

Benefits 251

Chapter 251: A Plan

"Princess Eleanora! Where were you all night yesterday?" Lily asked the question with sparkling eyes as she leaned close to Nora conspiratorially.

Lily looked at the innocent princess' face while inside she was gloating. Of course, she knew where the princess had been. She'd followed her to the garden where she'd been staring at that gardener before leaving with him. Lily could not believe that Eleanora would disgrace herself like this.

The Queen had offered her Prince Augustus and instead she went to someone lowly. It was class. It did not matter if one had royal blood or not, their thoughts could not be made Royal. So what if that Gaia was handsome? He had no money and only knew how to work with plants all day.

And the foolish princess probably believed that he'd fallen for her. As if. A lowly man like him would never refuse a woman but she could not be able to be with him. He was simply treating her as a notch in his bedpost.

Anyway, it was not her concern. Soon, Princess Eleanora would fall off her new pedestal and she would be able to see her master become the ruler. And then she would serve him. She did not have any lofty dreams about marrying the master of course. She only wanted him to let her serve him.

And he'd promised to let her do that if she was able to record the princess' confession tonight. " I went out. I'm kind of tired of staying here, cooped up inside all day. So, I went out for some fresh air."

Nora brushed her hair as she watched Lily repeatedly touch the button on her shirt. The foolish girl was actually trying to get a confession out of her. Well, she needed some help.

"But Princess, it's dangerous outside and you went alone. You should have atleast taken your security."

"That would be more dangerous, Lily. With the security guards around me, anybody who does not know me will also guess my identity. At least with my unknown face I have the liberty to go alone."

"But where did you go and were you really alone?" Lily asked trying to stress on the person she'd gone out with.

Nora's lips lifted in a small smirk but she quickly composed herself, "Lily! Why are you asking so many questions today? Are you going to leak my personal info?"

Lily looked at Nora with wide eyes and shook her head sharply repeatedly, "No princess. I would never do something like that. I was only worried about you..."

"Relax, Lily. You look as if I caught you with your hand in the cookie jar."

Lily gulped, unable to understand the meaning of the saying. Nora shook her head and simply explained, "It's simple Lily. You look guilty. Now go. As you can see I am perfectly alright. But really tired. I want to sleep."

"But Princess... I need to take care of you."

"I'll take of everything, Lily.", a quiet voice spoke, scaring her. Lily jumped as she whirled around and stared at the gardener. How did he come inside the house? And he'd even directly come to the Princess' room. A quick thought struck her and she realized, maybe this was better...

"What... What are you doing here in the princess' bedroom? A gardener like yourself..."

"Lily! What are you mumbling about. I summoned him here. He has to take care of the garden outside on the balcony. I wanted to discuss plants with him. Just go."

With that, Nora almost pushed Lily all the way down the stairs and out of the house and raced back up the stairs excitedly.

"This is the best part of the entire drama we are pulling off! It is so thrilling to be cheating like this!"

Demetri caught Nora in his arms as she nuzzled against him before carrying her to the couch and sitting down. As Nora settled in his lap, she heaved a huge sigh of relief. This was her home. His arms around her...

"I don't think I'm ever going to have enough of you, Mr Husband." she murmured.

Demetri smiled, caressing her arms, "I hope not. But just in case, I'll be on my toes ready to woo you anytime."

Nora grinned and even though they were as close as they could be, she could not resist trying to snuggle closer, "You are too dangerous, husband. I think I like it..."

Demetri smiled as he placed a small kiss on her forehead. After all, he finally had the world in his arms.

"Demetri? What do you think of the Sterling family?"

"What do I think? It is more important what you think, Nora."

Nora bit her lip before looking up at him, "I don't know. He's treated me well during this time. Its just that..."

"You considered him as a father, during this time, didn't you? And now you are unsure of him and his motives." Demetri finished for her.

Nora looked up at him and smiled, "You know me too well."

"I do. So, listen to me. Alexander Sterling is a man who has earned my respect, Nora. So, I can tell that he is trustworthy and upstanding man, doing what he can with the hand that he has been dealt with. As for whether you wish to treat him as family, it is up to you."

"It feels odd, having a father figure suddenly. I can actually feel him trying to curb his protective instincts and not hover. What about Evangeline?"

"Kitten? Are you doubting your own instincts?" Demetri asked her directly.

Nora smiled and quietly laid back her head against his shoulder. He was right. She was indeed doubting her own instincts. However, she just needed to make sure she had not conjured up a random family for herself.

"If you continue to wiggle like this in my lap, you are going to wake up..."

Before Demetri could continue his threat, however, the door to Nora's bedroom was pushed open...

Chapter 252: I'm Sorry!

"Where was an invisibility cloak when needed?" As Evangeline stood at the door, she wished that the garment would simply appear in her hand, and she could disappear. For almost an hour, she'd been hiding outside Eleanora's mansion waiting for that snitch to leave so that she could come and talk to her.

And finally, after almost losing all her blood to mosquitoes, when that Lily had left, she'd rushed inside, only to stumble upon this cozy scene. Maybe she could be blessed with a time turning machine... She'd go back a few minutes in time... Before she touched the cursed door.

Flustered she tried to apologize, "I'm sorry. I did not mean to... it was something... just continue, please. I'll wait.. no I won't wait. I'll come by later. Or not. Whatever."

Dam* it! Even her apology sounded like her software had malfunctioned.

Nora giggled at Evangeline's hurried words, though the girl made no move at all to go. Jumping off Demetri's lap, Nora spoke up, "Its alright. We were just chatting about the importance of fertilizers. Please come in."

Evangeline felt caught between the desire to escape and the need to ask questions which had brought her here. She glanced at the man behind her before looking to her little sister. At least they did not look too put off by her interruption. Though she was sure that Demetri Frost was plotting her murder right at this moment.

With a last glance in his direction, she said, "Uhh. It's alright. I can go... You guys can continue whatever it was you were doing."

That said, Evangelie continued to stare at Eleanora and Demetri expectantly while the two stared back at her, unsure of what was going on.

Helplessly, Nora exchanged an amused glance with Demetri, wondering what to do in this situation. Her husband, however, had no sympathy for the flustered girl. He raised an eyebrow and spoke nonchalantly, "Thank you for your consideration, Princess Evangeline. Would you be watching us? If you are interested in joining us then I would have to refuse though..."

"Huh? Oh.... Ohh..." Realizing that she'd asked them to continue with their snuggling while still standing there, she turned even more red if that was possible and stumbled backwards.

Nora shook her head and quickly grabbed Evangeline's hand, before the girl made a total mess of herself. She'd had enough of the Frost brothers for the day.

"Just sit here, Evangeline." Pulling her towards the couch, Nora had her sit down before she turned to look at Demetri imploringly. Shaking his head, Demetri sighed and answered, "The downsides of having cousins... We had five lightbulbs¹ as it is. There is going to be one more... or two."

Nora giggled at that while Evangeline looked on in confusion. Had they been discussing lightbulbs before she barged in here? Once Demetri had left, closing the door behind him, Evangeline once again spoke apologetically, "I am extremely sorry. I've never been so thoughtless in the past. I don't know what happened to me. Demetri must be really angry. The two of you were together after so long and I interrupted your moment. I'll just go and apologize..."

Nora shook her head, "He's not angry. So, Evangeline, what did you want to talk about?"

"Are you sure? He looked angry..."

"Nah. That wasn't his angered look. He was quite amused."

"Huh?" Evangeline thought that certainly did not look like his amused face but refrained from commenting. She'd already added to her list of faux pas today. What was one more in that?

"I'm sorry for this morning." She blurted out.

Nora blinked in response to the latest apology, her eyes wide with amusement. "Evangeline, are you on a marathon of apologies tonight? If that is the case, then I declare you the winner, so no more apologizing...unless you have some sort of an apology addiction..."

Evangeline opened her mouth, to apologize again before shutting it. "Thanks. I'm a bit lost today. Too many things happened suddenly. Eleanora, you can call me Evana."

"And you must call me Nora. That is my official name." Nora murmured slowly.

Evangeline nodded slowly before looking down at her hands, " I.. I don't know what to say. First off, let me say that I am really happy that your memory has returned. Secondly, I know about your experiences with Lara Anderson and her daughter. I'm really sorry for what you have suffered through."

Nora smiled, " Its all in the past. So, what did you want to talk about?"

Evangeline looked away before turning back to Nora, " I think you can guess. It's about Lucifer."

Nora giggled at that. "Lucifer?"

Evangeline shook her head before nodding, " I mean Lucien. Is he..."

"Is he what?", Nora asked. Of course she knew the question Evangeline wanted to ask but seeing the girl being all shy when she had been pretending to play a splendid white lotus all these months felt simply too good. Ha! This was her punishment for all those snide remarks...

Evangeline, unexpectedly, did not repeat the question but instead rolled her eyes at her, " You are enjoying this too much! Don't think I missed what you said about popcorn earlier."

Nora giggled loudly at that, her barely contained laughter spilling out, " But it was too cute. You are too cute."

Evangeline stared at her and smiled at the infectious laughter before commenting, " I knew it! All little sisters are so irritating! I thought it was only Dora who got on my nerves because she is too young. But you are older than her and you are just as irritating! I should have had a brother instead of two younger sisters. At least then I would have been able to beat him up."

As Evangeline shook her head in mock exasperation, Nora sat there in stunned silence. Was it so easy to have a sister? But Evana had said it so naturally. It kind of reminded her of the way the Frosties treated her. Her eyes moistening, she quickly hugged Evangeline, to overcome with emotion to say anything more.

In this instance it refers to a third wheel between a couple.

Chapter 253: Sisterhood

Evangeline blinked at the sudden hug but quickly hugged her back, patting her shoulders gently.

Just as suddenly as she had hugged her, Nora stepped back and smiled, "Since we are sisters, I won't tease you. First, tell me, why do you call him Lucifer?"

"Uhh, that's what everyone used to call him the first time I met him."

Nora leaned back and stared at Evangeline. So they really had known each other previously. Nice.

"Evana, I have a proposition for you."

"A Proposition?"

"Yes! See, you tell me about how you met Lucifer and I'll tell you about Lucien... What do you say?"

"Why would I want to know about Lucien? Its already a pain that I have to act as his fian..." Evangeline trailed off mid-denial as she noticed Nora's all too-knowing gaze.

With a sigh, she recounted, "I went for a party. It was one of the few where I was allowed to go without too many chaperones and with people my age. I... I've never had any friends Nora since a young age. My position did not allow them. Even as a youngster when I did not know, paparazzi would bribe them or their parents for details which they readily gave. It tended to harm me a lot. So eventually, I was trained to keep my distance and remain aloof."

"Anyway, at the time, I thought I'd gained some new friends and was looking forward to enjoying time with them. What I did not know was that they did not think of me as a friend. I'm told it was their jealousy that led them to try and harm me but I don't care what it was. Thankfully, Lucien overheard their plan at the party and saved me."

"At the time, I did not know he'd heard them. When he suddenly pulled me to him, it was as if my very own hero had stepped into my life. He kept me by his side the entire evening and I was just smitten by the hero. And he'd been dressed like this rough around the edges guy..."

"It made your good girl toes curl?" Nora completed, loving the total idea. It sounded so much like a romance out of the book. Good girl falls for the rebellious boy.

"Yes!" Evangeline confessed before hurriedly continuing, "But that was then. I'm not into him now, of course."

Nora smiled and agreed, "Of course not. Actually, Lucien could not be further from his moniker. Out of all the Frosties, he is the most soft-hearted."

"Frosties?", Evangeline murmured in confusion.

Nora nodded and suddenly a mischievous expression came over her face. "You don't know the Frosties?"

"Let me show you then..."

Pulling out her cell phone, she created a group of the Frosties without Lucien and made a video call. Curious, Evangeline leaned over to take a look and then widened her eyes as a good looking man appear on the screen, followed by another and then another.

Evangeline could only stare at the screen as the men called out loudly in greeting to Nora, asking her how she was doing while generally being loud.

"Hi, guys! I have company! I'd like to introduce to you all my sister, Evangeline Sterling."

As the camera and screen were turned towards her, Evangeline blinked and smiled readily, amazed at the beautiful men on the screen. Each of them was more handsome than the other.

"Everyone this is Evana, my sister, Evana these are the Frosties barring Lucien of course since you know him. The one on the bottom right corner is Ian. On the left is Seb with his colorful hair. Top right is Gabe and top left is Erasmi, my Demetri's twin. And the last one here is Gabe. You've already met Demetri and Lucien, the youngest Frostie. "

As Evana murmured a greeting to everyone, she could not help but be amazed at how these people looked so much like Lucien and yet different at the same time. Then the one on the bottom, his name was Ian probably, protested, " Hey! Did you just call us Frosties? Do we look like breakfast cereal to you?"

"Well, you certainly look like something a girl would like to eat for breakfast!"

" Are you flirting with us, Nora? you want Demon to kill us?"

"Nah! Just stating facts. Also, he won't kill you. He's in the 'throwing people into the ditch' phase these days. So at most you guys will starve for a few days!"

"Why if you are the one flirting? Because we have no interest in flirting with you. If you'd turn the camera a bit to the left so that we can see that beauty on your side."

"You can't flirt with her." Nora said protectively while the others started talking at once, protesting.

Finally, Gabe quietened them down and dropped a bomb, "Are we welcoming a sister in law?"

Ian: A sister-in-law? I just want to talk to the pretty girl. Why would you send me to the guillotines? No offence beautiful Evana!"

Gabe: I'm not talking about you, Ian! No one would marry you even if you begged.

Seb: Then are you talking about me?

As he asked this Seb pointed to himself as if horrified at the thought. But Evana did not take any offence as she watched them all start trashing the colourful-haired man. Hehe. This was fun. And the name did suit them. They were all delish and flaky...

Gabe: Id*iots! Look at the message that Lucien sent just now.

Hearing this, everyone looked down, switching the chat to the other group, including Evana who was peering over Nora's shoulder...

Her eyes widened at the caption and the picture that Lucien had sent- "Angel, my wife-to-be."

Before she could assimilate what was written, she heard one of the men mutter, "She looks familiar."

Nora raised her head and looked at Evangeline mysteriously before commenting- You just met her Seb."

With that, Nora turned the camera towards Evangeline, who was wishing for the invisibility cloak again, and grinned, "Let me re-introduce her. This is Angel... Lucifer's Angel...His new fiancé."

Chapter 254: Royal Scandals

Nora sat at the table, stirring the small cup of chocolate drink in front of her. The buzz of the television captured her attention and she stared at the television with interest.

The newswoman spoke with relish, "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. We are bringing you live coverage of Princess Evangeline's press conference, where she is expected to address the rumours surrounding her recent fling."

"While we wait for the Princess to arrive, let us discuss what the entire news is about. . A few days ago, intimate pictures surfaced on the internet, sparking curiosity about the seemingly innocent princess's supposed proclivity for the risqué. While the content of the pictures is relatively innocent the persons' attire hints at something else."

Nora suppressed a giggle at the woman's words. 'Risque'... Did people really use such words these days? And seemingly innocent? Evangeline was almost twenty-four. It was more weird for her to not have a lover or remain innocent. Seriously? What century were these people living in?

With a deep sigh, she continued to watch as Evangeline soon appeared on the screen. As the camera panned over to her, Evangeline appeared on the screen, looking cold and impervious... Nora smiled. Well, her public persona was really cool. No one would know that Evangeline was the opposite of what she looked like... Nice.

Absently, Nora shook her head as the reporters quickly started firing questions at Evana, "Princess Evangeline, can you comment on the pictures circulating on the internet? The public is eager to know who is the man beside you? Can you shed some light on that?"

Evangeline looked at the reporters surrounding her as she walked to the podium. Calmly, with no hint of vulnerability, she spoke, "Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. To begin with, I would like to thank those people who have reached out to me to express their worry about me. I'd like to assure them, I am doing perfectly well. Secondly, while I understand that I need to clarify about the pictures circulating on the internet, I request you to be a little more patient before I explain everything."

"While I understand the curiosity, I'd like to point out to my media friends, that I am also a human and do not appreciate the invasion of my privacy.

"Princess Evangeline? Are you angry because we have shown your true face to the world? Are you worried that the Ministers might see what kind of people you frolic with and oppose your succession to the throne?," a reporter shouted.

Immediately, another one colluded with the first, "Wouldn't it be right to do that, Princess Evangeline? As a public figure, you should be careful with the kind of man you mix up with and your bearing in public. What kind of message are you sending out to the youth with those pictures?"

Nora shook her head and sipped her hot chocolate, these people were digressing even further. Those pictures were not even showing anything. It was just Lucien at the bar with Evana standing close to him. Of course, his hand was on her waist and they seemed closer than normal but really! It was not even indecent. Lucien's face was not even visible.

If they wanted to create a scandal, then they should have at least found some pictures or videos of the two of them making out or something. What kind of lazy paparazzi existed in Estania.

"Are you too wondering how Evangeline is going to get out of this mess?"

Nora looked at the man who'd walked over to her table and then back at the television. The man pulled a chair opposite her and sighed, "Its sad really. A moment's mistake and her image is tarnished forever."

Nora turned to look at the man again and raised an eyebrow, "Do you really think that this scandal can mar someone's reputation? Especially the Princess'?"

The man looked in surprise at Nora, the venom in her voice catching him off guard. Scrutinizing the woman opposite him, he asked, "Then you think this scandal won't cause any damage?"

"Damage? It would be a wonder if it did not help her elevate her image. Who would be foolish enough to call those pictures scandalous? Whoever it was, should have used them even more carefully, instead of selling them to the media."

This time the man could not contain his shock and exclaimed, "Princess Eleanora! She is your cousin? Why would you say something so damaging? Do you wish for harm to come upon her?"

Nora snorted at the man and pointed back to the television and said, "Why don't you see it for yourself? How she will get out of this mess."

The man and Nora both turned to the television in unison where Evangeline had just asked someone to step onto the stage with her.

As the tall man stepped onto the stage with a quiet confidence, his appearance striking in a sharp suit, Nora was tempted to cheer for him loudly, but she settled for a quiet one in her mind, "Go Lucy! Conquer your princess!"

Outwardly, however, she remained calm and even a bit curious as she asked the man, "You know this person?"

The man shook his head but the frown on his face made her think otherwise.

"Princess Evangeline? Who is this man?" a woman on the screen shouted, soon followed by different voices shouting similar questions until someone finally exclaimed, "Are you the man in the picture?"

Evangeline once again gestured for the reporters to quiet down as she ordered, "Please everyone. Let me introduce the man here. He is indeed the one in the picture. And he is my fiance. His name is Lucien.

The room, both on the television screen and where Nora sat, seemed to shift in response to this unexpected development.

Nora smiled at the man opposite her and raised her cup in a toast. Evangeline was going to slide out of this so easily.

The man opposite her had an ugly look on his face but quickly composed himself as he turned back towards Nora, "Well well. It seems someone miscalculated. Anyway, Princess Eleanora, I came here for you today with a special invite."

Chapter 255: At The Conference

Evangeline stepped aside, letting Lucien come forward to the podium. Even now, she was half tempted to rush to the microphone and announce to anyone who would listen that she had no relationship to

this man. Heck, she was even willing to call him a friend. She could easily insist that the pictures were from a private gathering and nothing but a little bit of talking among friends for which the picture had been taken out of context.

Interestingly, the press ignored the man and shouted even more weird questions at her, "Princess, the man in the poster is dressed as a rebel while this man is well dressed. Are you trying to change him image so that it seems more respectable?"

"Princess Evangeline, we've heard this man was a holiday fling. Something to sow wild oats. Then why are you announcing him as your fiancé? Just to save your reputation?"

"Princess Evangeline? What does Prime Minister Sterling have to say about your choice for a life partner? Has he met that man yet?"

Evangeline was angered at the blatant contempt that the press sent his way while she cheered a bit! Good thing. See, if he was such a big shot, why was he not recognized by anyone here? But she needed to tread carefully from this point on or else, the public's view would turn too negative.

Before she could say more, Lucien stepped in front of her protectively and with a charming smile, called out, "Now, one would think I was invisible with the way you all have been shouting questions at my fiancé."

There was a certain commanding quality to his voice that seemed to freeze them. A bit unsure, they looked at each other in confusion.

"All of you look shocked. I believe Evana just mentioned that I am her fiancé." Seamlessly, Lucien took control of the situation, his tone diplomatic yet firm. "I understand that there are some questions, and I'll be happy to address them. But let's remember, we are all civilized people here, "I won't stand for baseless accusations or disrespectful insinuations. So you can ask away."

As the room fell into an uneasy silence with Lucien waiting patiently for the questions, a junior reporter tentatively raised her hand, "Then, can you tell us how long you have known the princess? And how this engagement came to be about."

Lucien smiled and looked at the reporter, "Of course. Princess Evangeline and I met at the mutual acquaintance's gathering a few years ago."

The words were like a bomb being dropped in still waters. Immediately, the reporters seemed to come alive, "Years ago? Have you been in a relationship since then?"

"No. Evana and I have been friends. It is only recently that we realized our deep feelings for each other. And I proposed to her. In fact, the pictures you have are from our vacation, we were celebrating our togetherness."

"But there is no ring in the picture?" another reporter called out.

"And my fiance is still not wearing a ring. Estania does not have the custom of a woman wearing a ring before her wedding. I believe you have forgotten that."

"Princess Evana? Are you still following the old tradition which many have let go?"

Evangeline, who'd been surprised at Lucien's revelation quickly nodded, "Yes. While many believe it to be a redundant tradition, I cherish it."

She'd only mentioned the custom in passing and how it was a handy excuse to not wear any kind of accessory on her hands since she hated those.

More whispers and murmurs. "Mister..." As the journalists needed to ask more questions, they realized that they did not know this man's name. Were they supposed to address him as Mr. Fiance?"

"Sir, would you please introduce yourself? Your name, etc?"

An enigmatic smile lit his face as he said, "Of course. My name is Lucien Frost."

A moment of pin-drop silence and then a rapid fire of questions started, "Do you have any relation to the Frost Industries which has recently signed a multi-billion dollar deal with Estania for the development project?"

"Mr. Frost? Are you from the Frost family?"

"Frost? Lucien Frost? You are the youngest brother of Demon Frost?"

"I am indeed from the Frost family. My older brother is Demon Frost. But I'd like to stress this fact here that my private life is not related to the deal with Estania."

As the journalists tried to process the new information, a seasoned reporter raised her hand, "Mr. Frost, do you think your family's financial standing influenced the Princess's decision to accept your proposal?"

Lucien smiled as he said, "Are you trying to say that Princess Evangeline would need to enter a business marriage?"

"It is a well-known fact that there have been arranged marriages in the past as well within the Royal family for mutual benefits...", the reporter trailed off, leaving the implication hanging.

Lucien smiled casually, knowing a dig when he saw it and answered, "Some things should remain in the past. As for this question, I am wondering if I should take offence. Are you implying that I am not enough for Evana and she would accept me only if I came with some monetary benefits?"

The reporters all laughed easily at that and soon, Lucien had changed the entire day's agenda into a storytelling session for their so-called love.

Evangeline stared at the man's back as she tried to control her expression. He'd spoken no lies and yet, he'd not spoken the truth either. Heck, listening to this man, even she was forced to believe that their entire story was all a fairytale romance where the two of them became friends and then more. If she had not been with him the entire time, she would have definitely been fooled.

Holy sh*t! This man is even more dangerous than she had anticipated. She needed to get Nora's head checked. The girl had claimed that he was the simplest and most honest of all Frosties... She was too foolish...

Chapter 256: Ohhh! A Husband

Nora lay on the couch staring at the ceiling. She was bored, out of her mind. They'd already discussed their plan countless times, Lucien and Evangeline had handled the conference superbly and Demetri was now overseeing the plans for starting the projects in Estania. While she was the only one with nothing to do.

She wondered if she should take up her studies again but then decided against it, for now. A year had already been wasted and it would be a few months till a new semester began.

With a pout, she turned to stare at the fine specimen of a man who was her husband. His hand was absently tracing circles on her leg while he read the files and she was the one suffering for it, too aware of that hand. She wondered if he even realized what he was doing.

Suddenly, an idea struck her. A sly grin covered her face as she slowly wriggled her toes, ready to move them. Slowly, she slid her toe across his bare arm letting him feel the warmth. She watched him like a hawk and grinned as his hand clenched on the file and on her other leg for the barest of a moment. Ha! She had caught his attention.

She let a moment pass, enjoying the subtle tease and then did the moment again. Her foot slowly wiggled its way beneath his arm to rest on his thigh, close to a little demon. As she would have wiggled herself some more, her foot was caught by a firm hand.

She looked at Demetri who was looking at her with amusement as he caught a tight hold on her foot. She tried to pull her foot out of his grasp but the man simply tightened his hold, "What are you up to now, kitten?"

Nora pouted and complained, "I'm just trying to get your attention. You... I thought you were different from all the other men in the world. But you are no different. Once you have what you want you all behave the same way!"

"We do?" Demetri asked bemused as he caught her wiggling toes, slowly caressing the arch of her foot.

"Of course!" On a roll now, Nora continued, " See, there was a time when you used to pay attention to me. But now, you cannot even be bothered to do that! It's been days since my memory returned and you know I have not indulged in my favourite hobby for months! But can you be bothered? No. All you know is work work work..."

Nora grinned inwardly as she met his narrowed eyes. Ha! Let him get around that. "Your favourite hobby? I thought I was your favourite hobby. And you've been doing me since your memory returned..."

Dam* it! This man had the talent to make everything sound so dirty! She tried to kick him with her foot but since it was still in his hand, he simply maintained his hold and r and kissed it slowly.

As their gaze met, the atmosphere turned from playful to something more... Continuing to hold her gaze, Demetri placed aside the file in his lap and moved to his knees on the couch, her foot still in his hand as he slowly moved closer to her, bringing her foot around his waist, sliding closer to her till he was between her knees.

"What... What are you doing?" Nora asked, her voice quivering with excitement. Demetri could definitely be her favourite hobby.

As his hand came to rest near her face and his face loomed over hers, Nora could only blink. She needed to keep her focus and not give in to his beauty trap...

"What does it look like I am doing kitten?"

"I... I don't know." Nora stuttered before kicking herself mentally. Why was she mumbling like a little girl on her first time?

"Are you sure you don't know?" His whispered words brought warmth to her face as his face came closer to her. Inadvertently, her eyes fluttered close and her lips puckered, ready to accept his kiss.

However, in the next moment, she felt cold air hit her face, as his body moved away, her leg now back on his thigh. It took her a moment to realize that she had actually fallen for his beauty trap. Her eyes narrowed at the triumphant smile on his face and she lifted her foot, ready to kick him firmly in the side! The bas*ard!

Her plan to kick him failed miserably as he caught her foot again and he tried to move again. Oh no! She was not going to let him fool her again. With a quick movement, she jerked upward, ready to push him back if he tried something again.

Unfortunately, he'd let her foot go at that same time and the abrupt movement and lack of balance caused Nora to fall headfirst onto the man, her face buried in his lap, her head almost causing him to become impotent.

Demetri's wince of pain was covered by Nora as she moved back quickly, her face turning red. What had just happened? How did she land like that? As she noticed his expression and realized what had happened, she had to suppress her laughter with a red face, "Are you alright? I didn't damage anything important."

Demetri looked at her, his face conveying his expression with no words. "I will be. Next time, I think I'll give you your gift directly. Its there on the table. And excuse me I need to go to the washroom."

As Demetri hightailed from there, Nora could only stare in confusion. What was he talking about?

But as she turned her head, she caught a glimpse of the entire set of books that had been placed near her head. Where did he get that from. Forgetting about her poor husband who'd been hit in the family jewels, Nora quickly grabbed the books! They were romance thrillers from her favourite authors that had been released in the past year...

Clutching the books to her chest, she looked up as Demetri returned with a stoic face. As she placed the books aside, ready to jump him, Demetri quickly caught her, "Uh huh! No more jumping around! Otherwise, we'll have to adopt in the future."

Chapter 257: Icy Dinner

Lucien cut his steak with a silent sigh as he glanced at Evangeline, through the flickering candlelight between them.

"Are you going to continue being like this, Angel?" he asked quietly.

"Being like what?"

"You know like what. Are you going to pretend that I do not exist?"

"There is no pretense. You may as well not exist as far as I am concerned."

"I'm not a dinosaur that might cease to exist, Angel. And you cannot ignore me forever."

"Yes, I can. Watch me!" Evangeline snapped as she cut through her steak with the finesse of a bull in a china shop.

A small smile graced his face as he leaned back and watched her, his voice deepening as he drawled, "Oh, I am watching angel. And I quite like what I see."

The smooth transition from the coaxing, teasing voice to the one that made her shiver, had Evangeline coughing.

Lucien suppressed a smile at her reaction and quickly passed her a glass of water that she took without looking at him.

Having caught her breath, Evangeline glared at Lucien, " Do you have some kind of a split personality?"

Lucien was the picture of innocence as he shrugged his shoulders, " I have no idea what you are talking about."

Shaking her head, Evangeline decided that it was better to pretend that he did not exist. Silently, she continued to eat her food.

Lucien stared at the top of her head and carefully considered his next move. For their relationship to get on the track that he wanted, the first step would be to make her talk to him. Narrowing his eyes, he thought of a quick plan.

Placing down his cutlery, he focused on staring at her. His angel wanted a challenge. He would give her one. But he did not just stare at her. He let his gaze caress every inch of her.

Evangeline clenched her hands on her fork, and repeated the mantra in her head, "He's not here. He's not here..." However, it seemed to be failing miserably as she could feel his gaze!

Finally, unable to bear it, she put down her fork and snapped, "Dam* it! You are insufferable."

"And yet, you suffer me gladly, Angel..." Lucien replied. And now that he had her attention, he was not going to let it go easily. Deliberately, he leaned forward, his hand gracefully extending toward the flickering candle. With a casual flick of his finger and thumb, Lucien extinguished the flame, casting a shroud of darkness over the table.

Evangeline gasped at the sudden darkness and was about to snap at him when she suddenly felt a hot breath over her cheek. Lucien had stepped behind her chair without a sound. Without a word, he seemed to surround her as she felt his scent enveloped her.

His fingers casually danced over her bare shoulders, as he moved them slowly down her arm, before holding both her hands with his, "Are you still going to ignore me, Angel?"

Evangeline felt her breath catch. The darkness intensified her other senses until she could only feel him. The scent of his cologne, the way his warm fingers entwined with hers, holding her gently, the soft sound of his breath near her ear. She could feel the shiver over her spine. The compulsion to give in to his seduction.

Unexpectedly, he softly tugged at her earlobe with his teeth, making her stiffen. She tried to take a deep breath to compose herself. His words continued to linger in the darkness, as he whispered in her ear, "Angel?"

Evangeline hesitated. She needed to hold her own or she will lose herself with him.

Struggling to keep her sanity as he continued to torture her, she finally let out, "I don't know what you want me to say."

Her answer was rewarded with a butterfly kiss on her shoulder, "Good girl. You can say my name for starters..."

"Y.. your name?"

"mmm"

His slight hum continued to send shivers through her and his name escaped her on a breathless moan, "Lucifer." Another butterfly kiss.

"Good girl."

"Promise me something, Angel."

She did not want to. That was the first thought in her mind as Evangeline heard his words. She was scared that she'd promise him her soul if he asked. And she knew that she could not escape once she struck any deal with this devil.

She felt him inhale slowly, as he seemed to step closer to her and whispered, "Are you not going to promise, Angel?"

"Wh.. What do you need me to promise?"

"Honesty. Promise me you'll be honest in your feelings with me."

She wanted to promise and ask him for the same promise in return. The spell he had cast over her was not one she could break or even wanted to break.

However, before she could promise, there was a knock on the door of their private room, breaking the atmosphere.

Lucifer cursed inside his heart as he felt her stiffen. Fck! He'd almost had her agreement.

"Princess Evangeline? May we come in?"

Before she could reply, he quickly covered her mouth and whispered, "Don't think this is over, angel. I'll have what I want."

The knock sounded again and Lucien lifted his hand, quickly nipping over her shoulder, as he walked back to his chair and she called out, "Yes?"

Lucien used a lighter and soon the candle light flickered between them again as a young server questioned them, "Your Highness? Did you need anything else?"

Evangeline shook her head and answered, "No. Thank you for the lovely meal. Please bring the cheque."

"Are you not going to have a dessert?" Lucien asked quietly.

"I've had enough of your company, Lucien. If I have to sit here anymore, I think I might get indigestion."

"Ouch! You know how to dent a man's ego, hmm?" Lucien grinned, not the least bit perturbed. After all, he could still see the slight blush on her face that he had brought and the way she refused to look at him. No one ever said that she'd fall for him just because he fell for her. He'd have to try longer and harder.

Chapter 258: The Love Destination

Lucien lay slumped on the small armchair in Demon's little house as he watched his brother putter around in the kitchen. As always Demon did not say a word but he was the one he could come to with his problems.

It was the truth with all of them. Even before Erasmi had been in the accident, Demon had been their go to brother for all problems, without a shame. However, as he sat here today, Luciee felt quite foolish! How was he supposed to talk about how utterly hopeless he felt in trying to woo Evangeline while she was not even interested in him.

While he'd never doubted himself in the past, her indifference made him wonder if he was forcing his affections on her. And that made him feel uneasy.

As Demetri walked back and placed a glass in front of him, Lucien sipped absently before frowning and looking at the contents of his glass, "What is this?"

"Fruit beer."

Lucien looked at the glass in his brother's hand with amber liquid and then his own. "Demon, you do realize that I am old enough to drink liquor."

Demetri cast him a look that made him foolish and yet he persisted. This was the problem! His brothers always treated him as a kid and now he was...

"Stop overthinking, Lucy. You don't want to be drunk for the conversation we are about to have." Demetri answered before Lucien could even begin complaining.

With an 'oh' sound Lucien moved back. Demetri was right. He needed to be sober if he needed answers.

"How did you get Nora to fall for you?" Lucien blurted out hurriedly. That was the only thing he could think of right now. Maybe if he knew what he might get some ideas.

Unfortunately, Demetri was too helpful..." Nora and Evangeline are too different people. And you are not me."

Lucien glared at Demetri. Ha! Demetri was a narcissist! He'd hidden it quite well.

"I know that Demon! I am just looking for ideas to make her fall for me! Can you not give me something to help me."

"Be yourself."

Lucien: ".." Why did he think he should have come to Demon... That man-wh*re Seb would have been more helpful! This was like banging his head against a wall.

Demetri saw his brother's expression and sighed, " Lucy, I always thought that you were the smartest among all us brothers. But now, I am starting to doubt my judgement. Fine. I will explain it to you in detail. What did you like about Nora?"

Lucien blinked at that. About Nora?

"You knew about that?"

"I'm not blind Lucy. Now tell me."

"Weren't you ever jealous? Or angry?" Lucien asked curiously.

"I had nothing to be jealous of. Nora would never have fallen for you." Demetri said impatiently.

"Ouch! Then..."

"Lucy! Do you want to discuss the past or the future? Stop thinking and answer my question."

Scolded by his brother, Lucien focused on Demetri's question and answered carefully, " At first glance, when I saw her, she looked so vulnerable and helpless that I wanted to protect her. But then she won my respect with her quiet strength. I thought anyone who would have her love would be lucky."

Demetri nodded and continued, " That is me. Now, what do you like about Evangeline? As far as I can see she is not vulnerable and does not need protection..."

"She is vulnerable! It's just that she shows the world she is strong. She has to be or else all those people after the throne would eat her alive. But more than that, I like how she is not scared to explore new things..."

"There is your answer," Demetri said finally, nodding in agreement.

However, Lucien only looked more confused as he stared at his brother. With a shake of his head, Demetri sipped his drink and explained, "If after this, you fail to get Evangeline, I will declare you as the dumb*est brother. Listen carefully. Nora needed protection but she was had inner strength. Even if she had not found me she would have landed on her feet. With me, she found someone she could trust and lean on. It was why she fell for me."

"I needed someone whom I could protect and lean on as well. Which is how I fell for her. In your case, Evangeline does not need protection. She needs someone who can give her the freedom her position has denied her while still offering her a safe sanctuary. Which is why she fell for the rebellious side of you and the boring one."

"On the other hand, you have been suppressing that side of you, the one that enjoys freedom and adventure because you think it does not suit your position. You are not your profession, Lucien. With her, you can be free to be yourself. And her hidden vulnerability, makes you want to protect her always. So just be yourself and court her. She is a perfect fit for you and you are a perfect fit for her. No Pretence."

While Lucien blinked in wonder at the entire assessment that Demetri had given him, Demetri emptied the drink in his hand as if his throat had turned dry from talking too much.

As if struck by lightning, Lucien jumped up from his chair and said, "Thanks for this Demon! I am going to go to her and..."

As Lucien would have raced away, he shook his head in exasperation. "Sit down Lucy! You are not going to go and confess to her right now."

Lucien sat down but looked confused, "Why not? If I tell her the same things that you told me then she would know..."

"You cannot tell someone they love you, Lucy! That person has to come to that realization all on their own. You can only nudge them along...And assure them that when they do come to that realization, you'll be there waiting with all the love you have for them."

"You are already there, just pull her to you slowly."

Chapter 259: Brothers

Evangeline stared at Nora who stared back at her with exasperation. She found it hard to believe that they were talking about the same person. If Lucien Frost was a simple and staid accountant who was always bullied by his brothers, as Nora claimed, then she was sure that she could watch elephants tap dance next!

"If it is as you say and he is not a playboy, then you tell me, how is he an expert at seduction?" Evangeline asked with a frown. The memory of his voice, the way he had effortlessly ensnared her with mere words, still sent shivers down her spine.

Nora grinned at Evangeline's perturbed expression and beckoned her closer as if letting her in on a secret. Evangeline leaned closer and Nora directly whispered, "It could be because you are attracted to him."

Evangeline reeled back at Nora's words and glared at her defensively, "That is not it! I mean, I'm not attracted to him. It's just... he has this way with words, and, well, it's confusing."

Nora shrugged her shoulders, "Too bad. These things always are."

Evangeline stared at Nora and licked the ice cream off her spoon, "I need answers..."

"Then you need to ask questions." Nora answered helpfully.

"It is what I am trying to do!"

"You are asking the wrong person. You need to talk to Lucy."

"I don't want to."

"Then ask his brothers." Nora handed her phone to Evana who looked at it as if she had never seen it in her life.

"You want me to ask his brothers, how he is as a man?"

"Of course. The Frosties are a tight-knit bunch who are always poking their nose in each others' business. If he has any dirty laundry then they will know. And they will happily share."

"Why would they share the skeletons of their brother? Wouldn't that be breaking of some kind of a bro code?"

"You'd think. But these guys are honest to a fault. So, as long as you need the truth, they will answer."

"Give me the phone. I'll ask for you."

"There's no need..."

Before she could refute more, Nora had already typed and fired a message in the Frosties Group, "Evana here. Need dirt on Lucy! Any ex's that she needs to beware of?"

Nora watched in amusement as Evangeline sat there restlessly waiting for a response. Soon, a series of dings sounded on their phone and Evangeline almost snatched the phone out of her hand, trying to see the chat.

However, as Nora watched, Evana's expression soon turned to a frown and she glared down at her phone as if it had done her personal harm. And then she started to type out a response...Nora observed her keenly before she took possession of her phone as soon as the send icon was clicked.

And then Nora started to read the messages... giggling at the expected replies,

Ian: Lucy? Boring as a rock. The most scandalous thing he's done is probably accidentally spilling coffee on his spreadsheet.

Seb: Lucy and skeletons? I don't think he would even know what to do with them. His idea of a wild night is reading accounting cases and laws.

Gabe: The only ex I can think of is the one in the alphabet. Lucy has had a few crushes over the years but not a serious relationship. Unless he has hidden his women with those accounting files...

Ian: As if he can be that creative. I don't think he's even ever seen po*n!

Erarsi: I recently caught him doing something exciting. His words... He was washing his underwear and then stacking them according to the colors. That is the level of excitement you will get with him... and no dirty laundry because he washes it diligently!

As Nora chuckled, agreeing with the brothers and their assessment of Lucien, her eyes widened as she read Evana's reply. She looked up from her phone with raised brows and read the message loudly this time, "Lucifer is not boring. He's responsible, disciplined, and focused. There's depth to him that you guys clearly can't see. Also, have you seen him ride a bike? You guys wouldn't even know what to do with the handles!"

Evangeline pouted and crossed her arms in front of her, "It is the truth. Lucien is not boring at all. And you said that these people know him best. Ha! What kind of brothers are they?"

"I don't know about that. But it seems someone is vying for the Presidency of the Lucien Frost fanclub...."

Evangeline blushed realizing that she'd probably been too vehement in her defence of the man...

Nora smiled and held up her phone, "Why don't you see for yourself what they have to say now..."

Evana: ".."

Evana took the phone and almost threw it back as if it was a hot potato even as she felt her heart race at the comments.

Ian: Sister-in-law Evana is protective of Lucien. I like it. I'll send my blessings to you both!

Gabe: We don't have to worry about Lucien anymore. He has a protector. Welcome to the family sis.

Seb: Our future in bullying Lucy seems meek... Sad... Though, we welcome you sister Evana.

Erasmi: If he ever makes you angry, tell us, and we will be happy to bully him for you."

Muttering about having an important meeting, Evangeline raced away from there only to be followed by Nora's laughter as she called out, "You have a meeting at midnight? The man must be really responsible, diligent and focused... not boring at all..."

Lost in her own embarrassing thoughts, Evangeline hurried towards her mansion, muttering under her breath about people who knew no bounds and would tease others mercilessly.

Unfortunately, as she took a hurried turn, she collided head first into a solid figure. Gasping, she stumbled backward, only to find herself caught by a pair of strong arms around her waist. Looking up, she found herself locked in Lucien's gaze and his arms.

Chapter 260: Talk

Gasping, Evangeline stumbled backwards, only to find herself caught by a pair of strong arms around her waist. Looking up, she found herself locked in Lucien's gaze and his arms.

"I apologize... I was going somewhere."

Lucien chuckled, a warmth in his eyes. "No need to apologize. Where?"

Evangeline tried to step back from his embrace but his grip remained firm. "Where what?" She asked in irritation. She was not going to give him the satisfaction of struggling against him.

"You said you are going somewhere? I asked you where?" Lucien kindly explained as if talking to a child.

Irritated, Evangeline almost stomped her foot," You are not the boss of me so... get out of my way."

With a shrug, Lucien let her go and stepped away, making a carry-on gesture.

His sudden stepping away had her feeling cold for a moment which made her even more angry and she walked away with a huff.

A few steps later, she realized that someone was following her. Stopping, she whirled around and glared at the man," Why are you following me?"

"I'm not following you. I'm going somewhere." Lucien answered easily.

"Where are you going?" Evangeline asked suspiciously. This was the way to her own place and not the guest rooms...

A smirk across his face, he lifted a shoulder and answered," You are not the boss of me."

Having her words handed back to her, Evangeline frowned and pointed a finger at him as she walked back to him," You! Do you think you are smart! Do you have any idea what people think of you? That they think you are the most stodgy man on the planet? That your idea of a scandal is to spill coffee on a spreadsheet?"

As she said those words, Evangeline realized that this description bothered her. Though she tried to tell herself that those people were his brothers, it made her feel uneasy to see him being put down like this.

Incredibly, Lucien laughed loudly at the description instead of being hurt. As she stared at his genuine smile, he spoke," I am sure 'stodgy' is not the word they would have used. I doubt it even exists in their dictionary! And who told you about the spreadsheets? Ian or Seb? They are never going to let me live it down. When and how did you talk to them? They are too fast if they've already touched base with you."

Evangeline stared. First, his laughter was too captivating. Secondly, she was trying to figure out if the man was genuinely amused or just doing this to hide his hurt. She should not have blurted out things like this. Just because his brothers had been spouting nonsense, didn't give her the right to...

"Are you not hurt and bothered by the way they put you down?"

Lucien smiled and caught her finger, which was still poking his chest and brought her hand to his lips. Gently, he kissed her fingertip and questioned, "Why? Are you curious about me now?"

Realizing that she'd fallen into his trap, she pulled back her finger, which was still tingling from his kiss and started walking away speedily. He soon caught up with her and walked beside her. Evangeline reminded herself that ignoring him was the best thing she could do to preserve her senses around this man. So she was going to treat him like air.

Unfortunately, said air was too noisy. "Come on angel. Just accept that you are curious about me. I am very curious about you. The time we spent together feels as if it was just a trailer and I want to know what this story holds. Tell me you are not curious."

"Curiosity kills the cat, Lucifer." Evangeline snapped.

"But suspense brings it back, Angel." Lucien replied with a pointed grin.

Evangeline sighed and finally stopped, "I've reached where I needed to be. You can continue wherever you are going."

With that, Evangeline turned to open the gate to her own small house. Ultimately, she was stopped by Lucien who stepped close to her back, his hands holding onto the gates, caging her between himself and the cold metal. Evangeline stilled, not daring to move forward or backward.

"Invite me in for some coffee, Angel."

"I don't have coffee in my house."

"Then a nightcap?"

"You wish."

"Then just your company, Angel. Let's just sit and talk. Your captivating company can make up for the lack of coffee. You can even scold me if that makes you happy."

Angle smiled and shook her head in surrender. "Fine. Just for talking. Nothing else."

His warm breath tickled her ear as his hands slowly moved away from the gate.

Evangeline quickly unlocked the gate, leaving it open for the man to follow her. Since he'd invited himself in, she was not going to offer him anything.

As he walked through the garden to the living room, he could not help but frown. This place did not look like Evana's at all. Even the living room she showed him looked as if it should be in those magazines for hotels.

Looking around with interest, trying to see something that she might have added there, Lucien shook his head and directly commented, "I want to see your bedroom."

cough cough cough. Evangeline who's just taken a sip of her water sputtered and shook her head, "What is wrong with you?"

Lucien smiled and walked to Evangeline. Pulling a few tissues from the bar behind her, he casually dabbed the tissues across her neckline, where a few drops of water still clung. Looking at the frozen girl, he tsked, "What is wrong with me? I'm just curious about you. And I promise, I am not planning anything scandalous... yet."

Evangeline caught his hand that was still 'soaking' water and narrowed her eyes, "You are not getting into my bedroom... ever."

Lucien smiled wickedly at that and leaned closer to her, "Fine then, we can indulge my curiosity right here..."

"I'm not sleeping with you in the living room." Evangeline blurted out.

"Talk, angel. We are going to talk... As for the other activities that YOU have in mind, we'll look for suitable locations when the time comes..."