

Chapter 8: Let Me Go

Rosalind sobbed and dampened Gabriel's T-shirt. He patted her back as if he were consoling a child. Later, she whimpered and buried her head into his chest.

"I feel so stupid. How can I waste my life for five years?" Sobbing, she hugged Gabriel's waist.

"You aren't stupid, darling. You are loyal and trustful, and my nephew knew it well." Gabriel sighed. "I'm sorry for his stupidity. If only he could see what he had done. He threw away a diamond for a piece of trinket."

She shook her head. "Don't say that. Monica may be a stripper, but her relationship with Jeremy is something else."

"Darling," he let out a sigh, "even you still defend your enemy. Rose, you are too kind, sweetheart." Gabriel kissed Rosalind's forehead. "It's why Jeremy could take advantage of you for five years." He stroked her cheek gently.

After a while, Rosalind finally stopped crying. She removed herself from Gabriel's embrace and hugged herself. "I'm sorry I shouldn't cry on your chest. Please remove your T-shirt. I'll wash it for you."

"No need." However, he grinned until a dimple was shown on his left cheek. "Unless you want to be my lover. I don't mind stripping for you anytime." He winked. "Then I'll let you pamper me too."

"Gabriel Da Costa!" Rosalind used her fiercest voice. "You must clean

your dirty mind."

He showed a serious look. "Yes, madam." But then he laughed out loud. "Oh, my Rose! When you called me by my full name, it was as if I were back in my childhood with a stern teacher."

Rosalind couldn't help but smile with him. "What? Were you a naughty student too back then?"

"Not always. But well, as a healthy and curious boy, I often found myself in trouble."

She couldn't imagine Gabriel as a naughty boy. But then, seeing him with a twinkle in his eyes as he grinned, it might not be so hard to see the little boy inside.

"What?" Gabriel asked.

"Nothing." But her lips twitched, and after a few seconds, she couldn't hold her giggles.

"What?" he asked again.

"I wonder if you are adorable as a boy."

Gabriel wrapped his arm around Rosalind's waist and whispered in her ear, "You can imagine it easily if you give birth to our son."

"Gabriel!" She pushed his chest though it was a futile attempt. Her face blushed at hearing what he said.

He laughed aloud until his head bent backward. After a while, Gabriel rubbed Rosalind's upper arm. "So darling, when will you give me your

answer?"

"Let me finish first with Jeremy."

"And afterward, you will say yes."

"It's not a question." She frowned because Gabriel only said a statement.

"Because you took too long to decide."

"Gabriel—"

"Gabe, not Gabriel. I want you to call me Gabe. Only the closest people to me call me Gabe."

She shook her head. "I'm not your closest person."

"You will be. Soon!"

"Are you always so arrogant like this?" She pouted at him.

"This isn't arrogant. It's self-assured."

"No, it's arrogant."

"Really?" Gabriel raised his eyebrows, but then he grinned. "I can picture our future together. Our quarrels will always decorate our lives, but we won't bore each other."

"I dislike quarreling frequently."

"Then say yes to save our energy. We can use our energy for other things." He grinned and stroked her upper arm again with his thumb.

He deliberately touched the side of her breast. "For example, to please each other."

Rosalind swatted Gabriel's hand. "No touching."

"Ouch! You are mean, my wild Rose."

"I'm not your Rose."

"Yet! You will be mine eventually." Then Gabriel glanced at his wrist. "What day is it? Ah, Sunday. I'll give you three days, darling. You will call me and tell me yes on Wednesday. I don't accept any other answer."

"You—"

He bent his head and covered her lips with his, so she couldn't protest. "Wednesday, my Rose." Then he stood and brought Rosalind to the front door. After entering some code on the door panel, the door was open. He let Rosalind on her feet and put his hands on her shoulders. "Remember, call me on Wednesday and I'll pick you up at your place." He took her hand and gave her his business card.

Rosalind inserted the card in the pocket of her trousers without checking it. "I won't call you. So no need to wait for me to call."

"You are a stubborn little one." He blocked the way out with his arm and put a hand on her cheek, rubbing it slightly. "You have no other choice, darling."

"Let me go. I want to go home."

"Fine. I'll let you go for now. But after three days, my apartment will

be your new home." Gabriel bent forward and captured Rosalind's lips with his. After giving her a lingering kiss, he let her go.

Rosalind walked away without glancing at Gabriel. However, when she was already far from his apartment, Rosalind touched her lips and closed her eyes. It was only once she was drunk, but the consequence was too much.

She shook her head. Losing her virginity to Gabriel was something she had never imagined, not even in her wildest dream. She didn't know him well enough. But then, Gabriel could offer her to be his lover.

Was it so good last night until he was impressed? It might be the only explanation, because why would someone as influential as him want to be with her?

Walking to a bus stop nearby, Rosalind wondered what was the best way to confront Jeremy. She disliked a quarrel, since it was obvious they would end everything. So why should she prolong the inevitable?

Leaning her head on the wall of the bus stop shelter, she sighed. The quick and peaceful end would be the best. Though it hurt her so much knowing how Jeremy used her for five years, she knew it was a part of her fault too. She was too blind to see some signs that Jeremy showed and brushed them off because she didn't want to think negatively of him. She had to know better, and now, regret would be too late. But then, it was better she knew now than later.