Chapter 23 (Part 2)

Hello my beloved readers! Sorry for the long wait.......again. 🙏🙏🙏. Anyways I hope you guys are enjoying the story. Don't forget to leave your thoughts 💭💭💭.

Lots of love. Have a wonderful day ahead. God bless!

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Third Person's POV

"You should not have taken it this far!! What were you thinking?!"

"I can do whatever I please with her! She's mine!"

"I can see that but how far are you going to go with this? Do you actually think that you could threaten her forever?! Force her into anything?!"

"Yes I will!! I will because that's the only way I know!! I will do whatever it takes to put her in her place and make sure that I'm the only one she thinks about!

Did you know that she deliberately disobeyed me right after I reminded her of all the bloody rules she needed to follow?!! She needed a lesson, and I gave her one! Now hopefully she fucking learns something!"

"A lesson?!! She did what she did to help her friend!! She's a human girl!! Why do you keep forgetting that?! She's fragile compared to you!! She has feelings! She feels things and right now she's feeling a whole lot of pain. You're torturing her! Do you honestly think that all of this will be easily erased from her memory?! How are you going to fix everything you've caused her?!....."

"ENOUGH!!! Like I said she broke one of my most important rule so I punished her. I wouldn't even call this punishing," he ran his fingers through his hair, deciding that this was a casual conversation.

He then threw his hand towards the girl's sleeping form.

"She's completely fine...."

"On the outside? If I choose to ignore the marks, maybe."

"She will be fine."

"I thought the older a person gets the wiser he becomes but you my Prince, you've proved me wrong. You have no clue as to what you're doing. I'm forced to understand your actions because this is all new to you but I cannot allow you to go any further than this. I just can't. You're hurting her too much."

"I know how to handle this! Why won't you ask yourself this?! What if something happened between her and Esther?! What if Esther had done something to her?! So many things could have gone wrong that night!! I don't give a fuck about who she tried to protect!!" Prince Phoenix fumed.

"This is not the way how one shows his concern. Please think about what you're doing to her.."

"Remember your place Percival. Do not cross the line," the Prince sneered. His patience slowly growing thin. Percival could feel his skin prickle. The room was getting hotter.

"If I don't cross the line with you, my Prince, you'll cross the line with her," he looked towards Eve. She looked thin and frail with small bruises covering her neck and face.

He must have held her too tight when she fought back, Percival thought.

He had taken an immediate liking towards her the moment they first conversed. She reminded him of someone very close to his heart. He hated seeing her like this but he also knew that there was not much he could do. Especially when things were related to the Dark Prince.

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I woke up to distant voices. I couldn't tell if two people were talking or arguing about something. The voices were a blur but the sound would increase at times. I tried prying my eyes open. My vision was blurry so I had to blink continuously until I could make out where I was.

His room of course.

As I stared blankly at the wall, I noticed the room had gone silent. One of them had already left.

I tried turning my head but every part of my body hurt. I don't know how this was possible but I felt numbness and pain at the same time.

Numbness in my heart and pain in my head and body.

However, I did not care that my body was weak and in pain, I tried getting up anyway. As I was trying I saw someone getting close through my peripheral view.

It was Him.

As he got closer, panic took over. Everything that happened last night came rushing in. The crying, the begging, the threats. All that was too much. The panic gave me an adrenaline rush and extra strength to actually sit up. By that time he was already close to the bed. I used my remaining strength to back away from him until I hit the headboard. I scrambled to get off the bed as fast as I could but no one could have matched his speed.

The Prince grabbed both my upper arms and brought me close to him. Even in my weak state I kicked and struggled against his hold. My actions did not have any effect on him. He gently but firmly took me in his arms and settled me on his lap at the oval table. Tears I tried so hard to control ran down my cheeks. I didn't want him close to me. I couldn't bare his touch and he made me sit on his lap with his arms around my small form. I screamed as loud as my lungs would allow surprising us both.

Desperately wanting to be out of his hold, I continued screaming. But even that came to a stop when he put his hand over my mouth and brought my head against his chest. I tried pushing him away while screaming into his hand that covered my mouth. There's only so much a person can take.

All the time I pushed and struggled, he did nothing at all. Later I figured that he was just waiting for me to tire myself and that was exactly what happened that afternoon.

Once I used up all my strength, I couldn't do anything else so I sat limp on his lap with my head against his chest. Moments later I felt him stroking my hair. If it was anyone else it would have felt soothing. Because it was him, I only felt more violated than ever.

What he did last night was more painful than before. I still didn't know why he was so furious. Last night, I was terrified that my biggest fear would come true. That he would actually cross the invisible line between us. That he would do it.

Thankfully, he didn't. It was the only thing I'm allowed to be grateful about.

"Now you will think twice about serving anyone other than me, my Little Flower. I warned you not to break the rules and that's exactly what you did," he gritted out while fisting his hand in my hair. "You will never do that again. Ever." The second he ended his warning, there was a knock on the door. He immediately held me closer to him.

"Come in." I brought my gaze up at the sound of light footsteps. It was Mr.Percival. He left a tray on the table. Our eyes met as he straightened up. I quickly looked down. It felt wrong that he should see me in this state. I felt slightly humiliated but the other half of me felt nothing. I guess I felt something when it came to Mr.Percival because I made a new friend in him.

"Anything else Your Highness?"

"No. You may leave."

I took a peak at Mr.Percival just to see that he was already looking at me with worry. He looked at me for a couple of seconds before turning around to leave. I didn't miss his sad expression and his broken smile.

The Prince of course pretended not to notice anything and proceeded to lift open the cloche revealing his main dish. There was bread, porridge and some cut meat. There was also a bowl of soup on the tray. Not at all his normal meal.

"Now, I want you to finish whatever you see in the tray. Since you've gotten yourself so bony, I want you to eat everything," he commanded as usual.

What he didn't know was that I wasn't going to eat all of it. There was no way. My body would not be able to handle this amount of food. No matter how scary he seemed, I couldn't obey him this time. I wouldn't. He could kill me if he wanted. I would gladly accept it.

He took a spoon filled with porridge and brought it to my lips. I kept my mouth closed staring into space. I was repulsed by the smell of it but I couldn't show it. I was already feeling numb.

"Open you mouth." I heard him say and that's all I could do. I was listening but I couldn't do anything. My mouth remained close and my mind remained blank.

"I said open your mouth!"

"I swear if I have to tell you again you'll be very sorry!!!"

Nothing. I couldn't even bring myself to flinch at his harsh tone. I had zero amount of strength left. Emotionally, mentally and physically.

"What the fuck is wrong with you??!!"

That's when the doors suddenly burst open.

"Your Highness."

Ms.Odelle

"What do you want?!"

"I....I heard yelling...."

"Really? I wonder who that was," he replied dryly.

I didn't look at Ms.Odelle but I sensed her getting closer to the table.

"What's the problem my Prince?" she spoke softly.

I felt his burning gaze on me for a long time. After that, he abruptly stood up along with me. I wobbled a little before he quickly made me sit on the chair.

"Feed her."

That's all he said before he walked out slamming the doors. By the way he slammed them I thought they would break into pieces. Even Ms.Odelle jumped a little.

The second he was out she ran towards me.

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Beth's POV

Work was harder than usual these past couple of days. Ever since Lady Esther arrived, we got more miserable. Her demand with food was ridiculous. Everything needed to be perfect and only according to her taste. Yesterday was horrible. The chef in charge of desserts made cheese tarts for tea time.

Not even ten minutes later we got word that the cheese wasn't so enough. Two castle guards barged into the kitchen area and found the chef responsible. They slapped him at least five times before pouring boiling hot water over both his arms.

'That would teach ya! Next time you'll be losing both arms.' They laughed leaving him to tend to his bloodied face and scalded arms.

As soon as they left we all helped of course but the pain he went through could not be undone.
Phineas was a very sporting thirty-five year old. He thought us all very well. He always guided us while we cooked and he made the best desserts. The incident yesterday came as a shock to all of us here. However, there was no time for pity. We all had to get to work once he was tended to.

I too tried not to let it get to me. This was what we should expect in this place. There was no room for sympathy towards one another.

Today was no different from yesterday. All of us had our respective chores. I was cutting vegetables for another older woman.

Every fifteen minutes I would look around.

Alex was still not here. He came in this morning but he left twenty minutes ago saying he had some stuff to do.

What stuff?! All his stuff should be here!

I wondered where he went. More time passed and I forgot about him and continued to cut the vegetables.

I finished cutting an hour later. As I started arranging them in separate bowls, Alex came bouncing back.

"Where the hell have you been?!"

"Shhh. Don't shout," the woman told me off. I mumbled a quick sorry before glaring back at Alex.

"Hey I'm sorry. I just went to deliver Lady Esther's lunch," he said sheepishly.

"What?!!" that earned me a bunch of 'quiets' and 'shhhhh's'

"Why? Where was Henrietta?" I demanded.

"Could you please calm down. She fractured her ankle due to the heavy work yesterday and both her knees hurt. The Lady is giving her too much work to do." He explained.

"None of the other personal servants are complaining." I shrugged.

"Not all of them are working for her!"

"You know you could have gotten punished for helping out right?"

"But I didn't so let it go Bethany. I don't understand why this is such a big deal." He grumbled on.

"What the hell?! Did you not witness yesterday's incident? Why are you so careless?!" I burst out feeling more irritated with every passing second. The people around gave up on keeping us quiet.

"For the last time nothing happened."

"Henri should have done it herself," I muttered.

"Which part of fractured ankle and hurting knees do you not understand?!"

"Okay, okay," I put my hands up in surrender. "Poor Henri. You just keep helping her. Yeah you do that." I started to walk away from him out he grabbed my wrist and turned me around.

"What is your problem?! Tell me." I stared deep into his eyes but it was the same look that I've been receiving these past few weeks.

He's changed.

Ever since that night.

I snatched my hand back and walked away from him.

He didn't try to talk to me after that and boy was I glad.

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That night we finished up quite late. Around nine-thirty.

Half the servants had already left after doing their part. I chose to stay and help the rest because I had nothing better to do and maybe because sleep wasn't something that was going to come to me that night. As I was putting away the kitchen utensils, I heard so footsteps approaching. I didn't need to hear them speak. I already knew who it was.

"Long day?" I asked without turning around.

"Yeah it was. Same for you I presume?"

"Yeap but I'm almost done."

"Oh, I was wondering, is Alex still here?"

"I dunno, can you see him?" I asked dryly.

"Come on Beth...."

"It's Bethany darling," I said with a sweet smile. The look on her face changed. She took a deep breath before she continued.

"Okay Bethany, I know you may not like me, I have no idea why and I'm not sure how I can change your mind about me but I really have to see Alex. Please."

"First off, as you can clearly see, he's not here Henrietta. Second of all, maybe you still don't understand how things work around here. If you actually cared for him, you wouldn't have told him to deliver Lady Esther's lunch this afternoon no matter what."

"What?! This afternoon, I couldn't walk properly and I was late! I needed help!" her eyes became watery. "My legs felt like they would snap! I knew I couldn't walk up and down the staircase without seriously injuring myself so I asked....."

"Well I'm not trying to seem heartless but you need to get used to it. Both of you could have gotten punished. Nobody's life here is easy. Alex could have gotten in trouble because of you. Plus, you're walking quite well with your 'fractured' ankle," I bit back.

She took a step back not expecting these words from me.

"So you'd rather I fall on the stairs, maybe break my leg and then get a bigger punishment from the Lady?!"

"That way at least only one of you will get it."

"You know you may act all sweet and nice to the others but I can really see you now. You're a heartless, snake! You want to know what actually happened?! I couldn't take the heavy work and I fell in the hallway, completely out of strength. That's how Kyle found me. It was lunch time and I knew I couldn't use up any more of my strength. I knew I'd collapse and I'd have to pay the price. That's when I asked Kyle if he could pass me her lunch.

In the meantime, I went to find myself some water to drink so I wouldn't faint. I never expected Alex to finish the job for me! So now I want to thank him! I don't have to explain any of this to a person like you! But since you enjoy jumping into conclusions then here's my answer!!" she yelled. She was breathing heavily after her rant.

I simply smiled at her. She looked puzzled at my reaction. "Goodnight Henrietta."

After putting away the last pan, I walked towards our quarters. Leaving her standing there.

"What is your problem?" she whispered. I was almost out of the kitchen area but I heard her.

"You are."

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Eve's POV

Ms.Odelle crushed me in a hug. I didn't react for the first few seconds. Then slowly my arms wrapped themselves around her.

"Oh, my dear everything is going to be okay."

Did she think I was five? Everything is not okay! Nothing was going to be okay.

"Come on let's get you cleaned up and fed," she stood up releasing me from her embrace. I made no move to get up.

"Come on Eve," she gently took my hand but I remained silent and seated. That's when she kneeled infront of me and cupped my cheeks.

"Eve listen to me, it's going to be either me...or him I know you don't want him near you anytime soon so at least let me take care of you." Only then did my eyes met hers.

"I c....can't do this anymore..."

"I understand but everything will clear out soon I promise you that," she said tenderly.

"Pl.....please leave me."

"I can't do that dear. You'd have to stand in my shoes to understand why. I won't and I can't leave you so come on."

She started to use more force to drag me up. This time, I followed her to the bathroom.

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There you have it!!! What do you think?

Continue to next part