

Chapter 49 What's Your Real Purpose

Oh, no!

I've been caught!

Isabel gripped the man's shirt tightly, her thoughts racing frantically.

Should I flee?

No, that's not an option! I'm no longer the same Isabel I used to be.

In her previous life, she had been known as the "Lone Wolf," living a solitary existence free from emotional ties.

But things were different now; she had someone who mattered to her.

She couldn't leave Reggie behind.

So running away was out of the question.

With no possibility of escape, she had to devise a believable excuse for her presence.

Breaking into a man's room at night and getting caught—it was tough to find a rational explanation for that!

As Isabel wrestled with her thoughts, Xander stepped forward.

"Look at me."

His authoritative tone sent a shiver of anxiety down her spine.

Should I comply or not?

If I don't, it might raise suspicions.

Yet if I do, what if he reads something in my expression?

Before she could process her options, Xander gently grasped her chin, lifting her face so their eyes could meet.

When she looked up, Isabel froze.

What is happening? Why does it seem like he's ... happy?

"Tell me, what's your real purpose for being here?"

Those words sent a chill through Isabel.

So I've been discovered!

To Xander, her hesitation appeared as shyness.

"I know you came here for me."

"Wait, what?" Isabel was taken aback, her mind struggling to follow his line of thought.

"Still won't admit it?" Xander teased, a playful smile dancing on his lips.

"What am I supposed to admit?" With each word he spoke, Isabel felt increasingly disoriented.

"Still pretending, huh?" He tugged his shirt free from her grip and continued, "Sam was right—you didn't marry me out of spite; your true aim is me."

Isabel tilted her head, staring at Xander, momentarily speechless, her gaze eventually falling to the shirt he was holding. She opened her mouth slightly, struggling to find the right words.

"I can't believe it; you actually like me that much?" Xander chuckled, a smug look on his face as he watched her reaction.

Just moments earlier, upon entering the room and spotting her twisting his shirt in her hands, he had felt a surge of emotions. Had he not been careful, he might have swept her up and taken her to bed, acting on their unspoken desires right then and there.

"Wait, what?" Isabel nearly choked on her own breath, hastily trying to clarify. "You've misunderstood! I don't like you! I just ... I couldn't sleep, so I came over to... look around, and —"

"Look around? So you casually decided to rummage through my clothes? Just holding my shirt and playing with it like that?" Xander interrupted her.

"Uh ... " Isabel found herself speechless.

"Still not ready to admit it? Fine. I'll make it impossible for you to deny." Xander pulled out his phone and opened a recording app—it was a message from Rachel.

"I'm after Xander's wealth and intend to become the mistress of this house. Beyond that, I plan to drug him, strip him of everything, and ensure that I have his child, leaving him with no choice but to be bound to me forever."

Sh*t ...

Isabel's jaw dropped in disbelief, her eyes glued to Xander's phone, unable to close her mouth.

"What do you have to say for yourself now?" Xander asked, a mischievous smirk on his lips as he regarded Isabel.

A pounding headache began to form in Isabel's mind.

There was no doubt; that recording was Rachel's doing.

She might as well thank her for convincing Xander that she had ulterior motives—that she had entered his room under the cover of night with plans of seduction rather than anything innocent.

This actually makes things easier; I can just play along.

Isabel steadied herself, shaking off the panic that threatened to overtake her, and met Xander's gaze with a newfound calm determination.

"Of course! You're handsome, charming, and the epitome of a hero—any woman would find you appealing. I'm no different. Plus, after being hurt by a jerk, running into you at that moment made me ... well, I just—ahem—lost my composure."

As she spoke, a wave of uncontainable joy surged within Xander, enveloping him like the gentle warmth of a spring breeze.

Isabel sighed and lowered her head, continuing her act. "But I understand we come from different backgrounds, and on the day of our wedding, I made a vow. I would never take advantage of you, nor would I allow myself to develop feelings. So forget about what happened tonight. Once I help your brother recover, I'll file for divorce and vanish from your life completely."

Isabel felt confident she was nailing her performance, even surprising herself with how convincing she sounded.

Now, she just needed to maintain her facade of sadness as she prepared to leave the room.

Just as Isabel was about to slip away, she felt Xander's large hand gently cradle her face, lifting it. Before she could react, his lips pressed against hers.

Isabel's eyes widened in shock and disbelief, her mind swirling in a dizzy haze.

Her thoughts jumbled, as if someone had pressed pause on her ability to think clearly.

It felt like an eternity had passed before Xander finally broke the kiss, his dark eyes shimmering with unabashed delight. His hands slid from her face to her shoulders, the corners of his eyes crinkling in a smile as he locked eyes with her.

This left Isabel utterly confused.

"I'll allow you to take back what you said earlier." His voice was smooth and sultry, like music that tugged at the heart, intoxicating and impossible to resist.

"Huh?" Isabel still couldn't grasp his meaning.

Before she could voice her confusion, his alluring voice returned, whispering in her ear.

"I permit you to like me."

Boom!

It felt like a thunderclap echoed above Isabel's head. She stared at Xander with wide, disbelieving eyes, frozen in place, struggling to process his words.

Xander misinterpreted her silence, thinking she was simply too happy to respond.

This only deepened his satisfaction.

"Come with me." Xander took Isabel's hand and led her to the edge of the bed, sitting down first. He patted the sheets, "Come on. Sit with me."

Isabel instinctively leaned back, wanting to escape.

Xander thought she was just being shy, reinforcing his belief in what she had said about maintaining boundaries with her former fiancé.

"Don't worry; I won't do anything until you're ready."

"Oh, okay," Isabel murmured, woodenly settling beside him.

As soon as she sat down, Xander shifted closer, their bodies pressing together.

Isabel felt as though she were trapped in a surreal nightmare, questioning her choices. She had only come to search for something, yet here she was, risking everything.

What puzzled her the most was what Xander had said.

He allows me to like him?

What could that possibly mean?

"Why don't you stay here tonight?"