, our clothing market will spread across the whole middle-east. And that's what bothering him. So maybe he wants to defame us by this and turn the Arabians to them," he continued, lips pressed tight in displeasure. The whole time Ace remained quiet. But the white knuckles of his on the steering was the proof of the

storm brewing in him.

This whole incident was bothering him a lot.

I wanted to reach out and hold his hand, but I held myself back.

"But he couldn't do it of his own, right? He must've used someone to do this." I pointed out. "Did you

see anyone suspicious around your car today?"

Maybe we could find out who's leaking information from the office if we get a hold on this person?

He shook his head. "No. I just left home this morning and was coming directly to the office until they

stopped me in the middle of the street."

"You were at home last night. They must've done it either at night or this morning before you left,"

said Tess, her brows furrowed.

"But who could that be?" I looked at Tess. "Did someone visit you last night or this morning?"

She nodded. "Yes, some people I called to resize my wedding dress and do some changes. They

needed to see it on me before they fixed it. So they dropped in this morning."

"Maybe one of them did it? What about the watchman? I mean, he stays there all the time..."

"He didn't do it," stated Ace, casting me a look. "He's been working for us for years now. He's reliable."

Caleb nodded, agreeing. "Yeah, Jordan wouldn't even think of it in his wildest dreams."

"Oh, okay." Then something clicked in my head. "What about the CCTV cameras? I saw them installed in your house. You've one outside, right?"

Tess sighed. "Yes, we've. But it wasn't working since the party night, and I was too busy to call someone and repair it."

From the party night? When a lot of people were present there?

"That means..."

"It was all planned. They did it on purpose so that they could execute their plan easily." Ace finished for me, his nostrils flaring.

"Oh God! And we were so clueless about it," Tess whispered.

"Did you notice anything weird about those people who came for your dress repair?"

She shook her head. "No, all of them were there with me all the time."

Then a realization crossed over

her features. "Yes, Liza came this morning to collect some files."

"Liza?" I was shocked.

"No, babe. Don't go there. I told her to come and collect those files for a meeting I wouldn't be able to

attend at Valencian Corp. Because I'd some urgent work at OC Textiles.

And she is one of the most

trustable employees of our company. She can't do this," Caleb said.

Even I agreed. She was a good person and had been a great friend of mine from the days I knew her.

Honest and hardworking...

And then something flashed in my mind. Her weird behavior this morning around the corner and...

I set back against my seat and stayed quiet waiting to reach the office, while Tess and Caleb

whispered sweet things to each other at the backseat. And Ace matched my silence. But I could feel it,

it was the silence before the storm hit.

As soon as we reached office after we dropped off Tess and Caleb to their house, I ran inside.

Taking the elevator, I went directly to the forty-ninth floor and went to the place where I saw her talking to someone on the phone.

The bin!

Thank God it was still here and no one took the rubbish out.

Crouching down before it, I moved some coffee cups and tissues aside.

My nose crinkled as I touched

those tissues only God knew why was used for. But I'd to do this.

I just hope it's still there.

With my fingers crossed, I moved some more things until it came into my view. The plastic bag with

some white substances at the bottom corner.

She threw it in here.

With shaky hands, I picked it up.

I hope it's not what I'm thinking it is.

Opening the bag, I slowly took a sniff. I froze.

It was indeed drugs.

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That means... Liza?

My suspicion was right. She did it. She was the one who put drugs in Caleb's car and maybe, leaking information outside.

My shoulders slumped as disappointment washed over me. How could she do it? She was such a nice person and worked with Caleb for years. What could make her betray all of a sudden?

I've to inform Ace about it.

Getting up, I clutched the packet tight in my hand and rushed to his cabin. My heart thumped in my chest.

As I approached his cabin, I found Carter outside on his desk.

"Is he inside? I've to see him right now."

Looking up, he smiled. "He is. Though he's a little busy, as ordered, you're always free to go in and out without any permission."

Huh? I could just walk in just like that?

Not wanting to waste anymore time, I threw a thanks at him and barged inside.

But I was shocked to witness the scene before me.

"-asking you for the last time, Liza. You better speak up now!"

Arthur was seated on a chair, and Ace stood at the middle of the cabin, his clenched jaw was a

declaration of his mood. And a trembling Liza stood right before him with her gaze on the floor. Silent

tears were streaming through her eyes non-stop.

What's happening? Did they get to know the truth already?

When their eyes fell on me, I didn't know what to say. His stormy gaze softened as soon as they met mine.

"Rosebud? What're you doing here?"

Gulping, I glanced at Liza. Her eyes didn't lift up from the floor. Her shaking state raised pity in me, she

was my friend after all. But I couldn't just let go of what she did. It was a crime.

"I- I want to say something."

All of a sudden his whole attention was on me as concern filled into those eyes. Forgotten the serious issue before him.

Nodding his head, he looked at his uncle over his shoulder. "Arthur, please take Liza outside. I'll be meeting you in a moment."

Acceding, as Arthur stood up, my voice stopped him. "No!" Every pair of eyes landed back on me, even Liza's. "It's about the drugs. I found something."

Liza's face paled dramatically when she saw the packet in my hand.

Hanging the plastic before her face, I asked, "See those white powder at the bottom, Liza? I found it

from the dustbin you threw it in this morning. Guess what it is?"

She remained silent, not meeting my gaze.

"What's that?" Ace touched the packet, taking a closer look.

"Drugs," I replied.

His hand jerked away from the packet as if it burnt him. Stepping away, his hands clenched into balls, shoulders tensed.

I frowned. What's wrong?

I tried to search for something in his eyes, but he was swift to move his gaze from my questioning one and turned to Liza.

"So it's proved then. It was you who planted those... drugs into Caleb's car." His expression tightened even while saying the word. "Why?"

Her sob became loud, her hands shook at her sides.

"I said why?" His deep voice boomed across the cabin.

Flinching, she scurried back. "I- I was being blackmailed. H-he told me he'd frame my brother for a crime he didn't even do! It was his friend. But- but somehow he got to know about it and started to threaten me. If I didn't do what he said, he'd sent my brother to jail. A-and, h-he is just a kid. I-i couldn't let it happen. So, I... I'd no other choice. I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!" She spilled everything in one go, shaking, sobbing and stuttering.

For a moment I wanted to reach out to her, but then whatever she did it for, it didn't justify her

actions. She couldn't just harm someone else to save her brother. Ace's lips curled into a sneer, the vein of his temple popped up. "So you decided to ruin my brother to save yours?"

"I-i'm sorry, boss! I'm so sorry! I didn't know what to do. I'd no other way! Please forgive me," she pleaded, her lower lip trembling.

"Forgive you?" Ace took a threatening step towards her, making her stumble back. "After what you did and were doing God knows for how many months, you dare to tell me to forgive you? One thing you should know working for me these years is that, I hate betrayers, Liza! And you just did that."

When Liza could barely stand up on her feet, Arthur was too relaxed on the chair, watching the whole drama to unfold. Shouldn't he be as mad as Ace after knowing what she did?

Putting a hand on his chest, I tried to hold him back. He seemed like he was about to burst. "Ace, calm down. Let me talk to her."

When his furious eyes met mine, I held his gaze.

"Please?" My tone soft.

His lips thinned in displeasure. Sending Liza another look of wrath, he nodded.

"Thank you," I said, before turning to Liza. "You said someone was threatening you about your brother?"

She nodded, sniffing.

"Who's he?" Whoever it was, he was definitely someone who was working for Antonio Reymond, or...

it was Reymond himself. Everyone knew how blindly everyone trusted her. So targeting her to make out their interest was a smart move by them.

She averted her eyes, hands fidgeted before her. "I- I don't know."

"Don't you dare lie, Liza. Trust me, you don't want to see my dark side," Ace said, warning dripped from his words.

She swallowed.

"Give us the name, young lady. Maybe we'll consider reducing your punishment." Arthur came up and

stood beside us, his expression matched Ace now, almost. For a fleeting second, we our gazes met, those dark eyes remained indifferent.

"Liza, who's he?" I asked again.

She shook her head, tears rolling down her cheeks. "Trust me. I don't know. H-he used to talk to me on the phone. Never had he met me in person or told his name. I don't know who he is." Her nails dug into her palms as she looked at me with something in her eyes.

Pleading?

I went to ask her again, but the terror in her brown eyes stopped me.

"Another lie. You..."

"Ace." I stopped him again and shook my head. "It's alright. We now know she did it, now let's end this right here."

His brows furrowed, eyes flashing. "So you're telling me we let her go? Just like that?"

"No, she'll get punished for whatever she did. I'm just saying it's not our job to punish her."

"I want that name, Emerald." The muscle of his jaw ticked.

"We both know who's it. Directly or indirectly, Antonio is behind it. So let's just drop it."

"But..."

"Ace, please," I whispered. Taking his hand in mine I squeezed it, trying to give him my message.

Staring at our joined hands, with clenched jaw, he gave a curt nod.

"Arthur, you know the latter."

Nodding, Arthur replied, "I already called the police. They'll be here soon."

A whimper left Liza's lips at the mention of the police. I didn't want to feel bad, but I did. Though she was wrong, she did it for her family. Yes, I was judging her actions, but now putting myself in her place, maybe I'd do the same if put in her situation.

Why didn't she just inform Caleb or Ace about it? They could've helped her.

Arthur grabbed her arm and dragged her out of the cabin. But before walking out of the doors, she glanced at me over her shoulder and threw me a look of gratitude.

"Why did you stop me?"

"Because if we'd forced the name out of her, there was a risk of the blackmailer harming her family." I turned to him. "If they could plan something that big, they can also go that down for their revenge." He pondered for a moment. "But I would've protected her family if she gave us the name. If she gave the statement, we could get proof against him." "But what if it's not Antonio himself? What if it's someone else he's using?" "That's what I'm talking about." He looked into the eye. "There's a middle man working for him, who knows everything about us and the people related to us. And if we got a hold on him, we could use him against Antonio." Oh, I didn't think like that. All I thought at that moment was Liza's fear for her family. "I'm sorry, I didn't think of that." I bit my lip. He shook his head, pinching the bridge of his nose. "It's not your fault. You were just thinking of her family's safety. Don't worry, I will find out about the man myself." I nodded. Running his hand through his hair, his gaze went to the distance. His shoulders were still tense, eyes disturbed. And the five o'clock shadow on his face gave him an edge. He needed some rest. I don't think after arriving in California, he'd even a pinch of sleep. Because he was too busy being furious about my recklessness. I sighed. "Let me get you some coffee," saying, I turned around and walked towards the door. Suddenly a hand grabbed my arm and pulled me back. And the next thing I found, I was wrapped around his arms, my face under his chin and his at the crook of my neck. "What're you doing?" I gasped. Brushing his nose against my skin, he took a deep inhale. "Hugging my Rosebud." "You're tired. All you need is a cup of coffee and some rest." I tried to wiggle out. But as always, he only tightened the grip.

"You being in my arms is everything I need," he rasped into my ear, kissing the junction of my neck and shoulder.

A shiver ran down my body along the warmth that spread across my chest at his words.

"Stay with me for a moment, baby. I need you." His hot breath tingled my skin as he let out a tired sigh.

"I will if you don't call me 'baby'. Because I'm not your baby," I said. But my arms slowly went around him as I rested my face against his chest. And my eyes went shut that instance soaking into his warmth and scent, as if they had their own mind.

Hugging someone to provide comfort wasn't wrong, right?

A deep chuckle rambled into his chest. "We'll see."

Hey, my pumpkins! So here was another update for you! What do you think of this chapter? And what about Liza? Do you think she's innocent, or she's again telling a lie? And want more moments between Ace and Em? Go, check out the new sneak peek of the next chapter! And don't forget to give my page a like(who still haven't done it), pretty please?

Now it's time for me to ask you guys a question. As all of you love your Achilles and Emerald, what nickname will you ship them with? Tell me in the comments!

With love,

Eva Zahan.

The Trap Of Ace

Chapter 24

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We'll see?

This infuriating man!

"I'm just letting you hug me because you needed it. Don't think of something else. I'm still mad at you for what you did up at your penthouse..." My cheeks flamed at my slip of tongue. Why did I need to mention it right now?

My lips tingled recalling the earth-shattering kiss on his bed.

He put his nose into my hair. "And don't think I forgot what you did last night. It was a really reckless

move. And about kissing you," he rasped, arms tightening around me, "I don't regret a second of it. I'll

do it again and again even if you don't like it!"

A gasp slipped through my parted lips as he placed an open-mouthed kiss on my neck and then on my throat.

"And I know, you loved it," the deep husky voice of his said, brushing his lips on my jaw.

My heart raced down my chest as hot desire shot through my veins the touch of his scorching mouth.

A tug in my lower region made me want to seek those sinful lips again, the same lips that were on mine just this morning. My skin burned with his bold touch over my curves.

But even if I wanted to burn in his flames for the rest of my life with pleasure, with all the strength I'd in me, I untangled myself from him and stepped away.

I couldn't do this again. I couldn't let my control slip again. I'd to go. When I turned around to run, his arms again shot out to me. Holding my shoulders, he pulled me back against him.

"Stop running away from me, my rose. We both know what we want. Stop escaping the truth," he murmured in my ear, stroking my mid-section.

His touch was making me unable to think. My body reacted to him strongly every time he touched me, my mind warned me to keep distance, but my heart longed for him every time he was away. His closeness was a sweet poison to my brain. Because it loved it even if it made it numb.

Keep it together, Em!

"I've to go. Leave me," came out my bare whisper.

He pulled me more into his powerful arms. "Never. I'll never let you go!" Huh? He'll keep me in his office forever?

"I've work. Let go!" I huffed.

"No work today. It's your free day."

"What? Why?" I turned to look up at him.

"It's been a long day for you and even a terrible night last night. So it's your off day." He brushed some tendrils away from my face. He was so close...

"Can you keep some personal distance? Move!" I wiggled, slapping on his strong arm.

Amusement etched into those grey eyes. "Why? My closeness bothers you, Rosebud? It makes you all hot for me?" he teased.

My eyes widened. The arrogance!

"Not at all! I don't feel anything! Now let go!"

"Only on one condition."

My eyes narrowed. "No conditions!"

He shrugged. "Then no leaving."

I groaned. "Fine! What's it?"

The corner of his lips twitched as he kissed my forehead. My heart stuttered at the gesture. "Have lunch with me?"

When I didn't answer, he continued.

"Let's talk. And I even ordered your favorite dish."

At the mention of food, my stomach growled. I didn't even have breakfast this morning in a hurry.

I tried to ignore the amusement in his eyes. What? Everyone had tummy.

"Okay. But only because I'm hungry." My turquoise eyes challenged his stormy grey to say instead.

Nodding his head, a smile spread across his face. A genuine one, which I saw very rare. Only when with me. "Only because you're hungry."

I stared at the cheesy garlic shrimps with extra sweet and sour sauce before me. Exactly how I liked to take it. Not a usual combo, but it used to be my favorite.

Our favorite.

Whenever he used to visit our home, he'd brought it for me. It was our regular thing after our chess matches.

"You remembered?" I whispered, looking up at him.

Leaning forward, he put some prawns on my plate and then poured the sauce onto it. "It's not

possible for me to forget even a single thing about you even if I want."

The look in his eyes was so intense it left me breathless.

I'd to avert my eyes. I couldn't let him see the moisture that old memories fetched in them.

Picking a prawn dipped with the sauce, I put it into my mouth. Exceptional! Just as I remembered. The sweet and savory taste blasted on my tongue. A moan left my mouth as I grappled another one. "It's so good!" I've missed it so much. In these years, in the process of avoiding him, I'd avoided everything related to him as much as possible. Even this sweet and sour heaven. It awakened too many memories. A smile danced across his lips as he watched me, still not touching the food. "You're not eating it with your hand anymore." Embarrassment rose up my neck to my ear. I used to hate using forks to eat them. Using my fingers, it was easy to lick the cheese and sauce. I'd do the same right now, but self-consciousness held me back. "You don't need to be embarrassed, Rosebud. It's just me. I want you to be yourself when you're around me," he said, taking my fork from my hand. When I didn't proceed, still hesitating, he also put his fork aside and picked a prawn using his hand. I watched him with surprise. He never used to use his hand while eating. He thought it was dirty. But now... "What? You want me to finish them all alone?" he asked, when I ogled him like a dumb. Shaking my head, I happily dug in using my fingers. Now it tasted even better. "Since when did you start eating with your hand?" Taking a piece of pepperoni pizza, I queried. Glancing up, he watched me with a strange emotion in his eyes, while sucking the sauce off his thumb. My eyes fell onto his wicked mouth before I shifted my attention on food again. "Since it started to help me in keeping me sane." I frowned. "What do you mean?" "Nothing. Why don't you taste those baklava? My chef is from Turkey, so it's the authentic recipe. Here, take some. You'll love it." He put some of the dessert on my plate, clearly changing the topic.

I'd so many questions preserved for him, and here he wasn't even answering the simple thing.

"No, thanks!" I snapped, my temper suddenly flaring. "I'm full."

I pushed the plate away.

His brows furrowed. "What happened to you all of a sudden?"

"Nothing. Why don't you eat those baklava? I'm sure you'll love it," I phrased his line.

He pressed his lips together. "I don't need to eat them to know if I'll love them. I do love them. Now

will you tell me what's wrong?"

I wanted to ask the questions I did to Tess, but I didn't know how to approach, and that is wrong.

Looking away, I replied, "Nothing is wrong. I'm done, so I gotta go."

"You won't leave without having the dessert with me and answering my question."

"Excuse me? And who're you to order me that?"

He titled his head. "Your boss."

I rolled my eyes. "Oh yeah! I forgot. No one can deny the king here. Only he can order around people,

not the other way."

"Nobody except my queen."

My gaze snapped up to his, his stare intense. Pushing the dishes away, he tugged my onto his lap,

emanating a gasp out of me.

"And as you're my queen, you've every right to order and deny me around, my Rosebud." My breath

hitched at my throat and heart pounded down my chest as I stared at the significance in his eyes.

Cupping my face, he spoke, "I'm sorry if anything I said displeased you. I didn't mean it. I'd never do

anything intentionally to hurt you."

"I- I'm not your queen," I mumbled, not knowing what to say.

Placing a kiss on my forehead, he peered down into my soul. "You are.

You can deny anything you

want, you've the right to do it. But you don't have the right to deny this one thing. So get that into

your beautiful head. YOU ARE MY QUEEN. My every fucking thing. My world."

I let out a shaky breath as a fierce emotion slammed into my heart, making me breathless. His every

word was like an arrow to my heart, breaking the bricks one by one of the wall I made around it all these years.

I wanted to ask why. But I feared I wouldn't be able to handle his answer.

"I- I want to ask something," I said, not trusting myself to break out if I didn't move the topic.

He sighed. Kissing my eyelids, he nodded.

"How did you know that Liza was the one who put the drugs into Caleb's car?"

"Like you suggested at that board meeting, I had people look into the recent activities of the staff having direct connection to the projects. And I just got the reports after we returned from the police station." His features tightened. "And Liza's phone records raised suspicion, she was also one of those people who went to Caleb's house this morning. So it was pretty clear that it was her. And your proof just confirmed it."

Nodding, I took in the information. Then something else caught my mind. I wanted to ask him about it since then.

"Are- are you okay?" I bit my lip.

A crease set between his brows. "Why do you ask that?"

Clearing my throat, I said, "You were disturbed regarding something since this morning. And I can tell it's not just Caleb, it's something else. What's it?"

Silence.

"Your reaction was strange when I told you it was drugs in that packet." I still remember how he flinched away from the packet.

His jaws clenched as his grip tightened on me.

"It's a very vile thing, Emerald. People should stay away from it as much as possible," he replied, eyes hard.

What you're hiding from me?

"Any other questions you have for me?" he asked, brushing his fingers on my cheek.

My heart skipped.

This is the chance, Em. Say it. Ask him.

"Will you tell me the truth if I ask?"

He watched me for a moment, and then gave a slow nod.

"I- I want to know everything, Ace. Everything that I should know.

Everything that's hidden from me,"

I whispered. "I- I want to know what happened that night, seven years ago."

He stilled.

How did you like the chapter, guys? Tell me in the comments!

The Trap Of Ace

Chapter 25

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Double update! Yes, I know I'm amazing! I thought why not give you guys a surprise today?

And about the nicknames you all suggested, I decided EmAce and Emilles

I loved the most! Thank you

so much guys for them! Now it's up to you which one you'd like to call

them with. The one gets more

votes, will be the final one. Tell me in the comments! Now go jump into the story!

I knew that he knew what I was asking. He knew really well what I wanted to know.

His feelings couldn't grow just in these days. It had to be from our past.

And if he really did feel

something for me, then why did he do that? Why did he push me away like that?

"I want to know, Ace. Will you tell me?"

Not only about the night years ago I wanted to know about, what

happened to his mom and his

hatred for his old house also nagged at the back of my mind. I didn't

forget the venom and pain

reflected in his eyes when he stared at the doors of his mom's former

room at Tess's engagement.

There were so many things I'd questions about. But the answers weren't anywhere in my sight.

Taking a deep breath, he took my hands and brushed his lips against my

knuckles. "I will. I will tell you

everything you want to know. You've every right to. But not now. At

least not today."

Suddenly a heaviness lifted off my chest. I felt relieved. At least he didn't deny.

"Then when?"

Just as he was about to answer my most awaited question, a knock on the door halted him.

I jumped off his lap as Carter poked his head through the door. His eyes widened seeing my flushed cheeks and Ace's murderous glare.

"You better have a valid reason behind the interruption, Carter."

The gulp of the secretary was visible. "Y-yes, boss. I've got the reports on-" taking a glance at me, he stopped, "-uh, project CA."

Ace stood up on his feet as soon as Carter mentioned about the project.

The ambience around us veiled itself into staid all of a sudden.

Project CA? It must be something really important.

Noticing Carter's hesitance of talking openly due to my presence, I cleared my throat, glancing at Ace.

"Uh, I gotta go now. I'll see you later."

When I turned to go, he again grabbed my hand for the third time.

Pulling me closer, he left a peck on my forehead.

"We'll talk, soon."

Staring in his grey pools, I nodded my head and then walked out of the room, leaving an awkward smile at Carter's way.

God, I don't know what he might be thinking catching us in that position! But I was more frustrated than I was embarrassed. He was just about to tell me when he was going to unravel the past before me. But Carter ruined it all.

The nagging desperation to know the truth vexed me.

Leaning my back against a wall, I closed my eyes. A sigh left me.

I had to know everything before making a decision. I was falling weak. I was finding myself giving up every time he was around me. One look at his stormy gaze, and I'd be that fifteen years old Emerald again.

How long can I resist?

Not for long.

I have to talk to Warner.

And just as I thought of him, my phone rang. His name flashed on the screen.

"Hey!" I tried to smile, but failed miserably. Nervousness and guilt swirled inside me at once.

Nervousness, because I'd no idea what to tell him. And guilt, because I didn't want to hurt him, but I'd no choice. It was for the well-being of both of us.

"Hi! I'm so sorry, I couldn't pick your calls then. It's such a busy schedule today. When I finally got some time, I thought to call you, but you didn't answer."

"Yeah, I was... uh, a little busy," I lied, clenching my fist.

"No problem. By the way, I called to inform you that I might not be able to attend Tess's wedding. I don't know what's up with my boss' ass, he just hates the word 'leave'. I don't think he'll allow me to attend the wedding. It's too much work here," he complained.

"What? But you can't just miss Tess's wedding!" He'd to come. Otherwise how'd I confront him? I couldn't keep it in for that long. This guilt will kill me alive.

"I'll try my best, Em. But I can't guarantee anything. And don't worry, we could always meet anytime later, right?"

I took a deep breath. "Warner, listen to me. I need to see you. I..."

"I know, I miss you too! But..."

"We need to talk. It's really important." I cut him off.

He went quiet.

"I- I've something to tell you. I can't tell you on the phone. I need to talk to you in person."

Silence.

Just when I thought the line went dead, he spoke up.

"It's about Achilles, isn't it?"

A gasp slipped through my lips. How did he know?

"H-how..."

A humorless chuckle reverberated through the phone. "Isn't it obvious? Whenever he's around, your eyes only draw to him even if your boyfriend stands right next to you at that moment. You think I didn't notice at that party and at that race track?" He scoffed. "And now that you work for him, I should've seen that coming. But I was too foolish to think of trusting you."

Biting my lip, I looked down. Shame and guilt burned my vision.

"It's not what you think. I didn't..."

"How could you do this to me, Em? You're ready to leave me now that you found your lost love? You

forgot how I was there for you when no one was?" His voice croaked.

"How do you know that he's the one I loved?"

He laughed. "Your uncomfot around him and the look into your eyes whenever you gazed at him, it

said it all. Childhood love, a family friend. Now it made all sense. He's the family friend who broke

your heart seven years ago, isn't he?"

I gulped the lump of my throat. "Warner, please. Listen to me. I tried my best..."

He again cut me off. "That's the point. You tried your best to manage to look happy with me. But you

never were, were you? You were always in love with him. No matter how much I loved you, you never

reciprocated my feelings. Because you never loved me, you never even tried to."

"Warner..."

"This is not done, Em. You shouldn't have played with me like this!"

And then the line went dead.

I stared at the phone as a lone tear fell down my cheek. I just did what I was afraid of. Hurting one of

my best friends. The person who always supported me in everything.

I didn't think he could ever forgive me. I felt like the worst person in the entire world.

Wiping my tears, I tried to call him again but it went unanswered. And the next time, it was

unreachable.

Deciding to give him some time, I let out a breath and walked away.

I didn't know what I'd tell him once he's calmer, but I have to sort it out.

Convincing him won't be easy,

but I didn't want to lose a friend like him forever.

Maybe I'd just go and meet him myself? Because I didn't think he'd come here after our conversation.

And I didn't want him to confront Ace. That's what I feared right now. A possessive man and a hurt

ex-boyfriend's face off won't be good.

It'd be a chaos.

When I went to collect some files from my cabin I needed to take home along to work on them, I found Matt on my way out.

With a heavy carton box in one hand and another small white box on the other, he struggled to walk out of the elevator. The ruffled hair of his and perspiration on his forehead told him misery.

"Matt? What's all this? Where are you going with these boxes?" approaching him, I asked.

He huffed. "To my new cabin."

"Why? Are you shifting?"

"Yeah, after whatever Liza did, she got terminated immediately. And now the boss wants me to take Liza's place. Though I'm happy that he showed such trust in me, but damn! My job was much easier than the secretary's job." He shook his head.

Yeah, I remembered how Liza didn't even used to get a minute to take a breath of break most of the time. She was best at her job, but unfortunately, everything got ruined.

"Yeah, I understand. But hey, look at the positive side. Your position and salary would now be doubled." I winked at him. Even though I was joking with Matt, the talk with Ace and Warner lingered at the back of my mind.

I gave myself an inward shake of head. I wouldn't get any peace until everything gets fixed.

He laughed. "Yeah, that's why I didn't waste a moment to say yes!"

Chuckling, I glanced at the boxes. "You need any help with these? I'm free right now if you want."

The eagerness was lucid on his eyes. "Yes, please! I'd be more than grateful if you do."

Smiling, I took the smaller box that he handed me and accompanied him to Liza's old office.

Doing small chattings with him and laughing at something he shared of his first day at job, when we were just outside the empty cabin, Ace and Carter had us stop at our track.

Carter was explaining something to Ace as he strode with his longer step, much ahead to his almost

running assistant. The tense jaws and clenched fists of his declared of the storm that was raging inside him.

He was... furious.

When he saw us, he came to a halt. Flaming grey eyes came to a smolder when they met mine. The strange swirl of intense emotions that ran in them were unknown to me. My smile faded.

What happened to him all of a sudden. Even Carter was pale and out of breath.

When Ace's gaze moved to Matt from me, his jaws tightened more before they moved back to me, eyeing the boxes in our hands. In my peripheral vision, I saw Matt taking a step back, fumbling with the box as the boss glared daggers at both of us.

Slightly moving his head, he pointed Carter to the white parcel in my hands and in seconds it was taken from me.

"I- I'll help Matt from here. Don't worry," said Carter, casting a nervous glance at his boss.

I narrowed my eyes at his boss as he came closer.

"What's with you now? And do not give me those looks, I'm not scared of them!" I said, even if I

found difficulty not to step back under his towering figure.

Placing a hand on my waist, he cupped my chin as if Carter and Matt weren't standing there, watching

us. "I told you to go home and rest. Then what are you doing here? And with-" he threw another

sharp look to Matt, "-one of my employees?"

"I was just helping him with these stuff," I replied, confused. What's wrong with that?

"He can help himself. And if he can't, then he can just take someone's help. You don't need to help him."

"And what's wrong with me helping him?" I gave him a challenging look. Pressing his lips together, he kept silence.

"Umm, uh... I should go now. A lot of work is pending," Matt stuttered.

"You better!" Ace hissed, not looking away from me.

Throwing a thanks at my way, he fled away inside the cabin, followed by Carter.

And all the while, our gazes didn't break. We did the staring down match for some moments, until he took a deep breath and closed his eyes, calming himself down to some bits.

Once opening them back, he pressed our foreheads together. "You always make me lose my sanity, Rosebud."

With my brows still furrowed, I said, "And you drive me insane!"

His lips twitched at the side. "Do I?"

I nodded, slowly melting.

"Why so angry?"

Expression back to serious again. "I'm a very possessive man, Rosebud.

And I don't like my woman

laughing with some other man."

My eyes widened at the ridiculousness. "He's just a friend! Stop

behaving like a caveman! And I'm not

your woman!"

His eyes darkened as he pulled me closer, his nostrils flaring. "You are.

You're mine, Emerald Hutton.

The sooner you accept it the better." He took a swift glance at his wrist,

with his hands still around my

cheeks. "I've somewhere to go right now. I'll talk to you later. This talk

isn't over yet."

"But this is ridic..."

My words died down at my throat with his mouth claiming mine in a punishing kiss.

As if thousands of electric shocks ran down my entire body the moment

his lips touched mine.

Delicious shivers shot through my insides as his expert tongue explored every inch of my mouth.

Instead of fighting him, a whimper left me as my eyes closed of their

own. And just as I was about to

clung myself to him, he pulled away.

No...

Still dazed from the euphoria of his scorching kiss, my treacherous eyes cast him irritated eyes.

Why did he pull away?

"Nobody can take you away from me!" he growled close to my yearning lips, his eyes flashing with

rage.

Carter came out of the cabin and stood behind him but I was too busy thinking of his words.

Giving me a last deep kiss, he said, "I'll see you later. Go home."

And then he was gone. Leaving me there unsated and confused.

Nobody can take you away from me!

What did he mean by that? Somehow I knew he didn't say it because of Matt. There was something

else. I saw it in his eyes. Rage, hatred, desperation, and... fear.

What was that?

Letting out a sigh, I touched my bruised lips glaring at the way he went.

Intolerable man! How dare he behave like he owned me? I'll definitely

kick his ass if he kisses me once

more without my permission!

Huffing, I turned around and walked down the hallway back towards my cabin.

And just as I turned to another corridor, I stopped at my track when

Sierra came out of the main

conference room.

The thing that had my brows knit, was her trembling state. With her

arms around her, she silently

wiped her cheeks, her dark hair hiding her face from me. Without

looking anywhere, she put her head

down and rushed away around the hallway.

What's wrong with her?

As far as I knew, there was no meeting today. Then what was she doing

in the empty conference

room?

Then the door of the conference room opened again, and came out a

person I knew quite well.

Arthur Valencian.

With blank expression on his face, head high in confidence, as usual, he

shoved his hands into his

pockets and followed the way Sierra just took.

He didn't notice me standing at the other corner of the corridor.

Confusion webbed inside me. What the hell he was doing inside an

empty conference room with

Sierra? She looked pretty shaken.

Was he threatening her about something? Or there was something else?

Did you add this book in your reading list yet? If not, add it and give me a

follow so that you can get

notified the moment I update the latest chapters. And who doesn't like some followers, right? ;)

With love,

Eva Zahan.

The Trap Of Ace

Chapter 26

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Another surprise update before Tuesday for those who requested for an early update! Now enjoy!

"God, girl! You should seriously dump that ass boyfriend of yours! I thought he was a nice guy, but I didn't know what a mommy's boy he is!" cursed Casie, shaking her head while Beth grabbed another tissue from the tissue box on her lap and blew her nose.

"It's not that easy, Cass. I love him. We've been together for three years." Beth sniffled, wiping her cheeks.

"Just because you guys have been together for three years, doesn't mean you'll take his mother's shit!

You deserve much more than this!" Casie snapped.

After getting the early leave, I came directly to Casie's place. And though I didn't find Beth in the same

state I found her last night, she wasn't any better. She was still a mess.

After asking Casie of what happened to her, she told me everything.

Beth and her boyfriend, Mason, were happy in their little world. Until his conservative Catholic

mother stepped into the picture once she got to know that her one and only son was going to marry a

non-catholic girl. His mother's displeasure of their relationship was creating problems between them.

And being a mommy's boy he was, as Casie mentioned, he didn't have the guts to go against his

mother and stand by Beth and their love.

And now Beth feared that he might as well break up with her, heeding his mother's advice. And that's

why I found her at that bar, drunk out of her mind.

Looking down at the ring on her ring finger, Beth whispered, "You won't understand. I can't just leave

everything like that. I- I can't live without him."

Casie scoffed. "But it seems like he definitely can. Otherwise he wouldn't let you leave his house so easily. He didn't even fight for you! And here you thought he'd come after you if you left the house."

"Now I'm repenting it. His mom will definitely use this situation against us," Beth said, her lower lip trembled.

Placing my hand on hers, I squeezed gently. "Don't worry, Beth. I know Mason. That guy really loves you. Maybe he's confused between his mother and you right now. But I'm sure, as soon as he realizes his mistake of letting you go, he'll come after you. I know he'll."

"Huh, I can't second that. Not everyone is Achilles Valencian," Casie stated, rolling her eyes.

Though a blush burned my cheeks, I sent a glare at her way. That girl never knew when to shut up.

She shrugged. "What? Don't give me that look. I support those men who know how to treat their women. Not some mommy's boy who lets go of his fiance just because his mom doesn't approve of it."

Sighing, I shook my head. "I'm not siding him. But we should give Mason some time, right? We all know how much he loves his mom. Maybe he needs some time to convince his mother and then get back to Beth? Yeah, letting Beth go like that wasn't appreciated at all, but Beth shouldn't just give up on her relationship like that."

She raised her brow. "Oh, I'm glad that you think that one shouldn't give up on something so easily."

I averted my eyes quickly, getting her hint.

"Okay, enough talking about my life today. I really don't want to discuss it anymore. I need some time to think. And Em?" Beth said, turning to me. "I'm so sorry for last night. Because of me you'd to carry so much trouble. I don't remember much, but Casie told me everything. I'm sorry, I didn't even realize how much drink I was having."

"It's alright. You don't have to say sorry," I said. "But you definitely should've thought twice before

going to that shady place. It could be risky, you know? Why did you even go to such a place? As far as I know, we've never visited there before."

She blew out a breath. "I just wanted to go somewhere where nobody could find me. When I went there, I was already drunk. I didn't even realize where I was going. And when I saw this bar at the side of the road, I just got in."

"Don't do that again. It's not safe." She didn't know what trouble we were about to fall into last night.

If Ace's guards weren't there...

She nodded, giving me a small smile. "I won't, I promise."

"Alright, anyone needs some coffee? Because I definitely need one. All of these are giving me a headache," Casie exclaimed, raising up on her feet from the couch we all were sitting on.

"Tea, please," I said.

"Of course!" Chuckling, she sauntered into her kitchen to get us some hot drinks.

Once she was back with the coffee and tea mugs, she got herself busy discussing her upcoming modeling project with Beth, while I, on the other hand, thought of everything that happened today.

It was a really hectic day.

No matter how much hurting Warner perturbed me, my treacherous mind went back to the kiss we shared in his bedroom this morning and then in that hallway.

Another blush rose up my neck to my ears. Goosebumps crawled up my skin recalling the sinful sensations I'd felt with his scorching mouth on mine.

My heart missed the warmth of his arms around me, or the husky murmurs of his in my ears.

A sigh slipped through my lips.

"Where are you so lost? Mind a penny of your thoughts?" Casie's voice pulled me out of my trance.

Even Beth had her concerned eyes trained on me.

Shrugging, I looked down at my wrist, twirling my bracelet. "Do you think I'm being selfish doing this to Warner?"

I'd talked to her about my and Warner's phone conversation before coming at her home.

"Of course not! Whatever you're doing is good for all three of you. And even if it's not for Achilles, you would've done it sooner or later." She held me gaze. "The relationship was only one-sided, Em. And one-sided relationships don't go for long. You and Warner both knew it, even though he's being an ass right now."

"His reaction is justified. Anyone would've reacted like this in his place. I shouldn't have hurt him like that." I'd tried to call him again, but his phone was still unreachable. He didn't even reply to any of my messages.

"You don't love him, Em. It was supposed to happen sooner or later. Even he knew it deep down. So the sooner he'll accept it, the easier it'll be for him to move on."

"Casie is right. Don't fret yourself that much. It's not your fault. You can't make yourself fall for him

forcefully now, can you?" said Beth, placing her mug on the table.

She was right. But I couldn't just shake off the guilt. Even after knowing that I wouldn't even be able

to love him, I got into a relationship with him. Even if it was him who convinced me to give us a

chance, I shouldn't have agreed with him. This day wouldn't have come if I denied him that day.

"So, what did you think? Will you go to Seattle to talk to him if he doesn't come here?" Beth queried.

I nodded my head. "Yes. Honestly, I don't want him to come here. I don't want him to meet Ace,

which there's a possibility if he really shows up here."

I'd no doubt that that Ace wouldn't take it lightly if he sees Warner around me again. I still remember

the rage and jealousy in his eyes this morning when he saw Warner calling me. And then the way he

frightened Matt with his murderous glare, God! This man seriously knew how to get on my nerves.

"Oh, let him come here. I want Achilles to beat some sense into him for accusing you of betraying him.

I mean, how dare he? Now he can't force you to stay with him in a relationship, can he?" Casie fumed, her lips curled into displeasure.

"Aren't you siding Ace too much these days, Casie? What's the matter?" I asked, narrowing my eyes.

"Because I know what's good for my best friend. And who knows, maybe he bribed me with something to ship you guys?" she replied, wiggling her brows.

Shaking my head, I chuckled at her words. And Beth joined me. Actually, it wasn't impossible that Ace would do something like that. He'd done even way more craziest things before.

Our mirth took a break when my mobile buzzed. A message popped up on the screen.

Seeing my sudden change of mood, Casie sat straight. "Who's it?"

"It's Warner," I replied, my eyes locked on the screen.

"What did he say?"

I looked up at her. "He's coming."

Once I was done blow drying my hair, I padded into my closet to choose a dress for tonight's event.

Tonight, our company will sign the final contract for the upcoming deal with the Arabs. The defamation Antonio Reymond had tried to stamp on Valencians, was cleared sooner than it was even possible. Ace didn't even let the news of Caleb's getting arrested spread across the media. Though some of the journalists were present there that day, clearly, Achilles Valencian knew how to deal with troublemakers.

Now that Liza accepted her crime, everything went back to normal. The Arabs were too eager to work with our company. And on the occasion of our coming together with a project, they invited us to a small dinner with them at the hotel they were staying at.

Mr. Hakimi especially requested my presence at the dinner with Ace tonight. And to my surprise, the boss wasn't happy to tag me along. He didn't want me to go there. But he couldn't dictate me in this matter. I was too excited to try the traditional Arab dishes to heed

to his grumbling. So he'd to agree at last, but only on one condition. He'd come to pick me up and

during the entire time of our stay there, I'll have to cling to him.

Not to forget, I'm not allowed to talk to any Arabian guy about anything that doesn't concern work.

Freaking crazy man!

Shaking my head at his ridiculous behavior, I searched for a suitable outfit for the night.

Lots of choices, but not impressive enough for me to decide.

Then something caught my eye between those heaps of clothes.

Pulling it out, I ran my hand on it. An involuntary smile tugged on my lips.

His t-shirt. The same one I

borrowed to change into after my blouse incident.

I still didn't return it to him. I didn't want to. One secret maybe I

wouldn't ever tell him, that I

sometimes wear it at nights when I can't sleep. Oddly, it comforted me.

He was never gonna get it back. Though I didn't think he'd mind if I

didn't return this one shirt, he

didn't have any shortage of clothes.

Folding it, I placed it in its previous place and took out the black dress from the back of the row. It was

a dress Tess forced me to buy when I went shopping with her.

A thigh length, sleeveless dress with sweetheart neckline. Simple yet

classy. This was a bad choice for

this cool weather like tonight, but...

I bit my lip to hold back the smile that threatened to spill.

Walking back inside my room, I began to get ready for the evening.

My heart skipped when the doorbell rang.

He was here.

Blowing out a breath, I checked myself one last time on the mirror and grabbed my clutch and phone.

At the mention of the phone, I remembered I didn't check my phone the whole day due to my busy

schedule at the office. It's been two days since I got that message from

Warner, but after that I didn't

hear anything back from him.

I did a quick check on my phone. No calls or messages from him. I didn't

know what was going on in

his head. Was he really gonna come?

I'd call him again later. I have to hurry now. He was waiting for me.

Putting the phone inside my purse, I rushed downstairs, as much as I could with my high heels. And once I was before the closed door, I smoothed my hair once more. My heart raced at the thought of his reaction after he'll see me. Nervousness and excitement burst through my veins.

I wonder what this night has in store for me.

Then taking a deep breath, I opened the door and stepped outside. Check out the next chapter's sneak peek on my Facebook page! And don't forget to give my page a like and follow! Have a good day!

With love,
Eva Zahan.

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The Trap Of Ace

Chapter 27

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Another update as promised! And what do you think of Emerald's dress above? Do you think Ace has a valid reason to be jealous? ;)

When I was finally outside, I was frozen in my place. And the cold breeze wasn't the main culprit for it.

It was him. Looking like just dived out of a magazine, he stood there leaning against his car, waiting impatiently. The crease between his brows was the proof.

Even comparing him to those models printed on magazines would be an insult to his beauty. He was... beyond gorgeous.

Flaunting a three piece navy blue Armani suit, paired with a charcoal black shirt beneath and a pair of polished expensive shoes, he took my breath away. As always.

Noticing me, he stood straight. "You're five minutes late." And then his eyes went to the rest of my body. My skin burned under those heated stormy gaze of his as they raked over me.

With shaven strong jaws clenched, nostrils flaring, he let out a curse. Grey eyes deepened two shades darker.

"You aren't seriously going to wear that in front of all these men, are you?" asked his now deep Greek

accent, pointing at my dress.

Oh boy! He was mad.

His eyes flickered to the small display of my cleavage and legs again, hands curling into balls.

"Why? What's wrong with this dress?" I feigned innocent.

Striding closer, he pinned me with his hard stare. "You did this on purpose, didn't you? You wanted to get on my nerves."

My eyes widened slightly. Oh, so he figured out?

Now you feel Mr. Valencian, how does it feel when someone irritates you out of your mind?

I gave him a look of horror. "What're you talking about? Why'd you think like that? I wore it because I

liked it. I didn't think of you when choosing this dress! Don't be that delusional!"

Stepping more closer, he gently cupped my chin. "Let's not waste anymore time arguing, shall we? Go and change it. We're getting late for dinner."

My eyes narrowed. "I'm not changing this dress."

"Until you're changing this dress, we aren't leaving."

Tone serious.

Crossing my arms over my chest, I shrugged. "I'm fine with curling under my blanket right now and watch Netflix."

"Rosebud." With warning etched into his voice, he waited for me to abide.

But I was too comfortable in my place.

His lips curled into displeasure as he let out a curse. "Fine! Let's go! But I swear, It won't be my fault if someone goes to their early grave tonight."

"You won't dare!" Casting him a look, I passed him and sauntered into the warmth of the car.

Thank God, he couldn't see through my skin. Otherwise he'd definitely notice how badly my bones were shivering with cold.

Irritating him had cost me too much than I thought.

Once inside the car, he shrugged off his coat and put it around my shoulders, still scowling.

"I- I don't need it!"

"I can see that very well. Now put it on and stay quiet," ordering me with a grunt, he adjusted the heater and then drove away.

And I didn't argue anymore.

Once we were outside of The Blue Paradise, the hotel the Arabs were staying at, he got out and opened the door for me. Stepping outside, when I was about to give him his coat back, his hands stopped me.

"No, keep it on." Securing the jacket around me, he took my hands in his. "They're cold."

I didn't pull my hands from his much warmer ones as he rubbed them in his. My heart fluttered with warmth. My silence remained even when he took my hands and kissed them, mumbling how I needed a pair of gloves.

I wished I could just hide myself from the cold into the cocoon of his arms and never pull away.

"Mr. Valencian!"

At the voice of Mr. Hakimi, I jerked my hands away from him and took a step away. Composing myself, I flashed the approaching old man a smile.

"Welcome, Mr. Valencian and Ms. Hutton! I'm glad you both could join us tonight for dinner." He shook hands with Ace followed by me.

"Our pleasure, Mr. Hakimi. It wasn't possible that you invited us with such respect and we wouldn't show up," said Ace, wrapping an arm around me. A blush kissed my cheeks when the old man's observing eyes caught the gesture.

"I'm glad you did. Now please, come in. It's freezing outside."

But before we could even move, a flash of red engulfed him into a hug, causing his arm to fall away from my shoulder.

"Oh my God! You're finally here, Mr. Valencian! I was waiting for you for so long. I almost thought you wouldn't show up!" Pulling away, she threw him a red lipped seductive smile.

My fists clenched.

The witch of a secretary of Mr. Hakimi, Cindy. How could I forget her?

My eyes cut through her from head to toe. She wore a red gown with a high slit and neckline so low that if she lowers herself a little, her assets would spill out. Was red her favorite color? Even that day she flaunted all red.

The nickname was perfect for her. Red witch!

With a hardened face, Ace gave her just a curt nod before turning to pull me back into his arms. But his disinterest seemed to do nothing to her shamelessness as her cat eyes eyed him up and down.

My nails dug into my palms.

"Please come inside, Mr. Valencian, Ms. Hutton," said Mr. Hakimi with a tight smile before turning to

Cindy, his eyes harboring warning. "And Cindy, why don't you recheck everything in the meantime, so

that our guests don't have to face any inconvenience?"

Tearing her gaze from Ace, she looked at her employer and nodded her head, before sauntering away.

Her hips swayed as she walked.

Where did Mr. Hakimi even find this witch?

Once we were inside, we met the other Arabs and Arthur was already present there. I didn't know he

was supposed to attend. After all the Arabs welcomed us with warm regards, drinks were served. As

always, Ace didn't have any. And the whole time his arm was around me, clutching me to him firmly.

"You don't need to tie me with you all the time, you know? I'm not a kid. I won't get lost," I whispered,

as another man came up to us and started a conversation.

His form tensed for a fleeting second before he composed himself. Even though it was just for a

second, I noticed it. What was that?

He nodded at something the man said and tightened his hold around me.

"I know. But you'll have to

stay in my clutch no matter whether you like it or not. Think of it as your punishment for wearing this

ridiculous dress. You should be happy that I'm not pulling every man's eyes out of their sockets in this

room for staring at something that's mine!" his words came out as a hiss as he murmured into my ear.

I shook my head at him. "You're a crazy man, do you know that, Achilles Valencian?"

Holding my gaze, a smirk tugged at the corner of his lips. "Oh, you've no idea."

Something flipped inside me at the emotion that flashed across his eyes. It was totally unknown to me.

The more time we were spending with each other, he was opening up to me. He showed me his emotions, his state of mind. But I always felt there was still something I was left into darkness with.

Something that hid inside him I didn't know. He held himself back every time he was around me. As if hiding a vast part of him. And this emotion that just washed over his eyes, it was a flash of that side he still kept as a secret from me.

And I couldn't comprehend the emotion his gaze held.

Whatever it was, it was profound enough to send a shiver down my spine.

Our gazes broke away from each other at the voice of Mr. Hakimi as he invited us to join them in the entertainment room. And I was surprised to see that they'd specially organised a belly dance in our honor. Though I didn't like those stunning beauties in their provoking dance attire, I was excited to behold this famous traditional dance.

Traditionally their dance clothes weren't that revealing, but on foreign lands, things tended to change a little. Because it has become one of the most popular dance practices among folks.

The dance started once we took our respective seats. Me of course beside Ace, when Artur enjoyed the show with Mr. Hakimi and others. In between the dazzling dance and enticing Arabic music, I kept glancing at Ace from time to time to see if his eyes were watching more than the dance. And I didn't know what I should feel about it, he was too busy playing with my hair and taking a whiff every once in a while. He didn't even pay any attention to the show.

And to my utter surprise, I didn't mind him doing that. I was happy that he wasn't even looking at

those beautiful dancers. Even at that witch, who was glaring holes at me standing afar, and watching Ace's attention on me.

An involuntary smirk etched on my lips as my eyes locked with her. Her facial features only twisted more.

As soon as I realized what I was doing, I looked away and concentrated on the dance.

What's wrong with me? I shouldn't be behaving like a jealous girlfriend. But I couldn't help it. This ugly sensation seemed to rise its head and snare every time some other woman whirled around him like a bee. I wanted to just hide him somewhere every time one of these bees came into my sight.

"What's the matter, Rosebud? You seem to have lost interest in the dance," he asked, his voice close to my ear.

I didn't turn to him. "What told you that?"

"That adorable scowl on your face. It looks like you're planning to murder someone in a very innocent way." His tone was filled with amusement.

This time I did turn to him, frowning. His face inches away from mine.

"It's nothing like that! And no one can murder in an innocent way. A murder is a murder. And it's always vicious."

A deep chuckle left his lips. Leaning in, he kissed my nose. "My Rosebud can."

"How?" I asked like a dumb.

"With those turquoise eyes of yours." His voice turned husky as he pinned me with his hot gaze. "Just like they did to the conscience of my heart and turned it into a slave of theirs."

My heart stopped beating down my chest as I sucked into my breath. A delicious shiver ran down my entire being. Those stormy eyes of his engulfed me whole into his flames.

And then my heart started racing with the realization of his words. Of what meaning they hid behind.

A shaky breath left my lips when he tucked a strand of my hair behind my ear.

"Mr. Valencian!" Mr. Hakimi's voice tore his attention from me. "Sorry for the interruption, but if you don't mind, I'd like to have a word with you." The old man threw me a glance of apology while I just turned crimson out of the situation.

And I didn't miss the unreadable look Arthur gave me from the other corner of the room. His face blank of any emotions.

"Sure, no problem," replying politely, Ace turned to me. "Stay here. Don't go anywhere. I'll be back in a minute, alright?"

I rolled my eyes, my wild heart still thumping under my rib cage. "I can take care of myself. You go."

Still hesitating, he nodded. "Just don't go anywhere alone. If you need anything, just call me."

When he was finally assured that I wouldn't go anywhere, he left with Mr. Hakimi. But not before leaving me another glance.

I let out a deep breath I didn't know I was holding. His words still affected like wires to my heart and body.

Grabbing my purse, I got up and asked the passing server where the washroom was. And once I was away from the hubbub, into the washroom, I let the cool water calm the haywire of my nerves.

Closing the tap, I grabbed some tissues and dabbed onto my face. My eyes met the reflection of mine.

With every passing day, he was breaking my walls. The boundaries I made around my heart to keep everyone away from it. Especially him. But I was finding them crumbling. Crumbling with his presence, actions and words.

How long could I hold myself from falling again?

"Tsk, tsk! Look who has I got here!"

Want more? Check out the sneak peek of the next chapter on my Facebook page! The link is in my bio.

Hope you like it!

With love,

Eva Zahan.

The Trap Of Ace

Chapter 28

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Whirling around, I came face to face with the red witch. With arms crossed over her chest, she sized

me up and down with her cat eyes. Her nose crinkled with disgust.

"I don't know what he saw into you, but I've to say, you trapped him pretty well in your web."

Biting my inner cheek, I cast the tissue into the bin and turned to her.

"And guess what? I didn't even

have to throw myself on him like a shameless woman to trap him. Seems like that trick got quite old

now."

Her face turned red matching her dress, eyes flashing. "So you used the bed then? Otherwise a man

like him wouldn't even look at you if not you pleased him well. Am I right?

Where did you take your

classes to please a man like that anyway? He seemed so lost into you."

My hands fisted into balls, trying my best not to punch her plastic face.

"From the same place you

took your PhD. I'm sure you now got your answers. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to go back inside.

He must be looking for me."

Leaving her flushed with rage, I walked out of the washroom.

Bitch! How dare she?

Oh how I wanted to pull her hair out of her scalp right now!

Fuming in anger, I passed a couple wrapped around each other, pulling at their partner's clothes out

of desperation. Noticing me, they jumped away from the other like even the mere proximity burned

them. Their faces flamed crimson as they shuffled into their places.

Saving them from the embarrassment, I got out of the corridor as fast as I could.

Even my own cheeks grew hot at someone's personal spectacle. Half of it was from my anger.

Just as I passed the huge window, something caught my eye. Halting, I neared the window ledge and

peeked outside. Two figures stood there under the shadow, down in the hotel garden.

I squinted my eyes. I... knew them.

Was that- Arthur?

When he ran his hand through his hair, the numerous rings on his fingers lustered under the moon. It was indeed him. Along him was a figure of a woman, but I couldn't make out her face properly from this far.

Who was he talking to?

The woman's shoulders shook as she placed her hand over her face. I didn't know Arthur could crack a joke. All I saw him do was stay emotionless and cold.

Deciding it wasn't any of my business, when I was about to go back inside, the woman stepped behind and walked away from him with her arms wrapped around her. And when the hotel's walkway's light fell on her face, a gasp slipped through my lips.

Sierra?

When she wiped her cheeks, I understood that she wasn't laughing, she was crying.

What was she doing here with Arthur? As far as I knew, her presence wasn't required here at all. And nor was she invited here. Then why was she here?

Even the other day I saw her with him. After that day, when I went to talk to her about it I found out that she took a week's leave due to sickness. And now she was here. She didn't look sick to me at all.

Though she looked, exhausted.

Strange. What was going on between them?

I definitely had to talk to her. Something was wrong, I could feel it.

I watched her as she rushed into the parking lot and then got into her car, before driving away. And when I looked back at Arthur, his gaze was already on me.

My breath caught at my throat.

His dark blank eyes sent an ominous shiver down my spine. But I didn't let it show on my face as I held his gaze with my chin high.

A small smirk tugged at the edge of his lips. As if... mocking me. Shoving his hands into his pockets, he turned around and left.

What was it about this man that always unnerved me? He sounded a really kind and helpful person from Tess, Caleb and Ace's mouth. But he didn't feel like that to me.

Still processing the meaning of his smirk, I pulled away from the window and walked back inside.

Once I was back in the hall, the dance was over. But Ace was nowhere in the sight. He was warning

me not to go anywhere, and here he was the one who disappeared.

I found Mr. Hakimi and two more Arabs conversing at a corner.

Approaching them, I cleared my throat, getting all the eyes on me. "I apologise for the interruption,

Mr. Hakimi, but did you see Ace... I mean, Mr. Valencian?"

A kind smile appeared on his face.

"He'd an urgent call to attend. Don't worry, your man is still here." He winked.

My eyes widened at his words as a blush crept up my neck. My man?

I wrung my knuckles, glancing around. "Uh, can you please tell me which way he'd gone?"

He nodded, chuckling at my bashfulness.

Following his pointed way, I left to find him after I thanked the old man.

Everyone was here, but I couldn't find a glimpse of him.

Getting out of the hall again, I continued my search. Even to one of the empty hallways, until I

bumped into someone at the head of a corridor.

"I'm so sorry..."

My words caught into my throat realising who the person was.

The red freaking witch. And... with her eyes filled with tears?

Her eyes widened as soon as she saw me. And the crestfallen face was gone all of a sudden. Replaced

a smug smile as she wiped the slight red smudge from the corner of her lips.

I frowned.

Flashing me a smirk, she glanced over her shoulder and then walked away.

And my eyes didn't move from the person standing far at the end of the corridor. His gaze was fixed

on me, expression unreadable.

With my heart palpitating down my chest, I walked to him. My legs hesitated, an ill feeling rose into

the pit of my stomach.

As I neared him, my eyes fell onto his ruffled locks, and then... the red marks on his neck.

My heart stopped in my chest.

I didn't even flinch with the nails piercing into my palms as my eyes didn't move from the marks of lipstick. Lipstick of that freaking bitch!

"Wherever the gears of your brain are turning to, stop right there. It's not what you're thinking it is,"

he said, not even an emotion flashing over his stoic face.

The clench of my heart made my eyes burn as my blood boiled into my veins. My teeth gritted, mind screaming to kill someone.

Them. That bitch!

"These marks of her lipstick are proof that I'm thinking just fine! You don't need to hide anything, Mr. Valencian. After all, you're a single man free to do anything with anyone!" I spat out the words.

A muscle of his jaw ticked, his eyes darkened. "I said it's not what you're thinking it is. Nothing happened between us. She threw herself at me and I pushed her away. That's it."

"Oh, really?" I snapped, stepping closer. My voice rose. The raging fire in me didn't let me process his statement. I was too mad for any kind of understanding. "She threw herself at you and you pushed her away? Just like that? Your hair and these marks came just like that? Do you think I'd believe that?"

"Rosebud," he warned, expression hardening. "I'm telling you for the last time. Nothing happened between us. She tried to kiss me but I pushed her away. Nothing more." The word kiss had me see red.

"S-she tried to kiss you?"

All of a sudden a whole different emotion ran through me. Insecurity. Though whatever I called her, she was a stunning woman. More beautiful than me, more poised than me. She was everything a man would ever want in a woman.

He must've felt something.

My heart squeezed at the thought.

I gulped the thickness of my throat as I pushed down on my anger. I'd no right to feel that way.

"W-whatever. I don't care what you do or not." I averted my eyes. "It's your personal life. I don't have any say in this. Forget that I even reacted any way. Let's go inside. Everyone is waiting for us."

His eyes flashed as I turned around and began to stride away. A gasp slipped my mouth when I was pulled back and pinned against the wall, his body flushed against mine. My breath caught at my throat with our faces just an inch away.

"Didn't you hear what I told you? Nothing happened between us!" he growled, lips curling into a snarl.

"And don't you dare show me your back after you just indirectly accused me of cheating on you! Fuck!

I can't even think of another girl, let alone letting one come close to me!"

His hands had my hands pinned at the both sides of my head, his hot breath falling on my lips.

Pressing our foreheads together, he closed his eyes. Taking a deep breath, he opened those grey oceans again. "How can I be single when I've my Rosebud in my life?" My lower lip trembled as a lone tear escaped my eye. Jealousy and insecurity burned my heart. "Y-you didn't feel anything when she touched you?"

He kissed the tear away. "Her hands were only for some seconds on me before I put her in her place.

And to give your answer, no. The only feeling I felt was disgust." Cupping my cheeks, he peered into

my soul. "This heart only beats for you, my rose. It only knows to react to your touch, no one else's. I

belong only to you, just like you belong to me."

With waves of emotions crashing into my chest, another tear rolled down my cheek as I slammed my lips against his.

And as soon as our lips touched, my eyes closed on their own. His arms wrapped around me while my hands snaked around his neck, one hand going into his thick hair as our mouths molded into an intense passion of assertion for each other.

Fingers digging into flesh and hands tugging the hairs, we were lost into a bubble of desire and

possession.

I pulled him as much closer as I could, there wasn't even an inch of space between us. I showed with my actions what my words couldn't say.

Waves of pleasure ran down my entire being when our tongue joined the other. My moans were desperate when his groans just intensified the tug in my lower stomach. Seeming to lose his control, his hand sneaked to my back and cupped my behind, pulling me more closer if possible.

"My rose," he groaned as his hand roamed around my curves. "You're driving me fucking crazy!"

Even if I didn't want to pull away, my lungs gave up. Detaching my lips from his, I rested my forehead against his, closing my eyes I took erratic breaths. My heart drummed into my chest.

He kissed the corner of my lips and then on my neck. Giving him more access to my neck, I leaned against him.

After placing a last kiss on my shoulder, he wrapped his arms around me, my face into his chest. The fast rhythm of his heart almost lulled me to sleep.

When sense started to kick back into my head, though I was shocked that how I initiated the kiss this time, I didn't pull away. Instead, hugging him tight, I snuggled my face more into his warmth.

We stayed in that way until I broke the silence.

"Why did you do that seven years ago?"

His shoulders tensed at the mention of that night.

"What do you mean exactly?" His voice tight.

I slightly pulled away, enough to look up at him. Gathering some courage, I finally asked, "D-did you know of my... feelings for you?"

With a clenched jaw, he nodded his head. "Yes. I knew everything."

My heart skipped. Even if I knew of his acknowledgement, his admission up front was a whole different thing.

Now I detached myself completely from him. Balling my fists, with a tightness around my throat, I asked him, "Then why did you break my heart?"

Silence.

He watched me with some unrecognizable emotions in his eyes.

"I- I saw you with Tess that night. I know, just because I'd feelings for you doesn't mean you'd also

feel the same. But... your words, your actions said that you did feel something. Then why? Why did

you do that?" I was scared. Uncertain. Maybe everything I presumed was wrong. Maybe I got the

wrong meanings out of his actions. I was afraid that he'd start laughing at my face at any moment and

call my illusions off. But he didn't.

The only thing he did was stare at me with utmost silence.

"I know, I can be wrong. Maybe I just assumed everything and..."

"You're not wrong." He cut me off.

My breath hitched at my throat.

"I'd always wanted you." His eyes darkened as he said, "I've always wanted you for myself."

I opened my mouth and then closed, too shocked to say anything.

"Then why?" I asked.

Again silence.

"Why Ace?"

He tilted his head. "You want to know?"

I nodded.

"Come on a date with me. And you'll get all your answers."

The sneak peek of chapter 29 is already up on my Facebook page! Go check it out! And don't forget to

give a like and comment! Pretty please? ♥ ♥

With love,

Eva Zahan.

The Trap Of Ace

Chapter 29

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Twirling the spoon into the mug, I mixed the sugar with my tea. Steam stopped dissipating from the

beverage, but my moving the spoon didn't halt. I was too lost into my thoughts.

I've always wanted you for myself.

Come on a date with me. You'll get all your answers.

His words haven't left my head since last night. Even at night, I couldn't sleep due to his revelation

and proposal. Proposal to go on a date with him. And as usual, not being able to give him any answers or make a decision, I ran away.

After returning home, when I recalled everything that happened out there at the hotel, I was stunned by my own doings. The jealousy, the kiss, and then demanding answers from him.

Last night I was too brave to pull off the stunts I'd never thought I'd do. But the bravery didn't stay long when it was an actual time to do something.

It wasn't my fault. First I kissed him, and then I asked him the questions that had been running in my head for so long. Yes, I was going to do that sooner or later, but I wasn't prepared for that yet. It just came out of me. And when he opened his mouth, I was shocked and surprised. And his condition to disclose the truth had me dumbfounded.

Being confused and overwhelmed with emotions, I didn't know what to say.

I still didn't know.

I'd ignored his calls and messages. I was even killing the time so that I didn't have to go to the office early today. Why? Because I was too nervous to face him.

The blare of my phone snapped me out of my trance.

My heart skipped.

Is it him again?

Disappointment and relief flooded over me at once when I read Casie's name flashing over the screen.

Disappointment because it wasn't him, relief because I didn't have to force myself to ignore him again so that I could get more time to think of an answer.

"Hey, what's up?" Setting the spoon away, I took a sip of the cold tea.

"Should I take the disinterest of your voice that you aren't happy getting my call?" Her tone accusing.

I rolled my eyes. "It's nothing like that. Just having a bad day."

She hummed, "Had a fight with Romeo?"

"Whom are you talking about?"

"Duh! Who'd be the Romeo of our Juliette other than Achilles Valencian?"

I shook my head at her. Even being sassy and sarcastic, in secret she was into Shakespeare's romance.

"No, we didn't have any fight. But..." I sighed.

"Spill!"

Then I did spill everything to her. And she listened without any interruption.

"I don't know, Casie. I'm so confused. I can't just go out on a date with him. And I know him, he wouldn't tell me anything if I don't agree."

"What's wrong with going out with him? You guys are jumping on each other's bones any chance you get, then what's the issue?"

My cheeks burned at her remark. "We don't jump on each other! And... definitely not me! It's always him!"

She snorted. "Yeah, right! And who initiated the kiss last night?"

I bit my lip. "I- the situation was different then. I... I was..."

"Jealous?" She finished for me.

"Yes," I said, swirling the liquid in the mug. What was the point of hiding?

She knew everything, anyway!

"That means you admit that you still want him?"

My heart stuttered.

Did I?

The fuzzy feeling in my tummy gave me the answer.

"It's not that easy, Casie. I still didn't have the talk with Warner," I

uttered the main reason I was

facing so difficulties to give Ace the answer. And wasn't it too soon? I

mean, we were just getting to a

level of understanding each other, even not there yet if saying frankly.

Even if Warner wasn't the issue,

wouldn't it be too soon to go out with him? Everything was going so fast between us that it

overwhelmed me.

"Now where did Warner come from? I thought he already knew of you and Ace," she squeaked.

I didn't know what problem she had with Warner. She just hated the idea of him being between me

and Ace.

"He has an idea about us, but we still didn't have an official break-up. So, technically, he is still my boyfriend," I explained. "And I can't just go on a date with someone else while still being in a relationship with another."

"Fuck this shit! This ain't a relationship! You don't love him and he knows it, end of story. Don't spoil your real opportunities for the fake ones!" she snapped.

"Casie," I cautioned. "Though I wasn't ever really in the relationship, our friendship was real. And I already did wrong enough to him by letting Ace close to me. I can't do more. I can't start something new keeping the former hanging."

"So where the hell is he? He was supposed to come here and talk to you, right? When is he coming?"

I set the mug down and rubbed my neck in frustration. "I don't know. He's still mad at me. All he told me was he'd be here soon. That's it. We hadn't had any contact since that day."

I didn't even know where he was. He wasn't receiving my calls or responding to any messages. I even called his cousin but even he'd no idea when he was coming to California.

"Then what are you gonna do now?" she asked.

I shrugged, sighing. "I don't know."

"You can't just ignore Achilles for long, you know that, right? You'll have to face him today or tomorrow. He's not gonna wait for your answer that long. Knowing his obsession with you, you should be lucky that he isn't already knocking your doors down to get a yes out of you."

A giggle bubbled up my throat as I shook my head. I definitely felt relieved of the fact that he didn't do any such thing.

My eyes fell on the fresh flowers in the kitchen vase that arrived for me this morning, just like everyday. Even when he must be mad that I was ignoring him, he didn't forget to send those red roses for me. At first Mom and Dad were curious about those flowers, but now they kinda got used to it.

"Alright, I'll talk to you later." I glanced at the watch. "I guess, I can't be anymore late today. Gotta go to the office now."

"Alright, I'll let you go now! But don't forget to keep me updated."

"I won't."

The first thing I did arriving at the office, was to ask the watchman if Ace was present in the office.

And I'd to curse my luck knowing that he'd arrived at the building more early than his usual time. And already one of the unlucky employees got fired due to his extremely sour mood.

I was certain that I was the reason behind his ill temperament.

Gulping the nervousness down, I kept my chin high and walked inside the building.

I just hoped I wouldn't have to face him today.

But as soon as I wished that, the elevator's doors slid open and he walked out of it. Running behind

him were some black suited men, busy in explaining something so desperately.

The tight set of jaws and a day's old stubble announced his mood.

Anyone with a sane conscience wouldn't want to cross his path today.

With widened eyes, I turned around and ran to the staircase before he could notice me.

Climbing up the stairs was a good exercise anyway.

But of course, my legs didn't let me listen to my mind and took the elevator to the fifth floor.

Once I was at my destination, for the first time, I pushed the thought of him at the back of my mind. I

had something else important to do.

I went to look for Sierra.

Even in between so many things, her exhausted pale face didn't manage to slip my head. Nor did

Arthur's mocking smirk that he threw me as a challenge. Even though I could be wrong, I could feel it

in my guts that something wrong was going on. And I needed to find it out.

But again, I didn't find her at the office. Matt being the closest friend of her after Liza in the office, I

asked him her whereabouts. But even he didn't know much about her, except her not being herself for the past few weeks.

"What do you mean by not being herself?" I asked him, outside of his current cabin.

He shrugged. "I don't know exactly. But her always bubbly personality was gone, as if something was really troubling her."

"Didn't you ask her what was it?" My brows furrowed. I'd this doubt that whatever it was, Arthur had something to do with it.

"I did. But she didn't tell me anything, Em. She can be really secretive when it comes to her personal life," he replied, seeming in wonder himself. "Anyway, why do you ask?"

"Uh, nothing. I didn't see her for some days at the office. I heard she is sick. So I thought to ask you as you're quite close to her," I lied.

I couldn't tell him my doubts. Because Arthur was a very reputable man in the office. I couldn't just bluff anything without a solid proof. Even I didn't have any. It was just my intuition that he wasn't a person to be put trust on.

He nodded. "Yeah, due to ill health, she took a few days off. But don't worry, I'm sure she'll get better soon. I'll let you know if I get to hear anything from her."

I smiled. "Please do. Anyways, I'll see you later. Gotta some work to do." Again nodding his head, he went inside his cabin and I was left to wander around the hallways. My head swirled with Matt's words.

I did try to call her last night, but she didn't receive her phone. She even ignored my messages and

emails. It wouldn't bother me this much if I didn't see her with Arthur.

And seeing tears in her eyes at

both times I found her around him, didn't sit well with me.

She looked, scared.

What was going on?

I let out a breath. I wished she would tell me.

Shaking my head, as I pushed the door of my cabin open and padded inside, a gasp slipped through my lips. My eyes widened in fraction.

I was running away from the devil, and here he was waiting for me in my own cave.

With one hand in his pocket, he stood before my desk, touching a picture of me and Tobias. Putting the frame in its previous place, he turned around. Dark stormy grey eyes fell on me.

"W-what are you doing here?"

His head tilted to the side. "Did you really think you could escape me for that long? In my own office?"

I gulped.

What do you think of this chapter, my sweet pumpkins? Tell me in the comments.

And want more of #Emilles? The sneak peek of chapter 30 is already on my Facebook page! Go, check it out!

With love,
Eva Zahan.

The Trap Of Ace **Chapter 30**

"What are you talking about? I'm not escaping you," I excused, not really meeting his eyes.

"Really? Then what was that at the lobby?" Gaze hard.

Surprise lit in me. He saw me?

Damn! I knew I'd gained weight. My fat ass couldn't even run faster!

"W-what was what? What did I do now?" I feigned innocent.

His lips pressed together in annoyance. "You ran away seeing me."

I shrugged. "I don't know what you're talking about. I was already late for office. And a lot of work

was piled up. I was busy. You're just mistaken."

"Busy talking to my employee?" he asked, nostrils flaring.

My eyes widened. How did he know that I was talking to Matt?

Was he keeping an eye on me now? Could this man be anymore weird?

"You don't have time for me but you do have time to talk to another man?" I staggered back as he

took slow steps towards me, like a predator approaching his prey. "How many times do I have to tell

you I don't like seeing you with other men? You seem to be fond of him too much." A muscle of his

jaw ticked, hands curled into tight fists.

In another time I'd have told him off, saying that he didn't have any right to decide whom I will talk to and whom I wouldn't. But at this moment, I decided to cool him down first.

"I- I was just talking to him about work. And yes, I do like him. But just as a friend. Nothing else."

My heart skipped when my back hit the wall and I realized that I'd no other way to escape anymore, with him standing just a hand away from me.

I was stuck between him and the wall.

Closing the rest of the distance, he put his hands at the both sides of my head on the wall, trapping me completely.

Leaning closer, he said, "And it's better if it remains that way. It'd be good for him."

I frowned at his warning. "What's wrong with you? You're behaving like a caveman!"

My breath hitched as he pulled me flush against him, resting his forehead against mine. The heady scent of his had me light-headed. "You're mine, Rosebud. And I can be worse when it comes to you."

Staring in his stormy grey, I went speechless at the intensity of his words.

"I was going mad since last night, thinking what'd be your answer. And you weren't even picking up my calls or answering my messages." He sighed, brushing his thumb on my cheek. "I was even outside of your house last night, but seeing the lights of your room off, I'd to go back."

I gasped. "You were outside my house? Why?"

"For your answer."

Oh!

I averted my eyes from his piercing ones, biting my lip. "I- I can't go on a date with you just like that."

"Why?" Tone somber.

"Because..." I trailed off, not knowing how to give him an answer.

His shoulders tensed all of a sudden as his nostrils flared. "Is it for that boyfriend of yours? That boy is still in your life?"

I remained silent.

With his lips curling into a sneer, his arms tightened around me. "When will you stop denying us?

When will you let that sham of your relation go and accept the truth?

The truth that you belong to me?"

When I still didn't say anything, closing his eyes, he let out a breath.

When those grey pools were

open again, it wasn't anger that I witnessed. It was pain and exhaustion.

My heart clenched for being the reason for his pain.

Cupping my cheeks, he grazed his lips at the curve of mine. I let out a shaky breath at the tingling

sensation that his touch left behind. My heart pounded beneath my chest.

W-was going to kiss me again?

"Tell me you don't feel what I'm feeling right now. Tell me you don't feel anything for me, for us. Tell

me your heart still doesn't beat for me," he said, grazing his lips against mine. Just a slight brush and I

was leaning for more.

"Ace..." a breathy whisper left me.

With his intent eyes on my lips, he rasped, "I'm going to kiss you right now. If you kiss me back, I'd

take it as a yes that your heart still belongs to me and no one else's. And if you don't... then I'll take

that as a no."

My eyes closed on their own as his soft firm lips pressed against mine and moulded around me into a

slow passionate kiss. My whole body trembled at the sensations that ran through me at just our mere

lips touching. Fireworks exploded in my nerves. I didn't know what would happen when he'd do

more...

I tried my best not to respond to his kiss. But when he sought out my lips like they were his salvation,

the words he said turned vogue in my head. Throwing my arms around his neck, I pulled him closer

and returned his affection with equal urgency and passion.

Groaning, he pinned me against the wall and put my hands above my head with one of his hands,

keeping them in place. And with the other one, he felt my curves. My body arched into his touch, wanting more.

But as if fate had some issues with my wishes, he pulled away, leaving whimpering.

The words come back was at the tip of my tongue, but I was certain my eyes were enough to display my desperation.

With a tiny smirk tugged on his lips, he cupped my chin, his breathing still ragged. "So it's a yes then.

Now I assume you shouldn't have any problem to go out on a date with me."

"I- I..." I was still recovering from the sensations he made me feel, my mouth couldn't form words. My heart still thumped wildly down my chest.

I did kiss him back.... But it wasn't fair! How could I stay sane when he had his mouth and hands on

me? His mere proximity was enough to make my thoughts jumbled.

Gripping my neck, he smashed his lips against mine into another hard but fast kiss. Pulling away, he peered into my gaze.

"Now that it's cleared who owns your heart, I want my answer before evening. You've only some

hours to give me a yes. Because I won't wait for long." With finality engraved into his voice, he

glanced at my mouth for one last time before walking out of my cabin.

And I just stood there like a statue. Still reeling from everything he just did and said. He wouldn't wait

for long? What did he mean?

What would he do if I didn't say yes? Drag me out on a date with him?

I shook my head. Who knew, Achilles Valencian was capable of anything.

It was my fault! I shouldn't have kissed him back.

Now what do I do?

My hand subconsciously rose and touched my swollen lips. Heat crept up my cheeks along the

flutterings in my tummy as the recollection of him wrapped around me flowed into my mind.

I sighed. Even if it was wrong, it felt the most right thing to be into his arms. His embrace felt home. A

home I never wanted to leave.

Gathering the pile of files against my chest, I strutted out of my cabin, towards the conference room.

Another important meeting would be held in some time, and even after being an ordinary employee, the boss needed me beside him.

I just hoped the evening wouldn't come soon. Even though I didn't have to answer him anything just because he demanded me to, but... if I wanted the answers of my own questions, I'd have to give him a yes.

But it wasn't that simple. I couldn't just go out with him when I didn't have a proper conversation with Warner.

As I neared the meeting room, I saw Tobias standing there, busy in discussion with Matt.

"Hey! I didn't know you were gonna drop by," I said, when he turned to me.

Smiling, he shrugged. "Thought to surprise you. And maybe you'll keep getting these surprises more often now."

I quirked a brow. "More often? What do you mean?"

Seeing me approaching, Matt's eyes widened slightly as he excused himself and scurried away.

What's with him?

"Do you know what's the meeting about?" Tobias asked.

I shook my head.

"Well, apart from our family business I thought about opening something of my own. As you know I always had an interest to do something in the clothing line. So I'm planning to do so now. And Achilles decided to invest in my new company, helping me with the launch." His face brightened up with a grin.

My mouth formed into an 'O'. I had no idea about his plans. Though I always knew of his dream. It was great that he was finally doing something to achieve it.

And Ace was helping him? He didn't mention anything about it to me. Ignoring the warmth that surged through my chest at his gesture, I gave my brother a bone crushing

hug. "That's great! I'm so happy for you! I'm sure you'll kick asses even in this field."

He laughed, reciprocating the affection.

Patting his back, I pulled away. "Does Dad know?"

He nodded. "Yes, he said he'd be always there if I needed any help or support."

As usual. Dad never stopped any of our siblings to chase our dreams. He always supported us. Just like

Mom.

"Uh, Ms. Hutton?" Carter slipped through the conference room's door, his face weary, shoulders

slumped. "Could you please do me a favor and inform the boss that the meeting is about to start? I'd

do it myself but I need to take care of some urgent issues before the meeting starts."

I'd told him thousand times to call me by my name, but he seemed to be adamant on calling me

formally. So I just stopped objecting.

I nodded my head. "Sure, no problem! I'll go and get him." My mind screamed to say no. I really didn't

want to be alone with him right now again. But I couldn't just deny Carter. It'd be rude.

Flashing a relieved smile, he thanked and rushed away down the hallway.

"It's him again, isn't it?"

At Tobias' question, I raised my brow.

"His being around you still troubles you."

I shook my head. "No, it's not like that."

"Then why you're procrastinating?" he queried. When I didn't answer, he sighed. "I know how you

might be feeling, Em. I can see your resistance. But don't. We both know how he still affects you so

much. Give him a chance at least. Maybe you don't know, but trust me, that man's world revolves

around you."

My eyes snapped to him, breath catching at my throat. That meant, whatever Ace said was true? He

did have feelings for me. And even Tobias knew it. Then why didn't any of them tell me?

This time I didn't deny his claiming that fact that what Ace meant to me. Instead I asked, "You knew?"

And yet didn't care to tell me?"

A sadness washed over his blue eyes. "Everyone knew except you, Em.

Everyone knew what you

meant to him. You still do. But fate doesn't always have the same plan."

I frowned, my throat tightening. What did he mean by that?

"Both of your happiness are with each other. Life has given you another chance, so don't let it go.

Achilles has suffered a lot in his life, Em. He needs you," he said, his tone soft. A distant look came

over his eyes, as if recollecting the past.

My heart clenched at the thought of him suffering. I knew his father's

death put him into a lot of

agony, but hearing Tobias' words, I could feel there was a lot more. A lot that I didn't know.

"What suffering?" My gaze searched for answers.

He shook his head. "Ask him yourself. But know this one thing, Em. His past is a sore subject for him.

Especially... his mother. So be careful with your questions."

His mother? I'd this idea that his mother had to do something with his

pain. I saw the hatred in his

eyes when he looked at his mother's former room. What happened with

him and his mom? Where

was she?

Taking in his warning, I nodded my head and walked away to find him. I

could ask Tobias about his

mom, but I knew he wouldn't tell me. Because it was another of the few

secrets Achilles Valencian

had locked inside him.

And the only way to find out was, ask Achilles Valencian himself. And for

that, I knew what to do.