

Chapter 50 Tickling the Man's Armpits

Isabel jumped to her feet, jerking her hand free from Xander's grasp, her eyes wide with disbelief as she stared at him.

"I told you, I won't do anything inappropriate. You can just sleep here," Xander replied, his voice calm and steady.

He intended to see if sharing a bed with her would finally bring him the peace he had been craving.

It was a thought he had contemplated for quite some time but hadn't found the right moment to explore until now.

Ever since that night with Isabel, his insomnia had worsened, and he could feel the toll it was taking on his health.

But as he considered this, Isabel took a few steps back, visibly uncomfortable.

A spark of irritation flared within Xander at her reaction.

Does she think I am some kind of monster?

"I think you've got it wrong. I really don't have those kinds of feelings about you," he clarified, trying to alleviate the tension.

Isabel's words only deepened the furrow in his brow.

"What do you mean by that? Just a moment ago, you said you were attracted to me."

"Honestly, it's a bit more complicated than that. I admire you, sure, but it's more about respect and idolization. Even if I feel something, it passes quickly. Right now, I don't have any romantic feelings for you. I keep my promises, and I said I wouldn't fall for you, so I won't," Isabel explained.

Isabel presumed that Xander was testing her, giving her one final opportunity to act on the chemistry between them. If she dared to take that leap, he would have a legitimate reason but to throw her out of the Bennetts' home, and that would ruin all her hard work.

A wave of relief washed over Isabel upon that thought. Thank goodness she had reacted quickly; otherwise, it could have been the end of everything for her.

Xander's face darkened as he glared at her. "Are you saying you don't like me? Then what about this recording—"

"That was just me saying the opposite to irritate your mother and Rachel," Isabel interrupted, cutting him off.

His expression soured further. "Then why are you in my room so late, running your fingers over my shirt like it's a magic lamp?"

"Believe it or not, I can't sleep in my own pajamas. They're uncomfortable. I find the fabric of your fancy shirt much more enjoyable, so I thought I'd 'borrow' a couple while you were out," Isabel replied, her tone dripping with insincerity.

Xander studied her closely, searching for any sign of deception, but he found none. That only deepened his mood, sending it spiraling downward.

"Ahem." Isabel cleared her throat. "Anyway, I feel awkward asking to borrow more. I should get going and wash up before bed."

With that, Isabel turned away from Xander and headed toward the door.

He watched her leave, anger simmering within him.

With a loud bang, Isabel slammed the door shut, and an eerie silence enveloped the room—so quiet that one could hear a pin drop.

Xander sat on the edge of his bed, his expression stormy as he remained frozen, unaware of how much time passed before he finally stood up.

His eyes roamed the empty room, and a sense of emptiness settled in. She was gone, leaving him alone.

He exhaled sharply, releasing a long breath filled with frustration.

Xander's expression remained dark and clouded. After the emotional highs and lows he had just experienced, Xander suddenly realized how much Isabel truly mattered to him—far more deeply than he had ever imagined.

Despite feeling calmer after taking a cold shower, agitation still simmered beneath the surface. With each passing second, it only intensified.

Tossing and turning in bed all night, he still couldn't find any rest.

Around 1:00 AM, Xander abruptly threw off his covers and sat up, his expression as dark as the night around him.

After taking a few deep breaths, he climbed out of bed, exited his room, and stood outside Isabel's door. He twisted the doorknob and pushed it open.

Startled awake, Isabel blinked her eyes open, instantly alert and listening intently to the sound of approaching footsteps.

Who could it be?

In this house, aside from the two brothers, there is no one else.

The villa has excellent security measures. Even I would need some effort to break in.

So, it can't possibly be an intruder.

It can't possibly be Samuel; he's taken the special medicine I prepared for him and is likely sleeping soundly in his room, completely out like a light.

No, it has to be Xander.

As Isabel quietly assessed the situation, she noticed Xander approaching her bedside with purposeful strides. Without uttering a word, he pulled back the covers and climbed into bed, settling in as if it were the most natural thing to do.

Isabel blinked in confusion, struggling to grasp the unfolding situation.

From her previous experience of sharing a bed with him, she recognized him immediately, even without turning around.

But why is he here, in the dead of night, slipping into my bed—is it simply to sleep?

Before she could fully comprehend what was happening, she felt his strong hands gripping her shoulders, pulling her against his solid chest and enveloping her in his embrace, just like last time, holding her tightly.

Isabel was completely taken aback.

Her shock seemed limitless.

Just as she prepared to push him away, she heard the steady rhythm of his breathing.

Is he really here to sleep?

What on earth is going on?

Listening intently, she realized from the sound of his breaths that he wasn't pretending; he was genuinely asleep.

"Are you serious?"

Isabel rolled her eyes in disbelief. Then, with some effort, she turned halfway to face him, glancing up at his sculpted features in the faint light.

Is he sleepwalking?

She couldn't help but wonder.

Carefully, she managed to pull one hand free from his grasp and attempted to pry his arm away, but it felt as unyielding as stone.

Forget it. If I couldn't escape his hold last time, it's not worth the energy to try again now.

Yet, with him wrapped around her, her sleepiness evaporated.

Suddenly, a mischievous idea popped into her head.

If being assertive isn't working, perhaps a gentler approach would yield better results.

Isabel's lips curved into a sly grin as her crescent-shaped eyes focused on his neck. She raised her free hand and began to scratch at his skin softly.

No response?

Is he not ticklish at all?

Her gaze shifted toward his armpit, and a playful smirk crept across her face.

She was determined to discover the truth.

Isabel reached for the spot and started to tickle him, scratching lightly, one deliberate stroke after another.

In his dreams, Xander felt the sensation of a playful little cat scratching at his underarm with its soft paws.

His brow furrowed slightly as he stirred.

Seeing his reaction fueled her curiosity, and she continued her playful onslaught.

"Stop moving!" Xander exclaimed, catching her mischievous hand that was teasing him.