

Benefits 271

Chapter 271: Rally

"You've changed your locks."

As Lucien strolled into Evangeline's home, as if he owned the place, she could not help but frown.

"And yet you did not get the hint? Were you a thief in the past Lucien? You kept playing with my security system. At first I was suspicious of my security team but you had them clueless about your breaking and entering. So of course I had to do something to keep you out."

Lucien grinned and shrugged his shoulders, "And yet, here I am."

Evangeline glanced at the man and shook her head, "Are you proud of your 'thief' skills?"

"Of course I am. These skills made it possible for me to get near you. Now if only they would help me get the end prize..."

"Don't ask, don't ask, don't ask," She murmured to herself. She asked. "What is the end prize?"

"Your heart of course. I'm working on stealing it. Unless you want to give it to me willingly, I have this amazing exchange offer...a heart for a heart..."

Evangeline could not help herself. She burst out giggling at his words, "You and your cheesy lines!"

Lucien inhaled slowly and let out a long-suffering sigh as he complained with a hand to his heart, "I offer her my heart and she laughs at me."

Shaking her head, she leaned back and asked, "Okay, enough with your antics. Why are you here tonight? We're going to meet tomorrow as it is..."

"Sigh! Tomorrow is very far. Also, we will be on the opposite sides of the table tomorrow. Tonight, come with me."

As Lucien extended his hand, Evangeline placed her hand in his without a question. It was only as a pleased smile graced his face that she realized she had not even asked him where he wanted to take her?

Seeing her expression, he leaned in close and whispered with a chuckle, "I'm adding kidnapping to my crime repertoire."

Evangeline giggled a bit as she followed him outside, only to find herself staring at a bike very much like the one they had ridden together... "How did you get this here?"

"I had her shipped of course. She was missing her rider. Here." As the helmet was placed on her head, Lucien grinned and waited for her to sit so that she could get on behind him.

As she settled on the bike and the engine roared to life, she wrapped her arms securely around him. Happy, he caught her wrists and pulled her closer so that he could feel her leaning close to him, "Stick close, angel. You're in for a ride."

Before she could come up with a reply, the bike shot off like a bullet through the wind. As they sped off into the night, the cool wind tousled her hair and the city lights blurred into streaks of color.

The closeness between them was undeniable, and the hum of the engine beneath them seemed to create a private world for just the two of them. Lucien navigated the streets with skill, and Evangeline found herself leaning into the curves, feeling the exhilaration of the ride.

As they rode through for a while, it struck her to ask where he was taking her. She'd never been to this part of the city before. However, before she could ask, the bike slowed down. In the distance she could hear people shouting and the sound of bustle. As the crowd came into view, Evangeline realized that they were at some kind of an event.

She wondered what she would do if someone recognized her but Lucien spoke through, "Don't worry. You won't be recognized. Keep the visor lowered." It was only as his voice sounded in her ear that she

realized there was an inbuilt device in the helmet for them to communicate. She marveled at the sleek racing machines and the adrenaline-fueled atmosphere.

"Are your arms tired? Can you hold on for some time longer? Or do you want to wait before we participate?"

"I am not tired..." For a moment, she wondered if he already intended to return and was quick to assure him that she wasn't tired but then as the last sentence sunk in, she realized he meant that they were going to participate in a race.

Before she could process this, he was at the starting line.

The atmosphere crackled with anticipation, and Evangeline's heart raced with a mix of excitement and nerves. Lucien revved the bike, the vibrations resonating through both of them. With a sudden burst of speed, they shot forward as the race began.

Evangeline was thrilled even as she hung onto Lucien for life. He expertly maneuvered the twists and turns of the course while everything simply seemed a blur to her. To her surprise, they were the first to reach the finishing line! But Lucien did not stop there. Amid the screams and the cheers, he continued to speed down the path until they were once again away from the crowds.

As he slowed down, she realized he hadn't stopped to claim the prize to keep their identity hidden and she was amazed. Finally, he slowed down to a stop. Exhilarated, she got off the bike on legs that felt like jelly and slumped onto the ground, thankful that it was grass and not concrete.

Grinning up at him she raised her hands up at him and laughed, "That was the best ride ever! Totally insane. Lucifer Frost, you could have warned me we were going for a competition and not a simple joy ride..."

Lucien looked down at her shining eyes and bent down, so that their eyes were level, "How could I do that? Then I would have missed seeing this excitement on your face. Besides, you handled it like a pro."

"I did, didn't I? When are you kidnapping me next?"

As Lucien continued to look into her eyes he could not help himself anymore. Closing the distance between them, he gazed into her eyes and murmured softly, "I need something."

Quickly, his lips captured hers, pulling her close. "I want you, Angel. You have no idea, how much..."

Chapter 272: A Promise

"I want you..." Evangeline woke up to Lucien's voice still echoing in her ear. Lazily, she got out of bed, unable to believe that last night had been real. If it were not for the fact that her thighs were sore from holding onto the bike, she would have been sure that she'd dreamt everything up.

Heck, she was the princess of Estania and she had no idea that such rallies were regularly held so close to the capital! She'd always thought these things happened too far away from Estania. Her horizons had been broadened. In many different ways.

She could still feel her lips tingling at the way he had caught her face and kissed her. Deeply. Passionately. His hand had been in her hair as he tongue connected fiercely with hers.

Slowly, she walked to the mirror and moved aside her hair to look at the mark he had left there. He'd been fierce yesterday, unlike the gentle and somewhat dominating touches that he'd given her in the past. Yesterday, Lucien had been intent on taking her.

Evangeline rubbed her legs together as memories of last night threatened to consume her. The way he'd pushed her to the ground, his hands roving over her, sliding under her shirt first and then between her legs... Last night, it wasn't only the bike that she'd ridden but his hand as well.

Evangeline buried her face in her hands in shyness as she remembered the need to stop him and the need that he never stop. Yesterday, he'd not asked for her surrender but conquered her. She would have been powerless to stop him if he hadn't controlled himself.

"Bas****! How dare he have the will to stop when she was so helpless." She cursed her silly self in the mirror as she slowly dabbed some foundation to hide the mark.

Why did he hold all the power in this relationship? It had been this way since the beginning! She needed to wrestle that control from him. She wanted him to be as mindless as her when he was with her as when she was with him.

And so she imagined. She would need to find a way to drive him crazy with need for her. As she thought of plans and doing research for this kind of thing, a knock on her door distracted her. It was the maid who came in to tell her, "Princess, Mr. Frost is here to escort you."

Evangeline blushed at the name! Even though she had only been thinking naughty things, his sudden arrival made her blush. She cursed at herself. How was she supposed to see him like this? She wouldn't even be able to meet his eye.

"I'll be there in a moment."

One last time, she made sure that the bite marks on her neck were covered and she quickly stood up and grabbed her purse. It was time for their meeting with the labour union and hospitality directors. Today was going to be a challenge and she could not afford to make a mistake.

As she walked outside, she almost stumbled to find her staff missing and Lucien holding her coat in his hand. "Regain control." She reminded herself in her head as she sent him a quick cool smile before stopping in front of him.

He smiled and walked behind her, helping her put on the coat. Today, her hair was tied up and so his fingers brushed against her neck as he withdrew his hand slowly, a touch both deliberate and lingering. The subtle contact sent a shiver through her, and she fought to maintain her composure.

But then, he leaned forward and kissed her nape, making her shudder, "You look beautiful as always, Angel."

Evangeline breathed deeply as she avoided looking at him and instead started to walk away, "We cannot be late today. Let's get there soon."

"Of course, princess. Your wish is my command."

Evangeline almost snorted at his words. As if! He was the one who was always in command.

She'd walked a few steps ahead when he caught up with her, smoothly holding her hand so that they would be together and murmured, "It shouldn't look like you are trying to run away from a murderer, right Princess?"

As he opened the car door for her, she nodded in agreement and watched as he closed the door behind her, walking around to the other side.

As the car started, the partition between them and the driver was raised slowly. Startled, she looked up at Lucien in question. Did he want to discuss something confidential with her?

But he looked at her and murmured, "Dam* it! Don't move. I'll try not to muss you up."

Her eyes widened and before she could say more, with a groan, he leaned forward and caught her lips in a hard kiss. Having no idea how much time had passed, Evangeline blinked quickly as he moved back, "You make me go crazy, Angel. Do you have any idea? See, even now, when you are just sitting there looking at me, I have to stop myself from jumping you and taking you right here."

Evangeline knew she shouldn't have said that but she did say it--"Then why stop?"

"Dam* it! Don't say things like that! I am trying to do the right thing here."

"Doing right is so boring." She goaded, enjoying the way he clenched his hands and looked at her deeply. This was what she wanted! Why should she suffer alone?

Before she could gloat, however, Lucien leaned forward and quickly pressed another hard kiss against her lips, "Tonight, angel."

Evangeline looked at him with wide eyes as he repeated the words which sounded like both a promise and a threat... Suddenly, she could not wait for the day to come to an end. It made her happy that he wanted her as much as she wanted him...

As the car rolled to a stop, and Lucien prepared to get off, she whispered, "Then, I'll be waiting for you Lucifer."

He froze and whipped his head to look at her and she was sure the wild hunger in his eyes was reflected in hers.

Chapter 273: Ruckus

As Lucien and Evangeline entered the building, they could already hear loud voices of arguing and cursing. Lucien raised a brow at that while a security guard rushed in, "Princess Evangeline, the place is not good inside. People have been provoked by the Union Leaders and are unwilling to listen. We feel this is a security threat and ask you to retreat as soon as possible. We will handle this, and then once the people have calmed down."

Evangeline frowned and looked at the security, "What is this about? What is the provocation?"

The security guard hesitated before answering, "The union leaders have been inciting the workers and spreading rumors. At the moment, they are claiming that you have not considered proposals from other investment companies because of your relationship with Mr. Lucien Frost. They are demanding that you apologize to everyone for giving them false hope and step down." Before Evangeline could react, Lucien snorted and shook his head, "They must think you a pushover. Are the union leaders foolish?"

Evangeline stiffened. She had the same thoughts in his head but another thing was at the top now. Lucien was used to being in control. Today's conference was about establishing authority. Uncle Banfi was trying to show his reach while trying to show her as someone irresponsible and weak. If she retreated now, she would be able to a voice confrontation but if she went in now and something happened... things would get more chaotic.

Her newest worry was the establishment of her own identity. But Lucien was a protective man. She could already feel his aura becoming threatening as he prepared to defend her. Which would avert the disaster for now but make her look weaker in the long run.

She needed to go into this alone but how was she supposed to say this to him without it being offensive.

As she turned her head to look at him, thinking of something to say, Lucien spoke, "I have something to discuss with my team. I'll go see them at the Hotel. Would an hour be enough?"

Evangeline sighed in relief. "Yes. It would be perfect."

Lucien smiled and quickly leaned forward, giving her a peck on the cheek and whispering, "Stay alert and protect yourself. Don't make me regret not becoming the alpha male and beating my chest and not threatening people."

Evangeline smiled and nodded again, the humor shining in her eyes. That is exactly what any other man would have done. To show off and protect her, they would have barged in to handle things. Playing the perfect knight to a damsel in distress. However, they wouldn't have understood that by doing this they would do more harm than good.

Watching his retreat, Evangeline couldn't help but fall for him all over again. It took a great deal of confidence in oneself and someone else to retreat. Lucifer Frost was too special.

Nodding to the security guard, she ordered, "Let's proceed."

"But your highness..."

"My people are a threat to me? I'm sure I can handle this much."

The security guard nodded and conveyed her wishes to the rest of the team, letting them know that she would be able to handle things and they needed to be on high alert.

Evangeline stopped just outside the door to the conference room and gestured for the guards to stand quietly, eavesdropping on the loud discussions inside.

She recognized the first voice and almost groaned. No wonder they were all so agitated! This man had a viper for a tongue.

Inside the room:

Gareth Simp screamed at the top of his voice, "They're trying to blind you with their lies! We won't let them ruin our chance to stand up for the workers! We demand justice! No more backroom deals! And definitely not bedroom deals!"

Inside the room, Gareth Simp's words echoed through the heated atmosphere, and as Evangeline listened, her expression hardened. She could feel the collective tension in the room, and she knew that this was the perfect moment for her entrance.

Without hesitation, she stepped into the room, her expression threatening, and spoke in a steely voice, "Mr. Simp, you forget who you are speaking about? Your choice of words is not only disrespectful but borders on insubordination. We are here to address concerns, not to engage in baseless accusations. And I'd advise you to be very careful in the future!"

Seeing that she had the attention of everyone in the room, Evangeline walked towards the center and calmly announced, "We are here to discuss the development project and its impact on our community. If you have legitimate concerns, present them respectfully. But personal attacks have no place in this discussion and will be dealt with appropriate punishment."

The room fell silent for a moment, the weight of Evangeline's words hanging in the air. Even those who had been vehemently supporting Gareth now hesitated as they watched the guards surround the man, ready to escort him out.

Gareth, who had been taken aback by the sudden appearance, frowned and shouted defiantly, "We won't be silenced by your threats! We want answers! Do you think that by throwing me out, you can fool everyone?"

Evangeline, however, didn't flinch. Instead, she delivered a calculated response that left no room for insolence. "The only way to get yourself heard is to speak clearly. If you are shouting gibberish, then don't blame me. I, Princess Evangeline, have nothing to hide!"

Seeing that everyone in the room had quieted and was paying attention to the girl, Gareth was terrified. Desperately, he screamed, "It is not gibberish! Tell me, is it a lie that you are engaged to an executive from Frost Industries? That is the biggest reason Frost Industries has been given preference over local builders and construction companies, in the name of growth and development!"

"Mr. Simp, are you trying to prove that you are illiterate? And cannot read? Or did you not receive the files that the public information department shared?"

Chapter 274: Blind Date

"You old man. What do you think you were doing? Haven't I told you to treat me as dead? You'd signed the papers, hadn't you? Then why do you insist on getting me married and arranging blind dates for me? You want some poor woman to bind herself with a dead man?"

Elijah Frost banged his stick on the ground as he glared at his grandson and shot out, "I had my reasons for signing the papers! But you survived, did you not? That means you are alive and in need of a partner!"

"Alive? Yes! In need of a partner? No! You are alive too! Why don't you get a partner for yourself?"

Elijah Frost banged his stick on the ground again while Ian and Seb looked at each other.

As they watched the scene unfold, the two bowed their heads, pretending to be nonexistent, but under the table, their fingers worked furiously as they messaged on the group.

Seb: Demetri and Erasmi really are twins! They are both intent on getting grandfather married.

Ian: It's why they are at the head. A new grandmother will keep him busy.

Gabe: They are arguing again?

Seb: Totally. Fun to watch. I don't understand why he won't arrange blind dates for us?

Ian: It's because he doesn't love us enough.

Gabe: More like he knows you will seduce the date and then go missing.

Nora: The world doesn't need more little Ian or Seb. Your grandfather understands that.

While Seb and Ian were suddenly being bullied, Erasmi had already left his seat and was striding outwards, "Don't you dare leave! I am still talking to you! If you do not get there tomorrow, I will..."

"You should know by now that you cannot threaten me..."

"Yes, I can. I know things that you don't."

Erasmi stilled. So did Ian and Seb. For years, their dear grandfather had used Erasmi to threaten Demetri and control him while they'd been kept in the dark. What could he probably have on Erasmi?

"What could you possibly know, old man?"

"You forget that I was the first one to reach the site of the accident where you and Nellie were. If I can make the world believe that you are dead..."

In the blink of a moment, Erasmi had grabbed his grandfather, "What are you trying to say? Is Nellie alive?"

Seb and Ian both knew that they should go and pull their brother off the old man, but they were frozen. For the life of them, they couldn't believe that the old man would do something like this... They watched in frozen horror as their grandfather almost lost his life at their brother's hands. It was the butler who intervened, "Young master, if old master dies, you won't know..."

The butler's words hung in the air, and a tense silence settled over the room.

With a tense silence lingering in the air, Erasmi released his grip on Elijah, his expression a mixture of shock and disbelief. The realization that his grandfather held a secret about Nellie, someone he thought was lost, shook him to the core.

He tried to speak, but the words seemed to be lost. Suddenly, Erasmi felt as if he was being squeezed from all sides.

He felt Seb and Ian come near him to support him, but it felt as if he was being caged. He shrugged off their hands and walked out before the darkness surrounding him threatened to consume him.

As Ian and Seb rushed behind him, Elijah Frost slumped in his wheelchair. The butler quickly brought out the oxygen and helped the old master breathe. As the old man's breathing stabilized, he could not help but plead with his master, "Sir. Why do you insist on carrying these burdens yourself? The young masters are all older and wiser; if you told them, they would share your burdens..."

"My shoulders are not yet frail enough, Thompson. I have my reasons for keeping quiet. Their hate for me will make them stronger. What does an old man like me need with love that will make me weak and be of no help to my grandsons?"

"But master, your cancer is spreading fast. If you at least told Master Erasmi why you signed those papers..."

Elijah Frost laughed before the sound broke into wheezes, "Thompson, are you worried my grandsons won't give me a proper funeral if I don't tell them the truth? There is no need. Even if I fall out with all of them, their sense of righteousness would not let them do that. So I have nothing to worry about... Come on, push me back..."

Ian Frost stood still as he overheard the conversation between the butler and their grandfather. He'd come back to check on the old man not expecting to hear this. What was it that the old man had hidden? And what was this about him having cancer?

Stealthily, he walked into the house but towards the backside. As expected, the butler appeared. Ian straightened the moment the man entered and smiled, trying to keep it as unthreatening as possible. From the horrified expression on the man's face, Ian knew that he had failed.

"Uncle Thomas."

"Master Ian. I... you startled me."

"I startled you? Uncle Thomas... you are the one who startled me. I thought you were on our side... but you are batting for grandfather's team?"

"Teams? I don't know what teams you are talking about. Did you need something, Master Ian? I was about to retire for the night..."

Ian grinned. "I need you to accompany me for a drink, Uncle Thomas... You won't refuse me, right?"

"I wouldn't have refused you, Master Ian, but this time I will have to apologize. I... the doctor has told me not to drink for some time."

"What silly doctor is this that he would refuse a man a drink? Come, Uncle Thomas, I'll take you to a better doctor."

The older man tried to drag his feet and stuttered but was pulled along by the force called Ian Frost.

Chapter 275: Kidnapped! Oh No! No No No...

"We have the person, sir. It was easy."

Banfi Jr smiled when he heard his people mention that they had successfully kidnapped their target. "Is anyone hurt?"

"No sir. He did not even put up a fight. He just fainted right onto the ground with a single hit. Easiest kidnapping ever."

"Very good. Very good! Bring him to the place, immediately. And be careful."

Alpin Banfi Jr grinned as he thought of the new plan he had worked out. His father was focusing on Evangeline and creating obstacles for her, but he, he needed to handle that Eleanora! She had boldly dared to create trouble for him and even broken his teeth with her punch! He'd teach her a lesson she would not soon forget.

Unable to suppress his excitement, he paced around the enclosed room and shook his head. Augustus had been scared off by this man? He'd only been able to take a blow to his head and had fainted. Augustus was too big a coward.

Too bad this man was involved with Eleanora. Gaia- the gardener was going to suffer for putting his hands on a princess. He'd like to see what that b*tch would do when she saw her lover's disfigured face. Would she still want to be with this person or would she run for the hills? She could do either of those things and he would use them to his advantage.

Finally, after almost an hour, he heard the sound of a car stopping. The door creaked open, and two of his henchmen ushered in a dishevelled figure, bound and gagged. Banfi Jr leaned against a table, his grin widening at the sight of his captive. The man still looked unconscious, so the men untied him before throwing him onto the chair and tying him there.

As he was tied, the man started to move and struggled to get free, almost kicking the men who were tying him up. That gave him another idea. He would make these people send a video of this man to Eleanora and let her struggle for a bit. Ask for some ransom. It would be fun watching her.

Suddenly, he felt a shiver up his spine. He looked at the man who was now fully awake and glaring daggers at him, his eyes promising retribution when he broke free." No wonder Augustus was scared," was the first thought in Alpin's mind as he almost stepped back in fear.

This thought shook him, making him angry. No! He was not going to be scared of someone who lived in the mud for a living.

"Take a picture of this man! And send it to Eleanora! Tell her that she needs to agree to your demands if she wants to save him."

The henchman quickly raised his phone and clicked a picture but then turned his head to look at Alpin and muttered," Master, I don't think this will work..."

Lost in his own thoughts of revenge, Alpin glared at the man and snatched the phone out of his hand, "Why not? Let me see. I'm paying you to do work, not think..." As he said the words, he trailed off speechlessly.

The captive's expression was less a plea for mercy and more a declaration of impending retaliation. It was a look that said, "Do you know who you're messing with?"

Alpin Jr's confident facade faltered, and for a moment, he felt a genuine chill down his spine. The man, despite being tied up, seemed more like a wild animal ready to pounce than a helpless captive.

This time, he genuinely felt fearful but refused to admit it to himself, "Nonsense! This will work just fine! Look at him trying to look calm when he is quivering in fear."

A noise that sounded suspiciously like a laugh, came from under the gag, while even the henchmen could only stare at the master speechlessly. The man was delusional. They needed to get their money and make a quick escape.

"Send the picture to Eleanora, quickly."

Once the message had been sent, he leaned back and sat on the table.

"You must be wondering why I kidnapped you? It's your fault really. Who gave you the courage to try and seduce a princess?"

"Though, I don't blame you much. I mean, even though she is a cousin, I can't help but agree that she is hot. And when you have such a woman throwing herself at you, you'd be a fool to refuse her. She looks so innocent...She must be wild in bed..."

As the fool continued to talk, the two men on the side stared at each other. They had not known that this man was so foolish. Could he not sense the danger around the man. Not for a moment, did he look as if he was tied. He seemed to be only biding his time. Ready to pounce.

With a tacit nod, they interrupted the master, "Master. We need to go and bury the van that we used to kidnap him. Give us some money."

"You just need to wait for a few hours. Very soon, that girl will call crying and give you the ransom money. Then we can mutilate him..."

"No no! We need to get rid of the van first. Then we will return. Please master. Give us the money first. Our job was only to kidnap this man. Nothing more. Pay up."

The senior of the two men spoke quickly. Even though it seemed like he was threatening Alpin, in reality, he was explaining the matter to the man behind him.

Irritated with the man's whining, Alpin took out a bunch of banknotes and threw it at the man's face," Here! Take it and get rid of the van and return immediately."

"Yes, master. Of course, master. We'll be back at the soonest."

Quickly the two men raced out of the warehouse, swearing never to return. They were not as foolish as their 'master'.

Chapter 276: Funny?

Ian: Are you guys doing bondage play? The surroundings leave a lot to be desired.

Seb: He doesn't look too happy, Nora, darling, I think when he mentioned ropes, this is not what he had in mind...

Lucien: This is too much information.

Gabe: Nora, I'm sure he'd like to be tied up by you, but this is too cruel. You should use a better gag. Do you need links to se* toy stores online. They have better things. Stuffing a cloth... is too...

Erasmi: Brothers! BE QUIET ALL OF YOU!

Nora looked down at the reactions of the brothers as she sat there shaking nervously. Never had she thought that someone would kidnap Demetri and ask her for ransom! And then to top it off, when she shared his 'kidnapped' photograph with his brothers, they would think that they were 'playing'. She wanted to scream that this was a crisis situation and she did not need shopping advice for adult toy stores!

Thankfully, Erasmi had some presence of mind and she could discuss the matters seriously. She did not have that kind of money.

She needed to find a way to save him and use that money to teach those people who dared to lay hands on Demetri a lesson.

Just as she was about to thank Erasmi and get into a serious discussion, Erasmi's message next message appeared, "Nora, for the love of God, don't share these personal things on the group chat! He has the same face as me! I'm going to have to bleach my eyes and probably my brain!"

Nora banged the phone against her head and typed out, " HE IS NOT WITH ME!"

Gabe: He's cheating on you? And letting someone else tie him up? Nah.

Seb: Yeah, You must be mistaken. Demetri won't let any other girl tie him up.

Ian: Yup. He only has you in his eyes. He won't cheat on you just because he wanted to be tied up and ridden...

Erasmi: Have faith in my brother, Nora. PS. This is not me.

Nora: "..."

Nora: "Can you guys be serious? I'm desperate!"

Seb: Ew

Ian: TMI

Gabe: *vomit* emoji

Nora: DEMETRI HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED. THE KIDNAPPERS HAVE ASKED FOR A BILLION DOLLARS RANSOM.

Seb: That is too much money. Tell them we will only give ten thousand, at most.

Ian: Seb is right. Start with ten and do not go higher than thirty thousand dollars!

Gabe: Thirty thousand is also too much.

Erasmi: Nah. Thirty Thousand is fine. We don't know the number of kidnappers.

Nora: Are you all suggesting that I bargain with the kidnappers for his ransom?

Nora could only stare incredulously at her phone. Had she slipped into some kind of shock-induced trauma? Why were these people not understanding the severity of the situation? She needed to go find Uncle Alex as soon as possible and ask him for money.

Erasmi: It is not ransom money. It is compensation.

Nora: ".."

Seb: For their hospitalization.

Ian: Yes. They might need more. I'd suggest arranging around fifty thousand. Ten thousand for each kidnapper. That should get them the treatment and maybe save some money for making bail.

Gabe: As if they would want to come out of jail after being handled by Demetri.

Finally, Nora felt as if she had been enlightened. "Are you all saying that I should do nothing and wait? Demetri will be safe?"

Ian: Of course.

Seb: Duh.

Gabe: Didn't expect you to be so slow.

Erasmi: How long ago did you receive this picture?"

Nora frowned at the question, still absorbing the fact that they were unconcerned about Demetri's kidnapping for some reason.

Nora: I got it about ten minutes ago.

Erasmi: Give it an hour at most. He'll let you know he is safe.

Ian: And when he does, you can take the links for the toy shops...

Gabe: Just for your peace of mind, I'll start arranging the money."

Seb: He doesn't look worried. Only angry. So you shouldn't be worried as well.

Could she believe them? Nora looked at Gabe's message and nodded to herself. It was better to be prepared either way. She needed to go to Uncle Alex as well and let him know that Demetri had been kidnapped...They should start finding the culprits.

As Alpin Banfi Jr looked at his watch, he could not help but frown. Where had those two men disappeared off to?

Demetri continued to stare at the man who was muttering to himself and shook his head. That old man Banfi actually wanted to put this boy on the throne? What a foolish prospect? He'd lose the throne before the night turned to morning.

Meanwhile, he continued to untie the knots and finally the ropes loosened. A small smile appeared over his eyes as he prepared to spit out the gag in his mouth. Finally, free of the ropes and gag, he breathed deeply. That gag was too foul.

Foolish boy! He'd actually turned his back to him. Standing up slowly, he approached the unsuspecting Alpin Jr from behind. When he was close enough, Demetri let out a low, menacing chuckle. Startled, Alpin Jr turned around to see Demetri standing there, no longer bound.

"Surprised to see me?" Demetri taunted.

Alpin Jr stumbled backward, his eyes widening in disbelief. Demetri took advantage of the situation, closing the distance between them. "You thought you could mess with me, huh?" he sneered. "Big mistake."

Demetri felt satisfied at the fear in his eyes. "What were you saying? You wanted to know what my wife was like in bed? Huh?"

"I hate people with no manners. Tsk Tsk...Now you will know I am not someone to be trifled with...even your minions were smarter than you..."

The next few moments were a blur for the poor Alpin Banfi Junior who had never felt such pain in his small life.

As the man lay groaning on the ground, Demetri leaned down and picked up the phone that had been used to show his kidnapping. Calmly, he clicked a selfie of himself and sent it to Nora.

Chapter 277: A Bet

"Come on out."

Evangeline hesitated for a moment, her gaze fixed on the message that Lucien had sent. It was unexpected for him to suggest going out when she had imagined something very different... But even as her face flushed about her imagination, she was secretly relieved. She liked Lucifer and he claimed he liked her but she felt they might be moving too quickly.

She wanted him and yet she did not want to want him. "But, you wanted him to come here, tonight, didn't you? And now you are disappointed that he's come like he promised but you won't be able to have him... What relieved... You cannot lie to yourself." Her inner voice taunted her making her shake her head.

"I'll be there in a moment.", she messaged him, trying to distract herself from what he might have to say about delaying their night together. Where would he take her tonight?

Grabbing a jacket for the wind, she quickly put it on and raced outside. Unexpectedly, he'd come in a car tonight..."

As she sat inside, she smiled at him brightly, "Hi! I thought you were taking me for a race again!"

Lucien smiled at her, "Really? Is that what we planned?"

Evangeline shut her mouth at that. She wasn't the one who'd changed the course of the evening. Then why was he questioning her? Did he want her to be the one to initiate everything? Like hell* she would be the one to say it.

Putting on her most innocent expression, she sighed, "It wasn't? Ahh, I don't really remember what it was about." Turning her head, she looked outside and quickly changed the topic, "So, where are we going?"

"You don't remember? That's a pity..."

Her head whipped around to look at him and before she could ask him what he meant; her face was caught in a hard kiss. Dazed, she held her fingers to her mouth. This man moved too quickly... and quickly started the car.

Her eyes widened in amazement as she surveyed the opulent place. Unable to contain her curiosity, she quipped, "Are you here to scout the competition, Lucien?"

Without offering a direct response, he swiftly stepped out of the car and circled around to assist her. Once outside, she couldn't help but feel a shift in the atmosphere, a subtle change in Lucien's demeanor. Her mind raced with questions, but before she could voice them, he handed the concierge a card and instructed, "Take the luggage, please."

Before she could utter another question, his hand encircled her waist, and he whispered, "We're staying the night here, angel." The warmth of his breath against her ear sent shivers down her spine, and the unexpected declaration left her breathless.

"I didn't bring any clothing..." she mumbled under her breath, only to be silenced when he muttered, "You won't need it."

Dam* it! She had been ambushed by this man again!

As she tried to compose her emotions, he did something unexpected again. Instead of taking her towards the room, they went in the other direction. She slowed down and pointed out, "Uhh, that is the casino."

"Hmm. The evening is still young..."

Inside the casino, the ambience was electric, filled with the sounds of laughter, chatter, and the occasional jingle of slot machines. While she had been a regular to the hotel for meetings as well as other gatherings, it had never been a good thing to be judged a gambling royal. As a result, she had steered clear of the casino... So this was going to be another new experience for her...

Evangeline couldn't help but laugh nervously. "Are we gambling now? What's next? A spontaneous wedding in Vegas?"

Lucien grinned, "Not tonight. You won't get drunk enough for that..."

Evangeline coughed at the reply and cleared her throat, "So what should we try first? I don't really know all those card games."

"We'll play only the slots tonight then. I don't want to share you with anyone else, either way."

Evangeline perked up! She could play the slots! That wouldn't be too bad and she would not end up losing like a failure.

They settled in front of the glittering slot machines, each machine beckoning with promises of fortune. Lucien handed her a stack of coins while placing the other in front of him.

"Let's make this interesting," Lucien suggested, his eyes gleaming with mischief. "The one who wins the most coins in an hour gets to ask something from the loser. Are you willing to risk it?"

Getting in the spirit of fun, Evangeline narrowed her eyes! It was good to raise the stakes! And the slot machines were not about skill but luck so there was no guarantee who would win.

"Agreed."

Lucien smiled and motioned for her to begin. And as she turned to the large machine with the shiny digital display, she could not help but rub her hands in excitement. She would definitely win and then have Lucien at her command!

Unfortunately, the innocent little lamb failed to realize that she had fallen into the wolf's trap, quite snugly.

They started playing, the digital displays lighting up with every spin. As the coins clinked and the reels spun, the tension between them escalated. Soon, they were playing different machines, winning and losing coins with excitement.

Evangeline made it a point to keep an eye on Lucien's tray as she continued to win, excited that she would be able to command him tonight! She was winning!

As the clock ticked away, nearing the end of their thrilling slot machine challenge, Evangeline couldn't contain her excitement. His tray of coins were almost empty while hers was full! This must be what they call beginner's luck! With only five minutes left, she decided to go to the man and claim her prize.

However, just as she would have reached him, the atmosphere in the casino shifted. Loud music erupted from the slot machines, and a cascade of lights enveloped Lucien's machine. Her eyes widened as she realized what had happened – Lucien had hit the jackpot. And as her eyes met his victorious ones, she realized, "She'd lost the bet... Uh oh."

Chapter 278: You Cheated!

You cheated, didn't you?"

As Lucien walked outside the casino, with her hand entwined in his, Evangeline could not help but ask him this question! Just what kind of luck would this man have that he would win at the last machine?

Lucien shook his head, "Of course not. Do you think those people would let me walk out of there if I'd cheated?"

"Then how can you have the devil's luck?"

Lucien cast her an ironic glance and told her, "Why do you think I was named Lucifer by those uni people? I've always been lucky."

Evangeline shook her head in amazement as they entered the elevator and murmured, "I can hardly believe your luck."

In the next moment, however, she found herself stuck between the cold elevator wall and his warm hard body. His hands on her hips as he held her caged. Breathless, she looked up into his eyes and as she did, that same evil smile that had bedazzled her graced his lips, "Believe me, angel. I am lucky but tonight, I am going to get luckier."

As he said this, his hips pushed against her, letting her feel his desire. His name escaped her lips in a breathless whisper, "Lucien."

"Angel..." He whispered back before catching her mouth with his. The kiss started out as soft but quickly changed. He wanted her and he took her. His hands moved from her hips to restrain her hands against the wall.

Any thoughts of being caught if the elevator doors opened failed to make her stop. She answered his desire with her own, seeking to get closer.

Once at the top floor, Lucien broke the kiss and looked down at her dazed eyes and red swollen lips. Cursing, he quickly picked her up and carried her into the room. Thankfully, he'd disabled the cameras here long ago.

The door to the room had barely closed when he caught her face and kissed her again. His hands slid under her shirt now, exploring slowly but boldly. He cupped her breasts, his thumbs playing with the small peaks.

Evangeline felt the touch jolt her. She could not think anymore. Desperately, she caught his wrists, wanting him to stop and yet not stop. Thankfully he understood her touch and stepped away.

She opened her eyes and looked at him, suddenly regretting her hesitation. She wanted to say something but couldn't. What should she say? That she wanted him back? Even thinking the words made her feel shy.

Suddenly, he closed the distance between them and she felt hopeful again. He was good at reading her thoughts, wasn't he? However, to her disappointment, he only held her hand and led her into the room.

"You lost the bet, Angel.", he murmured.

She blinked. The bet? What bet? Oh... Shaking her head hard to clear the cobwebs, she asked him, "Yes. The bet. So, what do you want me to do?"

"I'd like you to model for me..."

"Modelling? You want me to do a ramp walk?" Evangeline asked slowly, wondering if she was still in a daze for not understanding him. What kind of a command was that.

His lips kicked up and her eyes went to them. They were still moist from their kiss.

"No, angel. You are going to walk in there. I've specially chosen a few pieces of clothing for you, the choice is yours. I'd like to see you in any piece you like."

As Evangeline understood his words, her eyes widened and she finally looked around the room. Lucien went to sit on the couch and a small path had been cleared for her to walk while a screen had been set up... behind which she would be able to change her clothes.

She felt excitement unfurl within her. What kind of clothing had he chosen for her? As she neared the screen, her eyes widened as she realized that the screen was not opaque. So, if she changed behind the screen, he would be able to see her silhouette.

Gulping she walked to the other side with nervous excitement. This was thrilling, this element of naughtiness, and this slow buildup was making her... Behind the screen, as Evangeline noticed the few 'clothing' articles, she could not help but gulp.

The first thing was a cranberry red baby doll. It had two shoe strings at the top, while the rest of it was covered with lace. And as she twisted the hanger, she realized it had no back. She held it up against her body and came to another realization. This thing would barely cover her bu**

Quickly, she placed the hanger back on the rack and grabbed another and then another. The baby doll was the one that covered the most skin! As she grabbed the last hanger, she could not help but be amazed. It was a boudoir bra with only tulle lace and it hid nothing.

She really did not have the confidence to wear this right now. Finally, she took off her clothing and donned the silky red baby doll. Even putting it on made her feel a bit naughty and she slowly caressed herself. Inexplicably, a groan sounded from the other side and she realized that Lucien was probably observing her from the other side.

Flushing, she quickly stepped outside the screen, ready to apologize for taking so much time when she saw him. Where did his shirt disappear? He looked so hot...

As she froze there, he stood up and walked towards her. Her eyes scanned his perfect figure, stopping at the band of the low-riding pajamas he had changed into.

He knelt in front of her and slowly caught her ankle, whispering, " You can't model without the heels."

As his hands encircled her ankles, helping her into the slippers, Evangeline could not help but rub her thighs. He really wanted her to model this for him. He stood up and stepped backwards towards the couch, unable to take his eyes off her. In his eyes, she saw the worship and awe. He wanted her as badly as she wanted him. It gave her an inexplicable feeling of power and she raised her chin. He wanted a show. She'd give him one that he would never forget.

Chapter 279: Ready

With a small smile on her face, Evangeline looked at him. "Are you ready for me?"

She watched him nod but it was the way he looked at her that gave her the confidence to take the next step. His posture was languid as if he were a king awaiting a private performance from his most cherished concubine. But it was his eyes, the way he seemed to be drinking in the sight of her body.

Each step that she took made her eager to walk towards him. And yet, the need to tease him and her was there. Never before had she felt so sexy as she did at this moment. Finally, she reached the end of the makeshift ramp and stopped before him, letting his eyes rove over her.

She watched him raise his hand to touch her but she stepped back and shook her head, challenging him, " Uh huh. Only modelling. No touching."

As his hand fell back to his side and a challenging smile came across his face, she knew she had done the right thing. Tonight, she was going to be free to tease him. Gradually she turned and heard him groan as he watched the missing back of the babydoll.

"Angel... come here," he ordered. She looked over her shoulder and met his gaze, giving him her most innocent impression as if asking who was making him groan. Keeping her gaze locked with his, she turned back to him, " Why should I?"

She could feel the heat of his gaze all over her, making her shiver in anticipation.

"What do you have in mind, angel?" Lucien asked, his voice husky and desperate with need.

"I want to play a game too."

With her hands on her hips, she turned back to face him, the posture, making her breasts bounce. She watched his eyes narrow as he leaned back in appreciation. "I've been waiting all this time to play with you, angel."

She walked back to him, caressing his cheek, as she leaned in for a kiss. She felt his hands roam over her body, cupping her breasts slowly, kneading the, stroking her stomach, before settling on her ass. As she felt him tug her towards him, she pushed back, slipping away from his grasp.

A few steps away from him, she tried to catch her breath, wanting him so much even as she tried to play it cool. He just sat there watching her, his eyes filled with desire.

Lucien smiled to himself as he waited to see what she would do next. This was the girl that he knew she kept tightly hidden under that proper neat self of hers. He wanted to make tonight special for her but he had a feeling it might turn out unforgettable for him as well.

Like a siren, she beckoned him closer and he could feel his control stretching to its limits. As they entered the bedroom, he watched her pause, taking in the flowers he'd laid out for her.

Evangeline felt her breath catch. He'd done so much for their night together. Suddenly, she felt a bit lost. She turned to look at him, leaning against the door, playing the game she had proposed.

Confident again, her hands slid to the hem of her babydoll and she pulled it over her head so that she was left there only in a red g-string. She clenched her stomach, as cold air rushed around her. Breathing faster, she groaned, "Take me, Lucifer."

It was as if a dam had been broken. She'd yet to catch her breath when he caught her in his arms. She felt his fingers trailing over her spine, as his other hand moulded her a**, sending shivers of pleasure through her.

He kissed her deeply, his hardness pressing against her and she knew that soon she would be his, body and soul.

Picking her up, he carried her to the bed, tearing the small string that covered her as he got rid of his own clothing.

Soon, his lips covered her, his tongue sliding against hers as his knee pushed her legs apart. His hands roamed over her body as if wanting to memorize every dip and curve. She arched her back, needing to get closer. As he broke the kiss, she watched him take something from the drawer. It was only as the sound of tearing echoed in the room that she realized what he was doing. Inexplicably, she felt even more aroused.

His hips pressed into her but instead of getting closer, he moved downwards, took one nipple into his mouth and sucked. She clenched her hands over his back, needing what he was only teasing her with, "Lucien! I need you! Hard."

She felt him smile against her, before he quickly entered her. Angel could not help but scream at the sudden invasion. He paused over her and she knew he was worried about her first time. Meeting the concern in his eyes she reacted instinctively and clenched her insides.

It caused him to growl as if a wild beast had been unleashed inside. Any thoughts of going slow or gentle were thrown out as he his fingers spanned her hips and he pushed himself into her, bringing them both over the edge together.

Evana threw back her head as she met each thrust of his with her own need. Her ankles crossed over his hard a** as she tried to get him in deeper until finally, she could almost see stars...

It was a long time later when Lucien finally raised his head, their lower bodies still entangled. He looked at her and smiled. She'd fallen asleep... Looking at the small piece of metal, that still rested on the side table and he smiled, "Next time... next time he would show her the magic of the lip ring. He'd have to get a piercing again. "Beautiful angel. You've gone and ruined me now, hmm? Now you can't blame me for doing all sorts of things to keep you by my side."

Chapter 280: A Culmination

"Sir, we have two pieces of bad news."

As a man raced into the room Alpin Banfi Sr, glared at the man. He'd been watching the play-by-play of Evangeline's meeting with the union members and he was not very hopeful. He'd made sure to brainwash all the union members, so much so that they'd been ready to attack and not believe anything she tried to say.

But instead of even trying to explain herself, she attacked Gareth Simp and the others, even going so far as to make the others believe that Gareth was suspicious. It made him realize that he had severely underestimated Evangeline. She'd been quiet and not very active in the current politics, letting Alexander Sterling do things on her behalf. That man had fooled him into thinking that she was not as powerful. But now Evangeline suddenly turned to be the hidden ace.

Dam* it! Both the girls were getting difficult for him to handle and this made him angrier.

"What is this bad news? I already know that Evangeline has created problems for us? What else could be there?"

"Sir! Junior Master is in the hospital!" The messenger quickly spoke, worrying about his own safety. Everyone knew that the junior master was the only one the older master cherished more than his life. Even though he had previously been angry at the junior master, he would not take lightly to his son being injured.

Alpin Banfi Sr.'s face contorted with a mix of concern and anger. "What do you mean he is injured? Did he get into an accident? Was he drunk and driving?"

The servant quickly shook his head and spoke with wide eyes, "Neither, sir! Junior master kidnapped a servant from the Queen's palace! That man hit the master and escaped. That is the second piece of news, the master is in the hospital room but we cannot see him as the police are standing guard outside."

"Kidnapped a servant from the Queen's palace? What madness possessed him to do such a thing?", he roared in anger and disbelief.

"We do not know, sir. But there is an official complain and as far as the police is concerned, the young master is in custody. We fear that the news of his deed might leak any moment. We've already started to receive phone calls from the press asking if he has been injured.

Banfi Sr. clasped his hands tightly as he cursed his son! He'd just warned him to stay away from those people for a while, but he was too reckless! The news of that brat's reckless behaviour threatened not only the family's reputation but also intensified the scrutiny from external forces.

"Get our legal team involved immediately. We need to contain this situation, ensure his safety, and mitigate the damage to our name. I won't let this incident tarnish the Banfi legacy," Alpin declared, his tone commanding.

"And contact that servant here. I need to see who has the courage to go against the Banfis'. Tell the lawyers that they need to shut him up by hook or by crook. Am I clear?"

The servant nodded vigorously, understanding the gravity of the situation. "Yes, sir. I'll ensure our legal team is on it immediately, and we'll do whatever it takes to handle the situation discreetly."

As the messenger hurried out of the room to carry out the orders, Alpin Banfi Sr. remained seated, his mind racing to assess the extent of the damage. The combination of

Evangeline's unexpected attack and his own son's foolishness had thrust the entire family into a perilous situation. The legacy he had painstakingly built was now at risk, and he understood the urgency of containing the fallout.

First, he needed to find that fool's motive and look for the best way to turn around the situation. As he seethed, there was another knock on the door.

"What is it now?", he asked with mounting frustration wondering what was happening.

"Sir, there is more news. The person who was kidnapped is Princess Eleanora's lover. Young master wanted to use him to extract revenge from her. It is why he dared to kidnap the man."

"That fool! Did he really think that a servant would be important to her? He deserves to be lying in that hospital bed," the older man muttered, showing no concern whatsoever for his own son.

"Sir, there is something else."

"What is?"

"You've been wondering why Alexander Sterling's methods have changed. It seems that he has someone else advising him now."

That caught the man's interest. "Someone else?"

"Yes, sir. We've not been able to see who the person is but our person near the Prime minister has told us that the minister has become more secretive and that they have noticed him going off alone."

"Really? Where does he go?"

"He goes to the Queen's garden, sir? He's taken to a pastime for strolling along the labyrinth of mazes that Queen Rosalind had ordered the new gardener to make."

"The new gardener again? It is the same man that beat up my son?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well well. This is quite an interesting connection. First, Alexander changes his methods. And then there is a new servant who seems to be quite popular."

"Give me the background of this man."

"Sir, on paper the background is very simple. He is the son of the old gardener. But..."

"But what?"

"But the old gardener's son should be around his teens right now, according to the old servants. And the old gardener had left the country immediately after this young man joined. And many other servants who were close to that man have retired and left the country. It is quite a coincident that all of them are either on year-long holidays or have settled abroad."

"When did this man come to the palace?"

"A few months ago."

"After Eleanora came here?"

"Yes, sir."

Alpin Banfi smiled. This man is the one who is the master mind behind whatever is happening. Find out who else he is close to in the Queen's palace. We'll need to change our tactics."