

Crushed Affections

Chapter 14 The Most Special Place

Dominic glanced sideways at Bella. "Aren't you going to open it to see if anything's missing? I just happened to find it in the warehouse. I didn't go out of my way to help you, so there's no need to thank me."

Bella shook her head. "Nothing's missing, I'm sure... Actually, I don't even know what's inside, but this box was very important to my mom. Either way, thank you."

As she spoke, she couldn't hold back the tears. They fell onto the box, creating irregular, flower-like patterns on the surface.

Dominic frowned and stood up to grab a glass. He poured some liquor and handed it to her. "Swallow those tears down. They're annoying."

Normally, Bella wouldn't drink with Dominic, nor did she often get the chance. But her emotions were all over the place, and she felt like having a drink. Thus, she took the glass, wiped away her tears, and thanked him.

The strong liquor burned as it went down, making her cough violently. "What kind of liquor is this?"

Dominic looked at her like she was an idiot and took a light sip from his own glass. "Can't you recognize liquor, or can't you read?"

Only then did Bella notice the large letters on the bottle—XO.

Feeling a bit embarrassed, she said, "I don't drink often... Of course, I wouldn't know. If there's nothing else, I'll go to bed."

Dominic sat back in his chair, lazily swirling the liquor in his glass. "You used to throw yourself at me. Are you trying to play hard to get now? Isn't it a bit too late for that? Are you trying to make me think you're special? There's no need. For me, you have always been special... Especially loathsome."

Bella laughed at herself. "Really? Well, I guess I should feel honored. At least I occupy the most special place in your life."

Suddenly, Dominic turned his head to look at her, as if searching for something. "Why didn't I notice before that you're so good with words?"

The alcohol was starting to take effect, and Bella felt her face heating up. Since Dominic was in the mood to talk to her for a bit longer, she boldly sat down in the chair across from him. After tonight, she might not get another chance like this.

She lowered her head and softly called his name. "Dominic..."

His eyes briefly flashed with their usual irritation, but he didn't respond. While refilling his glass, he poured another for her as well.

His dislike for her was as deep-rooted as her love for him. But after so many years together, sitting with him like this didn't feel as unbearable. Habit could be scary.

Bella didn't care whether he responded or not. She continued, "If I disappear one day, will you ever think of me, even just once?"

Dominic frowned as he said in a cold voice, "Don't try to play sentimental games with me. If you wanted to leave, you would've done it a long time ago. You wouldn't have clung to me for so long."

Bella smiled without saying anything, then downed her drink in one go. This time, she didn't cough. The burning sensation in her throat seemed to carry all the pain into her stomach, leaving only a searing warmth.

Before the intoxication fully set in, Bella returned to her room.

As she looked at the box Dorothy had left behind, her heart felt unbearably heavy. This was the only thing Dorothy had left her.

The lock on the box was old and worn, and it didn't take much effort to open it.

Inside were old photographs, envelopes, and pictures of her as a child with Dorothy, along with...