

Royal Contract 801

Chapter 801: The good could outweigh the bad

Dani immediately came to see him, not minding if she had to cancel some of her appointments that morning. Family matters first, as far as she was concerned.

Whether she liked it or not, he was now one of them. He would always have the same blood running in his veins. And her father's wishes would always remind her to accept him into the family.

"Are you sure you don't want me to come with you?" She could see the reluctance of her husband to let her leave without him.

She could not blame him after all that happened between them, Nick and Gerald. The memories still lingered in her mind, but she had not allowed them to control her this time.

"I am sure. Gerald is my brother, Alex. He would never hurt me." Dani could not explain to him how she knew this and how she could be so sure that her brother would not harm her.

But she could feel in her guts that she had to trust him. She had to make him believe he could also trust her for all her plans to work. Besides, she was not doing this for herself but for her father and the legacy he had left behind.

Finally, Alex let her leave but only with a promise that she would immediately call or send some warning if she was in trouble. She believed that Alex would not have second thoughts about hurting Gerald if he even touched a hair from her head.

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"I am here to see, Mr. Brown." She told the security guarding the enormous gates.

It was a surprise to learn that he owned a mansion this size since she always thought he only lived in an exclusive apartment downtown.

He had them fooled, alright.

"He is already waiting for you inside." The guard opened the gates for her, and she slowly cruised on the long driveway, observing the armed men patrolling the perimeter of the place.

She guessed this was his other life. The one that he had kept a secret from everyone. The one in the city was the life he presented to the world, pretending to be a good member of the elite society.

Finally, she stopped at the main door where a man in a uniform stood waiting, probably for her arrival. He quickly greeted her, assisting her outside her door and into the massive hallway.

"Mr. Brown is waiting for you at the poolside." The man politely stated, guiding her towards another exit that led her to the outdoors.

She could see the man sitting comfortably on a small round table, talking to his phone, with his back on her. But she doubted that he was unaware of her presence.

The man excused himself as she exited the house to join her brother outside. She could see that he was waiting for someone for breakfast as the food was still untouched.

"Hey, Gerald. I am sorry if I am slightly late." She walked closer to him, then he finally looked up at her, not appearing surprised to see her behind him.

"A few minutes wait would not kill me, though the food was slightly gone cold. Do you want me to have it heat up?" He offered, standing up from his seat.

"I am sorry, but I have to call you again later." He spoke to the other person on the line before dropping his phone on the table. Then, he focused his attention on her again, offering her the vacant seat next to him.

"Oh, you should not have bothered." She told him, realizing that the food was for her. "I needed to get back to work soon."

She took the seat, acting civil with the man she now called her brother. She suddenly wanted to laugh at how fate threw irony so casually as if that was funny. As if life was just a game.

"Well, I thought we could at least spend some time. Give this family bonding a chance." Gerald responded with a friendly smile. "Besides, we are starting to miss you at the office."

He wanted to believe that his intentions were true, but warning bells in her head still made her cautious. She was willing to give him a chance but only to a certain extent.

"Fine, but I will not take long." She said, not minding getting late from returning to the office. "But I do have a few things I need to discuss with you." She added, and he nodded in agreement.

Besides, the company would still stand even if she went away for a couple of hours. It would not suddenly burn into the ground with her absence.

It had survived without her before. It would still do that while she figured out how to fix their current problems without unnecessary bloodshed.

"Ok. But first, try this. My chef bakes the best pie in this city." He offered her a piece, placing it in front of her.

Just for civility, she took a bite and agreed it was good. Then, Gerald offered some more different dishes, but she respectfully declined. She was not here for a social call.

"Anyway, I am not just here to bond with you, my brother." She emphasized the way she called him.

"But I am here also to discuss business."

She placed the fork down on the table after finishing the pie. Then, she drank only water since she had her coffee that morning.

"Well, you certainly had changed overnight from someone who wanted nothing from the business to all about the business." Gerald had a slight teasing in his tone. Not sarcastic, but playful.

She could understand his reaction since he was only speaking the truth. She was very vocal about her not wanting any part of the business. But things changed when her father left it to her.

“Change is not bad if it would be for the good of everyone and not just yourself.” Dani knew her words were not only meant for her.

She could only wonder if it affected him because she could not read anything from his expression. His eyes remained stoic, but his smile could be deceiving.

“I don’t think you are here to discuss me, getting back to the fold.” He jokingly said. “So, what business do you have in mind?” This time, his face turned serious.

She did not expect a few words could convince him that the good could outweigh the bad.

Chapter 802: Three was just perfect

“Amelia, are you sure you are ok to stay here?” Eida looked at her friend, preparing breakfast, while she rummaged for her keys inside her bag and could not find them.

It was her first day at her new job. Luckily, there was local hire for a researcher in a small network not too far from her place. It was perfect for what she wanted as the start of her new life.

A simple career that did not have to put the spotlight on her. She was through being a celebrity. It was time to take the backseat and live her simple life with her unborn child.

Besides, she had enough money to raise her child and live comfortably. The money she would be earning would be enough to get them through their daily expenses.

Therefore, what else could she wish at this moment?

She did not want to answer that as she continued to look for her keys while Amelia continued with her waffles, saying she did not mind crashing in her place for a while.

“Stop worrying about me,” Amelia responded to her with a wide grin on her face. “Think about yourself.”

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Still, she was not satisfied. “What about your foundations? Are you just quitting your charitable works just for me?” She insisted, knowing how much she devoted her life to her work. But now she was neglecting them because of her.

“I can always help in other ways. I don’t always have to go through the foundation to do good.” She offhandedly commented, acting like it was not such a big deal.

She began pouring coffee into one mug and hot milk into another before putting the waffles into a plate.

“Besides, I am not only doing this for you but also for my godchild.” Amelia continued as if that should be reasoned enough for her to stay indefinitely.

“Fine.” Eida raised her hand in surrender, believing that she would not win against her logic. If Amelia wanted to stay, she had no choice but welcome and appreciate all the help she could get.

She already had read many books about childbirth, first-time parents, and parenting. It did not seem like it was a piece of cake. The first chapter alone almost scared her to death. And she did not get spooked easily.

However, she welcomed whatever would come her way as long as it was for her child. She would accept the hardship if it meant a good and healthy life for her baby. And the help.

“Great.” Her friend shouted as she placed her breakfast in front of her on the kitchen counter.

Her keys and milk were already waiting for her.

“But don’t tell me I did not warn you.” Eida looked up to her friend as she sat at the table and grabbed the milk. “This will not be an easy ride.” She told her, just like drinking the distasteful milk in her hand.

She pinched her nose, not wanting to smell or taste the white, creamy liquid that went through her lips. But she knew she had to endure for her baby.

But her friend only smiled at her, assuring her that she knew what she was doing. Then, her friend joined her as they both had a full breakfast, laughing at her discomfort.

“And I assure you, I will abuse your generosity,” Eida told her, giving her a heads up, knowing that this would not be as simple as riding a bike.

However, she was slowly learning to take care of herself since she discovered she was pregnant. Although exercising was already a regular part of her regimen, good eating habits were not.

That meant full, healthy meals three times a day, snacks in between, and avoiding the unnecessary sugar, caffeine, alcohol, and things she usually loved to eat, junk foods.

“I am up for the challenge.” Amelia cheerfully answered, taking a big mouthful of the waffle into her wide open mouth, emphasizing her enthusiasm.

“Count me in too.” Suddenly a heavenly voice echoed in the room. Then an angel appeared by the kitchen doorway, brightening the room with her friendly smile.

“Angela, you are here.” Amelia was the first to see her since she was facing her, while Eida had to turn around before she could look at their visitor.

She stood from her chair, same as Amelia, and greeted their guest. “What are you doing here?” Eida asked, surprise evident in her voice.

She had no idea that Angela was in the state. She thought their friend was adamant that she would not leave her home. Therefore, seeing her standing in front of them was a slight shock.

She could understand her sentiment. If she did not get pregnant and her circumstances were not like this, she would not opt to leave what she considered her home.

“Well, I was getting bored at home, so I convinced Evan to drive me here,” Angela informed them as she took another seat at the table to join them for breakfast.

She saw Amelia’s face when she heard Evan’s name, but her friend quickly masked it with a smile. She could tell that Evan still affected her. But she was still refusing to acknowledge her feelings for him.

“Where is Evan?” She asked, knowing that Amelia would not ask that question but was dying to hear the answer.

If her suspicion was correct, Angela was here to finish what she started. Just like her, she believed that the two belonged together.

The two were both afraid of their past that they had them running away from their fate. Not if she could help it. She was sure Angela would be on her side.

“He had to rush back to the City since he had an important meeting, but he would be back on the weekend. Do you mind if I stay for a couple of days?” Angela explained her situation.

“Of course, Angela. You are welcome for as long as you want to stay.” Eida excitedly said, knowing she enjoyed the woman’s cooking and wisdom. She would not get bored by having her around.

“I am so happy that you will be staying here.” Amelia seconded, looking genuinely excited about the prospect.

However, she could not help but wonder if it was Angela she was looking forward to being with or Evan. But whatever it was, she liked having them around.

Others said two’s a company and three’s a crowd, not to her. Three was just perfect.

Chapter 803: Wait patiently by the sideline

Everyone gathered around the spacious room.

All that mattered had an invitation to attend this emergency meeting. No exemption. The Duke had asked everyone to be present for an important announcement.

And a decision had to be made.

“It is official, Alex had renounced the crown.” Count Julius Ashthorne announced to the entire Council Members and the King as they gathered around the massive elongated table.

It was imperative to decide on the next course of action after receiving the formal declination of Prince Alexander Blackstone from accepting the position of King.

Now, they had to declare a new rightful heir and discuss the succession of the crown. The King had continuously expressed his wish to retire and the need for his urgent replacement.

“Does that mean Prince Lance Wellington will be the next in line?” Lord Fordshire expressed his excitement about the news.

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He was indeed a true advocate of the Prince for the position. It was not surprising since he was also closed to Count Thomas, who had been lobbying for his son to qualify for the title.

“Yes, based on our laws, we could qualify him for the position as long as he could abide by our rules.” Count Julius proclaimed for everyone to hear.

He could see his friend, Count Thomas, smiling with the news. But no one was more than happy to hear about this developing news but him. It would perfectly fit with his plans.

He always wanted Prince Alex to be their King because he believed in his leadership. He could see a great future ahead under his kingship.

"I assure you my son is more than happy to take on the challenge of ruling this kingdom. But I hope you will give him some time to recover from his injury." Count Thomas stood up from his seat to face his colleagues, then the King.

"Yes, I understand his situation since I have been sick recently. And all of you were kind enough to hold the forth for me." The King spoke up. "If your son truly expressed his wish to be King, then I will gladly accept him as my next heir."

Everyone applauded with the King's word. It was binding, and no one could break it except him. They had an heir once Prince Lance formally accepted his new position.

But Count Julius knew he could not disregard Prince Lance as King. He was also a good candidate for the crown. At the same time, he could not discount the advantages of his reign in his plans.

He never desired it, but it landed on his lap. Like fate was telling him it was their time, soon. He could not pass up the opportunity to plan for this and take the reign once again for their family.

To finally regain back their legacy for his family.

All he needed now was time to plan everything. A time that he hoped would be enough to make this work. And destiny working in his favor.

"Then, it is decided. Until our next meeting, we would like in full writing if Prince Lance could still not be able to attend the next Council meeting that he intends to take the throne." The Duke announced, looking relieved that his son had changed his mind.

Count Julius could not blame the Duke for not wanting it for himself or his son. The crown, though seemingly beautiful and shiny on one's head, could also be a burden due to its size and weight.

Only someone who truly wanted it could ever be able to carry it on his head and the heavy cape on his shoulders. It was a massive responsibility that could consume anyone who was not ready to handle its power.

"Of course, I will make sure to handle it by myself." The Count could not contain his excitement, knowing that his son could become King.

It was a twist of event that no one had foreseen for a long time. Everybody had known that it was either Edward or Alex who would be vying for the crown.

But that was how fate worked. It had its mysterious ways.

And he was taking advantage while fate was clinging in his direction, giving him hope for a future for his family and generation.

“Then, we have nothing more to discuss for this time unless someone else had an agenda.” The Duke looked at each of his colleagues. Then his eyes focused on the King, sitting on the other end of the table.

But no one had spoken a word, appearing to have no more other topics in mind. In perspective, the meeting was urgent, and the other members did not have time to prepare their cases.

“So, if there are no other issues and it could wait for our regular sessions, then the meeting is adjourned.” The Duke announced, dismissing everyone in the room.

The only people left in the room were him, the Duke, the King, and Count Thomas. He would have gone with the rest, but he had to finalize the transition between the current King and the new one.

“Does Prince Lance need to recover a hundred percent before he could be ordained?” The King asked the three of them, still sitting in their respective seats.

“Not at all.” Count Julius answered, recalling their bylaws. “As long as the Prince regained most of his strength and body function, we could proceed with the ceremony.” He continued, being the only one well-versed with their laws, especially about the succession process.

“Then, continuously update us with your son’s condition, Count Thomas.” The Duke now spoke up, glad that the issue of the King was almost over.

He could see the different faces of the three men sitting around him. The King seemed anxious to let go of his powers as he could not wait to hand them down to the next one.

The Duke seemed relieved that his son was not taking the burden of carrying an entire Kingdom on his shoulders. While Count Thomas, his friend, was ready to feed his son to the flames of hell, only to have the power for himself.

He only wished that Prince Lance would stand against his father or he would become another puppet that their kingdom did not need at the moment.

What about him, Count Julius Ashthorne? He would wait patiently by the sideline until it was his time.

Chapter 804: When the time is right

Jacky had her dainty nose stuck on a pile of papers in her new job. Yes, she had a new corner office on a gigantic building, with her name on the door, new responsibilities, and her private secretary.

Someone else was now preparing her coffee. Then, one needed an appointment before seeing her. Could you believe that? Well, she was still wrapping her mind around it.

Luckily, she had some business to discuss with her new boss because she needed fresh air. Not exactly new, but the title was different. Immediately, Jacky walked into her office to deal with an issue, at the same time, check on her boss.

“Dani, are you sure you are ok? You looked a little pale.” Jacky moved to her side and placed her hand on her forehead. “I knew I should not have accepted my new position. I should never have left your side.” She could not help but worry about her.

Jacky began fussing around her friend like a mother hen, checking her temperature and the color of her eyes. She believed Dani might be overworking herself after her father had died.

Although she appreciated the promotion, she was still happier just attending to her friend and her needs, but her friend convinced her that it was better if she took the new job.

"I am ok, just exhausted." Dani quickly responded to her, taking a deep breath and expelling the tension in her body. "Nothing that a good cup of coffee could not fix."

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Her friend closed the file she was reading and looked at her. Then, she leaned on her chair, relaxing her body on her new comfortable chair.

Jacky was still unconvinced. Although her friend was right, she was not sick. Still, she needed more than a quick fix. "I still recommend that you take some time off. Rest. I think we both do."

She finally admitted feeling the stress of her new job. It was indeed getting into her. But like any challenge, she would work on it because she did not want to disappoint Dani.

She trusted her to do this job. She would do it well. Still, it was not an easy shoe to fill since many doubted her capabilities. But she could not blame them. She did jump from the ranks.

But she would prove to all of them that her boss was not just her best friend, but she deserved to be in this position.

Still, she had worked hard all her life to make herself better. She would not allow anyone to ruin what she had achieved.

"I am sorry for putting you in that position, but I think you are wasting your talent by just being my assistant. You are so much more." Dani told her, confident of her capability as always.

Jacky would admit her friend was right. She had exceeded her time as her secretary. She could also feel that there was so much more she could do with her talent. Maybe it was time to explore her new opportunities.

"Anyway, I still need to thank you for giving me this chance to prove that I can still be better." She still appreciated the promotion, especially the raise.

Although Marcus kept saying she did not have to work a day in her life because he could take care of her. Still, she did not want to depend on him for money. She had always been independent, and she would keep earning her keep.

"Because you deserve it, and don't let them get to your head." Dani quickly added the last part. "I heard the rumors." She continued as she stood from her chair and moved closer to her.

"Don't worry. I eat rumors for breakfast," Jacky responded with a humorous smile on her lips. "Anyway, take my advice. After the Annual Ball, I suggest we take a long, leisurely trip, my treat."

Besides the raise, she did get some bonuses. It would be nice to treat her friend to a relaxing vacation.

"Better yet, maybe we should start discussing your wedding. I like to help you plan it." Dani offered her.

Her friend did have more experience in wedding preparations than her, but she believed she could handle it so far. Besides, she did not feel it was right they should get married while their friends were still mourning the loss of their loved ones.

“I will keep you posted.” She replied, not giving her friend any details yet of her plans. She did not want to burden her with more problems, knowing she was drowning with hers.

“Jacky, when is the wedding? You keep on changing the topic when I ask you about it.” It would seem her friend finally noticed what she was doing. “Is there a problem? Are you experiencing cold feet?” Now, her friend’s eyes were all over her.

Worried lines covered her face as she tried to read her expression. Before she responded to her question, she asked another one that almost made her laugh.

“Is Marcus having an affair?” She could not blame Dani for thinking that. Her fiance did not exactly have a good record. But of course, he was not.

Many would probably jump to that conclusion after what Marcus did to her, but he was a changed man. She was confident that the man she loved and was about to marry would never hurt her again.

“No, to your first and second question.” She finally answered her friend. “We are just thinking of postponing the matrimony to a later date.” She finally admitted it to her friend but did not give her the reason for it.

She looked up to stare at her friend. She could see the questions swirling in her eyes. But she did not want her to think she was part of the cause why the wedding had to take place on a later date.

“Don’t tell me it is because of my father. Mom and I will not take it against you and Marcus if you get married tomorrow. We want to see the two of you happy.” Dani told her, always supportive as ever.

“Well, as much as we also wanted that. We know that you and Alex need us now more than ever. We can always get married when things settle down a bit.” Jacky explained what she and Marcus had agreed upon in their last conversation.

Besides, she had complete trust in their relationship. A ring would not measure their love. What was important to her was the love they shared every day.

But of course, she still wanted the ring, the cake, the wedding bells in the end. But she did not mind waiting a bit for their friends. Besides, she believed it would not take long anyway.

“Thank you, Jacky, for always being there for me, but I don’t think it is fair that you have to wait because of us.” Dani moved closer and hugged her.

“I insist we proceed to your original timetable and prepare for this wedding as soon as possible.” She continued. “You are done sacrificing your happiness for other people.”

She looked into her eyes. “It is now your time to shine.” Dani did not allow her to protest. “We will do this together.” Her friend let go of her and grabbed her phone.

“What are you thinking?” Jacky finally asked, observing the mischievous smile on her friend’s lips.

"I think it is time we call for reinforcement. I think we are already a bit behind our timetable." Dani answered her as she dialed a number.

Then, she called their friends to join her for dinner tonight to discuss the preparations. As her best friend, Dani said she would assume her right to be the matron of honor at her wedding. She was taking charge of everything.

"Haley, thanks for confirming fast. I will be expecting you tonight." A few more calls and she had everyone coming tonight.

"There is no rush." She insisted, but she knew Dani was determined to help.

"Abby already agreed to do your gown." She continued as she dialed another number.

"Dani stopped." Jacky pulled her phone away from her. "Calm down. If you want to help, then let us plan this out. But I still don't see the point of rushing this."

She insisted since she was already living under Marcus' roof. They were almost acting like a married couple. All that was missing was the ring and the paper.

But those were just material things. What mattered most was what they felt for each other. Without that, those things would not count.

She could easily throw or pawn the ring because it would not have value to her if the marriage failed. She could tear those papers after filing a divorce, so getting married would only matter if the love was real.

"Are you sure we are not just holding you back from your dream?" She could see the concern in her friend's eyes.

"Of course not. I will marry the man I love when the time is right." Jacky assured her friend.

Chapter 805: Not just for sex

"Ouch!" Amelia retracted her hand from the pan, slightly burning herself from the scolding metal as she stood before the stove.

It was her fault. She was not paying attention to her task, thinking that her body would work automatically. But she was not a robot as her mind floated in the clouds, worrying about something.

"You seemed distracted today," Eida mentioned, seeing her friend more agitated than usual. "Maybe I should continue with that before you burn the house down." She offered.

Her friend moved closer to her position and took the spatula from her hand. Then, she asked her to relax instead and drink her coffee.

She did not protest, knowing that Eida was correct. She had not been herself since last night. She barely had any sleep. She had been pacing the kitchen that morning to have an excuse to leave the house all day.

But it was the weekend, so there was no foundation she could go to as a reason for going out. She had no friends nearby to meet. Of course, she could come up with some form of alibi, but she was no good at lying. Eida would see right through her.

Why did she have to leave?

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“What is wrong?” Eida finally asked the question she dreaded.

Her eyes sharpened at her as if studying her reaction.

“Nothing.” She quickly responded, not wanting her friend to be suspicious. But she could tell she was not doing a good job.

Luckily, Angela was out early, buying some fresh fruits with the private nurse Evan sent to watch her. Or, she would be dealing with the two of them, three if you counted the nosy nurse.

Based on Angela, the nurse was not only for her. It was to watch Eida too. Although Eida seemed fine with her pregnancy, Evan felt responsible for her.

He did not want anything to happen to Eida and her child under his watch. He felt guilty enough for lying to his friend, Lance. He could not take it in his conscience if something untoward happened to their baby.

So, he was taking the responsibility that should have been Lance. Well, at least until Eida realized she needed the father of their child. She could not live without him and return to his side.

“I know what is wrong with you.” Eida scooped the cooked eggs onto the plate and then cracked a new set on the boiling oil to cook.

Then, she turned to face her with that look that said I don’t believe you. Her hands were on her waist while her feet gently tapped on the floor.

She appeared to be waiting for her to confirm her statement even if she had not said anything. Maybe she was fishing, trying to catch her with no bait.

“Nothing is wrong with me except a headache.” Somehow, that was not a lie since she was beginning to form one from the lack of sleep and the tension on her neck muscles and shoulders.

But it was not the entire truth either.

She knew why she was feeling so agitated. It all had something to do with what Angela said before she had gone to sleep. Her last words haunted her until now.

“I think the headache was caused by what was wrong with you.” Eida corrected her, smiling instead of being alarmed. “I know what you need.” She moved into the kitchen and took a glass of water.

“What is this for?” She asked, confused with her friend when she handed it to her. Although she knew water and hydration were good for a headache. She could tell it was not what her friend was trying to say.

“Splash yourself some water, or better yet, hit the shower because I believe you are in heat.” Eida teased her, slightly chuckling while turning the egg on the pan.

She was not that naive not to understand what her friend was insinuating. She was not in heat, although she could feel her cheeks heating up from embarrassment.

Not that she had something to be embarrassed about in her current situation. She believed she was not alone. Besides, it would happen at the right time with the right man.

“Laugh all you want, but that is not my problem.” Amelia defended herself.

Then, she knew she had made the mistake of admitting that she did worry about something. She could already see in her friend’s eyes the curiosity. The way her eyebrows rose to the air meant she was waiting for some answers.

“Spill it before I make you,” Eida told her, pointing the spatula at her. “Remember, I am a pregnant woman that should not be stressed out.”

Her friend was becoming good at using her condition to get what she wanted from her. Not that she was being abusive, just more persuasive.

“Ok. You are right. Happy now. It had something to do with our guest today.” She finally admitted, unable to name him, afraid he would suddenly appear on their doorstep.

She had no idea what seeing him would do to her again. In all honesty, she had never stopped thinking about him since they last saw each other when she left him back home.

He had been a constant star in her dreams. Their kiss had not stopped replaying in her head, constantly reminding her of what it was like to be kissed by a real man. Not the one she experienced a long time ago.

“And you are not helping.” She quickly added, stopping Eida from speaking what was on her mind.

“But I have not said anything yet.” Eida tried to defend herself this time. “All I was going to say is relax. Everything would be just fine.”

She could tell the mockery in her friend’s smile. It was not insulting but more of playing with her. Her friend always believed she was too uptight, afraid to live for the moment.

But before they could argue some more. A movement by the door alerted that someone was about to enter the room. But both knew it was Angela because they had given her a key.

“I am back and looked at what I found waiting downstairs,” Angela shouted as she moved closer to the kitchen.

Could she wish it was a stray cat?

But that would be wishful thinking, knowing who Angela was referring to, and she had no more way to escape the inevitable reunion.

She readied herself for that boyish smile that would greet her, that masculine voice that created goosebumps on her skin. She prepared herself for a mild heart attack and the lack of oxygen when that man was near.

“We are in the kitchen.” Eida hollered at Angela, directing her to where they were waiting for her and her guest. Well, their guest of honor.

Angela said Evan was coming here to pick her up, but she was contemplating if she was ready to return to his place. It was silent in his home with no one but a few cleaners who came by to clean the entire house.

She asked if she could stay a few more weeks with Evan visiting on the weekends. Eida seemed to have no problem with that. Well, she also welcomed her friend to stay.

“Good morning, girls. I bought your favorite fruits.” Angela greeted them as soon as she walked into the kitchen, carrying a small bag.

“You should not be doing this. I can buy this stuff for you.” Amelia suddenly offered, seeing that she should not be exhausting herself.

Then, her nurse, Bea, came in behind her, carrying the other bags in her hands. “Good morning, Ms. Amelia and Ms. Eida.” She greeted, placing the groceries on the marble counters.

“Nonsense. I also need some exercise. Right, Bea?” Angela turned to her nurse, who nodded in agreement.

“I thought you said you found something downstairs,” Eida asked the question for her.

Amelia would have asked, but she did not want to look suspicious. Besides, she could see that her friend was more than curious, not seeing Evan around.

“Oh, yes. I almost forgot, seeing the two of you with your lovely smile.” Now! That was a lie because she had a forced smile on her lips. But Angela was an actress. She was good at creating a dramatic entrance and putting everyone at ease.

But still, she wondered what else Angela had planned for today. Maybe she had Evan wrapped in a box and was about to unravel it in front of them. Well, she dreamed about him in that way.

But the nurse carried a box from the hallway, but she doubted Evan would fit in it. It was too small for his size. Did she find a stray cat as she had wished earlier?

She did expect Evan to walk inside the apartment, but no one else followed Bea. After taking the box inside, she closed the door immediately.

“Are you ready for my surprise?” Angela asked when Bea placed the box before her.

She could not tell if it was relief or disappointment she felt, but she did not like it. It was like she should not even be thinking about that man. Not at all.

Suddenly, she believed seeing Evan every week would be torture if this would be an indication. She would admit that she was attracted to him. But she could not accept that it should be enough.

She already failed her romantic fairy tale with Lance. But she was not giving up on her future. She still believed a man was out there to love her unconditionally, with all his heart and mind.

And not just for sex.

Chapter 806: Cut the invisible string

When the box landed just in front of Angela, it suddenly moved. Amelia could tell whatever was inside was done hiding and was ready to get out.

“Here he is, our little guest,” Angela unveiled the surprise, picking the tiny puppy to show them.

Immediately, the little doggie slightly barked, looking frightened by their presence. “This is Goliath.” But when Angela cradled it in her arms, it went silent, seemingly comforted by the warmth of her body.

It looked so adorable that she also wanted to pet it. Amelia walked towards Angela and started running her hands on the dog’s fur.

It was not much different from her earlier guess. It might not be a stray cat, but it was still a live pet.

“I am thinking of adopting him,” Angela announced, enthusiastically looking at them, proudly showing off Goliath in her hands. “I think he would be good company for me. Or us when I am here.” She added the last part as if asking for permission.

“You should adopt him,” Amelia seconded her plan. “He looked a handful, but he would give you so much joy.

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She always loved to care for animals, but her lifestyle could not support one. She could not keep one and then leave it in the care of another. That would not be fair because they needed constant attention from their owners.

Being a responsible owner was hard, and she did not want to take it lightly to say she owned a dog or a cat, then abandoned them at home or in someone else’s care.

“Yes, of course, Goliath would always be welcome here. It would be an honor to have him as part of this family, like you are, Angela.” Eida finally moved toward them, joining them in welcoming their new friend and member of the family.

Eida had very few of her own that she could say her family. She also had some, but she had not been close to them. Therefore, it would be nice for them to build a family, not by blood but by friendship.

“Oh! I am so happy to hear that.” Tears suddenly appeared in Angela’s eyes, threatening to fall as she gazed at her and then her friend, finally landing on the dog in her hands.

Amelia immediately moved to her side, not wanting her to feel the need to cry, even if it was happy tears. “Come on. There is no use for tears.” She teased her, making her smile instead.

“Goliath seems to be happy too.” She proclaimed as the dog barked to join them.

“I think we need your superpowers and salvage breakfast. I think Eida’s eggs are burning.” She declared, smelling the haze that was starting to fill the room.

She quickly moved to the stove and took the burning pan from the oven. “Open the windows wide.” She told Eida, who rushed to the other side of the room, following her instructions.

Angela took a rag and started waving it in the air to drive the smoke away from the detector. Then, into the already open windows. Even Bea helped out.

They hurriedly tried to contain it before the smoke detector sensed the smoke and sent rain on them and the fire department on their doorsteps.

That would have been an embarrassing unneeded fussed.

But she guessed it was too late when the doorbell continuously buzzed on the door, demanding to be open. It seemed the fire department acted fast, or it could be just their neighbor noticing the smoke outside.

“Wait. No need to worry the fire is under control.” She said as she neared the door.

But when her eyes landed on the person who was about to ram his body into the door. She knew the fire was not even close to being extinguished as it raged continuously inside her.

Unfortunately, he did not have time to stop his momentum, charging toward the locked door as it suddenly swung open. But he managed to slow down a bit, lessening the impact of his body when it bumped into hers.

Still, they both ended up on the carpet, but he somehow managed to grab her, reversing the fall, making them land on his back and her on top of him.

“How did you manage to do that?” She mumbled, unable to think of anything else to say as her eyes locked in with him. She was curious, and it was the first thing that popped into her head.

“It was instinct for playing years of football back in the days.” He managed to answer automatically, but he did not look like he was thinking about the game as his eyes focused on her face.

Then, she knew she should stop him, but she could read in his eyes how much he craved to devour her lips. He slowly lifted his head, but instead of avoiding it, she waited, also wanting to capture those luscious lips, so ripe for the taking.

But before they could do more, something moved on the top of his head. Then, she watched as her new friend slid his slightly wet and slimy tongue out of his mouth, rubbing it continuously on Evan’s cheeks.

“It seemed he also had the same idea.” A familiar voice spoke on top of them, taking the tiny dog away from him.

“I am sorry, Evan.” Suddenly, she snapped out of her trance, realizing she had been lying on top of him for too long. “I was...” She trailed off, not having a valid reason for it.

She quickly stood up, fixed her dress, and waited until he was on his feet. Besides, she was too embarrassed to say anything else, being caught in that position by his grandmother.

She knew if Angela did not interrupt, she would have allowed him to kiss her. She could tell that was what he was about to do from how his eyes stared at her lips. Honestly, she also wanted it so much.

“Don’t be. If someone had to apologize, it should be me. Besides, it was no one’s fault since it was an accident.” Evan responded, putting her at ease.

One incident averted, but how could she avoid what seemed inevitable? How could she maintain a distance when it kept pulling them together? How could she cut the invisible string that tied them together?

Chapter 807: An impossible situation

Breakfast, lunch, and mid-afternoon tea-time had been a struggle for her. Evan could see it was because of him, but it had been the same with him.

He wished he did not have to see her again, knowing how much he wanted her but could not have her. But he had no choice. He had to come and see his grandmother.

Nevertheless, he knew he could not have her because she would want more. She would demand something he was not capable of giving. He was not a commitment kind of guy. The man that she wanted.

“Hi, Grandmama.” He greeted her as she came out of the door.

“Evan, what are you doing here alone?” Angela walked towards him, sitting on the chair opposite to him under the big oak tree.

He had been hanging out most of his time in the backyard to avoid bumping into Amelia. His grandmother wished him to stay overnight before he returned to the city in the morning, claiming she missed him.

“I am helping mow the lawn.” He reasoned, pointing to the half-done cut grasses.

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It had been years since he had operated that piece of machine. In truth, he had paid a boy passing by to do it for him. What did he know about manual labor? Nothing.

“I am glad that you are here.” Angela looked satisfied as she stared at his face.

How could he complain when he saw how happy and seemingly alive his grandmother was with these two ladies as her company? He could only be thankful to them.

Although somehow, he felt that his grandmother was deliberately making all these small requests to make him spend more time with Amelia. But he could not disappoint her since he had agreed to this condition when she came with him.

It was a trap that he could not do anything but avoid getting caught. Else, he would end up making everyone disappointed with him. It was the only scenario he could foresee in the future.

“I am happy I can finally spend more time with you,” Evan responded, not wanting her to think of another reason he was here.

But the glint in her eyes told him she was up to something. However, he could do nothing about her grandmother's mischiefs. She was old and sickly. That was her excuse.

All he could do was wrapped her in his arms and tell her how much he loved her. Moreover, she could get away with murder if she wanted to because he would defend her for all he was worth.

"Well, I better get out of this heat. Are you not coming inside?" Angela asked him as she moved along the pathway.

He could only smile at her little efforts to make him dance to her tune. But he was fine staying here until the coast was clear, probably when everyone was fast asleep.

Then, he could sneak out in the morning and run as fast as his feet would take him, as far away from the temptation residing inside that house.

He leisurely lay around on a hammock in the backyard, peacefully trying to lull himself to sleep while staring at the lushed trees. Suddenly, a voice penetrated his thoughts.

Not just anyone's, but a very familiar one. "Angela asked me to bring you some refreshments. She felt that you might get dehydrated from the heat."

Hearing her voice felt like a dream, but he knew he was wide awake as he turned around to face her. It was like torture to see her and not touch her.

"Thanks, Amelia. But I think what you meant to say was forced you to bring it to me." Evan corrected her, knowing exactly how her grandmother could become manipulative in her ways.

"Sort of." Amelia finally agreed with a smile, probably remembering how her grandmother had sweet talk her to bring him the drink.

"Well, you should not allow her to trick you again, or she would be walking all over you," Evan warned her against his angelic grandmother. She was sweet, but she had a way with her words.

Then, he extended his hand to take the glass from her. Somewhat, he could not avoid touching the tip of her fingertips. It was like electricity flowed in his body with the merest contact.

He could also notice how it affected her as her hand immediately retracted as if scorched by his touch. He had always known he had never been alone in this struggle. She was in the same boat as him.

But he knew nothing could happen between them. It did not matter if they wanted each other. Because at the end of the day, they would both regret it.

"I will try to remember that." Amelia finally responded, stepping a few steps back.

Evan knew the chase was making him crave for her, but after he had her fill of her, he would lose interest just like all the girls that had gone through his hands.

Then, what? His grandmother would hate him because he broke the heart of the one girl she wanted him to marry. But he was not ready for that. He could not marry her or any girl for that matter.

Marriage was not in his cards.

“Thanks again for this.” He knew he was dismissing her.

He felt it was better if she was beyond his reach. Before, he could do something he could not take back.

Because at that moment, he could feel he was already on edge. How long could he keep putting his desire at bay? He knew if only he could expel her out of his system. Then he would be out of his misery.

“It is nothing. But I better get back inside. I am helping Eida and Angela with dinner.” She finally excused herself, walking away from him.

He could only stare at her retreating back. But what else could he do? He could not lie to her and pledge to her forever when he knew he could not deliver such a promise.

On the other hand, he knew she would not settle for a one-night stand. She already expressed how much she valued relationships and long-term commitments.

But he could not do that either. So, how could they compromise? He could only surmise that what they had was an impossible situation.

Chapter 808: The world of crime

It had been more than a month since his father had died, his biological father, the great Ethan Hamilton. Now, he was about to be crowned as King of his Kingdom.

It was a month since he had seen his sister. Since she offered her a sweet deal, he could not refuse. Of course, he could not pass up the chance.

In return, he would declare a ceasefire on his attacks on their father’s company. But there was more to it. It was not as simple as a favor against a favor. Certain conditions from both parties had to be satisfied.

“You, my sister, had learned from the best,” Gerald mumbled as his eyes focused on the tv screen.

The news featured his sister, showing a video of her discussing the Annual Charity Gala of the Hamilton Empire. One of the grandest events that Ethan used to host every year.

It was coming soon. This time, Daniella Hamilton Blackstone would be hosting the event. He could only wonder if he would be invited or did he need to crash on a family affair.

“This is for you.” He raised the glass in his hand to the woman on the screen, saluting her for her current success.

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Her sister was thriving in her position as the new head of the company Ethan had left her. But he was not falling behind since he had also made his milestone today.

At the moment, he had finally convinced the other mafia leaders and group members that he could lead this organization to greatness.

Finally, what he wanted was almost in his grasp? But what was wrong with him? Why did the victory feel empty? Because he was alone. That was what his mind whispered to him.

He had no family to share his achievements with, except for a few friends who stood beside him, staying loyal to his side. Other than that, the new family he acquired did not support his vision.

“Hey, man! I think congratulations are in order.” Mike appeared behind him, patting him on the back. As his second in command, he was here to give his support.

He knew his journey to this point of his life would not have been easier if it had not been for his friend, who always had his back. Mike might have left for a time, but he had not forgotten. He returned to be his right man once again.

Now, they were partners, not only in the legal world but also in the illegal business. Both were lucrative jobs that gave them great satisfaction.

It was a big contrast to what they do as legal councils defending the law. Compared to their secret lives leading their group to the world of crimes.

“I think you deserve all the credit.” Gerald turned to his friend, away from the scene in front of him.

He finally turned the television off, already having seen enough of what was happening around the big horrible world. As much as people fooled themselves with what was good in this world, he believed that the bad would always dominate in the end.

It was only foolish thinking that there was such a happy ending. Everyone would end up miserable one way or another. All would die eventually.

So, why waste his time trying to be a good person when it was far easier to be the King of crimes. Money just kept flowing like the river filling the sea.

As the saying went, money made the world go round.

Those without them would die a miserable death. Those with plenty of them, unfortunately, would suffer the same fate. But at least they had enjoyed a comfortable life before meeting their end.

“Fine,” Mike answered, bowing down to him as if accepting his crown. “Are you ready to face the mob?” It was not a joke or a figurative speech.

Mike was truthfully talking about the mob leaders. Those men who had appointed him to be their Official Big Boss. They would follow him until such a time someone else would betray him and take his place.

That was the life of crime.

If he could not succeed, they would not have a second thought of putting him out of commission and placing a new one in his stead. But he was not going to allow that to happen.

His father took many decades before he was taken ill and died. But he had led this organization to the peak of its achievements. Many heads never dared to touch him since their business flourished under his rule.

“Yes. I have been ready for years.” His father had trained him since he could remember to talk and hold a gun in his hand. It had been the only time he could remember that he was happy with him because he had excelled in his training.

“Then, shall we meet you subordinates and discuss the first line of business,” Mike suggested.

He ushered him out of the office he would use as his new headquarters and into the other bigger room where the other leaders and members waited for him.

Once the doors opened, he could already have seen several eyes turning in his direction. Then, more noticed his arrival as he walked into the room.

The conversations ceased, leaving the room in complete silence. Then, clapping ensued as congratulations floated in the air. All members of this organization welcomed his new position as their supreme leader. He was now the Big Boss, a title his father held for many years.

“He took the seat at the top of the podium where he would make a speech. After a few ceremonies, they would resume their meeting in the conference room to update him on what was happening in the different factions of the group.

“I assure you, liked my father, I will not let you down.” He knew that was not what the leaders would like to hear, but he still owed the dead some credit. If not for them, he would not be here.

“But I am here to set new beginnings for this group. I am not here to promise results but to create them. Join me in developing this Empire into the greatest in the underworld business.” Gerald announced, making the entire room cheer for him.

It was his world, the place he ruled, the world of crime.

Chapter 809: No pain, no gain

“Damn!” Lance shouted in frustration, banging the dumbbells in his hands, letting them fall into the floor, feeling more frustrated than ever.

He could still hardly move his hands, lacking control over his muscles. The therapists insisted that things would eventually go back to normal, but it had been weeks, and he was far from getting better.

“These are all useless.” Referring to the machines, equipment, and tools the physical therapist used to help him get back on his feet.

But in reality, he felt useless.

“You have to be patient. Healing doesn’t happen overnight.” Jake, who handled his care, picked up the dumbbells and shoved them back into his hands. “Now, start over again.”

He did not seem ready to give up on him yet as he kept pushing him even if he sometimes surrendered to his depressing situation.

“But I am still in this damn chair.” Banging his hands on the armrest of his wheelchair.

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He wanted to walk and move around without anything supporting him. He needed his body to move the way it was supposed to do.

He knew he was asking for a miracle that would improve his mobility magically. But he needed to get well soon, not because he wanted to be King as his father kept motivating him.

He only had one reason that had kept him pushing to regain his strength. "I need to get out of here." Feeling like he was about to go insane.

He had to find Eida. They said if he wanted a job done right. He had to do it himself. Because until now, no one could tell him where she was.

The longer he was trapped in this room, the less his chances of getting her back. He could not allow that to happen. He had to hear her say that she did not love him and did not want to see him before he could finally say he was over her.

But would he be able to move on without her?

"You will remain strapped on those seats if you don't do what I ask." Jake insisted, clapping his hands to catch his attention.

Suddenly, it snapped him out of his reverie and focused his eyes on his friend. With a renewed determination, he gripped the bells tightly in his hands.

"Now, one." He started counting, forcing him to lift the metallic weights with one hand after the other.

He guessed that Jake would not stop until he performed the task he had set him to do. Besides being his therapist, he had also become his friend.

He had been working with him in his workouts for his races for a long time. So, he was not just anybody. He was someone close to him who cared.

"You know I can fire you." He threatened him, making his friend realize he was still the boss. But of course, he would not do that.

He still lifted those weights with difficulty, struggling to catch up with his counts. If he failed again, he would make him repeat them all over again, which he did not wish to do.

"You can try. But this time, your father is paying me, not you." Jake reminded him. "Seven..." He continued counting, making him more frustrated. "Besides, you need me. You can't afford to lose me."

But somehow, he knew he was right. He was the best help he could get if he wanted to recover his movements at the soonest possible time.

He believed he just had to do his best and be patient, but it was easy to say but hard to do. As pain coursed through his body every time, he would move a muscle.

But at least Lance managed to finish his third routine so far. Still, several workouts lined up for his things to do today, but he wished to have a break.

"How is your therapy?" A familiar voice rang in his ear. He thought he imagined him, but he was surprised to see his cousin standing outside his therapy room, watching him.

“Alex, how long have you been out there?” Lance asked, waving at his cousin, beckoning him to enter the room. It would seem Alex was his answered prayers, giving him time to breathe before his excruciating routine.

Leg works were the worse as far as he was concerned. Forcing his feet to take on his weight and move was an experience he would not wish for anyone.

Alex slowly walked further inside. His eyes never left him as if he was studying his condition. Then, he stopped just a meter away from him.

“Long enough to witness how you are maltreating the help.” Alex jokingly said, then he turned to Jake. “How is our patient?”

“Stubborn as always.” Jake walked closer to Alex and greeted each other with a handshake. “It had been a long while since we saw each other.”

“It is. But I see you are doing a good job with our friend here.” Alex pointed to him. “How long do you think before he would be running again?”

“Hard to tell.” Jake tapped his chin as if thinking. “If he kept whining like a baby, maybe a year or two.” Jake exaggerated his recovery time, but it was less than that as far as he knew.

But faster if he would only push himself more. However, he would be honest. Sometimes he felt like giving up, realizing he had lost the woman he loved.

What was the sense of living if the only person he wanted to spend his life with left him and broke his heart? But if he found her, would he want her back if she admitted doing what his father had accused her?

“Funny. I am doing my best.” He finally joined the two. “Let us continue.” He ordered.

He guessed he could only find out what would happen once he faced the situation. As of now, he had to return to his routine. The break could wait a little later.

He grabbed the wheels of his chair and rolled himself to his next exercise. He guessed it was either he endured the hardship now or forever confined himself in this life.

As some said, no pain, no gain.

Chapter 810: Payback was a bitch

Mental and physical torture. That was what this was.

“You are so beautiful.” He whispered in her ears as his lips grazed her skin, creating a fire that both consumed them with a burning desire.

Then, his arms pulled her close to him as they both lay on the grassy lawn, uncaring of the cold breeze that enveloped them. Their bodies entwined was enough to create enough heat to warm them the entire time.

The night sky seemed so bright as her smile radiated on her face. He could probably gaze at her forever and never get tired of looking at her.

"I want you." She uttered in her low angelic voice, followed by a moan that suggested the urgency of her need. Her eyes mirrored the desire that was also surging in his veins.

He usually did not need to think twice about taking what she was offering. He also wanted her, so what was stopping him from taking advantage of their situation.

He could have her, but it did not seem right as he held himself back, pulling away from her.

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"Don't you want me?" She asked, showing confusion on her face from his hesitation as she peppered him with kisses on his lips and cheeks, not wanting them to stop.

"I do. I want you very much that I feel like I am losing my mind." He expressed as his lips captured hers, punishing her for making him feel this way.

But when he pulled his lips away from hers, he heard her voice again.

"Then, what is stopping you?" She asked, making him jolt up from his bed almost every morning, sweating, panting, needing to see her, and wanting to be as far away from her as possible at the same time.

It was becoming a recurring dream that haunted him in his sleep. But it seemed it also affected him lately, even when wide awake and in full daylight. He always found himself in a trance.

He tried sleeping with another woman, hoping it would stop his obsession with her. But it failed to stop the visions from coming.

He kept saying it was just the tension of wanting something so badly, knowing he could not have her. But once he had a taste of her, he could finally give it a rest and forget all about it. But a part of his brain doubted it. It insisted that he would want more.

"No, that is not an option." He could not use her like that. She was not like the girls he had slept with and discarded after. She was different.

Admittedly, he liked her. From the time he had met her, he had seen what kind of person she was. She was not just any girl or a friend of his grandmother. She had become a person he admired and respected.

However, he could not accept that he could settle with her and commit to a relationship either. He still had many things planned out with his life, and marriage was not one of them.

"Aaaggghhh!" He shouted silently in his brain, wanting his thoughts to quiet down. But lately, it was getting harder and harder for him to concentrate without dreaming of her.

Then, every weekend he would drive to visit his grandmother was an agony he had to endure. Every time he saw her, his desire only intensified.

Why could she not leave him alone?

Honestly, Evan knew the answer to that. He just refused to acknowledge it. He was afraid of what he would discover after exploring the possibility that he might want more.

“Again with that face?” David’s voice boomed around his office as he found him by the doorway, looking his way. “I swear that is not the look of someone who had nothing on his mind.”

His partner walked further inside the room and occupied the chair before him. As much as he wished to deny it, he knew his friend would not believe him.

He was drowning in his situation, and he could not figure a way out of it. Maybe talking about it instead of bottling it inside him would release the tension he felt. But he was not the kind of man who loved to share his feelings.

“David, what can I do for you?” He knew his partner also had many things on his plate. For him to visit, he must need something urgent from him. And talking about his personal life was not one of them.

“There is something I wish to discuss with you, but apparently, that can wait for another time. I think you have more pending matters to discuss with me.” David knew him too well. “So, what is it?” Making himself comfortable as he waited for him to spill it out.

He contemplated whether to tell him everything, but where would he start when he was confused about his feelings. How could he admit to something that he still could not accept within himself?

“Let me guess. From the contortion of your face to the droopiness of your eyes. You have not been sleeping.” David made his first assessment which was right on the mark.

He would not be the managing head of this firm if he could not read people quite well. He was one of the people he idolized and was fortunate to do business with since he was honest and a loyal friend.

“Wait.” His friend raised his hand, indicating he had something more to say, stopping him from interrupting. “And it is not because of work.” His eyes narrowed at him, studying him.

“Alas, it could only mean...” David made a drumroll motion with his hand. “It is all about a girl.” Something must have shown in his face, but he was sure not to blink or make any confirmation.

Still, his friend read him like a book.

“I knew it.” His friend shouted in disbelief. “Finally, someone caught your attention. I knew it was just a matter of time. Who is this unlucky lady who captured your elusive heart?”

Evan could only expel a deep breath and shook his head at his friend’s playful act. But could he blame David when everyone knew he was allergic to commitment?

That being with one girl was breaking his number one rule.

“So, who is it.” David persisted, forcing him to tell him a name.

He closed his eyes, hoping that this was not happening to him because, in truth, it was hard to concede to his friend that he might be right.

“Someone from back home. A girl I met recently.” He finally admitted, knowing there was no more use denying it. “I don’t know what is wrong with me. I can’t get her out of my mind.”

Maybe confiding his issues with his friends lifted a ton of bricks on his shoulders. Then, sharing more would help him release the tension in his body.

“Don’t tell me it was just about a very unforgettable mind-blowing sex.” David seriously asked, shaking his head.

How could he blame his friend if he came up with that conclusion? Most of his relationship. No, scratched, that. All of his affairs had been about sex and nothing more.

So, it was no wonder his friend would say that, but the funny thing was. “I had never been close to doing that.” He muttered under his breath.

But David still seemed to hear it as he laughed loudly inside his room. It resonated in his walls as if mocking him, although he knew it was not his intention.

He believed his friend was just surprised. He also would have laughed at himself if he was not under a lot of stress.

“Did I hear it right?” David placed his hand on his ears. “Let me see if I understand this right.”

His friend finally stood up from his seat and paced the floor as if he was analyzing a case. Then, he looked at him as if he was about to question a witness.

“You are saying that you met a girl back home. Now, she would not let you sleep at night or stop thinking about her during your waking hours.” David narrated his summation, pausing as if thinking of his words.

He could see that he was not through with him yet. He seemed to prepare for his closing argument, creating a dramatic effect for the invisible jury in the room.

“Yet you never even slept with her yet.” David stopped before him, planting his hands on the table.

“Well, that is interesting.” He tapped his fingers on the table for effect.

“Laugh all you want, but I am serious.” He was not mad at his friend’s theatrics. But he needed answers.

“What should I do to get over her?”

Then, his friend finally turned serious again. Gone was the smirk on his face. He was the same old David, who he could count on for solid and reliable advice.

“I will give you the same advice I gave myself when I was in the same situation as you.” He finally turned on his heels and walked towards the door. But he stopped before exiting. “Follow your heart.” Then, he was gone.

He seemed to remember this same scene before. It had something to do with his friend confiding in him about his feelings for Rosella.

Now, it appeared that he was returning the favor. But his advice was the complete opposite of what he said to David. He guessed his friend was a better friend than him.

Evan could only conclude. His friend might have a point.

Well.

Payback was a bitch.

