

# **Husband With Benefits**

## **chapter 91-100**

### **chapter 91**

Arabelle stared at her reflection with an air of dissatisfaction. The reflection in the ornate mirror displayed her perfectly styled hair, but it was clear that she was far from content with the result.

As Arabelle's stylist meticulously worked on her hair, she couldn't help but sigh softly, her expression revealing her unhappiness.

She sighed and complained softly, "I just can't seem to get the right look today. It's like something's missing. Just get me someone else if you cannot understand what to do!"

The high-end salon was a luxurious oasis nestled in the heart of the city, adorned with crystal chandeliers, plush velvet furniture, and the faint scent of exotic orchids in the air. It was the kind of place where the elite of the elite came to be pampered, and Arabelle was a regular fixture there. The stylist's hands trembled as she heard the girl complain.

This rich girl was known to have a bad temper. The previous hair stylist had lost their job here because she had failed to give her the exact hair color that she wanted. No amount of explanation worked on this woman.

Quickly, the hair stylist stepped back and bowed, "I'll go get someone more experienced, Miss Arabelle. Please excuse me a moment."

But even as she walked out, leaving the esteemed patron reclining on a fine leather chair, she had no idea what to do. She was the most experienced of all stylists and she had done everything she could to satisfy the customer. But Miss Arabelle seemed intent on making a fuss today.

Arabelle glared at herself once again. There had to be something she could do to attract his attention tomorrow. Great Uncle had promised to announce her marriage tomorrow. It was a big day for her. She could not afford to look less than perfect when she stood next to Demetri.

While she pondered this, she heard a woman's voice dripping with entitlement as she announced, "I am here for an appointment. I want your most experienced stylist."

Arabelle frowned at the arrogance of the older woman and turned away, not interested anymore. She needed to go for her dress trial and the delay was not helping her mood!

Just then, her previous stylist brought another one who started to do something with her hair. As the new stylist tugged at her hair, Arabelle scolded the woman, "Do you want to lose your job? This place has been declining with no good person. I won't be coming here again."

The woman who had been quietly sipping her champagne nearby, glanced over at Arabelle with a knowing smile.

Irritated at the woman's smug smile, Arabelle attacked her to ease her frustration, "And who might you be? What are you sitting there and looking at me for?"

The woman shook her head and smiled, "I am looking at you, of course. You are beautiful but not extraordinarily so. Or rather, your beauty is generic. You want to enhance the natural beauty and make yourself stand out, but it is not working, isn't it? I know just what to do. It is why I was smiling. My name is Lara Anderson."

As the woman insulted her even as she complimented her, Arabelle could not help but feel a hostile curiosity. She did not like the woman's intrusion, but she also noticed how impeccably dressed and styled this woman was.

Though somewhat irked, Arabelle was intrigued by the advice, "What would you suggest?"

Lara looked at her carefully and spoke, "You have an impeccable bone structure. But your straight hair does not highlight it. I'd suggest a slight change in hair length. Perhaps a touch of layering and curling to accentuate your cheekbones and give your locks more movement? It would frame your face beautifully and give you the perfect soft and romantic look."

Arabelle preened at the compliment and looked at herself in the mirror again. She'd heard someone mention that Demetri liked women with long hair and it was why she had insisted on keeping hers longer than average even though she found them troublesome. But maybe she could have them shortened a bit like the woman suggested...not too much, just enough to make him notice her.

Seeing that Arabelle was caught up in her words, Lara continued, "Also, colour is where you can truly make a statement. Given your complexion and the upcoming special occasion, how about enhancing your natural hue with subtle highlights that catch the light? It will add a touch of radiance to your overall look."

Arabelle nodded agreeably as she heard this before she looked at the woman in confusion, "How did you know that there is a special occasion for me?"

Lara laughed at that and shook her head, "It has to be a special occasion for you, otherwise why would you be so tense about your looks? Come on, you can tell me what is troubling you."

Seeing that the stylist had quickly understood what Lara told her, Arabelle leaned back in her chair as she chatted with the older woman on the other chair. Lara seemed to remind her of her own mother who she was very close to and was missing dearly.

A few hours later, Arabelle stared at her reflection once again, greatly satisfied this time. She really did look exceptionally beautiful and unlike her usual self. The highlights added a luminous quality to her hair, catching the light and making it gleam with radiance. She felt transformed, like a newfound version of herself, and her confidence soared.

Turning to Lara with a genuine smile, Arabelle couldn't contain her gratitude, "Thank you for your advice."

As Lara smiled at her warmly, Arabelle continued, "You know, Lara, tomorrow is my birthday. I'd be delighted if you could join me in the celebration. Here is my card."

Lara Anderson accepted the card with an appreciative smile and answered, "I'd be honored to attend. Happy early birthday!"

As Arabelle left the salon with a happy smile, she failed to see Lara Anderson's triumphant gaze.

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## **Chapter 92: AAAHHHHH**

[ 1,123 words ]

### **Chapter 92: AAAHHHHH**

Nora slid off the bed with a groan. Her body was stiff and sore, a gift from last night's activities. Sigh. She would have to force herself if she wanted to keep up today. Stretching slowly, she looked down at the man who was sleeping peacefully on the bed. How foolish had she been last time when she thought that he was a gentle lover!

Last night, exhausted from their continuous exercise, she had breathlessly asked him about why he had been so calm and slow previously while yesterday the man had been a beast. He'd only given her a reply in a few words, "It was your first time!"

Even after that night, she had been deliciously tired. But now... no wonder he said that he would give her a way to cry! Even walking to the bathroom, made her feel like crying! People were right to call him a Demon! In fact they should call him a Beast!

She looked at his sleeping form and grimaced enviously. How come he was able to slumber so peacefully while she had to be a morning person?

As she made her way to the bathroom, he moved, letting the blanket covering him slip. Her gaze followed his perfect back and a faint blush crept onto her cheeks. Despite the fatigue, she could not help but grin. So what if he had left numerous marks on her, she had done the same. Let him go and try standing under running water now..."

Hurriedly, she walked into the bathroom, taking inventory at every mark he'd left on her. Tonight was her first appearance as his wife and she was covered in love bites! The man was too much.

Sigh, thankfully, she did not have to worry about going shopping as he had already arranged for a dress for her.

As she made her way out of her room, she could not help but look back at him once more. Her mind drifted back to the first time they had met at Grandpa William's office. She'd been so awed and intimidated by him. But there had also been something reassuring in his gaze that had seemed to attract her. It was the aura he exuded. He'd looked at her as if he could crush her like a bug.

Now that she looked at his sleeping form, he still had that same powerful aura but it seemed to be tempered by more grace and elegance. It was as if this was his natural form without any artifice.

Grandpa William had really done her a favour by making her meet this perfect man. When she had walked into his office after seeing Antonio with Sara, she had been shattered. There had been only one thought in her mind and that had been to escape.

If Grandpa William had not coaxed her to fight for her rights, reminding her that her father would not want this for her, she had finally agreed to meet Demetri Frost.

She looked at his straight nose and thin lips, marvelling at his perfect features. When they divorced three years from now, it would be impossible for her to find a lover as favourable as him. She needed to enjoy him as much as she could before he got tired of her already or if they needed a break.

That said, she turned away from the temptation incarnate that was him. Suddenly, her mind was supplying her with some X-rated images to see if she could explore the things that had been left out previously.

As she hurried out of her room, she failed to see the man eyes half-lidded, staring at her intensely. Gradually, he stood up from the bed and sighed. Last night, he had come with a singular purpose to clarify a few things between them. And to lay down the rules for this new aspect of their relationship. And instead, like a hormonally driven teenager besotted with his first love, he had directly flirted with her and slept with her.

He was treading on dangerous territory, he knew. When he'd first laid down the condition to sleep together, he had been under the assumption that she might have some experience with her previous boyfriend. However, over the course of the months, he'd already understood that she was inexperienced. And yet, he had been unable to stop himself from being attracted to her.

Demetri rubbed the bridge of his nose. One misstep and his entire plan would come crumbling down like a house of cards. Him and Nora needed to be on the same page before they continued with this charade.

Grabbing his boxers, he slid them on and walked out of her room, intending to freshen up and have the talk with her. For a moment, he hesitated. He'd already made the terms clear in the beginning and from what he could see, Nora had not been very clingy or shown any signs of being infatuated with him. So maybe there was no need for the talk? It might only upset her which would in turn affect his plan...

However, as he walked out, he heard the voice of a woman, "Come on, you have to hold onto him. He is ravishingly handsome! I mean if I were you, I would tie him to my bed and have my way with him..."

As he heard this, there was a momentary silence and then Nora's voice sounded, "Hush! You cannot go around threatening to molest people! Also, his handsomeness is beside the point!"

"Well it shouldn't be beside the point! It should, be the point! I mean, come on this is straight out of a novel plot! You find out your fiance is cheating. Then you discover that he is a God in bed, and he has helped you. Of course, you have to devote yourself to him... it would be even better if it were in bed..."

Nora rolled her eyes at her best friend's dramatic encouragement and agreed teasingly, "Yes, yes. As you say, ma'am. I'll go right in and kneel down in front of him..."

However, she could not have expected a velvety voice to agree, "I certainly wouldn't mind that, kitten."

"AAAHHHHHHH"

Two simultaneous screams echoed in the kitchen as Nora looked up and met Demetri's alluring eyes while Isabella screamed in excitement, shouting, "Is that the handsome hunk? Go go Nora."

While a smile spread on his face, Nora hurriedly jabbed at the phone to disconnect the call and tried to think of a way to escape. Dam\* it! She had never expected that she would be so embarrassed. She needed to find a hold to bury herself in....

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## **- Chapter 93: Embarrassed**

As Nora clutched her phone to her chest, the traitor Isabella called again, almost tempting her to throw the phone into the water basin! As she watched him standing there in almost all his naked glory, she prayed that he had not heard much. However, she knew it was going to be useless because he'd already made his opinion clear about having her kneel in front of him.

Demetri walked towards her indifferently, leaning in close as he slowly brushed his slightly bristled cheek against her soft ones," So, when are you going to devote yourself to me?"

Nora felt herself shake! Dam\* it he had heard everything!!!! While Nora was still in a daze, Demetri turned around and walked towards his room. However, he stopped there and turned to look at her, his eyes unfathomable," Now I know what you want to learn next. Don't worry kitten... I'll teach you how to be on your knees and pledge devotion.

This time Nora felt as if she had suddenly spiked a fever, her face as red as a tomato. Nora came back to her senses and sighed, she was definitely going to die of embarrassment!

Thankfully, Nora did not have to think about leaving the country or the world for much longer as she was then busy the whole day preparing for the evening as she was dropped off to some salon.

As an army of people pampered and prepped her, some even being bold enough to whisper about the love bites that she had painfully tried to cover, Nora's day passed in a blur and it was evening.

Her hair had been gathered and tied up in a loose, effortless knot at the nape of her neck, with only a few tendrils of hair gently framing her face. Nora could hardly believe her look as she stared in the mirror. The hairstyle and make up was so perfectly done, drawing attention to her radiant smile and the graceful curve of her neck. She'd always acknowledged herself to be pretty enough but tonight, suddenly she felt beautiful. As

she turned to thank the stylist, the person brought in the dress that she was to wear tonight and her breath caught in her throat. It was so beautiful.

The assistant smiled at the young girl's expression and offered softly, "Miss, would you like some help with the dress?"

As Demetri stood outside, waiting for Nora to emerge, he could not help but glare at his watch. Even though they were not yet late, he did not want to give his grandfather a chance to grumble some more. Just then the assistant emerged from the private room and offered to him, "Ma'am is now ready, sir."

As Demetri marched inside impatiently, he almost stumbled at the door. Nora Williams had turned from a little duckling into a swan. The draped bodice of her gown accentuated her curves. As she walked towards him, the sequins, beads, and pearls on the gown caught the light, making her shine like a star, with every step she took.

The daring patterned slit on each side of her waist, revealed enough just to tease his imagination, and he could see the slight mark of the love bite he had given her. But what caught his attention at the way she graciously moved, a vision of grandness and allure.

For a moment, he was thrown back into the past memories, reminded of someone else, just as beautiful and confident and a hint of sorrow passed through his eyes. However, by the time Nora came to stand before him, he had already composed his emotions.

Nora looked up at Demetri and bent her knees as if giving a courtesy. With a smile, she teased, "Do I look like a little fairy that has just descended from the heavens? I certainly feel like one!"

Demetri smiled at that. She certainly looked enchanting. However, instead of saying the words, his fingers deftly slipped into his pocket and retrieved a small, elegant velvet box. The pale pink diamonds inside sparkled in the soft ambient light, their allure rivalling the gown she wore.

Nora felt her breath catch as she noticed the beautiful diamond necklace. She watched in awe, as he picked up the necklace and walked behind her. The necklace settled into place, and she could not help but shiver as she felt their coldness against her hot skin. As he fastened the delicate clasp around her neck, his fingers brushed against her skin, sending a shiver of anticipation through her. She felt him place a small butterfly kiss on her nape and felt her knees go weak.

His hands on her shoulders, carefully slid down her arms, brushing against the side of her waists before settling on her bared skin at the waist. His fingers gently traced the triangular slit, making her shudder as he leaned in close and complimented, "You look like my own little personal fairy."

He offered his hand to her and she placed her hand in his with utmost trust. Slowly, he pulled her close to his body and she could feel the heat of his body almost encompassing her. His hand moved around her back, settling on the side of her waist possessively as they walked out of the salon towards the car.

As Nora and Demetri walked towards the waiting car, their every step exuded an air of elegance and confidence, drawing the attention of everyone around them. Nora's hand rested gracefully in Demetri's, while he held her close with a possessive yet tender touch, his fingers lightly grazing her waist as they moved in sync.

Whispers and murmurs followed them as they passed by, the onlookers unable to contain their awe at the sight of this captivating couple. Conversations buzzed with speculations and admiration, as people murmured, "They look like they stepped out of a romance novel. One is handsome while the other is captivating."

While Nora was too conscious of his touch and paid no attention to the whispers, Demetri's eyes hardened as he heard this showing his unhappiness.

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Nora leaned back in the plush seat with a sense of wonder. She'd driven a few times in her husband's luxury cars. She had even flown for the first time in a private jet. But today's ride was simply extravagant. As the Maybach S650 Pullman drove through the streets she was reminded of the difference between Demetri and Nora's world. She craved peace and quiet while his life was based on opulence and luxury.

Demetri glanced at Nora who seemed to be enthralled by her surroundings and was looking around with a smile on her face. He was never one to have long-winded conversations and for this particular topic already he could feel his tie tighten around his neck like a noose.

Just then Nora looked at him and spoke up in a teasing tone, "What's on your mind, Mr. husband?"

Demetri blinked, momentarily taken aback at her perceptiveness and threw her a glance as he said, "Nora, whatever happened between us this past week, are you okay with it?"

Nora frowned at the abrupt question and she stared at Demetri in confusion, "You mean the fact that we fu\*ked?"

A look of distaste passed over his face as she used the crude words but she only teased," Hey! Those are your words and not mine. You were the one who repeated them to warn me so that I would not mistake them for anything else. So don't make that expression. Also, what are you asking?"

Demetri sighed," It was not a warning. More of an intimation. I do not like to give the act any other name than what it is-elemental fu\*king."

Nora giggled as the man said this and Demetri directed a sharp look at her," Okay! Listening to you using such explicit language is funny, you know. I mean you seem like such an upstanding and proper gentleman and then suddenly you swear."

Demetri's mouth rose up in amusement as he heard her evaluation of him. And he remarked," And not you've changed the topic. Despite your young age, you know what I mean, Nora."

Nora sighed and cocked her head thoughtfully," Mmm, you are worried that I may develop feelings for you and mistake the physical connection for the emotional connection."

Demetri nodded in agreement. Over the months of living with her, he had come to understand the girl much better. There were times she came across as someone who was ignorant and clueless but she had a tendency to make accurate observations. This saved him a lot of trouble.

Nora looked at Demetri's expression and grinned mischievously," But I am already in love with you. What do I do? Oh, my dearest husband," she began, her tone exaggerated and theatrical, "my heart beats only for thou, like a symphony of love that plays in the depths of my soul. Thou presence is a radiant sun that lights up my darkest days, and thy smile, oh, thy smile, it's like a thousand stars in a moonlit sky."

She watched his expression shift from laid-back to mild horror, and she couldn't help but giggle at his expense.

As he stared at her giggling form, Demetri finally caught a breath as he shook his head," You are quite a poet."

Nora burst into laughter, she playfully nudged Demetri's arm. "Oh, come on, you didn't think I'd let you off the hook that easily, did you?" "Ha! More likely you thought that I'd been possessed by a ghost from the 19th century and were already wondering how to get rid of me."

Demetri nodded his head thoughtfully," Hmm, that too."

Nora giggled and wanted to lay her head back but was would have ruined her hairstyle so she could only shrug her shoulders and complain," You can stop worrying. Just

because you are my first lover, I will not be mistaking you for my first love. Or even the second one. It would be self-torture. I remember our agreement about not falling in love."

However, when he should have been relieved that she did not love him, he felt his heart was unsettled. Tightening his grip on the wheel, he commented, "I am not sure if I should be offended or not. How would loving me be self-torture?"

Nora looked at him in surprise this time. She'd expected he would close the topic now that she had assured him that she did not love him, instead, he was questioning her.

She spoke matter of factly, this time, "There is no need to be offended. For one, you have already told me that you are unavailable for love. So if I were to love you, it would only hurt me. I am not a masochist. Secondly, I know now that no one is going to love me, for some reason, I am not loveable, so why would I burden someone with my love?"

Demetri paused at this. Her straightforward tone failed to hide the pain and vulnerability in her. Unable to stop himself, he caught his hand in hers, a gesture of comfort as he said, "I wonder what William Doughby would have to say about that. I am pretty sure that man loves you more than his own grandchildren."

Nora's eyes glistened as he uttered the words, a painful reminder that there were some people who cared for her but she refuted his words with a shake of her head, "He cares for me because he was a true friend to my grandparents and mentor to my biological father."

Demetri did not try to reassure her that William Doughby might not agree with her words. He understood that Nora truly believed herself unlovable and no words could convince her otherwise. Maybe in the future, she would learn to love herself and not need anyone else.

As he took the final turn, reaching his grandfather's estate, he tried to lighten her mood, "Your best friend, the smart one who suggested that you devote yourself to me, I am sure she loves you. She sounded like a smart person."

Nora glanced at him balefully. She recognized that attempt to lighten the situation and was glad the man did not try to offer her any false words of comfort and tried to change her melancholy mood as she pouted at him, "You are never going to let me live that down, are you?"

"Not until you do what you promised... on your knees..." Nora blushed at his lewd words as she hit his arm playfully...

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Arabelle stood before the grand entrance of the opulent ballroom, her heart fluttering like a caged bird. It was her 26th birthday, a day she had been eagerly awaiting, but the anxiety had her in its grip. Tonight was the night all her dreams were going to come true. She'd been battling with uncertainty for so long, but Great Uncle had promised to announce her engagement tonight as the future Mrs. Frost. However, she could not help but feel something was off. Uncle Elijah had sounded so distracted when he'd told her that she had to maintain a happy facade no matter what happened. Why would he say something so cryptic?

She took a deep breath to calm her racing thoughts. She must be overthinking things. Maybe he just wanted to remind her to keep her poise and not be too forward. She looked down at the soft green dress that she had chosen for the occasion. It would be a perfect match for the diamond necklace that Demetri had chosen for her. It was for this reason that she had even kept her neck bare, she wanted him to put that necklace on her. Summoning her resolve, she raised her chin and entered the ballroom.

With every eye on her as she entered the ballroom, Arabelle felt her confidence soar. As she looked at the sea of people with their admiring gazes, she knew that she was the most enchanting of all and no one would be able to steal the spotlight from her tonight. Her eyes sparkled with anticipation, and her delicate smile radiated the joy that danced in her heart.

As she moved through the crowd, she graciously accepted the birthday wishes from the eager guests. However, as she wove her way towards Great Uncle, she could not help but worry. Uncle Elijah was there along with Ian, Gabe, Seb and Lucien... but no sign of Demetri. Where was he? She watched as the Frost men soon dispersed in the crowd, with Gabe making his way towards her. There was something in his eyes that warned her, sending alarm bells ringing through her. She did not want to talk to him, she realized. She did not wish to see the way he looked at her, as if he could see into her soul. It made her feel uncomfortable.

Hurriedly, she looked around before moving to seek refuge near a glistening fountain on the grand terrace, where she took a moment to grab some water from a passing waiter and collect herself.

However, in the next moment, she wished she had not done so. Nearby, two guests conversed in hushed voices, unaware of her proximity. "It's a shame that Arabelle is going to marry into the Frost family. Old man Frost is really smart, keeping the gem close to him."

As she preened, she heard another person talk in hushed tones, "I don't think so. I've heard a most intriguing rumours. They say Demon Frost is already married."

Arabelle's heart skipped a beat, and she strained to eavesdrop on the conversation, her pulse quickening with dread.

Just then another guest chimed in, her words dripping with spite. "And he's awfully protective of his wife, you know. He's even imposed a gag order on his staff to shield her from prying eyes."

"I heard she's nearly fourteen years younger than him," another gossip mused, her tone tinged with disdain. "Practically a trophy wife or sugar baby, they say."

"Of course that serves Arabelle right. She does think that she is above the rest of us."

The conversation turned lewd from there as the women discussed about a dangerous man like Demon Frost protecting a young lamb... and then to pity the poor Miss Arabelle for waiting for a man who had no interest in her.

However, these guests had no idea that their malicious words had almost unravelled Arabelle's world. She needed to talk to Uncle Elijah. Only then she would be reassured. However, she had barely stepped out from behind the fountain when the entrance door opened once again, inciting a ripple of murmurs.

Demetri stepped into the ballroom, the very embodiment of charisma and allure. His arm was wrapped around the waist of a young woman, enchanting and resplendent in a rose gold-coloured gown. Her neck shimmered with pale pink diamonds that caught the light, radiating a soft, ethereal glow. Their arrival was like a scene from a fairy tale, but it felt like a dagger through Arabelle's heart. Tears glistened on her lashes as she stared at the scene. Those diamonds were supposed to be for her!

Her cheeks flushed with anger and her fingers clenched tightly, leaving moon-like indents in her palms as rage and humiliation threatened to consume her. How dare he ruin her birthday like this! How could he bring his mistress to her party, parading her right under her nose when today was the day their engagement was going to be announced?

However, she had barely taken a few steps when a hand on her arm forcefully stopped her. She turned her head sharply and glared at the man. "How dare you touch me? Let go of my hand!"

"Don't," Gabe said firmly, his voice devoid of sympathy. "I know what you're thinking, but this won't end well. You need to step away, for your own sake."

"I know what is good for me and what isn't, Gabe. I don't need you to lecture me." She tried to step away from him forcefully, but the man was immovable like a wall.

"Listen to me," he implored, his voice carrying the weight of urgency. "You confronting them won't change anything. It'll only tarnish your own image and cause you more pain."

"I don't care! I will make that bi\*ch pay and teach her a lesson for trying to snatch Demetri from me!"

Gabe looked around and breathed a sigh of relief when he noticed that everyone's attention was centered on the entrance and made Arabelle look at him forcefully, "Do you want to make Demetri your enemy? Because if you dare to do anything to Nora, he will not spare you. And then no one not even our grandfather will be able to save you."

Arabelle's rage collided with Gabe's unyielding strength at this moment, leaving an anxious atmosphere between them

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## Chapter 96: Rejection

[ 1,031 words ]

### Chapter 96: Rejection

While the guests waited with bated breath to check the reaction of the two VIPs of the evening, Demetri gracefully guided her in front of Grandfather to wish him. A sense of unease hung heavy in the air, like an impending storm on the horizon. Gabe had stopped Arabelle from charging forward, but Elijah Frost was not someone who could be stopped.

The old man regarded the couple with a gaze that bore no overt hostility yet dripped with unspoken disapproval. His nod of acknowledgement to Demetri was measured, and yet his aged features betrayed no hint of his true sentiments while his eyes passed over Nora as if she did not exist. The room remained silent, but the tension was palpable, like a taut thread ready to snap.

Elijah Frost looked at the young girl and then at his stubborn grandson who refused to listen. He'd warned the girl against coming here and yet she thought that she could challenge him. With a deliberate turn of his head, he denied her the honour of being able to offer her birthday wishes. His eyes were now hard, and unyielding, his silence

echoing through the room. He would have let go of the girl if she had been humble and accepted her mistake.

He would have considered her rude words a youthful mistake. But the girl thought that she could get away with things. What she did not know was her pride was based on nothing. She was gravely mistaken if she believed that Demetri loved her or that she could control Demetri with her viles. Others might think that Demetri had fallen in lust but he knew his grandson very well. Demetri was trying to merge the past and the present and he would never let this happen. Soon, he would show the girl that she was too young to play these dangerous games with him

The slight snub administered by Elijah Frost did not escape the notice of the onlookers. Their murmured whispers and exchanged glances only added to the tension that suffused the room. Demetri, however, was acutely aware of his grandfather's disdain. In a voice that carried the weight of his resolution, he spoke casually, "It seems, Grandfather, that you do not welcome our presence at this celebration. If that is the case, we can depart."

The old man and the young man stared at each other, both unwilling to give in. Demetri's audacious statement hung in the air, like an unspoken challenge that reverberated throughout. He was challenging not just his grandfather but also sending out a warning against anyone who dared to think that they could speak against his wife.

Just then, Nora placed her hand in Demetri's, distracting him from the standoff and turning back the attention of both the men towards her, " You are thinking too much. Grandfather was merely distracted and failed to notice that I was about to wish him. I wish you a long and blessed life on your birthday, grandfather." Her smile as bright as the sun, made everyone do a double take. The girl must either be really cunning or really innocent to suggest that Elijah Frost had momentarily been distracted and thus not received her wishes.

However, at this moment, Elijah Frost already understood that Demetri would indeed leave if he did not accept her. And so, the old man simply inclined his head as he answered, " Thank you."

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On the other side, Arabelle had already composed herself as she icily ordered Gabe, " Let go of my arm. I am not going to create a scene like the uncultured girl there."

Gabe grimaced at what had just happened and pointed out, " I don't think Nora created the scene just now. It was Demon."

Arabelle harrumphed and walked gracefully towards Elijah Frost. As she neared him, she called out to him in a coy voice, " Great uncle Elijah." She extended her hand to the old man in a gesture of respect and humility, as she warmly thanked him, " Thank you

for arranging this celebration for me. With you, I never feel as if my family is not with me."

Elijah Frost, ever the paragon of dignity, accepted her hand with graciousness and affectionately patted it. His response was filled with warmth and joy as he replied, "It is always a pleasure to be able to do something for you, Arabelle. How could I miss this chance to celebrate our day together?"

The stark contrast between Arabelle's approach and the previous confrontation was palpable, and it couldn't be lost on anyone present. Arabelle, through her demeanor, had demonstrated the chasm that separated her from the young woman who dared to stand by his side. But as she turned her head to show her disdain for the woman, she was disappointed to see that Demetri and Nora had already moved on and were now chatting to the other guests.

As they moved between guests, Nora turned her head and smiled up at Demetri as she said, " My dear husband, if people could kill with gazes, I would have been dead about a hundred times now. I thought I only had to contend with your grandfather and ex-fiance but then why is every woman looking at me as if they would like me to drop dead right at this moment?"

Ian who had just approached the couple widened his eyes as he heard his sister-in-law speaking casually to his brother but Demon's reply shocked him even more as the man sent her a serious look and suggested, " Your imagination is running wild." Pause. "At most they want you to trip on the train of your dress and make a mess of yourself."

Nora giggled at that and shushed him," Shh! Don't give them ideas. I'll tell you what, I'll play dangerously. I am going to the restroom. Let's see if someone decides to help me with paying for the dress. If someone can compensate you for the dress, it will save you some money."

"What a thoughtful wife."

Ian's world view was changed after this as he watched his sister in law walk away...

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Arabelle's simmering anger and jealousy had been building throughout the evening, festering like a slow-burning ember. As she glared at the couple surreptitiously, her eyes bore holes into the woman. This was the woman who had also kissed Demetri and thrown herself at him when they were at the airport. And now they were shamelessly

flaunting their love, greeting the guests with adoring smiles and lingering touches while ruining her evening.

What right did this unknown girl have to stand by his side so arrogantly? She was nothing but a girl relying on her looks. She had no right to bask in his attention. This Nora might think that she had won the jackpot when she caught Demetri's eyes but the girl had no idea that she could be destroyed by a simple click of Arabelle's fingers. Even Demetri would not be able to save her!

She could feel her control slipping away. She wanted to confront that girl and let out the storm that had been brewing within her. When she noticed Nora heading towards the restrooms, Arabelle seized the opportunity to follow her, her footsteps silent as she stalked the unsuspecting girl.

Nora on the other hand was actually aware of being followed. She'd become extremely sensitive to these things. However, even as she made her way to the restroom slowly, she was in a dilemma. She knew what her mission for tonight was- getting grandfather, Arabelle and everyone else to believe that their marriage was real and unbreakable while also establishing herself as someone who would not be easy to mess with.

But somehow, when she first saw Arabelle after entering the large room, the first thing she had witnessed was the devastation in her eyes when she noticed her with Demetri. And that pain reminded her of seeing Antonio and Sara together for the first time. She understood that Demetri had never dated the woman but the shattering pain of heartbreak was the same for anyone, wasn't it, whether the love was returned or one-sided.

She continued to try and think of some other way to persuade Arabelle to give up on Demetri without causing the other girl much pain. However, all her thinking and concern proved useless because as soon as they had entered the dimly lit restroom, her arm was caught painfully by the woman and she was twisted around roughly, while Arabelle hissed, "You think you can just waltz in here and steal Demetri from me, huh?", her voice dripping with venom.

Just this single action reminded Nora of the countless times Sara had attacked her like this, without provocation. The reminder was enough to make her remember that she was not here to sympathize with someone's heartbreak. She was here to hold up her end of the bargain and help Demetri get rid of the barrier that his grandfather had placed around him.

She cocked her head and looked at Arabelle, her expression calm and collected. Leaning against the washbasin, her posture exuded an air of nonchalance as she spoke "I didn't steal anyone from you." She emphasized on the 'you' for a moment before pointing out, "How could I when he did not belong to you in the first place?"

Arabelle's eyes flashed with rage and she pushed Nora, causing her to almost lose her balance as she knocked into the marble behind her. Nora winced in pain while Arabelle threw out wild accusations, "You're nothing but a gold digger! You're just after Demetri's money and he is with you because he wants to play with you. Does her pay you with these expensive dresses and jewellery? You are nothing but a glorified wh\*re taking things to warm his bed. And once he tires of you, he will throw you out! And that is when, I will show you the meaning of hell!"

Nora's response was a mirthful smile. "Gold digger? Sugar baby? Plaything? Call me what you want, Arabelle. It doesn't matter. What matters is that I have Demetri Frost, and you don't."

"You bi\*ch! You are not even worthy of wiping his shoes for him!"

"This is getting boring Arabelle, all this name-calling is too childish. So, if you are done, then I will take my leave."

Arabelle fumed when she was unable to get a rise from the woman! She wanted the woman to attack her so that she could complain to Great uncle about her crassness but the woman remained too calm and the indifference on her face to the insults hurled at her, gave her the shivers. It somehow made her think of Demetri and the way he looked at others. They were too alike.

She clenched her fists, unable to comprehend how this girl could be so unapologetic and calm, not even bothering to give an explanation and warned, "You're going to regret this, Nora."

Nora's response was a shrug and "I doubt I'll regret anything, Arabelle. But if you ever change your mind and decide you want to play nice, feel free to come to me."

Arabelle turned on her heel, storming out of the restroom, her rage unabated but her words defeated. She couldn't shake the image of Demetri doting on Nora from her mind, and it gnawed at her insides like a relentless beast and this woman's gloating set her nerves on fire... She wanted to kill this woman!

Nora watched the woman leave and slowly straightened her back wincing in pain. Dam\* it. She'd purposely leaned against the basins, hoping to save herself from a fall in case she was pushed but instead, she still ended up getting hurt. Today was truly a bad day for her.

However, as she walked out of the restroom, wearing a satisfied smile, she was stunned by an unexpected announcement.

Demetri's grandfather stood on the podium, his proud voice ringing through the large room as he first thanked the guests for their good wishes before bringing Arabelle forward and introducing her, "Ladies and gentlemen, it brings me great pleasure to

introduce that Arabelle as not only my Goddaughter but also the future daughter in law of our family, and the future of our hearts and home of the Frosts!"

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## Chapter 98: Engaged

[ 1,023 words ]

### Chapter 98: Engaged

"It brings me great pleasure to introduce Arabelle, not only as my Goddaughter but also as the future daughter-in-law of our family, and the future of our hearts and home—the Frosts!"

A collective buzz of excitement rippled through the room as the significance of the announcement sunk in. The crowd exchanged glances, speculation running wild.

*Someone commented incredulously, "What is this? Demon Frost has been parading his woman all evening and suddenly he is going to turn around and get engaged to Arabelle?"*

*"Oh please, this is the world of the mighty Frosts. Do you think he is marrying Arabelle for love? The woman he dotes on is the one he has been showing off while marrying Arabelle is more of a business venture. Consider this an announcement of a partnership between these two large groups of companies."*

*"Where is that mistress? I need to see her face? She must be so shocked. She'd been trying to steal the spotlight from Arabelle on her birthday, now that vicious girl will not be able to do anything."*

*"This is some soap opera material right here."*

*"Well, it is. Because I have heard that Demon Frost is actually married to the girl. I have a friend who works in the Civil Affairs Bureau, and he told me he'd seen Demon Frost bring someone in a few months ago..."*

*"I always thought these fancy high society parties were dull. But this is like a reality show in designer attire."*

Amidst the guests, Nora moved to stand next to Demetri, her expression a mix of confusion and curiosity but nothing that would give the jealous people satisfaction. She raised her brows at him, and whispered, "Is your grandfather trying to make you commit bigamy?"

Demetri grimaced and sent a glance her way and then turned back towards the stage, "I'll go take a look."

However, before Demetri could even step forward to question his grandfather, the old man continued, "I, now invite my grandson to come forward and join his bride-to-be on the stage."

At this moment, Demetri froze. His eyes met his grandfather's across the room and both men stared each other down, neither willing to bend or back off. There was no way in hell that he was going to walk towards that stage now, Demetri seemed to say. Nora, well aware that every eye was trained on them, simply wound her arm through his and looked at him coquettishly, teasing him, "Uh oh. Are we playing the dance and freeze game?"

Arabelle looked through the crowd at Demetri and hardened her heart to see him standing there motionless with his arm still entwined with that woman. This man did not give her any dignity at all. Since he was willing to stoop so low, she was going to see just how low he would go. With a smile, she looked at Elijah Frost and shook her head, "Great uncle, I'll go to him."

Just then, before Arabelle could take a step, another figure emerged from the crowd. Gabe stepped forward walking towards the stage slowly, holding a small bouquet of flowers as the spotlight shone on him. The room collectively gasped as it became apparent that the announcement was not about Demetri and Arabelle but rather about Arabelle and Gabe.

Amidst applause and cheers of congratulations, Gabe stepped forward and slowly caught Arabelle's hand, bringing it to his lips to place a small kiss there.

"What a plot twist. The only thing needed is some popcorn..." Nora murmured with amusement.

However, as she turned to look at her husband and caught a glimpse of his grim face, she could not help but speculate, "You are not happy that you did not have to get engaged to Miss Arabelle? Don't tell me you've just realized that you are in love with her."

The lights dimmed and Gabe escorted the beaming Arabelle down from the stage towards the dance floor as the band started to play soft music.

Demetri exhaled softly and murmured, "She is not worthy of Gabe. She'll break his heart."

"How are you so sure?"

Demetri sighed, "There are things I know. Come, let's dance."

In an unexpected move, Demetri asked Nora to dance as other couples joined the dance floor. This was yet another surprising move on Demetri's part and the guests could only stare in wonder as the man took the beautiful woman in his arms, instantly becoming the centre of attention.

Nora blinked as she realized this new change in plan and quickly placed her hand on his shoulder. However, she soon realized that this was going to be a problem for her.

All through the evening, Demetri's hand seemed to have been glued to her waist, his finger even occasionally slipping through the slit to slide under her dress, caressing the curve of her waist. This had kept her hyper-aware of his closeness throughout. She'd even tried to inconspicuously distance herself from him but it had been of no use.

They were standing too close. She could smell the faint scent of his body and she was immediately reminded of when she had placed her head on his chest and breathed in this scent. She glanced up at him from under her eyelashes, but it was still too much, he was too dashing.

Suddenly, Demetri's voice sounded close to her ear and she could practically hear his rare smile in it, "Why are you nervous? Your pulse is racing. Mrs. Frost, are you having a heart attack?"

Nora narrowed her eyes. This man! She was now coming to understand him really well. He was too petty. Just because she had teased him, he was teasing her back now.

She forced a smile and looked at him in the eye as she spoke through clenched teeth, "Of course not Mr. Frost. There is no need for me to be nervous."

Demetri raised an eyebrow as if she had laid down a challenge and he had accepted. Before she could refute this, his hand pulled her closer as his fingers tightened over her waist, pinching her lightly.

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Ian, Sebastian and Lucien, found themselves on the upper balcony as they looked down at the scene below. Leaning against the intricately designed wrought-iron railing, the trio clutched glasses of aged whiskey, sighing in unison. Until a month ago, all of the Frost brothers had been single as far as the public was aware and now two of them were taken off the market. The other three, who had assumed they had all the time in the world to sow their wild oats suddenly felt as if they were being stared at by all those little miss' ready to marry them.

Ian, narrowed his eyes at Demon and shook his head in disappointment, "I never expected Demon to be like this. Why does he look like he wants to turn into a caveman and carry our sister-in-law away while beating his chest and screaming 'mine'?"

Seb snorted at the description and inclined his head, "Because he has indeed been guarding her as if she is a treasure and he an ancient dragon."

Lucien paid no attention to what his brothers were saying but grumbled, "I always thought I would be the first to get married out of all of you."

Sen and Ian turned to Lucien in surprise who then sheepishly explained himself, "Hey! I am the only one among you all who is normal. Demon used to repel girls by creating that oppression around himself, Gabe was always pining for Arabella while the two of you are too busy juggling your many girlfriends."

Seb winked at Ian as he threw an arm around Lucien and spoke in a baby-ish voice, "Aw, Lucy, are you feeling the pressure of singlehood? But you are our baby and too young for marriage." Lucien made a face at that and tried to jerk of his brother's arm but the man simply tightened his hold and continued, "It pains me to be the bearer of bad news, but your singlehood ticket is still long and valid."

Lucien finally shrugged off his brother's arm and glared back, "Stop cursing me."

Ian grinned and added fuel to the fire, "Would you like to bet who is going to be next? It isn't going to be you though..."

His brothers laughed at that while Lucien narrowed his eyes at them. They were making fun of him but they missed an important point... Crossing his arms in front of him, he pointed out, "Sure, let's make a bet. So, Ian, are you going to bet on Seb or yourself?"

At this point, Seb and Ian both stared at each other in horror. Dam\* it! Either of them could be the next to fall! NO!

Stricken, both of them turned to Lucien and playfully answered, "Hey! We were simply teasing you. It is going to be you of course. If either Gabe or Demon holds a wedding, we'll even help you catch the bouquet..."

Lucien smirked and revelled in his brothers' discomfort as he answered, "Oh, I see how it is. The mighty Ian and Seb, the seasoned bachelors, are suddenly afraid of losing a bet?"

Seb feigned ignorance and simply patted his brother on the back as he said, "Hey, Lucy, are you menstruating? Why are you attacking us?"

Lucien rolled his eyes and said, "It's time to go down and dance with our sisters-in-law before the banquet hall catches fire. These two are throwing off the entire celebration with their raging hormones."

Ian and Seb watched Lucien walk away and clinked their glasses in a toast, "To us, the Frost brothers, where the only thing more unpredictable than our love lives is Lucy throwing shade. May the best man catch the bouquet, or, you know, avoid it entirely," as they braced themselves to step back into the madness that was going on below.

As they walked down the stairs, they noticed that Lucien had already merged himself in the dance crowd by asking Arabelle to dance with him. They could see Gabe in a serious discussion with their grandfather. With tacit understanding, Ian made his way towards Demetri and Nora while Seb walked towards the two other men.

With a hand on Demetri's arm, Ian extended his hand to Nora, who accepted the change in dance partners with surprising elan.

Demetri gave her a look promising retribution before leaving the dance floor, already marching towards his grandfather and Gabe. They needed to talk.

On the other side, Ian looked down at Nora with a twinkle in his eyes as he questioned, "Tell me, Nora, when you married my brother, did you expect that he would be someone like this? All possessive and caveman style?"

Nora blushed and laughed, her eyes sparkling with amusement. "Well, Ian, I didn't see that warning label when I signed up but then again, I can hold my own so not to worry much." As she said this, she gestured to him to lean down and spoke lightly, "Though I often wonder if he practices that serious look in the mirror every morning."

Ian grinned, twirling her with a flourish. "A woman after my own heart! I wouldn't be surprised if he does practice. And now I know someone who can help me find out. Why don't you invade his bathroom one morning and see what he is up to..."

Nora shook her head and winked, "Uh huh! Curiosity kills the cat. If I were to go into the bathroom, I would not escape unscathed... Thanks but no thanks..."

Surprised at her answer, Ian did not take long to understand the double entendre and unexpectedly felt his ears turning red. He had not expected this.

Nora laughed out loud as the man blushed and shook her head, "Ha! You did not think that I would be so frank, did you? Or not as innocent as I look."

Ian shook his head and accepted defeat. He had really not expected his sister-in-law to outdo him and make him blush. But interacting with her made him happy as well. There was a time when their brother was not always this block of ice that he was now. And in Nora's warm smiling eyes, he felt that his brother would also melt. Maybe they would be able to catch a glimpse of the old Demetri...the one who was always the first to tease everyone.

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