

She had made friends.

Sort of.

Kopik, the 60-ish wilting gardener. His skin seemed sun burned because of constantly working under the sun. He always had a cloth wrapped around his head for comfort. Whistling and watering the plants. .he seemed like, he was at the top of the world.

Emma would offer him a drink or some snacks and he would politely decline. According to him, his drinks and food reached him without delay.

She had discovered, he had an illegitimate daughter with a prostitute and upon finding, his wife had thrown him out on the streets.

The prostitute too hauled his daughter out of her house.

And Emma thought she had a hard life. There were people like him. . turning the lemons, life had thrown at him, into lemonade.

Kopik only had this job to survive.

"I dunno care. As long as the girlie is happy I'm ready to work under hell." He said while wiping the sweat off his forehead.

Emma had smiled seeing the love of a father for his daughter. The sweat, the tired sighs. .she could do nothing but pray for him.

But then the weak could do nothing but utter a so prayer and hope the breeze would carry it to the throne of God.

And then there was him. .

Frank, the almost 50 years old brooding driver had a scary aura but once Emma started to talk to him. .the ice melted away and bit by bit she learned her lesson. .don't judge a book by its cover.

Some people just had a resting bitch face syndrome.

Frank was a supporter of that.

It was tough to get around his hardcore exterior but one day he did crack a smile at her.

He would grunt when Emma would ask him a question.

Bark out a laugh when Emma wouldn't get his joke. His jokes weren't exactly sunshine and daisy. They revolved around death and macabre situations which he found amusing.

Turned out, he was an ex military man. Experienced in driving around in any vehicle you put him in.

It had been five days since incident number 2. And this time she did something different.

She quit hiding.

Quit keeping her voice down.

Quit walking slow without making any noise.

She reminded herself, she was not working for free. She had the same rights as him. She was free to walk around as being told by her boss!

But of course, all the vows and defiance fell apart when he would arrive.

The second he would step in—

She would hightail from there.

Not giving him a chance at anything and it was strange but since two days. .she had felt his eyes on her.

Talking to Diana, he would look at her as if just being reminded of her existence. she would feel the weight of his eyes—and the next second his eyes would snap back to Diana.

It was as if. .he wanted to say something? Which was ridiculous! His hatred and outrage at her—nope! She had to be mistaken.

Maybe this is why she was hiding again. Showing her back to her vows.

"I don't think I can. .," She trailed off watching him sigh.

"This," his hands dirt up in mud, held the white lily flower. " is meant for you, miss. Plant it." He had an such honest smile. The gardener was giving her his heart.

"Are you sure?" Emma asked again, wetting her chapped lips.

The look in his eyes had her feeling like he was offering her the world.

She nodded right then seeing the grin widen on his wrinkled face.

So the next ten minutes, Emma planted the delicate lily, a weird sense of accomplishment filling her. Seeing her hands caked up in mud and feeling the sun blazing on her back. .she felt accomplished.

Kopik watered it while Emma washed away the dirt from her hands, the sweat on her back not bothering her at all.

Humming and humming, he glanced at her.

"I heard lily stands for faith and purity."

"That's what I need right now. Faith." Emma said in a low voice knowing he didn't hear her reply. He was working on the little flower, setting it up nicely. Cupping the mud around its stem.

"Emma!"

The yell made her jump as she turned around watching an agitated Miles standing on the marble entrance. Tapping his foot impatiently.

"See you later, Mr Kopik." She bid her farewell to the old man and walked across the stretch of the lush lawn.

Miles had never needed her before—oh she did his biddings sometimes.

Can you get the file from Diana?

Can you order the cheese cake for me?

Can you press this shirt? The maid ruined it.

And Emma did those tiny chores and she was damn sure he wanted her to get something this time too. It never bothered her. In fact it made her happy doing his biddings. Miles gave her a sense of familiarity. He acted like a spoiled brother around her.

Miles pushed up his slipping glasses.

"What is it now?" Emma asked placing a hand on her hip.

"Uhcan you get the spare vaccum cleaner for me? It's in the storage room." He asked giving her his best have-pity-on-me face.

Emma rolled her eyes.

"This is the last time I'm doing it." She muttered darkly.

"You say it every single time." He mused and then fixed his face as she glared.

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Emma walked in the house with a light mood and a spring to her feet. She planted a Lily! A flower of faith and hope.

How she needed these two!

As she entered the spacious lounge, the smile on her face skipped. Her feet slowed down. .the color draining from her face, the good turned to worse.

It was. . him.

Him watching her from the second floor. Hands over the marble railing as he watched the light going out of her eyes.

A horrible feeling settled in her bones.

How long had he been watching her?

Long enough to wipe out the smile on her face?

"You." He said suddenly. "Come to my room."

The authority in his voice made her heart come to life and everything else he said to her came rushing back. .

The condescending voice, the fury, the accusations. .

She clenched her fists, digging half moons on her palms.

She didn't reply.

Ignoring him and going straight towards the basement where the storage was located.

He didn't hire her! Diana did so technically she was not his employee!

Since he loved to remind her of her worth so why bother talking to her?!

As she climbed down the stairs to the basement, she thought she heard heavy footsteps bounding down.

Seemed like he had an odd power on her since he always managed to flip her world upside down. Turned her smile into a frown.

Oh look at her now! The bloody man was walking in her thoughts! Running them!

In a dark mood, she opened the storage room and stepped in. She had been down the basement plenty of times with Diana so it didn't scare her and rich people storage rooms were the complete opposite of laymen's stores. The room was brightly lit with cardboard boxes stacked up one over the other.

Now all she had to do was find the vacuum cleaner.

"Miles you better pay me for this." She walked towards the boxes and was just about to lean down when the door burst open.

Startling her enough to turn around.

Seeing Maximus stepping in.

The murderous glint in his eyes taking her breath away.

He shut the door, slamming it harshly. The loud bangmaking her clap a hand over her mouth.

Turning around, his nostrils flashed dangerously. "Who the fuckyou think you're?" His nostrils flared as he stood in front of her like a nightmare she couldn't forget.

She lowered her hand. Not at all getting his aggressive stance.

What did she do now?!

"I. .I. . what?

She stood rooted to the spot as he walked towards her with sure steps. His unwavering gaze wanting her to run away and never be under his gaze.

"You like running away don't you? You think I don't notice seeing you hide away from me?" His deathly calm voice crawled on her skin.

In two steps he was close to her. .a mere one foot distance between them. The thud thudof her heart driving her over the edge as she watched him with wide eyes.

"How many times do you need to be reminded of where you belong from?"

The acidic comment jolted her into senses. .as Maximus watched the blush seep into her pale skin.

He wanted a reaction? Oh he was getting one.

Didn't she promise herself to ignore him?

Maximus leaned in.

His face closer to her than ever. .

"When I ask you to come to my room, you doas I say! You do as I—"

Emma stepped to a side, giving him her back. . forcing him to shut his eyes. Clench his fists. Purse his lips in a bitter line.

She rummaged through the boxes and found the stupid vacuum cleaner. Not at all acknowledging his being—she walked towards the door on wobbling legs—one arm wrapped around the box while the other opening up the door—

He was on her before she could blink!

His large hand appeared on top of hers—shutting the door back!

Emma felt her skin burn at the sudden contact and she snatched her hand back from under his. . feeling his powerful presence beside her. . feeling his body heat reaching her. . towering over her. .

"Don't give me your back when I'm talking!!" He hissed, his hot breath hitting her earlobe.

A fire like no other ripped in her heart and she whirled around—not at all ready for the proximity. .her chest heaving up and down—the delicate tendons of her neck popping out—

"I'll do whatever the hell—"

The guttural growl drove her back against the door—with sheer horror she watched him snatchthe cardboard box out of her grip and hurl it across the room!

The contents of the box slipped out as they hit the floor. Scattering around.

Breathing hard, he glanced at her.

Relishing at the look of terror on her face.

His temper got the best of him.

He brought his face to her level.

"Try cutting me again and I swear you won't leave alive. You hear me?" His ice cold voice cracked up her courage. This girl was pushing all his wrong buttons! He rarely lost his temper and she—

"You're no one. . nothingthat I have to work hard for to talk to you!!!!" He thundered down and that's when he heard it.

The first whimper that broke out of her lips.

First came the whimper than came the tears. .one at a time.

She wasn't looking at him. Her eyes were downcast as the tears slipped silently. Stopping him from saying anything further.

Running a hand in his hair, he cursed. Stepping back. . turning around. Knowing well he fuckedup.

Not with the idiotic girl.

With the door.

The bolt had slipped out with the sudden force.

The were locked in.

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