

As the belt slipped to the ground, Xander's robe gradually parted, leaving little to the imagination.

Isabel's eyes widened, causing her to quickly spin around, her heart pounding fiercely.

*How could Xander be so shameless? Undressing right in front of her!*

If she hadn't turned so fast, her eyes would've caught a glimpse of ... well, something she definitely shouldn't be seeing.

Even so, she hadn't turned fast enough to miss everything.

For instance, she definitely saw that Xander wasn't wearing any underwear.

The more she thought about it, the warmer she felt.

Thank goodness she was already in the hot spring—at least her flushed face wouldn't be noticeable.

As Isabel's mind drifted into a flurry of chaotic thoughts, she suddenly heard a splash behind her.

*He was getting in!*

After another splash, both legs were now firmly planted.

"What—what do you think you're doing?" Isabel didn't dare turn around, terrified that Xander might be standing there in the water.

With his height, if he were standing, well ... the mental image was just too much for her to handle.

Not to mention, the heat in here was already making her feel faint; if she let her imagination run any further, she was sure she'd get a nosebleed.

Xander smirked as he watched her rigid back, then glanced down at himself. He was sitting comfortably in the water, with only his chest and shoulders above the surface.

*Did she really think he was some kind of pervert?*

"I told you, this pool is big enough for the both of us," he said calmly.

"It's not appropriate. Men and women are different. You should really get out."

In response, Xander deliberately swirled his hand in the water, sending gentle ripples across the pool that lapped lightly against Isabel's back.

Her face and neck instantly flushed red.

The sensation of the ripples, soft and teasing, made her feel as though Xander were actually stroking her back, and a wave of indescribable embarrassment washed over her.

"Relax. I'm not some creep. I'm just here to enjoy the hot spring. It's a bit lonely on my own, so I thought we could chat," Xander said, his tone low and reassuring.

*Just chatting?* Isabel found that hard to believe.

"Turn around," came his rich, intoxicating voice from behind her.

*Why?*

*Was Xander about to unleash some primal beast within him?*

"I think I'll stay right here. The view's great from this side," Isabel replied, pretending to be absorbed in the scenery ahead.

Xander raised one eyebrow, his expression clouded and amused. He followed her line of sight—there were some flowers and a few shrubs, sure, but was it really a better view than ... what was on his side?

After a long, tense minute of standoff, Xander suddenly stood up.

The moment Isabel heard him move, her eyes widened in alarm.

She could feel it—Xander was getting closer.

"Thump ... Thump, thump, thump ... "

Her heart pounded faster and faster, completely out of control.

Just as Isabel was about to make a run for it, she felt warmth at her back.

She didn't need to turn around to know that Xander was right there, completely surrounding her.

It felt overwhelming, as if someone had completely invaded her territory and breached her defenses.

"Isabel," he murmured, his lips so close to her ear, his voice dripping with that deep, masculine energy, whispering her name with a softness that made her knees weak.

"Wh-what ... what exactly do you ... want?"

As the words stumbled out, Isabel realized she was stammering from nerves.

Xander's lips curled into a satisfied smile as he felt her tension.

He could see her flushed profile, her face red as a tomato, practically steaming.

She was so embarrassed, so adorably flustered.

He wanted to taste her.

His throat tightened, and he had to force himself to hold back, his chest rising and falling with restrained desire.

He leaned even closer, his lips brushing near her sensitive earlobe, warm breath grazing her skin as he spoke slowly, "Isabel ... tell me, how can I make you mine, completely and entirely?"

*Make her his?!*

Xander's words sent a shock through Isabel.

*So, he was finally losing control?*

Right now, with her guard down like this and her strength no match for his, if Xander decided to "storm the gates," it would be as easy as tearing through a sheet of paper.

Just as Isabel's nerves were stretched to the breaking point, Xander reached toward her face.

Instinctively, Isabel shoved him away, grabbed a towel from the side, and dashed out of the pool.

Caught off guard by her push, Xander stumbled backward and fell fully into the water.

By the time he surfaced, all he saw was Isabel, wrapped in a towel, fleeing the scene.

He couldn't help it—he burst out laughing.

He'd only reached out to help brush stray locks of hair from her mouth, but she'd gotten so flustered.

Meanwhile, Isabel was speed-walking down the hall, fuming internally.

Laughing?! What was so funny? Did he think he'd won just because she ran?

She glanced at herself in the mirror, her face as red as a

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boiled shrimp.

To think—she was the number one agent in the alliance, a lone wolf with a perfect mission success rate, and here she was, in a situation she couldn't handle at all.

It was all Xander's fault!

It wasn't bad enough that he was absurdly good-looking—he had to go and strip down to seduce her too.

Just as Isabel was grumbling to herself, a knock sounded at the door.

*Who could be knocking at this hour? Did the staff need something?*

After quickly throwing on a T-shirt and jeans, Isabel opened the door.

"It's you?" Isabel frowned.

She'd expected a hotel employee, but it was Kaleb.

"What do you want?"

Kaleb didn't like how coldly Isabel was speaking to him. He missed the old Isabel—the one who used to follow him around so gently, always by his side.

"I just want to talk."

"There's nothing to talk about." Isabel tried to shut the door, annoyed.

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Before it could close, Kaleb wedged his foot in the doorway.

"If the gentleman inside doesn't mind, I can just talk to you here in the hallway."

At that, Isabel glanced back into the room.

Xander was insanely possessive. If he saw her at the door talking to Kaleb, he'd be jealous and she'd have to deal with it.

"Let me change my shoes."

The moment Isabel and Kaleb left, Xander walked out from the other room.

*Where is she?*

*Where'd she go?*

He realized her phone was missing too.

*Did she go out?*

Xander immediately called her.

As soon as she picked up, he asked, "Where are you?"

"Oh, it was a bit stuffy inside, so I stepped out for some fresh air," Isabel said, not daring to tell the truth.

If it were anyone else, it wouldn't be a big deal. But if Xander found out she'd gone out with Kaleb, he'd

definitely get suspicious.

"Tell me where you are. I'll come meet you." Xander glanced out the window, scanning the grounds, but couldn't see any sign of her.

"Oh, well, the weather's not great. There's a light drizzle, and you're not fully recovered from your cold, so it's probably better if you stay inside. Wouldn't want you catching a fever."

She was still talking, slightly flustered, when Kaleb's voice rang out loud and clear beside her.

"You're saying all that just because you don't want him coming out and interrupting us, aren't you?"



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