

My Villainess Ex Won't Leave Me Alone #Chapter 61 - 3.06: Easiest But The Most Dangerous - Read My Villainess Ex Won't Leave Me Alone Chapter 61 - 3.06: Easiest But The Most Dangerous

Chapter 61: 3.06: Easiest But The Most Dangerous

Lucian wiggled his fingers a little bit more desperately, "People usually end things for more than one reason and the ones they give are not always the true ones. I would like to know what's the other reason. It will help me not to repeat my mistakes."

He used Varia language they studied together during his stays in the winter, to communicate with her, lest someone overheard their conversation.

"I'm working, and you are distracting me," Celine said, placing the document she was holding down.

Lucian tried to pick up on the hidden meaning of the sentence. He picked up a pen and wrote on a blank piece of paper: 'Distracted as in you can't stop thinking about me?'

He slid it across the table for her to see, and her eyes glanced at the paper.

Her pen scratched the paper with more force when she read the message. Did he hit the bull's eye? She probably didn't want him to know, so she threw him a bone: 'I'm not going to let love ruin my life.'

She gave her brother a hateful glance and then returned to work, "Men and their needs...tsh...disgusting...So easily seduced and tempted..."

"..." Lucian's mouth opened to defend his gender, but closed it. It was not the time to argue, "Not everyone is the same. Some only have one woman in their hearts."

Celine scoffed and then her pen moved across the paper again, "Until they get bored and go find another one to entertain them."

"I love boredom then," Lucian replied, laying back down on his arms, "I'm happy to be stuck with it forever."

She loved his sweet talking, but she knew they were just words.

Did Edmund's recent sexual cravings combined with Lucian's encounters with other women trigger her sudden need for a break up? Maybe? Who knew what other things forced her into taking those sudden actions?

Celine's expression remained stoic, but her tears rolled down her cheeks and fell on the paper she was holding.

"...!!!" Lucian quickly ran around the desk to her side. Finally some tears! He came here to cheer her up when she was at her bottom, and make her change her mind after all, "What's wrong? What did I say? Did I upset you? I'm sorry. I didn't mean to."

"..." Celine's tears mixed with the ink on the paper, "I'm not crying. The paper is wet because I spit on it."

"..." Lucian's heart was stabbed by an arrow of cuteness. Her face was pressed against his waistcoat before he knew it, "Spit on me all you want. My waistcoat is thirsty."

She stifled a chuckle against his stomach, "I'm just angry I can't burn you on a stake for being a wizard. How dare you tempt me to come back to you, you cute little fiend? Undo the spell."

"..." Lucian's heart was stabbed by another arrow of cuteness. This time it was his heart that was thirsty, "There is no spell. There are no spells at all," he insisted.

"Liar," she mumbled, "I can feel the magic."

"..." Lucian was baffled at how quickly she picked on his flirting skills, and was now using them against him. His hand stroked the back of her head, and he sighed in content.

It was a short-lived moment, as her brother's snores broke the silence between them.

Celine composed herself, her eyes still red and puffy, but dry. Lucian undressed his favorite waistcoat and handed it to her to use it as her handkerchief.

She took it and used the inside of it to dab her cheeks. "I have to finish these reports," she said, returning to her work.

Lucian grabbed a book from a shelf and went back to his seat, more obediently this time. He fed them grapes from a bowl of fruit, not forgetting about the drunkard on the couch.

It was like they were playing house, where Edward was their son that had a fever. Celine was a chair ridden wife that couldn't walk, and Lucian was the loving husband that took care of them.

It was a silly thing, something they could never have, and yet, he was happy. Even if it was just pretend, he didn't care. It was enough to see her smile.

It was when the sun set and the servants came to light the candles, that Celine finally put down the pen. She massaged her wrist and neck.

Lucian almost finished reading the book, and he was ready to put it down if she asked him to. But she didn't ask him to, she didn't say anything at all.

She went to close the windows and pull the curtain. Walking toward him, she wrapped her arms around his neck from behind, pressing her forehead against the back of his head and sniffed his hair.

"Do you know what they say about things sounding too good to be true?" she asked.

"That it's not real?" he asked.

Her arms tightening around him, and her face buried in his neck, "I don't think I'll ever stop doubting you," she whispered, "I'm sorry."

Lucian closed his eyes and let out a breath, "You've revealed enough of yourself to me," he said, "I know you well enough to never doubt your intentions."

"..." She was quiet for a moment, before speaking again, "You should use me to step up the social ladder," she advised, her tone becoming more serious, "Marrying into the family is the easiest way to get to the top. You'll be able to influence the kingdom's politics, and maybe even become a duke yourself."

"Easiest but the most dangerous," Lucian pointed out, "I don't know if I want to have assassins sent to kill me on a regular basis. You know my constitution isn't that great."

"I'll be the one dealing with them, not you," she said, her grip loosening, "You just sit back and enjoy the show."

Lucian wanted to be the one to protect her instead. And the best way to do that was to keep their relationship a secret, keep her off the stage, and not give anyone a reason to try and eliminate her because of him and the threat he would have posed to their interests.

"Marry me," she blurted out after she didn't get any response from him.

Chapter 62: 3.07: The Statistics Are On Her Side

Lucian tilted his head back to look at her, "If I reject you, you might start to think I'm not interested, and that's not the case at all. I love you, and I don't want to lose you," he said, "I don't want you to lose me either. That's why the marriage has to wait."

"I'm getting older and uglier with each passing day," she sighed, her eyes falling on the book he was holding as if it was his new mistress. She didn't want to show the hurt from his rejection and decided to take it out on the poor book. She reached over his shoulder and pulled it from his grasp, "I'll become a crone, and you'll leave me to die alone, surrounded by cats."

He caught her wrist, and brought it to his lips, kissing the back of it as he saved the book by placing it on the desk, "My lifespan is shorter than yours, I should be the one worried about getting older and uglier every day."

"All the more reason to marry me now," she insisted, letting him play with her fingers, "We should make sure that we won't change our minds and choose to be with someone else."

"We?" Lucian didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Statistics are on my side," she stated, "The more time passes, the more likely are humans to fall out of love. The marriage bond is the most effective tool that keeps them together, even if the love is gone. Not even cheating can destroy it."

"...Where do these statistics come from? Your imagination?"

"I did a thorough research," Celine assured him, "My tea parties with the noble ladies give me access to the latest news on marriage, love, and infidelity. Infidelity is a common thing among nobles, especially in arranged marriages, and yet, the couple stays together. How do they do that? Love is not the answer. It's money, power, and status."

"I'll prove you wrong then," Lucian said, determined, "You should believe in our love more, and not some gossip you've heard at your tea parties. It will make you feel better instead of depressed and anxious about it."

"...I don't want to be proved wrong." She pulled her hand out of his grasp, and paced around the office before grabbing his shoulders and shaking him violently, "We were supposed to attend the academy as a married couple and annoy everyone to death, not to go there separately and die from the distance."

"I don't remember agreeing to that," Lucian's head shook back and forth, "One person wasting their time there is more than enough for us. Take it as a vacation, rest and have fun for a few years. You've worked hard, Celine."

She looked at him like he had lost his mind, "Says one, who works like a slave."

"Well, you have to admit that I don't look half bad for a slave," he said, smiling.

"That's because you have a good owner." Somewhere amidst her shake fest, she groped his shoulders, frowning at what she found. Her shaking slowed down and she began to press the knots in his muscles, "Your eye bags would have turned into black holes by now, if not for me."

"True that," he agreed. He didn't notice how stiff his shoulders had become, and her fingers were doing miracles for him. It was as if she remembered that she was supposed to act like a little wife and had to take care of her man, "I would be dead by now."

She hummed in agreement and kept on rubbing. She had a good technique, and his muscles started to relax, the blood flowing through them, "You've been neglecting your body again. Is this how you take care of the gift bestowed on you by your parents and the universe?"

He gave her a guilty smile, "I'm a sinner," he admitted, "But you are here to redeem me. Aren't you?"

"..." Celine's hands moved from the shoulders to his back. She dug her thumbs in his spine, making him wince.

"Ow..." he grunted.

"Repent," she said, her voice stern, "Say: I promise to take better care of myself, or face Celine's wrath."

"..." Lucian's heart was stabbed by yet another arrow of cuteness. It was already full of arrows, yet it managed to fit another one, "I promise to take better care of myself, or face Celine's wrath."

"Good," she said, her hands moving up and down his back, "You may receive my grace now."

Celine still held a lot of troubles within her, but Lucian's presence seemed enough to make her feel better.

Their awareness didn't allow them to torture the other for long.

Showing too much of their ugly sides was not a way to keep people close.

The two of them were alike, in a way, only wanting to show sides they thought the other would find most appealing.

They were also good at pushing the limits of how long they could keep it up though, constantly cracking the other's edge and spilling the ugly bits.

What other way to crave themselves a place in the other's heart if not through such means?

"What if I find someone else?" she asked, tilting his head up to get a clearer view of his expression, "If someone better comes along, I might succumb to temptation like a weak human that I am. Will you give up on me then?"

"Arranged marriages don't count, since it won't affect my status as your only love, but if you are willing to commit to someone else...I will have him killed, probably in a very gruesome way," he said, his voice playful as if he was joking, "Before your eyes."

She didn't take it as a joke though, "What if they are innocent and don't deserve it? For all we know, you couldn't compare to their looks and charm. Wouldn't it be cruel to take away their life because of your own shortcomings?"

"There's always someone better out there, it's you who has to decide what you want the most, and what you can't live without."

"..." Celine sulked at his answer, "Are you not supposed to fight for me instead? What if it's just a temporary lapse of judgement on my part? Mistakes happen."

"So you want me to kill the guy and then win you back?" he asked, and her face brightened at the suggestion as if that's what she would do in his situation, "Celine..."

She coughed awkwardly, "It was a joke, but...that's what I would have wanted, yes...to feel like you can't live without me and will fight even a God for me..."

"..."

"..."

Chapter 63: 3.08: Poor Little Angel

"..." Lucian cleared his throat, "...Some mistakes can't be fixed. Staying loyal is a choice, and if you don't choose it, then it's not a mistake, it's a decision."

Celine made a cute, grumpy sound at him, which made him want to indulge her fantasies, maybe even some of his own.

"Alright... I should make you wish to have never left me instead," he corrected himself, thinking about what he would want to do but would never dare, "I will make you so miserable that you will regret ever looking at someone else."

He loved her too much to hurt her in such a way. Celine would have to mess up a lot for him to get to that point. She wouldn't be that stupid to risk it, would she?

Celine huffed happily, "Now, we are talking. That's the spirit."

Mm, she was smarter than that. Look, she was already testing the waters in case he ever did stray, using herself as an example. Instead of accusing his future self of adultery and making him defensive, she created a scenario where she was the one who would have an affair.

She was basically saying: You can get away with everything, including infidelity. I will make you miserable for a little while, nothing too serious, because I love you. Whether your lovers die lies entirely in your hands though.

She would rather trust the statistics and prepare for them than trust his loyalty. She never depended on promises, her faith lied in taking precautions.

He was a little worried about her falling for her own demons. Maybe he should give her a little angel to play with, let it sit on her shoulder and whisper sweet nothings into her ears?

"I was joking, Celine. It was a joke. I would never hurt you," Lucian summoned his own imaginary angel to his shoulder in hope she would get influenced by it, "I'm a good man, not some possessive freak who would kill others to keep his woman for himself... My loved ones are to be protected and cherished, not controlled and caged."

"Heh, of course," Celine grinned and let go of his head before putting more pressure on his shoulders, "You should joke like that more often, it makes your eyes twinkle in a cute manner."

"I'm being serious, Celine... It's my dream to make you happy, so if you are happier with somebody else, then I will be happy for you," he defended himself, not letting her poke holes into his image. "I will even help you get the guy. That's how good and supportive I am, and no matter how much it will pain me, I will put your happiness above mine. I'm a good, selfless man, you know?"

Celine made a gagging sound, and then a retching one followed, "Say that to the mirror every night before bed and maybe you will start to believe in yourself."

"..." Lucian looked at her, "I do. Every morning after waking up too. And before I sleep, I say it backwards."

She burst out laughing, her claws sinking into his shoulders, "Let me use your goodness then. Sacrifice yourself to my cause like a selfless man you claim to be. I will use you to the bone until there's nothing left to squeeze out of you."

"..." Lucian fled her grasp and ran around the table in frustration, "You were supposed to get infected by my kindness and want to be a good and kind person as well, not make me your slave."

His heart pounded hard against his chest as she hunted him around the office while calling him a cheap liar.

"Alright, alright, you got me," he stopped running, "I have my selfish moments, and I would rather die than watch you be with another man. I'll support your happiness, but only if it's me who is making you happy."

She tackled him to the floor and used him as a bed to lay on top of. The desk hid them from the view of the rest of the room.

Lucian was trapped between her thighs, and she had a firm grip on his shoulders to keep him down.

Her smirk was a triumphant one, breathing heavily from the chase.

She leaned down to press her forehead against his, her eyes staring into his soul.

His image was reflected in her eyes, and he felt like he was looking into a mirror.

They say the opposite attracts.

What about those who were alike in the worst of ways?

What attraction was there in that?

"Good boy," she cooed, patting his cheek, "You are finally learning how to be honest."

"..." That was not the type of goodness Lucian had in mind. Her fingers caressed his neck, and he swallowed nervously.

"You returned to me," she smiled, her nose brushing against his, "Does it mean you don't mind how I treat others that get in the way of us?"

It started small, the things she did. The pink haired girl was probably the first victim. Then the rest of the noble houses' daughters. She was turning him into a womanizer, who had to be kept away from the female staff by their mistresses (her "friends").

"I don't know how I will keep their paws off you once your title raises above theirs," she spoke about her circle of friends who had yet to pay their attention to him, "Small steps at a time...I guess. Yes, I won't let some statistics get the better of me."

Lucian sighed at the thought of her bullying innocent people. The subtle blackmailing she threw his way as a warning would have been unnecessary if she just trusted him, "It feels like I'm committing a crime against humanity by condoning your behavior."

"And yet, you are still here," she whispered, her grin widening, "Stay good all you want, but you can't deny that a part of you enjoys it. You get to play a gentleman, save all the damsels in distress, and get praised for it."

She paused to look at his reaction. Lucian tried to hide it, but she could see the guilt in his eyes. But instead of being bashed for being a trickster and a deceiver, Celine didn't seem to mind it at all.

Her fingers slid up to his jaw, her thumb tracing his lips, "An opportunist, through and through."

Lucian's eyes moved to her lips as her wicked charm kicked the little angel off his shoulder. It landed on the floor and rolled under the desk. He no longer paid any attention to it, his focus solely on her.

Her eyes followed his gaze, and she bit her bottom lip when she sensed his desires.

Lucian missed the hungry wolf that would devour him at a moment's notice. This patient one, who was taking her time to take a bite out of him, was a bit frustrating to deal with. How much more did she plan to evolve?

Her lips parted, enticing him to fill the gap between them first.

The angel tried to crawl out from under the desk and back to its rightful place on his shoulder, but Celine flicked her finger, and the little thing flew across the room, slamming against a wall.

Her lips continued to call for him to ravish them, to bruise them until they were red and swollen.

══ Author's note ══

In the previous Chapters, we saw Celine's reasons for the break up (the possibility of him cheating, her disgust by her own behavior of the dog in heat that she'd become because of him, his decision of letting her go without a fight when the time comes, etc.). The separation made her realize that she couldn't give him up even if he strayed. If Lucian didn't return by himself, she would have found other methods to get him back (she would have blackened even more).

This time, we saw Lucian's reasons. Why he went along with Celine's decision to end things without much protest at first. She didn't trust his loyalty, became cruel to others, and he didn't want to be a party to it. His upbringing and conscience couldn't allow it. He felt disrespected in a way.

After Celine revealed that he cared more about his image than the people he defended, he realized that she was not the only one who was messed up in the head.

His methods of trying to "fix" her and turning her into a better person were half assed at best. He doesn't really want to change her, just like how she doesn't try to stop him from being a gentleman.

There's lots of manipulation going on in their relationship, but it's not malicious. They are both aware of it, and it's almost a form of confession to each other. A weird way of opening up to one another, and a silent plea for help.



Chapter 64: 3.09: Primal Needs To Mate Will Have To Wait For Later

Lucian leaned in, his nose brushing hers, his eyes half-closed, "Do you want to know a secret?" he whispered.

Celine's eyelashes fluttered, her breath quickening, "Yes."

"Naughty girls..." He grabbed her bottom and gave it a squeeze, "...don't get to kiss." He then bent her over his knee with a grin and held her there, caressing the spot that was going to be punished, "They get spanked instead."

"..." Her expression changed from a seductive one to a speechless one. Nobody got to manhandle her like that and live to tell the tale, "Hey, what do you think you are doing? Let go."

The humiliating position she was in, over his knee, ready to be disciplined, was not something she wanted anyone to witness. Especially not her brother.

They could either fight and alert everyone, or stay still with each other for a little bit longer.

"..." Celine's face reddened with anger and embarrassment as she struggled to get free, "You...!"

He covered her mouth with his palm, "I can't wait for our next date," he murmured into her ear, "It will be fun, just you and me."

She gritted her teeth, her eyes glaring daggers at him as if daring him to try. She went completely still when his hand gave her rear a light tap. It was a warning slap, not a hard one.

He was not sure whether he was calming her or his own nerves, but it felt nice. He wanted to do it more firmly, see if he could get some interesting reactions out of her, but he didn't want to share her humiliation with anyone, and so he had to hold back. Maybe just a little...one more... "Ngh!"

Her teeth sank into his hand, making him yelp. His hand, however, didn't jerk away, no. It pressed harder, letting her bite as deep as she wished to.

He deserved it, and he was not afraid to take responsibility for his actions. The more she vented her frustration, the more of it would leave her, wouldn't it?

He could feel her confusion at his lack of reaction, her teeth loosening up their grip. A lick of apology was given to the wounded place, her saliva cooling the burning sensation of her teeth.

His free hand stroked her hair, his lips pressing a kiss to her temple, "Let's fight to our heart's content when nobody is around, okay?"

She sighed weakly at his gesture, her body going limp.

"I'll bring a whip," she muttered, "I have a feeling I might need it."

Lucian chuckled at the image, "A riding crop?"

"Mm," she hummed, "The kind used to break in the wild ones."

Lucian's chuckle turned into a full-blown laughter. Celine joined him, finding his laughter contagious.

Their inner child was having a blast, fighting and making peace in the span of a few minutes, while their adult side was trying to keep their sanity.

They have been learning a lot about the workings of the human body, and used the findings to their advantage.

It resulted in a rather efficient way to deal with each other during times when the emotions ran high.

Primal needs to mate and reproduce have been plaguing them both for a long time now.

Experiments in the past taught them that tongue kissing was the worst of offenders, and the more they did it, the more they wanted to go further (that's why Lucian didn't end up kissing her).

Chaste kisses had the power to calm the storm, even when it was at its peak.

Hugs and light skinship were good at warming the heart and bringing a smile on the face.

Lucian's inability to let go of the past caused a lot of friction, and Celine's tendency to manipulate her way to get what she wanted was a constant source of conflict.

It sounded like there were only problems in their relationship, but that was only the surface. The deeper layers were a bit more complex...a bit more intimate, and a bit more meaningful.

"Ugh," Edmund's groan interrupted the spell. "Water," he requested.

Celine rolled over, groaning in annoyance, she gestured for Lucian to serve her brother.

Lucian pointed at his crotch, sending her an accusing eyebrow. She patted it as she got up, causing him to breathe in sharply. He hid under the large desk, covering his face with his hands. Stupid body betraying him like it always did.

"Where's Lucian?" Edmund asked, taking big gulps of water.

"Behind the desk, hiding from my temptations," she replied.

Edmund coughed bits of water into his palm.

Lucian whined at her words. He felt like he was going to die from embarrassment as he peeked from behind the desk.

Celine laughed at their reaction, "Heh, that's what you get for ruining the mood. Now, go back to being unconscious."

"Ugh," Edmund wiped his face with his sleeve, "A thank you would suffice."

"Thank you for ruining the mood," she said.

"I'm glad that you are back to your normal self," he said.

"Thank you for your concern and the trouble you went through to help me," she replied, ruffling his hair, "I've finished all the work, so you are free to get knocked out again."

"You did?!" Edmund jumped to his feet and hugged his sister, "I don't know what I would have done without you!"

"Die probably," Celine replied, patting him on the back.

Edmund didn't argue with her, "How can I ever thank you enough?"

"Don't get drunk again, that's enough," she replied.

Edmund looked at his sister with a smile, "Not even for your sake?"

"No, not even for that...ouch," she winced as he squeezed her, "You are choking me!"

"But I love you," he said, "and I want to show you that."

"Get off me, you oaf," Celine demanded, pushing him away, "You are heavy and smell like alcohol. I don't want to get drunk on your stench."

"Suffer through it, you twat, I'm going to throw up on you if you keep on pushing me away," Edmund threatened with laughter. He knew how she loathed contact from anyone but Lucian, and he pressed his advantage. "It's payback time for making me worry about you, so there!"

Lucian bit his bottom lip, hiding behind the desk again. His stomach was in knots, and he felt sick. What was wrong with him? He covered his ears, trying to distract himself from his thoughts.

The siblings became a bit too expressive over the years (thanks to Lucian) and it made his heart hurt.

Did it also feel this annoying when his father and mother were overly affectionate in front of him? He didn't remember it bothering him that much. He loved them both dearly, and was sure that if he had a sister, he'd be the same way with her.

══════ Author's note ══════

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Chapter 65: 3.10: The Same Sickness As His Father's

"Ow! Ow! You brute! Lucian, save me from this savage!" Celine begged, her voice cracking in mock plea. "He is going to kill me!"

"Lucian doesn't care about you," Edmund teased, "He must have lost interest after witnessing your violent behavior towards your own brother. He must prefer my company over yours. Isn't that right, Lucian?"

Their shadows danced across the floor as they approached his hiding place. Lucian could take a side as a neutral party and be on good terms with them, or he could take one side and risk being on the outs with the other.

Lucian shook his head, blinking rapidly to clear his vision and putting on a smile, "Right, Celine can be quite violent when she gets angry," he said, emerging from behind the desk.

"Traitor," Celine hissed.

"..." Lucian chuckled. "If she can't appreciate you, then I will. I'm your new brother now." He scratched his nose before wrapping his arm around Edmund's shoulder and yanking him away from her.

'She tried to isolate me from other people, so she won't mind if I do the same to her, will she?'

Edmund gave his sister a sly grin, "See? You should learn to treat us better, or else you will find yourself lonely and depressed."

Celine frowned at Lucian as if asking if this was how he planned to 'save' her from her brother's clutches.

Lucian kissed the air in her direction, blowing a kiss her way as a sign of his affection, 'Not strong enough to exchange fists with him yet, sorry. Kiss, kiss.'

Celine's face twisted as she tried to hold back her smile. "Hmph." She turned around, stomping out of the office and slamming the door shut behind her.

"That was easy," Edmund said, looking at the closed door in surprise, "I expected her to put up more of a fight. Is the end of the world near?"

"I think she is just tired from the work she did today," Lucian said, walking over to the chair to pick up his waistcoat, "It's pretty late and you are still drunk. Let me accompany you to your room."

"I can walk on my own," Edmund protested, but didn't pull away.

Lucian didn't want him to, he needed a distraction from the thoughts that were plaguing him, "It's better if I escort you. I can't have you trip and break your neck, now can I?"

"...I'm not that drunk," Edmund grumbled.

"I insist," Lucian said, and they both left the office.

After escorting Edmund to his bedroom, Lucian left the estate, and walked to the caravan, greeting the guards that were patrolling the area.

His workers had retreated to their wagons, most sleeping or preparing to go to bed.

Lucian entered his caravan to wash and change into a fresh set of clothes. He had been jealous of others his whole life, but it was usually reasonable envy.

'I hope I didn't catch my father's sickness. I'm not sure if I can handle more than I already have,' he thought, laying down on the bed. His arm covered his eyes as he took a deep breath. *'It's the stress, it must be. I'll get better soon...'* he thought, drifting off to sleep.

It was scary how easy it was for Celine to gain his trust in the loyalty aspect, like nobody ever did. She didn't use promises or words of love, and yet, she managed to do what the rest of the world failed to do.

Anytime he interacted with another woman, he would become self conscious and think of all the things that could go wrong.

For someone, who had so much control over others, he began to wonder if Celine's occasional lack of restraint was a show put on purpose.

'I'm thinking too deeply into this. She's just being playful in her own way.'

The evil deeds were not all that bad if they were done to people that deserved it, but if the line between good and evil became blurred, how would one know where to stop?

He didn't mind becoming her partner in crime to give her a peace of mind, and to make up for the times when he failed to do so.

'People shouldn't depend on heroes for their survival, but develop their own ways of protecting themselves,' he thought, justifying his decision, *'I'm fighting for my little wife now, so to hell with everyone else.'*

If voice had a mouth, it would have twitched the corner of its lips. The brat, who preached the good and the right, was getting corrupted by his own hypocrisy.

Great leaders were not great for their right decisions, but the difficult ones, where there was no other choice.

Finally, the bottle neck that prevented his growth was gone, and the brat's potential was starting to unfold.

The duke's children's birthday party was so grand that Lucian could barely get a glimpse of Celine through the crowd.

Both siblings were busy socializing with their guests, their parents staying by their side like guardian angels.

All Lucian could do was stand in the corner with a plate of bites. He blended more with the staff than the nobles, so whenever he ate, some people would give him looks as if he was stealing.

Some even mistook him for a servant and snatched his food.

Lucian made more than a baron and viscount combined annually now, so the people who recognized him waited for him to come up to suck up to them.

'Such a waste of food,' Lucian walked toward the buffet table for a refill instead. His priority was to waste his mouth on chewing the food, not the chatter.

Celine didn't like him eating leftovers after the parties with the rest of the staff, so he had no choice but to stuff his belly with food now.

He would then go out for a walk to let his stomach digest the meal before he would stuff himself again. That was his strategy.

He missed the royal family's arrival, but apparently, the crown prince asked Celine to dance, which was a great honor.

Rumors among the staff started to spread and before Lucian knew it, the duke's daughter got enamored by the Crown Prince at first sight.

"Everyone loves him," Celine fed Lucian a piece of her birthday cake she sneaked inside of the bathroom, "I was just acting like every young lady in the ballroom, to fit in with the rest of them. Men in power love novelty, the different and new, and the moment you become one of the crowd, they lose interest in you."

Chapter 66: 3.11: Hungry For A Scandal

The Crown Prince Of Diamante Kingdom. The rumors of his cold and ruthless nature had spread throughout the land. Everyone feared him, yet admired him at the same time.

The most handsome bachelor in the entire kingdom had yet to choose his wife. It was a dream come true for any woman to be the object of his desire.

It was a pity Lucian missed the scene where Celine accepted the dance so enthusiastically that it turned off the Crown Prince immediately. The dance barely lasted a minute before he excused himself from her and left her on the dance floor.

Lucian's heart sank a bit at the image of her dancing with someone else, but the taste of the cake was sweet, and so he felt a bit better. "Mm," he licked the cream from the corner of his lips, "What a shame. You could have been a queen."

"Hm, yes," she smiled, scooping another piece of the cake and holding it in front of his mouth, "I'm so sad. I hope you will make me feel better."

She looked so cute all dolled up in her ball gown, her rouged lips and cheeks tempting him to smooch them.

She was only a few inches shorter than him in those heels she wore, so he didn't have to lean down as much to steal a kiss. His lips were sticky with sugar, sweetening her day in the most delicious way possible.

"Happy birthday," he whispered, his lips curving into a smile, "May I have this dance?" he asked.

He extended his hand in invitation, bowing his head slightly.

Celine's eyes lit up, placing the cake on the sink counter. "My pleasure," she placed her palm over his, and Lucian pulled her close, his arm wrapping around her waist.

The music from the ballroom played softly as they danced slowly inside the luxurious bathroom. The candles were burning low, the shadows from their waltz flickering on the walls.

"I've got a gift for you," he said as they twirled in the center of the room, "A small building in the capital city. Honeywell street 2." He fished the keys from his pocket and placed them in her hand, "The closest thing I could find to the academy grounds."

She could operate it as a jewelry store or anything else she wanted to. The important thing was that the building shared a wall with his new stores where he planned to sell his products. He could climb the wall from the backyard to visit her anytime he wanted.

It would be definitely easier than sneaking into her bedroom, also much more safer. She would be living in the dorms, but nothing could stop her from going shopping in the city.

Celine clutched the keys in her palm in delight and threw her arms around him, hugging him tightly, "Does it mean you are going to move to the capital with me?"

The happiness in her eyes made Lucian feel warm inside, "I will be on business trips a lot, but I'll try to stay as long as I can. You are my home after all, and I can't be away from home for long."

Her smile widened as she lifted her chin, "Kiss me again, I need more happiness to last through the night," she said, puckering her lips.

Lucian chuckled, kissing her on the lips, "And again, and again, and again, until you have enough."

He kissed every inch of her face, and when he was finished, he moved onto her ears, her neck, and her shoulders.

The more he kissed her, the brighter she glowed, and the more beautiful she became.

He ended up having to coax her out of the bathroom, otherwise they would have never left.

"I want to stay here," Celine clung to his shirt, "Everyone makes me want to stab them in their eyes and watch them bleed out. Nobody likes me anyway and I hate them all."

"..." Lucian stroked her back, trying to comfort her, "Naughty girls get spanked, remember? You've already accumulated enough to make your bottom turn as red as your dress. Any more misbehavior, and you won't be able to sit down."

She sighed, her shoulders slumping, "It sounds more tempting than going back to that ballhole. A bribe would work much better to get me out of here."

This sneaky little thing. Lucian thought for a moment, and then gave up, "I just don't want you to get into unnecessary trouble."

She chuckled at his words, "You are worth all the trouble that comes with you."

She pressed her lips to his, lingering there for a moment. They stayed like that until Lucian could no longer resist and kissed her back.

The Duke's daughter didn't show up for the gift giving ceremony and the firework display that followed, causing gossip among the guests.

From stomach ache to attention seeking, each person had their own theory. The most popular one was that she was upset about being ignored by the crown prince, got into an argument with her parents after she demanded them to intervene, and ran to sulk in the bathroom.

It was crazy how hungry they were for a scandal.

Standing by the gardens, Lucian rubbed the bridge of his nose and sighed, watching how the staff carried Celine's suitcases to the carriages.

The academy would start its school year in two weeks and she had to be there on time.

After her stunts at various public events, Lucian began to doubt whether Celine would be able to make it through the whole year without any incidents.

'She won't try to get expelled on purpose, would she?' he thought, feeling uneasy. *'Her brother will be there, he will look after her...'*

She played the role of a spoiled daughter too well, and it was hard to tell what her parents thought about it.

They seemed to be strict at times, and at other times they didn't mind what she did, at all.

Chapter 67: 3.12: Meriel Vale Royal Academy

The Capital of the Diamante Kingdom, Meriel, housed the royal family and was the heart of the kingdom, with a population of nearly a million people.

The city was also home to the Royal Academy, which was open to children from the ages of six to twenty-five.

Knight aspiring students usually attended from the age of six. They would wear a crest on their chests that represented the sponsoring house, which covered their tuition fee.

The wealthy nobles would usually have their children homeschooled until the age of eighteen, mainly because of the responsibilities that needed to be passed on. They were usually taught the family business, their family history, and how to run the estate, rather than a basic education.

Besides the access to a prestigious degree and connections, the Royal Academy also served as a propaganda tool to "unite" all the noble houses under the Diamante rule, as well as a way for the crown to keep an eye on the future generation.

That's what Celine had told Lucian in the past. In public, the academy was portrayed as this honorary elite institution that only the most gifted or richest ones could attend.

Lucian didn't think much about it until he got to know that the students were cut off from their families for months before they were allowed to visit for holidays.

No servants were allowed to accompany their masters to serve them either, but they could pay to be pampered by the academy's staff. It would also cost extra if the student wanted a room of their own; otherwise, they would be sharing a room with someone else.

From a different point of view, the academy was a place where noble kids had the chance to get away from their families for a couple of months.

The dorms were separated by gender, and Lucian could currently see them from the Dean's office. There was also a big garden separating the building complex in the middle.

The dean was an elderly gentleman with a short beard and a monocle on his left eye. He had a strict air to him as he sat behind his desk, reading through Lucian's proposal, and Lucian was waiting patiently in front of him.

"Hm," he rubbed his chin, "Interesting, but it doesn't benefit our school enough to justify such expenses to build and maintain."

Lucian had come prepared and set out a list of plans on the desk. "We can reconstruct the greenhouse as an additional classroom that will be available for your staff and students. It doesn't have to be used strictly for gardening purposes, and can be adapted for various studies as you wish."

The school definitely wasn't short on finances to reject his offer. The man was just playing hard to get.

"Do you not plan to attend the Royal Academy as well? You still seem young enough to enroll," the dean said, putting the papers aside, which showed that he was interested in something else, "Your constitution might not be suitable for combat, but you can still

enroll in our academic studies. I'm sure we will have a place for someone of your caliber."

"Thank you, Sir," Lucian said politely, "but I must decline your generous offer. I have a lot of responsibilities that require my full attention at the moment. I'm afraid I will be expelled for not attending the classes regularly."

The dean chuckled, amused by his response. Lucian wouldn't be able to focus during classes either and would miss the lectures due to being lost in his own head.

The kids here didn't have to think about making money to support themselves and their people. Their concern was studying, passing the exams, building connections, and creating a good image of themselves. The pressure was different for him.

He was the one supporting others, and if his business failed, he would be on the streets in no time. There was no safety net for him.

"I'm not a stranger to your situation," the man said, his expression thoughtful, "but I would rather you not give up on your education so easily. How about a compromise?"

He took a sip of his coffee, "A weekly lecture every three months. You will share your findings on a certain topic of our staff's choosing. They don't have that many chances to gain some fresh information, so you can consider yourself a guest lecturer."

It was obvious that the Dean didn't care about Lucian, but about the access to his research.

"If you don't want to waste time on studying, then you can spend it on teaching," the man concluded.

The only reason Lucian would agree would be Celine and her well-being. "I can't give you a definite answer at the moment, but I will consider your offer. Sharing the know-how is not something a businessman should agree to easily."

The dean laughed, "Ah, yes, the trade secrets. Very well, then I'll be awaiting your decision."

Lucian thanked the Dean for his time and excused himself. Once outside, a guard accompanied him to the front gates.

So this was what Celine meant by the crown keeping an eye on the future generation. The meeting with the Dean was more like an interrogation to Lucian than a business discussion.

Before the deal could take place, the dean asked about his past and present, about his parents and his goals. It was a casual conversation, but Lucian knew that his every word was being noted.

'I'll have to be more careful with my words next time.'

It was normal for merchants to get access to various noble houses to do business, but his case was special, similar to private tutors, physicians, tailors, ecetera. A pass to get access to the house's grounds equaled a pass to infiltrate.

Lucian was not a spy, and he had been building his reputation around his landscaping business, so his intentions were clear from the start.

On his way to the dorms, he spotted a couple of students lounging in the garden. They seemed to have just finished their morning classes and were enjoying their lunch break.

Everyone wore the same uniform, a black and white attire with a crest on the jacket. They looked like a bunch of penguins in his opinion, and Lucian couldn't help but stretch his neck to look for his little penguin.

Chapter 68: 3.13: Honeywell Street

The garden had wooden tables and benches scattered about for socializing, with a fountain and a statue of the founder in the middle of it all.

Lucian spotted her sitting next to Edmund, and he almost couldn't recognize her. She blended so well with the rest of the ladies, wearing a similar hairstyle and make up as them.

She set up a new trend to test how malleable the public's opinion was and to see if the other students would follow her example. It was an interesting observation.

Edmund got all the spotlight to himself, the admiring female gazes and giggles following him around. He was the second most popular male student right after the Crown Prince.

As if feeling his presence, Celine looked up and almost busted herself with a surprised look on her face before quickly composing herself. It was a struggle as she clapped her cheeks with her hands and looked away with flushed cheeks.

The other girls followed her gaze and let out gasps, giggling among each other.

"It's the Crown Prince," one of them said.

Lucian turned his head and saw the Crown Prince walking through the path leading to another building on the grounds. The black hair and grey eyes made him stand out more than he already did with his title alone.

The attention seemed to annoy the Crown Prince rather than flatter him, and Celine probably picked on the signs because what she did next surprised everyone.

She got up and chased after him, and like a hoard of sheep, the other girls did the same.

"How is your day, Your Highness?" they flooded him with questions, their voices overlapping each other.

'It seems like that not even a person with a higher rank could stop Celine from finding a way to harass them.' Lucian thought, feeling a bit better at the thought that it didn't matter if he had a lower status or not. She didn't view him as an easy prey since nothing could stop her from making her move.

From the outside, Celine's behavior looked no different from an infuriated maiden in love. Lucian would have misunderstood too if it weren't for the Crown Prince's reaction.

Celine wasn't so clueless as to not know how to attract a man's interest. The Crown Prince was bound to fall for her if she tried. Tried was the keyword here, because she barely did.

The Crown Prince gave the group of females a deadly glare before entering the building.

The girls didn't dare to follow him. Celine also retreated back to her spot and sat down, her smile widening in delight.

'There's no reason for the Crown Prince to have a secret relationship with her like me, is there?' The knot around Lucian's heart tightened as he continued to walk without a stop, getting the last glimpse of her from the corner of his eye.

After entering his carriage, Lucian rubbed his chest to ease the pain, but it didn't go away.

Even bad attention was still attention, and the way Celine dished it out to others made him feel a certain type of way.

'She thinks it's mostly because of my kindness that I don't support her actions against innocent people, and I thought so too, but...'

He looked down at his palms and closed them.

'...I have no excuse to be jealous now, do I?'

He pumped his head into his palms in frustration, his nails biting into his scalp.

'Is it wrong of me to want her all to myself?'

He would rather dirty his own hands than have hers stained. At least she wouldn't put that much focus on the rest of the world and dedicate her attention to more wholesome activities.

'But I'm fine with Togo and the rest,' he thought of an excuse, *'So maybe I don't have it that bad...maybe it's just a worry. Yes. I'm just worried about her...'*

Celine had a little ZOO back at home, where she collected birds of various species to keep her entertained.

Instead of keeping them in cages, she released them inside the greenhouse he built and trained them to return back to her whenever she called.

Togo turned out to look more like a black raven than a colorful parrot, which resulted in her calling Lucian a scammer.

Scamming Celine was the best part about his job. It was never worth selling her anything because she would end up scamming him out of the product for free.

Lucian never mentioned the species or the exact location where the bird was captured. It was on her whether she caught the bait or not.

It didn't matter because Togo ended up becoming her favorite.

It was a little devil in a suit of a bird. It didn't like anybody else except for her, and had the same superiority mindset that Celine had, looking at everyone from a pedestal.

Today was Lucian's eighteenth birthday, and it would be his first birthday in years he would spend without her.

"Stop by the closest butcher," he instructed the coachman.

Togo had been staying with him since her school started, and Lucian needed to get dinner for the little rascal before it threw a tantrum.

He had no idea how Celine could tolerate such a creature. His Seline used to be a much more pleasant pet to have around, always cuddly and adorable. Or maybe it was Celine's fault, she was a rotten influence after all.

Lucian returned to his office in the capital, carrying a small bag of ground beef from the city's best butcher.

Honeywell street was located in the shopping district. The buildings shared walls with one another, with the storefronts in front and the backyards in the back.

His office in the capital was more spacious compared to the one in Stonetomb City, with a large balcony on the second floor that overlooked the backyard. The view was not as impressive, but it was still a nice place to relax.

A nest was located on the roof, and a familiar black bird was peering down at him.

Lucian kept the door open for it to come in and set the ground meat in a small bowl on his desk.

"There you go. The best quality money can buy," he spoke to the bird, bribing his way into its good grace.

┌────────── Author's note ─────────┐

I wonder if anyone here likes to read smut?

┌──────────────────────────────────┐

Chapter 69: 3.14: Brainless Shrew

┌────────── Author's note ─────────┐

Music: Van Gogh - Vesislava & Virginio Aiello

┌──────────────────────────────────┐

The bird flew inside and landed on Lucian's desk, treating him like a servant who brought it food.

"You are welcome for the meal," Lucian said, walking to his seat behind his desk, "You could at least greet me back, you know?"

The bird gave him a side eye as Lucian rested his chin on his hand, watching it eat. His free hand snaked to the bird's feathers and gave it a few pets. Feeding time was the only time it was docile.

"I hope she won't try to sneak out of the academy grounds," he said with a sigh, resuming his work, "If she gets caught, she will get into a lot of trouble."

The academy housed the most powerful children of the kingdom. The security was so tight that it was almost like a prison. The student's rooms were checked regularly during the night.

The sky outside the window gradually darkened, the stars twinkling in the distance. Togo had finished eating and was now resting on Lucian's desk, its head tucked into its body.

It was definitely nicer than usual, making his birthday special in its own way.

Lucian got up from his seat and walked toward the balcony, careful not to make too much noise. *'I'm going to take a look at the renovations.'*

He climbed over the wall of the backyard and jumped onto the balcony of the neighboring building.

He unlocked the glass door and entered the room. It used to be a guest bedroom, but she turned it into a private office with a curtain screen to separate the office from the bedroom area.

The renovations were almost finished, and everything looked good. There were still some finishing touches that needed to be added, like her personal belongings that had yet to be unpacked and displayed on the shelves and walls.

Lucian laid down on the bed, his fingers tracing the pattern on the sheets. They felt smooth and silky, not like her skin, but close enough.

He once contemplated becoming a priest when he tried to move on from Celine. He was around fourteen at that time.

Celibacy was a virtue that was encouraged in the church. Forsaking worldly attachments and desires with a promise of a heavenly reward sounded like a great deal.

The church held a strong influence in the kingdom, not only because of the faith of the people, but also because of its blessing ability.

A blessing allowed a knight to absorb the earth's natural energy. The rarer and harder to obtain the earth's mineral a knight could absorb, the more powerful he could become.

Most blessings were weak and didn't last long since they all depended on the priest's devotion, and his ability to resist the temptation of the world.

"..." Lucian heard Voice's laughter when he recalled how his childhood plan had fallen apart.

They called his dreams unholy, and his fantasies sinful because he failed to hide them, and was scolded for being a lustful degenerate.

And how did he fail to hide them? He couldn't even pass the first trial, where the blessed ring he wore on his left hand, would turn the color of his sins.

Voice continued to laugh and Lucian couldn't help but ask in a slightly annoyed tone, *'Do you have to laugh every time?'*

'They failed to help you and instead mocked you for it. It's funny how far humans go for a little bit of divine power,' it replied, *'that they forget what it truly means to have it.'*

'Yet the god still lends them his power,' Lucian said.

'The more power a man has, the easier he destroys himself and others around him.'

"Lucian?"

Lucian turned to see Celine standing in the doorway. She was in her school uniform and looked a bit in a rush.

"Celine?" He sat up on the bed, holding back from running to her like a starved man, "How did you get here?"

She closed the door, "Kidnapped myself on the way to the dorms," she said, her eyes twinkling with excitement, "The academy will get in trouble if someone were to find out that their student got abducted. It will be fun to see them trying to cover the incident up. What a shame I will have to keep my lips sealed."

"..."

She walked over to him and sat down beside him on the edge of the bed.

"Happy birthday," she gave him a kiss on the cheek. Her smile widened when he pulled her onto his lap.

He hugged her from behind, his arms wrapping around her waist, his head resting against her shoulder.

"You can't just show up like this," he mumbled into her neck, "It's not safe and it's not good for my heart either."

It was a twenty minute walk from the academy, and she had to cross a few streets to get here. Who knew what kind of people could have been lurking around? She was still a duke's daughter.

"I had to see you, so here I am," she turned her head to the side to look at him, "Can't have you moping around here alone."

"I have Togo, so you don't have to worry about me," he replied, "I don't mop around, but if you feel lonely, then just say so and we will do something about it."

She stayed silent for a moment, thinking about it, before she finally spoke, "My reputation is in the dirt."

"Hm?" He turned her around to face him. Did something happen after he left?

Her hand went to her eyes to wipe the tears that began to pour down, "I hate it, but I have to do it."

She breathed in a sob, her hands rubbing away the thick layer of make up to reveal a face he was more familiar with. "I hate it even more when you see me acting like a brainless shrew. What if you stop loving me because of some stupid rumors?"

Lucian's heart broke a little at the sight of her tears, his arms wrapping around her tighter.

"Celine," his voice was comforting, his lips brushing against the shell of her ear, "I won't..."

She shook her head, "This is just the beginning of my downfall. It will become worse, much worse."

Chapter 70: 3.15: Listen To Your Heart

┌────────── Author's note ─────────┐

Music: Listen To Your Heart - Mustafa Avsaroglu

┌──────────────────────────────────┐

Apparently, Celine embarrassed herself in public again.

Nobody wanted to be disliked, and it was hard to be a person you didn't like. Celine was doing it to protect herself, but that didn't mean she liked it.

Lucian lifted her and carried her to the bathroom to wash her face clean. She wrapped her legs around his waist and buried her face in the crook of his neck.

Sitting her on the sink counter, he grabbed the towel and wetted it to clean her face.

He held back his own tears, trying to comfort her.

"It will be okay," he murmured, wiping her eyes and nose, "I'm not going to leave you, I promise."

"Don't let go of me," she whispered, her legs still locked around his hips, "Please, don't let go of me." Her words were quiet, almost inaudible, as if she was afraid to say them out loud.

"I won't, I won't," he said, wiping her cheeks and chin, "You're stuck with me, whether you like it or not. Haven't I survived your overbearing love already? What's another couple of years of you bullying me?"

She continued to shake her head and sob silently, her fists pumping against his chest. "Don't leave me, don't leave me, don't leave me..." she repeated, "I can't lose you, I can't...you are the only one, the only one..."

Her expression suddenly turned blank, her eyes dulling.

"Celine?" Lucian asked, patting her cheeks, "What's wrong?"

She blinked, her last tear rolling down her cheek as she looked down at her chest. Her hands felt it up, "It's... gone."

"What?" Lucian asked, confused.

"My heart," she whispered, her fingers pressing down on her skin, as if searching for the missing piece inside of her, "I can't feel it."

His hand slid down to the spot her finger pointed at, feeling the steady heartbeat. Steady, yet slow, as if she had a heart of stone.

"It's still there," he said, "It's just a bit weak, but it's still beating."

She nodded quietly, "Weak, huh? Not an usual thing when I'm with you. It usually goes the opposite way."

"..." Lucian lifted her up, her face resting on his shoulder, her limbs wrapping around him, "Isn't it too soon for flirting with me?"

It was like she got overwhelmed by something, and then her mind shut down all her heart's functions beside keeping her alive.

"Mm. Too early to be cheeky with you, too late to stop me," she smiled against his neck, "My heart needs a little kick to pump the blood again."

She didn't want to dwell on depressing things anymore, that much was obvious.

He turned his head to capture her lips in a kiss, and she returned the gesture. They fell on the bed, and he pressed her into the mattress, his hand sliding up her thigh.

"It's beating harder now," she said, her chest rising and falling rapidly as she tried to catch her breath, "You are such a good doctor, you know exactly what I need."

"..." Lucian dropped on top of her, his face buried in her chest, "Is this really time to joke around? I don't mind you being weak for a while longer. Forget what you said about proving yourself, okay? I already forgot it, and you should too."

He was referring to the time when he doubted her resolve to marry him, doubted her strength and called her naive. He didn't want her to hide her feelings behind a strong facade because of that.

She stroked his back, her other hand running through his hair. "A birthday boy should get what he wants on the day of his birth," she said, showing rare compliance, "I can't remember what I said to you. It must have not been that important."

"This is not the type of forget I was asking for." He got on his elbows, lifting himself up so he could see her face.

Her tears returned upon his words, but these were like she summoned them on command to appear.

"Stop that this instant," he commanded, wiping the tears away with his thumb, "or else I'll make you cry for real."

She blinked at his threat, "I didn't bring my horse whip."

"..." Lucian turned her around and gave her bottom a slap. This woman! She never missed an opportunity to tease him. Her bottom soon turned into his drum, and he started to play a tune on it.

"This is the sound of my patience snapping in half," he sang, "Celine, Celine, the trouble making Celine. She loves to tease, to make me mad. She loves to make me blush, she loves to make me fuss."

Smack. Smack. Smack.

"But I love her, the trouble making Celine," he continued to sing, "she is a meanie, a thief, she stole my little heart. She will never give it back, she is a cruel little brat. I'll give her another smack."

Smack.

Celine laughed into a pillow and Lucian felt a little better. He leaned over to see her rubbing her fresh tears into the pillow. He leaned back with a satisfied nod. That's what she got for doubting his skills in making her cry and laugh at the same time.

"You should join the choir," Lucian said, "I want to hear you sing too."

He continued to pat a tune on her bottom, and her laughter turned into a hum, singing along with him.

"Lucian, Lucian, the silly sunshine Lucian. He makes me mad, but also glad. He makes me want to sing, and I'll let him do his thing," she paused, thinking of the next verse, "He is silly and sweet, and he is all mine to keep."

Smack.

"Ouch!" Celine cried out, turning around to look at him, "Why?"

Lucian's cheeks turned red at her lyrics, and he cleared his throat to hide his embarrassment, "The tune required it."

"Oh." Celine turned back around and reached for her skirt pocket to get something, "I've got you a present."

Lucian stopped his drumming and leaned to her side to get a better look. A chocolate truffle and an envelope were in her palm.

He took the treat first, unwrapping the paper, biting a half of it and feeding her the other part. It was a bit melted, but still delicious. He chewed it with a smile, opening the pouch next to pull out the thing inside.

"You made it?" he guessed.

