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Diana clapped a hand over her mouth. Her jade eyes bugging out
with excitement when—
"Relax. We aren't. Engaged." He stated, killing her excitement right
there.
Emma noted the confident smile slipping o Laura's face as she
glanced at his stoic face.
"Yeah. I forgot. This is a promise ring." She gave o a nervous giggle. .
looking at his side profile for a irmation.
Diana kept looking back and forth between them whilst Emma acted
like she was a statue placed at the wrong venue.
"It's not. I got it because she liked it." He shrugged his heavy
shoulders.
Emma wished the floor would open up and swallow her whole. She
could see the color of embarrassment spreading on Laura's cheeks.
Her baby blue eyes blinking rapidly as if to ward o . .tears?
"Max, what is this?" Diana asked slowly.
Maximus looked her dead in the eyes.
"She wanted to come and—"
Diana cut him o . " I'm asking about the ring. You don't just go o
and buy a girl a diamond" Her voice was low, trying to make him
understand the gravity of situation.
His dark eyebrows screed up.
"I got it simply because she —"
Laura didn't let him complete as she snatched her arm away from
him and sprinted o . The sob escaping her red painted lips. To Emma
it was a scene staring out of a soap opera, with the girl running up the
stairs . .tears splashing down her face.
Diana sighed so ly. . sounding tired.
"I didn't get engage." He repeated.
Closing her eyes, Diana struggled with her patience.
"Break this news to herbecause apparently she thinks it's an
engagement ring. Of course the poor girl doesn't expect much from
you so in her goldilocks head, you proposed to her by giving her a
ring." Diana broke it down patiently and a knowing look dawned on
his handsome face..
"Fuck. ." He breathed out.
"Please settle this with her." Diana said while looking at the stairs as
if Laura was lurking by.
He nodded. . looking up at the staircase.
Shaking his head, he walked towards the stairs.
And Emma turned rigid.
Acting like she was invisible as he came near with each step he took.
Her eyes were glued to Diana's back but still. .still she felt the weight
of his gaze burning her face. .his jaw flexing at seeing her watching
everything from a safe distance.
Emma stopped breathing altogether when he passed by her. The
woodsy cologne filling up her lungs. The tiny moment between them
flashing in her head—the half hug— It was the sound of heavy
footsteps that made her take a breath . .a huge lungful of breath.
He made breathing hard.
Slowly, she made her way towards her boss who was busy dictating a
maid and Emma looked down, her eyes roaming over the . . . Dior
suitcases.
"—you know how she is. I don't think they will be sharing a room."
The maid nodded obediently.
"Take her stu to the guest room. Guess they will be spending some
time together. " Diana seemed to be talking more to herself then at
the maid.
The woman scurried o, taking all the instructions.
Noticing her presence, she hu ed in annoyance. Emma had a feeling
she didn't like the sudden entry.
"Is everything okay?" Emma asked noticing the frown lines on her
beautiful face.
"Fine. It's just that. .," She trailed o , her eyes having a far away look
," why don't he notice you—"
"What?" Emma's puzzled voice electrocuted her.
She jolted awake.
"I mean—i don't thinkLaura and Max. .are made for each other. I
know my brother well and I know what kind of girl he should be with
but . . . it's too soon to say anything."
Emma nodded.
Yeah, too soon to say anything at all, she agreed.
XXXXXXXXXXX
Turned out Laura Vitale was. . .a child stuck in an smoking hot body. A
model, a fashionista. Emma had enough experience to read people
and she had been observing her around.
Over the table.
With Diana.
At the lawn.
She had heard about a man child but now she was meeting a woman
child Laura would pout at not getting her poached eggat breakfast.
She would end up in tears over the slightest of things.
And most importantly, she clung to Maximus like an eight legged
octopus. For Emma, it was a rare sight to see the hardcore man
engaging with the blonde bombshell.
Also, she had been actively avoiding Emma's existence. It's not that
she had gone out to be a bat shit crazy bitch but. .she didn't
recognize her presence. At all.
And to Emma it made her life easy at the mansion.
It had been half a week of her staying over and finallyon the
weekend, the ice broke between them. Decked in a body hugging
dress, the plunging neckline leaving nothing to imagination. .she
walked right in the kitchen.
Emma who was preparing a sandwich for herself, stilled at the
sudden blast of perfume.
Knowing well who could it be.
She glanced around at the intruder and found her . . looking back at
her. The baby blue eyes eyeing her with a guarded look.
"Do you want something?" Emma asked politely.
Her blonde eyebrow went up.
"You speak too? I thought you were mute or something." She said
while flipping her golden locks over her shoulder. The silver dress
blinding Emma when the light would hit it o .
" Umml do speak quite well." Emma smiled watching the ice melting
in her blue eyes.
"Can you get me a glass of water? My throat stings and Max will be
here any moment."
Emma obliged, getting a chilled glass of water for her.
Greedily, she drank all of it. Not leaving a single drop. Sighing in pure
pleasure, she thanked her.
"I have a question." She asked suddenly as Emma got the glass back.
"Yeah?"
"Do you love Maximus? It must be hard to resist him."
Emma's eyes shot up to her pretty face. Wanting to know if she was
joking or—
Nope. She wasn't joking.
In fact she expected an answer.
Emma shook her head with force.
"No. No way. I don't— no." Emma's throat turned dry.
Laura's face cracked into a smile.
"Good. All this time I thought you were eyeing my man. I'm sorry for
giving you a cold shoulder."
Emma was surprised at her open admission.
"I understand where you're coming from." Emma said sounding
breathless.
At that moment, a car honked and Emma could hear the gates
churning to open up.
"That's my cue to leave. See you later, Emma!" She grinned excitedly,
turning around and click clacking away.
Emma's heartbeat had rise up.
She did not just ask her that!
Now, she could get why the hell had she been refusing to
acknowledge her.
Because she was insecure about the man she claimed to be her?
Someone should break it to her, it's not love if it's insecure
"Whatever. ." She bristled.
But her heart had smirked.
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The thunder was so bad, the glass windows shook with the force of it.
Weather had turned from mild to dangerous. The harsh rain pitter
pattered against the windows.
Diana had been asleep while she prepared to leave for her designated
apartment.
But the awful weather didn't let her out.
Kopik had warned her not to leave tonight. Still, she had yelled at him
that she would be alright.
And the old man had yelled back at her . "I ain't letting you go out on
your own!"
Seeing the stubborn look on his face, Emma gave up. And walked
back into the dimly lit mansion. The maids had gone out to their
quarters tucked at the back of the house.
It was her and a sleeping Diana.
"She don't even know I'm staying over." Emma muttered to herself.
Standing in the middle of the spacious lounge and hearing the wind
roar..
The leaping shadows on the walls seemed like floating ghosts. The oil
paintings on the walls staring at her—or maybe she was staring hard
at them? Hastily, she looked away. Not knowing what to do? Where to
go?
She felt like the thunder was going to climb in the house any moment
now..
"Guess I should wake her up." She decided. The weather and the
silence was getting on her nerves. .
She had just turned around when she heard it.
The honk.
And the gates opening up.
Emma stayed where she was. Knowing well who could it be . She
warded o the dark whispers taking his name. . .
All she wanted were people To surround her in this deathly silence.
.it didn't matter if it was him.
Her eyes were glued to the entrance, she twisted her hands around —
jumping at the bellowing of the thunder—and that's when she saw
the dark figure cutting in.
The lights flashed behind him. Illuminating half of his face..
He seemed like a shadow standing on the threshold. A white dress
shirt over charcoal black pants — he didn't notice her.
Emma too didn't make any noise.
He wasn't alone.
The woman stepped in , her figure wobbling around and she was
giggling out loud.
"I can see my brain spinning!" She laughed and twirled her finger
round and round in a spin over her head.
Sighing, Maximus stepped in and suddenly sti ened—as if realizing
he wasn't alone.
It was time to make her presence know.
"Laura." She squeaked, stepping forward—his neck turning at her—
that's when the lounge fell into complete darkness. The lights went
out. Freezing her right there. .all that could be heard was Laura
giggling and snorting.
Luckily, she had her cellphone. Quickly, she took it out and turned
the flashlight on.
And she wished she hadn't.
Seeing him watching the pathetic state of Laura impassively as she
continued to make a fool out of herself.
"I look beautiful right?" Laura asked sticking out her tongue at him.
A humorless smile spread on his face.
"You're the embodiment of embarrassment."
His icy comment did nothing to Laura but on Emma it had an impact
for she suddenly wanted to escape.
And her heart dropped down, noticing the low battery lashing on
her phone's screen.
"I'll bring something from the kitchen." She said hurriedly.
He didn't reply.
She took that as her cue to leave and sprinted o towards the kitchen
before her phone could die on her.
Tearing the door open, she scrambled around the drawers, on the
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shelves looking for anythingto keep the light alive and all she got was a candle. Swi ly, she flared it to life and slipped her phone back in her pants's pocket. Carefully, taking the candle o the shelf. .she walked back towards the couple. Noticing he didn't change his position and Laura was laying on her back on carpet. Making a snow angel. "Come on. Lets get you up." Emma said so ly at the laughing senseless woman. Maximus glanced at her, helping Laura on to her feet. Balancing a candle in her free hand. Emma's face was so ly lit up with the orange light of the candle. Her brown eyes fringed with dark lashes and her lips seemed so andwhat would it be like to kiss a Laura tried to snatch at the candle as she tried to stand up. Emma gasped, her grip on the candle loosening while Laura struggled to stand and seeing the hot candle descending down towards Emma's hand— He leaped towards her. Catching her wrist, his long fingers curling around her fist—steadying the candle in her grip at once. Feeling the drop of wax burning at his skin. A thudcould be heard as Laura fell into a heap on the carpet. Her hand catching nothing but empty air for support. Her drunken eyes watching the man she claimed to love, holding another woman's hand. He did not catch her but her. Emma had gone breathless, her eyes widened at the sight of the small white dot on the back of his hand. His hand wrapped around her fist. Emma supporting the candle. Him supporting Emma. "You alright?" His harsh breath fell on her face and she couldn't look up. All she could see was his hard chest. Moving up and down. "Yes." Her lips trembled. Everything inside her seemed to be coming to life. .the blood in her, the dragons in her, the hope and a strange indestructible feeling. . Laura moaned. Breaking the glass like moment. With her heart in her mouth, she glanced up at him. Candlelight

darkening his eyes. . .he seemed stuck in the moment. . .so stuck he

Why was his hand so warm and why had her hand gone ice cold in his

didn't feel the sting of wax dripping on the back of his hand.

Emma stumbled out of the moment as she whispered. "Let go,

"My head. .," Laura struggled to stand up again . .

His answer made her breathless.

"Why do you always ask of me to let go?"

grip?

please."

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