



Bend the Knee

Grace

"What happened to your feet?"

Surprised, I look down, and my nose scrunches. My feet don't seem to be in a good condition.

"I spilled coffee on—"

I pick up my head and get stunned into silence. Tristin is already halfway across the office, approaching me with long strides.

I close my hanging jaw and swallow. He rolls his sleeves up, displaying his veiny arms and blank ink peeking from underneath the white shirt.

My gaze lowers to his forearms before I quickly lift my eyes to his face again. He stops one step away, his eyes narrowed on my feet.

"Who did it?" He inquires in a grave voice.

My shoulders stiffen. "I spilled coffee on my feet accidentally."

"And you are walking around instead of applying ointment on the burns?" Slowly, his eyes find mine, and a strange emotion flashes across them.

"I...didn't get...the time." I whisper, uneasy about how he is investigating the whole situation.

"You didn't get the time for what?" He asks and grabs my arm without warning.



"Tristin." I gasp in shock.

He turns around and drags me to the couch. "Sit."

With a heavy heart, I take my seat and look up again. "I was about to apply the—"

"Did it not hurt?" Tristin asks, turning away from me to walk to his desk.

"It did but I can bear it." I reply softly.

"You can bear it?" He sounds like he finds my excuse ridiculous.

"Of course. It's not like I got cut in half. It's just some burns and they will heal in some time." I assure him, not knowing why I am even doing it.

Maybe, his sudden reaction caught me off guard. No one has ever inquired about my pain like this before. Even Ethan always told me that fever is just fever, cuts are just cuts, and burns are just burns—they heal and we don't need to make a fuss over them.

I remember...when I spilled oil all over my hands once and showed it to Ethan. He was annoyed about it. He asked me what he could do if I was stupid enough to spill oil over me. He was not a doctor, and I didn't need to show the burns to him.

I sigh. I don't know why I am even remembering those memories right now.

"So just because you can bear it, you don't mind if it continues to hurt?" Tristin's deep voice sounds close.

I shake off the thoughts and focus on the man who is in front of me again. Our eyes meet, and my head goes blank.

The lifeless look in his eyes is so profound that it hides every other emotion, making him appear more dead than alive. And somehow...It bothers me a little, somehow it tells me that I should be wary of what he is hiding behind this facade.

I start with a frown between my brows, " Mr. Roberto— "

" Tristin. " He interrupts and shifts his focus to his arms.

I follow his gaze, noticing how he rolls his sleeves further up and ignores me completely.

Suddenly, a knock sounds on the office's door, and Luca enters a moment later. I glance towards him curiously, only to see him holding an ointment.

" Boss. " He approaches us and hands the ointment to Tristin.

" Go have lunch, Luca. " Tristin says, dismissing him coldly.

" Yes, Boss. " The other man strolls out as fast as he came and leaves me alone with this strange man.

Sighing, I direct my gaze towards him. " Give it to me. I will apply it and be on my way. "

Tristin hands me the tube without much protest. My shoulders lose some of the tension.

I take my eyes off him, remove my heels, and try to bend down or pull



my legs up so I can apply the ointment but the skirt is too tight around my waist.

My cheeks warm at the struggle as I twist and turn to reach my feet. Alma is a sweetheart indeed for getting me these clothes, but she doesn't know my size.

From the corner of my eyes, I see Tristin looming over my head, his sharp stare fixed on me. Blinking, I avert my gaze and curse at myself in my head.

Why do I have to embarrass myself in front of him like that?

"You are too stubborn for your own good, Little Butterfly." He clicks his tongue, mocking me.

"And you are too interested in me. Why can't you just look away?" I scoff, giving up on twisting.

I feel like having a mental breakdown and crying right now. This day can't get any worse.

Out of nowhere, his hand comes into my view and he snatches the tube back. My heart lurches.

Instinctively, I reach out to the tube but he is already bending down. I gasp, pressing my thighs tightly together.

The length of the skirt is not too ideal either. Oh, sweetheart Alma. You messed me up.

Tristin notices my tense body and pauses in his way. His brows lift to his forehead, his eyes finding mine and giving me a curious look.

"It's not...appropriate, Tristin." I whisper under my breath.

"Because you are married?" He is so close, that I can see the depth of the blue in his eyes. For a moment, my head goes blank again and I go silent.

"That...and..." I shake my head. "I am..."

His gaze lowers to my taut tights, making me place my hands over them and pull my skirt down. The strange emotion passes through his gaze once more, causing heat to rise to my cheeks.

"I get it." Tristin rises to his height, towering over me.

"Thank God." I blurt without much thought as I watch him return to his desk.

"At least, give me the ointment so I can apply it." I twist to my right to reach my feet, without ripping my skirt from the side.

A moment later, his shiny black shoes appear in my sight. I gulp, my hands clenching into fists.

I am so done with this pushy behavior.

"Tristin, you need to—"

Tristin bends a knee and places his suit jacket on my lap. Pulling it up, he covers my waist and legs. The unexpected gesture makes me speechless.

"If something makes you uncomfortable, you need to speak about it and find a solution." His deep voice echoes in my ears as I stare at

his forehead.

Even when he is kneeling, he can easily reach my face. But he doesn't look at me. His eyes are fixed on my feet while my eyes are roaming down his face as I attempt to understand him for the nth time.

"It's still not appropriate. I am married. You shouldn't touch a married woman's feet." I repeat his words, my hands dropping to the couch to grab the edges. "Why are you even doing this? You are not someone who kneels for others, or touches their feet, are you?" 2

"If it makes you comfortable, I am a medical school dropout. You can consider me your doctor? Or half-doctor?" He dodges the bullet with a smirk on his lips.

And successfully manages to divert my attention. "You went to medical school?"

"Is it that hard to believe?" Tristin rolls his eyes and runs his finger down my right foot.

"You are such a mystery." I mumble, glancing down at his hands that are applying the ointment on my feet.

I don't know why...but my heart feels heavy in my chest. Did someone ever...do this for me before?

And why do I keep thinking the same thing when I am with Tristin Roberto?

It feels like he has noticed my unusual silence, so he looks up. From close, our eyes meet and his gaze narrows.

"What kind of life did you spend, Little Butterfly?" His breaths hit my



face, making me aware of our proximity. " did you not even expect the bare minimum from anyone? "

No.

I didn't know I deserved the bare minimum.

The words are on the tip of my tongue but it's tied. How pathetic does one have to be to be like me?

" What did she...do to your family? And why do you insist on...being nice to me? " I blurt what's been on my mind, forgetting that his fingers are still on my feet.

His eyes darken. The air around us turns cold. The mention of Lily changes him into this vengeful spirit who looks ready to murder anything and anyone in his path to get to that one person.

He opens his mouth, almost says something to me, but the door bursts open before he can. Startled, my head snaps to the right and the world freezes.

" Ethan. " I whisper, shocked to see him standing there, his eyes turning bloodshot in anger.

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