

Benefits 301

Chapter 301: A Misunderstanding

Lucien stared up at Evangeline in bewilderment. Why was she glaring at him suddenly? Hadn't she been understanding before?

"You want to break up with me? And just when I have come to terms with the fact that you used to like Nora! I'll kill you Lucifer. Believe me I will." Since Evangeline's flight or fight instinct had been triggered, this time she decided that she was going to fight. She was going to break this man's teeth the way he seemed to be intent on breaking her heart!

"You. How can you do that? How can you break up with me like this?"

That made Lucien stand up as well, just when he would have found a coffee aimed at his head, he roared, "Who is breaking up with you?"

The roar ended up silencing them both and they stared at each other.

Evangeline opened her mouth to say something but was silenced from a scathing glance by Lucien who threatened, "One more word and I will spank your pretty a**. Did you hear a word that I said?"

Evangeline opened her mouth to protest before snapping it shut as she tried to think. How muddle-headed had she been? Sitting down, she tried to think.. he mentioned leaving and something about his... grandfather...

Guilt covered her expression and she realised just how selfish she had been lost in her own thoughts. "Your grandfather is sick? Why are you standing here wasting time? I'll arrange for the Royal airport to be cleared. And you don't need to worry about anything, I'll handle everything with the business matters...You must be feeling terrible. I'm so sorry..."

Lucien turned to Evangeline and shook his head. Now she was already in damage control mode and taking over everything. Taking her by the shoulders, Lucien spoke slowly, "Relax. Take a deep breath."

Evangeline breathed slowly and cleared her head. Dam* it! She could never see straight when it came to Lucien. She gave him a small apologetic smile and said, "I'm so sorry. I'm not thinking straight. So, your grandfather is sick and you are planning to go back?"

Lucien sighed and nodded, "Yes. We're leaving in about an hour. Considering everything has been resolved here... there is no need for everyone to stay."

She nodded in understanding, a question burning inside her. She wanted to ask him when he will return. Or if he will return. Their time together had made her forget the practicalities of life.

Lucien searched her eyes, hoping that she would ask him to stay. Or question him about when he would be back. That way, he would know for sure that she looked forward to his return. But she stayed quiet.

After a moment, he nodded and stepped back, "I'll be going then. See you.."

And even as her heart broke, she nodded her head, "Goodbye Lucien."

Lucien turned back to walk out, feeling something was amiss. What did she mean, goodbye? And...He stopped. What did she mean by 'he used to like Nora..'

With narrowed eyes and confusion etched across his features, he turned back and questioned, "What were you talking about just now? About me liking Nora? Which blabbermouth spoke to you? Seb or Erasmi? Or was it Ian?"

Was that why he had warned him to talk to her about it today? Because he had uttered something to Evangeline? Could it be Demetri... there had been some kind of warning in his eyes, maybe he had been trying to tell him that Evangeline knew.

Evangeline shifted uncomfortably under his gaze, regret flickering in her eyes. "I... I overheard the conversation between you and Ian, just now. He mentioned something about you having feelings for Nora before and you said you would talk to me about it..."

Lucien sighed. No wonder she had reacted so badly. He opened his mouth to explain, but his phone started to ring. It was Ian reminding him that they needed to leave. He sighed and pushed a hand through his hair.

"Evangeline, just remember one thing, Nora was never my love interest. Never. I won't say that I was not attracted to her but that is something that might be true. The matter is complicated. But there is nothing there. Or anything worth talking about it as well. Ian wanted me to avoid any misunderstanding and that is why he said that."

Evangeline looked at him, her eyes wide and vulnerable as she started to overthink again. Why did he have to be so indirect about it? He could simply say that he was attracted to her and now he is not. But he said that it was complicated...

Lucien read her eyes and sighed before looking at his phone again, which was continuously vibrating in his hand and sighed, "Evangeline, listen to me carefully. And thing even more carefully. Remember these two statements. I met you first. Nora kind of looks like you."

Evangeline's heart pounded in her chest, a mix of emotions swirling within her. "Lucien, I—"

He cut her off, desperation in his voice. "Evangeline, you need to believe me. I have never, and I mean never, liked Nora in the way I like you."

Before she could say anything more, Lucien quickly pulled her in for a hard kiss, trying to tell her everything that his words couldn't before stepping back and saying, "I'll be back soon. And I'll keep you updated. Don't be a stranger, lover."

Evangeline stood there, momentarily stunned by the intensity of his kiss. Lucien's words echoed in her mind as he pulled away, leaving her breathless.

As he turned to leave, a newfound determination lit up Evangeline's eyes. "You better return, Lucien, because I won't let you go that easily," she whispered to herself, a promise echoing in her heart. The uncertainty lingered, but the connection they shared was undeniable, anchoring her amidst the storm of emotions as she watched him leave.

However, she could not help but think what he meant by saying that Nora looked like her...

Chapter 302: Elijah Frost- Rest In Peace

Erasmi Frost sat on a comfortable couch as he stared at the man asleep on the bed. The air hung heavy with the scent of age and illness, a palpable tension that seemed to thicken as the old man lay on his deathbed.

Even as he sat there stoically, with nary an expression on his face, his insides were a mess. He'd thought he had hardened his heart to the old man, but as his emotions churned, he knew it was not the truth. Their time had been cut short, first by his accident and then by this.. and now that it had almost run out, Erasmi realized that this weight of grievances he carried might forever remain unresolved.

He watched silently as the old man's eyes opened, and slowly searched the room, before lighting up a bit as he stared at him. He sighed, "Demetri is on his way with the others, old man. You'll have to make do with me until then. Save your strength."

Unexpectedly, the old man did not ignore him but reached out his gnarled hand to hold his hand. Erasmi felt a surge of conflicting emotions as the old man's hand clasped his own.

The old man's voice, though frail, carried a hint of vulnerability. "Erasmi," he rasped, the syllables hanging in the air, heavy with unspoken regrets. In that moment, he saw for the first time, not the proud and heavy-handed Elijah Frost, but an old man, begging for his forgiveness and understanding.

"I've made mistakes, Erasmi," Elijah's voice was a mere whisper. "I know I've let you down, let everyone down. But in these final moments, I hope you can find it in yourself to forgive an old man for his faults."

The old man's apology caught him off guard, making him wonder what was the point in holding onto the pain of the past. It could not be changed. And while he'd wanted to punish the old man, he did not want him to suffer even in the afterlife.

With a heavy heart, he held the old man's hand and spoke softly, "Let the past remain there, old man. The others are going to be here soon, and you'll be able to come back home soon."

"I'm not going back, Erasmi. I know that. And so do you. My time has run out. But before that, I want to say something to you."

"Erasmi... that time," Elijah faltered, a sudden cough seizing him. The coughs racked his body, echoing in the small room, and Erasmi's concern deepened. He could see the old man gasping for breath, a hand clutching at his chest as if trying to stave off the pain.

Worry etched his face as he leaned forward, "Easy, old man. Let me call the doctor." Erasmi pressed the emergency button on the side table, the shrill sound resonating through the quiet room. Within moments, the door swung open, and a nurse hurried in, followed by a doctor.

He stepped back quickly as the doctor took his place, administering the medicine to help his grandfather breathe easily.

As his breathing steadied, the old man whispered slowly, "Thank you."

The doctor shook his head and ordered sternly to the two men, "Mr Frost is not allowed to talk. Please refrain from talking."

Erasmi nodded but Elijah Frost gave the old doctor a stubborn look as he said, "I need to say something. Once I have... I won't talk anymore."

The doctor shot an exasperated look to the old man while sending a warning glance Erasmi's way, reminding him that it was up to him to make the old man keep quiet and walked out of the room.

Before the old man could even open his mouth, Erasmi told the man, "Don't talk Grandpa. I did tell you to save your energy. I'll listen to you when you have recovered a bit."

Elijah Frost shook his head, the urgency in his eyes, a desperate plea, as he spoke in an even weaker but resolute voice, "I needed to say this before... before it's too late." I'm so happy that you are calling me Grandpa again...

"Erasmi... that time," Elijah faltered, attempting to press on despite the obvious strain on his weakened body. Erasmi moved to press the emergency button again, but the old man's grip on his hand tightened as he continued to try to speak.

But suddenly, his fingers loosened and his eyes, once filled with life, turned vacant. The machines monitoring his vital signs erupted into a symphony of alarming beeps, while Erasmi stood there shocked.

Soon, the doctors and an array of medical professionals rushed back into the room, shouting for things as the nurses and others rushed back and forth.

Soon, a heavy silence settled in as the doctor announced the time of death and turned to Erasmi. "I'm sorry," the lead doctor said, his voice a gentle murmur. "We did everything we could, but he's passed away."

Erasmi nodded silently as he watched the doctors walk away before almost crumbling onto the couch. Closing his eyes, years of memories passed before his eyes, of his childhood, the old man doting on them, teaching them the ways of business, playing with them... The memories flickered like an old film reel as tears escaped his eyes.

There was a time, when things had not been marred by the old man's stubbornness and their own anger. He felt a hand on his shoulder and looked up into the eyes of his twin. He watched all his brothers standing there, having rushed here as hurriedly as possible, still unable to bid the old man goodbye and looked at the pain mirrored in them.

The old man who had pestered and protected them all their life was not in this world anymore. They gathered together, hugging each other as they used to in the past, sharing their pain.

Soon, the old butler entered the room and bowed to his master, before looking at the brothers. The old man would be resting in peace now...

Chapter 303: Planned

Erasmi turned away from the brothers and looked down, slowly clenching his hands as he said, "I'll go and make arrangements for the funeral."

Just then the Butler stepped in, "There is no need, young master Erasmi. The old master has made all the arrangements."

Erasmi stared at Thomas and nodded slowly. The old bas*ard had to be so controlling that he did not even trust them with his funeral. Anger and grief continued to war inside Erasmi and the distraction of making the arrangements was also taken away from him.

The funeral was a silent and somber affair. Elijah Frost had made every arrangement for the funeral, making it clear that he would be as independent in death as he had been in life.

As the casket was lowered into the earth, the air hung heavy with the weight of unspoken words. Erasmi, Ian, Seb, Gabe and Lucien all stood together silently watching, while Demetri stood on the other side, his hand tight around Nora's.

The old Butler, Thomas, stood at a distance, his face a mask of professionalism. Behind him stood the old servants of the mansion who had come out to bid goodbye to their employer. Once the last handful of soil fell onto the casket, Erasmi took a deep breath, feeling a mix of closure and lingering resentment.

Grief had come in waves, but none of the brothers would show it. For each of them, the old man had been a pillar of strength. Invincible when their own parents had left this world. Yes, the man had turned unreasonable with age, and yet, they could not forget the time when he had been their world. Their Superhero who'd taken them places, and made them laugh. He'd scolded them fiercely, but no one had dared to raised their voices to them in his presence.

The passing of Elijkah Frost marked the ending of their own childhood. As the brothers, each started to walk away, the butler came forward," Masters. The old master has also arranged for an executioner of the will to arrive. Dinner will be served and then the attorney..."

Demetri sighed, knowing all of them needed time to come to terms with their grief and said," Uncle Thomas, we can do this tomorrow..."

"The old mansion will be sealed tomorrow onwards, master. All of us servants have been retired and bequeathed by the old master already. If you would like to retain anyone, I can have a word with them, but since most of us are already old, we will be leaving to spend time with our families. And the old master wanted this done so that he would be able to rest in peace."

In the dimly and dreary library of Elijah Frost, the attorney took the old man's place while the brothers all stood in different places, leaning against an odd shelf, wondering what the old man had in store for them. The only people seated were Demetri and Erasmi, with their heads bowed.

The attorney sighed and spoke, "As per Mr Frost's last request, the execution of his last will and testament will be done now. Before that, I have to read the last few words that he had to say to all of you."

The man cleared his throat and began, "To all my grandsons, you may think you hate me, but you've all made me the happiest man to be alive. As I dictate these words, I want to tell you only one thing, I leave this place with no regrets."

As an old man, I have buried my wife, two youthful sons and their wives, and lived with a lot of pain. But I have also had the chance of seeing you grow up to be fine young men. In fact your fathers even had a competitive streak that worried me, but all of you are like a team and that could not put me more in peace.

Over the last few years, I have tested your patience, and even offended people you hold dear, but consider this the old man's way of protecting you the best he could. But your choices in life proved to me that I need not worry in death, for you will all be there for each other.

Seb and Ian, the two of you, I have always held responsible for turning my hair grey earlier than they should have been, so I hope you will have an endless supply of hairdye when you reach my age and are blessed with grandchildren as lively as you all. You've taught me to be happy and let things roll over when the going gets tough.

And Ian, you really need to find a better way than to get my staff drunk to get information."

Ian and Seb exchanged glances as they heard the words, remembering the numerous mischiefs they had dragged the old man into.

Gabe, you were always the focused one and from a young age, you've been focused on the one person who is bound to give you pain forever. I had hoped to save you... but I realized that no matter how strong I was, I couldn't protect you. I wish you to have all the happiness in the world even if the price you are paying is pain. Be happy...

Gabe bowed his head in silence, not wanting to say a word.

Lucien, the youngest and the most innocent-looking kid. You've been smart in hiding your rebelliousness from your everyone's eyes. Out of them all, you are the one who has least received a mother's love. I always feared that it would make you less empathetic, but seeing the man you've become, I could not have been more proud, even if you do like going around on those forsaken motorcycles.

To Erasmi and Demetri, we've been at logger heads ever since the two of you grew taller. I see my self in the two of you and I hope, that in the future, you would think of me with not a sigh but a smile. I did my best for the two of you, even though you always repeatedly tried to get another grandmother for yourselves."

Chapter 304: The Will(2)

The attorney smiled at the brothers and pushed his glasses upwards. When Elijah Frost had dictated these words to him, he'd been amazed at what the man wanted to write. A rich tycoon like himself should be writing about his treasures but he was reminiscing and said nary a word about the vast Frost business.

He'd expected to see impatient faces, asking him to get on with the sentimentality and to business. For the first time, in his career, it made him happy to be reading a will. It was... warm to watch.

Clearing his throat, he continued, "I know you think I am going to talk about business now, but you all are wrong. I have a few more people to address, so you boys can sit back or just standing around and listen. But for god's sake, Ian, leave my porcelain dolls alone. I've already bequeathed them to you."

Ian straightened and quickly put back the little dog he was fidgeting with causing the others to give a low chuckle.

"My next words are to a person whom I insulted on the first meeting and hurt on the second. You came into my Demetri's life and shook him up. I cannot tell you how happy, you've made me Nora Williams

Frost. You reminded me of my wife, the way she used to get all fiery and sassy with me. I hope the two of you will always stay together.

Nora's eyes widened in surprise as she heard this, and she looked at Demetri in wonder. The old man who had done his best to make her miserable and divide a wedge between her and Demetri actually liked her and wanted them to be together.

Demetri held her hand and slowly entwined their fingers while the attorney continued, "Unfortunately, our time together was cut short by your accident and I could not get to know you as a granddaughter. I've got a special request and a gift for you."

The attorney picked up a small velvet box and a small white envelope with Nora's name written on it and passed it to her before taking his seat back and continuing, "Firstly, do not share this letter with your husband, I don't need him interfering in this. In the box that you've been handed is a key to a locker. It holds a few pieces of jewellery that my wife favoured over the years. I hope you will be able to enjoy them in the future. I hope you will like them. I know that woman is going to torture me in the afterlife and blame me for not giving these to you sooner."

Lastly, the business matters have already been taken care of and I know that I need not worry. This house, I leave to Erasmi Frost, my oldest grandson as a reminder, that he wherever he may wish to go, his home will always be here, waiting for him.

Demetri, Erasmi and the other brothers, all wiped their tears quickly as the attorney shut the file and looked at them carefully. He now placed a separate file on the table and said, "These are the division of the properties and treasures. Apart from this, Mr Frost has left personal letters to all of his grandsons.

According to him, the letters should answer any questions you all might have wanted to ask him.

As the brothers all parted, their letters in their hands, Demetri and Nora returned home with a bittersweet heart.

There should have been happiness in returning home but instead, there was only heartache. She'd wondered why Demetri was always tolerating Elijah Frost, despite the man pushing his limits repeatedly, but as she looked at the letter that she held in her hand, she realized that she did not know this man well.

Without a word, she watched Demetri walk towards his room, his own letter clutched in his hand and sat down on the couch. Slowly, she opened the letter that the old man had left to her.

She looked at the bold deliberate strokes and was reminded of her husband. He had a similar handwriting to his grandfather's.

Nora, First, I owe you an apology and I understand that you may or may not be willing to give me one so I take this chance to force you to accept it. You can't really refuse a dead man.

I never doubted you when I claimed you to be a gold digger or those other vile things. I've always trusted my Demetri's judgement. But the things I did were necessary for this would be the beginning of your future storms. The two of you will need to trust each other implicitly and I hope that my sly tactics have helped you forge a deeper bond.

The only thing that worried me was the difference in your ages. Demetri is a man of few words but his actions have always screamed louder than words. I always worried how he would find a woman who would bring out the youthful boy in him that was lost so many years ago.

But you brought that to him. In the little time that I had to observe the two of you, I saw life return to my little boy's eyes. Take this old man's bow as a way to thank you.

There is one last responsibility I am leaving you with. Do you remember the cheque that I offered to you? Offer that to any woman who you think is unsuitable for my boys. And if they all find good girls like you, divide the money between yourselves and consider them this old man's blessings. You might be the youngest of them all, but you are the fiercest of them all as well! Scare any bad woman away and keep my boys safe, Nora.

And don't roll your eyes at this old man's request. For if you don't help me here, I will haunt you from the grave. Lastly, feel free to name my great-grandson or granddaughter after me. I know my name is old fashioned so just Eli will be fine."

Nora chuckled at the old man's last words and tucked the letter back into the envelope. No wonder all these brothers had this whacked sense of humour and a little bit of that narcissism which made them endearing and not annoying. They'd inherited it from their grandfather.

Chapter 305: An end

The six brothers sat around the large green table, each lost in their own thoughts even as they seemed to be concentrating on their card game.

Ian nursed his drink in his hand and sighed, "Why did I not know we had so many relatives? Were they living in a hole, or were we?"

Demetri sighed and sipped his drink, "They'd been pushed into a hold by, Grandfather so that he could protect us."

Erasmi shook his head, "I had no idea the old man was paying off so many people. I did not even know that our mother had two brothers who are apparently our 'uncles'."

Lucien snorted and shook his head, "They are not uncles but more like leeches. Now that their blood source has been cut off, they are trying to latch onto us."

"I would have continued to support them if they had not created a scene at the memorial service today! Dam* it! No wonder Grandfather had already arranged the funeral and everything else. These people would have not let us bury him in peace." Seb groaned. "Who the heck fights over giving the eulogy? Did they think they were auditioning for a blockbuster movie?"

Demetri shook his head and threw down a card, "They've all been taken care of so there is no need to worry."

Ian looked at the others and asked, "Have you all read the letters that Grandpa left you?"

That question was followed by another round of cursing as each man buried their nose in either their cards or their drink, refusing to talk. The old man had left them in a quandary that neither of them was willing to talk about. Ian could not help but wonder if the contents had been unsettling for all of them. Were they the same requirements that he'd left for him or was it different?

Finally, he turned to Demetri, "What did Nora's letter say?"

"She refused to show it to me. But I did hear her cribbing something along the lines that she was going to name our baby Eli when hell froze over. It seems the oldie told her to name our kid after him."

That caused a round of chuckles, as they all recognized that it was definitely possible for the old man to have made such a request.

Recognizing that his brothers had no response, he turned to Erasmi who was also avoiding looking at him, "You haven't read yours."

"At least read it. You might regret it later." Gabe finally gave his two cents. The other brothers nodded in agreement, making Demetri look at them curiously. His letter had only contained an apology and advice from the old man.

"Yes. You might get some closure."

I don't need any closure from the old man. Erasmi sighed and shook his head, "When are you holding the wedding, Demon?"

"In another six months. Why?"

"We need to discuss the arrangement for taking over the CEO role. I don't want it."

"You still want to go on a tour?"

"Yes. I'll return for the wedding since I'm going to be your best man."

"Hey! We are all the best men. You can't take the position alone," Ian protested.

"Not up for discussion. You can be the second best man since you will be taking part in all the arrangements for the wedding. I'm leaving tonight."

"You can all be the best men, alright? We'll make it a rotating position."

Ian grinned, raising his glass, "To the best rotating best men in history!"

Laughter echoed around the table, temporarily alleviating the weight of their recent loss and familial revelations. As the atmosphere lightened, Demetri turned back to Erasmi, whose announcement had been like a bomb just now.

"Isn't that too soon?" Seb asked with concern.

"I was waiting for Demon to return."

"Read your letter before you leave, Erasmi." Gabe suggested softly.

Erasmi stared at Gabe carefully before looking away. Did Gabe know something that he did not? Erasmi did not tell them that he was going to leave right away, his packed bags already sitting in the car. The cursed letter inside.

Demetri sighed and looked at his twin, "Erasmi, are you sure about the CEO position. You are the rightful heir."

"I'm not cut out for it, Demon. Not anymore. I'd rather not do this. I've been looking forward to the tour."

Demetri stared at his brother carefully, while Ian added, "Fair enough. Just don't disappear completely, alright?"

Erasmi nodded, a hint of gratitude in his eyes. "I won't disappear. You'll see me at the wedding, and I'll be back when you least expect it, probably with some wild tales from the tour. And probably more se* escapades than you all."

Seb chuckled at that and mocked, "That is impossible, Remi! You've got a decade to catch up on and we are not going to be celibate while you are playing catch."

That made laughter resonate around the table while they slowly started to concentrate on the game at hand. As the night came to an end, the brothers all walked off in different directions, knowing their paths might be different but they would always have each other's backs. They present had changed but they were still the same.

As Demetri entered his house, his eyes went to scan the familiar couch, a smile on his face as he watched his wife asleep there, surrounded by books, just like in the past. With a smile, he gently picked her up in his embrace and carried her to their room, realizing now, what his grandfather had meant by finding a home for himself.

Nora opened her eyes sleepily as she caressed his face, "You're back."

"Hmm."

"So, has grandfather told anyone else to name their kid after him? Did you let them know that they could have the honour."

Demetri smiled and shook his head, as she pouted, "Our first born is going to be named Elijah Frost?"

Demetri chuckled and quickly pecked her nose, "Think about the satisfaction you will have when the kid is naughty and you can scold him."

Nora giggled at that and wound her arms around his neck, "You do know how to look at the bright side."

Demetri smiled and stood up, before getting rid of his clothes and into bed as he reminded her, "You do know that you can name our kid anything else. The old man was only kidding, maybe wanting to get a rise out of you, since he did not have the chance to do it alive."

Nora smiled and shook her head, "I don't mind. You loved that old coot. But..."

As Nora was about to add a condition, she was pulled into a hard chest as her chin was nudged upward to receive a kiss.

"What are you doing?"

"We need to practice the deed. How else will we get a firstborn...Hmm?"

Nora smiled as she received the kiss. Her husband was right. Practice makes perfect.

Chapter 306: Lucifer

Lucien walked home, his mind lost far away. He did not know what the old man had written to his brothers, but the task that the man had left him ate away at him. Only he was the one who knew how vast his grandfather's financial portfolio had been, to have been able to finance so many of their relatives.

As his financial adviser, he also understood that he had sometimes invested on behalf of some other people as well. And he'd managed to close those accounts. All but one.

While Elijah Frost had made all his bequests clear in his will, letting everyone know about their gains and losses, he'd left a responsibility to him. It was a single name and an account number, where he was to deposit money every year. A considerable amount for the next ten years.

He wanted to find out who the woman was that his grandfather wanted taken care of but he'd been forbidden to investigate her or ask about her from anyone. From what he could see, none of the older brothers knew about this. Was it another relative that their grandfather was hiding? An older lady, maybe his old muse or a sister. But what if the old man had been tricked by some con artist?

The thought of the old man leaving him such a quest gave him a headache. The old man had requested that he not investigate the woman and he would honor his last request. But that did not mean he would not investigate the past. It was up to him to wind down their grandfather's portfolio, he would need to take a look at this account number to try and find out when the man started paying this person. If it started recently, then he would have to dishonor the old man's wishes.

With a sigh, he looked up at his apartment and shook his head. He hadn't come back here since leaving for Estania and now that he was here, he did not want to go into the silent place. He ached for his angel.

Turning away, he walked towards his garage, ready to go for a ride. Maybe the fresh air would help clear his head. As he walked there, he heard a sweet voice call out, "Am I invisible now?"

He stopped in his steps and whipped around, wondering if his eyes and ears were playing tricks on him. As he stood there in a trance, the wisp of his imagination came closer and stood before him with her hands on hips, "Lucifer Frost. Are you alright? I heard about your grandfather and came here but you are ignoring mmmmm...."

Before she could say more, Lucien had closed the distance between them, catching her in a tight hug. His arms wrapped around her securely, pulling her close, as if he feared she might vanish if he let go.

Their bodies pressed together, almost causing them to stumble backwards until her back met the cool wall. Lucien buried his face in the crook of her neck, taking in the comforting scent that was uniquely her and sighed deeply as he let out a whispered, "Angel."

Until that moment, he had not even realized how much he needed her. Evangeline wrapped her arms around his in a comforting embrace, the intensity of his hug letting her know that she had done the right thing in coming here for him.

It was quite a while later, as a few people passed with catcalls and wolf whistles in their wake that Lucien, finally remembered that they were in the middle of the street. Stepping back, he quickly caught her hand in his, entwining their fingers together, as he walked into his house.

As they walked into the house, before Evangeline could even look around curiously, Lucien's lips were on hers as he pulled her into him hard, "I've missed you", he whispered between kisses. "Thank you for coming to my side."

Evangeline kissed him back, with a hunger that surprised even her. As he picked her up, pushing her against the door, he seemed to regain a bit of sense," Angel, you need to leave. Tonight... I'm not safe for you."

"I don't need to be safe from you, Lucifer. I'm here to be with you, comfort you. I'm all yours."

Her words were like lighting a match over dried grass, seeming to intensify the fire in him.

He pushed himself against her, letting her know how much he needed him. She tightened her legs around him, needing him closer as she kissed him deeply, wanting him to forget the worry that she had seen on his face as he's walked with his head bowed.

Lucien caressed her through her dress, pushing his hand under her skirt, as his hips anchored her in place.

With urgent hands, he stepped back a bit, supporting her with one hand while stepping away and getting rid of their clothing in one move. In the next moment, the two groaned together as he entered her, his breath hot against her neck.

"Do you know that falling in love with you is the best thing, I have ever done in my life. I want to stay with you forever. You belong to me, only me."

As he pushed into her with each word, her eyes snapped open as she caught his words, kissing him hard. Breathing hard, she dug her nails into his back, letting go of all her own worries as she felt him inside her.

She moaned," Harder, Lucifer. You have to remind me that I belong to you."

In the aftermath of their pent-up emotions, Lucien and Evangeline lay stretched on the couch, with only a blanket covering them.

Lucien sighed as he held her close while Evangeling looked up at his face, "I'm sorry I could not meet your grandfather."

"You'd have hated him." Lucien spoke fondly.

"Really?" Evangeline asked him in surprise.

"Yes. He was a stubborn old man. But he approved of you. So that you know."

"What do you mean he approved of me? How did he know me."

Lucien sighed and finally realized that he had someone he could talk to...

Chapter 307: A Surprise

Demetri walked out of the shower to find his wife missing from the bed and the aroma of freshly brewed coffee wafting through the air. Walking outside, he smiled as he watched his wife sitting on the kitchen countertop with an apple in her hand.

"Where did the sunrise today? My kitten is having starting the day without a sugar rush?"

Nora grinned and shrugged as she bit into the apple in her hand and leaned back, "I wanted to surprise you. So surprise. Have the coffee and tell me if I've made it according to your taste.."

Demetri walked towards her as he threw the towel aside and quickly tapped her nose, "You look like Eve tempting Adam to sin with that apple..."

Nora laughed and with a flourish, took another bite, letting the sweetness linger on her lips, her gaze never leaving Demetri's. She watched as his eyes heated up and raised her brows to him challengingly.

Demetri chuckled and quickly stole a kiss from her lips, his hands on her thighs, ready to step closer when she brought the apple between them and rolled her eyes at him, "I made coffee for you. You have to drink that."

"I'd rather have you." Demetri protested.

Nora giggled and narrowed her eyes at him as he stepped back and sipped the coffee, only to cough and almost spit it out. Nora laughed and jumped off the countertop as she sympathized with him, "Oops. Did I make the coffee too strong?"

Demetri shook his head and glared at the distasteful liquid in the cup, "You call that coffee? It's sugar syrup with a hint of coffee."

"How can you say that? That is the taste of my love for you."

"More like your love for sugar. Kitten, I'm an old man, if I take you love in this form, I'll turn diabetic soon. Your sweet kisses will suffice if you want me to taste your love." Demetri sighed as he moved towards the coffee maker, to make himself a fresh pot... without the sugar killing him.

Laughing, Nora obstructed his way, "Fine fine, I'm sorry. I was just teasing you. There's your real coffee."

Grabbing another cup that she had hidden in the microwave, she placed it into his hand and frowned, "Here's your bitter coffee."

Demetri looked down at the cup that his wife was offering and then at the innocent face before taking the plunge, hopefully it was a decent coffee this time.

As he took the first sip, his eyes widened in surprise. She'd made it exactly the way he did.

"Thank you. This is perfect." Finally, as they sat down for breakfast, Nora sighed, "I can't believe I'm going to be back at university to only sit for the exams. What happened to extra credits? I mean really, all they needed was a large funding from my uncle and they agreed to let me back in through the back door?"

"You've already proven yourself. It was not your fault that everything happened. And they have agreed to let you sit for the exams, but you'll have to earn the credits, kitten. It's just that you've been given some extra time. The next few months are going to be full of studying."

"Tsk tsk. I'm not worried. I've got this hot professor at home..."

Demetri shook his head at her antics and stood up, walking around the small table and leaned down, close to her ear, "Well, you'll need to pay the professor..."

His intoxicating scent assaulted her senses and as the man's robe split apart, Nora lost her direction of thought and gulped.

Demetri smiled. He liked surprising her too. And she had not been expecting that he would surprise her in the middle of breakfast.

"You... When did you get that?"

Nora asked as she pointed at the small tattoo on his chest, the same place as her own tattoo. She'd definitely not seen that earlier.

Demetri chuckled and taking her hand, brought it to him, letting her hand slide under the edge of the robe, "It is not permanent yet. But what do you think?" The words 'only hers' had been written in the same way as hers and she could not help but grin.

"It's perfect. Are you going to get it done?"

"Hmm. I'm thinking it." Demetri answered.

Her hand continued to caress his skin, making him interested in other things and he quickly caught her wrist, "You are too dangerous kitten. We have to go soon."

Nora pouted, "It's your fault. You do things that make me want you."

Demetri's lips lifted in a smirk at her complaint as he quickly gave her a hard kiss and stepped back," I like making things difficult for you. Now come on, get ready. I'll drop you off at the Uni and once your paperwork is complete. I might have a surprise for you."

Nora's eyes lit up at that. "A surprise? Is it a Lunch-quickie?"

Demetri laughed at that and shook his head," If you're a naughty girl, then maybe we can add something like that. But for now, a quickie is not on the lunch menu."

Nora pouted, but immediately got to her feet," I'll get ready now. But I am warning you, Demetri Frost, if the surprise is at least not on par with a quickie, you will find that all your coffee beans have suddenly been soaked in my love."

With his eyes twinkling, Demetri shrugged his shoulders and called out," Nothing is on par with a quickie I can give you kitten."

Turning around, she made a face at the man, teasing him before quickly running away as he threatened to bite the tongue that she was showing him.

Demetri watched her run into the room and shook his head with a sigh. How was it possible to fall for someone every day? But that was exactly how it was. He'd never know what would come into her head next.

He glanced at the abandoned 'sugar syrup' cup in the corner and gently took another sip. He didn't mind the extra love. Not at all.

Chapter 308: A Surprise (2)

Nora drummed her fingers on the table as she glanced at the door for the umpteenth time. As she looked at the watch, she frowned. Demetri had become a total tease. He'd asked her to wait here for lunch and was now making her wait. She was so hungry..

Suddenly, a hand covered her eyes from behind and a voice whispered," Guess who, kitten."

Since she's just stiffened at the sudden hand, Nora relaxed and a small smile played along her lips. Her hands went up to hold his wrist and she quickly spoke, "You're late."

"Sorry, kitten," he chuckled softly.

Hearing the chuckle, she decided to make things more interesting. "You owe me for being late," she declared with a sly grin. "I think we need to have a quickie to make up for it."

She felt him stiffen in shock and used the chance to put pressure on his nerve in the wrist, which made him curse and drop his hands as she said, "Ian Frost, next time you try to impersonate my husband, I'll break your hand!"

Nora turned to see Ian standing behind her with a pained grin as he asked, "What on earth? Are you trying to get me killed by Demetri? When did you know it was me?"

"From the very beginning. Your hands smell different than his."

Ian rolled his eyes at that, "I don't even want to know how you distinguish that. And you said what you said knowing it wasn't him! This is attempted murder!"

Nora simply winked at him before gesturing for him to sit across her and asked, "What are you doing here?"

"I am your surprise."

Nora snorted at that, "Ha! As if."

Ian rolled his eyes at that again, causing Nora to giggle and say, "Your eyes will fall out if you keep doing that."

"Stop cursing me. Fine. I was charged with bringing in your surprise here."

Nora's eyes widened and she looked at him eagerly, " Really! Wow! Give it to me fast? Is it some exotic dessert? I hope you did not sit on it!"

Ian almost rolled his eyes again before stopping himself and instead said, " No! It is not a dessert and I assure you I would not dare to sit on your surprise. Look there."

Nora followed his direction and her eyes widened as she stared at the person standing there. Quickly, she pinched Ian who groaned and then laughed, " Is that really who I think it is?"

"You bish! First you literally forget me and then you are wondering if I am a figment of your imagination?" The woman at the door called out softly.

In an instant, she forgot everything and jumped up from her seat as she ran towards the door with a squeal, "Bella baby!"

The two girls, laughed and hugged each other, quickly talking over the other in rapid chatter making Ian wince. Were they even understanding each other?

"I can't believe you're here!" Nora exclaimed, tears of joy welling up in her eyes.

"And I can barely believe you are alive. You have no idea!!!" As tears welled in her eyes, the two girls hugged each other and cried again.

Seeing the girls like this made Ian smile as he decided to finally interfere. Quickly, he guided them towards the private room that Demetri had already arranged and asked the wait staff to bring in the bottle of wine, " The two of you can have fun here and catch up. Demetri will be here in the evening. Bye ladies."

As the two girls settled side by side, Isabella could not help but hug her again as she said, " I missed you babe."

"I missed you too Bella."

"Liar. I know all about it. You'd forgotten about me. Tell me everything now."

With a sigh, Nora recounted everything from the time they last separated to the present punctuating the story with drinking break and pouring the drink break. By the end of a few hours, the food lay untouched on the table while the two girls lay in each other's arms crying and laughing aloud.

Drunkenly, Isabella poked at Nora and complained, "It's a good thing Demetri remembered me and brought me here to be your Maid of honour! Or my best friend had totally forgotten me. You wouldn't have even invited me to the wedding!"

Nora shook her head in protest and cut off the girl, "Hey! You're wrong. How can I marry without the VIP."

"Ha! I wouldn't be the VIP at your wedding. It would be Demetri Frost.

"Demetri Frost cannot be VIP. He will only be the groom. My Bella will be the VIP."

"Then you will marry me, Nora?" Isabella giggled drunkenly.

Nora shook her head at that but before she could say more, a droll voice spoke, "I invite you here for my wedding, and you are usurping my place?"

Demetri stood at the door, looking down at the two girls sitting on the floor drunkenly, while the food sat untouched on the table.

Shaking his head, he sighed, "You were supposed to eat and drink. Not just drink."

Nora looked up at her 'four' husbands and grinned and swayed, "This is the best gift, husband. I like it. It rates just below the quickie on the rating scale."

Demetri shook his head. She was still stuck on her quickie while Isabella protested, "How could you! You mean I give you less happiness than a quick toss with your husband? You are a mean friend. I won't help you choose your bridal colours! You go ask your bed friend to do it instead of your best friend!"

"No. You can't abandon me! You are my best friend. Demetri wouldn't know the difference between magenta and fuchsia!"

With a shake of his head, he entered the room and gently relieved the two girls of the bottles from which they were taking swigs.

Isabella narrowed her eyes and questioned him, "Do you know the difference between the two colors."

Demetri shrugged and answered, "Magenta is purple and fuchsia is purple."

Isabella fell back and patted Nora, "Don't worry, baby. I won't abandon you."

Chapter 309: To Erasmi

Erasmi sat in the dark library as he looked down at the thick stack of envelopes in his hand. While the others had been given a letter each, his envelope had contained a key to the old man's locker, where he'd left him a stack of letters.

As he looked down at the yellowed envelopes, he could not help but want to ignore the letters. He'd not planned to open a single letter until Gabe's warning gave him a pause. Elijah Frost was not one to do things only out of sentimentality. He was an astute and cunning man who always had a motive. And the fact that no one was willing to talk about the letters made it clear that something was fishy.

However, he was not interested in the motive or the result. What he wanted to know was if there was something in the letters that would give him the answers he needed.

With deliberate care, Erasmi gently set the current envelope aside, his attention now focused on the one with the most recent date.

It was from a year ago... when the old man discovered that he had survived...

Erasmi,

When you read this letter, I will have already gone from this world. I know you think I have done you injustice over the years, and I accept all blame but one.

Believe it or not, I was the happiest about your survival. All these years, watching you wither away slowly and surely had been as painful for me as for Demetri.

I write to you now, not to justify, but to offer a glimpse into the depths of my heart, where remorse and love for you reside in equal measure. Erasmi, when I signed that Do Not Revive letter, it had been almost ten years since you had been in that state. Only Demetri and I had been aware of your meagre existence.

Before I explain, take a minute and answer this one question, if it was Demetri in your place, would you have fought as fiercely for him as he did for you? Even while smothering yourself in guilt?"

Erasmi paused as he rubbed his forehead. He did not need the moment. He knew the answer, he would not have given up. In that regard, he and Demetri had been same. But he also knew that knowing you would do it and doing it were very different things. He dare not forget the sacrifices that Demetri had made for him.

Picking up the letter again, he continued to read, "I decided to let you go the day after I discovered the news of my own cancer. You must think that I was angry about dying and decided to take it out on you. But it is somewhat opposite."

"As I stared at my imminent death, there was one thing that worried me. For a decade, I had watched not one but two of my grandsons putting their life on hold. And the threat of my own death made me realise that I could not let Demetri also die along with his brother.

The two of you came into this world together but it did not mean that you had to leave it together. If I had died before you returned or moved into the next life, Demetri would have continued to live in that hell alone.

I hope, Erasmi, that you can find it in your heart to forgive an old man's desperate attempt to shield one grandson from the suffering he had witnessed him endure for so long. The pain I caused you was not a punishment or a lack of love for you, but a misguided act of protection, as strange as it may sound."

"I could not bear the thought of Demetri carrying the burden of your absence alone. I believed that letting you go was the only way to ensure he could forge a life beyond the shadows of your memories."

"When I first heard of your return, my heart soared with an inexplicable joy. The prospect of reuniting with a grandson I believed I had lost brought a warmth to my soul that I hadn't felt in years. But then I heard whispers of what you had done in your quest for revenge. How you had almost destroyed the one person your brother had come to treasure and I could not help but worry again."

"I feared that the flames of your anger might burn everyone around you. But the Lord blessed me with a slightly longer life and I was able to witness the love of your brothers, slowly put out the flames of your anger. "

Erasmi closed his eyes, allowing the words to settle in his mind. The library's silence seemed to contrast the turmoil in his mind. Never had he believed that this could be the reason for his grandfather to have signed the DNR.

No wonder the man had been at loggerheads with Demetri over that. If Demetri knew that their grandfather had done what he did to spare him, the idiot would have drowned himself in more guilt. Leaning back in his chair, he almost crumpled the letter in his hand. He could feel there was another page that his grandfather had filled out but suddenly, he had no strength to read it.

His vision blurry with unshed tears, he realized that he could not continue to be angry at the old man when he would have done the same thing for Demetri. If it ever came to choosing between Demetri's life and his own death, he would choose his own death.

With a painful sigh, he turned the page, apologizing to his grandfather for not giving him a chance to explain his own pain. The old man had endured much and he hoped he would have peace now.

However, as his eyes scanned the words on the next page, all that anger and understanding seemed to fly out of the library's quiet window. Placing the letter in his hand aside he frantically searched through the pile of old letters, looking for the oldest one.

Chapter 310: Hot Ian

Ian shot a disapproving glance at his brother, who was actively supporting his wife, and then shifted his gaze to the other girl who, by all accounts, was meant to be under his care.

Instead of picking her up, he crossed his arms in front of him and questioned, "Why do I have to give up my night because your wife's best friend drank too much?"

"Because you are the best man." Demetri shrugged as Nora poked him in the shoulder gesturing for him to lean down so that she could climb on his back.

"Of course, I am the best man but what does have to do with taking care of... her."

Demetri shot a look at Ian and clarified, "You are the best man for my wedding, and she is the maid of honor. It is your responsibility to help her with the wedding arrangements which is what they have started today. So, you take care of her and I'll be taking my wife home."

Before Ian could say more, Demetri had picked up his wife and disappeared from the restaurant leaving him with the inebriated Isabella. Gently, he crouched down in front of her and said, "Come now, drunken beauty. Time to take you back to the castle."

Isabella opened her eyes and looked at the handsome man in front of her face. Grinning, she asked him, "Oh. You are so handsome. What's your name you hot man?"

Ian grinned at that. Isabella was quite like Nora. No filter on their mouths. "My name is Ian."

"Hi, Hot Ian. My name is Bella."

"Beautiful Bella. It's time to take you home."

"Ian, do you have a girlfriend?"

Ian Frost almost rolled his eyes. It seems drunk Isabella was flirtier than the sober one. As she leaned closer, her alcohol-laden breath hitting his face, he leaned back a bit, feeling a headache coming on. "No, I don't have a girlfriend. Now, your address?"

Isabella cocked her head and frowned, "Uhh, I don't know."

Ian shook his head and gently helped her up, "Come on girl. We'll sort out your address on the way home."

As he helped her up, Isabella lost her balance and leaned fell against his body. Ian stilled as he felt her press herself into him and reminded himself that he was a responsible man and not a perv.

Hurriedly, he put some distance between them and somehow half dragged half pushed her to his car. As the cold air hit her face, he watched her blink blearily and shake her head as she made a face. "Hey Isabella. Don't you dare throw up in my car alright?"

"I do not throw up." Isabella pouted before complaining, "Hot Ian, you're a buzzkill."

"Good. My only job is to get you home safely. And nothing else. So get in girl."

As he gently placed her in the passenger seat and walked to the driver's side, he cursed in his head. He should have asked Nora for Isabella's address.

"Now, your add..."

Ian trailed off before he could finish his question. His passenger had fallen asleep and was now snoring lightly.

As he sat there trying to think of a way to find her address, Isabella suddenly opened her eyes and leaned over him.

In a surprisingly sober and coordinated move, her fingertips delicately brushed against his shoulder as she leaned over him, surrounding him with her scent.

Ian stilled as she leaned back, his seat belt clicking into place as she murmured, "You shouldn't drive without a seatbelt, Hot Ian."

And then she was asleep again. As his senses returned, Ian glanced at the girl beside him and sighed. What the heck was wrong with him? Why was he suddenly looking at Isabella differently? She was the same girl that they'd met last year and danced with. While she was fun to hang around, he had most certainly not been attracted to her.

In fact, he'd definitely seen some sparks flying between Erasmi and her. Maybe he'd been too long without a woman. He needed to go and look for one right away. Or he could attribute this madness to that absurd letter grandfather had left him.

With a frustrated sigh, he drove around the city, feeling the need to clear his head. Though that proved to be a difficult task since the girl kept shuffling, her dress riding up her thighs, distracting him with those long legs...

An hour of torture later, Isabella was still snoring away peacefully. Feeling hesitant about disturbing her, knowing she had travelled a long distance to come here, he could only continue to sigh.

Finally, unable to think of anything else, he decided to check her into a hotel but then stopped. What if she woke up in the middle of the night and walked out? Or threw up and choked on her own vomit?

With a frown, he changed directions and took her to the safest place he knew. His own home.

Ian pulled into his driveway and turned to the sleeping beauty in the passenger seat. In a hurry to now finish his task, he quickly walked around, carried her out of the car and into his home swiftly.

She snuggled against him, murmuring something unintelligible while rubbing her cheek against his shirt.

Once inside, he quickly settled her on the bed in the guest bedroom and pulled off her shoes, while avoiding looking at those inviting legs.

Once the shoes were off, he swaddled Isabella in the blanket like a baby and stepped back with a nod, admiring his handiwork. He'd trussed her up well, with only her face visible. Now she could sleep like a baby. Literally and he'd have made sure she was safe.

"Alright, Sleeping Beauty. I'll see you in the morning."

With those last murmured words, Ian quickly slipped out of the room, vowing that he would go to the club and find himself a girl immediately. Little did he know that things would end up changing drastically come morning.