

Royal Contract 851

Chapter 851: Was she sick?

Alex could see the enthusiasm in her smile. It was apparent she was enjoying making him work for it. He could not blame her since he had woken her from a deep sleep.

She could barely open her eyes, but he forced her with a bit of persuasion and seduction. But in his defense, he hardly slept last night, wanting so much to hold her and have her.

Seeing her glowing the entire night during the party but unable to touch her was complete and utter torture. But he understood that she had an obligation to fulfill for her father and the company. So, he waited for his turn.

"You don't know how hard it was to control myself last night, seeing you wearing only those things." He told her, reminding himself that it had not been easy. "I had to take a shower to cool myself down."

He was not joking, remembering undressing her last night. He did not want her to sleep in her gown throughout the night. But finding her in those sexy, seductive lingerie had his hormones going haywire.

"I am sorry." Dani suddenly sounded guilty, but he did not want her to be.

He did anticipate a great night after that momentous event. A night to celebrate and congratulate her for a job well done. He had planned everything up to the last second to surprise her, only for his plans to backfire.

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Unfortunately, she had to drop in his arms before the night had barely begun. Unlucky for him, his plans did not materialize. However, even if the night was over, he still had this moment. So, he was still up for the challenge.

"You don't have to be sorry. You are always worth the wait." He mumbled as he looked into her eyes.

Then, his fingers worked on unfastening the brassiere that was hiding his possession from his sight. He liked the red-laced clothing, but it had already served its purpose. Now, he liked the feel of his skin against skin more as he dropped the lacy material on the floor.

As his hands and fingers elicited a verbal response, his lips also worked on making her writhed against his kisses. He wanted her to enjoy every minute as he took her to new heights.

He might not be the best lover or the most experienced man in the art of love-making, but he would certainly put her need first and satisfy her wants before taking what he desired.

"I am always yours." She responded, allowing him access to her body without hesitation. "But this time, let me." She worked on returning the favor by kissing him too, not only on the lips but on his body as well, working her way down.

Alex always wanted to make her happy, giving her all the love and care she needed. It had always been enough for him. He would never ask her to do things she was uncomfortable with because he did not need it.

But lately, she had been more vocal about her desire to please him. She had been trying hard to give him what she thought was her way of bringing spice to their sex life.

Of course, he was not against it. Honestly, he believed that couples should be able to discuss these things. Open communication was always the key to a good marriage.

But they had to be open to it and agree to whatever they would decide, or at least compromise. Or it would not work. It would only end up in a mess and a difficult situation.

“You know you don’t have to do that.” He tried to stop her, but she would not listen as her lips continued on their downward path. He could feel her lips scorching everything in its path. He was on fire.

What husband would not want to explore every sexual desire with his wife? Not him, of course. He wished to do everything that would make their sexual life colorful and alive. But as long as it was ok with the both of them, not just him.

“I want to,” Dani assured him as her fingers followed every path her lips had taken until she stopped at the heat of his passion.

His breath hitched when he felt her fingers wrapped around him, unable to control the excitement that shot up his body. Honestly, the anticipation was killing him. He wanted more.

Eventually, he buried his fingers against her hair, but he did not push her to do it. He allowed her to take her pace, not wanting to rush her. If she decided not to go through with it, he would not take that against her.

But when she felt her lips touch him, he knew he had just ascended to the next level. He was floating in outer space, riding the milky way. It was like he was ready to die and go to heaven.

Luckily, he did not pop right then and there. He had controlled himself, closing his eyes to savor the moment. But he wanted more as he waited for his wife to make her next move.

“Oooaaahhh!” He could not stop the groan that escaped his lips as the sensation of her lips created havoc inside his body. When she moved, he knew he did not want her to stop as his body grew stiff, surrendering himself at her mercy.

“Am I doing it right?” He could hear her slight hesitation, but he doubted she could make anything wrong. She was perfect as he watched her in the peripheral of his vision.

“Yes, you are doing great.” But as she continued, something happened.

Before he could reach his release, she pulled out and hastily ran. She was out of bed and inside the bathroom in no time. Suddenly, he was worried that she might have regretted doing this for him.

Quickly, he grabbed a towel, wrapped it around his waist, and followed her to the bathroom. The sight of her puking her guts out on the toilet, slumped on the floor, had him worried and a bit guilty.

He felt that this was his fault for allowing her to do it. Now, she must be upset about it, feeling disgusted with herself. Now, he felt terrible, feeling he had forced her to do this when it was not even necessary for their relationship.

“Are you alright?” He quickly moved to her side, putting a robe on her back, kneeling beside her as he swiped the hair out of her face. He grabbed a towel on the counter and started helping her out.

“I am ok.” She responded with a weak smile. She looked like she was not ok. Her face suddenly turned pale.

She looked like she was about to faint. Was she sick?

Chapter 852: A shoulder to cry on

She was pacing the room, staring at her phone as it blared on the table. She was debating whether to answer it or just let it ring until the caller was tired of calling.

After receiving an unexpected call from someone that she never wanted to hear from, the last thing she wanted was to listen to his voice again. But it might not be him. Maybe it was Evan, calling again, or Amelia or her work.

But she distinctly remembered that he said he would be contacting her again about the details of their meeting. She was not particularly thrilled to see him again, hence the hesitation to answer his call.

“Eida, are you alright? Why are you not answering your phone?” Angela strode into the room with Goliath and a paper bag in her arms, followed by Bea not far behind with a bag of groceries in her hand.

She watched the three move toward her, but Angela had her eyes shifting from her to her phone. After a short greeting, they proceeded to the kitchen to drop off what they had bought in the market.

“It is nothing important.” She dismissed the phone call as she left it in the living room and attended to helping Angela with their supplies.

At that moment, dealing with someone in her past was the last thing she wished to do. She had moved to this place to start over again and not to be constantly haunted by their presence and reminded why she had run away in the first place.

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Although she still continuously cried at night, missing him dearly, dreaming of him constantly, it would be better if she could stop hearing anything to do with him.

“It doesn’t look like it is not important.” Angela turned her head in the direction of the living room as she heard the continuous buzzing of the phone.

Even Goliath seemed to be irritated as he barked along with the noise. Suddenly, she regretted not turning her phone off, or in the least in silent mode so no one would be bothered by it.

“You know I can do the groceries after work.” She offered, seeing the bags Bea and Angela were carrying. She did not mind doing the menial things since Angela mostly did the cooking.

She also needed to change the topic before Angela snooped on something she was not ready to answer. As much as she trusted her new friend, she was uncomfortable sharing some details of her life, especially this one.

"I like going out. It gives me an excuse to walk Goliath in the street and socialize with our neighbors." Angela insisted, which Bea also seconded. Angela nuzzled Goliath's face, kissing the dog on the forehead.

"Angela needs the exercise. But don't worry, I am monitoring her condition seriously. If I find a reason that she should not go out, I will confine her in this house." Bea assured them, helping out in putting the groceries on its shelves.

"Ok. Fine. Just don't forget to ask for help if you need one." Eida reminded Angela as she put the rest of the groceries in the fridge.

She still had to prepare for her story. She had a good one and had been working on this since she started working for the small network. But it did not mean she could not help in the house when she was home.

Besides, she could not depend on Angela and Amelia forever. Eventually, she would be living alone with a child to raise on her own. She would have to learn to do all these things by herself.

"I hope you will also do the same." Angela countered, reminding her about the phone call. "You know I am a good listener."

She could tell that Angela suspected that she was hiding something from her. She thought she was good at making a poker face, but Angela was better at being a detective.

Maybe she should hire her to investigate for her since she was doing a great job examining her. No wonder Evan said that he could not keep any secrets from her. It was no use. Somehow, Angela could find a way to extract the truth.

"I do remember that." She assured her friend, but as she said. Her current situation was not something she was willing to talk about with anyone.

Then, she distracted herself by playing with Goliath, cuddling the cute puppy and messing up with its fur. So far, after two more ringings, her phone had finally quieted down.

She could always call whoever it was when she was ready. At the moment, her mind was still mauling over the first call she had received. She never expected that the Count would wish to talk to or see her again after their last conversation.

Why now? What did he want from her again after she had already done what he asked her to do? But what was worse? How did the Count know where she was or her contact number? He even knew her new name.

She was alarmed that he had effortlessly found her. What about Lance? Judging from the Count's desperation, he might still be searching for her.

How long before Lance could find her whereabouts?

"Eida?" She did not realize that Angela had been talking to her until she snapped her finger before her.

She was busy playing with Goliath. Scratch that. She was holding Goliath, but her mind was elsewhere. She did not notice Angela was talking to her or calling her name.

"I'm sorry." She was about to make some lame excuse, but Angela only turned her head from side to side with a grin on her beautiful face.

"Have Amelia or Lance called yet?" Angela interrupted her with an expression that told her she could wait until she was ready to share whatever was bothering her.

"Evan called earlier. He said that he would visit next week." Eida recalled their conversation. "But he seemed to be looking for Amelia. Well, she had not called yet."

"Do you think something happened? Why would Evan call and look for her when they are in the same city? They probably saw each other at the party last night." Angela worriedly stated, corroborating what she had been thinking earlier.

She was suddenly concerned that something was wrong. Why else would Evan call and look for her friend? It just did not make sense. She could only look at Angela with the same expression. She had no idea.

But before she could ask her more, her phone buzzed. She grabbed the phone this time, unable to ignore it anymore. It might be Evan or Amelia asking for help or something.

She quickly unlocked the phone, but disappointment slapped her on the face and a bit of dread. Not because the message came from her friends but from the man she did not want to see.

"What is it? Is it Evan or Amelia?" A voice behind her asked as Angela moved behind her, eavesdropping on her message.

She quickly turned the phone off, shoving it in her pocket, not wanting her friend to see the message. As she said earlier, she was not ready for someone else to learn about her secrets.

"No, it is just from work." She informed Angela, lying to her to avoid further questions. But she was unsure if she bought her excuse as her eyebrows raised in question.

But before Angela could ask her again, Eida noticed someone by the door. She could tell whoever was behind the wooden panel was trying to open it, but not forcefully.

Then, she heard the main door creak, wondering who would enter their apartment without an invitation. Did Bea forget to lock the door when she came in? But it appeared their unknown visitor had a key.

Indeed, she was surprised to see who stood at the center of the door with her luggage in hand. A woman who resembled her friend and was supposedly miles away from them was now home.

"Amelia, what are you doing here?" She asked as she walked closer. She was not expecting her to be back after a few more days. She said she still had some arrangements she had to deal with before returning.

What was she doing at home? Moreover, what was wrong with her?

"My trip was cut short," Amelia curtly said. Her tears seemed to have dried out, but it was still visible in her expression. She just stood there, unable to move, seemingly paralyzed when she saw her.

“What happened?” Seeing the tear-stained face of her friend.

She looked like she had been crying, with her puffy eyes and dropped shoulders. She could only conclude that Evan must have something to do with this. Did he just hurt her friend and break her heart?

At that moment, her problems seemed insignificant as she worried about her friend. She had to shove her current predicament and attend to Amelia first because she believed she needed her more.

Either her heart shattered into pieces, or somebody died. But whatever it was, she looked like she badly needed a shoulder to cry on at that moment.

Chapter 853: A zebra could change its stripes

She sat on the gurney of the tiny cubicle where the nurse had asked them to wait. “You know you are overreacting, Alex.” She protested as he drove her to the emergency room to have her checked.

Her eyes roamed at the familiar place, not finding being in it comforting. Although she had nothing against a hospital, she still preferred to stay away. She was ok. She did not need a doctor to examine her.

His eyes searched her face before responding to her. “Can you blame me? You should have seen yourself earlier. I still want a doctor to check on you.” His voice carried no room for argument.

But stubborn as she was, she could not help herself. “It was probably the wine from last night or maybe something she ate. And the exhaustion that got to me.” She continued to reason out.

She was sure it was nothing serious, although she still felt slightly dizzy and queasy. But she still did not believe it should merit a trip to the doctor.

Currently, they had to wait for a doctor to attend to her. Fortunately, it did not take long because she could see the concern in his eyes as if he could not wait another minute to know what was wrong with her.

At least a familiar doctor showed up, taking her chart. “Alex.” He greeted him first. Then, his eyes turned to her, noticing her on the bed. “Dani, what is wrong? What brought you here?”

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“Hello, Dr. Reece.” She was not surprised to see him here since he had worked for this hospital for quite some time. “I am sure it is nothing, Sebastian. My body is just reacting to something I ate last night.”

She had a look at herself in the bathroom mirror earlier. Even she was a bit concerned. She looked like she had just seen a ghost as her face lost color. If she was honest, she did not feel well at the time. But that was normal after vomiting.

But she quickly regained her strength after the heaving stopped. She tried to minimize what her body had experienced, not wanting the unnecessary fuss. She believed it was just due to some slight food poisoning. But she felt much better now.

"I need to be sure. You almost fainted on the bathroom floor." Alex interrupted her as he moved to her side, grabbing her hand to make a point. "There is nothing wrong if I want to be cautious."

After all the things that happened to them, she could not blame him for being overly protective of her. Still, she believed this was excessive to rush to the doctor when she could rest and wait for her mild symptoms to run their course at home.

"I think there is no harm in running some test since you are already here." Her doctor friend recommended as he took the side of her husband.

Two against one.

She had no choice but to concede. So, she might as well consent to the test that the doctor would order. But at the moment, he wanted to ask a few questions about her earlier experience and present condition.

"Tell me what you were doing before you vomited and almost fainted," Sebastian asked as he held a tablet in his hand.

Suddenly, she remembered what they were doing that morning, making her slightly blush before the doctor. How could she explain to her friend that she was giving him an oral sex job? But was that crucial to this?

She doubted it, but just for fun, she could not resist.

"I think I might know what happened earlier." She looked at the doctor and then to her husband, who had no clue what she had in mind. "Do you remember, Alex?" She could not help the glint shining in her eyes at the naughty thought playing in her mind.

"Any information would help diagnose your condition." Sebastian encouraged her to continue as he checked her vital signs. The doctor checked her pulse and blood pressure through the machines he attached to her body.

"Well, I was..." But before she could say more, Alex stopped her by standing beside her and wrapping his arm around her shoulder.

"I don't think the doctor needs the full details." She could feel her husband's embarrassment, but, of course, she was only teasing him.

However, the look on her husband's face was priceless upon realizing what she was about to tell the doctor. It was a moment that she would remember for a long time.

"As I was saying, I woke up, and when I tried to stand up, I suddenly felt dizzy and had to run to the bathroom." She explained to her husband's sudden relief.

She was not about to divulge to a friend what they did inside the room unless it was a medical emergency, which she doubted was her current case.

"Honestly, I believed it was too much food and champagne." Dani reiterated, not believing that something else was wrong with her body.

She believed she just had her yearly check-up a couple of months ago. Based on that, she was in perfect health. After her father had his first attack, she wanted everyone checked.

So, she did not believe this would be anything but a minor illness that a good night's sleep and a healthy diet could readily cure. Besides, her symptoms were already gone. She felt perfectly alright.

"Still, let me run some tests," Sebastian arranged for their transfer to a private room while he conducted the other examinations.

Even if she disagreed with the plan, she allowed it, not wanting Alex to worry about her. She was sure that the doctor would just be wasting his time, finding nothing that should alarm them.

"I hope this will not take long because all I want now is a long, warm relaxing bath and a long comfortable sleep on my bed." She told the nurse assisting Sebastian as he drew blood on her skin for the testing.

"Don't worry. It will only take a while. You will be out of here soon enough." Doctor Sebastian tapped her on the hand after he finished the routine procedure and left.

Now, here she was with Alex waiting for the result. It would be a lie if she said she did not feel anxious about the results. Her experience with the hospital had not been great.

"Hello, Dani. It is a surprise to see you here." She suddenly turned to the door, surprised to see a face she never expected to encounter again soon. "I hope it is nothing serious."

But she knew they were bound to bump into each other one time or another. She was not expecting it to happen in the hospital. "Hello, Cassie. I hope so too." But here they were.

She had heard that she was now in charge of Nick's properties. Jacob had made her the person in charge of his inheritance because Jacob only had one thing he would like to do, cure sick people.

She was probably here to see Jacob and accidentally learned that she was here. But somehow, she was happy to see her. They might not become friends again, but she had no ill feelings against her.

"Hello, Alex." Cassie turned to her husband with a friendly smile. "I know I have never thanked you enough for helping me. It is because of you that I am now free from Nick." She moved further inside the small room so she could face them.

"There is no need. We only did what was right. You might have made a mistake in the past, but you already paid for it. All we can do now is move forward." Dani could not help but feel happy for her former friend, seeing the light come back in her eyes.

All the hatred she had seen in her former friend had vanished, replaced with a happy smile. She could only attribute this to Jacob. She only hoped their relationship grew stronger because she could see they were good for each other.

They seemed to be a perfect match.

"There is no need to thank us because your help saved us from Nick's evil plans. It is us who should be thanking you." Alex interjected, smiling at Cassie, who had slight tears in her eyes.

Cassie had remained standing before them as if she had something more to say but was slightly hesitating. "What is it?" Dani asked, hoping she could help her say what was on her mind.

She knew she had already forgiven her for all her former friend had done to her. But she was unsure if she could do more for her or if they could return to what they used to be.

"Jacob had asked me to marry him, and I already accepted." Cassie finally told them. "I don't have families I can invite to the wedding. So, I thought if you two would join us. You are the only family I have left."

She suddenly remembered that Cassie had always been a sister to her until she broke her heart when she betrayed her. But now, could she accept her back into her life just like before?

Could she trust her not to do what she did to her before? Has she changed into this new persona she was showing her? There was only one way to find out. She had to try. But was she willing to do it?

She would have to take a risk and believed that a zebra could change its stripes.

Chapter 854: A changed man

"Are you done fucking up?" His friend walked towards his office, smirking at him.

When he looked up from his piles of cases, he was not surprised to see his managing partner with a mocking smile on his lips. But he was not alone as his other friend followed him.

"You know I have been there before." His newly married friend said. "If you need advice, I am here, my friend." The two sat before his desk, feeling smug with themselves.

He did not need to be a genius to decode what his friends were saying as they both made fun of his misery. But he could not blame them when he had the same thing to both of them not so long ago.

He guessed his past deeds were catching up to him fast. If this was the only way to pay for his sins, so be it. Let it come and do worse. But in the meantime, he had to deal with his friends.

"David?" Evan looked at his friend but was not surprised at what he had done. "You just had to tell him." He shook his head in disbelief at his friends. "Who else did you spill my sad life story with?"

He was not mad, just feeling indifferent as he closed the files on his desk. He knew he would not be doing any work until these two clowns exited his office.

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"By the way, thanks Marcus, but I think I got it from here." He addressed his other friend, who was playing with his new ring on his finger.

Marcus was right to claim to be in the same boat as him. But asking for advice from him might not be such a good idea. He did mess up several times before getting it right.

On the other hand, David kept declaring that he was in a solid, committed relationship. Yet, he still had to come up with a ring pledging his legal commitment to one girl, not just a promise ring.

“Just us,” David admitted. “Alex would have come to show support, but he had other important matters to attend to at the moment. So, you are stuck with us.” Pointing to the two of them. Still, he was thankful to have friends like them.

David walked towards his mini bar and poured himself a whiskey, offering him one and Marcus a glass. But he still had several cases to finish before he could declare it a day. The two drank the alcohol and sat, waiting for him to answer their question.

“What are you guys doing here anyway?” He asked, ignoring their inquiry. However, he had already guessed they did not come for business but to meddle with his life.

As much as he did not like people snooping around his private life, he did not mind his friends. They had been there for each other since the beginning of their friendship. He was not about to change that now.

Although they like to mess around with each other, they did not intentionally mean to hurt or harm anyone. It was usually just like monkeying around, but at the end of the day, they would always have each other’s back.

“We are going out for a drink. Let us say a late bachelor’s party.” David stated as he emptied the glass in his hands. “I think our friend deserves our support. Alex promised to follow shortly. Are you coming?”

Evan knew he had to be there for Marcus even if he was not in the mood to go out and drink. And the last thing he wanted was to party when all he could think about was Amelia.

He heard that she was back home with his grandmother and Eida. At least he could breathe easier knowing she was in safe hands. But it still did not solve his problem. He had to make up with her soon.

He could not fly out in the middle of a case to see her. He had to wait till the weekend. Then, he had to beg. Yes, he had to ask her forgiveness. If he had to kneel, kiss her feet or let her slap him on the face, he would do it. Anything that would make her forgive him.

He had been an ass, and he had to accept the consequence. But losing that woman who had him by the balls was not one of them. For the first time, he would swallow his pride for this woman.

“Fine. But I am not staying long. As you can see, I am still in the middle of a case.” He showed them the files on his table.

He wished he could fend it off to one of the associates or his partner, but Evan had promised the client he would handle the case himself. Now, he was in a bind that he could not get out off.

Honestly, he was also vying himself some time to figure out what he would do once he was face to face with her. He could not afford to mess up again.

“Shall we go?” Marcus stood first, followed by David as they waited for him to follow.

He looked at his wristwatch only to realize that it was getting late. He had been working all afternoon, distracting himself. He tried his best not to get on the plane and fly out at the soonest possible time that he barely noticed the time or the darkness outside his window.

He just assumed that it was still early. But since it was almost time to go home, he tagged along with his friend and agreed to meet them at the club they had chosen.

It did not matter to him which one anyway since he had no plan of staying for long. After a while, he pulled outside the high-end club he recognized as owned by a friend.

“Welcome back, Sir Evan.” Of course, the man at the front still recognized him. It was just a couple of months since he had last visited the place, but he was a frequent guest before.

He could see a few things had changed, but many stayed the same. A slightly different crowd, but it was a similar feeling. The music still blared just like he remembered it. It made his heart, blood, and adrenaline pumping but not the same way Amelia did it.

“We thought you were not coming.” Marcus shouted over the loud noise around the room when he was just a few feet away.

He was half an hour late since he had to stop for gas. Truthfully, he wanted time to think whether this was a good idea. Funnily, his mind concluded that he was through with all this shit.

“I am only here because of you.” He greeted his friends, but Alex was still a no-show.

He ordered his drink from a waitress that passed them by before settling comfortably on a seat beside his friends. But he had no intention of staying long.

“Well, that is new. Usually, you are the one bugging us for a night out. Maybe I should believe that this girl messed up with your head real bad.” Marcus raised his glass to him while chuckling at his expense.

Evan believed she did because he was willing to give all this up for her. He was now a changed man. He wanted to be a better man for her so he would deserve her.

“We should celebrate this.” David raised his glass with Marcus, leaving him to follow their lead. “To Evan and his new beginning.” He could see the seriousness in his friend’s face. He appreciated that.

After a few more drinks, he was ready to leave. He could already feel the buzz in his head. But David insisted they had a couple more shots before calling it a night. After all, it was rare that they were together like this.

Alex finally called, apologizing for not joining them. But that was no surprise. They understood his situation. But what he was not expecting was what happened next.

“Sir, the lady over there wishes to send her congratulations to the groom.” The waiter placed three fresh, complimentary drinks on the table courtesy of the woman who was now walking their way.

He figured she must be one of Marcus’ exes or someone he banged before Jacky. He certainly did not know her. However, why waste a good drink, taking the glass and drinking half its content?

“Excuse me, boys.” A stunning woman stood beside his seat and greeted them. If he was being honest, she was the sort of girl he would take home after a night like this. But those days were over. “I hope you don’t mind if I crash your little party.”

She looked at his friends before landing her sight on him. Before he realized what she planned, she sat down on his lap and wrapped her hands around his neck.

Then, her lips were all over his as her tongue darted inside his mouth, leaving him no time to think but only to react impulsively. Instinctively, his hands moved to her ass and back, keeping her in place as his lips moved with hers.

Fortunately, his drunk mind finally snapped him back to reason as he quickly pulled her away from her. "I am sorry, but I could not do this." He looked into the eyes of the unknown woman, seeing the dissatisfaction in her eyes.

Frankly, he was not disappointed that he had to stop it, but he was dismayed with his action. He should not have let himself slip even for that few seconds. Still, he was glad that he had stopped in time.

Besides, he just confirmed that he was a changed man.

Chapter 855: A new life

Dani could not say she was shocked by the sudden appearance of Cassie. But she was surprised by her invitation and the fact that her former friend still considered her as family.

However, she could not help but feel sympathy for her and not anger. Cassie had a rough life compared to her. Her circumstances drove her to do all those things. But it was not an excuse for what she did. She still did terrible acts against her.

However, she had managed to redeem herself by helping them take Nick down. If not for Cassie, they would never have enough evidence against her late ex-boyfriend. At least that should count. In her book, that absolved her of many of her crimes.

"Do you think you are ready to be Cassie's friend again?" Alex looked at her inquiringly when Cassie finally left.

Cassie said that it was up to her. She was not forcing her to attend if she was not ready and did not need an answer immediately since the wedding was not until a couple of months. She still had time to think about it.

But as they had said, time healed most wounds.

She believed the scars from Cassie's betrayal had no lasting impact on her. It was too superficial that it had healed and hardly left a mark. She had forgiven her long before. She could barely feel a grudge against her.

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"Maybe. Let us see." She could have easily said yes to her. But they said she had been too trusting of people, which usually put her in many difficult situations.

She had a good feeling about Cassie. She could see her friend changed since she realized Nick was a monster. But as they said, there was no harm in being slightly cautious.

Before they could talk more about Cassie, they heard several people running in the hallway while someone was talking on a loudspeaker about some code. She did not understand the meaning of it, but she could tell it was not good, remembering her few experiences in a hospital.

“Are you ok?” Alex moved to her side, sitting on the edge of the bed while he wrapped his arms around her.

He probably sensed her fear, making him worry about her again. She knew nothing was wrong with her, but still, she could not stop the apprehension of being in this place again.

She had associated hospitals with sickness and death since her father died in a place like this. Now, she dreaded staring at the four walls of this room with the various machines scattered around it and the white bed at the center of it all.

Lying on this bed where many countless patients had lost their lives was not reassuring. Machines and modern technology still were not guaranteed cures.

“Not really.” She suddenly felt the chills going through her spine when everything went silent. Then, the only thing she heard next was someone crying on the other side of the room.

She could feel Alex trying to comfort her as his hands ran up and down her back. She knew it was foolish to feel this way, but she felt the pain of losing her father again as a tear dropped in her eyes.

She hardly shed tears for her father anymore when she remembered him. But today was exceptional as she remembered every last minute she had spent with him. As she wished for another day with him, dining in his hospital room.

“Hey, don’t cry.” Alex hugged her tighter, his voice full of concern. “What is wrong? Tell me.” He was probably confused by the way she was behaving.

She was not this emotional, but she could not explain it either as she blinked her tears away, wiping them with her hands. She must look crazy, crying over nothing. But she could not help how she felt.

“Nothing. I just remembered Dad.” She explained, attempting for a smile on her lips, not wanting her husband to be more alarmed by her situation.

A tap on the glass door, followed by a voice, made them look at the doctor. “Excuse me. I hope I am not interrupting anything.” He wore a friendly smile that was slightly comforting.

“Of course not, Sebastian,” Alex answered for them. “Please come in.” Alex gestured for him to join them. “Do you know what is wrong with Dani?” He sounded anxious but still looked like he was in control as he stood confidently beside her.

She could tell that he was also affected by her outburst, but he had this ability to quickly turned off his emotions, unlike her. She suddenly wished she could do the same, solid and not driven by her emotion.

“I have your test results back.” Sebastian walked back to the room with another doctor following closely behind him, stopping only when they were by her bedside. “First, let me introduce my colleague, Dr. Taylor.”

The woman in a white coat smiled at them, introducing herself to them as an obstetrician and gynecologist. She was slightly confused about why she would be handling her health condition.

She thought upon getting the test results, Sebastian would prescribe something for the dizziness and send her home. Now, refer her to another doctor. What was going on?

“Is there something wrong with me?” She could feel her hands turn cold, adding to her already anxious mind. Her heartbeat had skipped a few beats, feeling the dread that she might be sick.

“No, that is not why Dr. Taylor is here,” Sebastian assured her with a smile as she checked her chart before continuing. “She is here with good and bad news. Should you start with the bad news?”

The other doctor moved out of the shadow of her friend and looked carefully at her charts before proceeding. She looked like nothing was seriously wrong with her, but looks could be deceiving.

“I am sorry, but I could not discharge you just yet because we would need to run some more tests.” The doctor told them, which made her more worried that something was wrong with her.

She held on to Alex’s arms, feeling the fear creeping inside her. The earlier incident blared inside her brain, reminding her that the hospital was a source of bad omen.

“For the good news.” Sebastian smiled at her before turning to his colleague, waiting for her to announce her initial findings. It felt like she had waited a lifetime to hear what she had to say, but it was just seconds when she revealed her news.

“You are pregnant. You two will soon become parents.” The doctor informed them excitedly.

She would lie if she said she had seen it coming. She was stunned by the news, totally not expecting it. She had been waiting for it for so long, but when it did not come after trying so hard, she decided not to think about it anymore.

Although she and her husband had longed to have children of their own, they also agreed to adopt if they could not have them naturally. But hearing the doctor proclaim that she was with a child was the most exhilarating feeling she had ever felt.

Her eyes could only look from one doctor to another, trying to get confirmation that this was not a dream. She did dream about this, but it had turned into a nightmare. She prayed this would not be like that.

“Wow! That is great.” Alex also looked shocked as it took him time to react to the result. “I am going to be a father.” The thrill in his voice was evidence of how happy he was with the news.

She could feel her husband squeezing her shoulders tightly, kissing her on her face excitedly, but she still could not say anything as she processed this new feeling. Instinctively, her hands went down her belly, feeling the child growing inside her.

Of course, she hardly felt anything. Her pregnancy was not visible yet in the human eye. But learning that she was, she suddenly was aware of the life they had created through their love.

All her apprehension left her, replaced by happiness, knowing she was carrying their child. She was about to become a mother, and Alex would be a great father.

“Maybe hospitals were not that bad after all.” She expressed with a sigh as she looked around her. It suddenly did not look that gloomy anymore.

“I am happy to hear that.” Sebastian moved closer to her and tapped her on the shoulder.

“Congratulations to the two of you.” He also turned to Alex and shook his hand.

"I guess we have to do the test now." Dani turned to the doctor, who would assure her baby was healthy and safe.

She could not wait to do everything she could for her baby. She would endure anything for her child. Even sacrifice her life if needed. Her life was not hers alone anymore.

Her initial thought that the white rooms symbolized death changed as she sensed her child inside her. The machines that beeped in the background sounded like music to her ears, knowing that soon it would be replaced by a child's cry.

At that moment, nothing about this place frightened her anymore. Nothing about what happened to her in the past mattered. Not the things and the people she had lost. Not the present that she built nor the future that she feared.

Because all of those suddenly became insignificant as the focus centered on the coming of a new adventure. A new journey for Dani and Alex.

A new chapter.

A new volume.

A new life.

Chapter 856: Never be a mistake but a blessing

"You have to push." A voice penetrated her chaotic brain, feeling her body was about to burst with its already frayed nerves. "Push harder."

Finally, after nine months of waiting, her child is coming. She could not wait to see her baby as her tears dropped in her eyes like a waterfall, blurring her sight.

She could barely see the white walls around her, the machine that littered the floor, or the people trying to help her. All she could sense was excitement that soon she would become a mother.

But then again, she would be reminded of the pain of giving birth as her doctor shouted at her. "Come on, Sarah. You have to do better than that." The doctor called her attention, bringing her back to the present.

It was easy and pleasurable to create this child, but bringing her baby to the world was a different story as pain shot up in her body, coming from all directions.

She was happy that finally, her daughter was coming into the world. She looked forward to holding her in her arms soon. But she also felt terrible because she could not share this moment with the man she loved.

"I am trying." She hissed in between her breaths as she attempted to push and expel air out of her body.

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It was easier to run several miles when she was trying to catch a story than to lie on this bed and push her baby out of her body. It felt like she had run several marathons. Yet, she was not halfway down as tears and sweat covered her body.

“Try harder, Sarah,” Amelia whispered in her ears as she tried to help and guide her through this ordeal, holding her hands, giving her strength.

However, as much as she appreciated what her friend was doing. At that moment, she only wanted one person to hold her hand and to share this momentous event in their life.

But that would never happen because she had destroyed every hope that she and Lance would end up together ever again. She was a fool to believe she was ready for a life without him.

She had allowed the Count to bully her into agreeing to his wishes, not considering what Lance would feel. Now, she had lost her chance for a life with the man she loved.

“Aaagggghhh!” She shouted at the top of her lungs, enduring the pain that crippled her body into a heaping mess. But this was nothing compared to the pain of knowing she had lost her chance for a future with a great husband.

But more than that, she had robbed her child of a chance to meet her father. She destroyed her future because she was weak and insecure about herself, and she did not trust love to pull them through in this situation.

Now, her child would grow up with only her at her side. Still, she would do anything for her baby. But what she could not give her was a father who would have loved her with all his heart.

“I am the most stupid person in the entire world.” She mumbled as tears continued to fall in her eyes. She had no idea if anyone could have understood her words since she had said them together with her sobs.

But the pity in her friend’s eyes told her that Amelia felt sorry for her. “Sarah, stop being hard on yourself.” Amelia held her hands tighter as if assuring her that she was still there for her.

She wished her friends were enough, but how could they replace Lance in her life, or more importantly, in her child’s life? She needed Lance as much as her child needed a father.

But she blew it. She ruined her chance to get back with him and be a family. Last night, he announced that he was getting married. Soon, he would become King.

She did not care about the Kingdom. She only wanted him, but that opportunity had sailed. She had no choice but to face a future without him and a child without a father.

“Sarah, I need you to focus on your child. She needs you right now.” The doctor snapped her from her reverie. “Come on, push for me.”

The doctor was right. She could not turn back time. She could not keep regretting the past and blaming herself for her mistakes. She had to move forward. For her child, she had to be stronger.

From this point forward, she had to think about her child and nothing else. What would be best for her under her current situation? And what she needed for a better future.

“Sarah, you can do this.” Amelia kept repeating a name she thought she would never get used to hearing. But it was her name now.

She had to lock Eida and Lance and all their memories inside a chest and throw away the key. Then bury it somewhere where no one could find it. The last thing she needed was someone unearthing a past that had no place in the future.

“Now, Sarah, concentrate.” The doctor looked at her again. “You have been in labor for a long time. We don’t want to cut you now. So, please, give it all you got.”

The doctor would like to avoid a caesarian section. She wanted to deliver her child naturally. First, it would be better for her faster recovery. Then, it would be safer for her child due to fewer complications.

She could hear the concern in her voice as she felt her body weaken. She had no idea how long she could keep doing this as her energy dwindled. But her child seemed to be fighting against her, not wanting to move out of her body.

Was that a sign that her baby girl got her temperament and her father’s stubbornness, a frightful combination of traits for a single mother like her? How could she raise this child alone and discipline her to become a better person?

“Sarah, are you even listening? Focus and breathe for me. Then, push.” The doctor instructed as she kept zoning out due to exhaustion and the feelings consuming her.

But she had to focus. She had to put all her remaining energy into pushing this child safely out into this world. Then with regards to the rest of her worries. She would have to deal with that as she cradled her child in her arms.

“Aaaaahhhhh!” She cried, shouted, and hissed, pushing and pushing until the doctor announced that the head was crowning, whatever that meant.

“Come on, Sarah. I can see her now. I need a few more big pushes, and it would be all over.” The doctor told her as she encouraged her to give her all.

“You heard that, Sarah. Our little angel is coming. Come on, help her.” Amelia pushed the hair that clung to her sweat-stained forehead, giving her a better view of what was happening.

She felt weak. Still, she knew she had to do this for her child. She gathered all the remaining strength left in her body and pushed with all her might. The pain and the exhaustion strained her body, but she had to continue as all her fights showed on her facial expression.

She had already let her daughter down. She could not disappoint her again by being weak. Not ever again. She would fight with every ounce of her body and soul to give her life and a future. Not just today but for all the rest of her days.

Yes, she was giving birth to a daughter. Not an heir to the throne. But she would be the princess in her life. She might not get a Kingdom or all the money and luxury of this world, but she would have a mother who would love her all her life.

“Aaagggghhh!” She shouted one last time until finally, she had nothing more to give as her body slumped on the bed, wasted.

“Good job, Sarah!” She heard the doctor say, but she was too tired to ask what it meant.

Was it over? But she still had not heard her child cry. “What is wrong? Where is my baby?”

“Don’t worry.” The doctor attempted to calm her down. “They are just making sure that she is ok. She is a beautiful baby girl.” She continued, not wanting her to get stressed out over nothing.

She felt a pride she had never felt before upon hearing those words. She was now a mother. She could sense her heart beating wildly inside her chest at the thought that soon, she would be holding her child in her arms.

“Yes, she is beautiful.” Amelia acknowledged as she smiled, reassuring her that nothing was wrong with the baby. “Wait till you see her.” She wiped her face dry, removing the sweat and tears that covered her face.

She would take her friend’s word for it. Even if she had not seen her baby yet, she believed her daughter would be the most beautiful child to set foot on this earth.

She could not wait to see her child, conceived out of love. She might not have known she was in love with him at the time, but she knew their attraction had not been mere lust. Their relationship had always been something more meaningful, driven by forces stronger than just physical attraction.

“Here she is.” The doctor excitedly announced as she carried a child and placed it in her arms, letting her rest on her chest. “Do you have a name for her?”

She thought she had already cried enough, but new tears formed in her eyes, seeing the sweet and adorable bundle of joy in her arms. Then, the doctor’s question reminded her that she still had not decided what to call her.

But something suddenly clicked in her mind as she looked into her cute, lovely face. “Luisa.” She said aloud, whispering it to her delicate ears. Suddenly, she believed her baby smiled.

“Her name is Luisa.” She confirmed as she landed a gentle kiss on her soft, cuddly cheeks.

No matter what happened to her past, her daughter would never be a mistake but a blessing in her life.

Chapter 857: Motherhood

She walked straight to her office with her husband escorting her, holding her arm as if she would suddenly faint. “I think this is far enough. You can now let go of my hands.” Teasing her husband for being overly cautious.

She might have been a little light-headed earlier, but the doctors told her that it was normal to have some dizzy spells. Nothing that should concern them as long as it was not persistent.

However, her husband decided to make a big deal out of it. Taking her condition like she was about to go to labor at that very moment. Ridiculous! But that was what she loved about him. She loved how he fussed over her.

“If it had been up to me, I would have cuffed you in the bed and never let you out of my sight,” Alex suggested as his arms pulled her body closer, his eyes staring down at her face.

How could she blame him when a few months more, she was about ready to pop, but it did not mean she should stay at home and do nothing? She still had a company to run, and there was no time to slack now.

His hands moved protectively at her round belly, caressing it like it was the most precious thing in the world. For one thing, she agreed with that. She believed her baby was more than all the wealth they possessed.

"I like that too," Dani placed her finger on his lips. "But..." Silencing him before he could utter another word. "I have work to do. But promise, I will let you do all those things once I get home." She whispered seductively.

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Who said that pregnant lost their charms when their belly looked like they swallowed a bowling bowl? On the contrary, her libido had increased threefold, making their sex life more active than ever. Her husband certainly did not complain.

She pulled him down until his face was at her level, then with a gentle tilt of her head, her lips touched his. It was the sweetest thing because it was as light as a feather touching her lips.

"Don't think that this makes it better. But I will let it slide this time." Alex kissed her one more time, putting more pressure, more passionate, before letting her lips go. But his arms still supported her as he looked into her eyes.

Suddenly she wished they were back in their room, her body lying underneath him as he adored every part of her skin with those feather kisses. But sadly, the reality was that she was back in her obligations, doing everything she could before her time was up.

"And you should consider cutting down on your workload." He suggested, his eyes displaying his deep concern for her condition. "Maybe we should go on a long vacation." He added before they were interrupted.

"In her condition, I think that would be a good idea." A voice called out by the door, making them turn their heads at the source.

"I am sorry, Ms. Dani. I tried to stop him, but he walked past my desk." Her new secretary walked behind her visitor, looking mildly terrified, with her face ashen as if she had broken a capital offense.

It was her first week on the job, and working for a top official like her would not have been easy. Recently promoted for her hard work, so she needed to give her some slack even if she had already made several mistakes.

She suddenly remembered when she first hired Jacky as her secretary. Jacky highly recommended her, so she did not doubt that she was more than qualified for the position. She just needed to get her footing.

"Don't worry, Apple. I'll take it from here." She dismissed her secretary with a kind smile and looked at the familiar face walking toward them.

He was not exactly an unexpected guest since he had an appointment. Judging from the time on her watch, he was just in time. "Adam, come on in." She invited the man further inside the room.

She had met him at one of the parties her husband had hosted. He was one of Alex's college friends who had attended. From there, Adam contacted her about some of his pro bono cases. It was mostly about asking for advice and a little financial support.

"Adam, it is nice to see you, man." Alex greeted his long-time college friend, looking surprised to see him.

"Well, I am happy to see you too." Their guest shook her husband's hand and made some bear hug that was a form of their greeting. "And I guess congratulation is in order." His eyes landed on her fat, big belly.

She suggested they all sit on the sofa on the other side of her office. "My feet are already killing me." She could barely stand for more than a few minutes. She thought it was better if she was walking than being immobile in one place.

"I did not realize you are back." Alex continued as they started talking animatedly about work and the past.

Although she had worked with Adam on some pro bono projects, they rarely saw each other, so she could not say she knew him well enough, only that he was a college friend of Alex and Marcus.

Then, he ran his small firm, catering to usually small cases and pro bono ones. But Alex said they were close back in college but had to go separate ways to pursue different careers.

"I was offered an opportunity to represent a case downstate. It took me time to wrap it up. But I think I am back for good." Adam stated as her secretary served them coffee. At least for the men, it was just fresh juice for her.

That answered the question of why she suddenly lost contact with him. But she was happy to know that he made a lot of difference in the lives of those he had helped.

Now, she was glad he was back. Maybe they could work on several cases together again, just like before. Or a bit later, when she had more free time, she remembered that motherhood would take much of her time.

Chapter 858: Win-win solution

Adam was an entertainer, not just a good lawyer. They talked about his case, a few old college memories, and some things about the future. Then, they were all laughing at life, remembering the good old days.

Dani was glad that Alex had friends like him back in college. She believed he was a good influence on him. Or, maybe it could also be the other way around. Anyway, so far, she thought that Alex had a good deal, having met great friends.

"Anyway, as much as I enjoyed this trip to memory lane. I think you need to go to your actual work." She had felt his phone vibrating silently in his pocket several times as he sat next closely to her. But he had been ignoring it.

She could tell that it was either his secretary calling or Marcus. He had been late numerous times because he always wanted assurance that she was ok. Or sometimes, he came home early to be with her.

It needed to stop before he lost his company because of negligence. Many people were also counting on his fast-growing company. She did not want to be the cause of his downfall. He had worked hard to build his dream, and she would be damn if she would let anything harm it.

“But...” Alex stopped when he saw her face. She meant business. “Fine, but I will be back before you know it.” He finally conceded, standing up but giving her a swift kiss. “It was good to see you, Adam.”

Then, after a few more goodbyes, Alex finally walked out of the door. She loved him, but somebody had to put them in line. They had obligations not only to themselves but also to the people depending on them.

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Not just their families but their employees and everybody whose lives were affected by what they did. She was also thinking of the legacy her father left her and the legacy their children would inherit after them.

“If I had known of your condition, I would have brought you a different gift.” Adam pulled out a gift box from his pocket and handed it to her. “Before you decline it, it is just a thank you for the last case you helped me with.”

She did remember that case. It was a tricky one, but they still managed to win it. She hardly did much for that case. Adam worked hard for it, but she acknowledged that she contributed some to it.

Then, he suddenly left, just saying goodbye with a short explanation. But, of course, Dani understood. They had different paths to trek, and she was happy that, at some point, they had crossed paths.

When she opened the box, it was an exquisite pair of gold earrings with tiny gems. It did not look cheap. Of course, she could not accept such a gift. A free meal would have been enough but not this.

“I am sorry, but I think this is too much. I hardly did anything to earn this.” She shoved the box towards him, not wanting to offend him but unable to take the gift.

“I still believe you earned it after all the help you gave me. But I could not force you to take it.” His brows raised, still trying to convince her, but she shook her head no.

She only accepted presents from her husband. Even before she had met Alex, she had never liked taking gifts from anyone else. She did not need much anyway. She was more than content with whatever she had.

“Give it to your girlfriend.” She suggested as she smiled at his beautiful gesture. She still appreciated he thought of her assistance as valuable to merit a reward.

“Unfortunately, we broke off a long time ago.” He admitted with a frown, but he quickly erased it and smiled. “Anyway, enough of my sorry ass. I came here to ask if you are still willing to continue what we already started.”

It seemed that now that he was back, he wished to continue with his pro bono cases. He was asking if Dani would like to join him in his crusade. Of course, she was excited and ecstatic to be a part of it.

“But I can only do so much.” She pointed at her swollen belly, limited by her health condition. “But I will try to help out any way I can.” That was the best she could offer at the moment.

Suddenly, she remembered her husband’s words. Cut down and not add up to her responsibility. Then, an idea came to her mind. What if she came up with a different solution?

She believed it was worth thinking about and discussing. It could be a solution to both their situation. It was a farfetched idea, but sometimes thinking outside the box was the only way to achieve something.

“I will love any form of help coming from you.” He told her that he understood her condition. But he more than appreciated any help she could provide him.

She finally moved to stand up to return to her desk when she had some difficulty. Adam probably noticed it as he quickly stepped beside her, placing his hands underneath her elbow to assist her.

“Are you alright?” He worriedly asked as he looked down to check on her.

“Yes, just been having some dizzy spells when I make sudden movements.” Suddenly, she felt a little concerned, thinking she should probably listen to her husband and have herself checked.

The last thing she wanted was to have a complication in her pregnancy, not only endangering herself but her baby as well. She did not want anything to happen to her and her baby.

She wanted to see her child be born in this world and take care of her baby until she grew old. An ambitious dream, but it was something she would like to do with her husband beside her.

“Maybe you should take Alex’s advice and rest. Take a vacation.” He told her as he assisted her back to the sofa. “Do you wish me to call a doctor or Alex?” He offered as worried lines showed on his face.

“No, I think I am getting better. But I will Alex to accompany for a check-up tomorrow.” She decided, knowing she was not thinking about herself but her baby.

“Ok. Just take it easy for today.” He reminded her after she settled on her seat behind her desk.

“For now, I hope you will be patient because I have something else I wish to discuss with you.” She asked him as she closed her eyes and rested to stop her world from spinning. “Just give me a minute.”

She believed it would be a solution for everyone, but she needed a few minutes to fix herself. It would be a win-win solution.

Chapter 859: Half of the man

A laugh, followed by slow applause. “You are unquestionably winning the hearts of the business community with your devotion.” A teasing voice came through the doors while he packed up his things after another successful meeting.

He looked at the man who had a smug smile on his lips, and all he could imagine in his mind was to punch him on that pretty face of his. But of course, he could not do that to his partner.

So, he only smiled, continuing with the task of clearing up the conference room to return to his office only to work on his other cases. It had been his pattern since he had messed up again.

Yes! Again and again. He fucked up!

“That is the plan. Isn’t that what we are supposed to do.” Evan answered indifferently, not caring about what his friend thought about his actions. “Do you need anything, David?” He asked as he moved toward the door, stopping just beside him.

He loved and respected his friend. He knew David only wanted what was best for him and help if he could. But he did not know shit what he needed. He sure had no idea how to fix his problem.

“I am worried about you, man.” David finally said it. His friend had been hinting at it for a few weeks, but he chose to ignore him. “It has been months, and you are starting to become a monk.”

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He could not contradict his friend’s words since it was true. At least to some degree. He had avoided joining them by going out. Feeling he deserved to be miserable for making the same mistakes over and over again.

“I am ok. I need to focus on work.” Evan moved to his office with his friend walking beside him. He quickly took his seat behind his desk, not offering his friend a chair since he did not want him to stay.

Every time his mind would stop and think, she was all he could think of, and it had been driving him insane. He wanted to fly toward her and explain himself again, but she did not want to listen.

She begged him to stay as far away from her as possible. She did not want to see him again. Now, he was respecting that wish. He just hoped that he would get over this feeling in time. But at the moment, he felt like he was drowning, unable to save himself.

“Work can only do so much. If you still love her, go out there and win her back.” David stood before his desk, looking down at him. “Don’t sit here and wallow in your sorrow.” Looking like he was ready to beat his ass.

His friend had this look that told him he was disappointed in him, but he did not say it out loud. But he did not have to since he already felt plenty of that for himself.

“I already did that,” Evan answered. “Many times, if you did not remember.” He had grovelled in his knees. He would have kissed her feet if she had allowed him.

He had begged her continuously to forgive him. Or at least listened to his explanation, but she shut her door on him. Ask him to leave and not to show his face ever again.

The funny thing was his grandmother took her side and was never even allowed to tell his side of the story. How could he blame them when he had done nothing but ruin everything?

“Then, do it again.” He walked next to him and tapped him on the shoulder. “Maybe this time, she is ready to hear your side.” His eyes told him to take the risk.

But was that even possible? Could Amelia ever learn to forgive him and give him a chance? He doubted it after all this time of not hearing from her. He even heard that she was dating. Maybe she had moved on from him.

“If you don’t want her anymore, do it for closure.” He suggested. “See and talk to her even for one last time.” Then, his friend strode to the door, leaving him to think about what he had said.

Was he right about her? Should he go back and try again? Would she be ready to listen this time? Honestly, he did not see a possibility he would ever get over her. But there was a chance that she could.

But he could always try to patch up his problem again by braving the possibility that she might reconsider. She might still love him enough to forgive him. It was not yet too late for them.

But if not, maybe David was right about the closure. It was time to put a period on this part of his life and stop hoping for a miracle to happen. He might wait his entire life for it, but he would be more heartbroken.

After a few more minutes of staring into space, he took one look outside his window and decided. “There was only one way to find out.” He sighed heavily, moving towards the door and stopping by his secretary’s desk.

“Cancel all my appointments for today.” He ordered without waiting for her to ask.

He turned around when she acknowledged his orders. Then, he remembered something else he had to do. “Please, arrange for my plane to be ready in thirty minutes.”

Then, he rushed to the elevator and down to his car. He needed at least a few changes of clothes because he was not leaving that place until she at least heard him out. This time, he would not easily give up, just like before.

He admitted to committing a lot of mistakes in his past. He had confessed that he had hurt her, but the rest of the accusations thrown at him was false. He did not do such a thing. It was a lie.

Whoever wanted to ruin their relationship fabricated those evidence, making it look like he perpetrated those things. But that was all bullshit. He would never mean to hurt the woman he loved.

Yes! He loved her. He finally learned to acknowledge that to himself. It was not easy to recognize that particular emotion, but after a long self-searching, he finally realized it was love.

I love her.

He kept repeating it in his head as he flew in the air, looking outside the window of his plane. He could not wait to tell her. To speak the words this time and not just show her. Unfortunately, he was not doing a good job.

“Hello, Grandmama.” Evan finally called her on the plane. He just wanted to make sure that she was aware of his plans.

They had talked several times on the phone in a week, but he never flew to visit her. Her grandmother advised against it. But she had dropped by his place several times to spend time with him.

She believed Amelia was not ready to see him after what he did. But his grandmother had given up on him, telling him that Amelia was too good for him, despite his plea that he had changed.

“Is everything alright?” Angela asked him, hearing a slight tremor in her voice. It was still early for his frequent calls. So she might feel alarmed by his sudden call.

Still, his grandmother loved him despite his shortcomings. So, he had no choice but to respect their wishes and stay away. Give Amelia the space she needed.

He always thought that she would come around, but she never did. She never once bothered to call him. But he was not taking that against her. He was the one at fault here, not her.

“Yes, it is, but I have a meeting there.” He quickly told her the lie he had come up with, not wanting to alarm her. “And, I wish to visit Eida. I heard that she already gave birth.” But that last one was not a lie.

He had been thinking of her since this morning after hearing the news. He owed it to his friend, Lance, to check on her. The least he could do was guarantee that Eida and his child were ok.

But he also promised himself that if things did not work out with Eida, he would run to Lance and tell him everything he knew. It might not be his place to meddle in their affairs, but if Eida or the child was in danger, Lance should know about it.

On the other hand, he could also use that alibi to get close to Amelia. He was desperate to talk to her. He would probably do all the tricks in the book if it had been the only way to see her.

“Oh! That is a bit sudden.” Angela’s voice had a hint of delight in it. As if she was happy that he was coming over.

It had been a while since he had seen her face to face. But he also looked forward to seeing the woman who had raised him. This time, he would make her proud of him.

He would not be half of the man she wished him to be, but the man she could be proud of now and forever.

Chapter 860: A Modern-day King

At long last, he finally regained the full functions of his body. He could now move around without needing a walking stick or assistance from anyone. But it did not mean that he was ok. He did not get better completely.

He was still as dead as the day he had that accident. He believed that his body might have survived, but his soul died that day Eida left him. His heart might still be beating at this minute, but it flatlined, shattered, and never recovered.

“Are you ready for your press conference?” His father knocked on his door, reminding him of his obligation to his family, the crown, and their people.

As if he would forget it when his father continuously reminded him of that fact. He had no problem leading their people to greatness. He had been born and trained to do that.

In truth, it had always been about his duty to the man who gave him life.

Honestly, he believed his father had solely created him for that purpose alone. But what could he do? A child could not choose their fathers.

But what he did not like about it was the fact that he had to marry someone worthy of the crown. At least to their laws and standards. He initially believed that was the reason Eida had run away.

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She thought she was not suitable to become queen of this fucking Kingdom. But, he was proven wrong again when he learned that his father had been right about her all along.

She did not deserve his love and his devotion. He almost gave up everything for a woman who did not earn it. But it did not mean he was not hurting.

He loved her. But she destroyed that love together with his will to live. He knew he would never love again. He would live the rest of his life miserable.

“I am almost ready.” He shouted as he looked at himself in the mirror, shoving the memories away. Except for the few scars on his skin that had not disappeared, no other visible damage on his body would indicate he was in an accident.

The doctors called it a miracle that he had survived with just the scars to remind him of that unfateful day, but he found the marks on his skin as a curse. It was just superficial compared to the damage inside him.

He should have died that night. Instead, he had to live with this pain for all eternity. His memories would continue to haunt him as long as he was alive. His father said it was his second chance, but he disputed that claim.

But one thing he had agreed with his father. If he had to live, he should at least be productive. He could not allow his selfish heart to let down the people he had been serving all his life. They deserved someone to lead them, and he was the most qualified to do it.

“Then, hurry up because it will start in a quarter of an hour.” The Count shouted, but he never attempted to enter his room.

Since he had agreed to his terms, his father had given him space, respecting his boundaries. Probably, as long as they coincided with his demands, his father was willing to allow him some slacks.

But whatever his father had in mind or his intentions, it was not for his good, that was for sure. And undoubtedly not for the people and the Kingdom. It had always been for his goddamn legacy.

“Hi!” A female voice greeted him as soon as he opened the door. He did not need to look at her face to know who she was. “You’re father said that I should get you. The conference is about to start.”

Her sweet voice, her lovely smile, her stunning dress, and the extravagant pieces of jewelry she wore did not fool him. She might be beautiful and intelligent, but she was not the woman he wanted. But she was what the Kingdom required.

She would be a good candidate for the position of queen. She had checked all the boxes in the list of their tradition. According to the law that ruled their land since the beginning of their reign, she would do well to be his queen.

But as his wife, that was a different matter. He would never love her. She would only be his partner on the papers. But still, he had to acknowledge her as his wife, and she had to bear his children, that would be the next heir to their Kingdom.

“You did not need to come here. I know my fucking obligation, and I sure know how to look at the time.” He did not like that they were not yet even married. She was already micro-managing him. He did not like it one bit.

His father knew how to choose another puppet he could manipulate with a short string. She might have come from a wealthy family with slight royal blood and a bright career, but she was just another business transaction.

Her father sold her to this marriage for a successful merger of two families. Correction! The merging of two businesses and a Kingdom. It was nothing new. That was how the kingdoms had survived for centuries.

He had hoped that the new world had erased those non-sense traditions, but it seemed it was still very much alive until now. And he had not escaped its grasp. He only hoped that he would be the last.

His child would never have to bear this responsibility placed upon his shoulders, to sacrifice love, and happiness for the sake of a tradition. He would make sure of this once he had become King.

“I just thought that you might need some help. And it would be nice if we would arrive at the conference together.” She stood her ground, unfazed at how he had shut her down and had unfairly treated her.

He was mad at the world, not her. So, he did not need to take it on her. However, he could not show her kindness because that would give her hope that their marriage could become something more.

Still, she appeared to be a fighter. Lance would give her that. But other than that, he could only respect her as his soon-to-be wife, nothing more. If she expected something more from this marriage, she would be disappointed.

As he said, he was already dead. He was only here because his body refused to leave this world just yet. Maybe it was punishment for what he did in his past life because he could not think of why he had to go through this shit life.

“Fine. Let us go.” He walked past her along the hallway towards the direction of the stairs, not caring if she had to walk by herself. She managed to reach her room on her own. She could still do that on the way downstairs.

Still, she caught up with him, snaking her arm around his, making it appear like they were a lovely couple. He guessed he had no choice but to play the part as they climbed down the stairs with her by his side.

“Is this necessary?” He looked down at their entwined arms as they descended to the grand hall of the palace.

He knew it was needed if they would act like a loving couple for the people. But they had not reached the conference room. There was no need to pretend yet.

“Lance, I know you don’t like me, but we still have to do this properly.” She whispered in his ear as she leaned closer to him. “So, act like the loving fiancée and smile because you don’t know who is watching us.”

Soon, he was standing before the cameras, facing the media for his interview as the new heir to the throne. With him was the wife his father had chosen, the woman who would share his life and be his queen.

Then, her face brightened in front of the light and cameras, as if she belonged on the movie screen. She was indeed beautiful and charismatic. She would fit perfectly into the role, just like the Count wanted.

But that was all she was. All that she would ever be.

“Then, let’s get this fucking circus on the road.” Because to him, this was all a fucking show that should entertain the masses.

Still, he had no idea if he was the ringmaster, controlling the show, or the clown, providing the laughter. But he would be he was the latter. It was not what he wanted for his life, but he still ended up in this situation.

The only thing that had him going was the people he hoped he could help. As the new King, he would have the power to change things around here. He just had to take his time until he had his control back in his hands.

“Lead the way. I will follow your lead.” His future wife responded with a confident smile.

She looked at him, then his father, who was not far from them. His father wore a satisfied smile, telling him he was feeling victorious today. He would let him have this one.

For now, he would play this game that his father had started. Then, all of this would be all his to rule as he pleased. His heart and soul might have died, but his mind was still functional. He could still do good for his people.

He could still be the King they needed at this time and age, a modern-day King.