

## Royal Contract 241

### Chapter 241 - Tongue-tied

"We had been talking about me all day. What about you? How was your date with Lance?" Dani asked her friend as she helped in the preparation of dinner.

The day in the office had been hectic due to the several cases she was handling. She still brought three contracts home that she had to review tonight to catch up with her work.

On top of all the things happening with her life, she barely had time to bond with her best friend. So now, she was taking advantage of their time alone to have a meaningful conversation with her.

"Honestly, I don't know if I can even call that a date. I think we are in a friend zone. He only likes my company while he is here, but nothing more." Jacky explained to her friend.

That was her impression on their dinner date. She had expected that it would be nothing more. She had to face reality and not the fantasy world.

"Hold on." Dani placed down the plate she was holding and walked towards her friend.

She pulled Jacky and stopped her from continuing with her cooking. She made her seat down on the stool right next to the counter and stared at her.

"What?" Jacky complained, not at all happy with Dani's plans. She could already guess that Dani was about to get the truth out of her. She was doubtful if she could share with her everything she was feeling.

"What is going on here? First, you end it with Sebastian because you don't feel the spark. What about Lance? Do you feel the spark with him?" Dani asked, not beating around the bush.

Once and for all, she wanted straight answers. She would figure out what was going through her friend's mind. It was the only way she could help her with whatever was happening to her.

"I do. I think Lance is perfect. He is everything I want in a guy." Jacky said dreamily for a moment, then her face abruptly changed, realizing that she was daydreaming again.

"Then, what is wrong with that?" Dani felt she was missing something from this picture but could not quite figure it out.

"I initially thought that Lance liked me too. But I was mistaken. It was only kindness, and I took it as something romantic." Jacky stated, remembering how she had replayed every event she had spent with Lance.

It was all wonderful. But in Jacky's muddle head, she took it as something flowery and full of hearts. But in truth, he was only showing hospitality to their guest.

"Are you sure about that? Maybe you are selling yourself too short. If I remember right, no man would drop everything and cancel an important trip only to see you one last time." Dani stated, not convinced with Jacky's assessment.

She tried to jog her memory if her facts were correct, but she believed it was. In her opinion, Jacky might be feeling insecure about going after a man like Lance.

But she never believed in a hierarchy. If you like someone, social status should not be a hinder to what you want. If Jacky wanted Lance, she would encourage that Jacky should go for him.

"You think so. But last night, it felt..." Jacky could not explain what she perceived. "I don't know." Jacky suddenly felt confused about the entire situation with Lance.

"I remember my best friend, who keeps reminding me that I should get what I want. Never give up unless there is no point in continuing. But it is always the last resort." Dani appeared to be reminiscing the past to her.

"I know what I said to you, but this is different." Jacky knew that she liked to spew nonsense to make Dani start dating again.

It did not mean that she could follow her own advice. Besides, it was not the time for Dani to remember what she said in the past. Whatever it was, she believed it did not apply to her.

"No. It is not." Dani was not going to let Jacky off the hook. "I think if you like Lance a lot, which I think you do, then you should go after him." Dani felt that it was the right thing to do.

Lance seemed to be a very eligible guy. Based on Alex, he was also very decent. So, if her first assessment was on point, Lance also liked Jacky. They just needed a push in the right direction.

If she had to be the cupid, in this case, she was willing to wear that cute outfit and carry a bow and arrow for them. She would do anything to see the bright smile back on Jacky's face again.

Not the one that she used to fool everyone that she was all good. But the genuine one that could fill the room with gladness. Because Jacky always had a big heart that could accommodate everyone.

"But..." Jacky was about to object to her friend's advice, but Dani did not allow her.

"You are coming with me to the charity event. And you will ask Lance to be your date." Dani said with finality.

She wiggled her fingers to silence her when she was about to make another objection. She was not allowing Jacky to back out from her plan.

"I can't ask Lance out." Jacky found the whole idea of Dani incredulous. Utterly insane if she would think about it. "He probably has a date already for that."

Jacky felt that her friend, catching the love bug, had gone berserk. Not because she was in love did not mean that she was already in authority about matchmaking.

Besides, she could not push herself to someone who did not feel the same way as she was. Could she? Although it did not stop her before, she was different now. She was not the same.

"We'll never know until you ask him right." Dani took her phone out and dialed Alex's number.

He said that he would probably be late tonight because they were finishing something important. Lance would surely be with him at this moment.

"Hello, Alex. Is..." She was unable to continue as Jacky tried to stop her. She quickly dodged her attack and ran to the other side of the counter, blocking her approach with a stool.

"Don't do that," Jacky whispered, hoping that she would stop and Alex would not hear her as she still tried to stop Dani from her plan.

"Alex, is Lance with your right now? Would you mind if I have a word with him? Thanks." Dani kept saying, while Jacky could only wait in anticipation.

Jacky knew she should have run to her room and locked it, but she kept her position, planted on the same spot. She waited for what would happen next.

"Hi, Lance. Sorry to disturb you, but do you mind speaking with Jacky." Dani waited for the reply.

"Thanks, here she is."

Dani quickly handed the phone to Jacky, who seemed to be hypnotized by the entire situation. She took the phone and placed the receiver on her ears and lips as she listened to the other line.

"Yes, Jacky? Are you there?" Lance asked when he did not hear any sound from the other line.

"Yap." That was the only word she managed to say. Then she started wetting her lips and swallowing hard, thinking if she could do what Dani was asking her to do.

She looked at her friend, who was looking excitedly at her. Even giggling like a fool as she waited for her to speak up.

"What is it?" She heard him asked. She could hear him breathing at the other line.

Her senses heightened up by the thought of him on the other side of the call. She could feel her heart was about to burst out of her chest. Was she about to do what Dani said? Had she gone mental?

"I... I was going to ask if you want to go to the charity event with me." There, she finally said it, glad that she barely stuttered. She had asked him, and now the ball was in his corner.

She suddenly wished for a black hole to open up and swallow her whole if he suddenly said that he already had a date. If not, she would go for her next option. She would strangle her friend for making her go through with it.

But the waiting was too much, although it had barely been a few seconds.. Jacky wanted to retract what she said, but she was suddenly tongue-tied.

### **Chapter 242 - Not Easy To Beat**

She felt the bed slightly shifted, making her aware that she was not alone anymore in her room. Then a light kiss touched her cheeks before it was gone again. She slowly opened her eyes to see who it was.

"Sorry, I did not mean to wake you up." She heard in her sleepy state, but she recognized it anywhere. At least she knew that she was not dreaming. "Go back to sleep. I'll change out of these clothes." The voice continued to tell her.

She closed her eyes again, not being able to focus her vision on anything in particular, satisfied that she already knew who it was. And somehow, her nose could also identify the scent that only one person possessed.

Then, after a few minutes, the bed moved again, and then a heavy arm wrapped itself around her waist and pulled gently closer to the warm body behind her.

"I'm sorry I am late," Alex said once more before he buried his head in the crook of her shoulders.

Having his warm body at her back, his arms holding her firmly, and sensing his steady heartbeat made her feel comforted and protected. Everything about what he did made her feel special.

It might be some big gesture like the flowers and the stuffed toys or the little things like this, the kiss, the spooning. Dani could not help but feel like she was suddenly the luckiest woman alive.

After a few more minutes of savoring each other's warmth and scent, they were both in Lala land, dreaming of rainbows and butterflies. There was no better way to fall asleep but in the arms of the person they loved.

"Hey, good morning." She woke up earlier than him. Well, she had a head start, so it was understandable. "Aren't you going to work?" She asked as she placed a kiss on his lips.

It was a bit late than her usual wake-up time but still early for them to be late for work. They still had plenty of time to prepare and had a quick breakfast if they were up for it.

He opened his one eye to look at her, and then he suddenly pulled her back to bed. "I am, but after I got my morning fix." He announced, surprising her and pinning her on the bed.

She already had her shower. Now her hair was spread on the bed, still slightly wet. "We are going to be late." She told him. But she doubted that he cared about that as he lowered his head to claim her lips.

Once his lips touched hers, she knew there was nothing else she could do. As he started untying the belt of her robe, she acknowledged that she was a goner. She wanted what he was willing to give.

"Oh, ah." That was the only response she was capable of giving back to all the sensational things his mouth and his hands were doing to her body.

She was like a musical instrument that he played through his tune, creating a rhythm with each movement they made. Then at the end of it, a magical melody filled up the room.

After a few moments of trying to recover from such an intense passion, both catching their breaths, they looked at each other, quite satisfied.

"You are going to make us late." She chastised him as she recovered from the high and pulled herself up from the bed.

"I think that was worth being late for." He grinned, quite proud of himself as he plopped some pillows on the headboard, put his two hands behind his nape, and made himself comfortable at the bed.

"Well, you think you are funny because you are the boss of the company." She straddled him and poked him in the chest. "Some of us need to be on time."

"Then, why did you not stop me?" Alex gave her his boyish grin. He knew that he had her, and she had no excuse.

"Because you are one naughty man." She kissed him hard on the lips and then left him in the bed to fix herself up and get dressed. But not a minute longer, he was on her tail, taking a long shower with her.

To sum it up, she knew she would be fashionably late today. By the time she went out of her room, Jacky was long gone.

"Look at what you have done." She said as she checked her watch. Luckily, she had no schedule this morning that needed her immediate attention, or else it would be a mess.

But she knew it was also her fault for letting him manipulate her this morning. However, admittedly she enjoyed every minute or second of it.

"I was only thinking of your needs and mine." He whispered before they parted as they went on their separate vehicles on their way to their respective offices.

He knew that it was indeed his fault for seducing her, but he could not help it when she appeared like an angel in his dream, wearing that white towel on her hair and covering herself with that white robe.

"Fine." She responded, blowing him a kiss before she entered her car and started her engine.

She could not argue with him when she felt like she was up in the clouds. She was certainly not expecting that when she woke up this morning. And she would not mind a repeat of that from now and then.

She happily smiled at her naughty thoughts of him as she drove herself back down to earth and her office. She had to come down sometime and face the music. She had much work to do.

Then, she realized she failed to ask him about the charity event. She thought about it last night. But by the time he came home, she was already sleeping.

But the phone ringing interrupted her thoughts again. "Yes, Mom." She answered, wondering why her mom was calling so early in the morning.

"Your Dad," Laura said in a panicked voice.

"What about Dad?" She immediately asked, sensing the tremble in her tone and the difficulty of her breathing.

"We have to rush him to the hospital." Her mom said. She could hear the small sobs that she was trying to control. But it was there. She could sense her mother's fear.

"Why?" A million scenarios started to rush into her brain, but she refused to panic as she waited for her mom's reply.

"I think he had a heart attack, but I am still waiting for the doctors' confirmation." Laura could only speculate on what happened to him based on what she saw.

"Wait for me, Mom. I am on my way." She knew that her mom would need her by her side. After learning the name of the hospital, she quickly maneuvered the car and went on her way.

She still did not want to panic, knowing that her father was in great hands. It was a very reputable hospital, and they had the best thoracic surgeons in the city.

She had faith that her father could survive this. He was a tough man and would not easily succumb to an illness.. Ethan Hamilton, her father, was not easy to beat.

### **Chapter 243 - More Than Enough**

He walked inside the hospital, dreading what he would find inside. He worried about how Dani and Laura were doing. How were they both taking what happened to Ethan?

"I heard what happened, so I rushed here." Alex walked into the waiting room, where Dani and her mother were waiting for news of Ethan's current condition.

He barely arrived at the office when his security following Dani called and informed him of what was happening. He was alarmed to hear that Dani went straight to the hospital and not her office.

When he inquired about it through his contacts, he learned that an emergency occurred. Laura rushed Ethan to the hospital due to a heart condition. They were still awaiting news of his condition.

"What are you doing here?" Dani was surprised to see him as he entered the waiting room and moved closer to their position.

She was not expecting him since she saw him last on his way to his office. But she could already guess how he knew about her whereabouts. She could already think of one, her bodyguards.

"Of course, to be here for you and your mom." He whispered to her as he leaned down to kiss her. Then he turned to her mother. "How are you holding on, Laura?" He held her hands firmly in his, wanting to provide comfort in these troubled times.

He could see that both women were trying to keep it together. Laura showed a steady and calm front for Dani's sake while Dani was doing the same thing.

"I'm fine," Laura said with a forced smile that failed to reach her eyes. She was trying to be the source of strength for Dani, although she felt like breaking down inside.

Her husband meant everything to her, and losing him would mean the end of her world. Ethan had been her partner from the beginning.

She loved him deeply, even if their relationship started only with mutual respect. Initially, they had been cats and dogs, but love still blossomed despite their circumstances.

"Don't worry. Ethan is a strong person. If anyone could survive this, it is him." Alex hoped that his words were comforting enough. Not having experience in this kind of situation, he could only act on instinct.

"Thanks. I appreciate that you are here and came to give us support." Laura voiced out her gratitude, tapping Alex's hands with slightly trembling hands.

At the same time, she still felt happy that Dani had found a good man to stand by him in good and bad times. Now, she felt assured that she was in good hands.

"How is he?" Another man walked towards them, wearing a weary frown on his face. He came as soon as he heard the news. He knew that his family would need him in times like this.

"Uncle Ben, I'm so glad that you are here." Dani temporarily left Alex and her mom to run to her second father figure. "How did you know?"

She always appreciated his presence in their lives. As her uncle and mentor, he had been a strong influence on what she was today. She would be forever thankful for all his support.

"Your mom called while they were rushing Ethan to do the hospital," Ben said to her.

He looked over her shoulder to gaze at his sister, who quietly sat in one of the chairs. "How is she?" He could see that Alex was trying to comfort her.

He still had to get to know the man that her niece was going to marry. He believed that there would be enough time for that. But so far, he only heard good things about him.

"She is calm, but I don't know." Dani never saw her mom liked this before. Like she was there, but she was not. She could not explain it since she had not experienced this before.

Laura had always been the strength that kept them together. The referee that stood between her and her father during their fights. The glue that bonded them as a family despite their differences.

"Well, she was never great at showing weakness," Ben whispered to her. "Let me handle her." He knew his sister was a tough one to crack.

But when she did, on those rare occasions, she could easily tear into pieces. And when that happened, Ben had to be sure to be there at her side.

"Ok." Dani could only seek help from people who knew better what they were doing. Seeing her liked this was new to her. She had no idea how to comfort her.

She decided to sit in another corner as Alex followed her and sat beside her. His uncle went to join her mother on the other side, comforting her mother. She would not know what to do without him.

"What about your work? You are already late, and you have an important meeting this afternoon." Dani stated, concerned that he was neglecting his responsibility to his company because of her.

She remembered their last conversation before they parted earlier. Alex told her about probably getting late again tonight because of another late-night meeting and negotiation that he had to close.

"My work can wait. And besides, nothing can be more important than being with you at a time like this." He felt that he needed to be here to support Dani, no matter the outcome of Ethan's condition.

He could not let her deal with a difficult situation on her own. Her mom would not be in any condition to comfort her since her mom was also in an unstable emotional state.

"You don't have to do this, but thanks. You don't know how much I appreciate your presence." Dani suddenly felt some form of relief from having someone to share her fear.

She would not know what to do if something terrible happened to her father. Although they argued and did not see eye to eye on many matters, she still loved her father dearly.

She would not wish anything worse to happen to him, especially not death. She could not fathom the idea that her father would leave this world. She had no idea how to live without her father constantly hounding her every move.

"I will cancel everything for you. You know that, right?" He waited for her to acknowledge what he said. When she nodded, he felt satisfied that she understood how valuable she was to him.

"Do you want me to check on his condition?" Alex offered since he could see the fear in her eyes, not knowing what was happening to her loved one.

If this happened to him, he knew that he would want her to be at his side in such a difficult situation. He knew that he would need to draw strength from someone who cared and loved him.

He realized that there was only one person he would wish to share his happy moments and, most of all, his worst times. She was the girl sitting right next to him, cradled in his arms.

"Can you stay for a while and sit down with me? I don't want to be alone." She answered him, not wanting to lose a human touch, in particular his warmth.

She once again felt so lucky to be loved by a man like him.. He was not perfect as far as she knew, but he had all the things she desired, and that was more than enough.

#### **Chapter 244 - Too Selfless**

Thirty minutes later, after Alex arrived, a doctor finally appeared in the room with the latest information about Ethan's health condition. "Mr. Hamilton suffered a minor heart attack. Luckily, the paramedics were able to administer immediate care, which stopped the worsening of his condition."

The doctor tried to explain to them more technical terms. But they did not much care about it. "How is he, Doctor?" Laura could not wait anymore as he interrupted the doctor from his diagnosis.

She did not understand much of what the specialist discussed. But she wished to know if her husband would be ok. That was the only thing that mattered to her.

"He is stable for now, but we would still like to run more tests so that we could completely understand what happened to him." The heart specialist informed them.

"Can we see him now?" Dani asked, hoping that it was safe to, at least, see his father even if they could not talk to him. She could not wait to see him, hoping that he would recover soon.

"Of course, he is now being transferred to his room." The doctor excused himself to attend to his other patients. But he promised that he would closely monitor her father's condition.

The doctor left them in the care of one of the nurses who assisted them to Ethan's private room. Well, it was more like a hotel rather than a hospital when they came out of the elevator.

But nothing but the best for the king of this city himself, Dani thought as they walked in the hallway of the private wing. She could not expect less from her father, who donated an enormous amount to this hospital.



"Thanks," Dani said as the nurse ushered them to a double doors room with a nice view of the city with its floor-to-ceiling windows.

Lying on the bed was her father, with his eyes closed and calmly breathing with some monitors attached to him and an intravenous dripped attached to his arms.

Her father looked so fragile in a hospital gown as if he was just an ordinary father and not the man controlling the city. She never thought that she would ever see him this helpless.

"Is he sleeping?" Her mom asked the nurse who was checking his vitals and the machines.

"As of now, yes, mam." The nurse answered her.

The doctor did explain to them that they had to sedate him so that he would relax and not worsen his condition. But once he regained consciousness, that was the only time they would determine if the attack caused any damage to him.

Although in his case, since it was just a minor one and caught early, it might not be anything worse than a few muscles paralysis, or it might not have any effect on him at all.

"Thanks." Laura smiled at the young woman, taking care of her husband. She took a seat placed near his bed and held his hand while he slept.

Dani, Alex, and his uncle stayed standing at her mother's back to give her support. They could only wish that no detrimental harm inflicted Ethan's body during his heart attack.

Her father was a strong and ruthless man when it came to business. But him lying on a hospital bed reminded Dani that he was still human. He was as vulnerable to illness as anyone of them.

"Explain it to me again. Is your father going to need surgery?" Laura asked, concerned about her husband's condition, wanting to know the extent of the situation.

She was not good at this kind of situation. She hated going to hospitals unless it was the last resort. Now, she was here dreading what her husband's condition would end up.

She could only pray that he fully recovered from this incident. But whatever happened, she would be strong for him. She would take care of him until she nursed him back to his health.

"No, not yet anyway. I think the doctors still planned to run some more tests on him if they would need to perform surgery," Dani explained to her mother what she gathered from the doctor's diagnosis earlier.

She could only sympathize with what her mother was going through. As a daughter, she felt the pain of seeing her father in this weakened condition. But for her mother, she must be suffering three times worse or more compared to her.

"Ethan is strong. Have faith in him." Ben said to his sister, assuring her that they would get through this.

"Thanks," Laura answered her brother with so much love. Without him, her life would have been different.

Because of his brother's undying support of her, even when they were just a child and until now that they had their families, she only had grown capable of handling everything thrown her way.

"I think you should go back to your work." I can handle it from here. Her mom told her.

A bit calmer after understanding that she had nothing much to worry about since the worse was through. All she had to do was wait for her husband to wake up.

"I can't leave you, Mom. I am staying right here until Dad has regained his consciousness." Dani was not leaving her mom in her current state.

She might not be crying, but she could sense that her mom was anxious about her father's condition. The worry lines on her forehead were telltale signs that she was not ok.

Her mother could smile all she wanted, but that would never fool her of what she truly felt. She would stay by her mom's side and assured her that her father got everything he needed.

"Alex, Uncle Ben, I know that you have worked to do. Both of you can go back to the office, and we will update you on what is happening here." Dani said, seeing there was no need for them to be present at the moment.

She believed that since her father was already in a stable condition, she and her mother would be just fine to wait until her father woke up from his deep slumber.

"I don't want to leave you." Alex wished to stay with her. His appointments could wait for another time.

He believed that Dani's needs would always outweigh all his other responsibilities. As long as Dani required him as her side, he would make sure to be present.

"But you have your obligation to your company. That same rule applies to you, Uncle Ben. We can manage on our own." Dani insisted, wanting both of them to be productive.

She would also go back to work if she must. But she knew she would not be doing much work too. Her mind would surely drift back to her father and worry, despite the doctor's reassurance.

"Dani is right." Finally, her uncle realized some sense in what she was saying. "We are not helping them by being here. We could always come back later if need be."

Hearing Uncle Ben's words, Alex knew that they did make a valid point. "Ok. But you better call me asap if you need me." Alex reminded Dani, finally conceding to what she wanted.

He knew now that he was willing to give up everything for her if she would ask him too. But knowing her, she would never ask him to do any of that.. She was too selfless to think of herself first before others.

## **Chapter 245 - Entwine Tangled Mess**

"How is your dad?" Alex asked her, meeting Dani outside of her father's room.

He opted not to enter the room, not wanting to disturb the patient and her mother, who was probably resting by now. He would have come earlier, but Dani insisted that he pushed through with his meeting.

The meeting, as expected, took longer than he wanted, but he could not leave without finishing it unless there was an emergency. Besides, Dani would not want him to neglect his obligation to his company.

"He woke up earlier. A little disoriented but lucid and stable." They both sat on a couch in a waiting area on the same floor, near the elevators.

Dani felt there was no use for both of them to waste their time just sitting around the hospital room, waiting for her father to recover. If anything changed, the doctors assured her that they would inform her immediately.

She would also go to work if not for her mother, who looked so distraught despite the strong front she kept showing her. She could not leave her in that condition.

"What did the doctors say?" He moved closer to her, placing his arm around her shoulders to comfort her.

He would have stayed with her the whole day if she allowed it, but she was always as stubborn as he was. But he respected her wishes to be alone with her mother.

Although he asked her secretary to update him every hour of Ethan's condition, calling their contact inside the hospital for updates. If he heard something amiss, he would leave everything behind to run to her side.

"Well, they said that Dad was lucky it was just a mild heart attack, and his secretary was able to administer first aid to him while they waited for the ambulance." Dani narrated the doctor's diagnosis.

The doctors would still be running a few more tests to determine the extent of the damage, but they were optimistic that he would recover from this without any permanent effect on his body.

"Then that is good news. I'm glad that your dad will soon be fine." He felt glad that nothing serious happened to Ethan. He rubbed Dani's shoulder, reassuring her that he would always be there for her.

He might have no experience with this kind of situation, but he knew he loved her. He would do anything for her.

"What about you? Did you close your deal?" She looked up to him and watched her face.

She had enough of talking about her father. She wanted to know what happened to him and his day. She also knew that he had a rough day. Their conversations could not revolve purely around her.

"Why don't we go home, so you can also rest, and I will tell you all about it later?" He suggested, seeing the fatigue in her stance.

She would never admit to being tired until she dropped down. It was what Alex observed about her. This time, he was not waiting for that to happen.

"Just let me get my things and say goodbye to Mom." She stood up from her seat and left him.

When she walked into the room, her father was still sleeping, as if nothing happened to him. The only indication that he was sick was the slight paleness of his skin and the different tubes and machines attached to his body.

She strode over to her mother, who also fell asleep on the extra bed provided for her by the hospital. She refused to leave her father's side despite the doctor's assurance that he was already stable.

She left the room with her things, silently walking away, not wanting to disturb the sleeping form. She walked back to where Alex was waiting for her to take her home.

"Can we go to your place?" She requested, not that she did not want to see Jacky. She was just too tired to entertain any more questions if she went back to her apartment tonight.

She knew that Jacky meant well. Jacky was like a sister to her and another daughter to her parents. But right now, she did not feel like chatting after the day's ordeal.

"Sure, anything you want. Have you eaten anything today?" Although he kept texting her and reminding her that she should eat and rest, he wondered if she did follow any of it.

"I had a few bites earlier." That was her answer to his question.

She tried to eat during lunch and dinner, but her appetite was not cooperating. She ended up toying with her food and throwing it in the trash after a while of staring at it.

She was not going to admit that to him because she knew he would not appreciate that. But she relished the fact that he cared enough to remind her every time to eat and take some rest.

"Ok." He mentally thought of preparing a quick soup to fill her stomach before sending her off to bed.

There were moments that Dani took care of him during times he was too exhausted from his work. Well, it was his turn to return the favor.

On the way home, he talked more about his work. He informed her that the negotiation was successful. "Your idea about..." But he paused, unable to continue with his sentence, noticing that she remained quiet on her seat.

He allowed her to sleep throughout the car ride. Glad that she was finally getting the rest she badly needed. When he stopped at a red light, he turned to her to fix her position and make her more comfortable.

He suddenly remembered the night that he first met her. He was very attracted to her, but he wanted to keep his hands to himself, thinking she was so young and innocent then.

"But you were not." He muttered to her sleeping form as he recalled how she tried to seduce him and succeeded. He continued driving when the light turned green, smiling at his recollections of that night.

He suddenly wondered if fate had something to do with all of this. Was she the one fated to be his wife and bring him to his knees, or was she going to be his downfall?

Was their future set to bring them into a successful union or to leave them in an entwined tangled mess?

### **Chapter 246 - Answerable To Death**

She opened her eyes with the rays of sun shining on her face. When she squinted her eyes to the time on her phone, she already knew that it was already late.

"Alex." She looked at the vacant space on the bed and wondered if he was in the kitchen making breakfast. He was not in the bathroom, which was quiet.

She quickly stood up from her bed and grabbed her robe. She made a quick stop at the bathroom before proceeding to the kitchen. There she found Alex slaving away on a pot of coffee and a pan of whatever delicious concoction he was making.

"Why did you not wake me up?" She asked him when as soon as she moved closer to his position by the stove.

She looked at him, wondering why she deserved to find a man who made her world complete. In his sweat pants, shirtless, and an apron, he still appeared perfect.

As he moved while cooking, with precision and skills, she could not think of any reason why she could not love a man like him completely. He was the man she had been waiting for all her life.

"Because you need your rest. What happened yesterday could not have been easy for you?" He said as he continued stirring the food on the pan.

When he woke earlier, all he wanted to do was cook something nutritious for breakfast. Dani hardly ate anything yesterday, and the soup last night would not be enough to sustain her.

"Thanks for taking care of me." She vaguely remembered him gently carrying her from the car to her apartment, not wanting to wake her up.

She must be too exhausted to argue with him to put her down. Or, she loved and enjoyed the feeling of his body against hers. The point was, she felt cherished and loved by his simple actions.

"I know you will do the same for me. Besides, I enjoy taking care of you." He was indeed a prince who loved to play as the knight in shining armor. But it was more than that.

He would do anything to see a smile on her face every day, as soon as they woke up in the morning and before they slept at night.

"Well, thanks still for last night and breakfast." She could already smell the delicious aroma that he was making.

She wrapped her arms around his waist and leaned her cheeks on his muscular back, trying to get some comfort on his warmth. She knew yesterday would have been more difficult if he was not by her side.

"Are you alright now?" He finally asked, sensing a difference in her compared to last night.

Last night, she had been quiet as soon as he put her down on the couch. He felt that she was awake when they entered his apartment. But she did not make a sound as she just sat on the soft cushion, staring at nothing.

He believed that the earlier events were only sinking in, now that she had time to think about it, without worrying about her father and mother.

"Yeah, I think so." She said with a smile on her face, but she knew she failed to convince him.

Last night, she realized how fragile life could be. She always had pictured his father as the invincible tyrant that nobody could beat. He was this strong man, capable of putting others to their knees.

But it had been a wake-up call to her what happened to her father. She failed to see that her time with her family was limited, and she should not be wasting it with their quarrels and differences.

"Come on. Let us eat first before we get ready to leave." He offered and helped her on one of the stools.

Then, he put two plates of food in front of them on the counter, pouring a cup of coffee to cheer her up. He knew how she loved her coffee in the morning. She was grumpy when she did not get some caffeine in her system.

"I am just going to call Mom to check on her." She suddenly remembered that she wanted to hear if there were any changes.

It should have been the first thing she did when she woke up earlier, but Dani was still slightly disoriented and forgot about it.

"No need. I already talked to your mom, and they are ok. Your dad was awake and feeling much better." Alex informed her before she could rush back to their room and call them.

He made a point of checking on the hospital and talking to the doctor in charge of Ethan's care. Then, he also called Laura to monitor her condition.

He wanted a guarantee that everything was fine, and if not, he would like to be on top of the situation. It was the only way he knew how to help Dani in her current condition.

"You did." She said with a slight tone in her voice. Well, she was a bit surprised by his action. She would have preferred to talk to them herself, but she could do that later.

Then again, she was glad that he already checked on them. What was important was, her father was doing great. She could not wait to see him and her mother soon.

"Yeah, I did when I woke up this morning. I only wanted to make sure that everything was ok." He said, watching her reaction, catching the slight hitch on her tone.

He hoped that she did not take it the wrong way that he meddled with their family affair. After all, he was only the boyfriend. But his intentions were only to help her.

"That's great. I'm happy that you checked on my parents. I think I'll probably drop by the hospital before proceeding to my office to see both of them." She suddenly felt bad that she used that tone on him.

She knew he was only trying to help. She was just stressed with the entire situation and thinking of the job that she had failed to do yesterday.

Although Evan said they would take care of it, she knew that it was her obligation. She could not keep passing up her work every time something was happening in her life.

"Can I drive you to the hospital and your work? I wanted to say hi to your father, and I have some papers I need to show to David." He told her as they finished up with breakfast and readied for work.

He knew he was making up excuses to accompany her. But from the way she reacted earlier, he was not sure if she would want his company.

"Yeah, I think that is fine with me." She answered him, trying to make up for her unruly behavior earlier.

She only wished that those tiny miscommunications or disagreements would never turn into something big that could ruin their relationship.

She then thought of her father, who she always argued with one thing or another. She wondered if she could ever get over what he did in the past.

But she discerned one thing with this incident, Ethan, her father, was just the same as everyone else.. He was human and still answerable to death.

### **Chapter 247 - Truthfully With No Fear**

"Tell those doctors and Jefferson, if they want me to keep donating to this hospital, they will sign my release papers immediately," Ethan shouted inside his room, Jefferson, referring to the director of the hospital.

His voice echoed in the entire room, even at the nearby hallway and the nurse station not far away from his room. The nurses tried to calm him down, but it was to no avail.

He could not stand to be inside the hospital any minute longer. He already felt good. He was fine, and that was all that mattered. He demanded to be sent home with his wife, who had been exhausted, cooped up in this room with him since he was confined.

"But the doctors said that it would be better if you stay at least a week in this hospital so that they could monitor you more closely." Laura pleaded with her husband.

She agreed with the doctors that it was better to be safe than to realize, later on, that they missed something on his diagnostics. Ethan was no ordinary man. The doctors could not afford to make a mistake concerning his health condition.

But she also understood that being kept inside this room felt like a prison to him. He was not allowed to work, looked at his laptop, or signed papers. His second in command took over the company while he was recovering.

The pressure that it had on him, knowing that his investors were worried about his condition. He needed to show them that he was still as strong as ever, or the vultures would start feasting on his carcass.

"I don't care what the doctors said. I should know what my own body needs and wants, more than them." Ethan complained to his wife, still expressing his command for his release from the hospital.

This kind of incident was what he feared the most. Without an heir to take over his business, his enemies would be swarming on his companies like flies if something serious happened to him.

If only Dani agreed to take on the role and trained under him, then the board and the investors would have no fear if anything ever happened to him.

They would be at ease knowing that he left the company in good hands. But the problem was, he was still unsure to whom he would leave his legacy. That was until his grandchildren were ready to take over his throne.

"No, you are not going out of this hospital," Laura shouted at her husband. She had enough, and she had to step in and set her foot firmly on the ground.

At least, it stunned Ethan into silence. Laura rarely raised her voice, and if she did, the end of her ire never directed at him. Now, he wondered if he pushed her to her breaking point.

"You don't know what your body needs. It is the main reason you are here. You're not taking care of yourself. Your stress levels are too high, and you are killing yourself without you knowing it." She continued, not allowing him to interrupt her.

As much as she wanted to sympathize with his issues, she wanted her husband to be well and alive, to live long by her side until they grew old together.

If she allowed him to bully himself out of this hospital, then the chances that he might get another attack were very high. She could not permit that to happen.

"But..." Ethan was going for another tactic with his wife, but she shut him down with one look.

"No." She finally said when she felt calmer. "I won't allow you to kill yourself because of that company of yours. If I have to, I will burn it myself if you keep insisting on what you want." She threatened him.

However, they both knew that she would not physically, or in any other form, burn it to the ground. It was an idle threat to make Ethan stop.

"Fine, one week. That was all I am giving this hospital, and then we are out of here." He finally conceded peacefully to his wife, not wanting to see the worried lines on her face.

It was not that he was afraid of her outburst earlier. He was more concerned that she felt frightened of losing him. He loved his wife more than anything in the world.

He promised to give her the world, but she declined. She only wanted him by her side. She would not care if they were poor as long as he would never leave her.

"Finally, I thought you would never stop shouting." A voice by the door alerted them of another person entering the room. But she was not alone.

"Princess, I am glad that you visited your father." Her mother said, breathing a long sigh of relief upon seeing who came by to check on them. At least, she knew that her daughter would come to her aid if she needed back up against her husband.

"Well, I want to see if he is getting better. From the sound of it, he may need a few more days before the doctors can send him home for home bed rest." She knew that she was exaggerating and teasing him, but she could not help it.

"I would not be this stressed out if you would only take your place and be the head of our company." Ethan once again reiterated that she was his only choice to take his place.



"Dad, as I said to you before, I am not interested," Dani repeated her answer to him.

"What about you, Alex?" Ethan turned his attention to the man standing next to his daughter. "Are you interested in taking Dani's position and run my company for me?" He knew he put Alex on the spot.

He was interested to know what his reaction and reply would be. He did not plan it, but the opportunity presented itself for him. If he could truly trust this man, he would be the answer to his problems.

Alex could be the next head of his companies, and his children with Dani would be his heirs. His grandchildren would continue his legacy.

"Who would not dream of being in your shoes?" Alex told him. Honestly, that was all he dreamed of since he started building his company in this city. "But that will be a tough shoe to fill."

He knew, from the glint in Ethan's eyes, he was testing him, baiting him to answer him, studying his reactions and his words.

"But are you willing to fill that shoe for my daughter and me?" Ethan continued his line of questioning.

He wanted a straight answer from Alex, and hopefully, he would know this time if he was lying or telling him the truth. Could he trust this man for his daughter?

"Dad, Alex is not..." Dani was about to interrupt their conversation, but his dad stopped her.

"Let the man speak," Ethan said to Dani, not liking that she had to defend Alex against him.

"Yes, it will be my honor to help you run your company." Alex gave him a straight answer, not turning away or even blinking. He stared into Ethan's eyes, daring him to say anything that would discredit his words.

He knew that whatever his answer was might be taken as opportunistic. It would all depend on his delivery and Ethan's perception and interpretation of it.

So, nothing he might say could assure him that Ethan would like his answer. So, the only way to answer him was the only way he knew how.. Truthfully with no fear.

## **Chapter 248 - The Golden Boy**

"That's a great shot." His assistant praised him as he entered his office.

He was playing a mini-golf game, set up in his temporary office while working in this place. He would prefer a game on a beautiful golf course lawn, but it was office hours, and he had to pretend to be working.

He walked back to his table and sat on his chair to attend to his obligations while cooped up in these four corners of a room. At least, they had the decency to give him a good size office with a beautiful view.

"So, what do you have for me?" He asked his assistant, who he had given the task to collect information for him through their investigators and contacts.

He was not just going to sit down and allow them to control him like he was their damn puppet. Well, he was not slaving away for their benefit alone.

He was here with a mission. But who said that he could not have a little fun at their benefits. It was time to act while everyone was preoccupied with their time.

"Sir Edward, here is the information we gathered." His assistant, Vince, placed the files on his table. "Our sources are still digging for more." He continued as he moved a few steps away from the table.

He had served the prince for years, not because he had high regards to him as a person with authority or a person in general. In truth, he despised him for what he stood for.

By obeying him diligently and loyally, he hoped to serve the future king of their kingdom. A prestige only a few of his kind had the opportunity to have. And the promise of more than he ever dreamed of to have in this lifetime.

"Ok. Let me know if the team found more valuable information." Edward told his assistant with a gleam in his eyes as he read the facts written on the report.

Edward could not wait for the opportunity to enjoy the weekend. He had been playing nice and acting in good behavior with Alex's rules. All for the benefit of the kingdom that he was about to serve once he was king.

Well, as far as his father, the Council, and Alex were concerned, that was what he was doing. It was all they needed to know so that they would not take the crown away from him.

"Will there be anything else you need?" Vince asked as he continued to wait, standing in front of his boss.

He would do anything for this man. So far, the prince had taken care of his needs and his family. Once Prince Edward was proclaimed king, he promised him a higher position in the palace.

He was aiming for Lordship, so if he played his card right. Then that would not be far from happening. He could already see him and his family having a comfortable life compared to what they had now.

"Nothing for now. By the way, is Alex back in his office?" Edward inquired, thinking of what he had to do to spice up the day.

He continued to read the file in his hand, finding the report very interesting. He was starting to learn a few valuable pieces of information he would need in executing his plans.

It would seem that some did not appreciate Alex's stay in this Big Apple.? Not everyone welcomed his sudden appearance in the business industry.

"No, Sir. I believe I heard that he had some errands he needs to attend to this morning." Vince talked about what he gathered from the other office staff from the other offices.

He could already see that the prince was concocting another of his plans. He might not agree with most of his actions, but he was the prince and his future king. He would do anything for him to get what he wanted too.

"Notify me when he returned to his office," Edward ordered. Then, dismissing his assistant, wanting to be alone with his thoughts as he considered his options.

He studied the files in his hands and realized that Alex also had acquired quite a few enemies on his way up the ladder. People he had stepped on and bypassed on his way up the business industry.

The data and names included in the reports were very informative. Something that Edward could use for immediate reference for his plans.

At the top list were the names of the people Alex had conflicts with within the business. But there was one name that came up highly recommended as the most invested in taking Alex down. Nickolas Travis.

"This is perfect." Edward surmised as he kept studying the report in his hand.

Surprisingly, he just learned that Nickolas had a connection with Daniella Hamilton. A very intricate past involving him to the sweet Dani. What a perfect coincidence? A nice touch on his plans.

"Vince, come back here. I have something that I need you to do for me." He called at his assistant, excited with his new plan.

He would exploit all possibilities to take down Alex. If he could take Alex out of the picture, it would guarantee his place in the kingdom and position as king. In a way, Alex was the only one standing in his way. With him gone, then it would only be him.

"Yes, Sir. What is it that you wish me to do?" Vince, as usual, was ready for his highness orders. He was literally at his beck and call.

"I need you to handle this. I want you to set me an appointment with this man as soon as can be arranged." Edward knew what he wanted, and he took charge of getting it.

He never made excuses and would never bow down to anyone. He was born to be a king, and he would be one. No one was going to stop him, not his father, not the Council, and not his cousin.

"Right away, Sir," Vince answered the prince. He took the paper and secured it in his pocket. He would get to it as soon as his boss dismissed him.

He wondered what the prince would want with the man. But he would soon find out. As his assistant, he had privy to a lot of the happenings in the prince's life.

Although the prince still kept many secrets from him, he still discovered some of them one way or another. Well, those were valuable information that could mean his life or his death.

"And one more thing, make sure to include these names in the guest lists on the charity event." Edward handed him another piece of paper.

He knew Vince had his way of doing things. That was why he was keeping him at his side. Vince was a valuable employee. But it did not mean he trusted him completely.

Anyway, he was excited to see the new guests attending the grandest party his cousin was organizing for some charitable work. He believed that it might even be the highlight of the night.

"There is nothing else. Update me when you finished with what I asked you to do." Edward waved his hand, indicating that he wanted to be alone again.

Alex was the only one standing in his way to his rightful destiny. He had always been the thorn in his side. Growing up with him at his side had never been easy.

He was the prince, the son of the king. Everybody should be praising him and not his cousin.. Alex turned out to be the golden boy when it should have been him.

### **Chapter 249 - Freedom To Choose**

He looked at the piece of thick paper in his hand, reading the beautifully written, embossed letters on its surface. It was an invitation to a very prestigious event.

"An invitation had arrived from Alex. He is sponsoring a major charity event for Dani's pro bono cases and some other causes." Fred said to his wife, who just walked into his office.

He just received the invitation for the event, and he wondered if he and his wife should attend it since it was their son's first time to sponsor such an activity.

It might not be much yet, but he was already proud of what Alex had accomplished since he started building his life on his own. He knew that he did not have the same courage to do the same as what his son did.

"I also heard from Laura that she had Ethan admitted and hospitalized for a mild heart attack," Katherine informed her husband about her conversation with her friend a few minutes ago.

She was trying to call Dani, but she could not reach her. She could not blame the child since she was always busy with a lot of things. She opted to call Laura instead to discuss some issues with the wedding preparations.

Since she met Laura, she became a good friend. So, talking had been their regular past times. But amid all the chaos, they both failed to keep in touch. So, it was only now that she learned of Ethan's condition.

"Oh! How is he? I hope it was nothing serious." Fred also was alarmed by the news. He placed down the invitation and walked towards his wife, hoping to hear for more.

Alex or his staff failed to inform him about it. Maybe the Hamilton family was keeping it a low profile to avoid the media circus. It was common practice to keep private matters away from the press.

He understood how these things work. They also did it in the royal palace when one of the royalties was ill or seriously injured. Avoiding the press was imperative to prevent complicated situations.

"Well, based on Laura, it was serious, but luckily Ethan was able to survive it with minor effects on him. They were expecting fast and full recovery if Ethan will listen to his doctors." Katherine emphasized the last words, knowing that her husband was nothing different from Ethan.

He would surely avoid any mention of having himself checked by their doctors. He had kept away from them, even if their intentions were only to guarantee his health.

"I'm sure it was just a minor incident. Ethan will surely bounce back out of it soon enough." Fred muttered with confidence, glad that everything seemed to be ok.

Although the idea of Ethan in that condition still caused concern. Even a great man like him could fall, and even kings and kingdoms could tumble down in just a snap of a finger.

But he still believed that men like him and Ethan did not give up easily to death. It was not the time to die, not yet. For either of them, it was not yet an option.

"I hope so. I can already see the pain that Laura and Dani had gone through when Ethan was fighting for his life." Katherine uttered in despair, imagining what it would be like if it had happened to them.

"I know what you are thinking. I am not dying anytime soon." Fred stopped her from her unwanted musings.

Sometimes, his wife had a very active imagination, thinking of things that might or might now even happen and worrying too much about it. But in some cases, she had reason to worry, but he would never admit that to her. Or, he would never hear the end of it.

"Anyway, do you think we should attend Alex's charity event?" Katherine asked her husband's opinion, trying to distract herself from going to her terrifying thoughts about the future.

In her opinion, it might be a good idea to attend the occasion, but she also wanted to hear Fred's suggestion. They were a team, and both viewpoints should matter.

"I think it may be a good idea to see our son, attend the party and visit our friend, Ethan," Fred recommended, watching her wife's reaction as he said it.

He could sense how much his wife wanted to see their son. She might not be forcing the issue about missing him, but he knew she was dying to be with him again after their last visit.

"I believe so too. Maybe it is also a good idea to participate in the fundraising and support Alex and Dani's cause." Katherine added, feeling the exhilaration of the thought of seeing Alex again.

She jumped from her seat and moved towards her husband, who was pouring himself a drink. She hugged him from behind, knowing that he was doing this for her.

"Then, you can discuss the issues about the wedding with Laura and Dani, personally," Fred added, turning around to look at her, seeing the happiness in her eyes as it sparked every time she smiled.

He would give anything to make her happy all the time, but the sad part was, he could never give their son back in her arms. Their son had spread his wings and decided to fly high and away from them.

He could not stop him even if he tried. But in truth, he did not want to limit his dream. If exploring another world was what would be his satisfaction, and then he would support him.

"Yes, that is a great idea," Katherine said, agreeing with her husband. She would certainly love to see Laura again and her lovely daughter, Dani.

Discussing the wedding would be a good excuse to bond with her friend and future daughter-in-law. She could not wait to see them too. Well, besides looking forward to seeing her son.

"Then, it is settled. I will plan our travel as soon as possible." Fred announced to her wife, giving her a firm hug and a tender kiss on the lips.

He would also like to see his son and discuss some matters with him. Some issues still required his attention, even if he did not want to be part of this royal charade.

He was still part of this family, whether he liked it or not. He was still answerable for his responsibility to their heritage. But that was the extent of what he was bounding his son.

"Then, I should also start preparing things for our travel." She let go of her husband reluctantly and made her way out of his office.

She needed to plan their itinerary while they were visiting Alex and Dani. Of course, there were the wedding preparations that needed her immediate attention.

"I'll call Alex to inform him about our decision," Fred called after her wife, who was already out the door.

He looked at a picture of his son on his table. He was about five then. At that age, he already saw that his son had the destiny for greatness.

He would not tie him up on a throne that he never wanted in the first place. He would allow him to find his happiness and success wherever his fate took him.

His son deserved a life not bound by their rules but freedom to choose his future.

### **Chapter 250 - Be Cinderella For The Night**

He had been watching her for several minutes since he approached her table, finding her fascinating as she seriously worked on her table. She was so engrossed in her task that she failed to notice his presence.

She occasionally stretched her body before letting her fingers worked on her keyboard once again. But her eyes never wavered, focusing only on the screen before her.

His phone vibrated, indicating an incoming message. "Where are you?" It texted. He immediately replied that he would be back soon. When he looked away from his phone, he was surprised at what he saw next.

She suddenly smiled at something she probably saw on the monitor as she clicked on the mouse in her hand. Her earlier serious face transformed in an instant.

He was suddenly intrigued by the cause of her delight as she continued to stare at the screen with a dreamy expression. Sadly, he could not see her screen at his current position.

"Hi!" He lightly tapped his knuckles on her table to finally catch her attention.

He did not want to startle her since she appeared to be unaware of her current surrounding. But he needed something from her, and it could not wait. He had to do it now while he was already in the vicinity.

"Yes," She slightly turned her face but never actually looked at him. Still maintaining that goofy smile plastered on her face, she entertained the visitor who dared to disturb her busy day.

She had to retain her professionalism in dealing with their clients, despite feeling annoyed with the intrusion. But she promised when she woke up early that morning, there was nothing that could ruin her already perfect day.

"Hi, Jacky." He repeated, hoping that she would finally look and recognize him.

Because it would seem that she was still dazed by whatever she was doing a few seconds ago. She did not even realize who was standing in front of her desk.

He waved his hand, and it was the only time she finally saw his face. The shocked look on her expression made him wonder if there was something wrong with him.

"Lance, what are you doing here?" She finally answered, with some form of panic in her voice.

She looked at him and down on her screen, slowly realizing what was happening. It was like chaos broke loose at her table as she had no idea what to do.

She started scrambling in her place, tapping on her computer, and knocking down several of the objects on her desk. Some toppled out of their place, and some went sliding down on the floor in her haste.

She found herself torn between going after the things that fell off her desk or just throwing the monitor on the floor when she saw what was still on display on its screen.

"Let me help you with that." Lance moved around the table and knelt on the floor beside her.

Everything happened so fast that she was unable to process everything. She suddenly saw Lance looking at the screen and realized he just saw what she was trying to keep from him.

She suddenly remembered to push the off button on the monitor to hide what she was doing. But she wondered if that was even necessary when he had already seen it anyway.

"Thanks," Jacky finally found her voice, but unable to say anything else as her mind thought of what he might think of what he saw.

He just saw her ogling his picture on the screen. Now, what should she do? What could be her excuse? She could not say that it suddenly popped up on the screen without her intervention.

She could not even look him in the face, feeling embarrassed with her action. Why did he have to visit just in time when she was fantasizing about him? She had been busy the entire day with actual work. Why not visit during that time, and why now?

"I came by to discuss something with Evans and decided to drop by," Lance explained his presence, trying to avoid the earlier scene.

All her efforts to hide what was on her screen were futile. Lance already saw a reflection of what she was doing earlier on the glass behind her.

It was an article written about him with a picture of him in his prince attire. It was old news, maybe a year or two ago. But what was she doing with it? Then, it occurred to him.

"Oh!" Jacky knew she needed to say something more, but she had difficulty dealing with her current predicament.

She was busy working on transcribing one of Dani's cases when a pop-up appeared on her screen. Distracted by an incoming email, her mind wandered somewhere else.

She ended up typing a name on the search button. She only wanted to see his face, to relieve some of her exhaustion. Now, he caught her fantasizing about him.

"Anyway, I came by to ask if you wanted to go out with me tonight." He asked her, noticing the pink tinge that covered her face.

He was conflicted if he should ask her about what he saw or just let it go. He felt that talking about it might embarrass her further. But he did not like her to feel uncomfortable around him just because of that.

"You don't have to come here for that." She said as she rearranged her things on top of her desk. "You can have text or call instead." She finally looked up to him as he continued to stand in front of her. Well, as usual, he was impeccable as ever. He wore a suit tailored to perfection as if he just came out of a magazine.

How could she ever think that someone like her could ever fit in his world? It was precisely why she only dreamed about him because reality was, she had no business being with a man like him.

"But I called and texted you last night and this morning, but you have yet to reply." He finally confronted her. "After you invited me to be your date at the charity event, you seem to be avoiding me."

He knew there was something wrong with the way she was acting around him. Now, he had a clear idea why. Was he so dense not to realize it before?

Jacky genuinely liked him, and he was stupid enough to think that they could stay on a friendly level. Honestly, he was also interested in her. But there was a problem.

"My phone was broken." She started, but she realized her mistake when she noticed her phone was directly in his line of sight. When he raised his brow, staring at her phone, she knew it was a terrible lie.

She quickly grabbed the phone and wiggled it in the air. "You see, it is not receiving any messages and calls." Shoving the damn object inside her drawer.

But the stupid thing started ringing inside her desk as if mocking her for lying. She quickly grabbed the phone again and turned it off this time.

"As you were saying." Lance decided to lean on her desk, putting his arms across his chest as he waited for her to continue.

He could not stop the amusement from showing on his face by the blatant lie she kept telling him. He could understand her predicament and enjoyed every minute of it.

He could not wait to see how she planned to get away with it. What possible excuse that she had left in her bag of tricks? For sure, she would have a few more that she could come up with in that creative mind of hers.



"I meant to answer you, but last night and this morning had been pretty chaotic. I might have forgotten about it." She knew that was a poor justification for her failure to reply, but she had nothing else on her mind. She could not come up with a better lie.

"Is that so? Then, it was a good thing that I came personally instead. So, tonight? I'll pick you up at seven at your place." He was not giving her another chance to make an excuse. He grabbed her hand on the table and planted a gentle kiss on it. "See you later."

"But." By the time she was able to answer him, he was already walking away. She should have said something, like no.

She regretted asking him out at that charity event. She knew she was setting herself to more heartache. Now, she was burying herself in the grave she dug for herself. Could she still crawl out of it?

Or she could stop overthinking about it and let the matter take its course.. Be Cinderella for the night and enjoy her prince until midnight.