

Royal Contract 1091

Chapter 1091 You

She tried to convince Zach to go home, but he would not budge. He insisted on staying for one more night and swore to leave early in the morning.

But how could she complain when she had a partner to help her with the chores and putting Edison to sleep? She might be recovering, but it was still exhausting to do all the housework herself.

“Thanks so much.” She said as she returned to the living room after making sure that Edison was fast asleep. “Aren’t you even tired?” She asked as she sat down on the couch while he picked up some remaining toys that Edison had left on the floor.

“A bit.” He admitted as he finally joined her and sat beside her. “But not yet sleepy. What about you?” He asked as he extended his hand on her shoulders, pulling her into his body.

“Tired but not sleepy as well.” She honestly answered him as she lay her head on his shoulders. “Do you want to watch a movie?” She asked since she could not think of anything else to say.

Besides, she had no idea what to do next as she waited for his answer. She had never had a real relationship, so this was a new experience for someone like her.

Should she invite him to sleep on her bed? Then, what? She suddenly felt awkward. But what about Edison? Would her son question why this man was sleeping in her room? But she could not ask him to sleep on the couch again.

“Sure.” He said as he took the remote from the side table and handed it to her. “Why don’t you choose?” He suggested as he pulled her back in his arms. But why did she feel disappointed upon hearing that?

Because watching a movie with him was not exactly what was on her mind. But how could she voice it out to him without sounding needy or desperate? She wanted him. Would it be wrong if she took the initiative?

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“I think I change my mind.” She said, taking a deep breath as she put the remote down on the center table and faced him.

She could not stand hearing his fast heartbeat underneath her ears and yet not feel his touch on her skin. She was burning inside and had no idea how to extinguish the fire. Only he knew how. He was the only one who could help her.

“What do you mean?” He looked confused, but after a few seconds of looking into her eyes, he seemed to realize what was happening. He must have read it in her expression. Was she that transparent? Or was he as desperate as she was?

“I...” Suddenly, she seemed to lose her nerve as no words came out of her mouth. It was like the words bunched up in her throat.

She abruptly looked down at her hands as she stared at her nails, unable to look him in the eye. But before she could think of something else to say, he unexpectedly pulled her back to his arms, making her land on top of him.

With one swift scoop, he claimed her lips like a hungry man. No more words to explain what they wanted from each other. Their actions had been enough to tell them everything they needed to hear.

Eventually, his lips left hers, creating havoc along her skin as he descended from her neck to her throat and down to her partially exposed shoulders.

A soft moan escaped her lips as his hand found its way underneath her shirt, working its way up to the fleshy part of her chest. It was a sensation that had her wanting more as she closed her eyes to savor every tingling sensation his hand brought to her skin.

"I want you so much." He said as he finally pulled his hand out of her shirt, making her disappointed by the feeling of such a loss. But it did not take long as he worked on removing her shirt instead, together with her bra.

Now, she felt exposed to his view, but it did not feel awkward. Somehow, it seemed like it was how it was supposed to be. Then, as if common sense instructed her, she pulled his shirt off his body, letting his shirt piled on the floor with hers.

Then, he kissed her again, pushing her back on the soft cushion of the sofa. But he did not linger long on her lips as he traveled on a downward part until he reached the richness of her mound.

Alternatively, his lips moved from one peak to the other, giving both parts of her breasts equal attention. She could only watch in amazement at how he used his tongue to set her on fire.

But he was not done yet as his hands started to skim her skin further down her body. She knew what was on his mind. And she was dying in anticipation.

"Wait!" But something clicked in her consciousness when he started to unbutton her pants. She could see the alarm in his eyes as if wondering if he had done something wrong. "Not here." Quickly, she added, seeing the growing concern in his expression.

Without waiting for him to respond, she pushed him off her until she could stand and pulled him toward the bedroom. She remembered that Edison might suddenly come out of his room and find them on the sofa, making out. Or worse, having sex.

"Oh! Ok." She saw the relief in his eyes when he realized what she had in mind. Immediately, he let her drag him into her room until they were safely behind the door.

But they did not make it to the bed when he suddenly pulled her and picked her up as if he could not wait a minute longer to have her. Then, she had her legs straddling him on the waist as he pushed her onto the hard surface behind her.

She could finally feel how much he wanted her as he sandwiched her between his hard body and the door. He kept kissing her lips, face, throat, and everywhere his lips could reach while one of his hands supported her weight while the other caressed her breast, not wanting them to feel neglected.

“What do you want?” Finally, he asked her as he pushed his entire weight toward her, making her bite her lip from the tremendous pressure it created inside her body.

Of course, she extremely craved to reach the peak of ecstasy. But only with him. “I want...” She took a big gulp of air as another wave of electricity coursed through her spine. “... You.”

Chapter 1092 Wished to stay

His eyes had been fixed on one spot since he had woken up and found her beside him. He had longed to touch her but knew he should not. She needed to rest.

He believed he had exhausted her last night, slightly feeling guilty since she was still recovering from her recent illness. But it was so hard to control himself when he was around her.

All he wanted was to keep her in his arms and never let her go. Was he in love? He hoped so because he believed she deserved all the love he could give.

But if not, he still believed that he was getting there. It would be just a matter of time. Honestly, he could imagine himself waking up every morning just like this.

He could stare at her face all day with his eyes focused on her closed eyes, her nose that slightly flared when she inhaled, her lips that he longed to kiss but could not, afraid that he might wake her up.

“I love you, Ria.” He said in barely a whisper as he leaned forward closer to her, trying the words. It sounded natural as they left his lips. Did he mean every word?

“I love you.” He repeated, louder this time, but still a whisper. Maybe. He had never felt like this with anyone, only her.

No one could accuse him of accidentally saying the words to her in the heat of the moment because his mind was as clear as the sky outside. He believed he more than liked her and not just as a person, a woman but as a partner. Maybe someone he could share his life with forever.

Then, his mind returned to last night’s activities. It was worth putting on his treasured memories, remembering how she molded perfectly in his body. Like they were created to be perfect for each other.

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“What are you doing?” Suddenly, her eyes partially opened, then blinked several times as she lazily stretched her body across the bed.

Then, as if she realized something, she quickly scrubbed her face, rubbing her eyes and the surrounding area of her mouth, checking for any dry saliva that might be sticking to her skin.

“Enjoying the view.” Zach finally answered her, slightly chuckling at how she panicked at her physical state. It was clear she was not used to waking up with a man beside her. Edison was exempted, of course.

Truthfully, he did not mind if she looked like a witch in the morning, seeing how her hair went everywhere. But he believed it was partly his fault, remembering how he buried and entwined his fingers underneath those strands.

"I am not much to look at in the morning." She said, looking conscious and uncomfortable. "What time is it?" She suddenly asked, probably seeing that it was still dark outside, but the stars slowly disappeared as the sun was about to make an entrance.

"It is still too early. So, technically, you can't kick me out yet." He reasoned, remembering his promise that he would go home early morning. "How are you feeling?" He added.

"I am ok. Why?" She answered, slightly confused. Then, she quickly said. "I am not kicking you out." But before she could say more, he interrupted her with a kiss.

"Good," Zach said as he leaned closer until he could claim her lips. He was not waking her up since she was already awake. And she said she was ok.

Nonetheless, he was not because he needed her again. Unfortunately, he could not wait for the next time. Luckily for him, she seemed to want the same thing as he felt her hands move around his shoulders before they wrapped around his neck.

When her lips parted, it was his sign that he could move to the next level, deepening the kiss as he slightly pulled the covers away from their bodies, pushing himself on top of her once again.

Feeling her body underneath him had him thinking. He used to believe he could handle her easily. As it turned out, it was the other way around. He was putty in her hands. He would willingly do anything she wished to make her happy.

Then, just like that, he switched their position, putting her on top. This time, she was taking the lead. "Do whatever you want with me?" He whispered to her as he let go of her body and placed his hands underneath his head.

He watched her as she straddled his body, looking so innocent. Seemingly, having no clue what he was asking her. But he had already discovered something last night. She might have had a child, but she still lacked the experience.

At some point, he wanted to hunt that man who had taken advantage of her, realizing that he might have forced himself on her or used her for just one night and dumped her the next. It was the only explanation for her behavior.

"I..." Suddenly, she lowered her body, hiding her eyes from his stare while her fingers remained immobile on his chest.

The way she was shy to touch his skin right now, despite what had already happened between them last night. Then, he noticed how she tried to hide her breast from his sight as the sun shone on them. To him, it was a clear sign that she still lacked the confidence to be with a man.

He was no expert in this matter, but he knew several scumbags who operated this way. At some point in his life, he might have caused a few women some tears. But not as horrible as this.

He might have hurt some women in his past relationships but not intentionally. The affair just had run its course. He did not see the point of staying. But he would never use a woman, treating them as an object to play with, unlike some of his friends.

“Hey, I will never force you to do anything you are uncomfortable with.” He calmly told her, not wanting to frighten her away. “We can stop if you want to.”

He was suddenly concerned that he might have rushed her into this. Maybe she had some traumatic experience in her past, remembering how she avoided talking about the father of her child.

But how would he know when she would not share her secret? But he could only hope that she would find a way to trust him because he wished to stay for a long time.

Chapter 1093 No, not again

She was glad to see him when she opened her eyes. Honestly, she could not contain the drumming of her heart just knowing he never left her side. Her fear of waking up with him gone did not materialize. He was here with her. That was all that mattered.

But when they started making out again, she was in pure heaven. How could she be so lucky? She could not wait to feel his body against her and for their bodies to join as one.

Last night had been one of the best experiences in her life. She believed she could not get enough of it. It was never like that when she had sex for the first and only time with her ex. There was just no comparison.

Zach knew how to make love. At least, that was what she wanted to call it. It was not dirty. It was intense and utterly sensational. That was how she would describe it.

But when he suddenly flipped her over, making her sit on top of him. That was a different story. Last night, they made love in the dark, under the covers.

Now, as the covers bunched around their waists, she was fully exposed to his view. As the light from the window shone on them, he would finally have a perfect sight of all her imperfections.

But when she heard him say. “We can stop if you want to.” And taking note of the concern in his voice. She knew he misunderstood her situation.

Of course, she did not want to stop. All she ever wanted was for them to stay in this bed and make love until they could not move. She had never felt more alive than when she was with him. And she did not want to lose that feeling.

However, she still feared that he might not want her anymore. Her insecurity had gotten the best of her as she allowed it to overshadow her judgment.

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She quickly imagined that he would look at her differently once he noticed that she was not perfect. And that she had many scars that might never heal, even in time.

“No, that is not what I want.” She finally found her voice as she bravely tilted her head to look at him. “I want you.” She said. “But will you still want me with all my past?” She asked him, suddenly pulling his hand that was on the side and dragging them toward her belly.

She allowed him to feel the scar that reminded her daily why she had to struggle, a constant remembrance of her past that had taught her a valuable lesson.

“What is this?” His fingers finally traced through the long line along her belly. It was not noticeable with a dress or under a panty, but it was there, a long and ugly scar that marred her skin.

As for someone who had never experienced the pain she had gone through, her scar was a hideous sight. But to her, it symbolized the most magical moment in her life. Because she survived, and her son lived because of it.

“A mark of my troubled past.” She told him, remembering that he only knew so little about her. But how could she tell him more?

Finally, she looked up, feeling his fingers tracing the long line. When her eyes met his eyes, she never saw any sign of disgust in them as she initially expected.

Instead, there was some form of concern, confusion, and something else she could not understand. Was it anger? Why? Was he angry that she did not tell him about it? No, that could not be it.

Before she could answer his question, his other hand extended up, pushing the hair that almost covered half of her face. Then, his fingers traced the line of her lips. In the same manner that his other hand was doing with her scar.

“Do you think that this scar would make me run away?” He suddenly smiled at her as if that was the farthest from the truth. “It would take more than that to scare me.”

Suddenly, to her surprise, he flipped them. Now, he was on top of her again. But instead of staying in their position, he started to move downward. She could feel her heart roaring inside her chest.

She did not know what to expect, having no idea what he had planned to do as his face stopped on top of her scar. Was he going to kiss her down there?

“I am not just talking about the physical scar, but...” She was unable to finish as her world turned upside down.

Oh my! She could feel herself hyperventilating.

When his lips finally landed on her blemished skin, she had to hold her breath in her lungs because it was just too much. And then, her eyes automatically closed due to the sensation that spread through her belly, down to her core.

Damn! It was out of this world as a loud moan escaped her lips.

“I don’t care about your past.” He mumbled between his kisses. “Everyone has them one way or another.” He continued. “I also carried many of them, so stop torturing yourself, and let us enjoy this moment.”

He continued his downward path until she felt his hands on her legs, spreading them wide apart. Was he? But the thought vanished outside the window as she felt herself floating among the clouds.

He said she should stop torturing herself, but what was he doing to her? She felt herself climbing over the edge until she was on the peak and about to fall. But something held her on the verge, but it was not enough.

“Please,” She begged him, but what was she asking him to do as her body twisted between pleasure and pain? “Please...” She pleaded with him.

Finally, he stood up, looking quite satisfied with himself as he positioned himself on top of her. And in one swift move, he was inside her, moving in a rhythm that was just too slow to get her where she wanted to be.

“Aaagggghh!” She did not know what to ask of him, but he was the only one who could give her what she needed. “Zach!” She called his name, not knowing what else to say.

“Just be patient, my love.” He said to her as he gradually quickened his pace. “I want you to enjoy every second of this.” He said in his hoarse tone as sweat dripped on his face and entire body.

She could see his effort to make this enjoyable and pleasurable for her. She could only wonder if she could ever return the favor. Once again, she could not help but question fate. Was this for real this time?

Then, finally, she felt their bodies shudder together, feeling the sensation that rushed through her body. It was spectacular like last night, or maybe better. She could not exactly tell, but it was another unforgettable experience.

Eventually, they lay silent on their backs with their fingers entwined while one of his hands rested on her scar, grazing it with his fingers. She could not help but stare at them.

He might not seem to mind her past or her scar. Still, it was her sign never to repeat her mistakes.

But was she making another one now?

Damn! Did they use protection? She could not remember, but she doubted.

No, not again.

Chapter 1094 To marry him, not bury him

Her view of the world was as gloomy just like the sky outside. It looked like rain was about to take over the city as dark clouds loomed over them, filling the space above them.

The sun could not even take a peek as the darkness dominated everything around her, seemingly even her heart. Finally, the first drop came as she looked outside her window, but it was not the rain.

“Are you ready, my darling?” She heard a familiar voice ask her. It came from her door where her father stood. Quickly, she wiped her tear with the back of her hand before facing him.

She had imagined a scene similar to this in her mind. Her father would stand on that spot, dressed on the nine, and ask her the same question. Then, she would answer him cheerfully with a resounding yes as her heart clamored with joy and excitement.

But unfortunately, that dream was far from her reality.

In the other scenario, she wore white, and the sky outside was bright like the sun could not contain its happiness. Today, looking down at her dress, all she saw was despair.

No.

She probably would never be ready for this day.

But instead, she answered her father. Yes.

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She could hardly see the light as her father guided her out of her room toward the worst day of her life. Despite the pain, she knew she had to be there. She had to say her final goodbye.

As she finally ascended the footsteps of the cathedral, she felt the weight of her every step. It was not a stiff climb, but her feet seemed to have lead weighing down on them.

"Haley." Her father called to her. "Is there something wrong?" Her father noticed that she stopped, unable to move forward.

Of course, everything was wrong.

She dreamt of getting married in this place, walking on that aisle, and standing in front of that altar. But not this. She did not want to sit inside in one of the pews, silently weeping with her tears.

It was not how it was supposed to happen.

Then, when she saw the people going inside, everyone wore black. The only white she saw was the flowers that littered everywhere. But just like her, they lost their charm and appeal. They were as dead as her heart and the man lying in his coffin in front of the altar.

Soon, hundreds of people gathered inside the room, friends, acquaintances, and unfamiliar faces, to pay respect to the man of the hour. She did not realize that he knew this many people. But she was not surprised, remembering how many people he had helped in his career.

"Are you ok?" Her friends asked her, which she answered with a nod. Many people who knew how important Gerald was in her life asked her how she was doing. Even her brother, Marcus, expressed his concern.

All she did was nod because thinking of a response was too much effort. She did not want them here. She only wanted the man she loved alive. But what she wanted would never matter anymore. At least, not today.

But only a few were aware of her relationship with Gerald. To most, he died a lonely man with no family, wife, or child. But he seemed to have many friends as the place kept piling up with guests.

Gerald did not exactly advertise their relationship, always wanting to keep it a private affair. No wonder not many people knew about them as a couple. But were they a couple? Did he love her?

"No." Finally, she answered one person that asked her if she was ok. "I am not." Then, he pulled her into his arms.

“You will eventually.” He assured her as he enveloped her in his arms, comforting her as he sat beside her, not in the front row, but just a few seats away from him.

“Thanks, Mike.” She relaxed her body into his comforting arms, leaning her head on his shoulders.

She stayed on the side, not acting like the widowed wife because she was not and would never be. She silently cried for her lost love, just like Mike had told her. The last thing they wanted was the attention to be on her during this ceremony.

“I am here for you. I know Gerald would want me to protect you.” He said as his hands gently caressed her hair.

Therefore, no matter how painful it was to see him go, she had to say goodbye silently, away from the spotlight. Because Mike was right, whoever killed him was still out there.

She could not risk her life and her child if they were out for revenge. She had to protect the only life that reminded her of him, his child. Her baby would remain a secret for now. As far as she knew, only Mike knew about her pregnancy and no one else.

“Gerald was lucky to have a friend like you.” Haley smiled, glad she had him to support her through all this.

Her father had long gone and left her to use this moment to promote his business and other agendas. He had never been concerned about her, but he needed her. That was why he was keeping her around.

“I think I am the lucky one,” Mike answered, but they stayed seated together throughout the ceremony, never leaving her side.

She believed she was also lucky that Gerald had a true friend who was now here, helping her get through this. She would be lost if not for him. She had friends, but they did not understand what she was going through, but Mike did.

“Maybe we are lucky because we both had the chance to love him.” She said, feeling her heart shattering to pieces once again.

“He loves you. You know. He could not say it. But I know, my friend.” Mike whispered to her before they fell into silence.

She had no idea how much time had passed, but she hardly felt anything. Like people were talking around her, but she did not understand what they said. All she did was nod, only hoping that the noise would stop and then she would be alone again.

She saw how the men in suits carried his coffin. Then, all the guests lined up to give him the final respect he deserved. Slowly, she watched them as they marched him down the aisle and out of the cathedral.

She wanted to run to him and hug him for the last time, but they would not even open his casket because his body was too burned to be recognizable. Besides, Mike would not let her.

“You have to control yourself. Think of your child.” Mike whispered to her ears, reminding her of the consequence of what she was about to do. That stopped her. She could not put her child in jeopardy.

Then, a few moments later, she watched them as they slowly lowered him into the pit. It took everything in her not to wail in front of everybody and follow him into the ground.

Maybe if she had not been carrying his child, she would not mind dying with him. She loved him so much that it was driving her insane. Maybe that was wrong, to love too much. But she could not help it. She could not do anything with her stupid heart.

“We will never see him again.” She mumbled into his chest as she leaned in for his support. She closed her eyes, not needing to see how they covered his body with dirt.

She did not want that scene to keep playing in her consciousness or even her dreams when she thought about him. She only wanted the good memories of their time together. Something that she would share with her child.

“Do you want to leave?” Mike asked as he wrapped his arms around her. “I can drive you back to your home.” He offered since he probably noticed that his father was nowhere in sight.

“No! I don’t want to leave just yet.” She quickly shook her head but refused to open her eyes.

Unexpectedly, she felt him move, dragging her with him. “No, I don’t want to go home just yet. I want to be alone with him when everyone is gone.” She explained to her new friend.

She wanted to be alone with him.

“I know, but it is about to rain.” He informed her. “I suggest we wait in my car until everyone is gone and it stops raining.” He offered.

It did not take long for the guests to disperse when the rain poured down on the cemetery. Nobody wanted the rainwater to drench their expensive coats, dresses, and mud on their shoes.

However, she also had to wait for the rain to stop before she could go to him. She did not want to get sick because that would not be good for her baby.

But, finally, she stood before his grave, not caring if water soaked her feet and mud clung to the sole of her shoes. What was important was she was finally alone with him.

“I love you so much.” She uttered the words she needed to say to him, even if it was too late. “I don’t want you to die.” She said as her heart squeezed with pain.

“I know you love me. And I believe that in my heart. And I know you love your child.” She truly believed that. “And I promise you...” She paused for a second as another wave of sobs escaped her lips. “... you will continue to live in our hearts.” As she finally cried and fell to her knees.

Then, she looked up to the heavens. If she had a choice and God asked her what she wanted at that moment, she only had one answer. She wanted to marry him, not bury him.

Chapter 1095 Life-and-death situation

Adam left her apartment, feeling like his heart burned and turned to ashes. He did not understand how she could reject him like that. As if his feelings meant nothing to her.

Was it because he was just an ordinary lawyer who did not make enough to cater to her lifestyle? But he doubted because he had come to know her, the real her. She was not like that.

But how could she dismiss him without giving him a reasonable explanation? She said she wanted to go away. As far away from everything, that meant, including him.

There must be a serious reason for it. But what? Should he accept it, or should he continue fighting for her? But why should he when she did not seem determined to fight for him? If she did, then she would never have left him.

“It is not you, but it is me.” A line that he had heard many say when they did not want to hurt the other. Unfortunately, that was a lie.

Sadly, it did not lessen the pain he felt for losing her. Maybe it was his fault. He had fought so hard not to show his feelings. He did not want to take advantage of her vulnerability, knowing she was going through a difficult situation.

It took losing her to admit to himself that he liked her, maybe more. But it was too late. He believed he had lost her for good. Should he keep faith that they might meet again? He doubted.

Of course, he could try to stop her. But what good would that do? He had seen the determination in her eyes to leave everything behind. Besides, he was just her lawyer, former, quickly correcting himself. He had to respect her wishes.

He never actually had a relationship with her, only a professional one. He could not overstep that boundary. Maybe they had a few intense moments, but he had let it slip away. Now, he lost the opportunity forever.

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“Goodbye!” That was all he could say as he walked away from her. Then, when he passed her door that morning, another tenant brought in their things. She was gone again but permanently this time.

David called, clueless about their situation, asking what had happened. But all he could say was that she fired him. He also had no idea why she dropped the case. She did not trust him enough to share that with him.

Presently, he finished his last client, giving his best to focus on their problems. That was his life, devoting himself to helping others. But why did it feel like he was not getting anywhere?

“Damn!” That was just him feeling sorry for himself. “I need a drink,” Adam told himself as he finished his last paperwork and called it a day.

He knew a bar not far from the hospital, thinking of grabbing a drink later. But first, he had to drop off Serena’s file cases with his brother. Then, he could finally visit his friend, more like his girlfriend, who was still in a coma. David said he would be there.

Moments later, he stood with his friend inside the room, staring at the woman David was supposed to marry, looking like she was only sleeping.

From his standpoint, he could only see a few visible scars slowly healing on her skin.

Other than that, she looked ok, except for the fact that she was not waking up. “The doctors still could not give me a time frame for when she would wake up. Only time could tell.” David said, looking slightly desperate.

But, at the very least, the doctor had assured his friend that her condition was stable. She was more or less out of the woods. But still, they had to wait until she decided to wake up.

“I am sorry about what my sister did.” David suddenly said as he tapped him on the shoulder. “I know you did a good job, but she still wasted your time.” He shook his head, looking apologetic.

“No, don’t think much about it. I was compensated well for my services, so it was not a waste of my time.” He assured him.

As a lawyer, there was nothing wrong with clients changing their minds. That was common. But in his case, he believed there was more to their relationship, and that was not just his imagination. He felt it between them.

But that was a ship that had set its course, and there was nothing he could do to turn back time. He just had to accept that they were probably not meant to be.

“I better get going. I have an early client to meet tomorrow.” That was true, but at that moment, only one thing was on his mind. He badly needed a drink.

He would have invited his friend for a shot, but he seemed determined to stay by her side. He did not want to ruin their night together. His friend did not need to be miserable because he was.

He left his friend, not wanting him to know what he felt about his sister because it was a useless effort. It was a knowledge that he intended to bury tonight in the deep recesses of his mind, never to dig up again.

Then.

Bang!

“Ouch!” He bumped into something hard as he turned to the corner on his way to the elevators. It would not have hurt that much if it did not hit his sensitive part.

It was right on the mark, and X marked the spot.

The corner of the table, cart, or whatever the woman was pushing hit him. And it hurt like hell as he twisted in pain, holding in his hands the future of his generation.

He was not even running, but apparently, she was. “I am sorry.” She said, but her voice was anything but apologizing. “But you should not be loitering in the hospital hallways. You could not be standing in the way of emergencies.” She nagged at him.

That certainly negated the apology as he looked at the woman in her uniform, who was mad as she picked up some things that landed on the floor.

To some degree, she had a point, but he was not loitering since he was about to leave the hospital. Still, he decided to be the bigger man. "I am sorry. Let me help!" He offered, feeling that the pain had subsided, picking up the last item he saw on the floor.

But she did not say anything else to him as she rushed out of there, appearing to be in a real hurry. What did he expect? He was in a hospital where everyone seemed to handle some life-and-death situation.

Chapter 1096 Turned out to be perfect

Unlike the other bar Adam used to go to, this place seemed to litter with doctors, nurses, and those in the medical field. What did he expect when it was just across from the hospital?

The place he usually went to had law firms around the area, so of course, those had lawyers as their crowd. He had to mingle with his colleagues to get insights into their current cases.

But now, he just wanted to drink in peace, and this seemed to be a perfect place since he would not know anyone unless he had a client nearby. But he doubted that.

"You are new here! Are you a doctor?" The bartender asked as he walked to his side.

He wondered if he looked like a doctor. But most of those who came here probably were. Then, he was a new face. So, the man must have seen most people working in the other building.

"No. I am not. But I will have a neat scotch if you have it." He did not need anything fancy tonight. He only wanted something that would drown his sorrow.

Then, the glass appeared in front of him in just a few seconds. "You are a doctor tonight." The bartender said as he poured what seemed to be a good brand. "You look like you just lost a patient." He added before nodding in his direction and walking away.

It might be worse than that.

Then, he grabbed the glass and sipped at the clear amber fluid. He looked around and saw men and women who might be feeling just as he was but for a different reason. They were not wearing their coats and uniforms, but they looked like they also needed a drink.

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"I guess I am a doctor tonight." He said, smiling at the silliness of his situation. "Can you give me another one?" He said to the man, who quickly complied with his request.

He could hear laughing on the other side of the room. They seemed to be celebrating something. Good for them, he thought. At least someone was not gloomy like him.

On his third glass, someone suddenly stood on his other side. "I will have what he is having, Cris, and refill his glass. It is on me." The feminine voice said as she took the empty seat beside him.

He suddenly turned around to check on this unknown person who was buying him a drink. Her voice was unfamiliar. He doubted he knew anybody from around here.

“Hi, I am sorry about earlier.” The woman said before he could say anything. “I am not usually that rude and grumpy, but my patient is dying, and you were sort of in the way.” She explained even if he was not asking for it.

“That is ok.” He answered, not wanting to make it a big deal. He hardly remembered it anyway, although it did hurt. “But you don’t need to buy me a drink.” He said.

“I already did, so let us just say we are even.” She stated as if there was nothing else they could do about it. “Besides, I feel terrible after what happened earlier. I hope it doesn’t hurt anymore.”

“It is fine. Thanks for this.” He said as he accepted the refill of his glass. Then, he went back to his solitude, drinking his scotch alone. And, of course, he did not want to discuss the state of his private parts, especially with a stranger.

But he felt he was not alone as she kept looking at him. It was like she had something to ask but was hesitating. But it was slightly irritating since he could feel her glancing his way as if she still had unfinished business with him.

“What is it?” He finally asked, but he did not bother to look at her. He just wanted to get it over with, whatever she had in mind. Then, he could get back to drinking in peace.

“Did someone die in your family?” She asked him as she looked at him with that solemn look.

“Did I look like someone had just died in my family?” Why did they keep asking him that? Maybe his heart just died and left him. That certainly felt that way.

“Well, you are not a doctor, a nurse, or someone working here. So, chances are, you are a family of one of our patients here.” She answered him. “And your face and how you are drinking and staring at the empty space indicated that you just lost someone.” She psychologized.

“Let me guess. You worked here for years. A nurse who thinks she has a degree to analyze people’s thoughts.” He sarcastically answered her, slightly annoyed by her nosiness.

“Yes, I have worked here for years, but why do all of you automatically assume that I am a nurse?” She shook her head. “For your information, I studied hard to become a doctor as male doctors did.”

That suddenly surprised him since he did not assume that she was a nurse because she was a female but because of her uniform earlier and what she was doing.

“I am sorry about my misassumption, but you should not be assuming as well.” He countered. “But I am not being racist to the female population. I thought earlier when you bumped into me that you were one. Probably because of the uniform.”

He could not understand why almost everyone in the hospital seemed to wear a scrub suit or something similar to it. It was getting harder to differentiate between the doctors and the other hospital staff if they were not wearing their coats.

“Yeah, maybe that was it. So, I guess we are even again.” She said, accepting his explanation. “I am sorry again for assuming too. But if you did not have a patient here, why do you look like the world collapsed on your shoulders?”

Then, she raised her hands when she saw the look he gave her. "I am sorry. I was only making conversation since you look like you need company." She quickly drank her scotch, believing that should be enough to explain her behavior.

"Ok. What about you?" He turned to look at her this time. "Tell me your story. Why are you here and drinking alone when you could drink with your friends?" If she could ask questions, he could as well. He believed he was better at it.

Why was this beautiful doctor sitting with him, drinking when she did not seem to look like she had lost anything? But honestly, did that matter? She might be irritating, but he believed she had turned out to be perfect at distracting his attention.

Chapter 1097 Not at her place but at his

She could see that he looked miserable. Suddenly, she felt guilty for being rude to him earlier. It was an accident. Then, it was mostly her fault, but she still took on him. Now, all she could think about was to say sorry to him.

But when her friends saw her looking in his direction, they mistook it as interest. Since she was the last to arrive, she had to take on some silly punishment. It was a game that they had played since working for this hospital.

"Tell me your story. Why are you here and drinking alone when you could drink with your friends?" He suddenly asked.

"You see." She pointed to the crowd that had been rowdy since he got here, "Those are my friends." That made him turn to look at her friends, who were also looking in their direction. "They sent me over here as punishment."

"Why?" He asked, looking curious. "What did you do to earn such punishment of accompanying a guy like me?" He sounded a bit insulted, but she did not take it seriously. She could tell he was only jesting.

"I was the last to show up." Giving him her simplest explanation as she took another swig of her drink. "As punishment, I have to get your number since they think you are the hottest new guy here."

She was not shy. She had no time for that shit. She also had no time for courtship or relationships, for that matter. She only had a few boyfriends that did not even last a month.

It was not because she liked to play with men. It was more because she did not have time. She had been balancing family, work, and school she hardly had time for herself.

Although her sister helped her with her finances, she still worked a little extra. She did not want to burden her sister with everything she needed. Now, she hoped that her residency would continue to go well, so she could become a full-time doctor and help the rest of her family.

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"Am I?" He suddenly asked as he looked at her.

Suddenly, she was confused by the question. "Are you what?" She asked, looking directly into his eyes, curious about his question.

“Am I hot in your eyes?” He looked like he was amused with her more than anything.

She could play his game. She was not the type who was afraid of men like him. She believed he was another self-centered man who thought highly of himself because women fell on their knees before him.

“Honestly, I think you are.” She looked at him, scanning his body from head to toe. “You look anatomically perfect. Your black hair, dark eyes, straight nose, thin lips, and nicely built physique made you look hot.”

Then, she scanned the rest of his body downwards, which she believed made him look slightly uncomfortable. “Ok. You made your point.” He turned to his drink and emptied his glass.

“Another one?” She offered as she emptied her glass too. Then, she signaled his friend for another round.

“Yes, but this time I am buying.” He said as he took the bill and paid for it.

She shrugged her shoulders, taking his offer. Besides, she believed it was bad luck to turn down a free drink since she did not see him as a bad guy.

“Fine.” Then, she took the new drink and sipped on it. Luckily, it was her day off tomorrow. Otherwise, she would have a terrible headache when she did her rounds. “Anyway, if you are not a doctor, do you mind telling me what you do.”

“Why don’t you guess since you seem to enjoy this game?” He offered, feeling the slight buzz of the alcohol finally hitting his system.

This woman certainly was making him forget about everything. At least he was enjoying their conversation, even just for tonight. Tomorrow, he would have to learn to leave without her. But tonight, he would like to forget her.

“Let me see.” She turned again to look at him. But she focused more on his face and his eyes. “I will need you to look at me.” He did. Then, he found her gazing through his eyes. It was as if she was reading his thoughts.

“Well, what is your lucky guess?” He asked after a few seconds before turning away again and drinking his scotch.

“I am having a slight difficulty here. I am debating between being a computer geek and a traveling salesman.” She said, laughing at her silly assumptions.

She was a doctor for a reason, not an investigator. Anyway, she had no idea what this man did besides drink. She could see that he had more than he could handle.

“I think I can be both.” He said without giving her any hint of what he did. But they kept talking about how he loved to play with his computers while traveling to different places to sell his wares.

“But was I even close enough.” She asked, knowing that she was not.

“For tonight, I can be whatever you wish me to be.” He answered her playfully, believing he was tipsy.

"I think you already had enough for tonight. That is what I think." She answered him as she took another sip of her drink.

"That is the point of drinking, right? To get drunk." He smiled at her, showing her two dimples on his cheeks.

She observed that he looked handsome when he smiled. But he had a point. Why drink if she had no plan to get wasted? She could see her friends already had more than their share of a good time as they laughed on the other side.

"I guess you are right." She answered him. "Why not?" She lifted her glass to him and cheered him on. "Let us drink to your success. May you sell all your wares." She added as a joke.

He clinked his glass with her and appeared to be thinking. "Ok. I will drink to that." Then, they drank the content up to the last drop.

"One more." He ordered as the bartender served them another, but he said it would be the last.

She understood, seeing that his new friend seemed at his limit. Then, she realized that she had forgotten to ask his name. "Hey, I am Roseann. What is your name?"

She extended her hand to him, seeing that she would need it to tell her friends. He smiled at her, appearing that he also realized that they had forgotten to exchange names.

"Adam." He offered but did not supplement the rest. She did not mind since all she needed was the name. "You have a nice name, Roseann.

"It was nice also to meet you, Adam. But I have to go back to my friends." With that, she nodded at him and said goodbye.

"It is nice to talk to you, too," Adam said before returning his attention to his glass.

She walked away from him, knowing she might never see him again. He was a stranger who passed by their corner. And now, she was stepping away because she did not see a future with a guy like him or any other guy. Not until she had a more stable schedule in her life.

"So, what happened?" One of her friends asked her.

"Was he married or single?" Another one asked.

"I bet he was a jerk." Another one said. She knew he had a crush on her, but she never liked to complicate her working environment by hooking up with a co-worker.

"He is fun to talk to, and his name is Adam. I don't think he is married, but I am unsure if he was a traveling salesman." She told her friends, who were anxious to hear more. "And I don't think he is a jerk. Just probably going through something." The last part, she said more in a whisper.

"Well, he seemed nice." One said, but a few minutes later, talked about him gradually faded as they returned to their patients who had made their day exciting, exhilarating, and a living hell.

"We'll see you around, Cris." She said goodbye to the regular bartender, but she was also checking if he was still drinking, but she doubted since Cris had cut him off earlier.

He was not in the bar, so she could safely assume he had left already. Then, she walked with her friends outside until they parted ways. Their friends brought their cars while she was taking a cab.

But it seemed it was not her lucky night as she found the streets empty. But she knew a cab was bound to come as she stood by the sidewalk waiting.

Then, something moved not far from where she stood. It was slumping on the floor by the wall not far behind her. At first, she thought it might be a homeless guy who might be sleeping. It was partially dark.

But as she stared at him, she recognized him as Adam, the man from the bar. What was he doing there? Instinct kicked in as she ran and knelt to help him. She checked his pulse and determined whether he was stable.

Thankfully, she concluded that he was just drunk and almost passed out. He must have been waiting for a cab like her. But where was he going? Quickly, she checked his pocket and found his identification card. At least he was not lying about his name. But she was way off with her guess about his profession.

A few seconds later, she returned his wallet to his pocket and waited for a cab. The least she could do was take him home. Not at her place but at his.

Chapter 1098 Selfless love

Waking up with a wedding ring on her finger was still surreal. She had waited for this moment, and now that it finally came true, she still felt like she was still dreaming.

But the man sleeping beside her told her that it was all real. She was now Mrs. Amelia Blake. And she was already wearing the proof on her finger as she wiggled them in the air.

"I see that my wife is finally awake." A croaky voice spoke beside her, catching her playing with her ring. "What do you wish to do today?" He asked her as he pulled her to his side and started kissing her.

"Besides this, of course." He mischievously asked as he started untying the knot on her robe. It was their honeymoon. What else were they supposed to do?

"Well, I was thinking of joining the others for breakfast, but this seems nice too." She excitedly responded, pulling her husband into a long and passionate kiss. "Besides, I can't wait to give you a son."

They had talked about kids last night. But they did not get to the part about the gender of the baby. She just assumed that he would want a son since most men did.

"I was more like thinking of a daughter. I want little princesses like you." He said as he pulled her for another kiss.

She did not expect that. But she could guess that Luisa had something to do with his decision. Since Luisa was born, Evan had fallen in love with her. Sometimes, she wondered if they had a girl, would Evan love their daughter just as much?

But, of course, she should not doubt him. Evan had a big heart. He had more than enough love for his family, including Eida and Luisa. He would also love their daughter just as much or even more. But the same went if they had a son.

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"I also like that." She pulled his shirt off, wanting nothing barring their skins from touching.

As much as she wished to join their families, making babies was her priority. She could not wait to have one or two to love and cherish. She loved Luisa, just like Evan, but she was not theirs.

"I think we can still manage to catch up with them. I promise to be quick." He muttered in between his kisses.

She could tell they were already both aroused, so it would not take much time to do one quick workout on the bed. "Better hurry then. I want a baby and breakfast soon." She commanded.

She could not help it. She was also hungry from their activities yesterday to a night filled with lovemaking. As much as she enjoyed having him for breakfast, he was not stuffing her belly with the proper sustenance.

Although, she was not complaining.

"You see. That was a record." He teased her as he brought her to the bathroom for a quick shower.

She must admit that he was quick. Nevertheless, satisfying. Although she wanted more, she could always wait for her seconds later. Besides, they had a lifetime to be together now that they were officially married.

After a few more minutes, they walked toward their friends, who were already sitting at their reserved tables. On the other hand, this was a rare memory that they would share with their family and friends that they did not want to miss.

She believed the reception was fantastic for something done in last-minute planning. It was so much better than what she had expected. Evan had done a tremendous job, probably better if she had done it herself.

"I am glad the two of you finally decided to join us," Angela said, appearing to be jesting with Eida.

She noticed their eyes were glowing with mischief. They were probably betting whether they were still asleep or busy doing what they just did a few minutes ago. But she did not care. She was too happy to be bothered by their usual teasing.

Besides, she was a married woman now. She could not proudly say that she was having sex anytime she wanted.

"I am starving. So, have you ordered, or did you wait for us?" Evan responded to his grandmother.

He quickly helped her to a chair across from Angela. Luisa was on her other side while Evan sat next to her.

"We thought you were not coming, so we already ordered," Eida answered as if, on cue, the food had arrived. That left them to order their food.

"Are you joining a marathon?" Angela teased again as their order arrived. She also thought the same, seeing the assorted food on their table. She was hungry, but apparently, Evan was worse.

“It had been a tiring day, and our vacation was far from ending soon. I don’t think I will last with her stamina.” Evan pointed to her as if it was her fault.

“Yeah! Right?” Amelia could not help but protest. But she was happy to see that their little family was having a great time.

She could not dream of a better wedding than spending her wedding ceremony and honeymoon with them. Weird as that may sound. But it was a memory that she would cherish for all eternity.

She might not have the wedding of the century. But she believed she had what many could only dream about, the perfect husband and a loving family.

“But I am happy to hear you are finally working on my second grandchild.” Angela interrupted them, making her smile at what she said.

“Yes, and expect it soon.” Evan proudly said. “You hear that, my Princess. You will have cousins to love and play with.” He mumbled to the little child, looking clueless.

But eventually, she still smiled at his Uncle Evan for whatever reason. Luisa seemed to enjoy listening to his voice. She responded well to him.

Amelia could only imagine Luisa growing up spoiled because of her husband, something Eida would never like. But that was something they would have to deal with in the future. In the meantime, she loved watching her family and could not wait for it to grow.

Breakfast with their family had been fun, but it eventually ended. They decided to go on their separate ways. The three were going on a movie, and they decided to take on a tour of the canyons.

But before they could exit the restaurant, somebody suddenly stopped them. A couple stopped Eida from leaving as they stood in front of her. Not because of a problem but because they were a fan.

Still, it was a problem because apparently, they loved Eida and would like a photograph and a picture. “We could not believe that you would suddenly quit and disappear. But it is such a small world to bump into you here.” The couple said.

“I am sorry. But as I said, I am not the person you are looking for.” Eida denied the couple’s claim, saying that it was not her. “You made a mistake.”

She knew how hard Eida had tried to change her hair color and how she applied her makeup. She also usually used glasses and hats to cover her face when in public so that very few would recognize who she was.

But today, she was not wearing her usual disguised. But who knew someone would come up to her and beg for a photograph and, worse, a photo?

“But we could not be wrong. You are Eida Harlowe.” The man said. He suddenly pulled out his wallet and showed her an old picture of her with the man. “I took these years back. But that is you. I remember taking this...”

But her friend did not let him finish his story. “I am sorry. As much as I want to be this famous whoever, I am not her.” She insisted. “If you will excuse me, but we were just leaving.”

The Eida she knew back then would never act like this for a fan. She was always courteous, thinking of how she owed her viewers the success of her show. But today, she was protecting herself and her child from people who might discover her true identity.

She wished that her friend did not have to go through that. But there was nothing she could do. But two men suddenly walked toward them, asking if there was a problem.

Eida just said that it was a mistaken identity and nothing else. "We are sorry." The couple said. "We just miss her." The wife said to them before leaving them alone.

She wondered if her friend ever missed the limelight. She had been used to it for years but to suddenly give it up for her child. She could not help but ponder if her friend had any regrets.

She doubted, seeing Luisa in her carriage, smiling back at them. No mother would ever regret prioritizing their child over themselves. She believed if she became a mother, she would do the same.

She believed she would shower her kids with her selfless love.

Chapter 1099 Unsung heroes

Dani watched her child in his cradle, peacefully sleeping. It was already in the middle of the afternoon, but he seemed not to care about time. To her son, he slept when he wanted, ate when he was hungry, and cried for whatever reason she could not understand.

She was exhausted. Luckily, she had her mother and Katherine helping out whenever they could. They dropped by every day to come to her rescue.

She wondered how other mothers coped without any help. But she guessed all mothers would do their best under any circumstances. She was just thankful that their parents were here to give their support.

"I think I am getting the hang of this." She whispered to her child. It was hard work, but she was learning to adjust to motherhood. "I just need you to be patient with me." She could not help but smile when Ares smiled back at her.

In the meantime, while she was still catching up with motherhood, she decided to extend her leave from work. She knew it was too much burden to put on Alex's shoulders, but she could not leave her child until she figured out how to manage both.

"How is our little rascal?" Alex suddenly entered the nursery, not bothering to knock or keep his voice down.

He had started calling their son by that silly nickname last night when Ares would not stop crying. They had tried many things, but without their mothers, they were clueless about what to do.

Eventually, she felt like their entire house were in chaos when he cried his heart out. She had tried to rummage her brain for an idea but believed she had exhausted everything.

She had already fed him and checked his diaper and temperature. She could only wonder if he was in pain or something. The problem with the situation was not knowing what to look for since her son could not complain with words.

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"Our little prince is sleeping like a baby." She quickly stood from her rocking chair and pushed her husband out of the door before he woke him up and started pandemonium again.

"I just want to see and kiss him," Alex complained, but he allowed her to push him until she could gently close the door.

"You can do that later when he wakes up. But for now, I want some peace." Dani said as they walked toward the living room, where they could sit. Well, she wanted to put her feet up and rest them.

She had been dancing and rocking Ares to sleep for almost an hour. She needed a break, but she was not complaining. She enjoyed taking care of Ares. She believed taking care of her son was a fulfilling job.

Although she also missed working. But she could come back to work anytime, but she would never be able to rewind the growing years of her child. Besides, she would figure this out. Until then, she would stay by Ares' side for now.

"I told you we can get a nanny to help you with his care." Alex reminded her, but she refused again.

"I want to do this while I still can." She reasoned again. "I am not saying I will not get help eventually, but I want to do this for now. Besides, I think I am adjusting well."

Last night, someone knocked on their door. It could be their security, who was making their rounds on the building. They might have heard the raucous outside and wanted to check.

"I am sorry, but I thought there was a fire." He jokingly said as she opened the door.

"No fire, Tom." She smiled at the older man. "Just Ares, making a fire in our ears." She explained as Alex rocked their son to sleep. But he just kept crying.

"Do you mind?" Tom asked, indicating whether he could enter their apartment.

Although, they kept treating Tom as part of the family. He still did not want to overstep his boundary as their head of security. He still did not assume anything and worked as hard as before.

She heard that he blamed himself for what had happened to them. He took full responsibility for what Joe had done and the men who were injured and died.

He was a good man. And mistakes happened not because of him but because of circumstances. They would never blame him for what had happened. Besides, if not for them, who knew? Maybe she and Alex could be dead by now.

"Come in." She wondered what Tom would do as he walked straight to Alex.

"Do you mind if I help? I am not an expert. But I think I know a thing or two." He informed them.

Then, she looked at their child, who was still whining. She could not help but think how tired he must be but still, he kept going.

"Sure. I welcome any help, Tom. Please." Alex begged him.

Then, he checked the baby. "Did you feed him just now?" He asked after asking several questions, the usual standard question.

"Yes," Dani answered, wondering if it had something to do with her milk. She decided to breastfeed him, opting for natural milk. She had avoided drinking alcohol or caffeinated drinks and ate nutritious food, hoping that she would pass on the nutrients to her child.

"Did you burp him?" It was a simple question that made her look so silly and stupid.

"Oh my! That was it." She forgot to release the air in his stomach, which had made him cranky. "I forgot." She admitted.

She just kept feeding him until he was full. But she was so tired that she forgot about it. Now, she understood where she had made a mistake.

Quickly, Alex placed him on his chest and cradled his head on his shoulder. Slowly, he patted his back until they heard his large, loud burp.

"Thanks so much, Tom." She told him afterward. "Why don't you have some coffee? Alex had made a pot since he thought he would stay awake all night." She told him.

Soon, they settled on the kitchen counter with mugs in their hands. The two men shared the hot coffee while Alex prepared her hot milk and a fruit cake to go with it.

She was still hungry most of the time. Maybe it was the breastfeeding. She also noticed that she was still gaining weight. But she did not care for now. She just wanted her baby to be healthy.

She could always go back to running and exercising to regain her figure, but that was something she would deal with one at a time. For now, her priority was her son and his needs.

"By the way, I came here not for a social call. I already sent the samples to my friend at the crime lab. And he would analyze them as soon as possible." She heard him say to Alex.

Of course, she had an idea of what they were talking about since she was the one who requested it from Alex. She still could not shake off the idea that the body they buried yesterday was not her brother.

Although she never had any proof to say otherwise, except for his gut feeling. She still could not ignore it if the authorities made a mistake. But nobody would suspect anything since only a few knew about her relationship with him.

"When would we know the results," Alex still insisted on a timetable.

She knew that time was of the essence in this situation.

If they confirmed that her brother was dead, she could rest in peace and pray for his soul's redemption. But if he was alive. She wanted to know what had happened to him and where he was.

"He promised me at least three days. He had to work on it without the others knowing about it." Nobody needed to learn about her involvement in this. Meaning nobody had to know that someone was snooping around his death.

"Ok. Keep us in the loop if you have any word." Alex said to Tom, who nodded and finished his coffee.

"I better get going and let you two sleep." Tom pointed at their little rascal, who was already sucking his thumb with his eyes shut tight and even breathing.

"Thanks again, Tom." She said, not only for the work he had done for them but for helping them with the baby.

"By the way, Tom. How do you know so much about babies?" She could not help but ask as she walked him out the door. She knew that he never had a family. Well, at least, that was what she heard.

"It is a long story. But I believe this is not the right time to tell you all about it." Tom said as he waved his hand at her.

He was right as she suddenly yawned in front of him, feeling the fatigue taking over her body. "I guess you are right." She mumbled as another one came immediately after the first one.

"Well, locked up before going to bed." He reminded her as he closed the door behind him.

She could not help but smile at the man that had saved their lives countless times. They tried to offer him a monetary reward for his heroic deed. Although he accepted them wholeheartedly, he also gave them away to the people who had lost their lives in saving them.

Even Joe's family, the man who had betrayed them, received a lump sum amount from him. He said that each one of them was his family. He could never turn his back on them.

That was a man she admired. To her, men like him were their unsung heroes.

Chapter 1100 Marriage was a sham

It was his wedding day, the most celebrated event of the year or maybe the decade. Of course, the future King would be marrying his future Queen. What could beat that headline?

The entire world would be watching this momentous event. Every eye would be on him, scrutinizing his every move. His allies would want to know what he would do when he became King. His enemies would be seeking his weakness.

"Are you ready, Your Highness?" He was not yet King, but most of the staff was already oriented to treat him as such. Would he ever get used to it?

At that moment, he felt sick. Not because he had any physical illness. But because he had cold feet. Did he wish to go through with this wedding, knowing that the woman waiting for him at the other end of the aisle was not the woman he dreamt of marrying?

Was she watching this on the news? Did she see the announcement? Was she going to show up and stop the wedding? And then she would announce to the entire people in the crowd that she still loved him.

She would tell him that everything was a mistake, a lie, or whatever reason she could come up with to say that she still wanted him. But would he forgive her if she did that? Would he accept her for all her weaknesses and flaws?

“Yes, I will. Just show up, and I will marry you instantly, right then and there, and forget about everything else.” He mumbled in front of the mirror. “I will renounce my crown and be with you. Just show up and tell me that you still love me.”

He knew it was wishful thinking. It was already too late for them.

He could already feel that she was not coming. Whatever they had was over? He had to learn to live with that and accept the wife that fate had given him.

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But it was not as easy as said and done. The heart knew what it wanted, and it wanted Eida. Despite everything, he still wished to be with her. But he could not turn his back on his responsibility.

He already gave his word to his family and her future wife’s family. He could not dishonor them by listening to his selfish whim. Besides, he had tried searching for her but did not find her.

Maybe she did not want to be found.

Maybe it was true.

She did not love him the way he loved her.

“Lance, it is time.” His father showed up at his doorstep, ready just like him. It was just an hour left, and he would be standing in front of the altar and saying his vow to the woman he was about to marry.

He turned to his father, knowing he had no other wisdom to impart to him. He had already heard it before. He would say that this was the best decision he had ever made.

It was not news to him that his father did not like Eida for him, but he knew it had not been personal. He only thought of what was best for him and the Kingdom, which he understood.

But still, he sensed a nagging feeling in the pit of his stomach, telling him not to go through with this. He knew it was the nerves. Therefore, he ignored it, looking one last time in the mirror to check on his reflection.

“Come on! You are not the bride. We could not let them wait.” His father shouted, sounding a bit anxious.

His father must have sensed his second thoughts. But could he blame him for still wishing he was marrying another woman? But he had nothing against the woman he was about to marry. He believed she would have been his perfect Queen if he had not met Eida.

He liked her because she possessed many good qualities. Something that he would have looked for in a wife. He would have eventually loved her through their marriage and even given his heart to her.

If only he had not given it to Eida. But his heart was torn to pieces. Would she be able to mend it again and make it whole? He had no idea. Maybe. Only time could tell.

In the meantime, he was marrying her out of obligation, nothing more. But at least he was marrying someone worthy to stand beside him and rule with him.

"I am coming." He shouted as he took one last long breath, squaring her shoulders, before turning around and walking toward his father. "I don't think they would start the ceremony without me. So, stop fussing."

He jokingly said to his father, wanting him to relax. He could see the tension in his body. Did he think he would suddenly run away from his marriage, seeing the security outside his door?

He almost did.

Then, they walked in the long hallway until they reached the large foyer where the organizers were already waiting. Without many words, they ushered him to his position as he waited for his bride.

Was he ready for this?

He believed it did not matter anymore. Liked it or not, he had to do it.

The music suddenly played, filling the room with its beautiful tones. Then, the doors opened, revealing the bridesmaids he did not know. They were her friends, not his.

Eventually, the time came for the big reveal, his bride in the most expensive gown known to man. Of course, nothing but the best for the future Queen.

"You are still lucky, man." His best man said as he stood beside him, clapping him on the back.

Was he? He probably was. But what about his wife? Was she lucky that he would marry a guy who could not love her? He did not think so. But he had promised her that he would honor and respect her, if not love her. That was the best he could do under the circumstances.

"I hope so, Alex." He told his best friend, who flew early, leaving his wife and newborn son, to be with him.

He understood why many of his friends could not come to join him. Most of them were going through something in their lives. But it saddened him not to see his childhood friend.

But still, he was happy for her, learning that her husband had flown her to Vegas for a surprise wedding. That was something he would have wanted to do. But then again, it was again another faraway dream.

He would have gone there to surprise them and join them on the most momentous event of their lives. After all, he had always considered Amelia like a sister to him. But he had to prepare for his wedding.

His father and the Council would never allow him to fly away before his big wedding day. But he would have if not because of this. He missed her since it had been a while since they had last seen each other.

"Hey, are you alright?" Alex tapped him on the shoulder.

He probably sensed that he was elsewhere. The music was blaring in his ears, and all eyes focused on the bride walking down the aisle. But all he saw and heard was the one playing in his head.

Like all the wedding ceremonies he had seen before. This event was not any different. But in his head, the bride was. He saw another face walking toward him, not the one smiling at him.

"Yeah! I just remembered something." He was not lying, but he did not elaborate.

He had to focus on his bride before he lost his mind and said the wrong name in front of everyone and all the cameras covering this wedding. That would be one hell of a scandal if he accidentally made that kind of mistake.

“Your bride is almost here. So, I could only say good luck, cousin.” Alex said to him before standing straight in his position, giving him space to welcome his bride.

He still would like to consider himself one lucky man despite being forced into this marriage by his obligations. He could see how beautiful his bride was, physically. Besides that, she had always been a gentle soul, kind, and with a beautiful heart.

Any man who wished to marry her would feel lucky to have her as his wife. Maybe when his heart healed with time, he would learn to love her. As they said, nothing was impossible for people who tried their best and never gave up.

He guessed it was a task that was not impossible to achieve with a girl like her. But that was still something he could not guarantee, but he promised to try his best.

“Take care of our daughter. Love and cherish her just like we have done all this time.” His bride’s father told him as he handed his daughter to him.

Honestly, he did not care much about the man, knowing he only forced his daughter into this marriage because of his business and political motives. But he could not disclaim that it was the same for him and his family.

He guessed despite the years that passed, the culture and thinking of the men and women in their society had never changed. Marriage was not for love and never would be.

“I will take care of Camille and honor her.” But he could not promise to love and cherish her. Not yet, anyway.

Saying love and cherish would mean lying to everyone and dishonoring himself. He could only tell them the truth. But that was more than what others did in an arranged marriage like this. Many would live with lies and illusions rather than face the reality that their marriage was a sham.