

Benefits 241

Chapter 241: Where Are We?

Nora looked around the small building with interest as she questioned Demetri, "Where are we?"

"Someplace where we are hopefully safe and away from prying eyes. This is the old gardener's house."

As Nora followed the man, she took in her surroundings and marvelled at the inside. While the building looked shabby from the outside, it was a different matter from the inside. It looked like a fortress...

"You created this?"

"No. Your uncle did. He needed someplace away from prying eyes. At the time, his old gardener offered this place to him. I was brought here after being rescued from the yacht."

Unexpectedly, as they entered a small room, that looked like Demetri's, Nora could barely look around when she was inevitably pulled into his hard embrace. Her hands wound around his neck as she kissed him back with equal fervour. When he'd brought her here telling her that he wanted to love her, Nora had certainly not expected that to mean literally.

With her back pushed against the door, Demetri kissed her slowly, from collarbone to cheek, and then back again.

His thumb landed accurately over the tattoo which she had hidden with make-up. It rubbed over the skin, wiping away the traces of makeup while his other hand, caressed her body, sliding into the romper with precision as he kneaded the soft skin there.

"I want to be inside you, Nora..." His harsh voice whispered in her ear.

She felt his desire against her as he pushed his hips suggestively, "Tell me now if you are not ready."

Nora tilted her face, giving access to his lips as she panted for breath," Demetri... when have I not been ready for you. I want you... always..." Her words broke off with a slight grimace of pain as her teeth bit over her skin, before he sucked hard, leaving a mark just above the tattoo that claimed her as his.

His hands roved over her back possessively as he tried quickly found a way to get rid of the romper...

Once the thing had fallen, he whispered in her ear with a caress," Where did you get that thing... it defies gravity sweet kitten."

Nora giggled at his whispered comment amid their heated moment and asked coyly, Why? Do you not like it."

"Oh, I like it very much."

"Good. Because I bought it in other colors too..."

With a wolfish playful look, Demetri growled against her neck as he said," Then I will suffer through with you modelling them all for me..."

Nora squealed as he got rid of the rest of her itty bitty clothing with a tug, carrying her toward the bed. His eyes roved over her hungrily while she complained," You need to get rid of your clo..."

She'd barely spoken the words, when Demetri discarded his own clothing as if it was on fire. Standing there in his naked glory, he leaned over her, kissing her again...

It was almost evening that Nora gathered the strength to even open her eyes. She tried to move her legs but found it impossible since they were still tangled with his. Demetri nuzzled her and pulled her closer into his embrace as he ordered," You're not going anywhere."

Nora grimaced and complained," I just want to move. My legs are numb."

With ease, Demetri flipped her around, making her wince, "Are you going to treat me like a doll."

"Hmm. I don't want to let go." Demetri murmured softly.

Nora smiled and hugged him back, "I don't want you to let me go."

With a contented sigh, Demetri continued to hold her close before finally sighing again as he explained, "I was not aware of Alexander Sterling's connection with you."

Nora looked up at Demetri, placing her chin on his chest as he explained, "Initially when someone botched our plan to use Sara to get to Lara Anderson, I started to look for clues assuming it was either her biological father, the man who had hit you or Arabelle. However, later, when everything started to settle down, the lead unexpectedly came back to a Royal Guard of Estania..."

"Like Alexander Sterling, I too believed initially that Sara was the rightful princess of Estania. As such, the first order of business was to get you away from there to somewhere safe, for fear of retribution. Once you were in Country N safe, I started investigating Lara Anderson's background. The woman was not just mentally unstable, she was a remarkable liar. She actually built a lie for years on end until she herself started believing it."

While your father had initially married your mother to help repay his debt to her parents, your mother insisted that he forced himself on her to conceive you. The truth is with Nellie old enough to understand her mother's reality, your father was planning to divorce her. And that is when Lara discovered his connection to the Royal House of Estania and seduced him, thus becoming pregnant.

She dreamt of becoming queen. When her effort to get him to bring her to Estania failed, she had an affair with his then-assistant to hurt him and exact revenge. Which resulted in Sara being born. This enraged your father and that is when he transferred all his wealth to your grandparents and made them prepare the will as well as the conditions. To protect his daughters from the politics of Estania as well as Lara.

"However, before any one of them could do anything else, they died one after another. And that gave Lara a new way to exhort money and get to her goals. She hid your existence and contacted your uncle quietly, asking the man for money while telling him that Nellie and Sara were his nieces. However, she

dared not to bring Nellie here for fear that the girl would tell the truth...She claimed that she wanted to honor her late husband's wish and keep the girls away from Estania, only asking for money in return to help raise you, which Alexander Sterling readily gave to her..."

Nora could only sigh as Demetri continued the story. Everytime she realized her mother's cruel deeds, she thought that the woman could not have done more. And every time she was proven wrong.

Chapter 242: Lucifer's Angel

Evangeline sat in her office, staring outside, lost in her own thoughts even as the assistant had placed a towering pile of work in front of her.

The slight wind outside made her yearn to go out, a longing that she had never felt before almost making it difficult for her to breathe. In the first order of things, she needed to buy a good motorbike for herself so that she could feel that freedom of the wind running through her again. The thrill of the speed and the power of the engine. And then she would forget Luci...

A deep sigh escaped her. She missed Lucifer. Despite being with him only for a few days, she missed him. And that made her angry. All her life, she had kept a distance from people, and been aloof despite yearning to be a part of them and connect, all because of her status. Her father had drilled into her since a young age that she needed to be seen as perfect with not a single weakness visible.

And yet, when it came to Lucifer, she had somehow put down those defences. Or rather he had bypassed them without her even realizing. She wanted to blame her naivety, but the truth was that he was a symbol of everything she had always wanted and never had. Added to that, like a classic example of some cliché romance, she- 'the perfect princess' had fallen for the bad boy with his imperfect hair and arrogant looks.

Shaking her head at her thoughts, Evangeline stood up and walked outside, seeing the setting sun as she wondered where Lucifer was at that moment. The thing about bad boy was that they never changed in reality no matter what anyone might want to believe. And she did not dare to take on this challenge. Yet, every moment, she only thought of him. Had he left there and gone back to where he had come from? Or had he found some other target to achieve what it was she wanted?

But was he truly as bad as she believed? That was another thought that had been torturing her. After all, he'd been a true gentleman with her all the time. Even as he'd led her on, he had not treated her with disrespect, trying to clarify his own motives before they could be too close. And then when she had denied him, he had continued to do things for her until they parted ways.

"It was all his plan," a cynical voice inside her mind whispered. If he had slept with you the way you were throwing yourself at him, then you would have chalked this up to a bad fling in the end. But he gave you a glimpse of what he could do for you and then left you yearning for more. And that way, he would approach her again.

"But what was it that he wanted?", Evangeline murmured to herself. He did not need or want money, of that she was sure. All his clothing though understated, was branded by top designers. And he had not let her spend a dime... Of course, it could all be for show, but she doubted that.

"It can't be for fame because he did not try to publicize our outings. In fact, he went out of his way to keep things between us private."

Her fingers tapped on the windowsill as she continued to ponder, "Could he be interested in getting something from the royal house of Estania?"

She discarded that thought as well. Just then a knock sounded on the door, breaking her out of her thoughts. As she started to turn away, her eyes fell on someone getting off the car in the distance and she froze in shock.

Her heart skipped a beat as she squinted, trying to make out the person who had just turned to be greeted by her father's assistant. It must be someone important if Roberts had come out himself. Who was this person.., and why did he look so much like...

The knock on the door again had her turning her head in irritation as she spoke, "Come in."

Her own assistant stood there with an apologetic look on her face. "These are the proposals that you need to look at for tomorrow's meeting with the people from Frost Industries. The Prime Minister said that they are urgent."

"Just place them there. Thank you."

Evangeline replied absentmindedly, her gaze instinctively drawn back to the unfolding scene outside.

As she watched the mysterious man entering the building opposite hers, she could not help but doubt herself. While the logical part of her brain dismissed the possibility of Lucifer being here in Estania, her rapidly beating heart was another matter.

Exasperated with herself, Evangeline chided herself. "Hallucinating about him now? Get a grip, Evana," she muttered under her breath, rubbing her temples as if trying to dispel thoughts of him.

However try as she might, she couldn't shake the feeling that she knew him. The silhouette was too familiar...

There was only one way to dispel that doubt. Swiftly, she turned around, her direction clear. She needed to head to her father's office and find out who that man was.

Nodding herself, she purposefully walked towards her father's office. However, before she could reach there, her path was obstructed by her assistant who needed her signatures 'urgently'

Cursing, she quickly scanned the documents that needed to be signed before racing to her father's office.

Outside the office stood her father's ever present assistant and she greeted him, "Hi Robert. Is someone inside with father?"

Evangeline tried to suppress her excitement as she waited for Roberts to answer her. This way she would not even have to disturb her father and get the answer.

However, much to her disappointment the assistant shook his head, "No, Princess Evangeline. There is no one inside other than Sir. You may go inside. You won't be intruding."

Deflated, Evangeline muttered to herself about her own overthinking before turning away, "No need. I thought he was with someone..."

Chapter 243: Not Moving

"Are you not going to move?" Demetri asked with a smile.

Nora continued to keep her eyes closed and her head on her arms, smiling as she shook her head against his back.

"I'm never going to move. I think I've turned into a rock who cannot move, just lie here..."

Demetri smiled as he turned his head, trying to see her face as she lay on stretched out on his back.

Her fingers pinched his bare shoulder as she complained with a groan, "Stop laughing at me."

Demetri protested mockingly, "Hey? When did I laugh."

"Don't lie. I can feel your shoulders shaking under me."

"That's because I can feel two soft things digging into my back."

Another smacking sound echoed in the silent room, as she hit his arm, "Get your mind out of the gutter, husband!"

"Let me tell you that is not where it is. My mind is solely focused on the softness against my back..."

With a moan, she rolled off his back, only for his arm to immediately snake out and pull her into him for a snuggle. Shifting comfortably, she settled in his arms, "I am always amazed how you can talk so dirty. You look like such an upstanding man..."

Demetri grinned and threw a leg over her, letting her feel something standing up, as he grinned, "Hey! I am upstanding. Can't you feel it? Do you want me to show you?"

Nora giggled at that and shook her head, "No no no! You are too much! I am already tired."

With a sigh, Demetri snuggled her closer, " That's alright. We have all the time in the world. I am never letting you go now."

Nora looked up at Demetri as he looked at her and she could feel the promise in his words. With an agreeable nod, she promised him, " You are right. We are never going to separate again, for any reason."

Demetri nodded and simply pulled her into his arms again. However, their little stolen time from the world was soon interrupted by reality as Demetri's phone started to ring.

With a complaint, she raised her head and quickly looked at the caller id. "It is Alexander Sterling."

As she passed the phone to Demetri, fully intending to overhear the conversation, she could not help but feel apprehension. Even though Demetri reassured her that her uncle did genuinely care for her, she could hardly believe it. She'd never had that.

But of course, from her own interactions with the man, she knew it could be true. She'd truly felt the affection from him. However, that affection was soon going to be tested. After all, she was going to become an obstruction in his plans.

While she'd had no memory, she could have gone along, letting the plan take its course but now things were different. She had no intention of staying away from her husband because of politics. While she would be willing to help out, things would need to be changed.

She tried to overhear what he had to say but it was of no use. Frowning, she stared at Demetri, trying to judge from his expression... which was of course futile and foolish. Finally, the man disconnected the call with a murmured, " Thank you."

Nora stared expectantly at Demetri waiting for him to tell her about this conversation but the man said nothing and simply closed his eyes.

Frowning, she pinched the side of his chest making him groan as she caught her wrist, " You are getting violent by the day, kitten."

"Tell me what I want to know." Nora pouted at him.

"What do you want to know..."

Nora was tempted to stomp her feet in exasperation. Why was he always doing this?

Grinning, Demetri patted her bottom and said, "Prime Minister Sterling wanted to inform me about the arrival of a representative from Frost Industries. We will be meeting him tomorrow."

That perked her up. She wanted to see her brothers as well! "Really? Who is it? Ian or Gabe? How have they been? They must have been worried too..."

Demetri sighed as he answered, "I don't know how they've been doing. I have not spoken to them since the accident."

That shocked Nora and she looked at him with questions, "Why not?"

Demetri looked away. Because he had no intention of returning to the living if she was not with him. If Nora had never remembered him then he would have continued to stay here by her side as a humble gardener.

Nora understood his thoughts and even as she hugged him harder to console him, she could not help but murmur, "They must have been so worried."

"They knew that I was alive. I'd sent a message."

"You must have made them so sad." Nora murmured.

"You are right. I'll apologize later. Now, don't you want to know who has come?"

"Yes yes. Who is it?"

Demetri grinned and answered, " Lucy..."

Nora moved up on her elbow as she heard this, " Lucy? But he rarely likes to leave his office. And, expansion of the business is not his territory..."

They both looked at each other as Nora said this before breaking into mutual laughter. The other brothers were definitely up to something. They must already know that her and Demetri were here and they had sent Lucy... instead of fighting to come here...

Quickly, Nora stood up, ready to jump out of bed as she said, " Lets go meet him! Its been sooooo long...."

Looking Nora move around excitedly, trying to get her clothing, Demetri shook his head and complained, " Hey! I am feeling jealous over here." That made Nora pause as she looked at Demetri and his impassive face. Quickly she jumped onto the bed and kissed the man's forehead, " Liar! I know you are as excited as me to see him..."

"I am not..."

Shaking her head, Nora called out in a sing-song voice, "Thou protest too much..."

Demetri did not let her escape so easily however and she was soon caught in his trap...

Chapter 244: That Bast...

Alexander Sterling stared at his daughter thoughtfully. She looked the same and yet he could sense that she was not as focused as before. He wondered if it was because of the man in the pictures.

His daughter was a grown woman and this was the first time, he'd even heard of her being close to another man. Despite feeling apprehension, he still felt relieved that his little girl was trying to live a normal life. It was what he had hoped for.

However, according to her security detail, the man was just a holiday fling for her. They'd been together with the intention of going their separate ways. But knowing Evana, she would not have done something like this...

"Daddy, at least tell me who the person is?"

Alexander sighed as he heard the question from his little daughter and sighed, "Miss Isidora, you are supposed to be studying. Why are you roaming the guest buildings."

"I didn't intend to roam, Daddy!", Isidora complained, angry that her father would scold her when it wasn't even her fault. "It was Kitten! She ran there when we were playing ball and I had to get her. And that man was so nice. He even offered me this chocolate and said I look like a mini version of my sister."

The last part was spoken proudly because Isidora loved her sister very much. Alexander raised an eyebrow at that while this caught Evana's attention and she did not miss the opportunity to tease her sister, "Only if we are looking for the ugly version."

"Hey!!! I won't talk to you! I am going." With that, the little offended girl left the officer while Evana turned to her father, "Who is she talking about? I did not realize we had guests who seem to know me."

She could not help but think of the man she had seen earlier, being greeted by her father's assistant.

Alexander sighed and turned his head, "I think he meant that Dora looks like Nora. They also share a resemblance."

"Oh..."

With that said, the little hope that had unfurled in her that the person might be Lucifer was extinguished and she turned back to reading the files in front of her. Her disinterest perturbed him and Alexander could not help but ask, "Evana? Are you alright, child?"

Evana looked up at her father in question before answering, "Yes Daddy. Everything is fine. why do you ask?"

"I don't know, you look..."

"It's just the stress, Daddy. I just want these things to come to an end soon..."

Alexander stood up and gently patted his daughter's head, "Don't worry. It will be over soon. We've already gained a powerful ally with Nora..."

"Yes. Of course. So, we are going to be meeting him tomorrow?" Evana asked even though she could not muster up even a little bit of interest in this.

At any other time, she would have been the first one trying to organise everything and keep on top of things. Before her father could question her anymore, she excused herself from there, citing exhaustion and need to prepare for tomorrow.

Lucien played with Dora and the little dog called Kitten as he tried to get a glimpse of the girl he had come here for. Evangeline. According to Dora, Evangeline was in the building behind them and like a fool, he'd eagerly led the little girl here hoping to see her.

Suddenly, he watched someone marching past the open grounds, without even turning their head in his direction. As if the sun had suddenly risen, Lucien wanted to raise his hand and call for her but she was already gone by the time he remembered to raise his hand. Feeling foolish, Lucien sighed and continued to play with the little girl.

He would be meeting Evangeline tomorrow as is. Just as Dora bounded back to him, his eye caught something on the dog's collar. And swore under his breath. He should have recognized the dog by its name! Only his brother would call a canine by a feline name...

"Dora? Whose dog is this?" Quickly, he grabbed the dog's collar, taking a closer look at the tiny camera in the dog's collar, wondering if Demetri had already seen him.

"The Royal Head Gardener. His name is Gaia."

Lucien smiled as he heard the name. Really Gaia? Demetri was referring to himself as the Goddess of Earth? Couldn't he have thought of something else? Heck, his name meant son of Earth, but even so!

Just as he was about to show a picture of Demetri for Dora to tell him if it was Gaia, she placed her hands on her hips and leaned closer to his face, "You look like Gaia."

Raising his eyebrows, he smiled, "I do?"

"Yes! You are a little less handsome than him but yes, you look a lot like him.. Wow...."

"Hey! I think I am more handsome than Gaia since I am younger."

"How did you know Gaia is ancient?"

Lucien chuckled and answered, "Aren't all Royal Gardeners ancient?"

"That they are!" Dora agreed as she grabbed Lucien's hand and said, "But he is really great! Let me show you what he has done since he became the head...."

Lucien stared at the beautiful garden in front of him and sighed. Demetri really was wonderful in everything he did. His brother had transformed the place. But... picking up his camera, he clicked a picture of the stunning view and sent it...

Lucy: This is what Demon has been up to...

Erasm: That bas****! I have been slogging away here and he has been indulging his green thumb! Wait till he gets back.

Gabe: Should we start a landscaping business? It would go well..."

Seb: Wohoo! We finally have someone who can lord over Demon now! Go Erasmi! Our eldest brother is the best!

Ian: Erasmi, why don't you take up your grievances with Demon?

Erasmi: What grievance? I'm only going to ask him to design such a place for me as well. And I am relieved that he is alright...

Seb, Ian, Gabe: ".." (There goes our hope for seeing Demon bullied in the future...)

Chapter 245: That Bast...

Evangeline came to the conference room, early in the morning, anxious to get the meeting over with. After an entire night of tossing and turning, she had finally woken up and decided that she was going to go to Lucifer and find out what it was that he wanted to confess.

Whatever ulterior motives he'd had for coming onto her had been overshadowed by his feelings for her. Even if a minute percentage of those feelings that she had felt from him during their time together were real, then they would have something to build on. And if his reasons were something like money or fame or even her title, she somehow felt that she would try to overlook them.

She would have dashed away from Estania early in the morning if not for this meeting. Truth be told, she was also curious about this husband of Eleanora's. She'd been tempted to look him up on the search engine but then let it go. If, like her father wanted, and they came to be sisters in the future, then this man would be her brother-in-law.

All she knew was that Eleanora had been in love with her husband and the man loved her back crazily. It had been difficult for her father to hold off that man for so many months. She just hoped that he would not create more trouble for her father in the future.

Soon, Eleanora walked in with her father and Evangeline smiled at the two of them. Since this was a secret meeting, there was no need to pretend to be enemies.

With a smile, she stood up and greeted her father first and then Eleanora. She felt a strange stiffness from Eleanora but then chalked it to wariness. After all, she too was wary of Eleanora's motives, now or in the future.

Alexander smiled at the girls, before nodding, "For all the world, today's meeting is going to be an attempt by me to reconcile the differences between the two of you. We will be touring the labyrinth of mazes for this. And the person in our meeting is also going to be joining us there."

Both Eleanora and Evangeline nodded as they started to head out for the maze. Nora curbed her excitement wanting to reveal the truth only after she had seen Lucien. It would be a surprise for him as well as these two people beside her.

As they circled the maze, passing through the different hedges, both the girls were lost in their thoughts while Alexander tried to keep a steady stream of conversation.

As they reached the middle, both the girls paused. One in anticipation and the other in shock.

Evangeline was sure that she was hallucinating. Why else would Lucien be here talking to the gardener so animatedly? And he looked different. Gone were the jackets and tight jeans. Instead, the man was dressed in an impeccable shirt and pants.

Just then, the two men turned towards them and her eyes met Lucifer's. It was not a hallucination. Evangeline felt her heart beating fast, ready to jump out of her throat. It was her Lucifer!

She wanted to run to him and hug him. Did he come here for her her?

She was about to run to him happily, when his eyes turned away and a smile unlike she had ever seen before lit his face and he raised his arms...

Evangeline watched as Nora raced towards her Lucifer and jumped into the man's arms, "Lucy!" The man laughed, picked her up in his arms and twirled her around while calling out, "Nora."

Everything after that was broken for Evangeline as she watched the two people. Lucifer was Nora's husband. The man she wanted to be with, she yearned for was her brother-in-law.

Evangeline felt as if she had swallowed shards of glass. This was the reason he had approached her. She thought back to their first meeting. She'd been meeting Eleanora's ex at the time. Lucifer... no Mr Frost must have been keeping an eye on the man and followed him there to her.

So, his reason for coming onto her had been... Nora... She wanted to run away from there. She needed to be alone. But her feet felt frozen, as if they were nailed to the ground.

Taking shallow breaths, she tried to think of a way to slip away from there before this lover's reunion could come to an end and she had to witness anything more hurtful. But instead her father had already started to walk forward, and with her hand in his, he was making her walk with him.

She tried to pull her hand away from her father's grasp, when he questioned, "Eleanora? You recognize Lucien? I thought you'd lost your memory."

Lucien? That was his real name? Evangeline wanted to smack herself. Of course, that man had not even bothered to give her his real name. She'd been the only one living in that dreamland.

Eleanora turned her shining eyes to them and answered, "Yes, uncle. That is what I came to tell you in the morning but you did not listen. I remember everything..."

And then Nora hugged Lucien again and said, "I think I missed you Lucy!!!"

"I missed you more, since you had no idea who I was."

As she heard the honeyed words from his mouth, the same shameless mouth that he had kissed her with, Evangeline felt red hot fury course through her! That dam*ed bast***! How dare he! So what if his motive had been to get close to his wife. How dare he lead her on!

Even if whatever she had felt from him had been her delusion, his kisses and the way he had wanted her was not her imagination! The man may have not gone all the way but he had cheated on her sister and used her! She was going to expose him...

"You missed her?" Her sarcastic comment had everyone turn to look at her and she walked towards him with narrowed eyes...

Chapter 246: You!!!

"You missed her?" Slowly she advanced towards him with deliberate steps unclear on her intention but very clear how she wanted to beat this man to a pulp! How dare he lead her on and almost sleep with her only to turn up as her brother-in-law?

Nora shot an intrigued glance at Evangeline, sensing the tension in the air. Lucien, realizing the peril he was in, quickly retreated, both hands raised in surrender, wearing a deer-in-the-headlights expression as he said, "Angel, I can explain."

Demetri looked on from his brother to the young princess and understood the matter in a glance. Gently, he tugged at Nora's t-shirt and handed her a phone with the camera on as he whispered, "Now we know why they chose him."

As Nora's eyes met Demetri's, she suppressed a giggle and quickly started to shoot the dramatic scene happening before her with Lucien stepping backwards and Evangeline advancing slowly. These brothers were as 'too much' as ever. But now she was curious about this new development as well.

The only person who was confused was Alexander Sterling who had no idea what was happening. First, his niece had regained her memories, then his daughter was acting strangely, threatening Lucien Frost, while the other man was calling her Angel...

Demetri Frost seemed to have merged with the background and seemed amused. Finally, he called out, "Evana. Do you know Mr Frost?"

Evangeline cast a scathing glance at Lucien before turning to her father, "Know him! I know him well Daddy. This man is a je*k! If beheading were a thing prevalent today, I'd have him beheaded right away! For that matter, I propose that beheading be made legal again, just so that I can see his head hanging outside my door."

Lucien shuddered and protested, " Hey! Why are you so violent? I never did try to hide anything from you. You were the one who did not want to know..."

"Mr. Frost. Please wait a moment." Alexander Sterling spoke quietly. He'd have to be foolish to not understand the undercurrents in the conversation and his daughter's hurt voice.

Stepping between the two people, he gently took her by the shoulders and helped her sit," Evana, how do you know Lucien Frost."

Evana stared at her father and then at Lucien before looking down and muttering," I met him at a party a few years ago. He saved me from the humiliation that some malicious people had planned."

Alexander Sterling nodded. Of course, there was more to the story than she was letting on so he patted her hand quietly, letting her continue.

Seeing her cousin sitting down, Nora quietly turned off the video and approached Lucien who was looking at Evangeline as if she was his favorite dessert and might disappear from here at any moment.

"What is the story here?", she whispered to Lucien. Distracted, he grimaced, and turned to Nora to answer her, "There is no story. I just..."

"Eleanora! Stay away from him!" Evangeline seeing that she was whispering something to Lucien, quickly intervened.

The anger inside her reignited, she stalked towards Nora who watched her with wide eyes. Was she going to be dragged into some cat fight? She did not want to hurt Evangeline...

Instead of doing anything, Evangeline came to her and actually pulled Eleanora behind her and protectively stood in front of her. With a finger pointed at Lucien's nose, she shot out," You! You will stay away from my younger sister. I don't care if you are her husband. I will not let you ruin her! It is a pity that her memory has returned! She was actually lucky to not remember a jerk like you."

Before the onlookers could even realize that Evangeline believed that Lucien was Nora's husband, Evangeline, was on a roll turned to Nora and spoke, " Eleanora! I can see that you love your husband a lot! But he is a jerk! He's cheated on you. He's been flirting with other girls behind your back when you were sick."

Demetri, who was standing behind coughed as he glared at Lucien. Why was he being dragged into Lucy's mess? On the other hand, was everyone blind? It was clear only he could stand by his Nora but they kept thinking someone else was her husband. There was Isabelle previously and not Princess Evangeline.

Lucien, now feeling the threat from his brother as well, stuttered, " No. Listen to me..."

Both the girls turned to him in sync and spoke, " Be quiet."

Evangeline was relieved to see that Eleanora was listening to her and continued hastily, " I know Eleanora that you do not know my much as your sister but I am your older cousin and it is my job to protect you! It's going to be difficult to accept that he is a cheating bas**** but it is the truth."

As Nora nodded, Alexander Sterling tried to intervene, " Evana, child, Mr. Frost is..."

Evangeline turned to her father and quickly cut him off as well, " I know Daddy that Frost Industries could be a good ally but not at the expense of Eleanora! Didn't you always say that the wellbeing of the family is more important than material gains?"

"Yes, but..."

"No buts!," With that, Evangeline turned to Eleanora and continued, " The future might seem bleak, but you will not suffer Nora, I promise you."

Holding her hand, Evangeline quickly tugged at her and stated, " I will not let this man influence you in any way. You are coming with me this instant. I'll contact the lawyer and set up a divorce. Also, I'll make sure that he regrets cheating on you. Just agree to the divorce, Nora."

"But Evangeline..."

Evangeline understood that Eleanora wanted to protest so she cut her off, "No. Don't say anything just now. You must need time to think to make your decision. Just remember you are not alone in this world anymore so you do not need to be with him. Also,"

Nora, knowing that Evangeline would not stop, quickly shook the girl's wrist and said, "Fine! Fine. I will divorce Demetri."

"Over my dead body." Demetri protested immediately!

But Evangeline was clueless and turned to glare at him! Who do you think you are to stop her?. You do that, Nora. Divorce Demetri...Who is Demetri?" Evangeline asked as she paused for breath...

Chapter 247: In Love With The Gardener

"Who is Demetri?"

Evangeline looked around in confusion, at the man who had spoken and then at Eleanora.

Unexpectedly, Eleanora shook her head and waved haphazardly, "No, you are right. I am going to divorce my husband. In the past few months, I have fallen for someone else. His name is Gaia. He is the royal gardener."

All eyes then turned to Demetri who nodded at Evangeline. Uncertainly, she looked back at Eleanora who maintained a stoic demeanor and then at Lucifer who tried to explain again but she ignored him and turned back to Eleanora.

"You are in love with someone else? This man?"

Eleanora nodded and asked defensively, "Are you looking down on him because he is a gardener?"

Evangeline was sure that she was missing something and looked back at Eleanora, "It is not that... Isn't he too old for you?"

Eleanora readily agreed answering, " Its because I have 'daddy' issues."

Demetri: ".."

Lucien: (Did he just watch his brother being roasted?)

Alexander Sterling shook his head and realized that instead of discussing their future plans, this meeting had somehow turned into some kind of a... he had no words for it.

Suddenly, Eleanora smiled and caught Evangeline in a hug as she muttered, " I am glad to have a sister like you. Welcome to the sisterhood."

Evangeline blinked and hugged her back as she said, " Thank you?"

Seeing the tears in Eleanora's eyes, Evangeline was even more confused, and she looked to her father for help. Seeing that his daughter was finally calm, Alexander made the belated introduction, " Evangeline, this is Demetri Frost, Eleanora's husband and you seem to know this gentleman here, Lucien Frost- Eleanora's brother-in-law."

Evangeline looked from the three people to her father, finally understanding that she'd created a mess for herself. "I made a faux pas, didn't I?"

"Quite." Demetri nodded while adding, " Don't worry about her crying. It's because she is happy. But I would really appreciate it if you did not try to convince her to divorce me..."

"No... I did not mean that..." Evangeline tried to explain before helplessly looking at everyone, her face turning red as she realized the depth of her guffaw.

Finally, it was Demetri who intervened, " There seems to be some sort of a misunderstanding here between Lucien and Evangeline. Why don't we let them sort that out first and then...we can discuss our plan, Minister Sterling?"

Alexander Sterling looked at his daughter intently and then at the man in front of him thinking back to the words he'd spoken to him yesterday," We are going to be family."

He'd believed it had been due to Nora but now he was doubtful... With a single nod, he sent a piercing glance at Lucien Frost before turning to his daughter," Do you need to talk to this man?"

Evangeline looked at her father and nodded slowly and reassuringly," I'll explain everything later."

Eleanora quickly hugged Evangeline once more as she whispered," We'll do sisterly things later! Bye."

With a grin, Nora walked away with Demetri and Alexander Sterling, leaving only Lucien and Evangeline, staring at each other.

"I am sorry... for just now...I misunderstood things."

"If only you would let me explain," Lucien tried to say but was cut off again.

"There is no need for it. I thought that you were her husband and were cheating on her. But that is not the case. So that is the end of the matter. I just hope that you won't hold this against me. Let's go back."

As Evangeline turned around to walk away, Lucien caught the belt loop on her jeans and quickly pulled her back, catching her against him," Not so fast Angel. I think it is time you listen and I talk."

"But there is no need..."

With a shake of his head, Lucien turned Evangeline around, still holding her against him. Winding his hand in her hair, he tugged gently, making her lean back to look at him. Gone was the gentleman and in his place was the same wild man in staid clothing as Lucien looked down at her," Hush. My turn to talk. But first, I am a little thirsty..."

Leaning down, he kissed Evangeline slowly at first, tasting her and testing her. As she quickly surrendered to his kiss, Lucien's lips firmed, pulling her against him.

Finally, when he thought he might lose control, Lucien pulled back, cupped her face and gently kissed her forehead. "Listen to me, Angel."

But once again, Evangeline shook her head and protested, "I don't want to."

"Want to tell me why?"

"What if your reason is something that I cannot forgive?"

"Then you make me earn your forgiveness, Angel. Come on, sit there."

As Evangeline sat on the bench, Lucien kneeled in front of her. "First let me introduce myself properly, Angel. My name is Lucien Frost. I used to be called Lucifer during my university days. While I might dress up like a carefree and wild person, in real life, I am a boring man of numbers. I am the Director of Finance and Accounts at Frost Industries. That story about numbers that put you to sleep? That is me. Boring."

Evangeline opened her mouth to say something but he stopped her and continued, "Let me finish. Now, for the part where I need to confess. I never intended to use you or hurt you, angel. The only reason I came there was to collect information about Nora and Demon, since they had been missing and we were unable to get any leads on them. We were desperate to make sure that they were safe. That is when we discovered my previous encounter with you."

"Yes. I did approach you with ulterior motives but that was not the reason for everything else. From the very beginning, I intended to be straightforward with you but..."

"But I think I liked you and instead of being truthful, I somehow convinced myself that I was going to spend time with you to gather information...as planned initially..."

Chapter 248: Son Of A...

"I think I liked you..."

Evangeline was very sure that she had slipped into some parallel universe. The wild Lucifer that she had fallen for had turned into a staid Lucien. And he was confessing to her. Eleanora had regained her memory out of the blue and was in love with the gardener who was not a gardener. And her father had retreated instead of standing over her protectively. She had definitely transmigrated...into some other dimension.

Lucien cupped her face as he noticed her distraction and questioned, "Are you even listening to me? I like you Evangeline and that is why I did not..."

As he turned her head easily, telling her to look at him. The way he looked at her with no remorse, she felt red-hot anger course through her, "You! Stop right there! You... you you you... You son of a biscuit!!!"

Lucien blinked at that, "Excuse me?" Son of a biscuit? Was that a cookie?

Getting on a roll, Evangeline stood up, almost pushing the man onto his a** and pointed her index finger at his nose, "You! You son of a biscuit! You THINK you like me? I am going to kick your a** to the next planet! The truth is that you thought you could gather information from me and be totally guiltless about it. But in the end, your conscience stirred, and you chickened out! So, you decided to think that you like me!"

"That way you could soothe your agitation and then use and discard me! Get away from me! Look at me! How foolish I am. I actually fell for an act! And now that I've fallen for him once, he thinks that he can fool me again. It is right what they say. The ones who fall first are always at a disadvantage. Get out of my way, I am leaving..."

Lucien blinked as Evangeline went off on her litany and then stepped over him to get away. Was she in some kind of shock? That had to be it. He'd never seen her this disoriented.

Lucien stared at her retreating back as a huge wolfish grin spread over his face. She had essentially confessed to him that she liked him back. He wanted to run to her and tell her that even if she had fallen first, he had fallen harder but he didn't think that would go over that well.

Also, this was not the right time. He needed to catch up with Demon and Nora and understand what exactly had transpired. Also, wooing Evangeline could not be a rushed job.

As he walked back towards the outside, he could not help but whistle freely. Everything was settling back in the world. Demon and Nora had been found and they were doing well. His brothers were all alright and he was in love.

Love. Such a strange thing. The first time he had seen Nora, he'd thought he'd found someone he could spend his life with. He'd looked forward to visiting her daily and even talking to her. It was only not he realized that what he'd felt then was probably liking or a puppy love. When he'd learnt that Nora was Demon's, he'd been sad and disappointed but not devastated.

As he compared those feelings to what he felt for Evangeline, he was amazed at himself. He did not look forward to seeing Evangeline every day. He was usually counted down minutes and seconds. Even the thought of Evangeline belonging to someone else made his blood boil.

Thank the heavens, his brothers were not here. If they were to see him like this, they would tease him no end. At least with them busy over there, he would be able to court Angel in peace.

Just then, a barrage of message ringtones had him fishing out his phone. Why did these people become active suddenly?

As he opened the chat and scrolled through, he shook his head. He'd thanked the heavens a bit too early. Nora had actually made a video of him and shared it on the chat with the message, "Hello Brothers! I'm back! Here is my comeback gift for you all."

First there were messages of them welcoming her back and asking after her soon followed by...

Seb: Holy shi* Lucy! You work fast.

Ian: We need to get the plane ready! We almost missed this. Thankfully our Nora is back and shared it with us.

Gabe: I've already packed my bags. Pick me up on the way. I cannot miss whatever mess Lucy will make.

Erasmi: You are right. Watching a recorded version is no fun. Nora, start a live broadcast next time! We'll watch real time and leave comments. Even sent you some gifts...

Lucien narrowed his eyes. Did they think he was preparing reels for Kit Kot? Live broadcast!

Nora: I'll accept cash next time. Thank you.

Ian: By the way, are we getting a new sister in law? She's your cousin, isn't she?

Seb: Did we miss out on some offer? Take one and the other is free? Do you have any other cousins lined up?

Narrowing his eyes, he noticed that Nora had slipped offline. Taking his chance he sent a middle finger emoji followed by, "She does have a younger cousin who will also be take one and get one."

Seb: Oooh... Really Lucy? Then I'll be there at the earliest.

Lucien: Sure. There's only one problem.

Seb: I can surmount all problems.

Lucien: Are you sure?

As Lucien thought he was going to one up his brother, unfortunately, Gabe intervened, "You cannot overcome this problem Seb. Not if you do not want to be labelled a se* offender and land up in jail. Evangeline has a little sister called Isidora.. She is eight years at most..."

Seb: Lucy! You sick basta*d!

Lucien: Seb, you son of a biscuit!

Ian: Lucien, stop trying to put Seb behind bars. It won't work. He'll end up seducing everyone there.

Seb: Lucy! You wait and watch! I will have my revenge... And what is a son of a biscuit?

Chapter 249: Transpired

"So, your grandmother is involved in the plot to kidnap you?" Lucien asked with concern.

Nora, however, was as shocked as that and a bit fearful. Since regaining her memory, she'd been thinking of all the people who were now her family. She even liked that old woman... no matter how grumpy she was.

Would she have to face a repeat of everything like Lara Anderson?

Prime Minister Sterling shook his head, "Not really. They used her soldiers but she was not the one who gave the orders. I am not saying that she is innocent. Just that, they used her ambition against her. They still are. And Queen Rosalind has failed to see that."

"What do you mean, Uncle?"

"My mother is simple-minded even though it may appear not. It is why my father actually protected her all his life before leaving the task to me. As per the rules of Estania, if a royal marries another royal from another country, then they cannot claim the throne. So, my mother's only motive is to bring you here and get you married to Prince Augustus."

"If I were to oppose her directly then she would have hidden her plans from me. It was what happened the previous time and you know what a disaster occurred. While I was in conversation with Demetri all this occurred. Thankfully, I discovered the plan at the end moment but even then damage was done. Demetri was shot and you lost your memory."

"You need not worry. I've slowly replaced all the people around Queen Rosalind with my own."

"Let me understand this, the original plan was to bring me back here and get me married off to that Calendar and kill Demetri? You call that not harmful?" Nora asked slowly.

"The Queen's plan was to simply kidnap you. The person who used her people planned to kill Demetri, marry you and then use you to claim the throne before discarding you. And by using Queen Rosalind's people he planned to blame her for acting against you and having her punished. With Queen Rosalind's reputation tarnished for harming you, me and Evangeline would have been branded as traitors by association... thus clearing the way for him."

"Who is this person, Uncle?" Nora questioned, a dangerous edge to her voice.

Alexander Sterling did not say anything for a moment, only able to look at the girl in front of him with a narrowed look. He'd wondered if Nora would want the throne once her memory returned. He did not have the answer to that yet but as he saw her cold look that resembled her husband so much, he knew one thing. If she really did want that, she would definitely be able to match Evangeline if not better her.

His daughter was still innocent but Nora had already suffered things that gave her a harder edge. It had been tampered a bit due to her memory loss but now it was there. As he watched Demon Frost gently caress the back of her hand, Alexander realized that the innocence was still there... It was just guarded for someone else and by someone else.

Eleanora might address him as Uncle but that did not mean she trusted him or was not wary of him.

"As far as my research has taken me, I believe that it is the Banfi family who wants to harm us all. The Banfi family is related to us since Alpin Banfi is the son of my grandfather's sister who married the Noble Banfi family in the past to help the Royal House stabilize Estania. As a result, they believe they have a right to the throne."

"While Alpin always tried to create trouble, he never went out of his way to harm anyone. His thirst and greed for the throne was tempered by his love for the country. His son, however, is a different matter. He wants to rule and he does not care who he harms to reach his goal. Alpin Banfi- the junior."

Nora looked at the man's picture in front of her and frowned. He seemed familiar somehow. As if she had seen him somewhere. However, before she could think hard, Lucien questioned, "How are we going to be of help?"

This time it was Demon who answered, "By establishing exclusive hotels and resorts here, we make sure that Estonia soon becomes a tourist destination, creating jobs, which are declining at the moment. That gives Prime Minister Sterling and Evangeline to gain the vote of confidence of the people on one hand and suppress Banfi's reach."

"While that brings a positive outcome for Estania there is no guarantee that it will suppress Banfi."

"Yes. But we need to do this quietly because creating any drama will only affect us. There are factions of people who are trying to create problems to pursue their own agenda. For now, Banfi is thinking of using you against Evangeline. Since her popularity is growing as the future ruler, he plans to use the two of you to get rid of each other. It is why I encouraged you to accept that you are interested in the throne and there are problems between you and Evana."

"Your maid, Lily is in cahoots with him and tends to pass on all the happenings to him. What he does not realize is that by following her, we have been able to reach him. As far as I know, he has already started to make his move. Once he does, we will counterattack accordingly."

"Why are we waiting for him? Why can't we attack him directly? Flush him out of his hiding hole and deal with him?" Nora asked quietly.

"Do you have a plan in mind?" Alexander Sterling asked her quietly.

Nora looked at Demetri and then at her uncle before nodding slowly, "I do."

Just then the door to the small house opened and Evangeline entered with a grim expression, "He's made his move. And he has chosen to attack us simultaneously." With that, she placed her cell phone on the table, being careful to not look at Lucien...

Chapter 250: The Scandal

"Is this what the Sterling family hopes to bring to the future of Estania? We've never differentiated between a Prince and a Princess. But...."

Lucien leaned forward to see the pictures before cursing under his breath. These were pictures from when they met that first night. While his picture was not very clear, the same could not be said for Evangeline. As she projected through the headlines shouting Scandalous behavior, raunchy, Explosive etc, he could see her getting paler by the minute.

He was distracted by Nora who jabbed him as she leaned close to him, questioning in a whisper, " You have a hidden twin as well?"

Prime Minister Sterling rubbed his forehead as he saw the pictures. He's seen them earlier but he'd thought that they were well hidden. However, as he looked at the man sitting opposite him and the way his daughter was avoiding him, it seemed the 'mysterious' man's identity in the picture was also revealed to him.

Looking at his distressed daughter, he patted her back, " I'll have the PR get on it. They'll deny all involvement as malicious and the pictures to be photoshopped and then we will introduce Eleanora and the tie-up with the Frost industries. That will take off the hint of scandal and divert attention. I hope that is okay, Demetri?"

"Of course, Minister Sterling," Demetri spoke casually, continuing to lean back as he sent a glance at his younger brother, who did not disappoint.

"Why deny involvement?" Lucien blurted out.

Evangeline looked at Lucien before quickly turning away. It was fine that he wanted to use her to get to Eleanora but did he have to be so cavalier about her reputation? Hadn't she mentioned to him how important it was for her to maintain her flawless image. The man had not even been listening to her probably.

Just as she was about to give him a piece of her mind, he continued, " Just tell them that she was with her fiancé and there is nothing wrong with being intimate when the intention is marriage..."

Nora turned to look at Lucien narrowly. Was the man joking. But as she saw the hands clenched under the table, not visible to anyone else, she knew that he was not as nonchalant as he seemed.

With a glance at Demetri she conveyed how his brother was as devious as him...Leaning close to her hubby, she whispered," If I'd known about the show, I would have brought some popcorn..."

Lucien turned to glare at Nora who'd become as bad as his brothers before turning back to Prime Minister Alexander and explaining," I met Evangeline at a party a few years ago. Even though we did not keep in touch, our meeting was known by many and how we spent the evening together. I have never appeared with another woman in the last few years. We can simply claim that she and I were seeing each other secretly over the last two years and now we are engaged so...."

"That way, her reputation remains unblemished and there is no scandal. Even if you deny the scandal those people might have some other pictures so it would be better to accept the truth and give it a spin."

As he said this, he looked directly at Evangeline trying to remind her that they'd been together outside on other occasions as well. How many would she be able to deny?

In answer to his hint, Evangeline banged a fist on the table and retorted sharply," I will not marry you."

Nora blinked up at Evangeline and her flushed expression. Ohh yes. This was getting interesting by the minute. Evangeline was totally into Lucien as he was into her and yet she was not jumping at the chance to be with him. Uh oh. Lucien had definitely done something foolish... Poor Lucy. Poor Evangeline. And poor her... for no popcorn...

Taking out her cell phone, she messaged in the group," You guys need to learn something from Demon and Lucy. See, Demon quickly snatched me. And Lucy is about to snatch his girl!"

Ian: Lucy? Snatch Evangeline? You must be dreaming!

Seb: Lucy is as slow as a snail. There is no way he can be fast.

Gabe: You. He'll start courting today and Princess Evangeline will probably fall for him in a few years.

Erasmi: Don't try to pull a fast one on us, Nora.

Nora: Well, he just proposed marriage to Evangeline. Does that sound slow to you?

As silence reigned in the chat window as well as in the room, Lucien finally muttered, " You don't need to marry me, Princess Evangeline. Your expression will make people think I asked you to eat raw tarantula. We'll just pretend to be engaged. Spin a fairytale until this calms down and then quietly break off the engagement."

Nora shook her head and typed, " I spoke too soon. Let it be."

Gabe: Hey! You can't just say that and then apologize. You can't leave us hanging here!

Seb: Were you dreaming that Lucy had proposed?

Nora: He changed his stance. He'd proposed a fake marriage.

Ian: No way! That is even more unbelievable.

Seb: Yup. Out of all of us, Lucien considers a marriage to be the most sacred. He wouldn't.

Erasmi: Holy shi!! Nora. He is actually pulling this stunt. Do you think he will succeed.

Gabe: Nah. Lucy is too innocent. He would not fool the girl into falling for him and marrying him. That is so cliché...

Nora: I think Erasmi might be right...

Ian: Ho ho ho! Our Lucy has grown up!

Seb: Lucy! We are proud of you! Good good! We will have a new sister-in-law by the end of the year!

Erasmi: That is scary actually. With Lucy down, it will be three of us down within two years. Who will be next? Ian or Seb.

Seb: Hey! It will be you! Don't curse me!

Ian: I am a sworn bachelor! We need no wives or girlfriends. You, Seb and I will be the three musketeers.

Nora looked down at the messages on her phone and grinned. This was going to be interesting. Next time she will make it a point to keep popcorn ready at all times...