

Royal Contract 1031

Chapter 1031 Perfect distraction

He heard that their friends were in another hospital but for another reason. He wished he could join them. But he knew he could not rejoice with them until Rosella recovered from her condition.

They were expecting a new life, while he dreaded losing one.

Until now, the woman he had sworn to love and protect had remained unconscious in her hospital bed, still in a coma. The doctors still could not assure him of when she would wake up or her condition if she did.

However, he held on to whatever thin thread they had given him. He believed in the slim chance that she would come out of this alive. He could not accept the other possibility.

“Your next meeting called and notified us that he will be late by thirty minutes.” His secretary informed him as she stood before his desk. He did not even notice that she entered since his mind was elsewhere. “Will you need anything else, Sir David?”

Roseann had convinced him to leave her side and go back to work. She said that work would distract him from the current condition of her sister. Although he knew she was right, he still would like to stay by her side.

He was afraid that she might wake up and not see him there. Worst of all, something would happen to her, and he would miss his chance to see her for the last time. Even though he did not want to think about such a prospect, it was a possibility nonetheless.

He turned around from his chair and faced her, suddenly registering her words in his mind. Then, he suddenly thought that maybe he better concentrate on his work, just like Roseann said. Besides, she promised to call him as soon as there was an update.

“Yes, hold my calls for a few minutes. I need to go and see Evan.” He stood up from his desk and walked straight to the door.

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He had been selfish for far too long. He had been thinking only of himself that other people had to put their lives on hold for him. If Rosella had learned about this, she would not like it.

“Yes, Sir.” He heard his secretary, but he continued walking down the hallway, determined to see his friend who had held the fort while he was away.

“Excuse me, do you have a minute?” David walked passed his friend’s secretary and knocked on his door. “I hope you are not busy.”

Of course, he knew he was busy since he had dumped most of his obligations on his friend’s table. But he would try to catch up and make up for his shortcomings.

“Come in, David. What is it?” Evan quickly asked as he closed the file he was working on and faced him. “Is this about Rosella? Is she ok? You know you don’t have to be here since I have it covered.”

He knew his friend was covering his clients and cases on top of his obligations. That was not the problem. He knew his partner could easily handle the task. Besides, they had competent people who could help him.

Nevertheless, there was another issue that he needed to address. He could guess that his friend did not want to open up on the topic because of his situation, but he could sense the urgency of it.

“No. Thank God! Rosella is stable.” He uttered with relief, still glad that it was not what he came here to discuss. “I am not here because of her. And this has nothing to do also with the company.”

He quickly added, but he could see the growing confusion on his friend’s face. Therefore, he did not prolong his wait as he explained the reason for his visit. “I am here to discuss your wedding.”

He might not have his wedding this year or soon, but he did not want his friend to delay his union either because of him. Before the accident, Evan had been talking about his wedding.

Honestly, he was envious that they were already planning theirs while Rosella was still stalling on theirs. Still, he was happy for his friend that he had finally met his match, a woman who had tamed his friend from his wild side.

If there was a man in their group they thought would never succumb to love, commitment, and marriage, it was their youngest member, Evan. But as always, love prevailed.

“What about it?” Evan leaned on his chair as he sat down on a chair. “We already agreed to delay it till next year.” He informed him.

That was what he was thinking. His friend was considering his situation, delaying his happiness because of his condition. But Evan did not have to do that. Who knew when Rosella would wake up?

The doctors had been honest with him from the start. Her condition had no timeframe. Some patients in similar cases woke up within a week or a month. Sadly, there are some instances where it took years.

But he would wait as long as it took him, wishing she would still wake up. He would not give up on her as long as there was hope. He would fight for her until the very end.

“I don’t think that is a good idea.” David seriously looked at his friend. “If you love her, you need to marry her soon.” He did not want him to waste his time waiting for the perfect moment.

From his experience, it might never come again. Therefore, he wished his friend would seize the moment and marry the person he loved as soon as he could arrange it.

“What is this all about?” Evan appeared concerned about him. He stood from his seat and transferred to the chair next to him. “Do you need to talk about Rosella?”

David could not blame him for misinterpreting his words. His friend had not experienced what he had gone through. His friend could not understand what losing was until he lost her and missed his opportunity.

“No, this is about you.” David continued. “Don’t worry about me. I think I have things under control around here. I know you need time to prepare for your wedding. Let me take over.” He suggested as his mind decided to focus on work.

The last thing he needed was for his mind to continue thinking of the worst things that could happen in his situation. He could not allow the negative thoughts to pester his mind.

“Are you sure?” His friend looked at him as if he had gone insane. At least, he seemed shocked about his proposal. “But I don’t want to dump everything in your lap while Rosella is still in the hospital.”

His friend probably expected that he would still fall apart with Rosella’s situation. However, he realized that she still needed him to stay strong. The only way he could do that was to continue living while he waited for her to wake up.

“No, I need the challenge of work to keep me from thinking of her condition. Besides, it will make me and Rosella very happy if you and Amelia would finally tie the knot.” He remembered his fiancée had always expressed concern for Evan’s wayward ways.

She was one of the top supporters when Evan announced that he had finally proposed. And she was the one who encouraged him never to give up on Amelia.

She hugged Evan tightly when he announced that Amelia had accepted his ring. So, he knew Rosella would not want Evan to postpone building his life with the woman he loved just because of them.

“I will discuss this with Amelia, but I want you to know if you need anything from me. I am always here for you.” Evan told him as he tapped him on the shoulder, showing his support.

He did not need to say it because he had always known that his friends always had his back. But it was time that he showed them that he also had theirs.

“I guess I better get back to my office. My next meeting might be at my office by now. But think about it. I don’t want you to waste valuable time waiting to be with the woman you love.” David reiterated.

He was not saying the same situation would happen to his friend and fiancée. He would not wish his condition on anyone else. It was a curse that nobody else should suffer.

He felt it was his punishment for all his wrongdoings. It was his wake-up call, telling him that he was not invincible. He only hoped he still had time to correct his mistakes, and Rosella would still witness how he had changed.

As he neared his office, he noticed that his next meeting had arrived and was sitting in the lounge. He quickly moved toward them, greeting them and excusing himself for making them wait.

“That is ok, Mr. Anderson. We are just glad that you squeezed us into your schedule.” The man leading the group stated as he took his hand for a firm shake.

“Why don’t you follow me inside my office.” He ushered them forward to his doors. “What can I do for you, Mr. Rosley?” He quickly asked once they were seated on his comfortable couch. He also offered them a drink which they declined.

“Business, of course.” The reputable businessman responded with a broad smile on his lips. “I want to bring some of my business to your firm. Do you think you handle it?” Mr. Rosley asked, using a challenging tone.

“Of course, we would like to have you on board,” David announced excitedly, knowing this man would bring big business for his firm.

He could only guess that his daughter’s association with one of his senior partners must be why he was here. But that was not important. He believed this was what he needed in the meantime.

More work, less time he would have to think about her. Not that he did not want to think about her. On the contrary, he only required the perfect distraction from his terrifying thoughts.

Chapter 1064 Chs

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1032 The real jungle

Finally, she felt relieved from the pain. Not only that but also from the knowledge that their child had joined them in this world. She would see her baby soon.

Suddenly, she was wary. She was supposed to hear a cry. At least, that was what she had seen in movies. But all she saw as she struggled to open her eyes were people moving fast as the doctor seemed to be giving instructions.

In her hazy mind and exhausted body, she tried to understand what was happening around her. Eventually, she looked up to see the concerned face of her husband. Was there something wrong with their baby?

“Alex,” She called to him, which had called his attention as he immediately looked down at her. His face contorted to a smile, erasing the frown on his forehead just a second ago.

Did she imagine it, or was he hiding something from her? She knew her body was battling fatigue as her eyes struggled to stay open, but she had to see her baby. She wanted to hold their baby in her arms before she succumbed to the darkness.

“How are you feeling?” Alex leaned closer to her, kissing her on the forehead as he moved the hair that clung to her face. Then with a towel in his hands, he tried to wipe the sweat that broke through her skin.

She pushed herself up to get a closer look. She could see several people on the other side of the room. That must be her baby. But what were they doing?

“Alex, is there something wrong with our baby?” She was afraid to ask, but she had to find out.

She gripped the linen sheet of her bed as she pushed herself to a sitting position. But the uniformed staff prevented her from seeing her child. Was this her worst fear coming true?

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“Dani, they are just making sure our baby is ok.” Alex wrapped his arms around her as they waited for the doctor to tell them the situation. She wanted to believe him, but he sensed uncertainty in his voice.

“Doctor?” She could not even hear her voice anymore as fear rose to her throat.

"I think we have a courageous fighter in our hands." The pediatric doctor finally announced in his big booming voice. "Sorry, Mr. and Mrs. Blackstone, for the delay, but the Prince has finally arrived."

Their son did not cry like she expected he would. He stayed quiet the entire time that the doctors worked on him. Until the time her doctor carried him toward her and her husband to see him for the first time.

"Is he alright?" Alex asked, looking slightly wary. He seemed scared to touch him, terrified he might hurt such a delicate being.

She could not blame her husband since both of them had no experienced dealing with an infant. She had held a baby before but not as tiny and delicate as this one. She was scared she might drop, squash, or hurt him with her touch.

"He is. There is just a few minor complications but nothing that should worry you. In the meantime, enjoy your moment with your son because it may probably take a few hours before he can join you again." The doctor placed the child in her arms.

Cradling her son in her arms seemed to wash away all her fatigue and worries as her heart was overwhelmed with joy. Looking at his tiny adorable face, she believed he was worth all her pain and sacrifices.

She felt her husband lean closer to her body as he gazed at the child in her arms. She could tell he would also like to take him in his arms, but fear prevented him from doing so.

"Have you thought of a name yet? But if you have not, that is ok. You can do it later." The doctor asked as he waited.

She looked at her husband, who seemed lost as he stared deeply into their son's eyes. Something clicked in her mind. A name that they never even considered including in their list.

It had something to do with what she heard the doctor say a while ago. It reminded her of the first thing she had thought when he first saw her husband. She named him after a greek god, Adonis, due to his masculine physique and other attributes.

"Ares..." She whispered into her son's delicate ears. She knew Alex heard it, but his response was not what she wanted to see.

She watched her son's face twitch into what her observation appeared to be a smile. Although, that was debatable. Still, her mother's instinct kicked in, telling her that her son loved the name.

"I love it." She heard her husband agree. "Ares," Alex repeated. Then, "His name is Ares Ethaniel Hamilton Blackstone." He proudly announced to the room for everyone to hear.

She could not believe her ears when she heard her father's name as the second name of her child. Alex never mentioned that he planned to do that, and she was eternally grateful to him for bringing her father to life through their son.

They both knew why it was a fitting name for their son. From the moment he was conceived, he had fought for his life until she delivered him into this world. Their son would require courage like no other to survive in this world.

They could try to protect him as much as they could. But in the end, as the heir to their large empire, he would have to learn to fight his battle. Many would want his head on a plate even at an early age.

“Welcome to the world, young Prince Ares.” The doctor acknowledged while everybody clapped to join in the celebration.

Although he never lived in the palace, technically, he earned his birthright as one of the possible heirs to the throne.

Once again, she stared into his eyes as she tried to envelop him with love and protection. But she could not help but fear for his future. But just like her parents, she swore to do her best to safeguard him in the real jungle, which was the real world.

Chapter 1033 Not him

He should not care if she was with that man, doing God knows what. He should focus on the girl that had been eyeing him since he entered the restaurant. She looked stunning, attractive, fun, and, best of all, single.

He could have a good time with her during lunch and even spend some time with her afterward. But his mind kept picturing that man touching her hand, and he could feel his blood boil through his veins.

“Hi, there!” The woman finally took the initiative to approach him since he had never made a move. “I wonder if you like some company.”

The woman took the spare seat next to him without waiting for a reply, indicating that she was used to having her way. Under another circumstance, he would have entertained her bold move.

But at that moment, he seemed to be not in the mood for company. He stood up from his chair and never even forced a smile on his lips. “I am sorry, but I think I lost my appetite.”

He had no intention of directing his statement at her, but he did not care because only one thing was on his mind. He had to find her and save her from making a mistake with that man.

“This is crazy.” He silently reasoned. Nevertheless, he had gone beyond making sense since he bumped into her. His entire world had turned upside down since he got to know her.

Despite the few things he learned about her, it did not stop him from wanting her. If he was honest, it only intensified his respect for her. It made him desire her more.

Was this insanity? Maybe he had loosened a screw inside his head, but the heart wanted what it wanted. At least his heart would not stop beating erratically for her.

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Was it love? He doubted, but he still intended to find out what it was since he could not forgive himself if he lost his opportunity to have her. But one thing he knew for sure, he had no intention of hurting her.

“Who do you think you are?” He thought that he had cleared of trouble, but he was mistaken as the woman stood before her, rage visible on her face. “Nobody walks away from me like I am a piece of trash.”

His assumption about her was correct. This young lady had never learned the word no in her life. He used to be like her, but it was clear that he had changed.

If he thought that was the end of it, he was wrong. A slap and red wine splashed across his face. He did not expect that, but he was not about to retaliate and add to the scene.

“Everybody had to experience it one way or another.” He answered her, giving her advice instead as he grabbed a napkin from a nearby table and dabbed it on his wet face.

He did not mind the slap. He believed he was getting used to it. However, he had no time to deal with a spoiled brat as he turned and left, striding faster since he had already lost valuable time.

“Where are you?” He mumbled loud enough for him to hear his words but not loud enough for the bystanders to notice him. “Where can I find Mr. Stark’s office?” He asked one of the staff of the hotel.

He did not know Mr. Stark, the son, but he generally knew men and mostly what they wanted from an innocent girl like her. He would not allow her to fall prey to another predator like him.

As far as he was concerned, this man had falsely pretended to look for him to get to her. But the son never took her to his father but took her elsewhere. Nonetheless, he would find them?

He could try his office. That was a start. Maybe he could charm his secretary to spill what she knew. Eventually, he began to concoct some ideas as he searched the building for her.

“Mr. Stark’s office is on the top floor.” The employee informed him. But he was just there a few moments ago.

“No, I mean his son.” He quickly corrected, but he could not tell him the name since he had forgotten when he had introduced himself earlier. Then, the uniformed man told him to take the express elevator to the upper floors.

It was just two floors down from the top floor, so he believed it was not hard to find. But the slow movement of the elevator was driving him crazy. It was like it was intentionally moving at a snail’s pace.

Usually, he would whistle as he waited inside the small box. But not today, as he could hardly breathe normally as his agitation increased as he neared his destination.

But his eyes widened when the metallic double doors slid open, and he witnessed her smiling at the man as he guided her outside his office. But that was not the worse part. He seemed to enjoy holding her hands as he said goodbye to her.

He moved toward them, but she seemed engrossed in their conversation to notice his presence. She still had her back to him as her face looked at the man before her while the other man watched her intensely, not even glancing his way.

“You are always welcome to visit us, Ria, and I also look forward to meeting Edison.” The man thoughtfully said as he raised her hand to his lips and kissed them, acting like a true gentleman.

But he knew what kind of man he was as he saw red. He was ready to attack the bull by his horn, luckily, his phone rang, and it somehow snapped him back to reality.

He was ready to blow this deal to smithereens just because this man kissed her hands and said a few words that hit him straight to his heart. But was it guilt that this stranger had accepted her despite having a son?

Suddenly, he felt he had no right to be with her. He abruptly turned around before anyone could notice him and rushed back inside the elevator.

He felt ashamed of his actions for the way he had treated her at the very start. He did not deserve to be with her. He believed she was better off with a more responsible man, not him.

Chapter 1034 Pride and joy

He vigilantly sat by her side since they transferred her to a private room, accompanying her until she dozed off. She had been through an exhausting labor, and her body had taken a tremendous toll.

The doctors recommended she had a good rest before she could see her baby again. As much as they would like to see him again, they knew it was for the best.

He finally stood up when he saw her breathing had fallen to a steady rhythm. With her eyes closed tightly shut, he knew she had succumbed to a deep slumber. Although he was also tired, he still had a few things to do.

"I love you, Dani. Thank you for all your sacrifices. Ares is a lucky child to have a mother like you." He tenderly whispered into her ears as he leaned over, planting a gentle kiss on her forehead, careful not to wake her up.

He hoped that in her subconsciousness, she would still hear his words. He wanted to say them when she was awake but forgotten through the excitement of seeing their child.

But he noted never to forget to tell her again how precious she was to him. Now, he realized the sacrifices that his parents had gone through for him. This time, it was his turn.

"Excuse me, Sir. I don't mean to be a bother, but I need to check on your wife." The nurse who entered the room asked him.

He quickly stood aside to give her space as she quietly worked on examining her, checking her vitals and other things, careful not to disturb her sleep.

"Can you call me if she wakes up?" He requested as he decided to step out for a few minutes after she finished her task.

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He walked out of the room, hoping to give his wife space to rest. Besides, their entire family and friends were still waiting for an update. He would have run to them as soon as their child was born, but he could not leave his wife in her condition.

Then, he also had to speak to the doctors about his son's condition. They had mentioned a complication in his delivery. Therefore he had to know the details.

Fortunately, the doctors assured them that it seemed to be a minor one. But they would like to conduct several tests before declaring the baby as a healthy young boy. It was standard procedure, so it was relatively safe.

“Hello, guys! We have a son.” He exclaimed as he entered the room, almost packed with his family and friends. “Dani is doing great, just resting. You are now grandparents.” Pointing to his parents and Laura, whose lips beamed widely.

“Congratulations!” Boomed in the air as, one by one, they greeted him. Those sitting seconds ago suddenly stood as they came closer to him to give him a congratulatory shake and a hug.

He felt ecstatic. It was the best feeling ever. It was the greatest gift he could ever receive in this lifetime. Better than the crown that was laid down on his feet but declined.

“Thank you all for all your support and love.” He was not emotional, but today, after seeing his son, he could not hold his few tears from falling.

Katherine immediately enveloped him in her arms while his father tapped him on the shoulder, and Laura smiled at him. He did not care if a Prince should not cry because this was the best tear he had ever shed in his entire life.

He was overwhelmed by his blessings, marrying a great wife and producing a handsome son. How could he regret choosing this life and leaving his birthright when he seemed to have everything that mattered to him?

“I am so happy for you, son.” Duke Frederick cheered for him. “But what name did you give my grandson.” His father asked as he recomposed himself, wiping with the back of his the wetness that glistened on his cheeks.

He could see everyone was interested as they all had gone silent and waited for his announcement. He could see several genuine smiles on their faces surrounding him, but he could also see the look that might have another meaning.

He was sad to see his friend Marcus and Jacky, who seemed happy for them, but deep in their eyes, he could still see the hurt that cut through their hearts.

“Yes, we are dying to hear it.” Haley hollered on the other side. She looked positively radiant as she smiled at him. He sensed something was different about her but could not pinpoint what it was, while her boyfriend seemed pensive.

Gerald smiled at him when he noticed that he was looking, but something seemed to be bothering him. With his underworld activity, he would not doubt that he had something cooking in his mind.

As long as he was not plotting against his family, he would not touch him as he promised his wife. But once he learned that he was using his position in the family to propagate his schemes. He would do everything he could to destroy him.

“Soon, you will meet our son, Prince Ares Ethaniel Hamilton Blackstone.” Alex watched his father’s reaction to the name, knowing he followed it in his late father-in-law’s name.

He was not disappointed as he beamed with pride at the name. Even his mother nodded her approval at their chosen name. He thought his father might be hurt since he did not choose his name. But he was glad he understood his reason.

“That is a great name,” Laura spoke up. This time, Dani’s mother had tears in her eyes. “You don’t know what this means to me. You deeply honor my late husband.”

His mother, Katherine, quickly enveloped her friend in her embrace. “It is a great way of remembering him and his legacy.” His mother told them.

“This is a day of celebration.” Duke Frederick announced to everyone. They would have opened a bottle of champagne, but the hospital rules did not allow it.

But the noises, laughter, and constant chattering were enough to fuel the festive moment. Alex could not be happier to share this moment with their family and friends.

He knew that if Dani could join them, she would laugh with everyone and brag about their beautiful and adorable son. She would also enjoy this moment with the people they loved.

But he could not also wait to show everyone his pride and joy.

Chapter 1035 From zero to ten in a split second

Like all the other nights, he could not go home until he had seen her. He could have driven straight to his apartment, which was nearer his office, but he had to turn the other way around.

He drove in the traffic and then into the almost empty street to be with her. No matter how late he got out of work, he went straight to her to check on her. He knew that he would not get any sleep if he could not see her.

Although Roseann told him he should not stay overnight, sleeping on the chair or the couch, he would still have lingered for a few hours before returning to his empty apartment. He needed assurance that she was ok.

“Hi, David. You are late today.” The nurse on duty greeted him. They were getting familiar with him since he was always around.

They even brought him coffee or a sandwich from time to time. But he could guess it could be Roseann who asked them to do so. Still, he appreciated their kindness and concern.

It somehow gave him peace of mind, knowing they would not let anything happen to his beloved while he was not around. At least Rosella was in good hands.

“I had a late meeting.” He explained to the kind nurse who always had her late night shift. “How is she doing? Were there any changes while I was gone.”

He could not help but hope for a positive update about her condition. Any indication that she might be waking up sooner than later. But the woman only made a solemn face, telling him that there was nothing.

“Don’t worry, maybe later or tomorrow.” She tried to encourage him as she walked passed him after her rounds. He would see her again later before he left when she checked on her again.

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In the meantime, he walked further into the room to sit beside her. He moved his chair closer to the bed, so he could be comfortable holding her hand. He wanted her to know that he was here. He might have left, but he would always return to her.

“I had been busy today. Work has piled up, but Evan is doing all he can to help. But he also has many things on his mind.” He started talking about his day at the office, telling her what he had done.

The doctors suggested that conversations could stimulate her brain and increase its activities. It could help in her speedy recovery. Maybe she would wake up soon.

He pulled her hand closer to him, warming it up with his hands. Since she did not have movements, her body had turned cold from the air conditioning around her. But the doctors assured him that she was not feeling any of it.

Still, he massaged her hands gently with the tip of his fingers and then covered them with his palms. He tickled her, hoping to get a reaction from her, but the only visible motion he noticed was the air going through her chest as it went up and down.

“I told Evan that if he loves Amelia, he should marry her immediately. He should not postpone their plans because they were waiting for us.” That was a joke between him and his best friend.

He kept talking to her about the meetings he had with some clients. He even discussed a few possible strategies he might use in his next negotiation. But her eyes remained closed.

He remembered that she would allow him to use her as his sounding board whenever he found himself in a bind. She would help him by giving some valuable opinions that sometimes help.

But what mattered most to him was her. The fact that she would give her time to listen to his whining. That was more than enough. He was lucky to find a woman like her to love and who loved him.

“Hey, David. I thought I told you not to stay too late.” Roseann’s voice echoed in the room as she entered to check on her sister. “You should go home and rest.”

He knew she only meant well. As she said before, she did not want him to get sick. He understood her concern and took her advice to heart.

He was not here to argue with her since he agreed with her. He also had to look after himself.

“I just arrived a few minutes ago. I had a late meeting.” He reasoned with her since she was keen on throwing him out the door. “And I brought something with me.”

He momentarily let go of her hand but not before leaving a lingering kiss on her knuckles. Then, he gently returned it to her side. He stood up and walked to the bags he had left behind on the table.

“Fine, you can stay, but stop sleeping here. It is not a hotel room. Besides, you will have a backache and a stiff neck if you keep dozing on that chair. Roseann pointed to the stiff chair used by the visitors.

He could sleep on the couch, but the last time taught him that it was not such a comfortable experience. The furniture was narrow and short. He could not fit his body when he lay down on it.

"I am not staying as long as you keep your promise to update me. But I brought dinner with me. I could not eat earlier, so I thought I might as well eat here." He dangled the paper bag in his hand in front of his future sister-in-law.

He thought of eating at home, but the idea of silence and emptiness did not appeal to him. Then, he remembered she might be hungry since she worked most nights at the graveyard shift.

He might as well invite her. Then, they could discuss her sister at length during the meal. It could also be his chance to get to know Rosella's sister and her family through her.

"What do you have in there?" She hesitantly asked, raising her eyebrows, but he could sense her growing interest.

"I have a variety of Mexican dishes." He placed the bag on the table and opened it up. It was still slightly warm since he asked the chef to heat it before he picked it up from one of Rosella's favorite restaurants.

He took a chance that her sister would also like it since Rosella loved their cooking. But her eyes dilated in delight when the aroma of the food floated in the room. They could smell its delicious spices as they whiffed in the air.

Without saying a word, she sat on the couch and helped unpack the food from the bag. "Are you eating? Or are you just going to stand there and stare?" She placed two plates on the table while he followed her and sat beside her.

"This is our favorite." She slightly whispered that he almost did not catch it. But he heard her. "Thanks for this." She forced a smile on her lips before she shook her head as if expelling a demon in her mind.

"Hey, Rosella, you better get your ass out of that bed, or you will never taste these delicious nachos." She jokingly said to her sister. He noticed her mood shift from zero to ten in a split second. Was there something wrong, but it could be nothing?

Chapter 1036 The water was not a dream

She knew she saw a glimpse of a man, but before she could confirm her suspicion, he was gone. The elevator closed, and she did not see his face.

But she did not doubt that it was him she had caught in her peripheral vision.

But what was he doing there, and why did he leave in such a hurry?

"Is there a problem, Ria?" Jay asked her, probably noticing her abrupt movement. Then, he followed her gaze, but he would only see the empty hallway.

During the short course of their meal, she had learned a few things about him. While she also shared a few things about herself. She had discovered that it was not hard to talk to him.

He seemed to be a sweet and loving husband to his late wife and a good and responsible father to his adorable daughter. He showed her a picture of his family while she showed him some pictures of his son.

“No, I just remembered something. But it was nice to meet you, Jay.” She could not share with him what she thought she saw. It could have been just a figment of her imagination.

But, yes, she had agreed to be friends with him, calling him by his name if it was just them. Still, she found it slightly awkward to hear his name coming from her lips.

“Remember, if you think of taking your son on a long, relaxing vacation, I need you to call me.” He handed her a card. “I am sure my daughter will love to meet him.”

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She could not help but wonder if he had ever used his daughter to pick up girls for a date. But she doubted. She believed a man like him, handsome, wealthy, intelligent, and successful, could pick up girls with a snap of a finger.

However, finding a woman that would accept his daughter and act as her mother would probably be difficult. It was the same issue she had with her situation. She knew that she would find it hard to look for a man who would be a father to his son.

“I will. Thanks again for the delicious lunch.” Then, she bid her farewell, not knowing if she would see him again.

Although she thought of bringing her son to a place like this, it was still a silly dream. Making it come true was another challenge she had to overcome in the future.

Then, he escorted her to the elevators and waved goodbye as the doors closed. She pushed her hands down on her side when she was left alone in the tiny confinement.

She spent the rest of the day inside her room, just relaxing in the tub and watching a movie afterward. When the afternoon came, she noticed the paper bag again lying on the floor.

“What to do with you?” She picked it up and pulled the garment out of its confinement.

Truthfully, she was bored. She did not know how to have fun without Edison around. Now, she wondered what else she could do to pass the time. Then, her eyes fixated on the soft material in her hands.

“Try it on.” She could hear her subconscious mind egging her to put the swimsuit on. “Why not!” She uttered, finally giving in to her curiosity. It had been a long time since she wore something similar to this.

She grabbed the flimsy material and wore it on her body. Then, she stood in front of the mirror, checking her reflection on the glassy side. She stared at her belly, remembering that it used to be fat.

It took her a while to regain her figure. It was not the same before she had Edison, but it was still sexy. Truthfully, she added a few pounds of flesh in the right areas, making her petite body transform into a curvy shape.

“Not bad.” She nodded in approval, seeing that she still looked presentable in this decent suit. But compared to her old pair, this was a lot nicer. But why would it not be when she paid a handsome price for it?

“Now, why don’t you go downstairs and check out their swimming pool.” She dared herself as she stared into her eyes.

Since she learned about her pregnancy and then having Edison, she never had time for the things she wanted to do. Her life had only revolved around him.

Maybe today was the only time she could have ‘me time.’ Maybe, it was time she took advantage of it because it might never happen again. She grabbed a robe that was neatly placed on the edge of her bed and put it on. It was now or never.

She marched outside her room and into the elevator with a new purpose. She would go swimming, sunbathing in the retreating sun, and then swim again a bit more.

As soon as she reached the pool area, a man greeted her and ushered her into a vacant lounge chair. Then, he asked if she had any specific orders.

“I will have fresh orange juice.” She ordered from the hotel staff, lingering in the poolside, waiting to assist their guests.

Then, she made herself comfortable, removing her robe and laying down on the chair, facing the sky. She could still catch a few sunrays before it finally hid behind the mountains.

Would it be nice to have some tan to show her son, her few friends, and some workmates? She could not wait as she relaxed on the chair and closed her eyes. She wished to imagine her son playing by her side.

But as her thoughts flew, so was her imagination as she pictured him in swimming trunks, showing off his masculine body. Although she had not seen his naked chest before, she knew what it could look like, remembering how it felt underneath her fingertips.

Then, was that sweat dripping from his body, trickling down on her skin? She believed her imagination was becoming wilder and wilder as her dreams became more daring.

But then again, she abruptly opened her eyes, realizing that the water was not a dream. “Would you like to join me for a swim?” A man stood by the side of her chair, smiling at her.

Chapter 1037 Maybe one or two more

It had been an eventful day as she gazed at her husband while breastfeeding their son. It took a while to get used to the feeling of his tiny lips sucking on her breast.

Of course, the sensation was different when it was her husband doing it. But the joy she felt at finally having her son in her arms could not be measured by any scale. She believed Alex also felt the same way.

“Do you think you can share your milk with Daddy?” Alex teased his son, who had been busy feeding himself.

She watched as he gently touched their son's cheeks, trying to get his attention. But Ares ignored his father as he continued with his task. She believed he might have inherited the trait of the Hamilton men, specifically Ethan's stubbornness.

"I think he just gave you his answer," Dani uttered, slightly giggling at their son's behavior.

She leaned over and touched his hairline with her lips, smelling the fresh baby scent of a newborn child. She had never imagined this day would come.

She remembered her engagement with Nick. He wanted to marry her, but he never mentioned having children. She thought that he was just not ready, but she guessed he was never a father material.

Fortunately, she learned the hard truth about him before it was too late. Or else she would have ended up in a miserable marriage. Luckily, fate introduced her to this man.

Alex was the best husband as far as he was concerned. She did not doubt that he would also be a great father to their son. She could already see how much he adored their little treasure.

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"I know we can work on a deal. After all, I am your father." Alex was not ready to give up as he continued to talk to his son, who never even acknowledged his father's existence.

"Give it up." She patted her husband on the face, comforting him for being the loser in this round.
"Maybe next time."

He pouted his lips at her as if disappointed. But after just a few seconds, he smiled again as if he had just thought of an idea. If she had to guess, it would be another silly suggestion that would make her laugh.

That was one thing she loved about him. He could be all serious and guns blazing when he needed to protect his family. But he could be hilarious if he wanted to make her smile.

He was not afraid to show his funny side, even if it might seem out of his character, as long as he could take away the pressure, the pain, or the exhaustion she felt.

"Not yet." He ran his fingers through his slightly getting long hair. It appeared that he was brewing another proposition in his mind.

She could only shake her head at his silliness. Anyway, she made a mental note to schedule him in a salon. She learned that the almighty Prince Alexander Princeton Blackstone was no different from her son. He was a big boy trapped in a man's body.

"What are you thinking now?" She asked as her eyes shifted back and forth between father and son.

"An arrangement that he would find hard to refuse," Alex announced with a smug smile, acting as if he was dealing in a merger.

"And what is it?" She could not wait to hear what he had concocted in his mind. She knew he was only entertaining her. After all, she still had not recovered from the hardship of labor.

Her son was not small by the standard. Her doctor had warned her that she should not eat too many sweets and salty foods, but she seemed to crave them more while pregnant.

It could be seen by how much her body had bloated. Then, the size of her son was another piece of evidence. Luckily, she was able to pull through the painful delivery without the need for surgery. Thankfully, her son was finally declared healthy.

“If you want more siblings, you must learn to share.” He declared in a whisper as he leaned down to their son’s ears as if it was a deal between the two of them.

She was amazed at the reaction he got from their little, mischievous son as he finally let go of her breast with a satisfied smile. It was like they had reached an understanding and made a pact, sealed, signed, and delivered.

“You see.” He pointed to their little angel. “He agrees with me.” He continued, proud of the connection he had with his son.

Although it might be just a coincidence, it was still adorable to see that the father and son had bonded in their little ways. Alex carefully picked up their son and cradled him in his arms.

However, somebody forgot to inform them that moving a child after breastfeeding could be disastrous if not handled properly. When he tried repositioning him from a different angle, Ares started burping.

Curd milk spilled out of his lips and landed on his father’s clothes. Of course, the new parents panicked, thinking the worse as they called for help.

The commotion did create a slight chaos in their room. Eventually, the nurse sorted it out with a quick tutorial on parenting easy tricks. But the rest, she knew they would have to learn by themselves.

Lucky for her, her mother, Laura, had volunteered to stay for a couple of weeks to show them the ropes. Even Katherine had agreed to help. They had already booked a room at a nearby hotel.

She believed both grandmothers could not wait to spend some time with their grandson. But she was readying herself for the possible clashes in their opinions. After all, they came from two different backgrounds. They might have different ways on how to raise their grandchild.

“But seriously, do you want more kids?” Dani gazed at her husband, who seemed to be enamored with their son.

She remembered he wanted at least half a dozen, but she knew they were joking back then. Now, she wondered what his opinion was about this.

“I do,” Alex answered her. “I want our son to have brothers and sisters to share his life with.” He gently held their son’s tiny hand in his fingers and tenderly pulled them to his lips, planting a soft kiss on his palm.

“But only if you want more.” He added as he finally looked in her direction. Then, he moved toward her, sitting on the edge of the bed with their son still in his arms.

She had never really thought about it before. Since she got pregnant, all her concentration went to their baby. She only wanted to keep him safe and deliver him to the world without a scratch on him.

Now, she could only think of one thing when she heard the yearning in his voice. She also wanted what he wished for their son. Being an only child had its perks, but she believed having a few more kids in the family would be better.

She might have difficulty in her first childbirth, but they said it got easier the second time. "Maybe one or two more." She announced. This time, Alex had a big smile on his face.

Chapter 1038 Cursed or just bad luck

Correction!

The man was not smiling but smirking at her. Her dream had drastically changed into a nightmare as the last person she wanted to see in this lifetime stood just a few feet away.

She had to blink twice and even dig her nails into the skin of her palms to be sure that she was awake. Unfortunately, she felt the pain, and the man remained like a terrible apparition before her.

"I think you are asking the wrong person. I am not interested." She responded with a furrowed brow. She was not hiding her distaste for the man. "Why don't you move along and find someone else to bother."

She suddenly wished she had powers that, with a snap of a finger, she could make him go away or disappear in a cloud of smoke. Sadly, she could only face him with her human strength and courage.

As much as she wished to shout at him, she had to remain calm. She was not here on vacation but representing her boss and his company. She had to prevent making a scandalous scene. She could only hope that he would leave her in peace.

"Is that how you treat old friends, Ria?" It seemed that was not happening as he kept pestering her, not heeding her advice.

On the contrary, he made his presence welcome by coming closer and sitting at the edge of her lounge chair. "I can put sunscreen on your skin just like the old times." He even offered, using his charm to get in a woman's pants.

She almost puked at his suggestion. Her skin crawled in disgust at the thought of his hands touching her. She would die first before she would allow his hands on her again. But maybe not even then.

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"No, thanks. I would rather burn under the sun than let you near me or touch me with your vile hands again." But she knew him well enough not to fall into his bullshits.

There was a time that she had dreamed of this man. She loved him and cherished their moment together. But she was a naive girl who quickly fell into his trap, believing his lies. That was back then, but not anymore.

She had learned the hard way the sad truth about men and love. She could never trust a man like him while love was as scarce as a diamond. Only a few were fortunate to experience having one. But it seemed it was not for her.

“It was not nice seeing you, Ryan.” She left her parting words as she hurriedly slid out of the chair, grabbed her things, and walked away.

She never thought that she would enjoy her time at the poolside. She even contemplated taking a dip into the pool, but this despicable human being ruined it when he showed up and disturbed her peace.

Now, she had no choice but to camp back inside her room and hide from the world. She did not want to bump into the man she never wanted to see again, accidentally or not, in this lifetime or the next.

“Where are you going?” He asked in an irritated voice. He did not shout, but it was evident to her that he did not like that she walked out on him.

For the first time, she liked picturing him, seeing the annoyance painted on his handsome face. For the longest time, she wanted to hurt him, just like what he did to her. But now, she realized she just pitied him for the scumbag that he was.

“As far away from you, jackass.” But she only mumbled it to herself as she continued to walk away.

She was just glad that he did not seem to remember their son. Maybe he had forgotten all about him. After all, it was in the clause that they made her sign that he would have nothing to do with her son.

Yes, her son, not his anymore. She repeated in her head as she expelled a sigh of relief. The last thing she needed was for him to demand to see her child. But she doubted.

She kept moving towards the elevators, hoping to get away from him as soon as possible. But she wondered what he was doing here. On second thought, it was a first-class resort and hotel. Of course, he could afford a place like this.

“What a day!” She expressed both relief and disappointment as she entered her room. It started great until it lasted.

She quickly moved to the bathroom to shower, removing the heat that clung to her skin and washing away any remaining thoughts of him. Then, she dressed up in a comfortable shirt and shorts.

She was glad she brought a pair, or she would wear her office clothes while in the privacy of her room. What was she thinking when she was packing? It was apparent she was not.

She grabbed the phone on the side table to order something to eat, but a knock on her door stopped her. It could not be the room service since she still had to dial the number.

It could be her partner. Come to think of it. She had not seen him since this morning. Suddenly, she wondered what he did with that woman. But that was not her business, hanging up the phone and dashing to the door.

“Hi! Zach.” She greeted him first when she slid the door open. She did not want what happened earlier to ruin the rest of their trip. After all, the business was not yet through until they had the signed papers and were flying back home.

“Hey, Ria. I hope I was not disturbing you. But I only wish to check if you are fine.” He smiled at her, but his face seemed to lack his cheerful self. “And I was going downstairs to have dinner in a few minutes. I wonder if you would like to join me.”

She appreciated his concern, but it was he who seemed not fine. "Thanks for the invite, but I will just order in and stay in my room." She did not want to complicate things between them.

Besides, she did not want to bump into her ex. But her partner did not need to hear that. Why did this have to happen just when she started to enjoy this trip? Was she cursed or just bad luck?

Chapter 1064 Chs

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1039 With nowhere else to go

"Ok. Then, have a good night, Ria. I will see you tomorrow." He seemed disappointed, but he did not insist like the other times. He forced a smile on his lips and then turned around.

Then, Zach was gone, going down the hallway as he disappeared from her sight. She concluded that something might have happened to him. Maybe it was the girl from earlier.

Suddenly, she remembered that she thought she had seen him at the office of Mr. Stark. But she was still not sure about that. Besides, why would he abruptly leave without saying a word, and why did he not mention it just now?

"Sure, I will see you tomorrow." She responded, but she was unsure if he had heard her.

Somehow, she felt guilty for declining his offer. He was there when she needed him. Now that he seemed to need company, she could not oblige his simple request.

However, her situation still made it hard for her to think about him or herself. If she saw Ryan again, it could bring more complications to their lives. She did not care much about her, but she would protect her son, no matter what it took.

"Stop beating yourself up. You have to do the right thing for Edison." She told herself as she closed the door.

She decided to make it up to her partner in another way once back home.

After all, she did not want to waste the friendship they had already shared, even if it was just for a fleeting moment.

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Anyway, she was glad that the clients had already signed the papers. They could finally go home, and she could finally see her son. One night more, and this would be all over. She could revert to her old, boring life.

"Dinner, right?" She almost forgot as she walked back further into the room.

She was about to pick up the phone to make a call for room service when it rang. She wondered who could be calling her. Who else but the desk? She thought.

"Yes, I am glad you called." She immediately picked it up and was about to ask for a menu from their food services. But the call did not come from the hotel staff.

She almost dropped the phone when she heard his voice again. "I am also glad that I called. I was thinking of inviting you to my suite for dinner. Should I pick you up in your room in five minutes?"

His voice echoed in her ears, and his words were like knives piercing her skin. It brought chills to her spine, making her tremble from fear. First, how did he know where she was?

That was a dumb question since he was Ryan Brett, son of a powerful Senator. She heard that he would soon follow in his father's footsteps as they groomed him for a position.

"I don't know your game, Ryan, but I am not playing. So, better stop this nonsense and leave me alone." She hissed through the phone, unable to contain her contempt for this man.

"Come now, baby. I know I made a mistake. I am sure for the sake of our son. You will at least try to forgive me." He mellowed his voice down, trying to coerce her to agree.

But his tricks would not work on her again. She was a fool to believe his flowery words and empty promises. But she had learned never to trust this man ever again.

"Son?" She laughed out loud when she spoke that single word. "You do not have a son. You lost your right to my son when you signed those papers." She reminded him, hoping that would work and he would finally leave her and her son alone.

It seemed that her fear had finally materialized. She just hoped that this was just a temporary phase. Her ex-boyfriend was using her son to rattle her for whatever game this was to him.

But after he lost, he would revert to not caring that he once impregnated her and had a son. Then, she could go back to living with her son in peace.

"That was a mistake. After seeing you, I know I should never have left you. I should have married you and been a father to my son." He continued on the phone. "Please, have dinner with me, and let us talk about this."

The nerve of this man. Did he think that it was as simple as that? He did not even sound like he was sorry. But he was demanding that she hear him out.

For what, a reconciliation?

That was funny.

When she begged him to take responsibility, he laughed at her, denying the child in her belly was his. He accused her of sleeping with other men, calling her a whore.

Then, when she begged him to help her with their son's health condition, he turned his back on her. Luckily, she met Ms. Daniella. She came to her rescue. If not for her lawyer, her son would have died.

She owed a lot to the good Samaritans, Ms. Daniella and Mr. Alex, who had gone beyond their obligations of representing her interest in her case. But until now, they were there to guide her.

"That was your mistake. Now, live with it." She told him, mustering all the confidence she had acquired since he left her.

She did not want to hear any more of his lies. Because once those did not work, he would resort to his demands, intimidations, and blackmails. However, experience told her that those were not idle threats. She was better off avoiding him until she was out of this place.

She dropped the phone out of her hands and let it dangle on the side of the table. Then, she ran around the room, grabbing her bag, phone and keys. She could get her other things later.

In the meantime, she needed to be out of there. She had to be miles away before he decided to come down and confront her in person. Luckily, he had given her a heads-up by calling first instead of dropping at her doorstep unannounced. Or else she would not have time to escape.

She almost broke the button on the elevator as she continued to press it. She could not run down the stairs since she was way up the building. But every second the doors did not open, the more her fear grew. Her heart felt like it fell to the floor when the doors finally opened, and a man greeted her.

She suddenly felt like a trapped animal with nowhere else to go.

Chapter 1040 Hated to ruin the illusion

She almost had a heart attack as the door opened. It was like someone held her heart and squeezed it tightly, and something sucked the air out of her lungs. She knew she had to get away as her mind tried to find a way to escape her fate.

Then, she almost screamed when he looked up and said her name. She was about to run to the emergency exit, not caring if it was a long way down to the ground floor. But a hand stopped her.

“Hey, Ria.” The man greeted her. Just like her, it seemed he was surprised to see her too. Gradually, his voice registered in her mind, making her realize who he was.

When she focused her eyes on his face, it confirmed that he was not her ex, making her expel a sigh of relief. Quickly, she inhaled a large amount of air, filling her almost empty lungs before she fainted due to lack of oxygen. She could feel that her body was already hyperventilating.

She was not expecting to see him again, thinking he would have been long gone. It had been a while since he had left. Therefore when the door opened, seeing a man, she immediately thought it was her ex she did not want to see.

“Is there something wrong?” He asked, walking closer to her as he exited the elevator. He probably noticed the frantic look on her face.

Yes, her life just turned upside down. She wanted to tell him but reminded herself that this was not his problem. She did not want to involve him in her personal issues.

However, she could use his help in another way as her mind finally came up with an idea. It might be a farfetched plan, but she had no choice unless she could think of another one. She was stuck with this one.

“Yes, Zach. There is.” Ria quickly thought of a good excuse for her current situation without revealing too much information to this man. “But we should not discuss my problem here.” She pressed the elevator button as her mind planned her next move.

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But now was not the time to explain to this man her plans. The last thing she needed was a reunion between her, her ex, and this man in this hallway. She hastily pushed him to the other elevator that opened its doors and was on its way down.

“Where are we going?” Zach seemed confused by her unusual behavior, but she was too anxious to be as far away from this place.

Fortunately, she relaxed as the elevator was empty. There still seemed to be no signs that her ex was coming. But she was not waiting to find out as she pulled Zach into the cart before it closed.

Then, she immediately pressed the close buttons on the side panel, continuously pushing on it until the doors closed shut. Before she leaned on the metallic walls, feeling relieved.

“Wait!” He said, shocked that she dragged him with her. “I forgot something from my room.” He attempted to stop the door from closing but failed.

He looked at her as if he saw her as someone who had loosened her screws. But she did not care as long as she was on her way out of there. The sooner, the better.

“You will just have to get it later.” She said as she stopped him from going back up. She could not afford to return upstairs.

“What is going on?” He asked as he watched the numbers on the screen count down as they passed the lower floors on their way to the lobby. Then, his eyes landed on hers.

She knew he was waiting for an explanation, and she was still ironing out her excuse. Then, she remembered his offer. That could work. It seemed better than what she initially thought.

“I remembered you offered to show me around. Maybe we can do it now.” She suggested, thinking it was a great idea.

She might be spending time with him, but at least she would be as far away from this place for the time being. Maybe, by the time they returned, her ex had forgotten all about her.

He would have moved on with another woman he could play with, and she would be in the clear. Then, she could return to her son as if this nightmare had never happened in the first place.

“Well, yes, I did. But I think I got the impression that you never wanted to spend a minute longer alone with me.” His earlier confusion seemed to have changed as his lips curved into a playful smile. “What changed?”

She could see that he seemed amused about their situation. But she tried to come up with a clever answer to his statement.

“It is not like that.” Suddenly, she felt like he had pushed her into a corner, and there was no way out.

Was it better if she confronted her ex than being trapped in this situation with this man? She doubted, but luckily, the doors opened, and a lovely older couple joined them inside.

Silence initially enveloped the room before the older woman looked at them and smiled. "I hope you two are having a blast on your honeymoon. Isn't this place a paradise?" The woman commented as she looked lovingly at her husband.

Then, her husband looked at her before kissing her adorably on the lips. Then, he turned to them. "It is our 30th anniversary, and she still made it seem like we are newlyweds."

"What is the secret?" Zach asked as he wrapped his arms around her shoulders, pretending they were together as he winked at her, telling her to get along.

She wanted to protest against his idea, but looking at the excitement in the other couple's eyes stopped her. Eventually, she decided to play along with his plans.

"I think my husband and I could use some friendly advice." She encouraged a conversation with the other couple, knowing she had no choice. She hated to ruin the illusion of this adorable couple.