

Chapter 62 - 65

I felt the weight of someone's gaze upon my shoulders. I tried to ignore the unsettling feeling aside but it only bothered me more. All eyes had been nailed on us the moment Ryze ushered me to the dance floor and that's when I felt someone's intently looking at me, there was something utterly familiar about the stare which I failed to fathom, call it instinct or something, but it was indeed familiar.

Ryze was the third oldest among my eight brothers and by far the most good-looking. Without a doubt my brothers are all refined men with striking features but Rhyze has a smooth, angelic face which I find attractive.

He has soft phoenix eyes who appeared lively all the time. It was framed by perfectly arched eyelashes that could make a woman green with envy, and sometimes on the unfortunate side, made our younger brothers tease him frequently.

His lips were thin and shapely as if they belonged to a woman. His perfectly chiseled nose enhanced his gentle features. He looked like a male version of me.

My wandering eyes surveyed the densely packed crowd with growing unease, I didn't expect that we would have a sea of visitors tonight when I was only expecting no more than two hundred But the guests gathered around us with keen no eyes, watching me dance with Ryze with curious keen eyes were no less than four hundred guests.

"Nervous?" Ryze whispered in his usual gentle tone. It's one of the traits I admire from my brother, he was the only Crawford man I know who was eternally calm and soft-spoken. It seems he was the only one who didn't inherit the notorious Crawford temper. Unfortunately, Ryze has a different calling. He was more purpose-driven inclined to fulfill his greatest dream—to be a priest.

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"A little bit," I replied, giving him the sweetest smile I could muster which he responded with the same eager smile that made his eyes crinkle at the corner.

"Don't be. Now that you're a Crawford, you have nothing to be afraid of.? They should be the ones who should feel nervous. You have nine Crawford men watching your back." Ryze's smile broadened, it was so warm and genuine and I found my heart-melting.

"Thank you, Ryze," I mumbled.

I was momentarily distracted when a familiar song began to play in the background. It was happier by Ed Sheeran. My eyes widened in curious fascination wondering who had chosen the music.

I thought I'd forgotten the unsettling stare but it returned, this time it felt heavier. As if by accident, my eyes landed on the dimly lit corner of the grand hall where a bar counter is located. Seated on the bar stool was a man wearing a shirt which I couldn't guess if it was white or grey since the light couldn't reach the corner.

There was something utterly familiar, despite being hidden into the shadows, there was something about him that simply stood out. Despite him wearing a rather out of place outfit, composed of a t-shirt and jeans in the room full of people indulging in the grandeur of their attires,? he still looks so proud, tall, and intimidating.

"I shall turn you over to Ethan, he looked as if he wanted to strangle me for keeping you longer than I should."

A turned my head to him, chuckling at the humor in his voice. He landed a soft, gentle kiss on my cheeks before letting me go.

When I turned my gaze back to the corner of the room, the bar stool was now empty, the man was nowhere to be found and there was no trace of him as if he evaporated into the air. I wondered if I'd imagined him or he was a ghost after vanishing as fast as he arrived.

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I was left with no further time to locate the man by Ethan's arrival. "Shall I have this dance, princess?" He said grinning happily after Ryze stepped aside giving him the chance to occupy his place.

"My pleasure Sir," I replied, grinning back.

The song changed and I found myself enjoying it as Ethan whirled me to the dance floor with the excellent grace of someone who frequented the dance floor. I wonder how many girls have danced with him before and surely enjoyed the moment with him.

The moment was so magical, so enchanting that I found myself lost for words to describe how I felt at the moment. I felt so special tonight like a princess dancing in the center of the room, while hundreds of eyes watched me with unconcealed admiration.

I feel so high at the moment as if I had taken some forbidden drugs that sent my pulse rate jittering with excitement. In fact, I felt as if I am the most beautiful woman in the room. Perhaps it was because I was surrounded by the most good-looking men in Cordova that I found myself so damn special. I too was well aware of the fact some women inside the room were eyeing me with raw envy as eight dashing men swept me off my feet with a dance.

I forgot that about my uncertainties, I too forgot that I was uncomfortable.

After the dance with Ethan, Skye followed, then there was Caleb after him was Rhylle and then there was Troy. I was expecting my feet to feel exhausted during the fifth dance but I have more energy than I thought. Surprised by my enthusiasm and gusto, I managed to dance with Calix, then with Blithe, and the last with Keith.

When the music died down, the dance I thought was the last wasn't the end, coming towards me at the center of the room with a proud gleam on his eyes was Alexander Crawford, my father.

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"Can I have this last dance, though I doubt this would actually be the last dance since a dozen of men are dying to take their turn?"

"I am honored to have this dance, Papa," I replied with eagerness, ignoring his last remark.

The room plunged into a sudden hush as Alexander Crawford honored me with a dance.

"Thank you for all of this Pa. This is the most memorable experience I ever had." After a long empty silence, I manage to say the words. Despite my efforts to suppress the tears, I end up spilling them.

"You don't need to thank me, Beatrix. I want you to know that I'm so proud of you. I will do everything to make you happy." Alexander replied I have never seen so much tenderness in his eyes before.

The dance ended with Alexander wrapping me into a tight hug. I swear I have nothing more to ask. I got everything at my feet. Above all, I am happy and contented.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this toast is for my only daughter, Beatrix Crawford, the heiress of Crawford Chain of Business!" Alexander announced raising a toast in the air.

After the toast, the dance floor was opened for the guests to indulge in a dance. I was planning to retire early, my body finally succumbed to exhaustion. After eyeing Faith peacefully asleep in Ethan's arms, I finally decided I had had enough of the party.

"Can I have this dance?"

I groaned. So much for my plans to retire early. A man with piercing brown eyes stood in front of me, his lips curled into a smile that no woman could resist. Good Lord! I muttered inwardly realizing that I have to stay a little longer.

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He was tall, my head barely reached his shoulders. He has this smooth warm honey hair that which I suddenly found myself wanting to brush my fingers into his wild unruly hair.

He was handsome... too handsomeA model perhaps? An actor? He was too out of my league. I thought eyeing his broad muscular shoulders and perfectly chiseled body which his tuxedo wasn't able to conceal.

When he smiled, I suddenly have a clear view of his pearly white teeth which had me guessing if he was actually a toothpaste commercial model.

"S-sure." I stuttered. Blushing.

The last thing I knew, I was being directed to the dance floor.

"Don't be scared." He whispered, gently guiding my hands around his neck. His arms slithered down the curve of my waist.

What a perfect gentleman. I thought as he danced with ease. I could feel my palms trembling as I held his neck.

Butterflies were churning my stomach as he holds me. For a moment, the room faded to the distance. There were only the two of us standing on the dance floor. Even the noise seems to drift far away. I am only aware of his breathing and so my own.

The dance stopped I became aware that the song ended. Once more I was back into reality.

"Goodnight Se?orita Beatrix." He murmurs in his sexy, sultry voice that nearly made my eyes close. "I shall see you tomorrow," he said meaningfully. After that, he was gone leaving me reeling with shock.

Chapter 63

Last night, I thought of him as handsome.

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But seeing him in broad daylight, I was utterly shocked to realize that 'handsome' would be an understatement. The man standing in front of me now, with left hand thrust on the pocket of his jeans and the other behind his back was a demigod.

He wore a simple blue t-shirt on top and blue denim jeans at the bottom. Despite the simplicity in the clothes he wore one could feel the authority he possessed, combined with a commanding aura he seemed to carry wherever he went.

The wild, untamed hair crowning his head last night wasn't the shade of warm honey. Perhaps it must be the effect of the pale light from the chandelier that made me thought it was that shade. Today it made me realize that his hair was a startling strawberry blonde and his eyes beneath his bushy eyebrow were an intriguing shade of emerald green—another mistake of mine. Must be the trick of light too.

For a moment, I found myself watching him with the same intense stare he was watching me. His eyes glowed with wry amusement, the corners of his eyes curled in fascination making me wonder what he was thinking behind those wild piercing glares.

Shock wouldn't be enough to describe the sudden increase of my pulse rate upon seeing him standing in the living room after I was summoned by a servant informing me that a certain Mr. Marcus Peterson arrived.

I didn't recall having acquaintance with a man named Peterson but I found myself itching with nagging curiosity for the reason why he paid me a visit. When I walked down the stairs, I found him seated on the white Victorian sofa. And when he saw me he quickly came to his feet and met me halfway.

A flicker of recognition sparkled in my eyes. He was indeed the man I danced last night. I recalled him saying something like 'seeing me again.' It didn't occur to me that he was serious about it. I wasn't interested in entertaining anyone at the moment.

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"It's a surprise seeing you Mr.. uh—Peterson." I broke the unnerving silence with a rather awkward smile, wondering how I should welcome a male visitor.

"Just call me Marcus." He responded in his sexy, sultry voice that could turn a woman's knee into jell-o but not mine. I'm particularly allergic to men as handsome as he.

He extended a hand which I couldn't ignore. It was seemingly rude of me to not take it,?The man was being polite, I told myself as I took his hands, it was soft and smooth, not the hard and calloused palms I was expecting. It occurred to me he was pampered and wasn't used to hard work.

I don't know what yad gotten on me but I was expecting someone else which I couldn't even understand.?Perhaps a man with brown hair and ocean blue eyes? The thoughts made my eyebrows furrowed in confusion. I don't know where the thought came from.

"For you, Beatrix."

He gently pushed a bouquet of flowers into my palms, it was the first time I became aware he had one. He must be hiding it behind his back.

"T-thank you." I stuttered like a teenager receiving a gift for the very first time.

His intention was still unclear.?We just met last night and here he was?giving me a bouquet of fresh red roses. The flower was beautiful but I prefer the pristine white roses compared to the usual red ones.

He must be offering some friendship, I told myself, crushing the idea of something more than that.

"Please sit down Mr. Marcus." I offered, cheeks blushing with embarrassment, cursing myself inwardly for forgetting my good manners.

"No worries Beatrix, I just came here to give you dropped by to see you, now that I did, I must be going. I'll visit you again if I have the time." He said, after

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that he was gone as fast as he arrived, leaving me to face a whirlwind of questions alone.

"I guess you've acquired yourself an admirer big sister." It was Troy grinning from ear to ear as he emerged from nowhere.

"I assume you'd been sently watching Sir?" I said in a reprimanding tone.

When amusement flickered on his eyes and the grin he had turned to a crisp laughter I knew I was right.

"I was glad you found that amusing Troy." I said in a stern voice. He was obviously laughing at my expense.

"Not really my dear sister. I was just wondering how Alexander Crawford would handle the news that his only daughter had attracted a dozen admirers at a single night."

"Stop exaggerating Troy. That was merely a single visitor today. There's nowhere on earth I would have many admirer from last night."

Troy shrugged his shoulders at my remark and motioned me to walk inside the kitchen.

"Bloody Hell." It was my initial reaction after walking straight into the kitchen and stumbling into a basket of flowers crowding the space on the floor.

"That was unladylike." Troy remarked with a snort.

"Where did these flowers come from? I said instead ignoring my brother's stern remark about my?behavior.

There weren so many of them that the ceramic floor was barely visible in the clutter. Over the kitchen counter, a rather fragile looking bouquet of flowers crowded the space. The sight created a mini garden inside the kitchen.

The crowded sight was giving me a

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headache this early in the day.

"From your admirer I guess." He replied, shrugging his shoulders.

I shook my head in exasperation, Troy was right, I assume, eyeing the card attached to the flowers and seeing my name written on it.

"Oh dear!"

Clarissa Crawford suddenly emerged from the door, her confused gaze surveyed the room as if she was battling if she walked straight inside the garden and not the kitchen.

"I assume you acquired yourself a number of suitors dear!" She exclaimed, her eyes widening in surprise. When she recovered her eyes lit up with happiness.?"Well, have you found anyone attractive?"

I groaned and cast my eyes heavenward. Handling my eight brothers alone was a difficult task. I don't want to make my life even more complicated. "That's not gonna happen Grandmama." I replied, evading the discussion about a possible suitor. "I'll go ask some assistance from the gardener. Hopefully he got an idea what he should do about this."

I waited no response and hurriedly escaped the scene. Troy and Grandmama will roast me alive if I don't leave right away. They will undoubtedly tease me until I couldn't take it anymore.

Warm stream of sunshine welcomed my face after stepping outside. I stopped for a moment, taking a subtle breath of fresh air to calm my nerves. I was still savoring the moment when I caught a glimpse of a servant waking her way towards me with another batch of roses clutched around her arms.

I nearly ran my fingers into my hair in frustrations. This is not happening. With quick long steps, I made my way to the garden. My wandering eyes trying to find the gardener. I needed his assistance right now. I couldn't let the kitchen

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look like that. I need to clear it as soon as possible before my annoyed brothers decide to let the flowers be thrown outside the house.

Maybe I could ask the Gardener to help me move some of the flowers on the flower pots in the garden. I hate to see them go to waste, so I might at least display them in a place they would be appreciated. Probably, I will display some on the flower vases too.

My burgeoning thoughts were cut short when my gaze landed on the tall man holding a hose and watering my grandmother's rare collection of plants. He was so absorbed in his own thoughts that he didn't notice I was standing just behind him, it gave me the chance to observe his back..

My pulse rate quickened watching him with a curious interest. He was tall, too tall actually that my head barely reached his shoulders. He wore a plain t-shirt which was quite oversized. Beads of sweat were now forming on his temples.

He has broad muscular shoulders and the t-shirt he wore which was now soaked with his sweat, it now clung to his body like a second skin He wore jogging pants at the bottom.

My heart beat erratically inside my chest. There was something utterly familiar with the man but I can't seem to figure it out. I ignored the sudden chill that ran to my spine as I watched him.

The man was surrounded with a thick mist of mystery. A thick hard wall seems to surround him letting no one to penetrate inside.

Suddenly as if he was aware that I was watching him in silence, he stopped on his tracks. The action only made my heart beat like crazy. As if very slowly, he turned towards my direction and I froze as a pair of piercing blue eyes landed at me. For a moment my world stopped spinning.

Chapter 64

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"H-have w-we met before?" I blurted the words aloud before I realized what I was doing. I shouldn't have asked but there's a part of me curious to find the truth.

A pair of exquisite blue eyes stared back at me and I caught my breath as he steadied his gaze to mine. He's got the most amazing shade of blue eyes I've ever seen. For a moment I found myself staring straight into a shade of beautiful lagoon.

"I assure you, we never met before Madam." He was polite, his face showed not a bit of emotion but when I looked into the depth of his eyes, I caught a glimpse of sadness he wasn't able to conceal in time.

"Are you sure?" I wasn't convinced yet. There was a different answer I wish to hear coming from him.

"I'm certain Madam. We haven't met before." He replied.

Despite the seemingly honest remark, I have this feeling he wasn't entirely telling the truth.

I shook my head. Probably I was simply mistaken. Why would he lie anyway?

"How may assist you, Madam?" He asked, his eyes never leaving mine. I could feel my knees melting from the heat of his stare.

"Are you really the Gardener?" I asked instead. He was probably thinking I lost my mind.

"Yes, Madam I am." It was his short response. A flicker of amusement crossed his eyes making it appear wider. He has amazing long eyelashes and I envy him for having them.

It was impossibly hard to stare at him and not lose oneself. With his perfect posture, large muscular built, and well-proportioned body he would undoubtedly pass a modeling career

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He was too overqualified to become a gardener. One could think that a man as breathtakingly handsome as he could find a more decent job with higher pay. It was such a surprise to find deity standing in front of a garden and tending the plants as if he was a perfectly chiseled statue.

"Are you listening, Madam?" His irritated voice tore on my thoughts. It seems I space out without me knowing. He was looking at me with his bushy eyebrows furrowed as he waited for my response.

I lifted my gaze back to him. My cheeks turned into a shade of crimson from embarrassment. "What were you saying?"

"For the third time, how may I assist you, Madam?" Gone was the flicker of amusement in his ocean blue eyes. He sobered and put a mask of paper blank expression on.

"I would need assistance moving out all the baskets of flowers inside the Kitchen before it becomes an inconvenience. Please put them all together inside the huge marble flower pot. When you finish the task, please display it in the living room."

And just like that after I said everything he needed to know, he walked away without saying anything. My eyes lingered on the sweat-soaked shirt he wore which now clings on the hard muscles of his back. He was the type who could wear anything but still manage to look regal. He may wear a rag but I swear he would still slay the look.

Upstairs, I paced back and forth with growing unease, my arms folded beneath my breasts. A frown crumpled my forehead.

'I couldn't be mistaken. I saw him before. I just forgot where and when. I could trust my Intuition, I couldn't lie.

This is not the time to burden myself to remember things I couldn't even recall, I reminded myself.? I stopped pacing back and forth and stationed in front of Faith's bed.

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My daughter was wide awake, giggling as she watched the colorful stars hanging on top of her crib. I stared at her with warmth spreading inside my chest. My sweet little baby. I mumbled, all worries occupying my thoughts were temporarily forgotten.

Her arms flailed as she stared at me. There was a smile tugging at the corner of her small, shapely lips. It never stopped to amaze me how I gave birth to such a seraphic creature. She was so beautiful. I wonder what her father looked like. He must be so handsome too.

Faith stared at me. For a moment, I found myself lost in the depths of her blue eyes. I was like staring into the depths of a wondrous ocean. I could lose myself in it forever.

A thought struck me. Faith's exquisite blue eyes seem utterly familiar. I have seen it before. I will bet my life I did.

A soft knock on the door woke me up to the burgeoning thoughts I found myself occupied. I briskly opened the door and pulled it open.

"Can we talk Beatrice?"

Alexander stored inside the room and made a beeline straight to the crib where he found his granddaughter looking at him with wide innocent eyes.

"What is it, papa?" I asked.

He shifted his gaze back to me, a smile slowly brightened his face. "Mr. Peterson came to me at the Hotel Site today, he asked permission to bring you to his friend's birthday party."

I sighed heavily and stared heavenward. Partying was the last thing I wanted to do. I have a daughter to take good care of and I have no time to have fun outside the house. Leaving Faith alone tonight seems to be an unpleasant idea that will hunt me to my destination.

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"Pa, I couldn't leave Faith alone. It gives me anxiety." My pleading gaze landed on his. I was praying so hard that I won't be obliged to attend another party tonight. All I needed was a peaceful night of sleep.

"Mr. Peterson rarely asked anyone to a party, Beatrix. You should be privileged. He was a decent man from a decent family. His family owns a chain of Hotels."

"I don't care if he was a farmer papa. I wouldn't care as long as he's a good and decent man. But that's beyond my point. What I'm trying to say is, I'm not open to welcome any man in my life now. I have Faith papa. I have my brothers. I have you."

I took a step forward, took his hands into my own, and stared deep into his eyes. "I have everything I ever wanted papa. Please... don't push me to things which are against my will."

"It was your happiness I'm after Beatrix. I want you to enjoy your freedom. I want to find you a man who will love you with all his heart." He explained, his tremble with emotion.

"I am happy papa. I couldn't be happier now."

Alexander Crawford's shoulders sank. He looked defeated. "I already said yes Beatrix."

"I couldn't let you down papa." I sighed deeply, concealing my growing annoyance regarding the matter.

Hearing the good news Alexander's face lit up with surprise. But after seeing the expression of uncertainty on my face, his shoulders sunk once more.

"Please don't force yourself, Beatrix. I could just tell Mr. Peterson you can't come since you're? feeling unwell."

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"True, I don't want to attend the party papa but I couldn't just lie to avoid the situation. I made up my mind I will attend tonight but you promise me that in the near future you will not decide anything without consulting me first."

He must have noticed the stubborn tilt of my jaw and the fierce glow burning on my eyes that he finally agreed. He knew when to argue and he knew exactly when it's time to give up and face defeat. "I'm sorry Beatrix for forcing you into this. I promise that this would be the last time you will have to do this. I will not interfere with your decisions anymore."

"I'm happy to hear that papa."

Alexander Crawford was gone but I was still wrapped in my thoughts. Not only will I worry about my outfit tonight but I will also worry about who will take good care of Faith.

Not that I can blame papa, he was just trying to divert my attention away from worries, including my past. He was simply trying to thrust me into a different environment in which I will have the chance to move forward and forget what entirely happened to me.

Being the Crawford Heiress had its own disadvantages. I thought rather grimly realizing I was pushed into action. I have no other choice but to allow myself to be driven away

Perhaps going to a party wasn't a bad idea at all. Maybe I will find myself enjoying the party tonight. I will meet a new acquaintance which would probably be beneficial to me in the near future.

"You should behave tonight baby. Mama will be out to attend a party. Please don't make it hard for your uncles tonight, they will be the ones to take good care of you ."

I smiled at my daughter as I lift her into my arms. She was surprisingly smooth and warm to the touch. She smiled back at me showing a pair of adorable dimples that melted my heart with its charm.

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"I love you, Faith. Mama will not be long, she will return quickly after the party."

Chapter 65 -

One of the most painful things in the world is watching the woman you love, happy with someone else.

I always dreaded this to happen. Especially that I was there to have a glimpse of what was taking place. It shatters my heart into a thousand pieces, almost making me want to weep with helplessness and frustrations knowing she once been mine but I blow up the chance and broke her heart, and now she found solace in another man's arms, I was left with no choice but watch her sweet enchanting smile as she slowly walks down the bottom of the stairs where a handsome Adonis waits for her descent—like a groom impatiently waiting for his bride to reach his side.

It wasn't my intention to pry over her private affairs. It just happened that I was about to enter the door to supposedly ask her about moving the huge flower pot outside to the spot she wanted it to be transferred. I know it could wait until tomorrow but I just want to see her.... Badly wanted to see her. I couldn't wait much longer and formulated a reasonable excuse to meet her only to have my heart broken and shatter across the floor seeing her walk down the stairs just like the first time I saw her except a man was waiting down at the end with a wide grin on like a teenager taking his crush to prom for the first time.

A felt the sudden stab of annoyance. I almost had this irresistible urge to pull the man's collar and push him hard to the floor, and rip that smile off his lips. Noticing the grim thoughts running on my head, I groaned, I sounded like a jealous husband except that Beatrix was not legally mine anymore. I'm nothing but a man regretting his past actions, but it was too late for regrets. The damage I did was beyond repair. It built a thick layer of iron wall between us. Phoenix—Beatrix is better without me.

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The grandfather clock seems to stop moving. My whole world momentarily froze into stillness as she walked down the stairs. I have to hold my breathing as I continue to gaze at her with nothing but pure admiration in my eyes. She was the most wonderful thing I've ever known and the sweetest person I've ever met. But I'm the stupidest man on earth for having to break such a delicate creature. I have to pay for my sins and today was just the beginning of it as I stood in silence, witnessing the scene that stabbed my heart with a thousand knives.

She moved down the stairs with the graceful movement of a queen. Except that she's not a queen but a goddess of war who fought and won countless wars in her life. The beautiful glow on her unique pair of eyes made her more appealing. She had always been beautiful but now she was simply amazing that even my eyes wouldn't want to blink in fear that I would waste a single moment. I wanted her memory to be implanted in my mind because that's all I could have of her.

When she reached the bottom stairs and the man gently took her palm into his lips, I swore I died at the moment. My only concern was I'm still very much alive. I rather prefer I'm dead to not witness the torturous scene that adds lemon to the raw wound in my heart. It must have been what my ex-wife had felt the first time she saw me with Angela. The pain must have been triple worst after she found doing the 'thing' with Angela on the kitchen counter. I now realize the pain. But I know the pain I felt at that moment was only a speck of dust compared to the pain I made her suffer when she had to witness my unfaithfulness live. Because I swore, if I found her with any other man on a bed, I would kill. That is without a doubt.

Her sexy lips stretched into a smile, it was so brilliant that it made the diamonds on her ears appear dull. Even the chandelier hanging on the ceiling seems unappealing compared to that illuminating smile. A strong ache in my chest woken me up from my illusion, the cheerfulness inside me vanished like a flame poured with a bucket of water. The smile wasn't for me anymore, probably it will never belong to me again, that's the truth I need to get over. I don't even know if I will ever 'get over and probably I have to spend the rest of

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my remaining days confined to a mental institution after I couldn't take the sweet torture of her memories anymore.

The man wearing a tuxedo laid his arms around her tiny waist. It took me a great amount of self-control as large as the size of Europe not to charge forward and rip the arms that were holding her. Jealousy was indeed one of the most unpleasant sensations in the world. If this continues, I wouldn't end up in a mental institution but I will forever find myself locked into Alcatraz. I know I should look away but there was no strength left in me to avoid something which I know I have to face forever. I realize at the very moment it was difficult to become a masochist except that it was unavoidable.

They are headed to the door, I realize as I ran behind one of the large lawn ornaments—an angel kneeling on the ground holding a flower into her palm—a hasty move to hide my presence from the two. If I dare broke this statue, I might as well say goodbye to my job for the next day. I'll bet my arms and legs that the lawn ornament cost Alexander Crawford a great amount of fortune. He will surely break my bones if I break the rare piece.

There was a brand new car waiting outside the entrance. I hate to admit it but it was gorgeous, the latest model, must have cost a fortune. That instant I knew I don't like the man, such a showoff. It almost seems to take forever as I wait for them to emerge, when they finally did, I swear I couldn't be more pissed off. How I wish that a bolt of great lightning would hit the car and destroy the engine before they could leave. But of course, it was as impossible as wishing Beatrix would pay me attention now that I'm a lowly gardener.

He opened the door for her then turned in the opposite direction and climbed inside. The engine roared to life and moved forward, the gates swung open and the moving car faded to the distance before the gates swung close. The car was gone but I was still there watching the gates with growing unease or perhaps it was growing jealousy if I would only be honest with myself. She was gone but the breathtaking image of her persists inside my thoughts. Beatrix had ways been beautiful but tonight I found myself searching for the

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right words to describe her. The silk gown she wore was too perfect to describe in words.

The smooth silk dress clung to the perfect curves of her body like a well-made glove. The double thigh slit did wonders to flatter her shapely legs which were one of her best assets and it cost me a great amount of self-control not to run for sewing tools and repair the exaggerated slits that could make a man's eyes bulge with admiration. I never saw her wear a gown so revealing before, not even when she was still my wife. She was always the prim and proper type. But tonight her taste must have changed too. It must be the influence of her personal designer Madam Stella, she was trying to make her client ride the fashion rage, which explains the plunging neckline that displays an ample amount of her perky breasts.

Beatrix was dressed as Aphrodite tonight and without a doubt, she slayed the look. She wore her evening attire with stunning grace that could make the real goddess of love and beauty from Mount Olympus blush. She was once mine, and even if it's now a distant memory I'm still so proud of her, so damn proud that I nearly weep at the thought that she would acquire more admirer. Moving the flowers crowding the kitchen this morning had been a difficult job that irritated the hell out of me. I don't know how would I handle to keep moving her suitor's gifts without losing my mind from jealousy.

"Wah-wah "

An infant's cries reached my ears. My thoughts were suddenly scattered in the air. My eyebrows scrunched in confusion while my gaze searched where the sound came from. It seems the noise was originating from inside the mansion. Impossible! My initial reaction was pure disbelief. A baby? Inside the Crawford Mansion? That's purely ridiculous. I must have been losing my mind. Didn't I lose my mind already a few moments ago? I strode away from the door to the direction of my tiny cottage. Must have been my imagination, I thought.

"Wah-wah." I froze in my tracks. This was no longer my imagination. "Bloody Hell," I muttered under my breath and made a retreating steps backward until I

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was standing at the door of the mansion. I take a peek inside only to be greeted by the greatest shock of my life.

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