

Royal Contract 881

Chapter 881: An uphill battle

"Oh my!" It was terrible. Her heart broke for her friend upon hearing what happened.

She forced Alex last night to take her to the hospital to check on her friend as soon as they had received the awful news. She wanted to be there for Jacky, just like her friend had always been there when she needed to cry on her friend's shoulder.

But Jacky was sedated after the miscarriage. Her doctor had advised her to go home and rest before returning in the morning. Now, she was back, but her friend was awake, but she would not see her.

"How is she doing?" Dani quickly stood from her seat in the waiting room. She wanted to see her bestfriend, but she declined to have any visitors. The only person she allowed in her room was her husband and no one else.

Jacky had barricaded herself in her room, refusing anyone who would like to see her. She could understand that her friend was depressed after what she had gone through.

She could sympathize with her friend, thinking that if that happened to her, she might feel the same way. However, she was not going to give up on her, especially when Jacky needed her the most.

Still, she would not claim that she had an idea of what Jacky was going through. Honestly, she might not know half of what she might be feeling after losing a child.

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She doubted it would be the same as losing a parent, who she had the chance to love and spend time with, a father that had lived a fulfilling life. Compared to a child that was not even born yet.

"She is not taking it well," Marcus responded with a beaten look like he had just walked out of the fight of his life and lost.

He could not deny that he was hurting too. He had lost his child, just like she did. But he believed she needed him more now than ever to be strong for the two of them. He could not break down and cry.

His wife had always been strong, never been asking much from him or anybody. It was a rare occasion that she cried for help, and this was it. She might not say it in words, but he knew he would need to carry them through this.

"What about you? How are you?" Alex concernedly asked his friend. He could not imagine the pain the couple was going through.

Without a doubt, Jacky was devastated by this accident, but he believed Marcus must be distraught just as well. No parent could readily accept the loss of a child.

He could only offer his condolences, unable to put himself in their shoes. He would never understand how they felt until he had experienced the same situation. Something he hoped would never happen to him and his wife.

"I wish I came home early. I wish I had never called." Marcus felt like it was also his fault. "I could have come to her rescue if only I declined the last meeting."

He could not help but blame himself. It was not Jacky's fault that she had an accident. But if he had arrived early, the accident might not have happened. Or he could have taken her to the hospital sooner.

But instead, because of his damn call, she had to rush to answer him and slip. Then, she had to struggle and crawl to get to her phone to dial and call for help.

His heart burst into pieces as she recounted her experience to him. It was like a nightmare not only for her but also for him. She was alone when the paramedics came, unconscious, losing blood and almost her life.

Unfortunately, the doctors could only save her life, but the baby was gone by the time she reached the hospital. He knew he had to be thankful that she survived, but how could he be happy when his child did not?

"Please, stop blaming yourself. Nobody wanted this to happen. Not you or Jacky." Dani wished to assure their friend that it was not on him. He could not put this tragic accident on his shoulder. It was nobody's fault.

She placed her arms around Marcus, providing him comfort. He was not just a friend but a family to her. And it hurt to see him crumbling to pieces because of something that nobody wanted to happen.

It was not fair that those who deserved to have kids had to lose a child. Then, those blessed with one would take them for granted, like Marcus and Jacky, who grew up lacking love from their parents.

But she knew they would have been great parents because they had so much to give despite being deprived of love when they were a child themselves.

"Thanks, guys, but I think you should go home and rest." Marcus looked at her, then down on her tummy, thinking of the little kid growing inside his friend.

He had not been aware that he wanted a kid this much until he had already lost his first one. He always thought that he was not ready for such a responsibility. But now, he hoped it did not happen to their child.

He could only wish his child had been born so he could have held his baby in his arms. He could have seen him grow, taught him to ride a bike, and shot hoops with him.

Yeah! He wanted a boy, but a girl would also do great. But it was not happening, not anytime soon. He could only hope he and Jacky could recover from this painful incident.

"Let us know if you need anything." Alex tapped him on the shoulder, knowing there was nothing else he could do for his friend at that moment. "And take some break off work. Take as much time as you need. Be there for Jacky."

He doubted that what their friends would be going through would be easy. The pain, guilt, and loss would probably eat at them and test their faith, marriage, relationship, and everything they believe in, even their love.

They could only overcome this by helping and being there for each other.

As their friends, they just hoped Marcus and Jacky would surpass this horrific hurdle in their life and come out of it fully recovered and stronger than ever before.

But first, it would challenge their strength and take advantage of their weakness. It would be one heck of a struggle and an uphill battle.

Chapter 882: A decent and honest man

Haley immediately rushed to the hospital after hearing what happened to Jacky and his child. She was concerned about what her brother was going through, knowing that losing a child could not be easy.

Her father might not have acknowledged him as a Rosley, but they shared the same blood, making them family. Marcus would always be her brother, no matter what her father said.

Unfortunately, just like Alex and Dani, she did not get a chance to see Jacky, but at least she consoled her brother, even if it was just a brief moment. She promised to visit again once Jacky was up for company.

"Join me." He called her over to him as she entered his office, letting her sit on his lap behind his desk. "Move my next appointment." He quickly informed his secretary and asked not to be disturbed as she closed his door.

He was not expecting she would drop by, but he knew he could not turn her away. She looked upset, but he had no idea why. He remembered when he left her apartment that morning, Haley was still peacefully sleeping.

A terrible thing must have happened after he had left to cause her distress. The look on her face told him it might be a delicate matter. He could tell that she had been crying.

"I am sorry for dropping by your office unannounced. I know you are busy." Haley slightly hesitated, leaning still in his arms. "But I just don't know where to go." She continued, looking quite distraught.

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She knew she could not go to her father. Although his father loved her, he did not share her opinion that Marcus was family. Of course, he would not care if he just lost a grandson.

She knew she also could not go to Dani because, at the moment, she was avoiding her because of Gerald. She still could not fathom why Dani asked her to stay away from him when she would not give her enough reason.

Therefore, she had no other recourse but to go crying on her boyfriend's shoulder about the unfortunate accident that her family was going through. She recounted to him what happened, releasing all her pent-up emotions while in his arms.

"I am sure Jacky would recover from this." Gerald pulled her to his side, comforting her as he listened to her story. "I heard she is a very strong-willed woman."

He guessed it was part of his obligation as her boyfriend to do such mundane tasks as sitting by her side during times of her distress. It was not something he would willingly do since he had never been in a relationship before, real or pretend.

Nonetheless, it seemed he had no choice but to act as the doting boyfriend. Bizarrely, it was not that bad. He was doing well for someone who never allowed anyone to get close to him.

At the same time, he genuinely felt concerned about her wellbeing. As if he had this urge to protect her and make her smile. He had never felt like this with anyone before, not even to Dani.

"I hope my brother too. He could act tough, but he is just a big softie." Haley confided with him, feeling more comfortable around him.

The more she spent time with him, the more she fell deeper into the relationship. It was like she was drowning, unable to breathe when they were apart. He had become her lifeline.

She knew it seemed too fast, the way her relationship with him was moving. They were only going out for a few months, but she had no more doubts he was the one for her. She could not live without him.

She believed she had found her soulmate.

He was it.

"I am sure that he would be just fine." Gerald pulled her closer to him as they sat on his chair.

"Remember that everything happens for a reason. Eventually, your brother and his wife would come out of this much better and wiser."

He was not great at family counseling. But that was what he usually told his clients. He had no idea if it worked, but he believed it served its purpose.

However, he knew how to deal with difficult situations. He might not have had a great childhood background, but his training included manipulating people to follow and get what he wanted.

Nevertheless, his mind was swirling at the implication of this recent event. He never considered tragedies as a loss but something to gain. If taken positively, he believed it could open doors for an opportunity.

But it would be something to explore later.

At the moment, he had to focus on his girlfriend and attend to her needs. He might not be great in words when it came to tragedies, but he had his ways of handling such a situation.

"Haley, look at me." He placed his palms on the sides of her cheeks and forced her to look deeply into his eyes. "It is terrible what happened, but you need to show Marcus and Jacky that it is not the end of the world."

"I know you are right. It just breaks my heart to see Marcus and Jacky experiencing such pain." She could not understand why she was deeply affected by the tragedy. It was as if she was the one who had lost a child.

Maybe it was because she had seen so much pain and hardship with the foundations she had aided. She could easily empathize with their pain. But she doubted that she had been through such a tragic situation.

She would admit to living a well-sheltered life. Her father had assured her protection from all the people who would want to harm her. She understood his overprotectiveness, being his only daughter.

Although it could be suffocating, his father's meddling had saved her from countless possible dangers. That included the many suitors who tried to win her heart, only to find out they were only after her money.

But Gerald was different. Even her father seemed to warm up to him, judging from the other night. She believed she had found the only man that did not like to take advantage of her, a decent and honest man.

Chapter 883: Without a doubt

She woke up to a loud screaming outside her door. She quickly opened her eyes, slid out of her bed, grabbed her robe, and ran to the door. She already imagined terrible things that could have happened to the baby.

But when she opened her door, she was confused as flowers littered the floor just outside her room. It was like a flower shop just sprung inside their apartment.

"What is happening?" She looked confused, raising her eyebrows at the girl holding a pot of flowers in her hands.

The unknown girl wearing a flowery uniform carefully placed what she held in her hands on the small space on the floor before standing up again to face her.

But before the girl could answer, another louder voice spoke, breaking the silence. "Someone has sent you all these beautiful flowers. And there are more." Eida walked towards her, carrying Luisa in her arms.

"Good morning, Luisa." Amelia greeted their little princess, kissing her dainty fingers as she held them in her hand.

She would have peppered her with kisses on her chubby cheeks if she had the chance to at least brush her teeth, wash her face and comb her hair. However, the commotion had her running out the door.

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Two more men entered the room, carrying vases in each arm. All she could do was wonder what that man was thinking, sending this many flowers. Did he assume this stunt would make her change her mind that easily?

"Who do you think sent you this?" Eida asked, still admiring the varieties of flowers decorating their living room. "Is it a new admirer?" She asked, blinking her eyes to tease her.

Amelia wondered if her friend was clueless about the sender or just pretending to know nothing. But from the glint in her eyes, she doubted that Eida was oblivious of his identity.

In her case, she might already have an idea, remembering the last time she had seen him. Besides, she could not think of any other man who would give her this kind of attention.

"I don't know." Amelia pretended to have no idea, picking up a bunch of flowers nearby. They were pink lilacs that were as beautiful as their little angel.

She took one piece and cut the stem, putting the small flower, looking like a four-leaf clover, on top of the baby's cloth. "You are like this flower, so beautiful and innocent."

She knew, just like the flower and what it symbolized, that their little angel would be someone full of life and curiosity about the world. She could also see that she would be as stubborn as her mother and father but just as determined.

She could only hope that this flower would also bring her luck because life was hard enough without it. Their little angel might need all the help she could get, especially when she was already a victim of fate at her very young age.

"That is such a nice thing to say." Eida felt touched by Amelia's gesture. And it seemed that Luisa also loved it as her lips went wide like they formed a smile. "You see, Luisa loved it too."

Amelia was right about her daughter. Luisa was just an innocent victim of their fate. As much as Eida did not want her to be part of her tragic fate, she had no other options. Luisa was stuck with her whether she liked it or not.

Still, Eida promised to do everything she could to give her daughter the life she deserved. At least in her best capacity. She knew she would not become a princess under her care. But she would fill her life with love.

"I see the card." Eida took it from the delivery service and thanked them. "Here." She handed the card to her friend, excited to see if her guess was correct.

Amelia took the card, but instead of opening it, she pushed it inside the pocket of her robe, appearing not interested to read the content. Then, she kissed Luisa on her covered foot before turning and returning to her room.

"That is not fair. You should read the card." Eida complained as she closed the door on her friend.

Then, she leaned on the door, feeling her heart beating wildly inside her chest. It was hard to pretend that she did not care when all she could think about was screaming at the top of her lungs.

Of course, she found the gesture romantic. She had dreamt of this scene a thousand times. Now that it was real, she still could not believe it. It was like if she opened the door again, all the flowers would vanish, and she would wake up.

"We are having breakfast in the kitchen. Join us when you are finally over fantasizing about your secret admirer." Eida shouted by the door before she heard her footsteps slowly move away.

Finally, she pulled the card out of her pocket and slowly peeked at its content. It was written beautifully in familiar handwriting, unlike a flower shop's typical card.

She could tell he had written the note on the card, noticing the strokes he liked to use in his penmanship. It was a sweet gesture that he must have personally picked the flowers and not just asked his secretary to do it for him.

"I am not fantasizing about him." She quickly responded, yelling back by the door before she moved to her bed to reread the words on the piece of paper.

AMELIA...

YOU SAID YOU WOULD LIKE ANY FLOWERS I SEND YOU, SO I DECIDED TO SEND ALL THE VARIETIES I CAN FIND. AND I WILL LOOK FOR MORE IF IT WILL CONVINCE YOU TO HAVE DINNER WITH ME THIS WEEKEND.

EVAN.

She could see that he had made an effort to do this. But was that enough to convince her that he had changed and deserved her second chance? But truthfully, she could not help the excitement coursing through her spine about the thought of seeing him again.

Of course, she would like to see him, but he had to earn her trust the hard way. If he would remain persistent and never give up, maybe this time, he might be telling her the truth. She could finally believe and trust him again, without a doubt.

Chapter 884: The future leaders

He excitedly rushed his way to the hospital when he received the call. It was one of the best news he had heard these past weeks. It was the best gift a man in his statute could ever receive.

After all, he was a man who almost had everything. At his age, he did not have much or desire more, not wealth or fame. The only thing that concerned him now was his family, especially his grandson and his newborn granddaughter.

He tapped his finger on the transparent window of the nursery room, trying to catch the attention of the adorable baby behind the glass partition. "Hello, Sweetheart! My little angel." The Count whispered, smiling and admiring his beautiful granddaughter.

After a while, he felt a presence standing behind him. Then, the other man stepped forward, moving beside him. He could see in the reflection on the glass the identity of his unexpected visitor but was not surprised to see him.

Finally, the man broke the silence. "Congratulations seems to be in order, my friend." Count Wellington smiled at his friend and turned to him.

"Isn't she beautiful?" Count Julius proudly told his friend, showing his new pride and joy, observing his friend's reaction to his granddaughter. His friend seemed genuinely happy, with no trace that the baby reminded him of something or someone.

Suddenly, he wondered if his friend even had an idea that he was now also a grandfather. Count Julius had recently received news that Eida had also given birth to a beautiful girl, but he had kept that information to himself.

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He believed it was not his place to meddle in his friend's affair. Count Thomas had declared the mother and daughter persona non grata in his family and society. Therefore, there was nothing he could do about that.

However, he would keep an eye on the mother and daughter, assuring their safety and protection. After all, the child was still royalty. Despite being stripped of her right even before she was born, the little angel still carried royal blood. At least in his book.

"I am sure your granddaughter would be a great addition to the royal line." Count Thomas said in his clipped voice, thinking that a male heir was still better than a girl.

If only his grandchild had been a boy, he would have asked that lowlife reporter to give him the child. But unfortunately, he had learned that the baby she carried was a girl.

Yes, he had them followed and investigated. After learning from the ultrasound that the baby turned out to be a girl, he lost interest in monitoring them.

He had no use for a granddaughter. A princess would have no value to the Kingdom, unlike if he had a grandson. He was glad he had been rid of them before his son learned the truth.

Now, everything was going as he had planned. He did not want anything to ruin it, especially not that woman and her baby.

Luckily, not many knew about Eida and the baby. He had made sure that they would not be talking about this secret. They had sworn to carry it to their grave when they had accepted their generous payments.

"I am sure that one day, you will also be blessed with your grandkids once Lance and Camille are married." Count Julius clapped his friend on the shoulder as he invited him for lunch.

One more time, he looked at his grandchild, welcoming her as the new member of his family. "I love you, my Princess Althea." He uttered by the window, blowing her a kiss as he watched the nurse take her away.

After a few minutes, he walked with his friend towards the exit, then traveled to the nearby restaurant where they could continue their conversation.

He knew that his friend did not just come to see his grandchild. He had something in mind that he wanted to discuss with him. He was not mistaken as he kept asking about the different rules in succession.

He felt it was too early to discuss the possible heirs to the throne, but he did not mind. He also had been thinking that their laws needed some modifications.

Modern times rendered many of their traditions and rituals obsolete. Maybe it was time for someone to review it and revise it. It was something he planned to confer with the new King once he was seated on the throne.

"Where have you been?" Count Julius was back at his home, sifting through his documents when he heard the door of his private office opened and closed. The little boy walked toward him, demanding answers.

"Hello, Liam." He waited for the boy to stand before him before he continued. "I went to see your little sister." Then, he watched his eyes light up as if it was the best news he had heard, like the first time he rode his bike or received a gift on Christmas eve.

"You did. How is my sister?" Liam impatiently asked as he moved closer to him, tugging his arms for some answers. "I wish I could have seen her too." He uttered disappointedly as his face dropped, his lips pout, like a child about to throw a tantrum.

"Althea is beautiful. But she is still being monitored by the doctors today." He tried to explain to his grandchild.

But how could he blame the boy when no one seemed to care for his grandson except him? His daughter-in-law could not give a damn about her kids while his son was probably in a casino, gambling away his remaining inheritance.

"When is she coming home?" Liam asked, thinking he would finally have someone else to love besides his grandfather. He could not wait to have someone to play with and care for, and hopefully, someone else who would love him.

"Why don't I just bring you to the hospital tomorrow so you can see her?" The Count suggested, seeing his eyes light up in excitement.

"I like that. I want to see my sister." His grandson happily jumped before him.

There was nothing else he could do for his son, but he had not lost hope with his grandkids. He would do all he could to raise them well, hoping they would not end up like his son.

Someday, they would become the future of this house, the ones to carry their name to its former glory. He would make them the future leaders of their Kingdom.

Chapter 885: Famous superstar

"Damnit!" "Fuck!" Two different voices echoed in the hallway as two bodies collided. Then, the documents they individually carried flew in the air, landing on the white marbled floor.

"You should watch where you are going." The woman hissed angrily at him, blaming him for the incident.

"Excuse me, but you are the one who bumped into me." He argued, believing it was not his fault as he scooped on his knees to pick up his files.

He might have been rushing to get to the elevator, but she suddenly came out of nowhere, probably looking elsewhere instead at her path. She was probably expecting people to step aside because she was about to pass by, but he did not have enough time.

"Don't try to pin this on me. You should know your manners." She also bent down to retrieve the papers scattered on the floor, snatching a few pieces away from his hand. "Those are mine." Pulling them harder when he would not easily let them go.

"I was only trying to help. But suit yourself." He responded, feeling insulted for trying to diffuse the situation.

Of course, everybody could guess what came next with her when he finally let go of the papers. She ended up sprawled on the floor. It was not funny, but he could not help it. She got on his nerves.

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"You're a jerk." She countered as she collected herself and her files and stood up, fixing her dress. "Don't you know who I am?" She angrily said but suddenly bit her lip, realizing her mistake. "Never mind."

"Anyway, I am just wasting my time talking to you." Snobbishly looking at him from head to toe, knowing that no good was coming from this unfortunate encounter.

He had already ruined her morning, and she had no time to debate with him. She was already late for a meeting, and her documents were all messed up.

Besides, she was starting to attract little attention from the crowd. At least, the incident. The last thing she needed was media attention. Somebody was bound to notice who she was. And that would not be good.

"Me? A jerk?" He questioned incredulously, finding her accusation hilarious because he was pretty sure she was the one who bumped into him. "But you are right. Talking to you is a waste of time." He shouted to the woman retreating away as he grabbed the last paper on the floor.

His plan to apologize had just flown out the window when she acted rude and all high and mighty. He did notice how beautiful she was, but he had no time for a spoiled rich girl, judging from her clothes and well-manicured fingers.

Who was she, acting like a brat? Did she own the fucking building? But, he did not care to find out. All he could say was good riddance.

Besides, he was already late for a deposition as he rushed to his appointment. Luckily, he was able to salvage the meeting and managed to reschedule for a continuance.

However, that was not the worst part of his day as he realized in the middle of his argument that he had lost an important file. It was not in his file, but he remembered checking it earlier.

He could only conclude that she must have taken it by mistake. He had to find that woman to retrieve the file before she threw it in the dumpster out of spite.

But. "Fuck!" How?

Quickly, he went to one of his connections from the security of the building, asking for assistance. It helped that several of them owe him a favor or two.

He did not come from money, but he had worked hard to get to where he was today. So, he had no time for people who thought of themselves as someone privileged because they were born with a silver spoon.

“So, Adam, who are we looking for?” It seemed that the security was busy in the lobby, that nobody saw their incident in the inner hallway.

The man in front of the security panel started scanning his specified time frame, searching for the incident a few hours earlier. All he needed was a name, then the rest, he would figure out later.

“Here. Found it.” The tech guy pulled the screen into a wider frame, watching the scene, and eventually started chuckling.

“That’s her.” He pointed at the screen as they reviewed the footage. “I need her name. And stop laughing. It is a life and death matter.” He was baffled at how these two clowns were enjoying the clip at his expense.

The two securities with him looked at each other and laughed some more. “Seriously, you don’t know that woman?” His security guy tapped him on the shoulder as if he could not believe it. “What world are you living in, man?”

“What? Who is she?” It seemed that his friends knew something that he did not. He was the educated one in this trio, but he had no doubt he looked like the idiot in this case.

“Really? You don’t recognize her at all.” The other security asked him, tapping his fingers on the keyboard. “What again do you need from her?” Now, he looked suspicious.

“Should I?” Now, he rummaged his brain, trying to remember meeting someone like her from somewhere. “As I said, he accidentally took some papers that belonged to me.”

He watched the scene again, noticing his file mixed with hers. “See.” He pointed to his friends to disperse their suspicion. But who was this girl they were trying to protect anyway?

“Fine.” His friend finally conceded. “If I did not owe you a favor. I will not tell you her name. I might lose my job because of you.” He cleared the screen and returned it to the regular size.

Then, he turned around to face him. “Swear that you did not get this from me.” When he nodded, he continued. “That is Sir David’s younger sister. The famous actress, Serena Anderson.”

“Now, do you know her?” The other security asked him.

He only nodded, feeling foolish about himself. Honestly, he had heard the name, but he was not a movie buff. He could not care less about famous people unless they ended up in his cases.

Then, of course, he knew that his friend, David, had a sister, but he did not hang out much with them back in college since he studied on a scholarship program. So, he did not exactly have the chance to meet her.

Now, what? How could he find this famous superstar?

Chapter 886: A pack of ice

She did own the building. Damn! At least her father did.

Adam looked up at the tall building before him. It was not the same as the one he was in earlier, but it was as imposing and luxurious, judging by its size and design. And their family also owned this one.

Serena Anderson was a famous actress and sister of his friend, David. How could he miss that? But he was a busy man with many responsibilities, and taking note of who was famous was not his priority.

Anyway, he was only here to take his file and nothing more. It was easy to track the actress down. All he had to do was call his friend, David and explain his situation, which was slightly awkward.

“Good luck with my sister,” David told him afterward, seeing the security video of their unfortunate encounter. “From what I saw, she will not make it easy for you.”

Then, he gave him the address of her residence where he might find her. But David could not guarantee if she would be home because she moved a lot from one place to another.

His friend offered to deal with his sister, but he declined. It was his mess. He needed to clean this up.

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At that moment, he stood in the reception area, hoping to check if she was home. But the receptionist would not entertain him without an invitation from the actress.

Fortunately, he had a few friends working in this building as well. A few phone calls later, he was on his way to her apartment floor. He immediately knocked on her apartment door, but it swung slightly ajar.

“Get out!” He heard a feminine voice shout inside. Then, a masculine voice responded as if he was consoling her. He could not hear much from the doorway, so he could not conclude what he heard.

He tried to peek through the door but barely saw anything. He did not intend to eavesdrop on other people’s affairs, but that girl could be in trouble.

Although, he also thought it could also be nothing. Barging inside without probable cause would be trespassing unless he had reason to believe the girl required help.

“I am sorry...” Adam heard a few words coming from the man. Then, she said something, but he hardly made out a word.

Then, in the small slit on the door, he saw that the man had her in his arms, kissing her, and it appeared she liked it. There went his detective skills. It was probably just some lover’s quarrel.

Anyway, he should probably come back later. It did not seem appropriate for him to be standing outside the door while they were making out. It would look creepy and stalkerish.

He had barely stepped away from the door when he heard her again. “Stop!” She did not shout this time, but it was loud and clear enough as it reached his ears. “I want you to stop and get out of my life for good.” She repeated, louder this time.

This time, he heard the distress in her voice. He looked again at the opening and saw her struggling in his arms. “You don’t know what you are saying. You are just angry.” The guy said arrogantly at her.

"You know you can't live without me. That is why you keep coming back." The man hissed at her. This time, Adam could not keep his hands to himself as he pushed the door and barged inside the room.

He witnessed the man grabbing her by her golden hair when she tried to get out of his grip. Then he slapped her hard, right across the cheeks, for resisting his advances. The famous actress landed on the couch with a thud.

"Hey!" Adam shouted, getting the man's attention, but before the other guy could look at him, he grabbed him by the collar of his neck and pulled him away from her, slamming him on the other side of the room.

Of course, he let one of his fist land on his face before finally letting him go. He could not allow what he did to her to get away without any consequence. He was lucky that he could still control himself.

Although he did not condone violence, he could not stop himself from retaliating. He hated seeing men taking advantage of a woman because they thought they were stronger. That was just wrong in his book.

The other guy was big, but he was not small either. "Serena already asked you to leave." The other man was surprised by his sudden appearance in the scene, but he quickly recovered.

"And who are you?" The man faced him, ready to punch him in the face, but he dodged his attack, pushing him away this time.

"It is none of your business who I am. But you have no right to hurt anyone." Adam fisted his hand on his side, trying his best not to beat the crap out of this idiot.

The man quickly stood up again but did not bother to come closer. "What are you even doing in my girlfriend's apartment?" He asked as if telling him that he had no right to interfere in their business.

Adam stood between him and the actress, protecting her from the so-called boyfriend. "From what I heard, she just ended your relationship. So, you are free to leave." He commented, pointing to the door.

"Serena, who is this clown? Do you even know this guy?" The man shouted at him as he questioned the woman behind him. "If you know what is good for you, you will mind your own business." He continued throwing threats at him.

"Elliot, just leave." She finally stood behind her unknown savior, hoping her ex would get the message. "I don't want to see you ever again."

She wrapped her arms around the stranger's body. "I am seeing him now."

She hoped her act would finally convince her ex to leave and never come back. It was her fault for letting scumbags like this man into her life. She should have known better to pick better men and learned from her past.

"You are picking this nobody over me." Elliot laughed as it echoed in the room. "You're more fucking crazy than I thought." He picked up his coat that was lying on the couch. "Don't come back to me crying." Then, he marched out the door.

She could only hope it was for good.

When the door closed with a bang, she quickly pulled away from the stranger in her apartment. She did not exactly have a good look at his face. But when she did, she could tell it looked familiar.

But she was still shaking from the experience, and her face was still hurting from the impact. Could she, at least, get a few deep breaths and a pack of ice first?

Chapter 887: The princess with long, golden hair

Damn!

When would she ever learn her lesson? Serena thought to herself as she slumped on her living room couch, closing her eyes to get her bearing straight. She gently touched her cheek, which was still throbbing in pain.

She should sue that dumbass for assault and battery charges, but that would lead to another scandal she did not need. Her career had just taken a hit from her previous relationship, and being on the front page again with another disastrous affair would not help her back in the industry.

Then, her eyes caught the stranger in her peripheral vision, staring at her. "Thanks, but he is long gone by now. There is the door." Serena pointed to the exit of her apartment, hoping the man would take a hint and leave her alone.

But Adam ignored what she said and did not walk towards the door. Instead, he strode to the other side of her apartment. She watched him disappear into her kitchen, wondering what he was doing.

"Who are you again?" She asked when he returned from her kitchen with a frozen vegetable pack in his hand and a hand towel.

She did not have a good look at him while the incident was ongoing. But now, she wondered if she had seen him before. Should she worry about him, thinking he was still a stranger?

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Honestly, she did not sense him as a threat in her life. He did save her from another disastrous relationship. If he did not arrive on time, she might be in a worse condition.

"Put this first on your cheeks." Adam handed her the cold processed food since he did not see any ice in her freezer that she could use. "Then, we can discuss why I am here." He sat on the lone chair on the other far side.

He did not want her to feel that he was another threat in her life. She already had enough of that in one day. But it seemed she still had not recognized him from earlier as she sat there staring at him.

On the other hand, he could already see the pink finger imprints on her cheeks. He could tell it would badly bruise if she did not put those ice on it. He knew it was not her place to meddle with her affairs, but he could not help himself.

"You can press charges against that man." He reminded her as the image of her boyfriend hitting her still made his blood boil in anger.

Suddenly, he wished he had beaten the hell out of her boyfriend, taught that son of a bitch a lesson he would never forget. No one deserved to become a human punching bag.

Anyway, he had no business meddling with her affairs. He had already done enough. He was here for one reason, which was to retrieve his files. Now, that was what he should do.

"Wait! I remember who you are." Her face lit up in recognition as she pressed the cold pack on her cheeks. "You are the jerk from this morning." Her eyes narrowed at his face. Then, she snapped her finger as if she had solved the mystery of the universe.

Now, she remembered him. He was the man who bumped into her and refused to apologize. She had no doubt, remembering those eyes and that unruly hair. It was him.

But what was he doing in this building? Was he visiting someone on this floor? Then again, what was he doing in her apartment? Was he here by coincidence, or was he stalking her?

"I think we can drop the name calling. After all, I save your ass." Adam reminded her. "Anyway, I am Adam Mason and a friend of David." He did not bother to offer his hand as he maintained his distance. "And I know you are wondering what I am doing here."

He could already see the distrust in her eyes, probably realizing that even if he had come to her rescue, he was still a stranger. And someone she had an unsavory encounter with earlier.

"Fine, but only because you saved me." She replied, but she still kept her guard up. "What are you doing in my apartment?" She had to determine whether he was up to no good.

She did ask him to leave, but he was still sitting on her couch. As if he was waiting for something. However, unlike any of her stalkers, he seemed to be different. Honestly, she was more curious than afraid of him.

"I am sorry to come here unannounced. But I am here because of what happened earlier." He explained that he had tried to call her, but she was not picking up her phone.

Then, he told her about the papers that she accidentally took. He asked if he could get it back because those documents were important in his ongoing case. It would jeopardize a man's life if he did not get those evidence back.

"I am sorry if I was unable to answer your call." She pointed to the corner where her phone lay in pieces. It was the first casualty of war from the earlier incident.

"Regarding your file, I don't have it here, but I will ask my assistant to bring it to you first thing in the morning." She felt slightly relieved to know that he came in peace. "If that is all, you know your way out."

Honestly, she could not handle another issue today. It had been too much already. All she wanted to do now was lay on her bed and sleep. Then, deal with everything else the next day.

For now, she sat on the sofa, closed her eyes, and let the ice ease her woes. She did not care anymore because her life sucked. Her life was not perfect at all.

“Does your brother know about this?” Suddenly, he could not help but worry about her. She looked so defeated compared to her earlier high and mighty attitude. It looked like all her life had been sucked out of her.

He knew he should leave, but he knew that she needed therapy and a support system if she would get out of an abusive relationship. She could not do it alone, or she would keep ending back right where she started.

“No, and I plan to keep it that way.” It was a direct way of saying he should butt out of her business.

“I strongly advise that you tell your brother about this.” He still insisted as he looked at her. “He could help you.”

“Hey, Mister. Thank you for getting rid of that scumbag. Now, if you don’t mind, can you leave my apartment before I call security and have them drag you out.” Serena irritatedly told him.

She appreciated his help. Granting that he was her brother’s friend, still, it did not give him the right to meddle with her affair. She did not need a lecture from him.

“Ok. I am leaving. It is still nice to meet you, Ms. Anderson.” He walked out of the room without looking back.

He knew not to push when the victim was resistant. But he hoped she would change her mind and seek help about her situation. But damn, he wished there was more he could do.

However, it was out of his hands as he looked back at the building behind him, where a princess cried herself to sleep, locked in her tower. She was the princess with long, golden hair that he could not save from herself.

Chapter 888: Alone and miserable

“Whaaaahhh!” The disturbing sound started as a low cry.

Eida ignored it as if it was just a dream. She turned away from the sound and deep her head back on the pillows, hoping to return to her deep slumber. She was exhausted.

But the sound turned a notch higher. It was as if someone had increased the volume, snapping her out of her daze. When she looked at her side table, she realized that the baby monitor was the source of the unwanted commotion.

Immediately, she jumped out of bed and rushed out of her room. With eyes still droopy like a zombie, she made her way to the next room, which they had converted into a nursery room.

“Whaaaahhh!” Her little angel made her protest known as she cried louder this time. She quickly grabbed her baby and carried her in her arms, hoping her warmth would be enough to soothe her woes.

However, she continued to cry as if that was not what she wanted. The hard part about tending to a baby, she could not understand what she wanted. Her baby could not voice out what she needed. So, she had to guess.

Somewhat, she realized that pregnancy for nine months and giving birth was a piece of cake. But being a mother was a different matter. Assuring the baby was always safe and providing for their needs was more difficult than she had ever imagined.

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It was tremendously more difficult than having a full-time job.

“What is wrong, my sweetheart?” She pulled her closer to her heart as she started moving around, but it did not make any difference. “Come on, did you miss mommy already?”

Eventually, she sang and danced around the room. It worked but only for a few seconds. Then, her sweet baby shrieked like an alarm clock, ready to wake up the entire house.

“Can you just give mommy a break?” Now, it was her turn as she whined like a baby as she looked at her little angel.

Lack of sleep could also make people cranky. Mothers were no exception. They could only do so much. At that moment, she was hanging by a thin thread, ready to snap.

But, of course, that was not an option as she took a deep breath to calm herself down. “Think!” She checked on her watch and realized it was barely an hour since she had left her child in her nursery, sound asleep.

She concluded that she must be hungry, finding nothing else wrong with her. Soon, she was sitting on the rocking chair, feeding her child while she struggled to keep herself awake.

She took the tablet she used to play baby music and scanned the screen. Finally, she stumbled on the internet site that she wanted to see. Then, blaring sounds of engines echoed in the room.

She toned down the volume, but it was still loud enough for them to hear. Then, she watched the scene before her. It was an exhibition race, but still a thrilling video clip nonetheless.

“That is your father. You see how fast he could go.” She pointed at the car that Lance used to drive. Suddenly, she wondered if Lance would ever go behind a racing car again.

But she guessed that was one of the things he had to give up now that he was about to be King. The Council would never allow him to risk his life by driving again on such a dangerous track.

She talked about him, telling her child things about the man she would never have the chance to meet. She spoke to her baby girl about the wonderful prince that changed her life and gave her a wonderful gift, her Luisa.

“You would have loved him, and I am sure he would have adored you.” It was one of her greatest regrets.

She could raise her child without a father. She was confident now that she could do it. But did she want it for her child? Of course not. She wished that their life was different.

Lance was ready to give up everything for her. But was that what she wanted for him? If he had known about Luisa, she was sure he would denounce everything to be with her. But that was not on their card. That was not her fate or her child.

"I am sorry that you will grow up without him. You will never know your father." She knew this was the only choice she had. Tears ran down her cheek as she watched her baby sleep in her arms.

She had grown up without parents to guide her. Luckily, she had her aunt, who devoted her life to her. But she grew up knowing that all her life, something was missing.

Now, she had given her child the same fate that she had. She had condemned her to a life of misery just like hers. But she believed it had to be done for everyone's sake.

"I love you, Luisa. I love your father. I wish we could be together, but that is not possible." She could only wish that her child would never learn the truth.

It was better that she believed her father was dead. That Lance never discovered that he had a daughter. She was doing this for the good of everyone. It might sound selfish, but she never thought of herself when she made this difficult decision. It had always been for Luisa and Lance.

"You miss him." A voice by the door made her look up from the small screen. Amelia stood by the door, probably disturbed by Luisa's cries.

Eida carefully lifted the sleeping baby back into her cradle. But she left the sound of the engine motors running. It seemed to calm her down. Then, she faced her friend.

"Yes, I do." She admitted it because that was the truth. "What about you? Are you going out with Evan?" Of course, she knew it was Evan who sent those flowers.

"I think I will." Amelia pulled her friend into a hug. "Come on, let me put you back to sleep." She escorted her back to her room and tucked her underneath the blanket. "Sleep tight. I will take care of Luisa for tonight."

Eida was right. Amelia thought as she watched her friend doze off instantly. She needed to give Evan a chance, or she would end just like her. But at least she had Luisa. Unlike her.

She would be alone and miserable.

Chapter 889: Last straw

He watched her as she sat on the bar, drinking her favorite poison. That was what she called her favored drink. She was still beautiful after all this time. He still could not believe that she was his.

Two men had approached her, offering her another drink, probably trying to get on her pants, but she ignored them. She did look vulnerable. Her eyes were still puffy from crying, and her shoulders sagged down as her eyes focused on her drink.

She kept to herself, drowning in her sorrow. She was miserable and using alcohol to make her forget. But it was just a temporary relief. It could help for a while, but once it was out of her system, she would be right back to square one.

"I'll have what she is having." He ordered, sitting on the spot next to her on the bar. He could not watch her from a distance anymore. He would join her so she would remember that she was not alone in this.

He had asked one of his security to monitor her movements, afraid she would get herself in a situation. She had not been herself since that unfateful day. He had already lost someone dear to him. He could not afford to lose her too.

When her security informed him that instead of going home, she made a few stops and ended up in this bar, he knew he had to follow her. It seemed that she was not coping like he thought she would.

"I don't need a babysitter. I know you have someone to follow me around." She spoke without looking at his face, but her eyes moved to look at his fingers, recognizing those hands and his ring.

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She had seen the man with her husband a few times. When she drove out of the parking lot of her office, she noticed the car tailing her. Once she was out of the clothing shop, he stood by the sidewalk, waiting.

He was one of his men, probably asked to follow her around because her husband was concerned about her well-being. Could she blame him? No. She felt like she was losing her mind.

"Jacky, I am worried." That was all he could say as an explanation for his action. "You smile as if nothing happened. You kept crying when you thought no one was looking." He said exasperatedly. "You won't talk to me." He hissed under his breath before emptying his glass.

He had watched his wife slowly dying in front of him. He knew he had to do something. He even booked them with a shrink for counseling, but she kept postponing it, saying it conflicted with her schedule.

She had been catching up with the work she had missed due to her confinement at the hospital. She used that as an excuse, avoiding seeking professional help.

He thought it was ok since Jacky was one of the most resilient people he had met in his entire life. It was one of the traits that had attracted him to her from the start. It seemed that nothing could bring her down since she had experienced the worse in her life.

"I am ok, Marcus. I only want to grab a drink." She wrapped her fingers around the cold glass before her and lifted it to her lips. "I just missed going out like this." She gestured to the bar around her. But that was a lie.

She was happy with him and the comfortable life he gave her. She had never missed her old life. But her new life at the moment was in chaos. She thought she could toughen up and get through it all just like before, when she was back on the street, fending for herself.

However, she was losing. No matter how she cheered herself up, she still ended up in a crying mess, hiding in private, not wanting anyone to see her misery. But it seemed her husband could see through her and her facade.

"No, you are not." He said like it was a fact, pulling several bills from his wallet and dropping it on the counter. "Come on. We are going home." He grabbed her by her wrist and pulled her out of her chair.

He would drag her out of that bar and into the safety of their home. If she still wished to continue drinking, he would drink with her. But this time, he would insist that they should attend counseling. He was taking no for an answer.

However, He was wrong about his assumption about her sobriety. It appeared she had consumed more than her limit as she swayed on her feet. But she pulled her hands off him and turned her back on him.

"I don't want to leave, not yet." She answered him, returning her ass to her seat and signaling for the bartender to serve her another drink.

She did not want to go home, not sober, at least. She could not look at that house without thinking about what she had done. It kept reminding her that she was a murderer, killing her child because of her carelessness.

She should be in jail, not having a great life with a man she did not deserve. She killed his child. He should hate her, not act like her protector.

"Please, let us just go home." He held her by the shoulder, but someone suddenly grabbed him from behind.

The unknown man pulled him off her. "The lady said she did not want to leave. It meant that you should leave her alone." He pushed his fist at his chest, making him step back.

"Is this man bothering you?" The guy, playing as a knight, asked Jacky as he continued to shove him on the chest.

He acted like a hero, trying to impress his wife, probably thinking he could score by doing a good deed. But he made a big mistake when he poked an angry bear.

But before his wife could answer the nosy man, Marcus grabbed him by his collar and threw the first punch. The man finally pushed him into his last straw.

Chapter 890: A rehabilitation program

He had been in this similar place numerous times before, but for a different reason. Tonight, he was standing on the other side of the law. He was here to see a friend who had committed a crime.

He could see several police officers in uniforms and some in detective clothes with badges hanging on their belts. Some officers were busy interviewing civilians while others sat at their tables, working on their cases.

"What is he being charged with?" Alex asked as soon as he stepped into the police station after midnight, facing the man who called him.

He was surprised to get a call from a detective about the incident. But as the immediate contact person, they had to call him. His friend sat behind bars, charged with assault and destruction of property, while his wife sat in the waiting area, visibly still slightly intoxicated but crying.

He quickly went to talk to the officer in charge of the situation, wanting to get to the bottom of it. He had to get Marcus and Jacky out of this jam before the press got the whiff of this, and it hit the next news cycle.

"Let me handle this." David tapped him on the shoulder and faced the detective. Suddenly, their other friend arrived at the scene together with his girlfriend.

"Thanks for coming." Alex quickly acknowledged his friend. He called him as soon as he heard about Marcus. He was the lawyer, so he would know better what to do with his case.

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Immediately, Rosella walked to the waiting area to join Jacky. Dani would like to come, but he went against it. The police station was not suitable for her condition. But Alex was glad that Rosella was here to comfort Jacky while they diffused this situation.

"Of course, this is Marcus. I have to be here." David whispered in his ear. Then, their friend discussed the situation with the detective, exploring their options.

"As much as I like seeing him behind bars, I don't like Jacky's condition. Do everything you can to get him out of here by tonight." Alex instructed, remembering Jacky's face and what she was going through.

Of course, he knew David would do his best to get their friend out of this mess. Truthfully, they had waited for this moment, the time that their friend would finally end up in jail for all his youthful mischief. But of course, not in this circumstance.

He knew that even if Marcus was not speaking about it. He was also hurting from the loss of his child. He was trying to be the foundation of their marriage and must have snapped from the pressure.

"Maybe you can arrange with the opposing party. That is the only way he is getting out of this place tonight if you could make Mr. Andrews drop the charges." The detective explained to them their situation.

Since Marcus was the first to throw the punch, the blame was on him. The brawl in the bar started because of him. Many joined the fight while the others tried to stop them, causing damage inside the bar.

The bar owner was not pressing charges as long as they paid for the damages. But the man who was black and blue on the corner was adamant about pressing charges against their friend.

"What do you think?" Alex asked his friend after the detective left them.

He looked at the other guy, also talking to another detective and a man in an expensive suit. If he was not mistaken, he might know him from somewhere.

"I think we have a big problem." David expelled a deep breath as he thought of his next move. "That is Senator Andrew's son." He scratched the back of his head as he also stared at the other team. "And that man in the suit is one of the best criminal lawyers in town."

It meant paying off the other party was not an easy option. So, making them drop the case would not be that simple. They need a big gun and a lot of ammo to deal with this situation. But that was not the only problem.

If they could not make him drop the case against Marcus, their friend would have to stay the weekend in this place because the court would only resume by Monday for his bail band hearing.

“Well, we have to try,” Alex said, thinking of ways to settle this before it became a case number in a court hearing.

From the day he learned that nothing came free, he knew everything had a price. It was just a matter of how much or what terms of payment. This man might have something he wanted. He just had to discover it and give it to him if possible. Or somehow strike a deal.

Soon, they were all seated in a room where Marcus faced his accuser. Of course, they were not there to start another brawl but to fix the situation. David asked what it would take for the young man to drop the charges.

“What if I want to pursue this case?” Mr. Andrews arrogantly responded, smirking at Marcus as if he was provoking him again.

David could not blame his friend for attacking the fool. He deserved the bruises he received for his arrogance. Not because he was a son of a high-ranking official, it gave him the right to abuse the situation.

Granting that his friend was also at fault, he understood what triggered him to hit this man. But it did not mean his friend had to be penalized for his action. He had been through enough.

“That is your prerogative,” David answered. “But we are here to resolve the issue. Mr. Kenley is prepared to settle this out of court and apologize.”

They already talked to Marcus and suggested keeping his mouth shut while David negotiated for his release. He did not want emotions to rule this proceeding because that could only complicate things.

“But I would suggest we avoid the drama in this situation.” Alex butt in, knowing that Mr. Andrews had no plan to cooperate with them. “So, I had a small discussion with your father and had made arrangements.” He looked at his watch, then said. “Expect a call from him now.”

As he had calculated, the call came just in time. Luckily, he had some projects with the Senator, building a few ships for the Navy. One of the Senator’s platforms in his reelection campaigns.

After explaining the situation to him, the Senator agreed that this was a simple misunderstanding. He would deal with his son. In return, his son would work under him for a much-needed internship.

The Senator called it a rehabilitation program.