

Forbidden Heat 18

Chapter 26: Midnight Visit

Ah...Lucien's hands are on my breasts over my nightgown. It feels so good, I wish he would slip his hands inside to touch my skin directly. He's kissing the base of my neck now...

My thoughts were drowsy with sleep as I felt my body being fondled all over. This must be a dream caused by my yearning for more action with Lucien. His seduction in the bath was apparently not enough to fully satisfy my deep-rooted desire for him and my body was yearning for more.

The hands groping my breasts were squeezing harder. Why is he being so rough with me? I thought to myself as I moaned softly. His exploring hand glided from my breasts down the plain of my stomach to reach the sensitive spot in between my legs and started to massage my clit through the thin fabric of my nightgown.

"Feeling so horny even when you're asleep?" He whispered with a small laugh next to my ear.

My eyes flew open in shock.

"Zak!" I gasps as I realized that Zak was next to me on my bed. Looking around it was pitch black outside so it must be very late into the night. I could see the outlines of Zak's handsome face and his wavy light blond hair reflecting the moonlight that was shining in through the window of my bedroom.

"Hey Cinderella, it's midnight now so your prince is here for you," Zak whispered softly in my ear before nuzzling my neck.

"I don't think that's how the fairytale went," I replied sarcastically.

"Well, we're a bit twisted so our fairytale has a twist. Not bad, right?" Zak smiled at me lovingly then pulled out a blindfold that he had been hiding.

"Ready?" He asked, a playful smile on his sensual lips.

He didn't wait for my reply as he slowly placed the blindfold on me. My world was now pitch black. Robbed of my sight, my other senses became even more active to compensate for my lack of sight. This is exciting but also quite scary. Every small sound is now much louder, I could clearly hear the rustling of the sheets. My skin is also much more sensitive than before. Feeling a bit scared and lost, I reached a hand out to feel

nothing but air in front of me. The next moment, I felt Zak's warm hand taking mine into his own.

"Relax. I'm here. I'll be extra gentle so you can relax," Zak's encouraging voice rang out in the silent room.

I lay back down on my pillow waiting for what was to come next. I felt Zak close to me and the bed creaked a bit as he straddled me, hovering about my hips. I felt something soft and warm on my lips and the smell of Zak's cologne. His kiss is so gentle and sweet just as he had promised. After a while of enjoying his kiss, I ran my hand into his soft wavy hair before parting my lips slightly, inviting him to dip his tongue into my mouth. I wanted to feel his heat inside my mouth. I wanted to be closer to him. Zak is so dear to me.

I felt a warm wetness probing my lips teasingly before slipping in deeper into my mouth to caress the walls of my mouth and, finally, entwining with my tongue. I let out a small moan of pleasure and I started to pant in excitement. Making love with Zak slowly like this is like making love to an angel.

The heat of his body on mine feels amazing and I was feeling it more than usual now that I could not see. Zak was growing harder and bigger as I felt his hardness on my stomach while he lay on top of me. I ran my hands along Zak's now-naked back, feeling the firm muscles in his back moving against my hands while I imaging his beautiful form in my mind. Zak gently took my left wrist in his hand lifting my arm above my head. Suddenly, I heard a sharp click and found out that I could not move my arm as I yanked against the restraint. Zak, what have you done this time?!

"Zak...What did you just do? Is this a handcuff?" I asked him in panic. The darkness was silent as Zak refused to reply while grabbing my other wrist to handcuff that arm also above my head to the bed.

"Zak...please let me go..." I pleaded with him with both my arms now spread eagle above my head. Yanking my arms, I could hear the sound of metal clanking on metal as the handcuffs are probably scraping against the bed's metal headboard. I have to stop struggling, I told myself, the handcuffs are not budging and the more I struggle the more the metal bites into my skin. I should have known that a weekend with Zak costs more than just a blindfold.

"I'll make sure you enjoy this," Zak promised as he kissed my forehead, then my eyes, my cheeks and finally, my lips. This time his kiss was aggressive and demanding. His tongue plunged deep into my mouth to savor my taste as he continued to kiss me wildly, changing angles various times. I moaned into his kiss as I enjoyed myself. Zak was also panting hard as his lust built up.

My chest heaved up and down as I panted. Having both arms bounded above my head made it more exciting and I could feel my tits jiggling up and down harder than normal

as I panted. Zak's impatient hands unbuttoned the tiny buttons on the front of my nightgown, yanking some buttons off as he became desperate. Soon my naked breasts were exposed and I could feel the night air on my skin giving me goosebumps. I felt my nipples harden to the cold air before his wet mouth took one into its warm depth. He sucked my nipples hard and loudly, twirling his tongue on my hard nub as his other hand stroked my naked belly.

"Ah...Zak. Please...stop," I begged him to stop. I felt like I was going to explode with pleasure. I arched up my back to thrust my breasts closer to his mouth and face. Finally, I felt his hand thrust up my night gown to reveal my legs, my hips and my pussy.

-To be continued...

Chapter 27: Blinding & Binding Love

"You're flooded down here, dirty Cinderella," Zak teased and then I felt something hot and warm running against the slit in between my legs. It can't be...ahhhh! I moaned out loud as his hot tongue traced my slit before flicking its tip against my swollen and sensitive clit. His hand spread my legs further apart so he could burry his hot tongue deep into my wet hole. I cried out as he ate me out. His tongue fucked my hole as his mouth sucked my love juices into his mouth, making loud slurping sounds.

The pleasure coursing through my body was so intense that my hips bucked up against his mouth and my arms were fight against their restraints. I wanted to hug Zak closer to my body and become one with him. I wanted to run my hands on his firm body and through his beautiful hair.

"Does it feel good? Cum in my mouth, Natalia," Zak coaxed me into obeying him. It wasn't hard, my climax is fast approaching as he continued to fuck my wet pussy with his tongue. I felt a sharp sensation on my clit and I cried out; he must have pinched me there with his fingers. I was getting wetter and wetter and so was the slurping wet sounds echoing in the room from between my legs.

"Zak...I'm cumming...I'm cumming now!" I moaned with pleasure as I felt my body getting hotter, my pussy clenching and twitching around his tongue. My climax hit me as I felt a gush of hot wetness being released deep inside my pussy. Oh god, I just came with Zak's tongue inside me, this is so embarrassing. Zak lapped up all of my love juices into his mouth, sucking hard at my opening.

"I'm at my limit now too...I'm gonna fuck you using my cock now," Zak confessed after removing his lips from between my legs. I hate this blindfold so much. I can't see Zak's face right now.

His hungry hands are now on the back of my ass as he lifted my ass up from the bed. I clenched my hands, unable to move my arms, my anxiety is getting the best of me. In a few heartbeats, I felt his solid heat being pressed against my opening. Zak must have

positioned his fully erect dick against my opening as he lifted my hips to meet his cock. I wouldn't say that I'm a small girl but compared to Zak's height and size, I'm like a small girl in his arms. He could lift and shift my body around to his desire so easily, just like now. My hips were still lifted off the bed as I felt his hips wedging itself between my legs, forcing me to spread my legs further apart for him.

"Ahh! Zak...No!" I screamed as Zak suddenly rammed his hot and big cock inside of me all at once. Thanks to my cum lubricating my walls, I could somehow take in Zak but still felt the usual pain accompanying his entrance. I know this already but my body cannot seem to adjust to his large size. His cock hit all the way inside of me as I felt him deep inside my belly. My hips were lifted in the air, held in place by his loosely supporting hands under my ass and his huge dick buried deep inside of me. This angle is making me feel him hitting my sensitive spot more than usual.

He started thrusting inside me hard and fast while his hands squeeze my ass. He held my hips in place so he could pound into me harder. Zak was panting hard and groaning with pleasure. His lustful sounds were turning me on and I squirmed my hips in his hands. My pussy is more sensitive than usual and I was clenching my walls around his member tight with every thrust. The fact that I couldn't see made the pleasure so much more intense and our moans seemed louder than ever before. If he keeps fucking me hard like this, I'm going to cum really soon.

"Harder! Zak...I'm going to cum...please," I begged him for my release but this made him slow down his thrusting instead.

"Not yet, my dirty Cinderella. You've got to hang on a little longer," he replied as he pulled his throbbing pole out of my quivering insides.

I whimpered in protest and yanked my arms against the restraint. Zak, why must you be such a tease at a time like this. My body was burning with need, I wanted to cum hard.

"Zak...please make me cum. Please...I need..." I literally begged him to take me, my body squirming around in his arms that were now hugging me to this chest. He kissed me deep, slowly and lazily to silence my begging.

"I promised to be gentle...so gentle it will be," Zak whispered in between our gentle kisses.

His hands were spreading my legs apart painfully slowly. Gentle and slow sex with Zak was rare and right now, very frustrating for my mind and body. He rocked his hips against mine, gliding his hot shaft inside of my wet love hole slowly. Inch by inch he slowly pushed his staff inside of me. It was too slow and I was getting impatient so I pushed my hips up from the bed in an attempt to push him deeper into me faster. To counter my efforts, his hands only held my hips down still on the bed and he continued to slowly sink his length into me. Finally, he was buried all the way in and my pussy clenched around his heated staff in joy.

"I'm going to move now, Natalia, let's enjoy this together," Zak whispered such loving and caring words into my ears. This was so unlike him and it was turning me on more and more. This unexpected loving and tender side of Zak's love making was so new and fresh.

"Ah...it's so good, Zak..." I whimpered softly against his chest as he thrust into my pussy slowly but deeply. Zak changed the angle of each of his thrust strategically making me feel all good inside, leaving no where in my love cave unexplored.

"I'm sure that you like this. You're clenching me so tightly. Your pussy is sucking in my dick," Zak chuckled softly as he said that and kissed my forehead softly before sucking my lips. He began to move faster taking me closer to my release.

"Please let me cum this time, Zak...please," I begged him and this time he complied. Zak pumped his cock inside of me harder and even deeper while reaching down his hand to rub my clit. It drove me over the edge and I cried out as my body trembled and twitched non-stop from ecstasy. Zak came at the same time calling out my name in his moment of heat before flopping down to hug me sweetly.

We cuddled each other close after our love making session was over. It feels weird to be hugging Zak as I slowly drifted off to sleep. My body was tired but truly satisfied.

"I love you, Natalia," Zak whispered as he caressed my hair and kissed my forehead tenderly.

"I love you too, Zak..." I whispered as I laid my head on his chest before falling into a deep and peaceful sleep.

"Not like that..., you stupid girl," Zak whispered after he saw Natalia was breathing regularly in her sleep. He kissed her cheek lovingly and cuddled her to him for a long while before leaving her to head back to his room.

I don't care what happened between Natalia and Uncle Lucien today but if he hurts her; I'll kill him.

-To be continued...□

Chapter 28: First Meet

The cruise weekend is now finally over and I have settled back at home. Peace and quiet without Angela in my life. It's been a few days since the cruise and my life with Lucien has been surprisingly normal. He did not talk about our intimate encounter in the bath and has not touched me in that way again since then. A part of me was relieved but I was also worried and confused about our relationship right now.

“Master Lucien wants to see you in his study, Miss Natalia,” a senior maid who serves Lucien was at my door to deliver Lucien’s message.

“I’ll be right there. Thank you,” I replied with a smile. I wonder what he wants to talk about. With a sense of apprehension, I headed to see Lucien in his study.

“Lucien, I’m here. I heard you wanted to see me?” I greeted him with a smile. He motioned for me to sit in the sofa opposite him and I did.

“Yes. I have something quite important to discuss with you today,” Lucien started to explain in a gentle voice. He soothes me every time he uses that voice.

“Actually, I heard from Edward that there might be a stalker stalking you and that you were feeling anxious about it. Well, regardless of whether there is actually a stalker or not, you have grown up to be a very beautiful lady. This is probably the right time that you started having a bodyguard of your own,” Lucien continued to explain to me. His gentle face now had a look of seriousness and concern. I knew that he was being very serious and considerate about all this.

“A bodyguard? Do I really need a bodyguard? I’ve never been attacked or anything,” I voiced out my confusion at the situation. Having a bodyguard of my own seemed a bit extreme. I do know that Lucien, Edward and many other family members have bodyguards of their own. Some were really 24/7 while some only accompanied the family members on special occasions such as public events. Lucien has an army of bodyguards when he goes out to public events but only very few discreetly around him in his daily life. That’s right, when my mother was alive, she had a small team of bodyguards that Lucien arranged for her too.

“Let’s be clear. I’m not placing a bodyguard on you because I believe you are in danger or that you may be attacked. It’s just better to be safe than sorry. Do it for me, Natalia. I don’t see any harm, so allow me to hire a bodyguard for you for my own peace of mind. Ok?” Lucien tried his hardest to win my consent. I guess I have to give in if he insists. He was right though, what harm could there be in having a body guard? Except, would my secrets be safe from Lucien if I had a bodyguard?

“Ok. If you put it that way then…” I reluctantly agreed. I don’t think I have much choice in the matter. Lucien might hire someone to tail me in secret if I refuse to have a bodyguard outright.

“Good then. Now that’s settled. Time to meet your new bodyguard,” Lucien said with a beaming smile of self-satisfaction. His smile is so beautiful and his green eyes gorgeous as always.

“Come in,” Lucien ordered and the door of his study opened suddenly. My eyes were immediately on the now opened door.

A very tall man dressed in the family's highest-ranking butler attire walked in. He was very tall, even taller than Lucien and Zak, his build also much bigger. The most striking thing about him must be his bright red hair contrasting with his strikingly clear blue eyes. His stern and serious expression did nothing to hide how handsome his face is. Wow, this man is going to be my bodyguard? He seems young for his position as one of the highest-ranking butlers; he looked around 30. I've never seen him before; he must be from the main house.

"Natalia, this is Reiner. From this moment on, until he is relieved of his duties, he will be your personal bodyguard and butler. Apart from safeguarding you, he will also serve you to ensure that your life is comfortable. Reiner, this is Natalia," Lucien introduced us to each other.

I turned to face Reiner and was immediately overwhelmed by his height and the difference in our body size. I stood barely at his chest height and had to look up to meet his eyes. What do I do now? Do I curtsy or offer him my hand for a kiss?

Reiner walked up to me before getting down on one knee and taking my hand in his, placing the back of my hand against his lips. He kissed the back of my hand gently and although I knew this was just well-mannered pleasantries, I felt a hot spark of electricity race up my arm from the contact point of his kiss.

"My name is Reiner. You can call me Reiner or any name that you wish. I am here to serve as your bodyguard and butler. I am happy and honored to finally meet you," Reiner stated in his deep and formal voice.

"Umm...same for me. I mean, I'm also happy to meet you," I stuttered a bit as I answered him.

Letting go of my hand, Reiner stood back up.

"I have work to do. Natalia, why don't you show Reiner around and spend some time with him to get better acquainted. Have a good day both of you," Lucien signaled that we both should leave his study.

"Ok. Thank you, Lucien. I'll see you later. Have a nice day and don't overstress at work," I replied cheerfully before leaving the room with Reiner.

Lucien watched as the two of them left his study. Reiner seems to be very professional and trustworthy, Lucien thought to himself. Reiner has military training and used to be a professional bodyguard before joining to serve as a butler slash bodyguard for the main house a few years ago. He has gone on many high-profile missions to guard top members of the family including some of the elders but this is his first time being dedicated to serve one person. It's close to a miracle that Edward was able to arrange for a high-ranking butler in high demand like Reiner to be Natalia's exclusive bodyguard...

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Reiner and I are standing outside of Lucien's study now and I am getting extremely nervous now that we're alone. Will I ever get used to having him around me 24/7? Where do I take him now and what should I say?

"Umm...where would you like me to show you around?" I asked timidly without looking at him.

"There's no need to go out of your way to show me around. Please proceed with your day normally as if I'm not here," Reiner replied without any emotions.

"...Right. Umm...maybe for now we should head to the lab? I have some work to do with Edward. Do you know Edward?" I asked in a quiet voice, still unable to meet his eyes. His presence is truly intimidating and his tall and large build is not helping.

"I'll drive you," He replied.

Just like that we were on the way to the lab with Reiner at the wheel. He has not spoken a word to me since we got in the car. I chose to sit next to him in the front passenger seat instead of sitting on the back seat like I should. I just didn't want to treat him like a driver; although he fully expected me to and voiced his concern. In the end, I was somehow able to get my way and could remain next to him in the passenger seat. I always prefer to have a friendlier relationship with employees working close with me including some close maids and now Reiner as well. I've been told many times that this is inappropriate for my standing as a family member but I guess as long as Lucien was ok with it, I can still sort of get my way.

However, judging my Reiner's cold and stiff attitude, it's going to take a long while for us to get on friendlier terms. This silence is so awkward; I need to find some topic to get the conversation going.

My phone vibrated on my lap. Oh, I text message?

-To be continued...

Chapter 29: My Bodyguard

"You with Reiner? I chose him to guard you. He will keep you safe from any random men. See you at the lab." Edward. So, this is what he had planned all along? Using Reiner to keep tabs on me when I'm not with him. What a heavy price to pay for my lies.

"Yes," I replied to his text simply.

Now back to Reiner. What should I talk about?

“Reiner, your full butler uniform is a little bit much. Starting tomorrow can you dress perhaps a bit more casually to blend in better?” I suggested. After all, it’s not like I want the whole world to know that I have a butler shadowing me everywhere.

“Sure, I’ll wear a suit starting tomorrow, Miss Natalia” He replied, acknowledging my words as his command.

“I mean, it doesn’t need to be a suit every day. You can adjust your outfit to sort of match what we’ll be doing based on my schedule. Oh, and please just call me Natalia,” I told him as I turned to look at his face for the first time since we left Lucien’s study. His serious face as he watched the road is quite attractive...

“As you wish,” Reiner replied shortly.

That was the end of that. In the end, we didn’t exchange any more words between us the whole ride to the lab.

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****A week before****

A very tall man with a large build, bright red hair and piercing blue eyes stood in the middle of Edward’s office.

“Good to see you again, Reiner,” Edward greeted the tall figure standing straight in the middle of his office.

“Yo, Sir Edward...How’s the girl?” Reiner turned around to greet Edward mockingly.

“That ‘girl’ would be ‘Miss Natalia’ if not ‘Lady Natalia’ now for you,” Edward corrected the man jokingly.

“That scrawny girl is all grown up now huh? I haven’t seen her for ten years,” Reiner said wistfully as he thought of the first time that he met Natalia, before she was adopted into the Rosenhall family as Lucien’s daughter.

“So, what do you have to tell me? You schemed to position me as her bodyguard and called me over here for something, right?” Reiner asked, getting straight to the point.

“Natalia has at least one lover. I want you to keep an eye on her and figure out who he is,” Edward started to explain.

“You mean including yourself?” Reiner asked rhetorically.

Edward’s mood darkened immediately. Reiner and his intuition are scary.

"Guess I hit the bull's eye. You were pretty obsessed with her after that incident," Reiner said while grinning at Edward.

"I want you to keep her safe. Natalia has come of age and I honestly don't know what plans the elders have for her or what harm lies in her way," Edward continued to explain.

"What do you plan to do with her? You're not just using her as a bed warmer like all those other women of yours, right?" Reiner asked with genuine curiosity. Edward is famous for his numerous affairs that were some times even featured in tabloids.

"I want to marry her," Edward stated bluntly.

"...What? Are you out of your mind?" Reiner replied in shock.

"I can keep her safe way better than Lucien ever can. Lucien will forever be tied to the business and this family. He is the CEO now, and in the future, he's going to become one of the elders for sure. If Natalia stays with him, she will be stuck in this rotten family forever, Edward explained his logic.

"I have the least tie to the business and this family. I have a well-established business and life outside of this mess. I can remove Natalia from this fucked-up life for good and you are going to help me achieve that."

"I owe it to Natalia's father to protect her; I don't owe you anything though. I'll do things my way and have a little bit of fun while I'm at it," Reiner stated bluntly.

"Don't you dare touch her, Reiner," Edward threatened in a low voice.

"I won't...unless she asks..." Reiner replied mockingly as he headed for the door. As far as he was concerned, this conversation was over.

Edward's plan is crazy but I could see his point. I guess I have to see for myself which life would be better for Natalia: A life with Edward or a life with Lucien. Or perhaps, a life with neither of them.

Edward watched as Reiner strode out of his office, his footsteps silent. He knew Reiner was dangerous business but he believed in Reiner's loyalty. If there was someone who would put Natalia first, it would be Reiner. The downside is Reiner is crazy hard to control and predict. This could be harder than he initially thought.

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We arrived at the lab and Reiner opened the car door and took my hand to help me out of the car. He is pampering me so much, although, I guess he is just acting his part as my butler.

We were headed to Edward's office so I decided to brief him a bit on our schedule today.

"Edward and I will be attending a gala dinner hosted by one of our research partners. It's a public event to announce a new technology that we have co-developed," I explained the main event for this evening.

"I will gladly accompany you, Miss Natalia," Reiner stated.

"Umm...please call me Natalia. Ok?" I asked him again. Miss Natalia is way too formal. Gosh, if I was married, he would probably call me Madame.

"...Only if you call me by a nickname when we are alone. Then I'll address you as Natalia when we are alone." Reiner said, surprising me that he was negotiating with me.

"What is your nickname?" I asked. This idea is intriguing.

"That is up to what you want to call me," He replied without any emotion in his voice.

"Reiner...hmm...a nickname? What about 'R'? I'll call you 'R'. It's cute yet cool, right? Like a codename," I suggested with a shy smile.

"Sure, Natalia," He replied. Deal done. Finally, he called me purely by my first name when we are alone.

"Let's go, R," I replied with a cheeky smile as we proceeded to walk to Edward's office. Maybe we are one step closing to becoming friends.

-To be continued...□□□□□□□□

Chapter 30: Evening Gala Date

"My date looks stunning!" Edward exclaimed as he eyed me from head to toe.

Since we had to attend a gala dinner tonight with our business partners, I had to get dress in formal evening attire. Annoyingly, Edward was the one who picked out this dress for me and had a stylish do my makeup and hair to perfection. I personally felt that this is a bit over the top for a work-related gala dinner. The last time I was this dolled-up was when I went to a movie premiere for one of the movies that Zak sponsored. The dress I had on was a rosy pink long dress with a very high slit running up my left thigh all the way to almost my hips. Gold pin-point high heels and my favorite timeless black caviar clutch bag completed the ensemble. My hair was put up in a stylish bun by the stylish along with rose-gold tone make-up. I have to say I looked quite attractive in the mirror.

Both Edward and R were in their tuxedos. This event is probably bigger and more important than I thought at first. R drove us in Edward's Bentley while I sat together with Edward at the back. I have to admit that I was less nervous about meeting the client and the whole event than I was about the potential of me tripping over in the golden pin-point heels that Edward had undoubtedly chosen.

"The client that we're meeting today and the co-host of this event is the CEO of one of our lab's major partners. His company is responsible for the production of many of our new products based on the research completed at the lab. He's a bit of a womanizer. So, watch yourself," Edward warned me teasingly as he ran his hand up my leg where the fabric of my dress parted.

I immediately slapped his hand away which resulted in Edward laughing uncontrollably.

"More so than you?" I teased back. I couldn't imagine a man being more of a womanizer than Edward. I've seen my fair share of gossip columns of his various affairs with celebrities in the tabloids. Those articles rivaled other articles covering him on his philanthropic projects. Edward is truly an enigma.

"Perhaps a little less than me..." he said unfazed and flashed me a smile taking my hand in his. His hands are so warm. I wondered what would happen between us if Edward found out about my recent developments with Lucien...and vice versa. These two brothers that seem to be in a love-hate relationship with each other are giving me a real headache.

On top of that, I've been having a weird repeated nightmare lately ever since Edward took me to that cottage by the lake. Perhaps the dream and the event are not even related. This whole thing could be driven by my own stress and anxiety. I've been trying not to think about the dream so much and trying to focus more on the reality when I am awake.

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We arrived at the venue which was at a famous 5-star hotel. No surprise there. R opened the door for us and Edward took my hand to help me out of the car. I succeeded in stepping out of the car without falling on my face while still able to flash a few smiles to the crowd of cameramen. Achievement of the day right here. I was very conscious of Edward holding my hand in front of the press. I pulled my hand away after he successfully helped me out of the car. There could be big and unwanted news if we, niece and uncle, were photographed with our fingers laced together as if we were a couple, which we are not.

A group of bodyguards escorted us as representatives from various news agency swarmed in trying to get as close to Edward as possible to ask him questions. The flashes from the cameras were blinding and I was getting quite annoyed and sick of the attention. Edward was smiling and keeping up his perfect public appearance. R pulled

me away from Edward and used his big body to shield me from the crowd as he led me away while the other bodyguards continued to guard Edward by keeping enough space between him and the press. It was a mess and I was thankful to R for leading me inside safely and without much hassle.

“Thank you for getting me out of there,” I thanked R when we were finally inside the conference hall.

“No problem,” He replied curtly.

What should I do now? Should I go to my seat and wait for Edward or should I go and socialize with other people to try to build up relationship and connections. I’m not a big fan of socializing but work is work.

“I’m going to go greet some guests over there,” I informed R and he nodded before following behind me. I guess he really will be stuck to me 24/7.

I met a couple of professors and researchers that I already knew from past introductions and seminars that I’ve attended. I managed to introduce myself to many new people in the field as well as some high-profile investors. I guess I wasn’t doing too bad for myself, although, I have to admit that I was doing so well because of Edward’s connections and reputation. People immediately became friendly and trusting when I mentioned that I was his niece and is now working for him.

It was time for the official presentation to start and everyone was headed to their seat. R led me to my designated seat where I met up with Edward as we sat next to each other for the presentation. Edward was invited to give a few opening remarks to kick-off the session. Edward’s speech captured the audience and gave them hope and inspiration for the future of technology and medical research. The round of applaud at the end of his speech was proof enough that he was amazing. Edward’s public persona was flawless. Flawlessly smart, charming, empathetic and captivating. I guess very few people know how different his real personality is.

I didn’t end up meeting the “womanizer” CEO. Perhaps that was because Edward kept him quite occupied with some talks. This made me a bit relieved. I guess Edward has his own ways of protecting me and I have to thank Edward for that.

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Finally, the presentation came to an end. Edward was being swept away by the crowd of guests and the press once again.

“Come this way,” R whispered in my ear as he took my wrist in his hand before pulling me away from the crowd.

“Are we going home? What about Edward?” I asked. Edward was still stuck in the middle of the crowd. It doesn’t look like he’ll be able to free himself from them anytime soon. Poor Edward.

“Please follow me,” R instructed as he continued to drag me by the arm. Noticing that I was struggling to keep up with his long strides, he slowed his pace to match mine.

To my surprise, instead of heading home, we took the elevator from the lobby up to one of the top floors of the hotel. When the elevator opened, R dragged me along before we entered a luxurious hotel suite.

“Please rest here until Edward is done with his business. I will take you home later. I have already informed Lucien so there is no need for you to worry,” R explained as he led me to a sitting room and gestured for me to sit down on the sofa.

I flopped down on the soft sofa and immediately took off my high heels. My feet and legs needed the rest and my mind needed to wind down from the stress of meeting so many people. My feet are killing me, wearing brand new high heels to an event was such a bad idea. Some parts of my feet were scrubbed raw by the leather straps, I looked down at my feet to see that they were bleeding slightly.

“Let’s clean and bandage them up,” R said softly as he crouched down in front of me on one knee, taking my foot into his large and warm hands. Amazingly, he already had a first aid kit next to him, ready to take care of my wound.

“Wait! I can do it myself...” I protested, slightly embarrassed at his touch.

“You did your job for this evening, now let me do mine,” R brushed my protest aside and started to tend to my wound. His touch was gentle and he finished taking care of the wounds on my feet professionally in no time.

“Thank you, R...” I murmured my thanks.

“You’re welcomed, Natalia...” He replied as our eyes met. Wow, these long auburn lashes framing his bright blue eyes are hard to look away from, I thought as I stared, lost in those eyes.

“Finally! I managed to escape. Set up dinner please so I can finally dine with my girl,” Edward’s loud entrance into the room broke the spell.

“Right away, Sir Edward,” R replied professionally and exited the room.

“We’re having dinner here?” I asked, a bit confused.

“Yes, to celebrate the success of this event. To be frank, I got Reiner to arrange all this in advance because I wanted to celebrate alone with you...and also because I knew I

would be drained from the event. Or would you rather go to my place?" Edward explained while turning to give me a wicked smile. He obviously knows that I don't want to go over to his place. Come to think of it, I actually don't know where Edward lives. Unlike his siblings, Edward does not live in a mansion in the family compound. Zak's mother no longer lives in her mansion either so it's just Zak alone in his mansion. Due to her health issues, she had to move out of the city to a place with fresher air.

—To be continued...



























