Finding Real Love
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Finding Real Love

by KarnsteinRosenberg

Summary

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At the young age of twelve, Carmilla's life was shattered when she was snatched from the life that she thought was hers and was thrown to a new one with full of obligations and responsibilities; a strange new life that she must live and a new identity she must accept.

After discovering who she really was, Carmilla had to commit her life to become the new her; obeying everything that was required of her even if it meant changing what she really was... until she discovered the truth.

Love does not judge. Real love sees into your heart and soul.

Notes

This is my first long original Hollstein Fanfic and is inspired by all the books and stories that I have read, t.v. series/movies that I have seen, museums that I have visited and weaved it into a story. The fic might be provoking to some people but I hope you give the story a chance before you judge. Because this is a story of accepting what love is no matter who you are or what you are. Love does not judge. Real love sees into your heart and soul.

I would add new tags and characters as the story progress. So make sure to check them before reading a new chapter. English is not my first language so bear with me. Constructive criticism and comments are welcome. I'm writing in 3rd person and would put at the beginning of the chapter who's POV it is. You might be confused on the later chapters with the use of pronouns, to make it clear: I am just writing and describing what the character POV sees.

Disclaimer: I do not own Carmilla/ Laura and all the characters from the Carmilla Web Series. I am just borrowing them and not gaining any profit from it. I am not a medieval expert and all things related to medieval times in this story are not all one hundred percent accurate. But I did research/read some of them and applied it in the story to make this believable.
"Ma! No!" Carmilla cried and tried to escape from a tall woman who was holding her tight as she saw the bad men took her Ma away from her. "Don't leave me!" She implored as she saw her Ma tried to get loose from the bad men.

But they were strong and big, they seized her. "Be strong Carmilla and remember that I love you!" Were the last words that her Ma told her as they threw her Ma in a carriage.

That was the last time she saw her before she was abducted by the same horrible men in identical clothes and thrown to a different carriage together with the tall woman."

She woke up gasping for her breath, her heart pounding, cold sweat running down from her forehead; she could feel the chill in her body. She struggled to get loose and opened her eyes, then reality hit her when she found herself sleeping on a big four poster bed with heavy drapes.

Many days had passed since she was painfully separated from her Ma. But the excruciating scene still haunts her every night in her sleep.

"Ma?!" She cried in anguish even though she knew that her Ma was no longer with her. She tried to go back to sleep and thought of the happy days and nights she and her Ma spent; the days they spent their times together growing vegetables and flowers in their little backyard; the days she and her Ma would tend the cows and hens that they have in their small barn; the days she could run freely at their small farm and picked the roses in their little garden; the days her Ma would teach her how to sew and embroider her own clothes; the days she and her Ma would spend the day cooking food and baking bread; the nights her Ma would comb her beautiful long locks before going to bed; the nights her Ma would tuck her in bed and kissed her goodnight; and the nights she would cuddle with her Ma when there was storm and would feel secured.

Those days and nights were gone.

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She did not know how many days or weeks had passed but she was glad to be out of the new chamber that she was sleeping in now. A chamber that was bigger than her home.

When she arrived in this place, she was crying, shouting and throwing things at the people that brought her food and guarded her. She was angry, sad and just wanted to go back to her own home with her Ma.

The tall scary lady who took her away from her Ma discovered her unpleasant behavior and she was detained in this new chamber. She was told that she would not get out of there until she behaved properly. But she did not heed. She was still angry and longing for her Ma and she continued to shout, cry and throw things every day.

Until one day, she got tired and realized what the tall scary lady told her. Maybe if she behaved they would let her out and she could see her Ma again, and she could go back to her own home with Ma.

She had thought hopefully.
So, the next day she did not throw her tantrums to the woman that brought her food and ate it dutifully, she even took a bath and did not give the woman a hard time. Her Ma used to help her with her bath and clothing her, but since they took her Ma away she taught herself to do it alone.

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She was snatched from her recollection as she heard the cold authoritative voice of the tall scary lady, and found herself standing in the grandest room that she had seen in her entire life.

"Come here."

The tall scary lady beckoned her to come forward. The eerie sound of silence and the vastness of the room gave her the shiver. The sight of the tall scary lady sitting on the big chair with her dark hair neatly combed and dressed in the finest clothes she had ever seen was intimidating enough to render her powerless and speechless. It was her first time to set foot in this vast room, and she was scared just by looking at the tall scary lady's dark fiery eyes staring at her. She had no idea why she was suddenly summoned. She walked slowly towards where the tall scary lady was sitting. She approached with reluctant steps while her heart anxiously throbs as she came closer.

It felt strange, however, to be terrified of this woman and yet, she felt like she was somehow connected with this woman that she feared. It felt like she had already seen her before when she was still young, but she cannot recall when and why? It might also be a fragment of her imagination and maybe she must be hallucinating due to her pining for her Ma.

She was thankful that it was only her and the tall scary lady inside the vast room; she was not used to seeing a lot of people. She grew up with only her Ma on her side and Da who visited them once in a while. She was taught by her Ma that not everybody was kind and trustful so she was not permitted to meet other people or go outside of their farm. And now, she understood full well why her Ma did not want her to meet other people, as she found herself in the presence of one of the unkind people she met.

"Do you know why you are here?"

She heard the icy cold voice of the tall scary lady and noticed the fiery eyes glaring at her with full of authority.

She just shook her head afraid how to converse with this woman; afraid that if she says something it would turn out not right and she would be locked again to her new room.

"I want what is best for you."

She wondered and furrowed her brows. Why would this woman want the best for her? Does she even know that this is the most dreadful times in my life!

"From now on you will be called by your real name and you are to forget the name that you are used to hearing." The tall scary lady stated.

She looked up, shocked at what she heard. Her young mind cannot comprehend what this woman was saying, she shook her head and was growing upset and confused, and before she could control herself the words were already out of her mouth.

"No! My name is Carmilla!"

She shouted not caring what this misbehavior would cost her. She was growing upset now; all she wants was to go back to her Ma. She had behaved and obeyed all the things that they had asked her
to do, and she was looking forward to being released and returned to her Ma!

"Silence!" The tall scary lady shouted back and rose from the big chair. "You are not to speak when I am talking to you and you will listen and obey me!"

She was already trembling with anger, refusing to accept what this evil woman was telling her. She made the tall scary lady furious and she knew that she would be punished, but she does not care anymore. She just remained standing there and bowed her head, refusing to listen further as she hid her face behind her long dark locks.

"Look at me!"

She flinched as her small ears heard the tall scary lady ordered her to do. She trembled with fear when she saw this evil woman standing just three feet away from her.

"And listen carefully to what I'm going to say! You will forget that name!"

She reluctantly looked up, her eyes shimmering with unshed tears, her hands balled into a fist and this time she tried to control her temper while she swallows her pain.

"You will always acknowledge when I call you. You will ignore anyone who will call you by that name and that person will be punished if he or she disobeys. There are people here who will provide you with everything you need as long as it adheres to my satisfaction. This is your home!" was the tall scary lady's demands.

"I don't want anything from you! I don't want to live here!" she finally burst out, as tears flowed out from her eyes. "Where's my Ma?! I want to go home! Let me out of here!" she demanded.

Suddenly she saw the tall scary lady stepped down from the big chair and approached her, and the next thing she knew, the evil woman was holding her jaw and she found herself face to face with the woman she detests.

"You are forbidden to neither go outside the walls of this place nor talk to the village people who come in here. The moment you tried to escape, you will be punished. You will no longer see nor have contact with your Ma, I have sent her to a faraway land!"

She refused to accept all of the things that the tall scary lady was telling her. "No! I want my mother back!" she bawled in desperation.

She tried to get loose from this evil woman's hands, but she failed, as she felt the hold on her jaw tightens and her face was brought closer to this evil woman, making sure that she was looking straight in those fiery wicked eyes.

"I am your Mother and you're going to obey me!" The tall scary lady reprimanded. "From now on you will be called Prince Carl Philipp Marcus of Karnstein!"

The words came as a shock and she froze as her disoriented mind tried to digest what she just heard.

TBC
Carmilla

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What!?

She shakes her head. She refused to accept; she refused to acknowledge whatever madness this evil woman was commanding her. Nobody could take away her identity, and nobody can dictate to renounce her real name. This woman was not her mother but an impostor!

As the shocking revelation subsides and her courage regained, she shoved the evil woman's hand that was on her jaw and got loose from the claw.

"Get your hands off me!" she claimed, her eyes glaring at the woman. "No! Noooo! You are not my mother!"

"Have you not been listening?!" Was the furious remark. "I, Queen Lilita of Karnstein, am your Mother and the King Philipp of Karnstein is your Father!"

"You are lying!" She accused and ran towards the door where she entered earlier, fuming with all the lies that she heard.

The moment she stepped out of the vast room her life changed drastically.
"Ma! No! Don't leave me!" she shouted as her heart beat rapidly, desperation overtaking her.

Suddenly she was snatched from that terrible scene, opened her eyes and met by darkness and silence.

"Ma?" she muttered and realized that it was another nightmare and she found herself alone on a soft mattress covered with a warm blanket. She was in the chamber; her chamber, on her bed. She does not know how many days; weeks or months had passed since the Queen confronted her. But the nightmares still haunts her; the pain was still inside and she was exhausted.

She laid on her side curled up into a ball, bent her knees up, drew them near her stomach as tightly as possible, and bowed her head as she wrapped her arms around it. And lulled herself to sleep again.

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When she was finally contained, the evil woman that she now called her 'Queen Mother' began to visit her every night before she sleeps…

She heard the sound of shoe heels clanging at the marbled hall outside her chamber. As the sound came closer, her fear grew stronger. She dreaded this time of the day when the maid had left and she was alone in this new chamber. Her heart was banking and the anticipation of sleeping alone in the dark drove her insane. She heard the door opened and she swallowed in fear as she saw the Queen entered the chamber. The Queen trained her to stay awake and wait for her to say goodnight to her before she goes to sleep. She had dutifully done it for the past ten months.

"Are you comfortable and ready to sleep?" Was always the same question that she hears the Queen asks before saying goodnight to her for the past ten months.

And the only answer that she has to say is: "Yes my Queen Mother."

Upon hearing her satisfactory reply, the Queen would give her a wicked smile of approval, and would remind her every night:

"Remember, you are strong and you are fearless; you are Prince Carl of Karnstein and the future King of this kingdom." These phrases from the Queen had been inculcated to her mind every night before she goes to sleep for the pass ten months. Afterwards, the Queen would closed all the curtains in the enormous four post bed of hers and blew off the only candle in the room before leaving her in total darkness and silence.

And then it began.

…The dreadful feeling.

The feeling of being swallowed by this deep black hole; the feeling that she was about to fall into a pit and never come out again.

In the pass ten months, every night she would cry and shout for help hoping that there was someone
who might hear her and open the door of her chamber to let the light in and just hold her tight.

But nobody ever came.

Nobody ever hear.

Nobody ever save her from drowning in this pit of darkness.

And she would just cry and cry until she was exhausted and sleep claimed her.

She knew that the nightmares were over when she woke up and hears the maid enter her room.

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She could still recall how she was seized by the maids and was locked up in the big chamber that they called 'the Prince's Chamber'. They did not let her out and confined her until she succumbed to the evil woman's claims and demands. Demands that she have to fulfill and obey in this new life of hers.

And now she found herself staring in front of the mirror as she accomplished another requirement from the Queen. She tilted her head from one side to another and felt exposed at the absence of those long rich curly locks that had been a part of her. However, she felt surprisingly satisfied of the outcome as she saw her hair, cut short neatly at the back, with her nape showing and the side were cut neatly too above her ears, forming a pointy elegant thin side burns around her ears that curls a bit at the end that made it looked softer, while the front was left in soft mess that falls to her eyes, a request that she asked the barber, even if the Queen preferred it shorter to complete the neat look. The barber complied unto her request and he advised her to fix her bangs and put on a little beeswax to hold it back, so that it would not get in a way and she would look neat in her mother's eyes. Her mother specifically ordered the barber to cut her hair every two to three months in order to maintain her hair short and neat.

She just finished her bath and stared at the clothes in front of her; clothes that she never wear and now she had to get used to them because the Queen had chosen it for her.

She tried to recall all the things the Queen commanded her as her eyes roamed at every piece of clothing material in front of her: first, she have to wrap her chest with linen and made sure that her chest was flat and fully covered. The Queen strictly informed her that no one can see or touch her chest. No one was allowed to see her naked. She would wear a braies followed by a pair of trousers and wear a long sleeve tunic so that she would look appropriate according to her mother.

She chose a simple black linen tunic with gold embroidery linings as her everyday clothes. She was told by the Queen that these were the clothes that she would wear and nothing else, and was strictly prohibited to wear any dresses. The Queen had asked the shoemaker to make different kinds of boots and shoes for her that she would use for different kinds of occasions, and nothing else.

From now on, everything that she need and use should be approved first by the Queen.
She found herself alone in the presence of the Queen again at the vast room, but this time she was calm and resolve. The last time she was here, she was struggling to get her old life back and refused to accept who she really was. But in the span of ten months she gradually accepted all the things that the Queen instructed her to do, even if it was against her will. She stood three feet away from the throne and bowed to the Queen.

"I am so pleased to see you in those clothes, my son. You looked handsome and neat."

She heard the Queen imparted and she felt the scrutinizing eyes of her mother on her. She just finished taking her bath and was dressed in the black tunic that she picked as her everyday clothes and a pair of trousers and boots and made sure to wrap her chest tightly with white linen before she put on an undershirt and her tunic. She did not forget to put some beeswax on her hair as recommended by her barber. She wanted her impression to be perfect in the eyes of the Queen.

"Thank you, my Queen Mother," she replied, reluctant if she called the Queen correctly. She needed to think and be careful how she answers while in the presence of the Queen.

"I think it is time for you to begin your education as a prince and the future king of Karnstein," the Queen revealed. "There will be a scholar to teach you all the proper etiquette of being a prince and you will learn to ride a horse and use a sword. You will speak calmly and lower the pitch of your voice every time you talk, you will not screech and cry. And most importantly you will control your emotions because it is a sign of weakness. Do you understand?"

She nodded and gave the Queen her full attention before saying, "Yes, my Queen Mother."

"I have selected a very notable musician from Wien, to teach you to play a musical instrument of your choice and an Italian artist will arrive in the castle next month to teach you arts. You will begin your studies of foreign language, history, philosophy, literature, arithmetic and science." The Queen explained. "For your leisure time you will practice your swordsmanship and horseback riding."

She continued to give her undivided attention to the Queen and she felt deprived of her freedom. Even her leisure time was assigned to the Queen's choice of activities for her. She had thought of asking if she could do gardening for her leisure time, but she shoved the idea and remained silent knowing that she would not be heard.

"From now on you will eat dinner together with me and your King Father and I expect you to behave yourself like a prince." the Queen added.

She was suddenly yanked from her recollection as she heard the word 'your King Father'. Since she arrived at the Karnstein Castle, she never saw the King. The thought of meeting the King for the first time was making her apprehensive. What if he did not like me? Will he accept me? Will he believe that I am his child? These were the few concerns that stressed her out. What if he is not my father and all of these are lies?!

"The King travels a lot and today he is arriving and you will get a chance to meet him as you join us for dinner." The Queen elaborated and paused. "Carl? Are you listening to me?" Was the Queen's puzzled remark.

She nodded absent mindedly and tried her best to calm herself. "Yes my Queen," she replied right away.
"Do I have to keep on reminding you to call me your Queen Mother?" the Queen told her.

She bowed her head realizing her mistake. "Forgive me my Queen Mother."

She received a nod from the Queen accepting her apology.

"It would not happen again." Was her humble response.

"Very well, I expect that you will remember to address the King as your King Father." Was the Queen's challenging remark.

"I will remember, my Queen Mother." She assured.

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The anticipation of meeting the King for the first time had been straining her since this morning. And now she found herself fidgeting at her chair in the family dining room of the castle. She was placed at the left side of the long rectangular table across the Queen, and to the left of the King's place.

She and the Queen should always be the first to arrive before the King; it was one of the rules in the castle when dining. This was also the first time that she will eat together with the Queen and it worried her. Her restlessness did not go unnoticed as she received a strict look from the Queen.

"Is there anything that is bothering you, my son?" The Queen asked in a firm tone.

Her body automatically calmed down, as she heard the authoritative voice of the Queen. She sat straight and took a deep breath, calming her nerves, and when she was able to pacify herself, she looked at the Queen and calmly said, "No, nothing at all, my Queen Mother."

The Queen was supposed to say more when their attention was caught by the royal guards announcing the arrival of the King at the dining hall. She stood up at once together with the Queen and bowed both their heads when the King approached the dining table. She was still bowing her head when she heard a deep gruff voice.

"Look at me." The voice commanded as she saw the sight of a large pair of leather hunting boots on the floor that belonged to the King. She was just a foot away from him and his presence was making her anxious. She reluctantly lifted her head and looked up at the tall slim well-built man in front of her. Her eyes widened as she observed fully a middle aged face with well-trimmed beard, dark hair and pale skin. She was astonished as she discovered the strong resemblance of her to the King. He had the same jawline as hers; his nose was as perfect and pointy as hers; they share the same thin lips and she was surprised to find out that the King had that symmetrical eyebrow too as hers and dark orbs! The only thing that was separating their appearance was the King's full beard and the wavy shoulder length flowing hair.

"My child!" The King expressed.

The next thing she knew, two strong big arms were wrapped around her as her head rested on the King's chest. She heard the excited beating of his heart as her ear was pressed tightly on his chest. "You are finally here!" He added with excitement in his voice.

She was speechless and helpless as she remained wrapped around the King's arms. She did not
expect that he was going to react like this. It was totally the opposite of how the Queen treated her. She never felt any concern from the Queen since she arrived in the castle. However, the King’s genuine affection was confusing her; the fact that the King was almost in tears upon seeing her and embracing her was overwhelming enough to drive her insane. She never expected that the King of Karnstein would regard her.

She then felt him released from the embrace and was now standing close to him, his eyes staring down at her with mixed emotions of remorse, gladness and excitement as she gazed at him with relief. All her doubts and worries disappeared, and a smile formed in her mouth as she saw the eyes of her father for the first time and felt the warmth and love flowing from his gaze. Unshed tears of joy where threatening to fall from her eyes, but she contained it; remembering what the Queen told her, 'Showing your emotions is a sign of weakness.' And instead she composed herself and finally found the courage to speak.

"It is an honor to finally meet you, Your Majesty, my King Father," she said with absolute sincerity, took his hand and kissed it.

"It brings me great joy to see you here, my child." The King proclaimed.

She was about to tell him the same thing, but the voice of the Queen prevented her.

"My King, I am sure you are very exhausted from your long journey," the Queen sought his gaze. "Why don't we take a sit and eat our supper and then you can tell me everything that happened in your journey."

The King nodded and motioned for her and the Queen to take their seat, and the servants began to pour wine on their goblets and served the food.

Surprisingly, she felt welcome for the first time since she arrived in the castle, after she heard those words from the King; from her father. Once she was comfortably seated, the King’s attention was now diverted to the Queen as she saw the King kissed the cheek of the Queen and they had a chat about his journey. She disliked eavesdropping so she tried to block anything she heard from their conversation. Her doubts earlier vanished as she saw the evidence of her being related to the King of Karnstein.

I look like him. She reminded herself as her eyes discreetly study again the King's features.

She had never thought that she would meet her father. The nearest relationship to a father that she had was with Da, and she knew that she could never be related to Da because Da had a red hair. And then it dawned on her: Ma had a light hair!

She grew suddenly curious and observed how she was related to the Queen as her eyes analyze the features of the woman in front of her. This was the perfect time to stare at the Queen without being scared because the Queen was engaged into a conversation with the King.

And there it was: the pale and porcelain-like delicate complexion and the dark hair of the Queen. It was certainly the features that she inherited from her mother. There was nothing more to doubt. She was indeed the offspring of the King and Queen of Karnstein.

As the indication of being a Karnstein unfold before her eyes, another mystery had puzzled her: Why was she living with her Ma since she was a small child?

Without having second thoughts the question was out of her mouth. "Why did you give me away?" Was her daring and yet innocent query. She maybe young but she was smart and curious. She finally
received the undivided attention of both the King and Queen. "If I was your child, why did I not grow up in here, at the castle? Why did I not grow up with you, my real mother and father?"

There was a long silence as two pairs of eyes stared at her.

"Leave us!"

She heard the King's taut voice and all of the servants and guards in the dining hall disappeared. She was now flinching in her chair and regretted that she ever asked the ultimate question, as she saw the King glare at her while the Queen remained silent and frigid. She swallowed hard as she waited anxiously for her punishment of being impertinent in front of the King and Queen. But her fear vanished as the King put his hand on her small shoulder and gently squeezed it and gazed at her with full of remorse.

"Carmilla you were-" the King uttered softly.

She was seized as she heard her name again and almost lost her composure. It had been a long time since someone called her by her name: her real name! It was like she had been awoken from an enchanted spell. Finally! The King was recognizing her by her real name!

"Philipp,

The sound of the Queen's cold authoritative voice sliced like a dagger and called the King's attention before he could say another word.

"Our son, Carl Philipp Marcus," the Queen glanced at her before overtaking the conversation. "…Had been informed of his legitimate name, we will no longer use that old name and everyone in the palace was prohibited to call the Prince that name."

Her hope of regaining her identity was thwarted upon hearing the Queen's statement.

"And to answer your question why you never grew up in the castle with us?" the Queen continued in that calm domineering voice. "You were abducted." The Queen said matter-of-factly.

She was dumbfounded; her ears do not want to accept what she just heard, as she stared at the Queen with a slightly open mouth and furrowed her brows.

"Lilita-" the King interrupted.

But the Queen hindered him.

"No Philipp. Our son deserved to know the truth," the Queen said not giving the King a chance to explain. "…That he was abducted by his wet nurse." The King and Queen's attention was suddenly focused on her. "Your wet nurse that you called your Ma had taken you away from us." The Queen related, anguished.

She was shocked. She swallowed hard, closed her eyes and her hand reached for the bridge of her nose and pinched it. Did her Ma really abduct her? She never witnessed any violation or dishonesty while she grew up with her Ma. Her Ma raised her earnestly, giving all the love and care that she needed. She could never recall anything wrong about her Ma's personality; everything about her Ma emits love and sincerity.

Her contemplation was interrupted when she heard the Queen speak again.

"Do not be fooled by the affection that your wet nurse showed to you," the Queen advised. "She
was desperate to have a child."

Still bewildered, she focused her sight on the Queen and saw the Queen put her hand over the King's hand that was resting on the table and held it, while the King avoided her eyes.

"The King and I suffered from your lost and I... I had thought of killing myself from the loss of my beloved child. I was devastated; the past twelve years without you were the most sorrowful years of my life. I never bear another child because I never recover from the pain of losing you." Was the Queen's heartfelt confession. "You will understand now why I am very protective and strict about your well-being. You are very precious to me and to the King and we do not want any harm to come to you again. We will do everything in our power to protect you, our only son and the love of my life; because I could not bear losing you again."

After that profound disclosure from her mother, her outlook towards the Queen changed.

She stood up and walked towards where the Queen, her mother was seated. The Queen quickly turned to her direction as she approached, and then she kneeled in front of her mother and took the Queen's right hand. "My Queen Mother, I never knew. Forgive me for afflicting you and the King such misery."

"You have nothing to apologize my child," the King finally spoke.

She felt the Queen's left hand covered her hand that was holding her mother and forcefully sought her gaze. "My son, you are the source of my happiness. It would bring me joy and satisfaction to know that you have fully accepted who you really are and never again look back to the old life that you had. You have wasted twelve years of your life without me, let me take care of you and mold you to who you really are: the Prince of Karnstein and the heir to the throne."

"I will obey and honor you, my Queen Mother and my King Father."

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There were nights that she never wanted to go to sleep for fear of having the nightmares again; she would remain awake till the wee hours of the morning and wait for the maid to come… and that was the only time she would feel at peace.

And there were days that she never noticed the maid enter, as she slept deep and peaceful. And this was one of those days…

"Good morning Your Highness."

She heard the firm but courteous voice of the maid said. It was the same middle aged woman who had guarded and served her food when she arrived at the castle.

Still groggy from her sleep, "Good morning," she returned, to let the maid know that she was already awake, as the Queen instructed her. The maid would never leave the room and stop saying 'good morning ' to her until she had reply.

She heard the maid walked around the room to light the candles, and then went to the bathroom to prepare her hot bath, clean clothes and everything she needed for the day. She waited patiently on her bed until she knew that everything was prepared.

The disclosures of the Queen and the physical evidence of her resemblance to the King last night
were an epiphany that changed her whole view about her situation. Although she had given her word to both the Queen and the King that she would obey and honor them, she still cannot find it in her heart to hate her Ma for abducting her. Her Ma never hurt her and had loved her like her own child. The part of her life that she spent with her Ma would always be a happy memory that she would cherish and keep in her heart. And nobody can know that; specially the Queen. She had no intention of causing any pain to her mother, she repeated the word again, *Mother*, trying to get used to the sound of it. She used to refer to the woman that bore her as the Queen, however after last night she was slowly finding it in her heart to refer to the Queen as her mother. She would just have to remember to call her 'Queen Mother', in her presence.

Her ruminating was halted when she heard the voice of the maid.

"Your bath is ready, Your Highness" the maid informed.

"Thank you, you may go." She replied firmly.

The Queen has forbid her to talk to any maid or guard. The only communication she had with the maid was when the maid wakes her up and informs her that her bath was prepared.

Upon hearing the door closed and was certain that she was alone, she opened the heavy drapes of her bed and get up. The maid needs to leave her chamber before she comes out of her curtained bed. She remembered the strict instructions that the Queen had implemented.

She took the purple robe that was laid on the chair beside her bed and put it on before heading to the bathroom.

Today was the beginning of her journey of fully accepting who she really was and to be able to obtain that, she need to fully accept what she really was.

When she entered the bathroom she went first to the chamber pot and stood in front of it and emptied her bladder.

TBC
To Please the Queen

Chapter Summary

A look at Carmilla's relationship with her Mother, as fourteen year old Carmilla slowly tries to win her mother's trust and attention. She was deprived of the care and affection that her Ma used to shower her and she thought that if the Queen is happy and pleased about her achievements, she would receive more attention and compliments. These were the kind of 'love' that she was seeking now and she knew that the only person who could provide her that is her mother.

Chapter Notes

Please note that the first ten chapters have a time jump of one or two-year interval.

I tried to stick to the canon on how Lilita treated Carmilla as her most precious one in Carmilla's early years in this chapter. I think their mother/child relationship should be explored more.

Carmilla

Once they finished eating dinner, the Queen would either ask her to play some music at the music room, read some literature for her while they have tea in the tea room or paint a beautiful picture; and she always obliged. But every time she would strike a wrong chord, paint a bad picture or mispronounce a word from a book, her mother would always tell her:

'You are not trying your best, how could you become a king someday when you can't even do it right!'

She felt always humiliated and degraded to hear those words from her mother, which was why she made sure to work hard until she perfected everything and the Queen was pleased. She excelled in her studies and began to like philosophy. She set her goal to make the Queen happy and satisfied with what she does in order not to be humiliated again. She accepted her fate that she was to become a king someday and she would act like a king. Every time her mother would compliment her, it was like a lift in her pride and spirit. She began to thrive on those compliments from her mother and longed for that. She promised herself never to fail again and fully accepted the fact that she was a prince; the Queen never fails to remind her that. Every night before eating their dinner when she would dress on those fine tunic, trousers and cloak, kept her hair short and neat, the Queen would always tell her what a handsome prince she was. And she would smile at the compliment from her mother and thank the Queen from that boast of confidence.

Her father rarely said a word during dinner except to ask her how were her studies and what new things did she learned. Other than that, the Queen always dominated the conversation and she and her father would just listen and agree. Every evening after they have eaten their dinner her father would always tell her the same phrase all over again before he leaves the table, "Good night my son." And she would catch a sight of her mother's satisfied smile before she replied: "Good night my
King Father."

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She felt the warmth that was emanating from the fireplace back her, as she sat on the floor in front of the Queen who was sitting on a chair right across the fireplace. The Queen's chamber seemed warm and little compared to the real appearance of it when the whole chamber was lighted and looked cold. Her head was resting on the Queen's lap and she felt calm at the touch of the Queen's warm hand caressing her face. Sometimes she was lucky to spend a relaxing moment with her mother in the Queen's chamber and this was one of those evenings.

"You do know that I will do anything for you, my son?" she heard the Queen's soft remark while her mother strokes her hair.

She lifted her head from the Queen's lap and looked at her mother's eyes. She was told by the Queen that every time someone was talking to her she would look into their eyes and give her full attention. This time, the Queen reached for her face and gently cupped it with both hands, gazing at her like she was the most important person in the world.

"You, my glittering prince, are a diamond," the Queen said. "Everything that I do is for your best interest. You are the most important person in my life, more important than the King."

Suddenly, she felt this pride grew in her. She never thought that the Queen prioritized her more than the King.

"One day, this kingdom will be yours," She heard the clear voice of the Queen continued, still holding her face with one hand, as the other stroked her hair gently; and not breaking the gaze, as if the Queen was trying to get through her mind. "You will become the king and the most powerful in this kingdom. Everyone will obey you and fear you; everything you say will be the truth and no one will dare to question you. You will become strong and fearless. To attain that, you need to sacrifice; you need to work hard, you need to have wisdom and discipline. You need to control your emotions and not show them, because it's a sign of weakness. Do you understand me?"

She just nodded, not wanting to interrupt this moment; the moment she hears the Queen praised and worshipped her; the moment she feels the gentle caressing touch of her mother that she infrequently experienced. It seemed magical to her.

"In order for you to become a great king, you will obey and do everything that I say." The Queen stated firmly. "And if you do, you, my Prince, will make me happy and proud of you."

After that remark, slowly, the Queen gave her a kiss on her left cheek while still cupping the other side of her face, "Will you do that for me?" the Queen whispered into her ear, the voice sounded gentle and then gazed at her eyes with such intensity.

As if she was hypnotized, she nodded. "Yes, my Queen Mother." was her resolved answer. "I will obey."

"Excellent." The Queen replied, the voice back to the normal tone of firm and superior, and gave her that controlled smile that never reaches the eye. "Now, give me a kiss."

She complied and took the Queen's hand; she bowed her head as her lips touched the back of the Queen's hand.

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There were several occasions that she wanted to show the Queen how obedient she was, and one of the things that she knew that would make the Queen happy was when she dressed herself the way the Queen wanted her to be, and the way her hair should be cut: short and neat. Today was the day the barber needs to cut her hair. She was now sitting in front of the mirror in the middle of her chamber, gazing at her image. The barber was waiting for her permission before he starts to cut her hair. She contemplated for a moment and wondered, how she would look like now if her hair were still long and her curly soft locks hanging above her shoulders, and how would she looked like if she could still wear those beautiful dresses that her Ma sewed for her. Her Ma… she now found herself longing as the memories of her past haunted her, the memory of her old life, the memory of her old self. Then her eyes unexpectedly gaze back at the image in the mirror. And she was snatched back to reality as she saw in the mirror the new her… The Prince of Karnstein, the son that the Queen always calls, and she was reminded of the conversation with the Queen yesterday. 'Make me happy and proud of you' was always the reminder that kept emerging in her mind. Without having any second thoughts, she commanded the barber to begin. She made it a point to tell the barber to cut it like the same as before.

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That afternoon before she eats her midday meal, while she was alone reading one of her philosophy books, she was surprised when she saw the Queen entered the library followed by one of the royal guards. She stood up at once and bowed to give respect to the Queen.

The Queen motioned for the guard to hand the sheathed sword to her, "I have a gift for you." The Queen said and the guard kneeled in front of her lifting the sword with both hands and offered to her while the guard bowed his head. She carefully took it and unsheathed the heavy sword and was mesmerized at the sight of it. It has a golden handle and its blade was also gold, and it shimmered as her eyes examined every corner of the blade.

"It's beautiful," she expressed in awe not lifting her eyes off the sword.

"It’s the Blade of Hastur," The Queen informed. "It has been with the family from generations to generations. Your grandfather, my father the late King Marcus of Morgan was the last owner."

Suddenly, she felt that she did not deserve to own the sword upon learning that it belonged to a former king. "My Queen Mother, I'm very thankful for this precious gift. But I don't think I deserve it," was her honest remark.

"Nonsense!" the Queen exclaimed and beckoned for her to come closer. The serious look on the Queen's face tells her that this was going to be another punishment. Quickly, she sheathed the sword and handed it back to the guard that was still kneeling before her and dispatched the guard with a waved of her hand before he sees her being reprimanded by the Queen. She was nervous and worried that she made the Queen angry by her ungratefulness. However, she was surprised when the Queen cupped her face and lifted it to meet the Queen's gentle gaze. "You're my son and the future king. You deserve a king's sword." The Queen said and released her.

"Forgive me for my ungratefulness," she returned still looking up at the Queen. "I will be honored to own it and will take good care of it." Was her swift recovery remark, one thing she learned was never to argue with the Queen.

"Perfect." The Queen returned giving her that controlled smile. "Now that everything is settled, I expect you to do your best in your swordsmanship."

"I will do my best to be the worthy owner of the sword." She returned.
"I'm pleased to hear that, my son," was the Queen's happy reply.

She bowed her head as a sign of promise to the Queen and, thought that the Queen was about to leave but as she looked up she saw the Queen still standing in front of her looking towards her as if appraising something in her head. "Did the barber cut your hair today?" The Queen asked, checking her neatly cut hair.

"Yes my Queen Mother," she answered, glad that the Queen noticed. Then her eyes caught the sight of the Queen's arms reaching her back and felt the Queen's hand touching the tip of her hair at the back of her neck, and momentarily caressed her bared nape before releasing the touch. She felt almost hypnotized at the contact.

"It becomes of you," the Queen remarked.

She beamed at the comment of the Queen knowing that she had pleased her mother.

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As she passed the throne room on the way to the training hall to practice for a sword fight, she caught sight of the people that were lined up that wish to talk to the King and grew curious on how the people from the village lives.

The Queen told her that life outside the castle was dangerous. She was forbidden to neither go outside the walls of the castle nor talk to the village people who came to their castle. The Queen told her that the people outside were mostly savage.

When she was just new in the castle, she was told by the Queen that she can roam around freely at the castle's garden without supervision, but the moment she tried to go out of the castle, she would be punished. She did try escaping, but she underestimated the Karnstein Castle's guards and she was caught at once and locked up at a small chamber for many days in total darkness until she promised the Queen not to do it again and she was released.

But this time, she already understood the true reason why her real mother had forbidden her to go out of the castle, and she does not want to cause her pain again. She brushed off the thought of how does the village look like and what kind of people live there. Instead, she focused her mind on how she could perfect her swordsmanship and walked in the direction of the training hall with determination.

TBC
The Royal Mistress

Chapter Summary

What happens when a fifteen year old Carmilla accidentally met her father's "Royal Mistress"?

Chapter Notes

Please take note of the additional tags. I hope not to offend someone.
I promise that the later chapters are full of Hollstein goodness, but this needs to happen.

Fact: There was actually a title/position: The Royal Mistress in the palace during medieval times and these mistresses were considered a great influence to the king or heir.

Warning: Masturbation. G!P Carmilla

Carmilla

"Who are you?" She questioned, standing a feet away by the end of the King's bed and stared at the sight of the woman lying on her father's bed.

She was looking for her father. But she was surprised to find a woman instead in her father's chamber.

"And who are you?" the woman retaliated with a foreign accent.

"I demand an answer." She returned not breaking her eyes at the woman who seemed to be not scared of her. The woman does not look old, maybe just a couple of years older than her, with a pale skin and brown long hair. She became more irritated when she saw the woman gave her a naughty smirk and seemed to be appraising her when the woman looked at her from head to toe.

"To what do I owe the pleasure?"

She suddenly felt warm at the sound of the woman's enticing voice. "Where's my father? And what are you doing here?" she demanded, trying to cover her uneasiness. But instead of answering her, the woman got out of the bed and slowly approached her. She gasped and yet remained calm and got distracted as she caught the sight of those voluptuous breasts peeping from the woman's satin robe that were slightly opened; she felt something throbbed down her.

"I didn't realize the Prince is more handsome in person."

She heard the woman remarked as the woman break into her comfort zone and suddenly she felt like she was under the woman's spell. Her gaze turned to the heaving of the woman's bosom and she could smell a flowery perfume, as the woman came closer. The woman lifted her chin up with an index finger before looking to her eyes and said, "I'm the King's Mistress."
She contorted her brows, "What do you mean?" she asked, still holding the woman's gaze.

"I take care of the King's pleasure needs." The woman quipped.

She gave the woman another puzzled look.

"Like this." The woman replied and the next thing she felt, her genitalia hardening at the touch of the woman's hand while rubbing it, her breath became ragged as the overwhelming feeling captured her. She closed her eyes savoring the strange sensation of the woman's hand on the most intimate part of her body. Never had she felt so excited and hot in her life, she felt like something was roused inside and everything in her body was going to explode.

"It seems the Prince likes it too." The woman whispered in a husky voice.

She opened her eyes and managed to breakout from the woman's spell. She stepped back, slapped the woman's hand that was on her crotch and strode to the direction of the door. Leaving in haste and ran to the direction of her chamber.

When she arrived at her room, her erection was still visible. She quickly locked herself in the bathroom opened her trousers and let her fully erected shaft out of her braies. It was very hard and tight it aches so much. It never felt so tense like this before and the spasm that came with it prompted her to take over. There was no amount of breathing exercise that can calm it. She cannot ignore the ache anymore as the naked image of her father's mistress kept reoccurring in her mind, and felt the overwhelming sensation that the woman was giving her.

"Damn!" She expressed and groaned, as she imagined the woman rubbing her shaft; she stared at her erection and hesitatingly held it, carefully running her hand up and down at the length of her shaft, testing how she will react to her hand and began to pump it; she was surprised to find pleasure on this and she continued stroking up and down. The more she stroked it, the more she liked the sensation. Then she felt her balls warm and tight as the surge filled up and was now threatening to explode as it stretch its way to her shaft. She pumped faster and moaned at the feeling that it sent to her body; she felt losing her mind as the surge started to take over, the anticipation building up and she lose control as the wave crash and her orgasm took over; she shuddered and black out for a moment as the feeling of letting it go thrilled her.

She used to feel this every morning and would try to ignore it till it subsides. She never touches it and she would just breath in and out till she calmed down and her erection was gone. But right now, she had realized something new; something thrilling and satisfying.

While she was a child she never had this situation before, there was nothing hanging in between her legs and she sits on the chamber pot while emptying her bladder. But as she grew, and as she recalled, the later years of her life with her Ma, Da began to tell her that there would be changes in her genitalia as she grew up. She trusted Da and everything that he tells her. She knew that every time Da would come to visit them, he would check up her to see if she was healthy and well. Da used to tell her that she should not be surprised if her genitalia changed and gain a different one. She was worried at the beginning but Da was always there to explain to her and her Ma the changes in her body. Da assured her that everything was going to be fine and that everyone under goes this phase of life called puberty, and there would be changes in one's body. And Da informed her that this was one of the changes in her body along with having full grown breasts. Da told her that it was just perfectly normal. She recalled that Da suggested that she begun to learn to pee standing, but her Ma refused to agree and told her that she can continue sitting on a chamber pot while peeing; Which she continued doing so until her Queen Mother ordered her to stand if nature calls after her mother asked her to strip her clothes off to check if there were signs of 'abused' from her Ma after she was brought to the castle.
It all started in her early years she lives in the castle; she noticed that she always wakes up to find her genitalia hard and fully erected. She often experienced it too during the night and she would just try to calm and ignore it until she can go to sleep.

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That night after her mother said goodnight to her, and as her room became dark and silent, she decided to shed off all of her clothes as she lay in her bed. She was no longer afraid of the dark and can manage to sleep now without crying and shouting. But her mother still continued to say goodnight and to remind her that she was 'strong and fearless and she was the Prince of Karnstein and future King'. And the curtain to her bed remained closed whenever she would sleep.

After the incident today, she found a feeling of boldness awakening inside her. Her hand reached out for her shaft and she began to work on it rubbing it up and down as the image of her father's mistress played in her mind.

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She woke up at the sound of water being poured on the tub, and she knew that any minute from now the maid would tell her that her bath was ready. She closed her eyes again trying to salvage her erotic fantasy of the woman that she met yesterday. But before she could form another image of the woman, she heard the maid informing her that the bath was ready. "Thank you. You may go." She said as fast as possible. When she knew that the maid had left her hand reached downwards and she felt her hard erection under the sheet. She used to ignore it every morning but after the sensation that she discovered yesterday, she chose not to neglect it and will give it full attention every morning.

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After her bath and "new morning ritual", she felt more relax and giddy. She had never imagine how refreshing and invigorating it was to release all that tension in her body. Who would have thought that she could feel like this after that morning ritual?

She started her day eating breakfast and when she was done she decided to sneak at the King's Throne Room. When she found the King already seated on his throne, she hurriedly went to her father's chamber. When she arrived, no guards were standing by the door maybe that was the sign that the King was not inside just like yesterday, she thought to herself and made a mental note. She carefully opened the door and her eyes beamed at the sight of the woman that she met yesterday sitting at the end of the bed. This time the woman was wearing a lace bodice dress. She felt warm when the woman regarded her presence.

"You came back." Was the woman's remark, giving her a naughty smile. "How can I be of service to you, my Prince?"

Suddenly she lost her confidence, wondering why this woman was making her weak. I... I wanted to apologize for what I did yesterday, was her initial reaction, remembering how she slapped the woman's hand but she suddenly remembered what the Queen used to tell her, "A king is always right and never makes mistakes that is why he does not apologize". She took a deep breath and when she
regained her composure, she spoke calmly. "You did not answer my questions yesterday and I demand an answer. Who are you and what are you doing in my father's room?" she delivered in an authoritative voice.

Her eyes followed the woman as she saw the woman got up from the bed. She was thankful that she was fully clothed today, or else she would find herself speechless and motionless again. The woman approached her and stopped in front of her but this time, the gap between them was decent enough for someone to talk to. The woman curtsied in front of her before speaking.

"Forgive me Your Highness; I got carried away yesterday. I did not realize how charming and handsome the Prince is, until I came face to face with him."

She felt a pulse inside her braise. This woman surely knows how to tease and make her uncomfortable. She fought her emotions and recalled what her mother told her, "Showing your emotions is a sign of weakness."

"You have not answered my questions." She said firmly, glaring at the woman.

The woman released a sigh of submission and gave her a serious look.

"My name is Elleanor, Your highness. I am one of the King's mistresses." The woman replied firmly with pride.

*One of my father's mistresses?* She was suddenly curious. *How many mistresses can the King take?* She wondered, growing confused at why the King needs a mistress when he was married to the Queen, her mother. "What is your role as a mistress?" She asked, bound on finding the truth.

"My role is to serve the King. Do whatever the King desires and pleasure him in bed."

She was dumbfounded at the answer that she received. She thought the King's wife was the only one that could pleasure the King in bed. Suddenly, she felt concerned about her mother's feelings. Even if she finds her mother cold and aloof, she would still not permit this unfaithfulness. "Does the Queen know about this?"

"She does Your Highness."

She thought that this was too much, "And why would my mother, the Queen allow this?" She asked with a hint of anger in her voice wanting to defend her mother.

"...Because the Queen cannot fulfill her duty in bed all the time to the King."

"How dare you talk about my mother like that?!" She shouted and was about to slap the face of the woman. But she found her composure and took a deep breath.

"With all due respect Your Highness, your Mother the Queen was the one who chose me to be your father's mistress."

She was shocked. "You're lying!" She accused the woman, as her temper was beginning to overcome her. How could her mother permit it? She wondered as she grew more confuse. And before she could accuse the woman of some other things, she heard the door opened and saw the Queen standing by the door.

"Your Majesty," the woman remarked and curtsied in front of the Queen at once.

"Leave us!" The Queen commanded.
She saw the woman hastily leave and closed the door behind her.

"What are you doing here?"

She heard her mother's fierce voice, as she bowed her head, hiding her face. "I... I am looking for my King Father. But then I found this woman..." she was supposed to add "on his bed" but refrained.

"Elleanor," Her mother tried to finish the sentence for her. "...Your father's mistress."

She looked up, stunned at her mother's comment. "You knew?" Was her astonished reply.

"How can I not, when I was the one who chose Elleanor to be your father's mistress?" The Queen stated.

She hesitated on the next question, but eventually gave in. "Did you know that my father's mistress is pleasuring him in bed?" She tried to reason, wanting to know if this woman was telling the truth.

"Yes."

She heard the Queen's firm and confident answer.

"But how can you let her do that?"

"Because my role as the Queen is to bear an heir; as a Queen I have duties not only to the King, but to the whole Kingdom, to the people and to you, my son." The Queen related. "I cannot always be at your father's side whenever he wants to be pleasured, that is why I have chosen three mistresses for him."

"Three?!" was her reaction as she found out the truth. She slowly realized that being a Queen was a very demanding job and she had witnessed how her mother fulfilled all those duties.

"I know that you are surprise to find out. But it is perfectly acceptable for the King to have mistresses, because the King needs someone to serve him, amuse him, serve him food and pour him wine, listen to him talk even if it was in the middle of the night and most importantly it’s the mistresses duty to pleasure the King and give him all that he desires in bed."

After that reasonable explanation from her mother, she now understood why the need for the King to have a mistress was necessary. She bowed her head and walked towards the Queen, feeling ashamed of having to ask her mother all those things. She had learned never to question her mother and the Queen was always right. "Forgive me my Queen Mother for my rudeness, I did not mean to ask those questions."

"You don't need to apologize. You are the Prince and the future King." Her mother expressed. "And when you become the King, you are going to take a mistress too. But before that happens, we need to find you a suitable wife."

TBC
Chapter Summary

A fifteen year old Laura was beginning to fulfill some of her duties as a Princess, even if it's against her will.

Laura

"Do I have to?" She whimpered, trailing behind the Lady in Waiting as the curly redhead woman laid two dresses on the bed while she eyed the gowns with awe.

The first dress was a long elegant slender emerald gown made in velvet, adorned with beautiful wide long sleeves, and round low neckline, twisted with gold and green piping on shoulders, neckline and sleeves end. The other was a long white tunic linen dress, long sleeves with elegant golden trims, with a round low neckline and a lacing on the back that can be adjusted to fit her figure.

"Princess, your father has invited the most eligible princes from different kingdoms." The Lady in Waiting encourages her. "And besides, it is the first time that the castle is having a ball, so your presence is required."

"Oh Perry, the only reason why my father is having this ball it's because he wants me to meet those potential suitors, wed me off and send me to another kingdom." She reasoned out and sat on her bed beside the dresses and sighed before lying.

Since she turned fifteen and became a full grown young woman, the whole castle especially her father, had begun encouraging her to be more sociable, as the sons of the King's friends and alliance from different kingdoms begun to come and visit their castle. She wished that she could just remain young and does whatever she desires: roam around the castle and chat with the servants, read, bake sweets with her Lady in Waiting, ride the horse in the forest with her father, play her sword with Kirsch or just do nothing and chat with her handmaiden friends the whole afternoon.

"You sounded like The King wants to get rid-off you."

"Isn't that what all the Kings and Queens are doing to their daughters? Because girls cannot take over the throne, so the best solution is to find a prince that will marry us and take us to their kingdom and become their ornamental wife?" She retorted not happy about the way girls were not given the same right as the boys. "Why can't daughters rule and become the heir to the throne?!"

"Princess, you are not going to be an ornamental wife of a certain prince," Her Lady in Waiting tried to console her. "As a princess, you have a significant role to play."

"What role? Attend the balls and feasts? Obey the husband? Do some needle work and embroidery?" she reproved.

"As a princess, you have a duty to bear your husband a child."

Perry's words prevented her from snapping further.

"And if you marry a first born prince or the heir to the throne, you are not just expected to bear a
son,” Perry explained with pride. “You are to produce an heir to secure your husband’s hold on the throne and empire.

“What if I bore a girl instead of a son?” she retorted; sighting herself as an example. She was an only child and never thought of having any siblings. "Look at my father he did not have any male heir.

“Well, you just have to try again until you produce a son,” Perry explained calmly. "And the King’s situation is different. When the Queen died he promised on your mother’s grave that he will take good care of you instead of marrying again."

She closed her eyes and furrowed her brows, feeling the pressure of those responsibilities. She does not like the idea of bearing someone's child out of duty. She felt like she was being used for some political propaganda.

"What if I refuse to wed and wish not to bear someone’s child? It is my life; it is my body; it is my decision." She challenged and heard Perry sighed. She knew that her Lady in Waiting was starting to have a headache due to her stubbornness.

"Oh Princess, I wish I could agree with what you just said. But you are not an ordinary peasant girl or a commoner. You are a princess, and you have obligations to fulfill and duties to obey."

She groaned and rose from the bed and walked across the room, stood by the window and stared blankly outside. "I wished I hadn’t been born a princess. Maybe my life would be easier." She lamented and sighed.

"Don't say that. Everything is going to be alright," Her Lady in Waiting returned. "One day you would become a Queen and help your husband rule his kingdom. You would be a good Queen and a great mother. You are strong, compassionate and beautiful. I think your husband would be the luckiest man."

Then it dawned on her, "What if I don't want to be wed to a man?"

"I beg your pardon?"

She heard Perry’s surprised reaction and turned around to face her Lady in Waiting. Even if Perry was just five years older than her, she considered Perry as her mother figure, best friend and not just her Lady in Waiting. She was comfortable telling Perry everything.

"What if I want a woman instead?" was her bold statement.

Perry blinked her eyes and opened her mouth to say something, but no words formed in her mouth. After a few seconds, the redhead regained her composure. "Would you mind repeating what you just said?"

"I don't want to marry a man," she reiterated with confidence. "I want a woman."

"Laura, you have not been with a woman or a man before. How can you tell that you do not like a man, and you want to wed a woman?" Perry pronounced slowly and clearly every word.

"Intuition, I guess."

"Princess, you cannot decide on your preference based on your feelings," Perry disagreed. The shock on her face faded and replaced by worry. "And I suggest that you kept mum about this and never tell anybody, not even your father."
"But why... What's wrong with loving a woman instead of a man?" She asked, growing frustrated.

"Because it's not natural," Perry declared.

She gave Perry an irritated grin, "What do you mean it's not natural? And who get to say that this is natural to do and this is not, huh?"

"It's the tradition and beliefs," her Lady in Waiting simply replied.

"Well, I don't want to follow that beliefs and tradition." She proclaimed crossing her arms on her chest.

Perry approached, uncrossed her hands and held it; and gazed at her eyes before telling the truth.

"Laura, you might get hurt if you refuse to follow," was Perry's concerned remark. "Not everybody would accept and understand what you want. We don't know if there are girls out there who like girls too, and if they did, they might be afraid to tell someone about it."

"Why would they be afraid to tell that they like girls too?" she asked innocently.

"Because they might be punish."

"I think that's absurd."

"I know. But you have to promise me not to tell anybody about this." Perry implored.

"I won't tell anyone; but I cannot promise that I would stop liking a woman." She informed and released her hands from Perry's hold.

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She fulfilled her obligation dutifully like any other princess and had been a perfect hostess to her father's guests, especially to the young princes that danced and chatted with her the whole night. Among the twenty princes that were invited, she found the Prince from Berghausen interesting. But not interesting enough to create a spark of romance between them.

Perry told her that they just met, so it was just natural not to feel something yet, however, if they get a chance to spend another time with each other, maybe something might developed. She discarded the idea and raised her hands as Perry put on her camisole. After that, she sat on the chair of her dressing table and faced the mirror, as Perry stood behind her and started to brush her rich long blonde locks.

"You were beautiful and perfect tonight, Princess. I'm proud of you,"

Perry stated, in between brushing hair and then turned her head to the direction of the bathroom as one of the handmaids emerged outside and approached them.

"Did you found the cream Natalie?" She asked, as the girl with the black hair and almond eye stood by her side.

"Yes, Princess," her childhood friend replied with a natural tone. "Should I put some in your arms and legs now?"

"Yes Natalie, you may, thank you." she answered with a smile and then looked at Perry's reflection on the mirror in front of her.
"I don't want to disappoint my father; after all, I am a princess and it's my duty to charm my guests," she simply replied with a hint of sarcasm.

"Oh, Princess, it's not that bad. And besides you made a good acquaintance with that handsome prince… what is his name again?" Perry was eager to know, while Natalie remained silent and continued putting cream on her legs. The handmaids were always silent while in the presence of the Lady in Waiting.

"Viktor… he is nice and quiet. He is not like the other princes that I met."

Worried, Perry stopped brushing her hair and followed up another question, "Why?! How were the other princes? Did someone hurt you?" The Lady in Waiting asked, sounding like a protective mother.

"No! Nobody hurt me." She clarified. "I just find most of the princes arrogant, sometimes rude and sarcastic, that's all. And some of them are teasing me."

"Princess, boys, like to tease the girls, and some princes can be arrogant because they knew that they would become a king someday." Perry explained.

She just rolled her eyes and thought that boys were imbeciles. "And have you seen the Prince of Lawrence?"

"What about him?" Perry asked, sensing her restlessness.

She never complained but if there was one thing that she does not like in a man was a beard or hard stubble. When she was a child, she refused to give her father a kiss because she dislikes the feeling of being kissed by someone with a facial hair. It hurt her soft skin. That was the reason why the King had never grew his beard and remained clean shaven.

"Don't get me wrong, he is handsome, tall and have beautiful blue eyes. But the way his stubble rubbed on my face when he kissed me goodbye on my cheek, it's so rough and I hate it."

"That's just how men are Princess. You're just not used to it because the King does not have a beard and Kirsch shaves regularly because you told him that you do not want a personal royal guard that looks like a barbarian." Perry informed.

She suddenly felt guilty about teasing her only male childhood friend. Being the son of the castle's cook, Kirsch grew up living in the castle with his mother. And since she was always in the servant's hall or in the castle's kitchen when she was a child, the servant's children became her friends and treated them as her family. As they grew up, the King witnessed how the servant's children helped her overcome the sadness of losing a mother. So, her father made sure that her childhood friends remained by her side, and became her hand maids and personal royal guard.

"And you're father told your uncle that you don't like someone with a beard, so he kept his face smooth too."

"What?! But I did not ask him to tell that to Uncle Spencer!" She suddenly felt ashamed of being fussy and did not realize that her father's younger brother was ordered to remain clean-shaven too.

"You're father saw how you react to those people with beard near you, so he ordered you're uncle and your cousin to shave regularly." Perry related, grinning at the thought of revealing a secret. "The King only wants what's best for the princess."

"Oh Perry, what have I done? I remembered only asking my father to shave his beard, because he is
the only one who kisses me on the cheek... and I was just teasing Kirsch, but I did not know that he would take it seriously. But with regards to my Uncle Spencer and my cousin, I don't have anything to do with it!" She babbled fully and felt bad about it.

"Calm down, It's not your fault. I only told you these things so that next time you will be tolerate and considerate to others." Perry disclosed and tried to calm her by guiding her to her bed and tuck her in at once. "Sometimes you need to be humble and accepting to how people looked like, and stop judging people of how they look outside. Because you cannot find love if you always look at the surface, you need to look deeper to the person's heart and soul."

"Princess, what if your husband has a beard? Imagine how will it be every time he will kiss you?" Natalie suddenly came up with a very witty remark that worried her more.

Perry glared at the hand maid that was standing on the other side of the bed. "Natalie, don't scare the Princess."

"Forgive me Princess, I was just being realistic. Because I heard that most of the women prefer to have a husband with beard, because they thought that it is very manly and handsome. That's why most of the men in the village have beard." Natalie related, ignoring Perry's glare.

She was about to tell them that these was one of the reasons why she wanted to wed a woman and not a man, because she likes the smooth face of a woman. But suddenly changed her mind when she realized that she and Perry were not alone; so instead, she expressed her preference if she was to marry a man. "Well, I am not one of those women and I prefer my husband to be clean-shaven and smooth."

"We all have our own preferences when it comes to choosing our partner in life. We just have to respect each other's choice of partners." Perry told them, so as to end the 'debate' of which was more attractive: men with beard or clean shaven?

She grew suddenly curious and before her Lady in Waiting could say another word, she asked the question that she and the other hand maids were dying to know, "How about you, Perry? Do you prefer with beard or clean shaven?"

Perry's cheeks crimsoned and they waited eagerly for the answer.

"Yes Perry, do you like those ruggedly handsome look? Or do you prefer the smooth one like the Princess?" Natalie repeated, as if challenging the Lady in Waiting.

Regaining her composure, Perry stood straight and looked at them in their eyes; first to Natalie and then to her before saying, "I prefer a smooth face over those stubbles. I do not want to kiss someone if it's going to hurt... And before I forgot, I need to know if you are coming with me to the market square tomorrow. We are out of chocolates for your creampuffs."

TBC
Chapter Summary

When Carmilla turned 16 years old, she was officially crowned as the Prince of Karnstein and the castle finally announced that the Kingdom had an heir. It marked also Carmilla’s ‘Name Day’ that falls every 6th of May. As a gift to her on her name day, the Queen provided Carmilla her own Valet de Chambre.

Chapter Notes

Warning: Carmilla/Ell Moment. Fellatio

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Carmilla

She woke up at the sound of heralding trumpets outside of the castle and groaned at the loud persisting sound of it, as if not stopping until the whole castle and the village were awake. Last night was one of the nights that she had a nightmare again, and she woke up in the middle of the night too disturbed to go back to sleep again. She managed to catch some sleep not until she heard the rooster crowed. The nightmares became lesser and almost never happened lately as she grew up, but she was surprised when she had one last night. She put a pillow on her head to muffle the annoying noise. But it never stopped. Irritated, she threw the pillow at the end of her bed.

And then it occurred to her:

Today was the day the castle will announce officially that the Karnstein Kingdom has a prince and heir to the throne; today the castle will declare also her official name day, the 6th of May; and today will mark also her entry to the real life of being a crowned prince and the future King of Karnstein.

She felt suddenly out of breath and began to sweat and felt cold after recalling what would happen today.

Am I ready?

She asked herself as her heart pounded and the thought of meeting those people who would be part of her new life sends her to frenzy.

What if I cannot do it?

It took her more than four years to become the confident and well-bred prince that she was now, and she knew that the way to become the king was a long learning process. And today was only the beginning. She had overcome and surpassed almost all of the Queen’s requirements and demands for her to become a well refined and intelligent prince. However, the anxiety of meeting a lot of people and being with them in one room was driving her mad!
Her worrying has ceased when she heard the door opened widely and heard the familiar sharp sound of shoe heels clicking and clacking on the floor of her chamber.

_Mother?!_

She realized and panicked. She fumbled under her sheets and sighed in relief when she felt nothing hard.

_What is she doing here?!_

She thought irritated; the least person she wants in her chamber in the morning was her mother. She could tolerate the maid coming to her chamber in the morning and waking her up; she was confident that her privacy would be respected, but her mother?

“What? Are you awake?”

She heard the cold authoritative voice of the Queen outside of her curtained four post bed; she could feel that her mother was already standing beside her bed. She shoved the sheet that was covering her and checked if she was decent before replying.

“Yes my Queen Mother.” She said, and rose.

She shoved the curtain to open it and come out of her bed. She was right; her mother was standing near the bed, as she saw the Queen’s tall figure in front of her.

“Happy name day, my son,”

She heard the Queen said and was surprised when she felt the Queen’s soft lips touched her left cheek. She felt warm and happy at the gesture of the Queen; it was the first time her mother kissed her, and it meant a lot to her.

“Thank you my Queen Mother,” she returned with a satisfied smile, as she bowed gently in front of the Queen, not forgetting her manners.

“I want to be the first one to greet you on your special day,” the Queen informed. “And since this is the day that you are going to be officially crowned, I thought I might surprise you with a gift.”

She gave her mother a surprise look and followed her mother’s eyes as it darted to the direction across the chamber by the fireplace. She almost lost her composure when she saw another person with them.

And she remembered the rule: ‘always wait for the maid to leave your chamber before coming out of your bed.’ She was just clothed in her braies and long sleeve under tunic nobody was allowed to see her in her sleep wear except the Queen.

Sensing her uneasiness, she felt the Queen’s hand cupping her left cheek and she turned her gaze up to her mother. “It is alright. LaFontaine has my permission.” Her mother assured and summoned for the person to come closer.

“Good morning Your Highness,“

She heard the person with a short red hair greeted before bowing in front of her. Her eyes scanned at the sight of this person clothed in black breeches, black long sleeve under shirt over a blue plain nylon vest. She discreetly eyed the person’s crotch and was confused by the lack of bulge. Before her curiosity can go further, she heard her mother’s voice.

“This is LaFontaine,” the Queen introduced. “From now on, LaFontaine is going to be your Valet.
They will look after your personal needs, from grooming, taking care of your clothes, ordering the maids when you need something and organizing your day for you.”

She listened intently to what her mother told her and was satisfied that she had her own personal valet. But one thing confused her: why does her mother keep on referring LaFontaine as they?

“May I ask why we have to refer to you as they?” she asked carefully, respecting LaFontaine’s identity.

“My son, Lafontaine chooses not to be called neither a she nor a he,” the Queen informed and gave a nod to LaFontaine. “They prefer they and them.”

She was still confused, but this was not the time to ask more. One day she will ask LaFontaine why. But in the meantime, she wanted to assure that LaFontaine was suit to be her valet.

“Does my Valet know their limit of how far they can serve me?” She asked, wanting to be sure.

“LaFontaine knew everything about you and the rules that I implemented to every servants that were serving you,” The Queen told her. “LaFontaine is schooled as an apothecary and grew up watching their father cured people. So, they would be one of the castle’s apothecary from now on too.”

She was suddenly impressed at her new Valet, but she began to wonder what this person was doing in the castle and serving her as her valet. “Have you been a valet before?” She asked this LaFontaine. But her mother took over.

“No, they have not.” The queen explained. “But do not worry. LaFontaine had been preparing for this position for a long time and their training had been commendable; it is like they are born to be your Valet.”

She nodded in agreement towards her new Valet, and then turned her gaze to her mother. “Thank you my Queen Mother for providing me the best care. I am very much grateful for your kindness.”

“I want the best for you,” The Queen relayed and focused to LaFontaine’s direction. “LaFontaine, I now entrust to you my son.”

“Thank you, your Majesty, for giving me the honor,” LaFontaine said. “I would be forever grateful.”

“My son, Your King Father and I are proud of you and the hard work that you have undergone in order to attain this, we are happy that you had become the prince that you are: intelligent, obedient, fearless, confident, courteous.”

“Thank you my Queen Mother, I could have not done it without your help,” she replied with pride.

*****

The time had come, and she found herself fidgeting as she waited by the other side of the throne room. She could hear the murmuring of the people inside the throne room. Her mother assured her that only the important noble men and women and the castle’s important court officials, bishops and priests were invited. She was distracted from her thoughts when she heard the voice of her Valet beside her.

“Your Royal Highness just remember the breathing exercise that I taught you,” LaFontaine relayed. "And the scent of the lavender that I applied on your pulse point would calm you."

She looked at LaFontaine’s direction and nodded discreetly. She felt better realizing that her valet
was beside her and knew how to calm her even if they just met today. Her mother was right, it was as if LaFontaine was born to be her Valet; to be her companion; to assist her in whatever problem she was in to and she was thankful for it.

“And remember, I am always behind you, Your Royal Highness.” LaFontaine assured and smiled.

She smiled modestly at her Valet and gave her a nod of thanks. She straightened her back and stood proud as she saw the King and Queen proceeded to the main door of the throne room and entered. She remained standing on her spot, waiting for the herald to call her as the King and Queen marched inside the throne room. She could hear and see what was happening inside the throne room.

The door remained opened and she had a view of how many people were in the throne room to witness her crowning and she began to sweat and feel cold. Then she remembered the breathing exercise that her new Valet told her and worked on it. She slowly regained her composure and concentrated on what the herald announces.

It did not take long before the herald announced the arrival of the King and Queen as the procession in the throne room began.

“All rise for their Royal Majesties, King Philipp Albert Matthias of Karnstein and Queen Lilita Mircalla Constance of Karnstein, rulers of Kingdom of Karnstein!”

“Your majesties, do you have any words for your people?” The herald announced as the King and Queen reached their thrones and faced the crowd.

“I thank all of you for coming today to celebrate a special occasion,” The King began as the small crowd listened intently. “I declare today that the Kingdom Of Karnstein has an heir to the throne and this day marks also the Name Day and coronation of my successor. I call forward my son and heir to the throne of Kingdom of Karnstein!”

“Their Majesties call before them Prince Carl Philipp Marcus, heir to the throne of Karnstein Kingdom!”

The herald announced her entrance, and she marched with confidence to the throne room, with LaFontaine following discreetly behind her on the side. She focused her sight towards where her father and mother were standing, as the King and Queen waited for her. She could feel all the eyes and attention to her but disregard it and focused towards her parents. She bowed her head first to the King and then to the Queen and remained standing in front of the King, as her father approached her.

“As heir to the throne of Kingdom of Karnstein, You must at all time place the good of the Kingdom before Your own interests. You must be a source of strength and wisdom for Your people. As my sole heir, do you accept to be my successor?”

“I accept, with all my heart.” She declared, and kneeled on the pillow that was placed in front of her. And the King took the crown and placed it on her head carefully.

“As the King of Karnstein and ruler of this Kingdom, I now declare you, Carl Philipp Marcus, my successor and heir to the throne of Karnstein!”

Seconds after the declaration, she heard the crowd rejoiced.

*****

It was almost midnight and she did not know how she managed to survive the crowning ceremony and the feast, but she was thankful that it was already over. LaFontaine had helped her today
enormously and she realized that most of the people that were invited were the same people that she sees in the castle and some noble men and women that her parents knew, which she already recognized.

Right now, she was resting in her chamber sitting at the chair beside her study table still dressed in that red long over tunic with over coat and red long cloak with a fur that was pinned at her shoulders with diamond brooch. She still felt uncomfortable at the weight of her crown on her head. It was not heavy but she just has to get used to it. She stood up from her chair with her back straight and faced the door as she heard the sound of her mother’s heels on the hall’s floor. It was time for the Queen to say goodnight to her. The guards opened the door to her chamber and the Queen entered. She bowed at once as the Queen approached her.

“Good evening my Queen Mother,” she greeted her mother.

“You were excellent today, my son,” the Queen praised her, standing in front of her. “I was afraid that you will be distress due to the number of people that were inside the throne room, but you managed to composed yourself. I am proud of you.”

“I would not have done it without the help of my Valet,” she returned honestly.

“Did them?” the Queen remarked, wondering. “I should praise LaFontaine for taking good care of my precious son.”

She felt warm and proud at the mention of her being precious.

“I have another gift for you,” the Queen relayed.

“I thought my valet was the gift.” She said, wondering; and was surprised when a golden chain necklace with ruby pendant surrounded by diamonds were put around her neck. “It’s beautiful, thank you so much my Queen Mother for the precious gift.”

“You are my precious glittering Prince, you deserve precious gifts.” The Queen reasoned and kissed her on the cheek. “Before you go to bed, I want you to think of the things that happened today. You are now the crowned Prince of Karnstein and your father’s successor; in order for you to be a successful King you need me to guide you.”

She nodded and the Queen walked to the direction of the door and left her wondering about what her mother told her.

*****

It was the day after her birthday feast and she was given a rest day by the Queen from all her studying and obligations. She had asked LaFontaine to take care of all the gifts that she received yesterday and write a letter of thanks to all the guests. Right now, she can do freely what she wanted without her Valet trailing by her side.

She saw the strong rays of the sun outside her window and felt the gentle breeze of summer caressing her cheeks as she approached the window. She looked out and smiled at the sight of green trees and its abundant leaves and the flowers that were in full blooms. It was seldom that she feels excited and looking forward of getting out.

The closest thing that she enjoyed when going out of the castle was to go horse riding around the castle’s vast courtyard. But today she had this confidence of conquering her fears of being out in the vast space and just surrender to it. She had successfully overcame her fear of being with lots of people in a room, although fifty persons were not a lot, still, she managed to calm down and fulfilled
her task yesterday. And all thanks to the breathing exercise that her Valet taught her, some calming herbs and the knowledge that LaFontaine was there to help her anytime. Although they just met yesterday, LaFontaine oozes with trust and security that she never saw before in a person, not since she was separated from her Ma and Da. This time she felt a little secured knowing that there was a person that she could trust fully in anything.

Before she can change her mind, she put on her riding boots and strode out of her chamber.

When she arrived at the castle’s stable, she was greeted right away by the tall lanky middle age man with gray hair and bowed to her. Aside from the scholars and teachers, he was one of the servants that can talk to him.

“Good day Alfred,” She said as the man lifted his head and smiled at her. He had taught her how to ride the horse since she was twelve years old and was the only person she trusted when she wants to go horse riding.

“Good day Your Highness,” he returned.

“I was wondering if we could go outside of the castle’s walls today; perhaps the nearby forest?” She asked with confidence and saw the reluctance on Alfred’s face, but the man eventually nodded.

“Should I fetch some Royal Guards to escort us?” Alfred asked, knowing that it was their first time riding the horse outside of the castle. “…We do not want Her Majesty the Queen to worry.”

She was about to decline the offer, but eventually agreed with the man’s suggestion. The last thing she wants to see was the Queen worrying about her. “Only if they will not get in a way of my horse riding; I wish to explore the forest and see them for the first time without anybody disturbing me by trailing behind.”

“As you wish, Your Highness,” Alfred nodded and motioned for the five royal guards that were in the stable to come and gave them orders before hopping in their horses.

After a few minutes, Alfred was finished putting on the saddle on her black stallion and she hopped on her horse at once smoothly. Once she was securely seated, she guided her stallion on the way out of stable followed by Alfred behind her, and the other five royal guards that were keeping their distance a several foot away from her and Alfred. She felt a sense of freedom ignited inside her as she rode her horse passed the drawbridge and on the way to the forest.

*****

It was almost dusk when they reach the castle. She was thankful that her mother and father were busy attending to the guests that had spent the night after her coronation feasts, and were probably still entertaining them. So, their attention were focused somewhere else. When she reached the main door of the castle, she passed unto it and did not get off of her horse. Instead, she went around the side of the castle and chose the castle’s side entrance; trying to avoid some guests who were probably still loitering in the castle. She hopped off at once from her horse and thanked Alfred for accompanying her.

Upon crossing the threshold of the side door of the castle, she almost bumped into someone when she came face to face with a woman who was a couple of inch taller than her, dressed in a black cloak. Her eyes widened as she recognized who it was.

“Elleanor?”

“Your Highness, Forgive me,” The woman expressed and bowed in front of her, ashamed at rushing
to the door and almost colliding to her. “I have no idea that Your Highness is using this door.” She apologized, still bowing her head.

She did not know who were using this door, but it was her first time to enter through the side door, so there was nobody to blame.

“It’s not your fault. I am trying to avoid our guests, so I decided to use this door instead of the main door.” She replied and saw that her father’s mistress was still bowing. “Are you hurt?” she asked with a hint of concern in her voice.

She remembered the last time they saw each other, they parted not in good terms and she was angry at this woman, believing that she was lying. But she regretted her behavior towards her father’s mistress when the Queen explained to her everything about the King’s Mistress. She cannot blame her if her father’s mistress was somewhat intimidated by her presence.

“Look at me.”

Elleanor hesitated and looked at her with a hint of anxiety in her eyes. She suddenly felt guilty of accusing this woman of being a liar and she was about to apologize to her but suddenly caught off guard when the awkward silence between them was broken. And she heard Elleanor’s voice.

“I-I am alright Your Highness,” Elleanor uttered.

She was about to apologize for behaving badly last time they met, but was suddenly reminded of what her mother used to tell her: ‘You’re the future King, you don’t need to apologize.’ And instead, she thought of something to make up from her misbehavior towards her father’s mistress. But first, she needs to know where Elleanor is going.

“It’s already dark, where are you going?” was her curious remark.

“I was about to go home, Your Highness,” Puzzled, “I thought you live in the castle?” was her innocent comment.

“No, Your Highness, the King provided a house for me in the village. I just come in the castle when the King needs me. And tonight the King is with his other mistress, so he sent me home.”

“But it is already dark, how would you manage to go home?” she suddenly found herself worrying at Elleanor’s safety. Then she caught Elleanor blushing at her remark and smirk at her. “What? Did I say something wrong?”

Elleanor shook her head, “No Your Highness, nothing is wrong. I just don’t expect that the Prince of Karnstein will be worried about how I would go home.”

This time, she felt that she was the one who was blushing as Elleanor’s statement silenced her. “I just want to make sure that you are safe.” She honestly told her and made Elleanor smile fully.

“Thank you for your concern Your Highness that is…” Elleanor hesitated for a moment.

“Is what?” she demanded, not use to being left hanging in a conversation.

“…thoughtful of you,” Elleanor supplied right away.

This time she was the one who smiled and felt a tingling sensation. But before it could lead to another different tingling sensation, she felt rumbling in her stomach and realized that the last meal
she had was breakfast and it was almost dinner time.

“Would you care to join me for dinner?”

There was silence on Elleanor’s part and she saw the surprised expression of the King’s Mistress.

“It would be an honor, Your Highness,” was Elleanor’s excited reaction. “But I am not allowed to be seen dining with any of the Royal Family, and I cannot eat at the servant's hall. Since the Queen ordered that I am to entertain and serve the King in his chamber and nowhere else.”

She was about to suggest that they could eat in her chamber but dismiss the thought. "I could ask the maids to prepare dinner at the tea room instead," was her hopeful suggestion. She was careful not to sound desperate.

"It sounded perfect."

Finally, she managed to coax Elleanor. "Follow me." She informed the King's Mistress and walked towards the direction of the tea room. When she saw the first Royal Guard in the castle he asked him right away to tell the servants that she would be dining in the tea room with someone.

*****

After three hours, and a four coarse meal and two jugs of wine, they now found themselves relaxing and talking endlessly. She was satisfied that she chose the tea room because she never experienced eating dinner while sitting on a sofa. Elleanor served her food and poured wine in her goblet, while they eat and relax in the softness of the sofa. She felt mischievous of not eating in the right manner but found it comfortable compared to eating dinner with her mother and father in the family dining hall where she had to observe proper table etiquette.

She could smell the faint flowery perfume of Elleanor as the King's Mistress leant on her side to pour more wine in her goblet. She knew that she had already reached her limit, but she does not care, as long as she could still be with Elleanor, talk and laugh with the King's mistress, she would continue to drink. She also noticed that the space on the sofa between them where growing shorter.

"So, how does it feel like to be crowned Prince of Karnstein?" Elleanor asked after pouring the red wine.

"Heavy."

They both laugh at her reply. She had never been careless and fooled with someone before and she never expected that there was a part in her, the foolish part that exists. She had never let her guard down and was always careful of how she behaves and talks. She was brought up to be serious and orderly, that she almost forget how to laugh. And today, this person opened this window of emotions in her: the window of happiness and being carefree.

She found Elleanor clever, entertaining and a good listener. And she realized now why her mother had chosen Elleanor to be her father's Mistress: Elleanor was the complete opposite of her mother. Suddenly, she envied her father and before she could think, the wine overtook her sanity and blurted out:

"I wish I have a mistress like you."

"I wish I am… your mistress." Elleanor emphasized on the word 'your'.

She gazed at Elleanor and there was just silence, as she saw the fully dilated eyes of her father's
mistress, as if inviting her. She did not waste any seconds, she leant in and kissed the rouged lips of the King's Mistress with wanton and was reciprocated with the same manner of kiss. She felt Elleanor's hand groped at once her crotch and started rubbing her shaft, it hardens at once at the contact, "Elleanor…" she groaned in between heated kiss and the maddening sensation of Elleanor's hand on her shaft. This woman can read her mind, she thought. She remembered the last time Elleanor touched her; how it awakened her into a new world.

"Call me Ell,"

Her father's mistress implored, as she felt Elleanor released from the kiss and was now putting small kisses under her earlobe and around her neck.

"Ell…" she pleaded and felt Ell's hand untied the strings of her trousers. And the next thing she saw was her fully erected shaft out of her braies and Ell going down on her.

She groaned, cursed and said words that she never used before as Ell's tongue and mouth gave her first sexual experience…

"Happy name day Prince Carl," she heard Ell whispered in her ear afterwards. She was about to kiss Ell to let the King's Mistress know how satisfied she was, but was rudely interrupted when she heard a voice called her.

"Your Highness."

She followed where the voice came from and she anxiously pulled her braies up and tied her trousers, as the figure of her Valet approached them. Suddenly she felt like she was abruptly snatched from a dream and was thrown back to reality.

"LaFontaine, have you not heard of knocking first, before entering?" Was her sarcastic remark, as she finished tying the strings of her trousers. Ell was now standing beside her with a decent gap.

"I was Your Highness…knocking. But no one answered," LaFontaine replied calmly.

"Then why didn't you leave?" she asked annoyed.

"Because the maid told me that Your Highness is here and-"

"…And that you can just barged in and disturb me?" She reproached, while glaring at her Valet.

"No Your Highness," was LaFontaine's firm calm reply. "I am here to let you know that the Queen was looking for Your Highness and is waiting at your chamber."

Mother?! She felt like cold water was poured over her, as she realized how she lost track of time and lost control of herself. She panicked and rose from her seat, but suddenly lost her balance as the effect of the wine got into her. She felt Ell supporting her by the arm.

"Your Highness, are you alright?" Ell asked with worry in her eyes.

She faced Ell, and gave her a weak smile. "I am alright. I had a good time, thank you for spending the evening with me. It's a pleasure being with you."

"The pleasure is mine Your Highness," Ell replied and bowed to her.

And before she could ask LaFontaine to help her, she felt LaFontaine already standing beside her,
and putting her right arm around their shoulder, to support her fully.

"Don't tell my mother what you have seen," she warned LaFontaine at once before leaving the tea room.

"I don't know what you are talking about, Your Highness," LaFontaine replied and winked at her.

She smiled at her Valet's loyalty and thought that if there was one person she could trust right now, it would be LaFontaine. She was grateful that her Valet understood her.

*****

When they arrived at her chamber, the tall figure of the Queen greeted her eyes right away as they entered her chamber.

"Hello Mother!" She greeted the Queen as LaFontaine walked beside her, still supporting her.

"Where have you been?"

She heard the cold serious voice of the Queen.

"I just had dinner with Elleanor, since I did not want to disturb you and my King Father," she replied, and hiccupped.

"You're drunk!" The Queen reprimanded, and came closer and examined her face. "LaFontaine why is the Prince intoxicated?"

She grew worried and watched LaFontaine's expression as her Valet looked at her mother in the eyes.

"The Prince had dinner with this woman, Elleanor and served the Prince wine. Unfortunately, she did not know that His Highness cannot tolerate too much wine."

"Will you put the Prince on the chair and leave us for a moment?" The Queen asked LaFontaine.

As soon as the door closed, her mother stood in front of where she was seated and stared at her. She may be tipsy but she could tell that she was in for strong reprimanding.

"What kind of foolishness have you been up to? You were officially crowned the heir to the throne and you were already behaving like a fool."

The Queen started, not tearing her mother's sight on her. She could see the anger and disappointment in her mother's eyes, and did not dare reply.

"And why were you with Elleanor?"

Her mother asked, in a suspicious manner. Suddenly, she found herself fidgeting, as her mother waited for her reply. She gathered her composure and decided to tell the truth, since she knew that there was nothing wrong with it, until the part where she kissed Ell.

"I met Ell. Elleanor on my way to the castle and invited her to eat dinner with me," she explained without flaws in her voice. She chose not to elaborate more for fear of slippage.

"And why would you invite your father's mistress to dine with you?"

The Queen asked what she was afraid to hear. She knew that her mother would not stop until the
truth was revealed. But she challenged her mother's suspicions.

"Why wouldn't I? My King Father had already sent her home and I want someone to keep me company, and Elleanor happened to be there."

After that explanation, she saw her mother's facial expression changed from the familiar deadpan to worry.

"From now on I forbid you to see and talk to Elleanor." The Queen insisted and glared at her.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the Carmilla/Ell moment. I totally love Hollstein, but I need to get passed at this chapter of Carmilla's life to keep the plot going. I would make it up on the later chapters with lots of Hollstein goodness.

And thanks for all your kudos and lovely comments. It's good to see that there are people who appreciate this story :-)


Princess Laura's Suitors

Chapter Summary

It was Laura's 16th name day the 10th of August and the Hollis' Kingdom invited as many princes as possible as potential suitors for Laura. One old acquaintance of the Princess brought his sister with him and everything changed. While her interest with the Prince of Berghausen fade away.

Chapter Notes

Warning: Mentioning of penis and erection

Laura

"Oh Perry, how many times do I have to do this!" She grumbled as she sat on the chair in front of her dressing table, dressed in one of her finest white gown and ready for Perry to put the crown as a finishing touch on her braided hair.

"As many times as you can, until you find the one," her Lady in waiting returned, standing behind her and looking at her reflection on the mirror, after pinning the crown on her hair.

"I don't think I can find the one," she despaired, knowing that her preference was not the ideal partner in the eyes of the people.

"Oh, Laura, don't say that," Perry reproached, stopping for a moment. "There is always someone for you out there; you just have to kiss as many princes as you can to be able to find him."

Perry was being optimistic as always, but she does not find it amusing right now. After the ball, there had been numerous proposals from the princes that she met. She had been nice, patient and accommodating for the past three months to all that visited and offered their love and castle to her. But none of them had enticed her to put on the ring.

"I would rather kiss many frogs instead of kissing those arrogant, unshaven scruffy princes," was her retort.

"Oh Princess, try to cheer up, it's your name day! You cannot be cranky on your special day," Perry reassured rubbing the sides of her shoulders, and looked at both their reflection on the mirror before whispering to her ear, "I heard Prince Viktor is coming today. He is clean shaven, handsome and nice."

She just rolled her eyes and conceded. As one of the few maiden princesses in Styria, there was no doubt that a lot of princes from the neighboring and even far away kingdom had proclaimed their love interest in her. According to Perry and the rest of the people in the castle that knew her, they were all convinced that she was the ideal princess that every prince seeks and the perfect daughter in
law that every queen mother wish for their sons to marry. She was the epitome of kindness, cheerfulness, beauty, charm, humility and a ball of sunshine according to her friends and love ones. With all the excellent qualities that she possessed, she was indeed the perfect princess to bear an heir and be the mother of a future king and most importantly an ideal wife to any prince or an excellent queen to an heir.

However, their lovable Princess was not that ideal as they thought when she discovered that her preference with regards to her partner in life was not the ideal one in the eyes of the majority.

On that day that she revealed to Perry that she wished to wed a woman, she was thankful that her Lady in waiting understood and respected her decision. However, that did not stop Perry, her father and the rest of the people in the castle to search for the perfect prince that could melt her heart and convinced her to settle down. She loved the idea of settling down but when she pictures the image of her partner and love in life, an image of a woman and not a man was always drawn in her head; it was her heart that creates that image and she cannot control it no matter how hard she denied it. She would always prefer a beautiful woman from a handsome man and nobody can dictate her whom to love. The King, Perry and the whole castle can command her to fulfill all the duties and responsibilities of being the Princess of Hollis, but they cannot dictate her heart to love a prince that they deemed perfect for her. Love was the only thing that she could hold onto and when the right person comes, she would gladly give her heart to that person.

In the meantime, she does not want to disappoint her love ones, so she took a deep breath and prepared herself for the celebration.

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She chose to stand by the door of the castle's ballroom to greet her guests instead of sitting on the throne beside her father to welcome them. She thinks that it was more welcoming to meet her guests up close and personal instead of bowing to her while she was seated on a throne. She enjoyed also the non-traditional hugging and kissing her guests and receiving a peck on the cheek or a kiss on the hand from her acquaintances, friends and relatives.

Upon seeing her first guest of honor entering the ballroom and after hearing the herald announcing the names of the guests that arrived, she beamed at once at the sight of a blonde clean shaven middle aged man, a middle aged woman with a dark brown hair with a smiley face and a young prince that was a replica of the older man.

"Uncle Spencer!" She walked to the direction of her father's younger brother at once and gave him a hug, and kissed her auntie Jordana upon setting an eye on her uncle's wife followed by Johann their son. Then she gave her cousin, a bear hug and discreetly punched him lightly on his shoulder. Her cousin Johann might be the next heir to the throne of Hollis Kingdom, but that do not stopped her from being playful or teasing her cousin even if they were already both in their adolescent and were being presented to the society as potential betrothed to other princes and princesses.

"So, who would it be, Prince Viktor or Prince Gerhard?"

Johann whispered in her ear, teasing her. Her cousin knew that she was being paired with these princes after they witnessed how interested she was with the two the last time they had a ball.

"No one," she retorted and grinned at him and was about to give him a playful slap on the shoulder again, but had to refrain herself when the herald announced the arrival of the next guests and Johann walked further. She composed herself and smiled as a new prince that she had never met before walked towards her.
He had dark hair and was tan. He must have come from the neighboring land of Austria. If looks would count he would surely be one of the princes that she would be interested with, due to the fact that he was clean shaven and look smooth. She dislikes the hairy kind of men and preferred the ones with less hair.

She composed herself and smiled as she saw the prince bowed to her.

"Your Royal Highness, Princess Laura," he said standing majestically in front of her. "Allow me to personally introduce myself I am Prince Theodore of Straka. It is an honor to have been invited at your name day and to meet you."

"Thank you Prince Theodore, the honor is mine and I am grateful that you accepted our invitation," she returned before he was ushered further by the royal guards to go further down the hall.

*He was kind of serious and formal.* She thought as soon as he was out of her sight. He had also this air of arrogance in him, *definitely one of those heirs to the throne!* She may not be attracted in men, but she surely enjoyed the company of men who had sense of humor; men she could tease and be playful with like Johann; men who were kindhearted and courageous like Kirsch; men who were nice and clean shaven like Prince Viktor; and men whom she could talk anything under the sun and make her smile like Prince Gerhard.

*Speaking of the devil!* She thought as her eyes caught the sight of the tall, well-built, light-haired prince.

"Princess Laura, it's a pleasure to see you again!" The Prince of Lawrence declared as he gingerly made his way towards her, smiling. He was the only prince that she met that exudes with cheerfulness and found him unusually chatty for a man. She liked his unreserved, straightforward and unpretentious demeanor.

She received a hug from him at once and then a peck on the cheek. She was thankful that he shaved this time. "I'm so glad to see you too, Prince Gerhard."

As soon as they parted from the embrace, he motioned to the direction of a young woman who was standing behind him. "Princess Laura, allow me to introduce my sister, Princess Danielle of Lawrence."

Suddenly, she found herself staring at the tallest and most beautiful princess that she had ever met. This princess was tall like Prince Gerhard, but a redhead; her eyes were the bluest she had ever seen and her lips were thin and red. She found herself adoring every feature of the princess' face and cannot help but to sigh at this beautiful creature in front of her.

She was snatched from her ogling and thankful for being saved from this embarrassing situation when she heard the princess talk.

"I am Princess Danielle and your humble servant." The Princess uttered holding her gaze and then bowed.

Her mouth fell and she almost lost her composure upon hearing the princess of Lawrence uttered those words. She found it very intimate: and right there and then, she was already captured. She had not even noticed that Prince Gerhard had been telling her something. She shook her head and cleared her thoughts as she forced her attention to him.

"Forgive me, Prince Gerhard, could you repeat that again?" she embarrassingly requested, feeling the heat crawling in her face.
"I was wondering where your Royal Personal Guard might be?" Prince Gerhard asked.

She lifted her left eyebrow, confused at why Prince Gerhard was looking for her Royal Personal Guard. "Kirsch?" she asked and received a nod from him. "He was escorting some of the guests, but he would return immediately."

"I think I would require some assistance from him later on," the prince simply said and smiled at her before walking further.

She bravely set her gaze back at the Princess of Lawrence who was patiently waiting for her. "I am looking forward to get to know your charming personality." She returned and bit her lower lip. She received a smirk from the Princess, bowed in agreement before turning around and followed the path where the guests were.

She cannot stop herself from grinning like a fool, as the thought of getting to know Princess Danielle made her ecstatic. But the smile on her face disappeared when she saw her next guest already close by and was replaced by a less goofy smile, as she composed herself and stood straight.

"Princess Laura, you looked beautiful," the clean shaven young blonde Prince greeted and took her hand right away and kissed it before she could welcome him. "Happy name day," he said after releasing her hand.

"Thank you Prince Viktor, I am so thankful that you accepted our invitation again," she said emphasizing on 'our' instead of telling him that it was her invitation. Of all the princes that she met, the Prince of Berghausen was the one who was modest and refined; and not at all the aggressive and cocky type of man.

"It is a pleasure to be invited again by the most beautiful princess in Styria," Prince Viktor returned. "Would you do me the honor of saving the last dance for me?"

She does not know what does it meant, but since he requested nicely she had thought nothing wrong about it. "I would gladly do it." She returned and smiled knowing that it was just an innocent dance.

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The dinner was served and after granting all the request of those who liked to dance with her, she now found herself wanting to get out and just disappear from the eyes of everybody. Her feet hurt and it was warm, she really needed some fresh air.

She sneaked out of the ballroom while everybody was dancing and the rest still drinking and eating. She does not want to chat with another potential suitor or prince, she had been patiently chatting with every prince in the castle for the last six hours and she just needed a break.

Few minutes later, she was out in the castle's courtyard on the way to her favorite spot under the largest maple tree in the courtyard. A wooden bench was specifically made and placed under the tree upon the King's request since her father always find her under that tree, playing, reading, drawing, relaxing and having tea or what she used to call picnic. She sat at once and took off her shoes. She looked at the sky and the sight of the full moon shining in the clear night calmed her at once. Five minutes had not passed yet and she was already interrupted when she heard someone called her name from behind. Thinking that it was one of her handmaidens or some of the maids that were sent by Perry to search for her, she answered at once.

"Tell Perry I'll be back in ten minutes, just give me some time to rest my feet," she declared to whoever this person was, but she felt the person's presence approached her closer. When she opened
her eyes, she almost gawked at the person in front of her.

"Who's Perry?" the sound of Princess Danielle's voice broke her ogling.

She composed herself and straightened her back, and put her shoes on. "Princess Danielle, what are you doing here? Shouldn't you be inside mingling with the guests?"

"I think I'm the one who should ask you those questions," the Princess of Lawrence returned and then smiled at her. "Relax, I'm only teasing you."

Sheepish, she gave Princess Danielle a bashful smile and gestured for her to take a seat beside her. "Well, sometimes, the celebrant needs a break too."

"How did you know that I was here?"

"I just thought that maybe you needed somebody to look after you, since you sneak out of the castle and your royal body guard was busy chatting with my brother," Princess Danielle related. "I wouldn't want anything bad to happen to you, in case there's a drunken guest that was roaming outside."

Her heart pounded madly at the heroic declaration of the Princess, but she did not dare tell her how much impact that remark made. "Well, you sounded like a knight in shining armor that wants to protect her princess." She spoke half in jest and half in earnest.

"You're right, I wish I was-," Princess Danielle replied, smiling.

Still oblivious, "So, you wished to be a knight instead of a princess?"

"No, I wished that I can be your knight in shining armor so that I can protect you."

After that statement, she sought Princess Danielle's eyes for any trace of teasing or fooling. But she became silent when she found earnest eyes gazing at her. She still cannot believe if this was for real. This would be a dream come true if she had interpreted it correctly. She was about to ask Princess Danielle another question, but the sound of Natalie's voice can be heard at the whole courtyard, shouting her name. Perry had surely found out that she was missing. "I guess we better return inside."

But before they could stand up, Princess Danielle held her arm gently, as if stopping her from rising. She turned her gaze to her with a questioning look, waiting for what she was going to tell. But instead, she felt her hand being taken by a soft hand, and the next thing she knew, Princess Danielle’s lips were already touching the back of her hand and a pair of blue eyes were gazing at her with desire. She lost herself for a while at the sight in front of her. The most beautiful and attractive princess that she ever met was kissing her hand and wanted to protect her, how crazy and unreal it was! She tried to calm herself as she stressed out at the sound of Natalie's voice getting closer to them and the realization of Princess Danielle might feel the same thing as she does.

"Do you always kiss your lady friends on their hands like that?" was her stupid question.

"No. Only with you," Princess Danielle revealed.

After that answer, she did not waste any minute, she cupped the Princess of Lawrence's face and kissed her deeply. She was not disappointed as Princess Danielle returned the kiss with the same
fervent manner. They only parted when they hear footsteps getting closer to where they were sitting.

"Princess Laura, everybody's looking for you and the King was worried," Natalie said after finding them.

Princess Danielle remained silent and bowed her head.

Still panting, she spoke at once to dispatch Natalie. "Tell them I'll be right back, I just have some matters to discuss with Princess Danielle," she informed Natalie, and gave her handmaiden a smile, before leaving them. As soon as she was sure that Natalie was gone, she held Princess Danielle's face and caressed it before saying, "I would love to see you more."

She woke up with a smile in her face as the rays of the sun met her eyes. It was surely a bright day as the remaining heat and sunny days of summer still made its presence. In a few weeks the days would become shorter and the night would become longer. But she does not mind it, she felt like everything around her was still beaming. After her name day celebration last night, she could tell that it was the most wonderful ball or celebration that they had in the castle. Everybody in the kingdom of Hollis was happy and satisfied after the feast. She had dance with all of the princes that had been invited and saved the last dance to Prince Viktor. She remembered Perry mentioned that they both looked beautiful and perfect while dancing. She shrugged off Perry's comment and told her Lady in waiting not to expect too much. But the reason why she felt inspired and happy upon waking up was the new guest that she met last night.

*Princess Danielle.* She uttered the name like a sweet and fondly recalled what happened last night, while touching her lips. Her daydreaming was interrupted when she heard Perry called.

"Good morning Laura! You have a visitor," was Perry's very excited remark. "You would not believe who was in the tea room waiting for you."

"What?!" she was puzzled. She was not expecting someone today. "What do you mean?" She asked as she sat on her bed, ready to listen to Perry.

"The Prince of Berghausen is here and he was eager to speak to you at once." Her Lady in waiting declared.

"It sounded like he was too eager, since it had not pass a day yet since he was here and now he's back?" was her oblivious remark. "What does he want?"

"He wants to talk to you in private and he said that he had some serious matter to tell you."

She was left without a choice but to face the Prince of Berghausen, after half an hour, she showed up at the tea room where she found Prince Viktor already standing and smiling at her upon laying his eyes on her.

"Prince Viktor, to what do I owe this honor?" She said smiling, as she approached him and bowed to greet him, while he took her hand instead and kissed it lightly. She felt warm at his gesture and quietness. She can sense that he was nervous and looked very serious. She gestured for him to take a seat, and she took the empty space beside him and sat on the sofa.

"Princess Laura, I apologized for disturbing your sleep, I know that-" the Prince was telling but she stopped him at once, to lessen the lines on his face, and put her hand on his to make him at ease.
"Prince Viktor, you did not disturb me at all. I was awake when my Lady in waiting informed me that I have a visitor," she related calmly and withdrew her hand from touching him as soon as she felt him relaxed. "And I was happy to find out that it was you."

"I am so relieved and glad to know that," he returned, and moved a little closer to her.

She did not move a bit, not wanting to send a wrong signal to Prince Viktor that she was avoiding him and remained composed and calm as she waited for him to speak.

"Princess Laura, last night was amazing," he started, and faced her. "I have never felt so happy in my life while you gave me the honor of having the last dance, thank you so much for considering me. You were so graceful and beautiful in every moment that I am with you, I felt proud that I was able to hold you and get close to you while dancing. I said to myself that I would be the happiest man if I get a chance to always dance with you…"

She was flattered at his sincere remark and smiled at his thoughtfulness, he may be the same age as her but he was surely mature in the way he thinks and behave, she thought. "Well, you’re one of the nicest persons that I knew, and you asked me politely so I did not refuse your offer." Was her genuine remark. "And you were a good dancer too, so I did choose the right person for the last dance." He blushed at her remark and his boyish charm surfaced. But he soon recovered from his bashfulness, as she touched his hand and reassured him. "You are probably the best dance partner that I ever had, after having danced with more than thirty princes. And you are charming and a gentle-" she was not finished yet with what she was saying, when she felt him claimed her lips and kissed her deeply. She was caught off guard and did not realize that he was going to behave this way. She pulled out from the kiss gently and looked at him. And before she could say something, he was holding both her hands and gazing at her, before saying:

"Princess Laura, would you do me the honor of being my wife and the mother to my children?"

She was shocked at what had just transpired she did not have the slightest idea that he was going to propose. She stared at him for a moment and cannot find the right words to tell him. Then she decided to look down so she could compose herself, but was taken aback at the sight of the bulge in Prince Viktor's trousers. She quickly released from his hold and rise from the sofa. "Oh my! What's that?!" she exclaimed gesturing on the package that was showing in his trousers.

The Prince of Berghausen looked down and was shocked also when he saw the bulge appearing in his trousers. He pressed his hands down on it, trying to hide it. But the contact only made it worst as it became more erected. She panicked at the sight of it and rung the bell for the maid to come in, while Prince Viktor turned his back on her to avoid further embarrassing sight.

Shortly, the door opened and she was glad to see Natalie instead of another maid. "Natalie, could you please tell Kirsch to escort Prince Viktor to his carriage? He needs to go home immediately," and before Natalie could leave the room, she bid him a quick goodbye and left the tea room.

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That night when Perry was finished brushing her hair and Natalie had left, she decided to tell Perry the truth.

"Perry, I lied, Prince Viktor did not have a stomach ache," she began as she looked sheepishly at Perry while the Lady in waiting was tucking her in bed. Perry was very excited to know what happened while they were in the tea room, and she said that he just came to visit and suddenly felt ill that he decided to go home early.
Perry's brows crinkled and gave her undivided attention to her. "What do you mean?" giving her a suspicious look.

"He proposed to me today," she said carefully, knowing that her Lady in waiting always gets excited upon hearing some prince proposing to her.

"What?! How!! Did you said yes?!" was Perry's hyper remark.

"Calm down, I know you're very excited to hear this, but I did not gave him an answer." She relayed and saw the disappointment on Perry's face.

Worried, Perry asked at once. "What happened? Why didn't you accept his proposal?"

"We kissed before he proposed-" she started but was interrupted by Perry's excited reaction.

"You kissed him! That was great!"

"Well before you get too happy and hopeful, I want you to know that I felt nothing special while he was kissing me. And when I pulled from the kiss I saw this bulge… his thing in his trousers-" she was babbling but was halted by Perry's reply.

"It's an erection."

"A what? And why it suddenly happened?" was her innocent question.

"Laura that only meant one thing: Prince Viktor was very happy and excited to kiss you."

Unsatisfied with Perry's explanation, "Would you mind explaining it to me like a grown woman and not a child. Perry I'm already an adult, I could handle everything unpleasant."

"Alright, an erection is when a man becomes sexually aroused and the penis fills with blood and grows larger than the usual size. The erect penis became harder and sticks straight up or forward." Perry explained without a hint of embarrassment. "And they say that when men find the object of their attention alluring that's when erection happens. So, in the case of Prince Viktor, he really is very attracted to you."

"I don't think I want to see him again." Was her initial reaction. "And I don't think I would want to see an erection or a penis again."

"Oh Laura, don't say that, you were just surprised because you did not know what to expect when in company of men, especially men who were attracted to you." Perry tried to convince her that it was not such a bad thing. "Sooner or later you're going to realize that it was a normal thing when you get married someday."

"I don't think I could consider seeing penis a normal thing in my life." She answered with absolute certainty.

"Princess, you cannot say that. Once you get married, your husband would ask you to fulfill your duty as a wife, or else he might divorce you."

"What do you mean my duty as a wife?" she was suddenly irritated at the mention of duty. She was fed up of hearing duties and responsibilities in her life, and now Perry was telling her that she had a duty to her husband too if ever she was to be married. Why can't I decide for myself?

"According to the book, a husband should fulfill his marital responsibility to his wife, and likewise a
wife to her husband. A wife does not have the right over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband does not have the right over his own body, but his wife does." Perry stated as a matter of factly.

Upset at what she heard, "That was nonsense and foolish!" she exclaimed. "A woman should have every right to decide for herself and in everything that she does. No man should dictate what she should do and should not."

"Oh, Princess I know what you mean. But you are a princess and might become a future Queen someday you need to obey the rules." Perry quoted once again, reminding her role as a monarch.

It was rare that she gets angry when she and Perry were discussing her duties and obligations as a princess, but right now, it seemed too much for her to handle this conversation. "To hell with those stupid rules! I'm not getting married at all." And with that, she turned her back to Perry and covered herself with the thick blanket.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Happy Holidays to everyone! Thanks again for all your comments and kudos.

Hope the readers could help me with this one. Because I don't want to offend people. I want your opinion with regards to additional tag on this story. I had put Hermaphrodite Carmilla as a warning and tag so as not to offend those readers who do not wish to read G!P stories. I did not put a G!P tag because this story has a plot and it tells about how Carmilla (and the people around her) would deal on being different (a Hermaphrodite). So, my question is, do most of you think this is a G!P story? Or the Hermaphrodite tag is enough. Please let me know on the comments if you have time. Thanks.
The Truth Unfolds

Chapter Summary

Carmilla finally discovered the truth about herself.

Warning: Carmilla/Ell kissing

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Carmilla

"What is it with men and finding our breasts fascinating?"

She heard Ell asked and she quickly tore her eyes off the Royal Mistress' chest. She just sneaked in the King's Chamber knowing that her father and mother were out of the castle. And as she closed the door behind her she found Ell wearing a red corset dress that has a very low cut on the chest; her sight immediately caught Ell's abundant bosom and she suddenly fight the urge to touch them. Guilty, she looked up and stared at Ell's face instead as she heard Ell's voice; she calmed herself even though the sight of the Royal Mistress' bosom was making her uncomfortable.

She was paralyzed when Ell approached her; the sight of Ell's body clothed in the tightest bodice that she had ever seen drove her to madness.

She could not control herself and closed the gap between them with a kiss on Ell's lips. Her hands found the hips of the Royal Mistress and she drew Ell closer to her. She felt Ell's kiss deepened and found her tongue and Ell caressed it with her own. The sensation drove her mad and she groped Ell's breast and knead it and was rewarded by a moan from Ell. She had wished that Ell was naked; she was irritated at the tight dress that was hindering her from feeling those soft abundant breasts of the mistress.

She does not know where this beastly behavior of hers where coming from, but she found it hard to tame as she felt hot and her shaft erected in its full glory, in want of attention from Ell. She began to untie her trousers to relieve her with this torture, but was disappointed when she felt out of nowhere, Ell withdrew. She took a deep breath after Ell released from the kiss, and glared at the Royal Mistress with mixed surprised and anger.

"My Prince, I promised the Queen that I will never tempt his Royal Highness," Ell explained and kneeled in front with crossed arms as if covering her form.

"I am the heir to the throne, you cannot deny me of my claim!" she demanded, as if Ell was her property.

Ell looked up with scared expression. "I am fully aware of that, and if I would have it my way, Your Royal Highness need not to ask." Ell began. "But her Majesty, your Queen Mother ordered that I lay my hands off from the Prince, or she would behead me."

After discovering the truth she sighed in frustration and was angry to find out that her mother threatened Ell. She had to respect Ell's decision and she does not want to be the reason of the Royal
Mistress' death.

"Very well, I do not think my presence is needed here anymore." She replied and turned her back to Ell and was about to march towards the door when she felt Ell's hand held her arm.

"My Prince!"

Ell called and released the hold from her arm as she eyed Ell's hand as if disgusted from the touch of the Royal Mistress.

"Forgive me, I did not intend to be impertinent," Ell confessed with bowed head, still kneeling. "I am already pleasing the King in bed. I think it will spite the Queen if I will please the Prince in bed too. The Queen informed me that Your Royal Highness is very precious to the Queen and Her Majesty does not want anybody to touch her son."

Suddenly her anger subsided after that explanation from Ell. She did not realize that the Queen was envious of Ell. And she remembered her promise to the Queen and to the King too that she would not cause them any pain.

"I understand." She returned and gave Ell a smirk to assure the Royal Mistress that she was not angry anymore. "I am going to ride my horse this afternoon. Will you have tea with me afterwards? My mother would arrive before dinner time, so we have plenty of time to chat."

"It would be a pleasure, my handsome Prince," Ell replied with a smile.

Frustrated, she still forced herself to smile and gave Ell a nod before she left her father's chamber and closed the door behind her.

Every time she sees Ell, she cannot control this sensation; this desire to touch the woman. It was as if, she does not have the will to resist. She had not felt anything like this in her whole life and she does not know what it was. But one thing she was sure of: she always felt her shaft hardening every time she sees Ell's body and it frustrate her that Ell cannot touch her because of her Mother's order.

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She was just on her way back to the castle, and was about to turn around, when she heard sounds of men laughing and then splashes of water. She halted her horse and headed to the direction of where the sound came from. As she came closer, she was surprised to see a spring few meters across her that was hidden from the thick bushes and trees of the forest. She had never used this trail before whenever she goes horse-back riding with Alfred and the royal guards. However, today she chose not to have any escort since she already knew the way around the forest. She knew that Alfred would not allow her to go to the forest alone, so she sneaked out of the castle and informed LaFontaine instead.

She went down from her horse and walked towards the spring with her horse in tow, carefully she approached and hid behind the bushes to avoid being seen, in case it were some thieves or barbarians. When she was sure that she was securely hidden, she took a peek at them and saw that there were around five men who were submerged in the spring, bathing, laughing and talking. They looked like they were enjoying themselves. Her eyes caught the familiar red and black color of the Castle's Royal Guards uniform hanging by the bushes, and she felt relieved to know that they were not barbarians or thieves roaming around the forest.

Her attention was caught when two of the men got out of the water and started to walk towards the bank. When she saw that they were both naked, she decided to turn around knowing that it was impolite to watch further. But the sight of their flat chest and hairy body made her stay. Curious, she
watched carefully how they were alike from her. But she became disoriented when she cannot see the similarity of their bodies to her. Thinking that her eyes were deceiving her, she waited for the rest of the men to come out of the water.

After a few minutes the remaining three came out of the water and she was shocked and agitated when she witnessed the sight in front of her: All five men have the same genitalia as hers, but nobody had a full grown breasts like hers!

*How is this possible?!*

She was transfixed by the reality in front of her. Disoriented, she fumbled climbing up to her horse and with shaking hands she grabbed the reins and signaled for the horse to move and rode as fast as she can without looking back.

When she arrived at the castle she was still shaking. Her heart was pounding and her mind was blurred. She needed some answers at once and went straight to the library.

Once inside the library she scanned the bookshelves and tried to find the book that could give her an answer. She knew every book in the library and what was it about but after unsuccessfully finding it, she threw the books that were in front of her and shouted to the guard and ordered him to fetch LaFontaine.

It did not take long before LaFontaine arrived at the library.

"Bring me the Human Anatomy book!"

Confused, "Your Highness?" LaFontaine asked after bowing.

"I said, bring me the Human Anatomy book!"

"With all due respect, Your Highness, the book that you are requesting was one of the forbidden books in the castle," LaFontaine stated.

She was confused and furious, "What are you talking about?"

"Your Highness, there is a list of forbidden books the Queen provided that should not be brought nor read inside the castle," LaFontaine explained.

Her suspicion grew; she felt betrayed but she won't take no for an answer. Seething with anger, she approached LaFontaine menacingly. "Bring me that book or I'll have you hanged."

LaFontaine nodded in silence and bowed; and calmly left the library.

She does not know how long LaFontaine can get the book for her, so she decided to take matters into her own hands and walked out of the library.

She ran towards the King's chamber and opened the door without knocking. When she crossed the threshold she was disappointed that she did not find the King, but instead, she saw Ell standing in the middle of the room.

Clouded with anger, she did not give Ell a chance to talk and strode towards her father's mistress. She saw the confused look on Ell's face but she disregarded it. She grabbed the mistress' robe and tore it out of Ell's body together with the underwear. Once the naked form of Ell was revealed, a wave of futile rage swept all over her as she ran her eyes on every part of Ell's body, resting on the genital area.
"P-prince Carl?" Ell pleaded.

She was distracted from Ell's voice and looked at the mistresses' eyes. Ell was petrified; fear was written all over Ell's face.

Pained with the truth, she left Ell and strode out of the King's chamber.

She arrived at her chamber still panting and opened the door wide. She grabbed the first thing that she had seen and threw the candlestick at the direction of the fireplace. She was boiling with anger and felt this unshed tears threatening to fall from her eyes. But she controlled it.

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She was sitting by the fireplace when she heard the door opened and saw LaFontaine carrying the big brown leather bound book that she asked.

"Put it on the table," she commanded and rose from the chair and walked closer to her Valet. There were still residue of anger in her body and it will not disappear until she confronted all the people that were involved in her life for an answer.

LaFontaine was calmly standing three feet away from her, waiting for any instruction. But instead, she chose to confront them.

"Do you know that I'm different?" She asked in her low authoritative voice, testing her Valet's knowledge. LaFontaine had seen her a lot of times naked whenever her valet would help her with her clothing.

LaFontaine nodded quietly and bowed their head, as if hiding something.

She decided to get to the point. "And you know that what you saw was very different from the rest?"

This time LaFontaine lifted their head and looked straight to her eyes. "Yes, I do."

She was pained at the admission of her Valet and felt betrayed for having to hide it from her.

"All this time you knew, and you didn't even tell me the truth?!!" she was growing frustrated and the anger inside her had resurfaced. "How could you let me believe and treat me that I am normal, when in fact I am an abomination?!"

"Because you are not an abomination; you are different, but you are normal." LaFontaine elaborated, not breaking their eye contact.

"How could you call somebody normal; when the person is both a man and a woman?!" She reproached.

"Because the definition of normal is infinite," LaFontaine relayed. "Most of us grew up learning what is right and what is wrong. We were taught to follow the rules and traditions and stick to it. What we see outside and how it should look like where already decided by the people who made this rules. But we always forget that we have free will."

"It's easy for you to say that because you don't have the kind of obligation that I have." She returned not convinced. "Tell me, is it your decision not to be referred neither a he nor a she, or it was my mother's order too?"

"As I grew up my father had given me a choice of how I should dress and look like," LaFontaine
answered. "According to my father, people should not limit their knowledge and experience. We should continue to explore and discover what we really want and like in life."

Wanting to challenge LaFontaine's point of view, she asked the ultimate question. "Do you really want to become a Valet? ...Because as I understood you like chemistry and all science related. So how come you end up here?"

"My father told me that my upbringing and outlook in life might one day help a person enlighten his mind and lessen his burden in life."

Then it dawned on her that LaFontaine was referring to no other than her.

"Your father might have felt great empathy to the people who are not normal," was her sarcastic retort. "Tell me, how did your father knew where to send you and who to help? Does he even know me?"

"He has known you from the day that you were born." LaFontaine declared.

Her composure was suddenly shattered and another wave of confusion swept over her. And before she could utter a word, LaFontaine was ready to supply the answer.

"I call my father Papa... and you call him Da."

She was shocked at the revelation and cannot believe how she could have missed it. The people that were around her were certainly trained and manipulated by her mother!

"So you're saying that my mother brought you here to fix me?!" She accused.

"No, I am here because I want to," LaFontaine disagreed. "I am here to let you know that you're not alone in this and that you don't have to be scared."

"I am not scared!" She argued. "I'm furious... how could you, your father and my parents hid this from me?!?"

"...Because they wanted to protect you."

"Protect me from what?!"

"...From having to hate yourself and feeling alone."

"Well I guess it's too late now." She challenged.

"No, it's not," LaFontaine contended. "You are perfectly the way you should be."

"Yes, an abomination." She finished the sentence for LaFontaine.

"You're not an abomination," LaFontaine contradicted. "You are who you are and we all care about you."

She snorted, "The only thing that all of you cared for is for this kingdom to have an heir."

"No, that's not true."

"Really?! Because according to my mother I was abducted by my wet nurse, but then I realized today that it might not be the truth," she reasoned out, and pieced together all the things that happened in her life. "Tell me, if I have not developed a penis, would my mother take me back to the
castle?"

"I cannot really answer that," was LaFontaine's genuine reply.

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That night she was bound to unfold the truth.

As soon as the three of them were seated comfortably at the dining room and before the servants could come out and bring their dinner, she dropped the bomb at once.

"Tell me my Queen Mother…” she began calmly looking at her mother across the table. "Would you still bring me to the castle even if I am a girl?"

She saw the alarmed expressions of her parents and there were silence for a moment as two pairs of eyes focused on her direction.

"Leave us!" The King commanded to the guards and servants.

As soon as they were alone, the King faced her. "What's this foolishness you are talking about?"

"I am absolutely sure that my Queen mother knew what I am talking about," she started, checking how her mother was going to react, since the Queen had been silent and expressionless. "I just found out today that men have penis and flat chest while women have vagina and breasts…"

"Stopped this nonsense! I will not tolerate such vulgar language in my castle!"

Her father commanded. But this time, she refused to obey.

"I would stop this nonsense if you two could explain to me why I have a penis and yet the body of a woman!" She blurted out, and she saw her father calmed down and was replaced by worry, while her mother's expression remained unchanged. "Why did you hide it from me?!" she demanded, as her anger resurfaced. "I was a fool to believe that there are people out there who looked like me; I was a fool to believe and obey everything that you told me; and I was a fool to believe that I am a prince and the heir to the throne-"

"But you are the heir to the throne!" the King reminded. "You are my only child and we care for you."

"Tell me my King Father… would I still be your heir if I have been a girl?" She challenged her father and switched her sight to her mother. "And would you care to bring me to the castle even if I don't have a penis? Or you would just leave me in that little house to believe that my wet nurse was my mother to avoid embarrassment, and people telling you that your child is an abomination?"

Her attention was caught as her father leaned closer to her side. "My child, you are not an abomination and I never intended to leave you with your wet nurse." The King's earnest reply.

"Is that the truth? Or you just decided that I am your child because I developed a penis and you needed an heir?" she supplied, divulging all her suspicions and anger.

"Your father was telling the truth," the Queen finally had broken her silence.
She shifted her sight to her mother and tried to clear her head from the anger that was taking over her.

"Your father wanted to keep you since you were born," the Queen related in a calm low voice. "But I was in shocked when the midwife and chirurgeon informed me that my child has both the private part of a boy and a girl. I was in denial and I cannot accept that you are different. I locked myself in my chamber and refused to see anyone, not even your father. Because I felt that I failed to give him a proper and normal heir…"

"Why didn't you just leave me to die if you cannot accept me?" Was her bitter remark.

"My child, that idea never occurred in our thoughts," the King defended at once. "Your mother was devastated and not in a good state and proper mind to take care of you. That's why I decided to ask your wet nurse to feed you and take care of you. I made sure that you're going to live and grow healthy," her father explained earnestly. "Your mother remained ill for years; she refused to eat and had tried taking her own life. That's why I decided that it was best for you to be with your wet nurse; because I was afraid for your safety. It took so long for your mother to recover from her illness. That's why you did not grow up in the castle."

"Did you ever plan on taking me back or you just wanted me because you need an heir?" was the ultimate question that kept on bothering her.

This time, her mother shifted from the chair and faced her. "No. Your father and I will accept whatever happens."

"Then why did it take twelve years for you to decide to tell me that I am your child?" Was her impatient upset comment.

"While you were living with your wet nurse, your father and I never stopped searching for a solution for your…" the Queen hesitated for a while. 

"…Illness," She supplied with sarcasm.

"Your unique case," her mother graciously filled in. "It took us years to look for answers, but nobody could tell us. Until LaFontaine's father informed us that he had read a legend about a fish that was born with both male and female organ, but when the fish came of age it shifted to male."

"So, you decided my faith and destiny based on a fish legend?" was her mocking remark.

"We did not have a choice but to take a chance," the Queen continued calmly. "The Kingdom was waiting for your father to declare if we have an heir or a princess, and we were very confused what to declare. So we seek the help of people we trusted and we came to a decision to wait until you come of age. According to LaFontaine's father, in this way we could be sure that you had already grown or started to be an adult, then we could know if you would have a male or female part."

That was too much information that her reasoning cannot grasp fully and she was already becoming disoriented.

"The process of growing up reaches a certain point where you stop being a child and starts to become a full grown man or woman," the Queen explained to her like a child, since she had not read nor studied anything about human body and its development. "And since you have unique qualities, LaFontaine's father had a theory that there would be changes in your body as you grow up, so we waited until you reached that stage. In this way, we can find out if you're going to be a male or a female."
"But I am both."

"We are aware of that." the King reassured.

"The last time LaFontaine's father checked on you, he informed us that you have a very rare condition," The Queen explained clearly. "We were expecting that either you're going to be a full grown woman or a full grown man. But we were surprised when LaFontaine's father informed us that even if your male part had developed fully, your body remained like of a female."

"And that remained a mystery for us and LaFontaine's father," the King butt in. "So, I decided that as long as you're healthy we should be grateful and accept you for what you are and we stopped looking for answers and just faced the reality."

Still groggy from all the information, she got curious on how her secret was preserved. "How did you manage to keep the secret from the people and the kingdom?"

The Queen called her attention at once. "People who we trusted and knew about your situation advised us to tell the kingdom that you had a rare illness and that you were sent to a warmer place to live and to grow strong and healthy. Your father altered the law, stating that the palace would announce to the kingdom the sex and name of the heir, upon the heir's 16th name day. And anyone who dares to question the law would be punished."

After all the details, information and explanations that she heard she was still doubting and scared that one day her secret would come out and people will cursed her.

She was suddenly worried. "What if someone finds out the truth about me?" she asked. Then she suddenly felt her father's hand on her shoulder, gently rubbing it.

"My child, I am the King. I would make sure that nobody ever hurt you." The King stated. "And your mother had already taken care of the rest. We only want what's best for you because we love you and you are not alone in dealing with this.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for leaving kudos and comments!
Chapter Summary

Now at 18, Carmilla had thought that she already had the freedom and privilege to do whatever she wants without her mother's supervisions. But she was wrong.

After finding out the truth, Carmilla continued to live her life like before. But she became more serious and broody and refused to go out of the castle. The only time that she goes out is when her father takes her with him on hunting. But other than that she neglected her horseback riding with Alfred and instead, chose to lock herself in the library and read all the books she can and study the politics of ruling a kingdom. Her mother was very worried that the Queen had thought of something to divert her attention to.

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone. I would like to start the year by not offending a lot of people. So I decided to change the tag to avoid upsetting some more. Apparently, the word Hermaphrodite is hurtful to some people, so I would not use this tag anymore out of respect to them. And I have put the G!P tag to warn at once the readers who do not like to read G!P. And to all of you who like this story, thanks for your continued support.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Carmilla

It took several months for her to speak with LaFontaine again in a natural and friendly manner. The day she found out the truth, she felt that LaFontaine had betrayed her too, but her Valet had been patiently there to assist her with everything she needed and did not give up on her even if she was broody all the time.

After those crucial months of adjusting to reality, LaFontaine always made sure to tell her that she was still the same Prince of Karnstein and that she should not lose faith and confidence in herself. Those words had made her stronger. But something inside her has broken.

"You're being broody again." She heard her Valet as she was torn from her deep thoughts. The relationship between her and LaFontaine had changed a lot since she found out the truth. She discovered that LaFontaine was the person that she could trust the most and considered them her friend.

"I am not." She defended, putting on the black overtunic that LaFontaine had been holding for a while. "I was just wondering why my father had to travel a lot. Can't he just delegate his work to his men?" She asked, as she slipped her arms on the tunic's sleeves.

"Are you asking because you missed your father or because you want to find out if you could avoid travelling when you become the King?" was LaFontaine's daring and yet honest remark.
She did not deny it. "Both actually," she replied with a clear deep tone. She felt that she could talk to LaFontaine anything without being judged. "My father had been gone for almost ten months and I still don't understand why he has to be gone that long."

"Well, being a King is a fulltime responsibility," LaFontaine supplied the answer. "His Majesty is also a dedicated and excellent trader. He always wants his Kingdom to have an abundant supply and wants to discover new methods and new things that could be beneficial to his kingdom."

Suddenly, she was amazed at how LaFontaine knew these things about her father and felt ashamed of not being aware of it. Whenever her father was in the palace they always talk about her and afterwards the King would be busy talking to his men about the situation in the kingdom. It was seldom that they spend time doing something together except when the King would take her on hunting. And instead, she was always with the Queen.

Curious, "How did you found out that my father is like that?" she asked.

"Because my Papa is always with the King wherever he travels, he is the King's chirurgeon. My Papa always tells me how amazing the King is."

After discovering the truth of how LaFontaine's father had helped her parents go through the hardship and confusion of taking care of her, she found more respect for him.

"How was Da?"

LaFontaine gave her a confused look. "I beg your pardon?"

"I mean… how is your father?"

"Oh. My father is alright. He actually asks me how you are doing every time we see each other," was LaFontaine's nonchalant reply.

"Really?! Was her surprised reaction and felt an overwhelming sentiment came over her.

Perhaps LaFontaine caught the amazed look in her face, LaFontaine added: "Yes, your Da still cares for you and misses you."

For the first time since she had arrived in the castle, she felt something good inside her that made her smile like a child; it felt genuine and warmed her heart. Da was the first father that she recognized and had known since she was a child. She grew up believing that Da was the one who had been protecting and providing her with all the things that she needed. But she was wrong on that, since Da had only been an instrument. However, nobody can replace the moments where Da had taught her to ride a pony; kicked a ball; made a boat out of leaves; milk the cow; made a toy sword out of wood and taught her how to use it. Nobody can replace those happy childhood memories of her with Da; not even her real father.

"The next time you see Da-" she suddenly hesitated. "I mean your father… tell him that I miss him too."

"I will," LaFontaine nodded and winked at her. "Before I forget, Her Majesty requires your presence at the Queen's chamber this afternoon."

"What does my mother want now?" she asked with a slight of irritation in her voice. "Aren't she satisfied enough to know that I am always in the castle and that she does not need to worry where in the world am I, like my father?"
"Apparently, it worries the Queen that you are always inside the castle," LaFontaine retaliated. She ignored the comment and broke her eye contact with LaFontaine. "You can tell my mother that I spend my afternoons outside, so she did not have to worry about me not getting enough color on my cheeks."

"You call that outside?" was LaFontaine's sarcastic remark, pointing out that her gardening hobby and daily run in the castle's courtyard as 'outside'.

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"My Queen Mother, LaFontaine informed me that you wished to speak with me?" she asked, once she entered and saw her mother sitting on the chair by the fireplace of the Queen's chamber.

As soon as her mother caught her attention, the Queen beckoned her to come closer. After bowing to her mother she was suddenly taken aback when her sight caught a young woman rising from the lounge chair that was placed right across where her mother was sitting. The girl was without a doubt the most attractive young woman she had ever seen; tan skin, blonde wavy hair, deep blue eyes, thin lips and a very attractive mole on the upper side of the right lip.

"Carl, I want you to meet Princess Madelaine of Weiz," the Queen spoke, gesturing with her hands on the direction of the Princess that was dress in a baby blue satin gown. "Princess Madelaine, this is my son Prince Carl Philipp Marcus, the heir to the throne of Karnstein Kingdom."

"It is a pleasure to meet you Your Royal Highness," the Princess said and curtsied in front of her and gave her a smile that could melt everyone's heart. "I am Princess Madelaine Therese Amelie of Weiz."

"The pleasure is all mine, Princess Madelaine," she returned and walked to the princess and took the young woman's hand and kissed the back of it. She cannot deny that she was captivated by the beauty of this princess, as she found herself discreetly leered at the princess.

"Princess Madelaine will stay in the castle for a week and I want you to show her around the castle and be her companion for the whole duration of her stay with us."

She was suddenly caught off guard and did not know how to react at what her mother just told her. They never have a guest that stays in the castle, and the fact that this princess looked the same age as hers made her suspicious.

"I would be more than pleased to assist and escort you, Princess Madelaine," she replied, wanting their guest to feel welcome.

"Very well, since it is still early, maybe you could take Princess Madelaine to the tea room and we could chat there, before we all go to dinner," the Queen suggested looking at her.

"As you wish, my Queen Mother," she bowed to her mother before shifting her focus on the beautiful princess that was all smile and waiting for her. "Shall we go?" she asked in her deepest tone and offered her arm for the princess to take.

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That night, as soon as they finished eating dinner and after she had escorted the Princess of Weiz to her chamber, she decided to find out what her mother's real plan.

She knocked on the door of the Queen's chamber rather loudly, knowing that her mother would be
preparing to go to bed soon.

"Who is it?!!" she heard the deep authoritarian voice of her mother from the room.

"It's Carl, my Queen Mother!" she answered with the same phrase every time she would identify herself before entering the Queen's chamber.

"Come in!"

Once she entered the chamber, she saw the lady in waiting and five handmaids of the Queen bowed to her before leaving the chamber, so as to give her and the Queen privacy.

"What can I do for you my son?" the Queen got straight to the point, rising from the chair by the dressing table and approached her.

She bowed at once as her mother walked closer to where she was. "What does this Princess of Weiz doing in our castle? As far as I know, we never invited anyone to stay in the castle," was her calm and innocent query.

"I invited Princess Madelaine, so that you could get to know her better." The Queen simply replied.

She contorted her brows and felt that her mother was hiding something.

"May I know why I need to get to know her better?" she asked with a hint of curiosity.

"So that you could find out if she is the perfect wife for you." The Queen declared.

She gaped and her eyes widened at what her mother just said. Confused, "Forgive me my Queen Mother, but I did not fully catch what you said." She returned trying not to panic and hoping that what she heard was wrong.

"My son, you are already 18 I think it is high time that you find a wife," the Queen explained clearly.

"I never said that I want a wife," she replied, instantly. "That is not in my plan."

"As the heir to the throne you are required to produce an heir of your own to continue the monarchy of the Karnstein Kingdom."

"But I do not wish to get married," she retaliated.

"You do not have a choice; you are the future king. And the king needs a queen," The Queen stated. "And why are you opposing to marriage?"

She was losing her patience and she knew that her mother was the most difficult person to convince. Instead of arguing further with the Queen she decided to tell the truth.

"How would I explain to my wife when we go to bed that in addition to a man's part I also have a breasts?!" She retaliated, as if challenging her mother. "Do you think it would be easy for her to accept what I really am?"

"My son, your wife does not need to know it. She will obey whatever you say because you are her husband. So, there is no need for you to worry that your wife might discover it," was the Queen's fanciful reply. "You just need a wife who would bear your child and produce your heir, not a lover. And besides, the King and the Queen each have separate chambers like your father and I. You will come to her bed when it is time for you to consummate your marriage. You are not required to sleep and be intimate with her. And if the need arise, you can take a mistress of your own to pleasure you
in bed without any questions or boundary."

Frustrated, "My Queen Mother, what you are telling me to do is inconceivable." was her cynical remark.

"Carl Philipp Marcus Karnstein, nothing is insurmountable when you are the future king."

After that hopeless comment from her mother, she decided not to challenge the Queen anymore, since she knew that she would lose in this argument. And instead, she planned on taking matters into her own hands.

Finding her composure, "Very well, if my Queen Mother thinks that it would work out, I would not question your opinion anymore. However, I do want the freedom to choose my own bride," she explained.

"And what exactly is in your mind?"

"I wish to choose the bride that suits me. You can select and invite the princesses that you deemed appropriate to be my wife. But I will decide whom I will marry." She suggested.

"Very well, we could arrange for that, as long as you will obey whatever I say," the Queen replied.

"I will, my Queen Mother."

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After saying good night to her mother, she hurriedly sought LaFontaine's presence. She heard the door of her chamber opened and was relieved to see her Valet, even though LaFontaine had forgotten to knock again.

"I need your help," she informed her Valet at once.

"You do know that it is my job to help you," Lafontaine answered, as they approached her and began to take off her cloak.

"Aside from that," she said, standing still as LaFontaine began to untie the strings of her overtunic. "I need your help to drive away our guest."

"You mean the beautiful Princess from Weiz that was being paired to you by Her Majesty?!"

Annoyed, she rolled her eyes as she heard LaFontaine's somewhat unbelievable stupid reaction. "Yes."

"But why?!" was LaFontaine's curious and dejected reply. "She is so beautiful and a good match for you."

"You're beginning to sound like my mother," she accused irritatingly. "I don't have any desire to marry and I don't need a wife."

"But you do need a wife and a queen to carry your offspring and be the mother of your children!"

"LaFontaine, you are worse than my mother!"

"With all due respect, the heir to the throne always needs a woman to guide and enlightened them," her Valet started. "Your wife would be your partner when you rule your kingdom and she could be the person that you could trust the most when it comes to any decision that you would make. Aside
from that, she could be your friend and your lover."

Suddenly, the word lover pained her. Who would dare to love her? Who would dare accept what she really was? It never occurred in her mind that she would someday find someone who would both love her and accept her. Not after she had found out the truth. She may have accepted the fact that she was different, but she had lost her confidence of loving someone and finding someone who would love her in return. Not even Ell could bring back her confidence when it comes to being intimate with someone.

She hated that she had to explain again the reason behind why she refused to marry however; she needed LaFontaine to understand her too.

"Tell me, how would I explain to my future wife about these," was her challenging remark, pointing to her chest and then to her crotch.

"Oh." Was LaFontaine's simple and sober reaction.

"According to my mother, I don't need to get intimate with my wife because I just need to impregnate her and make sure that I produce an heir of my own." She related.

"Well… to be honest, you can do that but-"

She rolled her eyes refusing to believe that her own Valet agrees with her mother, however, she knew that LaFontaine always have a reasonable explanations to all her predicaments, "But what?"

"But it would be unfair to your wife if you would just use her like that."

"So you finally agree with me?"

"On the contrary, most of the royal marriages are rarely based on love," LaFontaine expressed.

"So, you mean to say that my mother and father do not love each other?"

"No, I did not mean like that." was LaFontaine quick answer. "Most of the monarchs like you need to establish an alliance to keep the empire going from generation to generation. As the future king of Karnstein you need a wife that would not just bear and produce your heir but someone who would suit also as a queen; like your mother, for instance."

"But I don't want to marry someone who would always dictate me what to do," she quipped.

"Why don't you take a chance on love?" LaFontaine challenged her out of the blue.

She gave her Valet a sarcastic smile. "Do you really think that there is a person out there who could accept me and love me for what I am?" she retorted. "You are naïve and hopeless."

"And you are being pessimistic," LaFontaine retaliated. "You haven't even tried and you are already giving up. You are the future king of Karnstein you should not give up in your battles."

Her ego was suddenly hurt by what LaFontaine said but it was the truth. "There are certain battles in life that have been won before it has been fought," and with that, she walked out of the conversation and decided not to waste more time.

She put on a thick robe and left her chamber with full determination and had already constructed an alibi out of her betrothal to the Princess of Weiz.

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After successfully convincing Princess Madelaine that she loved someone else and wish not to marry the Princess of Weiz, her mother on the other hand did not waste a time finding another candidate.

And now after just a week, she was summoned by her mother to come to dinner in her finest clothes and to meet the Princess from Liezen.

She sauntered to the direction of the family dining hall, and tried to recall all the information that LaFontaine gathered about this princess. She learned that this princess does not like to ride a horse and denounced hunting. Aside from that, this princess was very particular about cleanliness and does not like to get her hands dirty. Upon learning all these things, she made sure that her plan would turn out smoothly.

Yesterday, she asked her father for the first time to accompany her to go on hunting today, she was lucky to have her request granted even if her father was very busy. She knew that the King could not say no to her, especially if she wanted to go out. But her father told her that it would be a pleasure to spend some time with her to make up for the ten months that the King was away. She was very happy to bond with her father and she purposely prolonged their hunting so that they would arrive late at dinner.

When she arrived at the dining hall, she saw the Queen already seated on her mother's usual chair, while the King's chair remained empty. She had expected that the Princess would be put next to her chair on her left side, and she was right; as she saw the sight of a thin young woman with long straight brown hair sitting on that chair.

"Good evening my Queen Mother," she bowed at once to the Queen and did not give her mother a chance to talk yet. "Forgive me for coming late; I was with my King Father in the forest hunting all day. We enjoyed immensely hunting for those deer that we have forgotten the time."

"It is alright my son, as long as I know that you went out and enjoyed it. I would not oppose to that at all," the Queen replied and gave her a satisfied smile before gesturing to the princess that was sitting patiently on the other side of the dining table. "I would like you to meet our guest, Princess Sarah," the Queen started and they focus their attention to the girl. "This is my son, Prince Carl Philipp Marcus, the heir to the throne of Karnstein Kingdom." She heard her mother's proud introduction.

She walked to the other side of the table at once as soon as she saw the Princess rose from the chair and bowed to her direction. "It is an honor to meet you Your Royal Highness I am Princess Sarah Martina Kristina of Liezen."

"It is an honor to meet your acquaintance Princess Sarah," she returned and took the Princess' hand and kissed the back of it. She smiled when she felt that the princess released right away from her hold and discreetly wiped the hand that she kissed on the back of the princess' dress. She pretended that she did not catch it and motioned for the Princess to take a seat and she obliged as one of the servants pulled the chair for the princess, while she took her seat too.

"So, Princess Sarah I am planning to go hunting again tomorrow, would you do me the honor of being my companion?" she asked, not wasting her time of ruining this match.

"I... I apologize Your Royal Highness, but I have not ridden a horse for a long time," was the princess' sheepish remark.

"Oh. And why's that if I may ask?" she returned, but her mother halted the princess' answer at once.

"Carl, I am sure Princess Sarah can do something else aside from hunting," the Queen supplied.
"Something she is comfortable with."

"Forgive me for being apathetic," she relayed and saw that the princess became at ease. "How about doing some gardening with me? I know it is a rare hobby for a prince, but I do love planting my own roses and getting my hands dirty with the soil."

This time she saw the princess flinched at the mention of dirt and soil.

"Forgive me Your Majesty, but I think his Royal Highness and I had nothing in common," the Princess related to the Queen, with an upset voice. "If I may be excused, I think I would like to take a rest now. I suddenly feel unwell."

"I regret to hear that" was the Queen's worried remark. "Would you escort Princess Sarah to her chamber, Carl?"

"There is no need, Your Majesty," the Princess opposed right away. "I wouldn't want to bother His Royal Highness. It is a pleasure meeting you, Prince Carl."

As soon as she saw the princess rose from the seat and bowed to her, she rose from her seat too and nodded. One of the servants was summoned by the Queen to help the young woman and was escorted outside.

It did not take long before they heard the announcement that the King had arrived. They bowed to the King and her father gave her a puzzled look as they all took their seats.

"What happened to the Princess of Liezen? I thought she will eat dinner with us?" was the King's confused remark while taking his seat.

"I really don't have any idea my King Father," she replied innocently and began to unfold the table napkin in front of her and put it on her lap.

"The poor girl suddenly became unwell... perhaps due to your son's suggestion of gardening with him," the Queen's suspicious answer.

"I don't see anything wrong with that." The King commented.

She smiled wickedly as she heard her father not opposing to her odd hobby and watched how this interaction between her mother and father would last.

"My King, gardening is a filthy and appalling hobby for a prince. I don't know why your son is so mad about making it as his pastime." The Queen disagreed.

"Nothing is appalling and filthy as long as my child is happy and satisfied," the King retorted and winked on her direction. It was her first time to connive with her father against her mother and she was enjoying it.

"Thank you my King Father for your acknowledgement with regards to my passion." She declared gaining some confidence from her father's reaction.

"Philipp, you and your son can agree however you like with regards to gardening, but I still disapprove it," the Queen retaliated giving them her icy cold stare.

Seeing that the Queen became upset, "I apologize My Queen, I did not mean to disregard your opinion," the King apologized and caressed the Queen's hand.
As she witnessed this scene between her mother and father, she cannot help but to imagine how she would be, if she ever has a wife: would she become like her father and obey all those things that her mother desires, or would she be like her mother who always wants her every desire to be fulfilled?

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It did not take long for her mother to find another potential bride for her. And now, she was on her way to the castle's guest room to welcome another new visitor. Seven weeks had passed and different princesses had visited their castle every week.

LaFontaine was walking beside her as they descend the grand stairways of the castle on the way to the castle's guest room. Her mother and father were attending some important matters and she was left in charge of welcoming the Princess from Graz.

"Her name is Princess Helena Beatrice Cristina and she is the daughter of the King of Graz," LaFontaine briefed her on the way. "Just like you, she is the only child of the King and Queen of Graz and likes all the attention focus on her and loves to be pampered."

"Hmm… are you implying that I am self-centered and overindulged?"

"No, I am just saying that this princess are used to having all attention to her and wanted to be treated special," LaFontaine retorted. "And for the record, you are not self-centered… perhaps overindulged due to the lavish gifts from the Queen…"

"One more word and I'll feed you to the dragons," she replied playfully.

"You wouldn't dare; because I'm the only one who can help you with this 'princess troubles of yours," her Valet retaliated and gave her a wicked grin.

She smirked back wickedly, and as they near the guest room she asked LaFontaine about their scheme. "So, what's the plan?"

"After dinner, you'll invite the princess to come with you at the tea room," LaFontaine explained. "I have talked to Ell and asked her to serve the tea."

"What?" she panicked at once at the mention of Ell's name. "You know that my mother had prohibited Ell and I to see and talk with each other-"

"Calm down, Her Majesty won't be back until tomorrow afternoon," LaFontaine reasoned out. "That's why you have the whole night to convince the princess that Ell is your Mistress and that-"

"Hold it! I'm not going to involve Ell in this scheme," she retorted, hiding the fact that she did not want to see the Royal Mistress again since the last time Ell tried to pleasure her, she lost her confidence and left Ell frustrated.

"I have talked to her and she agreed to help," LaFontaine tried to convince her. "And besides, where are we going to find someone who could play your mistress and agree to keep this secret aside from Ell?"

She eventually conceded at her Valet's idea. "Alright, so what would I do?" she asked impatiently.

"While in the tea room, try to irritate the princess by flirting with Ell and looking at Ell like the way you looked at her," LaFontaine suggested.

"Like what?" was her confused remark.
"Like you're going to tear Ell's clothes and devour her."

"Hey! I don't look at her like that," she denied with all her might.

"Is that so?" was LaFontaine's sarcastic reply. "Because the first time I saw you with Ell it does not looked like you are enjoying drinking wine with her."

She remained silent and realized just now that LaFontaine did catch them when Ell gave her, her first taste of oral intercourse.

"Alright, let's just get on with it and dismiss this princess as fast as we can," She returned and stopped arguing with her Valet. "And don't include Ell again if this plan didn't work out."

"What are you going to do then? Hide from the princess?" LaFontaine retaliated.

"Why not?"

She saw LaFontaine rolled their eyes and did not comment anymore. She would do all the necessary things just to avoid getting married.

She had made up her mind and closed her heart.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Happy New year to everyone and I wish you all the best in 2016! Thanks again for your comments and kudos.
"When One Door Closes, A Window Opens."

Chapter Summary

After one year of secretly having a relationship with the first person she fell in love with, Laura, now 18, was still devastated as reality claimed the love of her life: Princess Danielle was betrothed to the Prince of Straka.

While Hollis Kingdom was visited by a king who had been an old rival and enemy of Laura's father. In order for them to fix their dispute, the two kings made a deal and created an alliance.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Laura

"Laura? Are you awaked Princess?"

She heard Perry's voice as her Lady in Waiting entered her chamber. However, she doesn't have any plan leaving her bed at all. She had been wallowing in pain since the day Princess Danielle had confided to her that she was betrothed to the Prince of Straka.

"Sweetie, it's a beautiful day outside," Perry remarked, while sitting on the bed. "Why don't we go and have a picnic?"

"I'm not in the mood." She mumbled, her back facing Perry.

"You've been like that for the past months, you need to move on,"

She heard Perry's comment but did not bother to face her Lady in waiting. "Just go and have picnic with the girls. I'll be fine here." She suggested, knowing that Perry liked to have picnic too together with the handmaidens and her.

"Laura, you know that sooner or later, you and Princess Danielle would part ways," Perry stated. "You need to accept the truth that you two cannot be together no matter what happened."

"But it's unfair!" she exclaimed and turned around to face a worried Perry. "Why can't we be together? Why can't they allow women to have a choice of who we want to spend our life with?! Why should marriage be between a man and a woman? Why can't it be between a man and a man? Or a woman and a woman?!"

"Because that's what we have grown to believe."

Stupid beliefs! She cursed, remembering what Perry used to say about traditions.

"Laura, just be thankful that you and Princess Danielle were given a chance to be together even if it's just for a short time."

She refused to accept it, "I'll be thankful if I am the one who could marry Danny instead of the
Prince of Straka." She retorted and got out of bed and walked to the direction of the bathroom, with Perry following behind her.

"By the way, the chirurgeon was called in today," Perry said with a hint of worries. "His Majesty is not feeling well."

She suddenly stopped and faced her Lady in waiting. "Why? What happened to my father?"

"Kirsch told me that His Majesty was not able to sleep last night and had been coughing the whole night."

"I need to see him." She returned and hurriedly put on her thick robe and shoes.

"Don't you want to change first?"

"It could wait." She replied not bothered if she was still in her sleeping wear under the thick robe. She just needed to check and see her father at once.

*****

"Perry, what's going on? Why is the castle preparing for a banquet? Is there a big feast to celebrate?" she asked as she entered the castle's kitchen and saw about twenty servants and cooks with Perry in a chaotic scene of slaughtering a lamb, butchering a pig, plucking the feathers of the pigeons and chickens, peeling sacks of potatoes, washing tons of different kinds of vegetables and Perry almost covered in flour.

"Your father has an important visitor and the kitchen was ordered to prepare a special dinner to welcome your father's guest," Perry replied after putting the fifth dough of bread on the wooden tray.

"And who is this very important visitor that needed to be welcomed with a banquet?" she asked with a hint of sarcasm, thinking that the preparation for this person was way too much. "Is she a woman?"

Was her careful query, as it occurs to her that maybe her father was trying to impress a woman and wanted this woman's hand in marriage.

"No, Princess, it is not a woman… and you can stop worrying," Perry quipped.

"Wha-?! Who said I'm worrying?"

"...Said the pout in your mouth; the narrowing of your eyes and the lines on your brows." Perry delivered perfectly while kneading new dough.

She released the breath that she was holding and rolled her eyes, and followed Perry to the direction of the stone oven. Perry surely knows when she was lying and when she was not.

"Well, I am just curious that's all." She returned, helping Perry carry the trays of dough of breads to be put in the oven.

"I gathered that it was the King from Karnstein Kingdom who is coming," Perry said.

She stopped for a while, thinking that the name Karnstein rang a bell. "Where did I hear that?" and as the name sink in, she opened her mouth wide and covered it quickly with her hand. "Perry shouldn't we be preparing for war instead of a feast?!" was her dramatic reaction upon realizing that it was one of the Hollis' rival kingdom and Styria's notorious trader. "The Karnsteins are well known for conquering lands with abundant crops and livelihoods like ours!"
"Calm down Princess, that was long time ago," Perry replied and put all the doughs in the stone oven. "The Karnsteins was an old rival of your great grandfather but the King of Karnstein today was not engaging in battle but in trading."

"But why is he coming over?" she asked following Perry behind, as suspicions played in her thoughts. "I hope he wouldn't try to deceive my father in order for him to gain the kingdom's richness."

"Princess, I think you are being paranoid," the Lady in waiting accused and faced her. "Why don't you go to your chamber now, Natalie and Betty are waiting for you."

"Why? I am already dressed," she said, looking at herself and wondering why her handmaids were summoned to her chamber again.

"...Because you are going to welcome the King of Karnstein upon his arrival. Your father is not feeling well and still resting in his chamber."

She nodded right away and did not question Perry anymore. Her father's illness was getting worst and she was growing worried day by day. After her heart was broken, she did not entertain any more suitors and devoted her time taking care of her ill father. When she turned eighteen years old she refused to have any feast on her name day and informed the castle that she cannot tolerate the whole castle would celebrate while their king was ill.

And now, six months later, the castle was hosting a banquet and she was skeptic about having this feast tonight.

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Before sunset, she saw the carriage and the entire entourage of royal guards clothed in red and black uniforms; then she recognized the banner with Black Panther with a golden crown on its head of the Karnstein's House.

She hurriedly went to the throne room to formally welcome the King of Karnstein.

*****

By the time the dinner banquet was prepared, she was glad that her father felt better and stronger. And now while sitting at the right side of her father over dinner, she smiled as she saw her father partaking in the merriment while engaging at a serious conversation at the same time with the King of Karnstein who was sitting on the left side of her father. *Maybe having this feast was not bad at all.* She thought finding her father in good humor and seemed satisfied with the outcome.

The Hollis Kingdom's Kitchen had surely prepared an abundant and very special dinner for their guest. It was like showing off what the Hollis' Kingdom has to offer.

The banquet lasted till midnight and she smiled as she saw the satisfied look in her guests' faces. She recalled how the King of Karnstein was so appreciative and thankful for the warm welcome and delicious food, specially mentioning the sweets, before retiring to his chamber half an hour ago, even apologizing for leaving the feast too soon. And she thought this king was kind and humble. She was about to retire to her chamber and bid her father goodnight when she heard the King called her.

"Laura, may I have a word with you in my chamber?"

She heard her father's request and grew worried that he was ill again. "What is it Papa? Should I call the chirurgeon?"
"No, my little Princess, I just have some important thing to discuss with you," the King replied, rising from his seat.

Seeing that her father needed a rest; "Can't it wait till tomorrow? It looks like you need to go to bed now.

"No. I must tell you now," Was the king's firm reply.

Not wanting to upset her father, she nodded and led him out of the banquet hall and walked to the direction of the King’s Chamber.

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As soon as they arrived at her father's chamber, the king did not waste any time and asked her to sit on one of the three chairs by the King's study table. She obeyed and her father took the seat opposite to hers. Once she was comfortably seated, her father drew his chair near her and took her hands and held it. She suddenly grew anxious. She does not know how she would take it if her father told her that he was dying. She just cannot take it! And before her father could utter a word, a tear was already falling on her left eye.

"Laura my dear, why are you crying?" the King asked at once and brushed the tear on her cheek.

She held her father's hands tighter and gazed at him before asking, "Are you going to tell me that you are dying?"

"No! My little Princess," the King quipped.

She embraced her father at once, relieved upon hearing the truth. "Oh Papa, I was so worried that I thought you are going to leave me like Mama." She burst out and did not bother to suppress the cry that was threatening to fall a while ago. Then she felt her father's hand rubbing her back consolingly.

"Shh, I am not going to leave you," her father whispered in her ear.

As soon as she calmed down and her whimpering subsided, she released from her father's embrace and gazed at his melancholic eyes.

"I love you Papa," she uttered softly, always telling the people around her how she felt.

"I love you too Princess, that's why I must tell you this-" the King hesitated, then looked at her and reclaimed her hands.

"Papa, what is it?" she asked, encouraging the King to speak.

"Laura, we all know that I am sick and we do not know how long I would live…"

Her hold on her father's hands tightened upon hearing that phrase as she waited anxiously at the next word her father will utter.

"It would give me peace of mind and happiness if I would see you now settled."

She narrowed her eyes and contorted her brows, but she remained silent.

"I have tried many times to find you a suitable husband, so that you can be happy and fulfilled-"

This time, she cannot accept what her father told her. "Papa, I am perfectly happy and fulfilled taking care of you and being with you. I don't need a husband to make me happy and fulfilled." She
corrected a bit irritated at the thought that finding a husband was the key to happiness and fulfillment of a woman's life. She was not like most of the women and princesses that were so passionate of finding a suitable husband.

"I am aware of that my little Princess," the King replied with a calm voice. "But as a father, I dream of you being married and having a children of your own. Every father and mother's dream is to see their child happy and settled in life. I am not young anymore and not strong enough to find you a suitable husband. Sooner or later, you would need someone who will protect you and take care of you like I do."

"I don't think I could find someone who would protect me and take care of me like the way you do Papa," she retaliated. "That man was not born." She strongly claimed.

"Very well, if that was your opinion, I don't oppose on that," her father nodded. "However, the time has come for you to finally settle down. I have tried my best to invite as many princes as I can, so that you can select among them that suits you best. I have given you the freedom to choose, and yet you still remained unmarried and choosy. That's why this time I have chosen the prince that was best suited to you."

"What are you implying?"

"I decided to marry you off to the Prince of Karnstein."

She was shocked. Having been fussy and meticulous of selecting her potential husband, she did not expect that she would be paired off to the kingdom's old rival. Was this karma? She cannot fathom what her father was thinking?! Of all the princes that were offering their love and castle to her, why did she suddenly end up being betrothed to a prince that she have not even seen nor met? And to say the least, a prince that belonged to the family of their old rival!

"Papa, I will fulfill your wish and get marry," she spoke, but her emotions were taking over. "But why would you decide to marry me off to our family's old rival?! I could have said yes to Prince Viktor since he is still unmarried!"

"Laura, I have been patient enough and waited too long for you to come to a decision, and I cannot wait any longer."

"But I have not even met the Prince of Karnstein," she explained. "What if I don't like him? What if he is one of those arrogant princes that thinks that they were always right and that everybody would bow to them and obey their desires?"

Suddenly, she heard her father cough and put his hand on his chest, rubbing it as the cough continued.

"Papa, forgive me. I did not mean to upset you," she realized that she was beginning to be selfish. She rose from her seat and stood beside the king and rubbed his back. "Come on, I'll tuck you in bed now." She guided her father to the four post bed and removed his cloak, shoes and crown.

Once the king was tucked in bed, she took a chair and put it by his bedside and took a seat. She held her father's hand again, realizing how badly she behaved.

"Laura, I hope you won't hate me for this," the King began to explain gazing at her eyes. "I chose the Prince of Karnstein for you because I wanted to end this old family dispute between the Hollis and Karnstein Kingdom. By marrying you to the Prince of Karnstein our family would gain an alliance and would become two powerful families in terms of trading and cultivation. King Philipp is
an excellent trade man and is always searching for a new way to keep his kingdom rich and abundant. He does not waste his richness and teaches his people how to protect and enrich their livelihoods. He cared for his people and does not take a lot from them. He is a kind and generous ruler."

She was finally enlightened after that heartfelt explanation from her father. She cannot continue pining for the loss love that cannot be reclaimed. "Forgive me Papa for being selfish. Now I know that you just meant well for me and I would do everything that you wish and would stop complaining."

"I just want the best for you my little Princess," the King replied. "It is still your choice to make and I know that it is selfish of me to tell you this; but if you would accept this proposal, I would be the happiest father knowing that my little baby would be in good hands and well taken care off. It would give me peace of mind too knowing that there is already someone who would protect you and take care of you."

She took a deep breath and stared at her father for a while, as if weighing her decision. She knew that she had wasted and prolonged her search for finding a husband. And now that she was broken hearted and the only woman that she loves was married, there was no choice but to move forward and accept the fact that she cannot find the love that her heart was longing for. She cannot find another woman that would accept her love and be with her forever, she knew that it would be difficult for her to search further since she was not just an ordinary peasant girl who could do whatever her heart desired.

As what Perry told her, she was a princess and she has a duty and obligation to fulfill, not just to her family but to the kingdom as well.

This time, she needs to face her destiny. And her destiny was already waiting for her at the Karnstein Kingdom.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thank you again for your lovely comments and kudos. I really appreciate it.
A New Life

Chapter Summary

Princess Laura is starting her new life in her new 'home'.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

She could not explain how she felt, but the throbbing of her heart grew stronger as the horse drawn carriage approached their destination, and after some dreading minutes the horses halted.

"Perry… are we-" she fumbled for words, suddenly losing her ability to speak.

She felt the warm hand of Perry held her right hand.

"Yes Princess, we are already at the Karnstein Castle," her Lady in Waiting finished for her.

She had been silent since this morning, after she bade her father and the whole Hollis Kingdom farewell. She faced them with courage, not wanting for her father and the entire kingdom to worry about her as she prepared for her journey to her new life. However, deep inside her, she had never felt so anxious and distress in her entire life. She had never felt so vulnerable and exposed as the thought of living in a new castle with total strangers frightened her.

"What if they don't like me?"

Perry held her gaze and took both her hands. "Laura, King Philipp of Karnstein had personally chosen you to become the wife of the heir to the throne of Karnstein, isn't that enough reason to convince you?"

She felt a bit relieved at Perry's remark, but she still managed not to calm down. "You're right. But… what if he did not like me?"

"Who?"

All of a sudden she was worrying. "The Prince… what if he finds me unworthy to be his wife?"

"Princess, he is a fool not to like you," was Perry's confident reply. "I think he is the luckiest prince in this land. If he only knew how many princes had offered their love and castle for you-."

She stopped Perry on reminding her all over again how precious she was. "I know. Don't mention it anymore, it sounded like we're bragging about me."

"But it's the truth princess," Perry returned, staring at her. "You are the most beautiful, caring and kind hearted person that I have ever met. You always think of others first before yourself."

Her Lady in Waiting absolutely knew how to make her feel good and special, she thought and realized how lucky she was to have such a good friend, and mother-like Lady in Waiting at the same
"Thanks Perry, I don't know what I would do without you by my side."

"Oh Princess, it is always a pleasure and a joy to help you and accompany you in everything that you do."

"And I am very glad that you're with me as I take this journey," she added, showing more how grateful she was. "Because I don't know if I could do this alone."

"Laura, you're strong and brave, I am just here to remind you that you have all those wonderful qualities that you seemed not aware of," was Perry's genuine remark. "And I am pretty sure that the Queen of Karnstein is going to like you right away."

"How can you tell that, you haven't even met my future mother in law," was her doubtful comment. "I heard that she is a perfectionist and very strict."

"Princess, with your charisma and cheerful qualities and not to forget your beauty, I am sure that you will receive the Queen's approval at once."

After those wonderful remarks from Perry, she finally felt confident and ready to face her new life. She may have lost a mother, but she was thankful to God that He provided a substitute for her mother.

"Shall we go and meet your future husband?"

She heard Perry asked and nodded with confidence to her Lady in Waiting and reminded herself before she stepped down from the carriage, that she was ready to face her destiny and fulfill her duty and obligation as a Princess and as a daughter. She was here because she promised her father that this time she would not avoid her duty anymore and would face the truth. The truth that she could no longer find the love that she was really longing for: the love of a woman.

*****

Once they entered the main entrance of the Karnstein Castle, they were mesmerized at once. It was grander and larger compared to their castle. And there were plenty of royal guards inside the castle however the atmosphere was not like their castle. She finds the Karnstein Castle spacious, cold and a bit darker and quiet, compared to the castle that she grew up with where it was always bright; people were talking to each other, the servants were happily greeting her and the King if they happened to meet them, there were less guards inside the castle since they trust their servants and guards and there were plenty of times that her father allowed the people from the village to eat in the castle once in a while. Everything in the Hollis Kingdom emits warmth and friendliness, the people were mostly smiling. And right now she was having a hard time not to smile and remained silent as she and Perry walked further to the throne room as the steward led the way. Once the main door to the throne room was opened, she and Perry proceeded alone and she walked gracefully to where the King and Queen of Karnstein were sitting. She felt nervous as she was not used to see a throne room without the crowds, but just the King and Queen of Karnstein and some royal guards inside waiting for her to approach. Once she came closer to the throne, she heard the herald announced her name and she curtsied to the King and then to the Queen. She was about to rose form her curtsy when her ears caught already the friendly voice of the King and she saw him rose from the throne and approached her at once.

"Princess Laura, we are so honored and grateful that you have finally decided to become a part of our family," King Philipp declared and gestured to the direction of the Queen who rose from the throne and approached them with a decent distance. "May I present to you my wife, Queen Lilita Mircalla Constance of Karnstein."
"Princess Laura Elizabeth Rosamund of Hollis, it is an honor to have finally met the beautiful Queen of Karnstein," she expressed as she curtsied again and smiled graciously to the Queen.

"It is a pleasure to finally meet you, Princess Laura," the Queen said in a clear and yet formal tone. "I was told by the King that he had chosen a beautiful bride for our prince, but he did not mention that it is the famous princess who is coveted by most of the princes in Southern Styria. What made you decide to finally settle down?"

Suddenly she found herself ashamed of her being meticulous of choosing her husband. She did not expect that the Queen knew about it. But as what all mother in laws, she felt that the Queen was trying to test her on why she was worthy to become the prince's wife. "Your Majesty, I think that I am matured enough to understand and perform my duty fully as a princess, and I felt that this is the right time for me to settle down and fulfill my obligation."

"Why did you agree to this proposal, even if you have not met my son yet and refused the other princes?" The Queen asked in a challenging tone.

"I accepted this proposal not for my own personal choice but to end this old dispute between the Hollis and Karnstein Kingdom. I want to bring peace to both our families," she declared sincerely not breaking her eye contact to the Queen. "I think we could be strong and powerful kingdoms when combined, and this marriage would seal its purpose."

The Queen did not reply further but she saw the impressed look on the Queen's face.

"And we are grateful for you for being an instrument of peace, Princess Laura," the King uttered, breaking the tension. "Consider this as your new home," the King informed.

"Before you retire to your chamber, I have an important thing to tell you about the Prince of Karnstein," the Queen interrupted.

She held her breath and waited anxiously, the way the Queen said it was like something was not good.

"The Prince has angst of going out in an open space and being surrounded by a lot of people. He has not set foot in the village nor other places, except in the perimeters of the castle and its nearby forest," The Queen revealed. "I think it is important for you to know his situation to avoid future problems. So, tell me, would this be a problem for you?"

"I don't think it would be a hindrance at all Your Majesty. No one is perfect," after answering that challenging question satisfactorily, she received a nod and a smile from the Queen.

"Princess Laura, I regret to inform you that the Prince is feeling ill today and cannot personally meet you," The King said, facing her.

She was suddenly worried upon hearing it, "Kindly send my regards to His Highness and I wish for him to recover soon."

"I will Princess," was the King's warm reply.

*****

She was astounded when she opened the door to her chamber and was greeted right away by the large four post bed that was made of mahogany and has burgundy velvet curtains on each post. A full body mirror stood on the left of the bed while a large fireplace that was higher than her can be seen on the left side of the bed, on to her right was the window and beside it was the dressing table.
with mirror, and just left by the door was the door leading to her own bathroom. The size of this chamber can be compared to the size of her father's chamber back home, and she was overwhelmed by the size of it.

"God, Perry this is actually huge for a little princess like me," she exclaimed as they inspected every corner of the room. She walked towards the wardrobe and saw at least three dozens of different gowns that were hanging and dozens of shoes. She ran to the direction of the dressing table and opened the drawer and saw about ten different kinds of earrings that were mostly made of diamonds, some rubies and sapphires, there were golden necklaces, with diamonds and emeralds and an exotic one made of pearls, about ten pieces of brooches where lined up too in the drawer made in diamonds again and sapphires. And there were four different kinds of tiaras too with diamonds on the table.

Surprised, "Are these all for me?!" she asked Perry, thinking that this prince surely knows how to pamper a princess. "But how did they know if it's going to fit me the dresses and shoes?"

"Because they asked me," was her Lady in Waiting's sheepish reply.

"But they don't need to give me new ones, I got my own and I still love the old ones," was her humble reply. "And the jewelries, I don't think I can accept it, didn't you mentioned to them that I am not fond of jewelries?" was her overwhelming reaction to all the extravagant gifts that were surrounding her. "I wouldn't want the Prince to think that I am extravagant and just thinks of dress and material things."

"I thought that they were going to make a dress for your betrothal feast, I did not expect that they were going to give you dozens of it," was Perry's confused remark.

"Don't touch those dresses that were here. I am going to use my own," she ordered her Lady in Waiting and made sure to remind her handmaids too. "Tell the girls that they should not touch it and that the ones we've packed from home are the things that I am going to use."

"What are you going to do with the gifts from the Prince then?" was Perry's curious remark.

"I don't know yet about the clothes and shoes, since it was personally made to fit my size. But I am definitely going to return all of those jewelries. I don't need it." Was her certain answer.

"As you wished," Perry agreed without any hesitation. "I will prepare your bath now and Natalie, Sarah Jane and Betty are coming right away with your things, is there anything in particular you need so that they knew right away what to unpack first while you are taking a bath?"

"Will you kindly make sure that I have my yellow pillow on the bed beside me?" she asked sweetly her Lady in Waiting, since Perry knew that it was her favorite pillow since she was a child.

"Oh Princess, you are about to marry and yet you're still craving for your security pillow," Perry commented. "When you get married, you can use the Prince of Karnstein as your security pillow instead.

"I don't think the Prince can provide me the same comfort and security like my yellow pillow is giving me," she retaliated, citing the significance of her favorite pillow that had helped her to calm and soothed her while sleeping alone at night. And since she was not in her own bed anymore and was going to sleep on a new bed in a new castle, she would definitely need some comfort and soothing tonight was her initial thought.

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She forcefully opened her eyes as the persisting sound of a knock on the door roused her from her
slumber. "Who could this be?" she asked herself knowing that Perry just comes in her chamber without any notice, and her handmaids usually calls her name when they were knocking on her chamber.

"Come in!" she shouted back and put on the white silk robe to protect her from the cold air, as she stay on her bed and left the warmness of the blanket.

"Good morning Your Highness, I hope you slept well last night,"

She heard the voice said and saw the image of the person with short red hair as her eyes adjusted to the brightness of the sun rays from her window.

"Please allow me to introduce myself, I am LaFontaine and I am His Royal Highness' Valet de Chambre."

She saw the person bowed to her and narrowed her eyes towards the person. And suddenly her curiosity kicked in, "Are you a woman dressed in a man's clothes?"

"I am Your Highness, but I prefer to be referred neither a he nor a she, and I would prefer they and them when addressing me."

Suddenly she found herself fascinated by this person in front of her. She never thought that there were people who liked to be different and live the life they want. "May I ask who are you again?"

"I am LaFontaine, I am the Princes' Valet and I am here to inform you that His Highness, Prince Carl regrets to inform you that he was still unwell and cannot attend to Her Highness yet,"

"Oh, please send my regards to the Prince and tell Your Highness to get well soon and that I am looking forward to meet him." She related, growing concerned about the Prince's health.

"I will Your Highness," the Valet returned. "If there's anything I could do for Her Highness, please let me know. I am willing to help in any way I can to make the first day of your stay as comfortable as possible."

Her eyes caught the tiara's that were laid on her dressing table and suddenly remembered the enormous gifts. "Yes, there is one thing I like you to do. Kindly tell the Prince thank you for all the gifts that he gave me and I appreciate his generosity and thoughtfulness. Unfortunately, I could not accept it."

She received a dumbfounded look from the Prince's Valet.

"I beg your pardon, Your Highness?"

"The clothes, shoes and jewelries are too much," she explained trying to find a way on how she could tell to the Valet without sounding ungrateful.

"With all due respect Your Highness, the Prince of Karnstein thought that his betrothed deserved the best.

"I am grateful for all the gifts, but I have no use for it since I have my own clothes and my old ones are still perfectly well and beautiful. And I could not accept all those jewelries since I have my own but rarely use them. I think it would be better if the Prince could give it to the Queen instead."

"Very well, I would inform the Prince first before I removed the gifts." Was the Valet's polite reply.
"Thank you LaFontaine and kindly tell the Prince that I hope he is not angry at me for refusing his gifts. But I just thought that it is inappropriate for me to accept such extravagant gifts, especially if I have not seen nor met him yet."

LaFontaine silently nodded and bowed to her. "I will relay the message Your Highness. Have a good day."

"Have a nice day too LaFontaine and it's so nice to meet you," was her chirpy remark before the Valet left her chamber.

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After eating her breakfast, the Queen summoned her right away and was told that she would be toured around the castle and its facilities to familiarize herself of her new home.

"I think as the future queen, you should see first the most important place in the castle," The Queen suggested as they left the great hall and walked to the other side of the castle's wing that was separated from the main castle.

She followed the Queen behind. They reached the entrance of the room that the Queen was talking about and when the Royal Guards opened the doors, she was astonished at the sight in front of her.

"This is the castle's kitchen."

The Queen showed her, as what she could describe the biggest kitchen she had ever seen. It was triple the size of the Hollis' kitchen. As they proceed inside and walk around she cannot help but to admire the structure of how the kitchen was divided.

"I like things in order, so the first section is where all the animals and poultries are to be butchered and cleaned. Over there is the section where all the vegetables and fruits are prepared," The Queen explained. "We have a separate place too where all the grains and wheats are stored and prepared. All the preparations of raw food should be prepared on that table near the fire place and stone oven once the food is cooked it should not get in contact with the raw ingredients. This is where all the hot foods are prepared."

She was impressed at how the Queen manages the production of food in the castle, but there was one thing she was dying to ask.

"Do you have a place too for baking breads and making sweets?" she asked with full of enthusiasm.

"Certainly," The Queen replied as they began to walk to another room that was less warm and much cooler. "I consider this the most important part of the kitchen, because cakes and sweets are the Prince's favorite food."

She grinned at the information that she gathered upon discovering one of the Prince's weaknesses. *So, he's got a sweet tooth like me!*

"I heard from the King that your castle had served him the most delectable cakes and sweets that the King had ever tasted,"

"Yes Your Majesty, we have one of the best Konditor and bakers back at home," was her proud answer.

"I wish we have our own Konditor, it would have been extraordinary," the Queen commented.
"I think it would not be a problem anymore, Your Majesty," she returned smiling at her future mother in law.

"What are you trying to imply?"

"My lady in Waiting is the Konditor of the Hollis castle, and she had taught me all that is to know about cakes and sweets," she delivered proudly.

The Queen seemed amazed and did not speak for a moment. Princesses were usually not interested in blending with the servants.

"When I was young I used to spend more time in the kitchen, and my Lady in Waiting's mother was the castle's Konditor during that time," she related. "We grew up together and learned a lot from making sweets and cakes."

"I am impressed that a princess like you managed to blend with the servants and eventually learned some of their craft," was the Queen's genuine expression. "If it will please you, the castle's kitchen is at your disposal."

She cannot believe what she just heard; she never thought that the Queen would give her access to the kitchen. "Thank you so much Your Majesty, I am grateful that you trust me to use the castle's kitchen."

"I expect that you can satisfy the Prince's cravings for sweets," was the Queen's challenging remark.

"I assure you Your Majesty, once the Prince had tasted my sweets, he wouldn't crave for anything else but mine," she uttered with confidence and was surprised at how she had conveyed it.

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Her second day at the Karnstein Castle had been exhausting with all the walking and climbing the stairs to the different chambers and halls of this enormous castle, and now she was thankful that it was over as she sat in the bath tub and relaxed in the hot water. She tried to recall all the information that she gathered from the Queen about the Prince. She was surprised to discover that they have some things in common like a weakness for sweets and cakes. And now she was looking forward to bake some cakes and make some sweets for him. She did not know why she suddenly had the urge to please him, but perhaps it was just her natural way of doing something good towards others, she presumed. The Queen was surprisingly accommodating as she remembered receiving permission to use the kitchen, now she just needs to go to the market square to buy all the ingredients that they need for making cakes and sweets.

As she reflected the things that happened today, she can say that both the King and the Queen were nice and pleasant towards her. She never expected that she could feel this warm welcome from total strangers and from her family's old rival.

The only thing that was left for her to worry was meeting her betrothed and the anticipation was killing her… It was killing her not knowing how the Prince looked like! It was killing her how the Prince was as a person; it was killing her how the Prince was going to react at meeting her for the first time; it was killing her that she had agreed to marry him even if she did not know him; and it was killing her that this Prince can demand what was rightfully his: her body.

TBC
Thank you for all you're wonderful comments and kudos.
Carmilla would do anything just to get rid-off the Princess of Hollis

Buckle up Creampuffs! This is going to be a long chapter. And thank you for all your comments and kudos. It's good to know that there are readers out there who appreciate this fic. And since some of you asked for a quick update I decided to work on it. So, here you go, the chapter that everybody is waiting for: Hollstein's first meeting.

Carmilla

The thought of her betrothed sleeping on the other wing of their castle and staying under the same roof as hers was driving her insane. She never had a decent sleep since last week when her father returned from his journey, shocking her with the news of asking a certain princess for her hand in marriage for her. She was still furious at how her father went behind her back and secured her a bride. She did not see it coming.

She felt betrayed when her mother did not invite first the potential bride to be, like the Queen used to do for the past months. Her mother was the only one who was involved in this desperation of finding her a bride and she thought that she had successfully driven away all the potential brides that her mother invited for the past months, when the number of princesses coming to their castle dwindled and when nobody had come for the last four months; she thought that she had won…

She did not know how long she could stay in her chamber pretending to be sick. Her mother and father were both aware that she was cross and do not have any plans on welcoming the princess. She told LaFontaine to inform the King and Queen that she was ill instead. Sooner or later she would need to get out of her chamber, but she would not give her father the benefit of welcoming this princess with open arms and accepting her.

One of the most important things that she learned from her father about winning a battle was to know your enemy; and she was bound to win this one whatever it takes.

Her pondering was broken when she heard the door opened and saw her Valet coming in with a tray of food.

"What took you so long?" she asked irritated, even if she was aware that it was not LaFontaine's job to bring her breakfast. But right now she did not want to see anyone except her Valet, and dismissed the maid that brings her food. She threw the book that she was reading on the side then rose from the bed and walked towards the table by the window where her Valet put the tray.

She controlled the urge to smile as she caught the sight of a yellow long stemmed rose lying on the tray beside the shiny red apple, piece of loaf and her favorite cheese, the Steirerkas. She pulled out
the chair beside the study table, sat and started eating while LaFontaine stood beside her.

"What's this rose doing on my tray? Are you trying to lure me to come out of my chamber and visit my garden?" she asked her Valet and suddenly missed her rose garden.

"Princess Laura actually sent that," LaFontaine related. "She wished you well and expressed her concern, since you have been sick for three days now."

She raised her left brow and was actually surprised at the gesture. But she shrugged off the idea of telling her Valet about it. She would not want LaFontaine to think that she was interested, so she ignored any topic that would lead to talking about the Princess. She diverted on another topic instead.

“What did my Queen Mother said?” She asked LaFontaine, while breaking the bread in small pieces. This was the third day that LaFontaine had been in the kitchen to bring her some bread and cheese, and fruits for breakfast.

“Nothing,” LaFontaine had replied and brought out a flask from their breast pocket’s coat and handed to her. It was the Queen’s strict rule that she can only drink wine during dinner, and since she had been avoiding their family dinner lately, she lost the chance of drinking some wine.

She gulped down the liquid and did not stop until the last drop, “Thanks,” she exclaimed after drinking her first red wine in three days. “How did you managed to get some?” she asked, knowing that wines in the Karnstein Castle were usually consumed by them and rarely available for the servants and guards of the castle. Although Most and Ale were usually served to the monarch and nobility, the servants consumed mostly the two last drinks. But during festivities her father gives wine too to the servants.

“I’ve asked Perry to save some for me,” her Valet replied, and blushed a bit at the mention of the stranger’s name.

“Who’s Perry?” she asked, nonchalantly as she took a bite of an apple, munching it slowly. “Is she the new cook?” she asked and took another bite.

“No. She’s Princess Laura’s Lady in Waiting,” LaFontaine explained.

She was wondering why a total stranger from another castle had access to their kitchen and buttery. The butler was usually the one in charge of the buttery, she thought, since she had tried to sneak into the buttery to get some wine, but the butler was given a strict order of her mother not to give wine to her except during dinner times, where her mother can control her wine intake.

“And why was she allowed to go to the buttery? Where’s the butler?” she asked annoyed, knowing that the butler does not allow her to step in the buttery. She could feel that the man dislike her and had thought that the day she became the King, she would fire the butler.

LaFontaine gave her a suspicious look and said, “You never care what happens in the kitchen or pantry or the buttery. Last I know it was the Queen who controls these places. So, How come you’re suddenly concerned about who enters in the buttery? And if I may explain further, Your Highness…” LaFontaine was saying with slight sarcasm, “Perry did not go to the buttery, she was supposed to give the wine to Princess Laura, but decided not to when I asked her a favor.”

“Why didn’t you say so?” she put the blame on LaFontaine.

“Because you suddenly flared up,” was LaFontaine’s calm retort. She remained silent, guilty after her Valet’s comment. “And I think you should stop hiding and meet your betrothed,” LaFontaine
added.

She hissed in disapproval, “She is not my betrothed,” looking at the door as if afraid that someone might hear it. Her father had not yet made the announcement of her engagement it was only her parents and LaFontaine who knew about it. “And you’re going to help me to stop this betrothal.”

“Aren’t you getting tired of running away from your responsibility?” LaFontaine exclaimed.

“I thought you’re my friend?!” she retaliated, and stood up from the chair not expecting of all people that she would hear those words from them. “You know that I don’t want to get married!”

“I know, but…” LaFontaine replied as their brows contorted. “But don’t you want to find out?” they asked hoping.

“Find out what? …if there’s someone out there who’ll accept an abomination like me?!” she retorted vehemently, not wanting to discuss this thing again.

“No…” was LaFontaine's calm reply before giving her a concerned look. “To find out if she could love you for what you are.”

She was silenced by the last comment.

She had never thought of this thing called love.

She was raised by a mother who gave her child to her wet nurse, and never knew what the word love was. She was thankful that her Ma cared for her like her own child, but there were always something that was missing in that care, a mother’s touch. It was like a void that would remain inside her. There were always a distance between her and her mother that was why her emotions were always suppressed. On the other hand, her mother made sure that she was lavished with the best things in the world that only the kings and princes could have; educated by the best scholars and philosophers; was taught music and arts by the best musicians and artists in Austria; and was brought up being treated the second most powerful person in the whole Kingdom of Karnstein, where everybody obey everything she desired, with the exception of her parents of course. These were love according to her mother and she was provided with it and everything she needed to become an intelligent, strong, fearless, well bred, confident and powerful ruler.

However, every ruler must provide an heir to continue the family’s reign, and this was the biggest challenge she has yet to face.

Desperate, "I tell you what, you help me get rid of the little princess and I'll grant you anything you desire." She told LaFontaine, not knowing what kind of agreement she was going through.

"Anything?!" was LaFontaine's dumbfounded remark.

"Yes. Anything," she replied with absolute certainty. "I am, after all… the future king of Karnstein." She added, smirking.

"Alright it's a deal," LaFontaine agreed. "I haven't really thought about it. So I'll just have to tell you next time or when I've already made up my mind."

"No stress. Take your time. But we need to get rid of my problem as soon as possible," She concluded, giving LaFontaine a mischievous smile.

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That night as she waited for LaFontaine to bring her dinner, she cannot help but to wonder why this princess agreed to her father's proposal even if they have not met each other yet.

Surely, she wanted something out of this betrothal; she speculated as she looked outside of her window and gazed at the stars, and then her mind came to a conclusion: This princess from Hollis was one of those extravagant women who liked jewelries and fancy things like gowns and shoes and their only desire in life was to marry a very rich prince and live in a big castle like theirs.

"Don't get mad at me for being late,"

Her contemplation was broken upon hearing her Valet's voice. She turned around and walked towards the table and sat on the chair, as LaFontaine put the tray of her dinner. She inhaled the delicious scent of hot beef pottage in front of her and was about to dip her spoon on the soup when her eyes caught something on the left side of the tray: the little round cake that was like a size of a cup.

She put her spoon down and lifted the saucer where the small cake was placed. She scrutinized the little sweets and inhaled the delicious scent of dark chocolate, she closed her eyes as she imagine taking it in her mouth and relishing the pure taste of cocoa beans in her tongue. She turned her focus to LaFontaine, "This smells delicious did the cook found a new recipe?" she asked, since she was familiar with all the cakes and sweets that their cook were making.

"Oh, I almost forgot," LaFontaine uttered excitedly. "The Princess baked that especially for you."

She raised both her eyebrows and cannot believe what LaFontaine just said. "The Princess made this?" was her surprised reaction, eyeing on the little fancy dark chocolate cake that she was holding. "How is that possible?" she asked questioning the Princess' credibility when it comes to making sweets and cakes. "This looks exquisite, are you trying to fool me?"

"That's the truth," LaFontaine returned with enthusiasm. "I was in the kitchen when Princess Laura and Perry made that. That's why I was late."

She was surprised and at the same time irritated, and suddenly she was not impress and put the sweets back on the tray. "Throw it away." She ordered and did not touch her soup either. "I lost my appetite."

"But why?" was LaFontaine's confused remark.

"I am not hungry anymore," she stated and rose from the chair and grabbed the book that was lying beside the tray.

LaFontaine was about to take the tray and go out with it when she remembered something important.

"I am sure that the Princess was already overwhelmed with all the gifts in her chamber, perhaps you can already ask her about the trade?" She stated, reminding LaFontaine and herself not to be distracted by the gestures from the Princess from pushing through with her plan.

Her Valet just gave her a puzzled look.

Irritated, "The Plan… where you ask the Princess to break our betrothal in exchanged for more golds and diamonds?" she reminded her Valet one of the schemes that they used to do to some of the princesses that agreed not to pursue being her bride and was sent home with more jewelries in exchange for her freedom.

"No. And I think it would not work out this time," LaFontaine returned.
"Why wouldn't it work? I am sure this princess just wants jewelries and fancy things," she declared.

"Because I forgot to mention that the Princess of Hollis was very thankful for all your gifts, however, she told me that she cannot accept all of it, and that she apologized for sounding ungrateful, but she thought that it was inappropriate to accept it."

She was dumbfounded after hearing that remark from LaFontaine. This was the first time that a princess refused her gifts.

"And I told the Princess that I will inform you first before I remove all the gifts in her chamber," her valet added. "Should I take back the gifts?"

This time, she mellowed down and remained silent for a moment as a flicker of guilt hit her, then she softly uttered, "No, don't take it back. Tell her… tell the Princess that I would be hurt if she returns everything," she relayed with a hint of shame in her voice.

"Very well, I will tell the Princess as soon as possible," LaFontaine nodded and bowed before leaving her chamber.

She felt like she was slapped in the face. She thought that everything can be solved as long as there were gold and diamonds involved. She thought that anything can be bought with her wealth and power, but this time she was wrong.

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The following day, she decided to be “sick” for the fourth day, testing how far the princess' patience of waiting for her would stretch. Right on the dot, when the clock struck twelve in the afternoon, her Valet came with the tray of her midday meal, and serves it in front of her on the table as she sat comfortably on the chair. She was contented when she saw nothing unusual on her tray in the form of a flower or sweets.

"It's good to see you come on time," was her sarcastic remark to her Valet, as LaFontaine laid also the table napkin on her lap.

"Well, everybody went out early today, so the kitchen was not that busy," LaFontaine returned.

Curious, she asked her Valet quickly, "Who's everybody? And why are they out?"

"After breakfast, His Majesty and the Queen invited the Princess and Perry to go out and ride the horse, so that Princess Laura would be familiar around the vicinity."

She grew worried at the thought of her parents getting fond of this Princess and became annoyed. Instead of reacting at LaFontaine's remark, she decided to follow up on their plan.

"Have you gathered enough information about the Princess?" she asked as she buttered her loaf. "I don't want my mother and father to get used of seeing the Princess in the castle."

"Not quite yet. But I am going to talk afterwards with one of the Princess' handmaids." LaFontaine returned.

"You better hurry," was her serious order. "The faster we could send her back home, the better." She remarked, wanting this plan of driving away the Princess to commence soon. "And why do you keep calling the Princess’ Lady in Waiting by her given name? Did you befriend her?" was her suspicious
query and suddenly saw her Valet crimsoned like never before.

"No. Per… the Princess' Lady in Waiting had been very nice towards me, and insisted that I call her by her given name," LaFontaine reasoned out.

"I hope you're not conniving with the enemy," she retorted giving her valet a suspicious look before dismissing them.


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Before the sun set, LaFontaine returned with juicy news for her…

"From what I've learned, Princess Laura was very picky when it comes to choosing a husband," LaFontaine informed her, as they devised a plan on their next scheme. "She'd had almost twenty proposals but none of them had succeeded to win Princess Laura's heart."

"And why is that?" she asked, suddenly curious, as she paced with her hands crossed behind her back.

"According to my source, there were two princes who have been Princess Laura's favorite and had grown fond of," LaFontaine explained as they stood beside the fireplace. "The first one was a young prince from the south. I was told that the prince looks very young, barely a man in appearance, though he has already reached his puberty, he still doesn't look like a man."

"What do you mean?" she queried. While she was growing up nobody had explained to her the changes that a girl or a boy would go through when they reached puberty. The only changes she thought that could happen to a child like her was that, one's sex could change upon reaching puberty. Just like in her case. And since she underwent a lot of changes in her life, she did not even noticed if those changes were really part of a normal life. Because she was just thrown in this life without a choice.

"It means the prince doesn't have facial hair and was very clean in appearance. He was thin and not muscular," LaFontaine described seriously.

"So you mean to say, Princess Laura dislikes men with facial hair and muscular?" She inquired, raising her left eyebrow as she strokes her chin.

"Precisely!" LaFontaine agreed, giving her a nod. "And hear this out, I think you might find this particular information very helpful: the Princess has an intense aversion to men with beard."

"What do you mean?"

"My source told me that the King of Hollis had to remain clean shaven due to the Princess refusing to kiss her father on the cheek," was LaFontaine's passionate retelling of the story. "The King even ordered his brother, the Princess' uncle and the Princess' cousin, the heir to the Hollis' throne to always shave, because Princess Laura dislikes men with facial hair and finds it repulsive. Even the Princess' personal royal guard was been called by the princess barbarian when he started to grow his beard, and refused to let him guard her until he was clean shaven."

"Well, that was very interesting and enlightening," she replied. "But what happened to the Prince? Why didn't the Princess accept his proposal when she's attracted to him?" was her very curious question.
"…Because according to my source the young prince was so captivated one day by the beauty of Princess Laura that he wasn't able to control himself in her presence. He tried kissing her and she kissed him back, but the poor young prince was so aroused that he did not manage to stop his erection just after the first kiss! So, when Princess Laura noticed his bulge in his trousers, she panicked and dismissed him," LaFontaine relayed and laugh hard after the last information. "I think the princess is afraid of penis!" was LaFontaine's funny remark.

She did not find it funny. She laughed along with LaFontaine, pretending that the joke was hilarious and amusing. But deep inside her she was wondering.

Not wanting to dwell on that last part, she drew LaFontaine's attention by asking another question, "How about the other prince, what happened to him?"

After recovering from laughing, LaFontaine cleared their throat before proceeding, "Ehem… Well, this is a bit odd. Because this prince from the Kingdom of Lawrence is absolutely not the type of prince that Princess Laura likes. He has a beard, muscular and ruggedly handsome."

"So, how come the princess was fond of him?" was her perplexed remarked.

"Princess Laura was fond of him, because he always takes his younger sister, the Princess of Lawrence with him whenever he visits Princess Laura," LaFontaine informed. "Princess Laura thought that it was nice of him to bring along his sister every time he was in Hollis Kingdom… because Princess Laura gained a very special friend in the form of the Princess of Lawrence."

"Hmm… so you were saying that Princess Laura preferred the company of the princess instead of the prince?" Was her theory.

"Well, my source did not comment more on that," LaFontaine replied. "All I've learned was there were lots of times that both the Prince and Princess of Lawrence visited and stayed over at the Hollis Kingdom. Until one day, they both did not come at all."

"What happened?" she asked impatiently.

LaFontaine furrowed their brows before continuing, "The Princess of Lawrence got married and the Prince of Lawrence stopped coming. And Princess Laura did not accommodate anymore suitors for years… until she said yes to your proposal."

She was yanked from speculating further about what had happened between Princess Laura and the Lawrences siblings, when she heard LaFontaine's last remark.

"I did not propose to her! It was my father who proposed for me!" She retaliated losing her temper. Until now she cannot accept the fact that the King was involved in this predicament.

"And may I remind you that the Queen requests your presence at tomorrow's dinner," LaFontaine's comment made her more irritated. "Your mother emphasized that you will be formally introduce to the Princess of Hollis."

"What if I said no?" Was her arrogant reply, as if challenging her mother's order.

"Ah, yes, the Queen emphasized also that if you neglect to attend the dinner, Her Majesty would burn all the Philosophy books in the library," LaFontaine stated clearly.

"And you really know how to persuade me," was her mocking reply, and glared at her Valet.

"Do not hang me. I am just the bearer of news."
So it began her wicked plans of driving away another princess, and this time she had planned it carefully so that this marriage would not come into fruition. She knew that her mother was already preparing for the announcement of her engagement and she had planned on interfering it before they had a chance to tell the whole kingdom.

Desperate on breaking her betrothal to the Princess of Hollis, she plotted a scheme that would surely shocked and drive away the Princess.

She woke up early and summoned LaFontaine right away to her chamber. She just finished bathing and was in the bathroom with her Valet sitting in front of the mirror, looking at the facial hair on her jawline.

"Are you sure it looks like this?" She asked LaFontaine, worried, checking for the second time both her cheeks in the mirror, as LaFontaine worked on the false beard, meticulously putting it on her cheeks and attaching to her side burns.

She told LaFontaine to make it look more rugged, so they opted on applying the beard all the way to her cheeks and trimmed it to look neat and appropriate. "Don't you think it should go all the way down to my throat, like my father's?" she asked comparing the King's modified trimmed full beard to the false heavy stubble that was glued to her cheeks and around her lips, almost hiding the delicate shape of her mouth.

"No. We don't want to overdo it." Her Valet reasoned out, checking the strength of the beard's glue when applied to her face. LaFontaine opted on applying the beard beyond her jaw line, but keeping her neckline visible. "And besides, you should have lesser facial hair because you're still young."

"Says who?" Was her curious reply.

LaFontaine shrugged their shoulders, "I don't know it's just the way I observed people in the village."

Her expression became a little sober upon hearing LaFontaine's comment. She had never set foot outside the castle's walls and had never met different kinds of people in her life, only few of the people that serve and guard the castle.

"Alright," she agreed and checked her chin, unsatisfied with the lack of hair around her mouth. "But I need you to cover the area around my mouth with only my lips visible. I'd like the Princess to cringe if ever I need to kiss her." Was her naughty remark, and gave her Valet a wicked smirk.

After hours of putting and adding the beard and bickering with LaFontaine, she finally got the look that she wanted. She checked again her reflection on the mirror and smirked at the outcome. She looked like the younger version of her father. The length of her beard can be compared to heavy stubble, only it was softer and it covered almost half of her cheeks as it connects through her sideburns, the area around her mouth was covered as well, emphasizing the redness of her thin lips and her pearly white teeth, a perfect contrast to her dark facial hair. She eventually settled for LaFontaine's suggestion of just having her beard under her jaw line and not all the way on her throat, leaving her creamy smooth neck visible and her beard neat. Now she was ready to drive away some princess.

As a part of her daily hair grooming, LaFontaine was about to apply beeswax to her hair, to keep the
bangs and the top in place and clean looking, a look that her mother considered most appropriate.

"No. Don't put it," she declared, not opting for the neat look that her mother approved.

"May I remind you that you cancelled your hair trim last time," Lafontaine said, still holding the glass of beeswax. "Your hair would look messy and rough if I don't apply it."

Her hair was still short but untrimmed and it does not passed on the Queen’s standard of short clean cut. She was about to tell them to put it away, but her mischievous alter ego had another plan. "On second thought, you can apply it but…” she emphasized on the word 'but' putting LaFontaine suddenly on hold. "… muss and ruffle it to my hair."

LaFontaine gave her a confused looked, "You want me to make your hair look messy and unruly, is that what you're saying?"

"Yes."

LaFontaine hesitated, "But that would be imperfect and the Queen would definitely disapprove that look."

Her patience was running out. "For years I have obeyed my mother and father their every desire…” she started, as her rebellion started to show up. "When I told them that I am the one who would choose my wife, I thought they have given me the full responsibility to do it. But once I found out that my father had personally picked a bride for me, I felt like they betrayed me. Do you still expect that I am going to obey everything they say?"

"No." Lafontaine supplied quickly. "But do you have any intention at all to choose a wife? Perhaps His Majesty was impatiently waiting for you to decide, that's why he took matters into his own hands."

Guilty of the truth, "Say whatever you want to say, but I am not obeying any orders from anyone anymore… so, will you stop arguing with me and just do what I say?!"

"Alright."

After a couple of minutes, LaFontaine had finally acquired the goal of looking imperfect as she smirked at the reflection of herself on the mirror.

"Now, you look like you just got out of bed," was LaFontaine's unsatisfied remark.

"It's not so bad… maybe you could always style it like this," was her satisfied comment as she check out her hair, after LaFontaine had mussed her hair into the desired level of unruliness, until it's in perfect disarray. She noticed surprisingly that this 'just got out of bed' look, as what LaFontaine called, complements with the false heavy stubble on her perfectly squared jawline.

"How do I look?" She asked proudly facing LaFontaine.

LaFontaine looked into her face, nodded with approval and gave her a smirk beaming with pride at their latest masterwork, "Ruggedly handsome."

"Perfect!" She exclaimed looking back at the mirror to check again. "Let's see how this princess reacts being betrothed to me."

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She sauntered her way through the hall of the castle wearing her most masculine long sleeve purple tunic, opting for this thick tunic to make her looked muscular; black trousers and black cloak and her black leather riding boots that had two inches soles to add on her height. She put on her crown knowing that it was a special family affair. She smiled with full of confidence and cannot wait for the reaction of the Princess of Hollis.

LaFontaine was as usual besides her briefing about what to do.

"I have already informed the King and the Queen that you are coming," LaFontaine relayed.

After all the days of hiding and avoiding the Princess of Hollis, she finally gave up and thought of a better plan to escape this betrothal.

"And dinner would take place in your usual family dining room," LaFontaine informed.

The castle has different dining rooms and halls that were being used in every occasion. The most intimate room was the family dinner room where it holds a small rectangular table that has two chairs on both sides and the king's chair at the head table. She thought it would be perfect for her to observe the Princess.

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When she entered the dining room her Queen Mother was already seated on the right side of the king's chair. She smirked as she saw the Princess of Hollis sitting on the left side of the table, beside her chair, to the left of the king's chair. She discreetly stared at the new bride candidate and surprisingly found the Princess beautiful. There were dozens of princesses that she met, but she found this particular princess emits not just beauty but warmth, light, happiness and charm; it's like sunshine. But before she could interpret this admiration for attraction she composed herself and focused on her plan.

She walked towards the Queen to kiss her mother's hand and noticed the surprised look in the Queen's eyes.

"Good evening My Queen Mother," she said, trying to catch her mother's facial reaction as the Queen looked at her, waiting for some disapproval.

But instead of a retort, her mother gave her the Queen's signature controlled smile. "How nice of you to finally join us, my son," was the Queen's pleasant remark and then gestured to the princess across the table. "May I present Prince Carl Philipp Marcus of Karnstein, my only son and the heir to the throne of Karnstein Kingdom."

She walked around the table and approached the princess who had already rose from the chair and curtsied before her.

"Princess Laura Elizabeth Rosamund of Hollis," the princess replied after curtsying. "It is an honor to finally meet Your Royal Highness."

She held the Princess' gaze, as if eyeing the little Princess as her prey, then slowly took the Princess' right hand, gently brought it to her lips and kissed it as she stared at her betrothed not wanting to miss the Princess' reaction. "It is a pleasure to meet your acquaintance, Princess Laura," she said with her deepest and most enticing voice. She did not release the princess' hand for a while and gazed at her with those dark orbs, putting the princess in an uncomfortable situation. But she was surprised when the princess did not twitch a single finger and held her gaze too. Her mischief was interrupted when
the royal guards announced the King's arrival. She released the princess' hand gently and stood beside her as they all bowed to the king upon his arrival.

"Good evening My King Father," she said, as she saw the angry look at her father's expression upon recognizing her.

"What's the meaning of this?!" the King demanded, still standing beside his chair and facing her.

The Queen touched the King's right elbow and held it, "I am sure your son would explain that to us afterwards. In the meantime, why don't we sit and celebrate this occasion and formally welcome Princess Laura into our family."

The King calmed down and took his seat, and they followed after him. And so the servants began pouring the wine and serving the first coarse.

She took a sip as soon as the servant poured the wine in her goblet and glanced at the Princess of Hollis who was sitting to her left and chatting with her mother. It was the first time she saw the Princess up close; she smirked wickedly and thought this would be easy.

The Princess of Hollis looked the same as the other princesses that were invited to the castle as her potential wife. They were naïve, pretty, innocent, vain, snob, demanding, lazy, egocentric and lackwit. They all want the same: to marry a prince, do whatever they desire, own all the finest clothes, shoes and jewelries and do nothing all day in the castle. They were all imbeciles!

She remained silent as if wanting to send a message that she was not interested. She just answered some questions as short as possible, so as not to encourage a conversation. Half an hour passed and they were all ready to retire in their chambers. She behaved during dinner and let her mother and father talked to her 'betrothed', while she continued to scrutinize the little Princess of Hollis. She found out that the Princess did not eat too much main course but had a sweet tooth and particularly likes red wine, and was fond of talking.

She was too involved in analyzing the Princess of Hollis she did not noticed that the Queen was already calling her. "Carl!" She was distracted from her evil plan and focused her sight to the Queen.

"Princess Laura is ready to retire to her chamber," the Queen informed.

She may be mischievous but she does not forget her manners. So, when the servant pulled out the princess' chair, she stood up and offered her arm to the princess as a sign of escorting her out. The princess gladly took her arm and they were about to bow to the Queen and the King before they leave, but the King's commanding voice stopped them.

"Hold it there, young man! I am not finish talking to you!" The King ordered.

She turned her gazed to the Princess of Hollis, "Princess Laura, I am afraid that I cannot escort you to your chamber since I have some things to resolve with my father," she said politely, and summoned one of the royal guards to replace her. "I hope you will have a nice evening."

"Thank you Your Highness for the lovely evening," the Princess returned and left the hall.

"Leave us!" The King ordered and every servants and royal guards in the room left except for her and the Queen.

She remained standing at the other end of the table right across the King's place and the spot where her father stopped her from escorting the princess.
"What are you up to now?! What kind of nonsense are you planning again?! I am already fed up of your mischiefs!" The King declared, glaring at her, while the Queen remained seated, ready to pacify the King.

"I do not understand what you are talking about my King Father," was her innocent remark.

"You know damn well what I am talking about!" was the King's furious reply. "I have travelled so far to find you a suitable wife, now that I found her you will just ruined it?!"

She can see that her father was already in the verge of his anger, but she still remained calm and composed; a trait that she learned from her mother, "Showing your emotions is a sign of weakness."

"I do not see anything that I am doing would ruin this betrothal," was her sarcastic retort.

"You watch your tongue young man!" The King shouted, stood up and banged his hands on the table. "You will remove that beard at once!" He finally said it.

She was also feeling her anger rising, but she took a deep breath and still composed herself. She had learned many times how to win an argument but this was her first time arguing with her father, and it looked like she got her bad temper from him. She was already tired of entertaining dozens of princesses to be her suitable wife and had already told her mother that she wished not to get marry but her father refused to accept it.

"I do not see any reason why I cannot have a beard," She replied while stroking her bearded chin, as if provoking her father. "I am after all... a prince." She disclosed as she saw the look of concede on her father's face. "Goodnight my King Father," she said with full of pride in her voice, and looked at her mother, "Goodnight my Queen Mother." And with that, she bowed her head to both of them and walked out of the room with an air of confidence and a wicked smile.

TBC
Karma

Chapter Summary

A look at Princess Laura's first impression of Prince Carl and what she really felt about this betrothal.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

"Oh Princess, you're here!" was Perry's excited remark as she entered her chamber. "How does he look like?"

She handled her first meeting with the Prince very well, maintaining her composure and poise like a true princess. Her future in laws never had a slight idea at how she was feeling while meeting their son. But once she arrived at her chamber, and reality sunk in, the emotions that she was suppressing since dinner had burst.

She was still in a semi state of shock and processing the situation after meeting the Prince of Karnstein. Then it dawned in her: this was karma; karma for being fussy about how the men around her would look like so as to suit her preference; karma for her qualm on man's facial hair and how it cringe her; karma on being choosy when it comes to selecting her husband; karma for being unappreciative and dissatisfied of the people that cares for her; Prince Viktor would have been the best husband for her if she would have to choose again; despite the awkward state that she had experienced with him last time, she knew that he was a nice and polite person, not to mention clean looking and not the typical naughty, wild, ruggedly handsome and arrogant type. Prince Viktor could have been the type of husband that would grant her every wish like her father. But she was so blinded by her attraction and love for Danny that she did not saw how Prince Viktor could have been the perfect husband for her! She took him for granted and now she was paying for all she had done with him and the other men in her life, as faith mocked her and gave her the Prince of Karnstein.

"Oh Perry, he looked perfectly all the things that I hate in a man!"

Confused "What do you mean?" Perry asked.

Perry might have noticed her state of immobility, "Laura, what's wrong?" her Lady in Waiting asked and led her to bed and they both sat.

"Everything is wrong!" she expressed, resting her head on Perry's shoulder as her Lady in Waiting put an arm around her. "He has a beard!" she grumbled.

"Oh." Perry realized. "Well, maybe when you get to know him better and already close to him, you could ask him to shave off his beard for you."

"I don't know Perry I think he wouldn't do that. I find him arrogant and broody,"

"How could you say that when you just met him tonight," Perry explained in her famous diplomatic way, "I'm sure he is not like the other princes that you met, who acts like they are the king."
"But he is, the future king!" was her hopeless reply; having met some of the heirs to the throne and finding the similar attitude of arrogance in them. "And he is not just the sole heir to the throne, he is an only child! Imagine how domineering, egocentric, overindulged, aggressive-

"…Self-reliant, matured, independent, responsible, obedient, trustworthy he might be?" Perry finished the sentence. "You are an only child too."

Perry's reminder silenced her and pouts at the truth.

"So you think I'm domineering, egocentric, overindulged and aggressive?"

"Hmm… you are certainly not egocentric and overindulged. But you're kind of domineering and sometimes aggressive," was Perry's sarcastic answer.

"I am not!" she objected, but received a narrow look from Perry. "Am I?" was her sheepish query.

"Laura, every person has its own good and bad qualities," Perry related, giving her a reassuring smile. "Nobody's perfect. When it comes to marriage and living with another person, it is a challenge. Because our own comforts would be put to test and push into its limits. That's why it's important not to judge and not to expect too much."

"But what if he does not obey me?" was her worried remark, knowing that she was betrothed to a future king. "What if he is too arrogant to comply?"

"Princess, first and foremost, it is likely to happen that Prince Carl would not bend easily to your every wish and desire, since you've mentioned that he is the future king. But everything takes time. You need to work hard to gain his trust and respect. You cannot expect at once that he would grant your every desire," Perry explained in the most rational way. "Your duty as a wife is to obey your husband and honor him, but you're entitled also to your own opinion and he should respect you above all."

"I wish I would have said yes to Prince Viktor," was her hopeless remark, thinking that she could have easily dealt with Prince Viktor since she had known him better compared to the Prince of Karnstein, and they all knew that Prince Viktor was smitten with her.

"Laura, you mustn't say that," her Lady in Waiting criticized in a strict tone. "Remember, you're the one who said yes to this betrothal, nobody had forced you. You could have said no in the first place to avoid any problems. But right now, it was already too late to change your mind. You should take full responsibility for all of your actions now. Backing out in this marriage is like declaring a war to the Karnsteins."

She groaned in defeat and did not realize until Perry mentioned to her how she had been selfish and superficial; she did not realize how her fussiness could lead into a huge problem between two kingdoms. "I didn't mean it… I apologize. It's just… I've been controlling my emotions since dinner," she sighed and tried to recall her first encounter with the Prince. "When I saw him in the dining hall, I panicked at once… because the first thing I noticed is his beard… I… it's like my mind had blocked everything and the only thing that I was thinking was I hate his beard. And when he introduced himself, he took my hand and kissed it and the feeling of his beard on my hand gave me the shivers."

"Did he notice it?" was Perry's worried remark.

"No, he didn't. Thank God," she returned. "I maintained my composure and poise just like you taught me, and never put him in an awkward position. However, he did try to put me in
uncomfortable state."

"What do you mean? Where you hurt?" was the automatic worried reply of her Lady in Waiting.

"No, he didn't hurt me," she explained, and put her hand on Perry's own to calm her Lady in Waiting. "He stared at me while kissing my hand, as if he knew that I would twitch if he prolonged kissing my hand with the contact of his beard on my skin. Luckily, he got distracted by the King's arrival and released my hand. But I swear I saw something wicked in his eyes, it's like he is mocking me."

"Princess, you're being paranoid,"

"No I'm not, there's really something in his looks and eyes that I cannot decipher, but felt that he did not like me," she quipped.

"So, what did you do? Did he notice that you're uncomfortable while he kissed your hand?"

"He didn't," she replied with certainty. "After all those feasts and entertaining dozens of different kinds of suitors, I skillfully learned how to suppress my emotions every time I meet a prince that I don't like," she declared proudly. "There are some princes who thought that they could just screw your mind and play with your feelings… but they are wrong."

"Alright, that's all for tonight. Meeting the Prince for the first time could be overwhelming. I'm going to prepare a hot bath for you before you sleep so you can calm down and think straight," Perry suggested.

"Are you saying that I am crazy and everything that I told you was a fabrication due to my repulsion at a man's beard?" she retorted.

"You're the one who said that, not me," Perry quipped.

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That night while in the comfort of her new bed, she pondered on the events of the day and her first encounter with the Prince, as she tried to recall how her betrothed really looked like. She was never given a chance to look at him carefully since she was sitting beside him, but she could remember how wild he looked like with those mussy untamed hair and heavy stubble. It was a long time since she was in a company of men with beard like Prince Gerhard, and she never thought that she would never encounter another rugged looking man after her break up with Danny. But this was a great challenge for her, as the person that she was about to marry possessed the number one quality that she dislike in a man. And now she found herself worrying how she would face her life with this person.

Could she bear to sleep every night beside him? She does not even know what she has to do in bed, she was informed that he could rightfully demand for her body and do whatever he desired to her since the primary goal was to produce an heir; and that was her most important obligation, to bear him an heir. But what if she did not like it? Just the thought of seeing a man's bulge like Prince Viktor's repulsed her already, what more if she sees the real thing out and was put inside her? How would she react? How would she take it? And worse, how would she take it being intimate with him; a man?!

She groaned in frustration and decided to give her mind and body its well deserves rest. Tomorrow was another new day, perhaps tomorrow everything would be alright since she was going to meet the Prince and was asked by him to ride the horse to the forest. She took a deep breath and let sleep
claimed her as she cleared her mind of the happenings of today.

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"What do you mean he cannot make it?" she asked confused, while standing in the threshold of the stable of the castle. She woke up early today and put on her riding boots and riding dress looking forward at this fresh start of their 'getting to know' each other phase. She had not even finished her breakfast and decided to skip the dessert since one of the Royal Guards informed her that His Highness was already waiting for her at the stable. Not wanting to let the future King waits; she decided to go to the stable as quickly as she can.

"One of the guards just told me that His Highness was already here, waiting for me."

"His Highness suddenly had a headache and sends his apologies," LaFontaine explained. Suddenly, she grew worried. "Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Where is he? Can I visit him?"

"Umm… I think it's best that we let His Highness rest alone. The Prince could be broody and temperamental when he is sick."

"Oh, I see. Well, kindly tell him that I am worried and that I hope we would be well soon," she returned and gave LaFontaine a concerned look. "Is he always sick?" was her curious query, remembering that the Prince had been sick the past few days too.

LaFontaine took a deep breath and said, "It's just the weather, I guess. But with regards to His Highness' health, he is strong and healthy. So, Your Highness does not have to worry anything."

"Thanks LaFontaine for making me at ease," she said genuinely. "I was beginning to worry about that the Prince. By the way, did he like the rose and sweets that I sent to him while he was sick? He forgot to mention it to me last night during dinner."

"Oh, the rose and the sweets were lovely, His Highness liked it and sends his thanks," was LaFontaine's hyper reply. "Is there anything else I could do for Your Highness?"

The Prince's Valet had been very accommodating and friendly to her and to Perry and she felt that LaFontaine could become one of her friends too, just like Perry, Natalie, Sarah Jane and Betty. "Yes, I would like you to stop calling me Your Highness and just use Princess Laura, since we would be talking and interact with each other as often as possible. And I think we could be good friends and should stop this formality, don't you think so?"

"As you wish, Princess Laura, and I would be honored to be the future Queen's friend," LaFontaine stated with pride.

She beamed at them and said, "I am not a Queen, I'm just a Princess so kindly refrain from saying that, because I don't want Her Majesty to think that I am eager to become the queen."

"But you are going to be the next Queen," LaFontaine corrected. "But if it'll please the Princess, I would obey your wish."

"Thanks, and you can go back to His Highness, I think the Prince needed you more than I do," she explained and looked around the stable. "I think I'm still going for a ride even if the Prince can't. Is there someone out here whom I could ask to accompany me?"

"Yes, just give me a minute and I will fetch Alfred for you," LaFontaine offered. "Alfred is the one in charge of the horses and carriages here; he could recommend which horse would be best for you."
"Thank you again LaFontaine and please send my regards to His Highness," she returned before the Valet bowed to her.

"I will, Princess Laura, and enjoy your day."

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It turned out that the Prince became sicker and it was the fourth day since they were supposed to meet and go horseback riding, LaFontaine informed her last night that the Prince needed more days to recover from a bad cold and LaFontaine thought that he has a virus so they did not recommend her to visit the Prince, when she asked them again that she wants to see him. She respected his request although she was eager to see how the Prince was doing since she was growing worried about him and she felt like she was inconsiderate of not visiting him while he was sick.

Today, it had been more than a week since she arrived at the Karnstein Castle, and she had just met the Prince once. The King would be gone for a week and that left the Queen in charge and she was informed that Her Majesty would be busy in the next days to come. She was itching to visit the Prince but decided to wait and be patient. Even if the Prince cannot be with her she quickly gained some acquaintance inside the castle and befriended the Prince's Valet. Her Lady in Waiting was busy tidying in her chamber and she does not want to get in Perry's way, so she decided to go to the library instead. The Queen had already shown her the direction to the library, and still remembered it. One of the servants offered to escort her but she refused and told him that she was good at remembering directions.

It took her ten minutes to go from her chamber to the library, and now she was smiling as she saw the familiar mahogany door. She opened the door right away and was surprised when she saw the Prince sitting with a book on the chaise lounge beside the fireplace.

"Your Highness, I am happy to see that you are well," she uttered and bowed to him as soon as he caught her attention.

"Princess Laura, it's so lovely to see you," he returned and rose from the sofa, still holding his book. "I didn't know that you are fond of books too."

She looked at him and caught the naughty smirk; she sensed that he was hiding something. "I am Your Highness, fond of books," she replied, standing a few meters away from him, and discreetly checked him out for any sign of colds or sickness, she furrowed her brows as she found nothing. "I didn't know that Your Highness are already fine and well. I was beginning to worry that I am the one who brought the virus since Your Highness have been sick from the day that I arrived."

"I think I am having a strong reaction and hypersensitive against sunshine," he returned.

Confused, "I beg your pardon?" she was torn from observing his face when she heard that odd reply.

"You know… bright, happy, cheerful, warm little ball of sunshine," he continued. "It could be overwhelming for me if I am exposed too much."

_What is he talking about? Does he have angst of going out in the sun too?_ She thought, as his last comment continued to baffle her. Not wanting to sound like an idiot, she decided not to dwell on his well-being. "Will Your Highness be interested to show me the best books in the library?"

"Certainly, will you be interested in reading Philosophy?" he suggested as he walked ahead and went to the shelves with large leather bound books.

She discreetly rolled her eyes, as she followed behind him. She hated Philosophy.
That afternoon as she returned to her chamber, Perry caught the smile on her face and got curious.

"You look happy today, what happened?"

"Nothing, I just saw the Prince in the library and he showed me his favorite books," she replied, and sat on the chair by her dressing table.

"I thought he's still sick?"

"I thought so too, that's why I was surprised when I found him in the library."

Perry smiled and walked towards her and began to comb her hair. "Well, it's good that you two finally spent some time with each other. How did it go?"

"He suggested some books for me to read, even if Philosophy didn't interest me," she related. "But in the middle of our conversation, when I was asking him if he liked the sweets that I made for him, he suddenly began to cough and told me that he might throw up. So he left me in the library and said goodbye."

"Oh my, maybe the Prince did catch some virus," Perry commented.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for all your feedbacks and kudos
Laura had accidentally caught Prince Carl in an awkward moment with another woman. 
What would this incident lead to?

Laura

It had been a week since that unpleasant incident with the Prince and that woman that she just knew as Ell. She was just supposed to have tea with him, and to her excitement, she arrived at the tearoom early than expected wanting to surprise the Prince. But she got the surprise of her life when she witnessed her betrothed in an intimate moment with another woman. She left the scene too shock to confront the Prince after she accidentally caught the woman touching the Prince's private part. She asked the Prince's Valet the name of the woman after describing her to them but did not dare asked LaFontaine further what that woman's relationship to the Prince; for fear of finding out the truth.

After almost a month of living in the Karnstein Castle and enduring all those excuses and alibis from the Prince, she could finally tell that Prince Carl might feel the same thing as her; they were both trapped in a responsibility and obligation that they did not want; to marry and produce an heir. She had not told Perry yet what had happened but she felt like she was slapped in the face when she caught the Prince in an intimate moment with that woman. She could tolerate all those sarcastic arrogant remarks and alibis, and even his constant absences but the last thing that the Prince did was unacceptable. She was not jealous; not at all. But she was hurt. She was hurt that he has to resort to that kind of action in order to show her that she was unwanted and undesired. And now she fully understood that he really did not like her, to which degree? She did not know. But she would not make a scandal nor confront him. She felt that they were not that close for her to act like she was affected by the incident. In fact, she did not care at all if he wanted to kiss some random woman or let them touch him. She does not care for him. And she was definitely not jealous. She wished that she could just tell him that she does not like him too.

But she was already invested and bounded in this betrothal and cannot withdraw anymore, as she remembered what Perry told her: backing out in this betrothal was like declaring a war to the Karnsteins. So, even if her pride was hurt and she was being disregarded and disrespected by the Prince, she would still fulfill her responsibility with a brave face and accepts her destiny; for her sick father and for her kingdom. She would sacrifice her happiness and love just to fulfill her obligation and show to the people around her that she was a responsible and dutiful person.

She had been upset of what had happened and she chose not to tell Perry the truth, and instead informed her Lady in Waiting that she does not feel well and remained in her chamber for the past days.

"Laura? Are you awaked Princess?"

She heard the concerned voice of Perry as her Lady in Waiting entered her chamber. She turned to the direction of the voice and she hesitatingly rose from her bed and sat.

"How are you dear? The Queen and the King are worried and have been asking about you," Perry informed as her Lady in Waiting put the serving tray in front of her, with her lunch.
"Still the same," she replied as she comfortably sat on her bed and eyed at the bowl of vegetable pottage and some rye bread on the tray in front of her. She smiled when her eyes caught the sight of the little chocolate cake.

"I wish you could tell me more what you've been feeling so I know how to cure it, or at least I'll know which medicine to ask from LaFontaine since you refused to see a chirurgeon," was Perry's worried remark and sat on the bed.

"I told you, it's nothing serious, I just feel easily tired lately and got my monthly visitor, so maybe this is why I'm not feeling well," she reasoned out and was thankful for the perfect timing of her period, since she cannot take it anymore if she has to lie further to Perry. "And kindly send my thanks to the Queen and King for thinking of me and tell them not to worry," she added and realized that Perry just mentioned the Queen and King. The Prince had not expressed anything regarding her state and never saw him neither.

When he was the one who was sick she was concerned and wished to visit him even if they have not met yet. However, when it was already her who was 'sick' he did not even bother to send some get well soon wishes or just heard him ask Perry how she was doing. She did not bother to ask Perry if the Prince had asked for her. It was useless, since she knew the answer. I guess there are some people who are born insensitive and selfish. She concluded and started to eat her lunch.

"I am going to prepare a hot bath for you so that you'll feel relieve," Perry informed and stood from the bed and walked towards the bathroom.

"Thanks Perry," was her sober remark, feeling the cramps in her stomach.

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It took another week for her to stay in her chamber due to her regular menstrual discomfort. The Queen and the King continued to send get well wish to her and she assured them that she would get better soon, and told them that she just needed some rest.

"Good morning Princess!"

The sound of Perry's voice had awoken her from her reverie and stood from the chair of her dressing table. She smiled at once as she saw the bouquet of roses in different colors that Perry was carrying. At last, he did remember me. She told herself as her growing dislike towards the Prince diminished, thinking that he would like to apologize and to wish her well.

"Here you go," Perry said while handing her the flowers. "It's from LaFontaine. They are beginning to get worried about you since you refused to see them."

She was disappointed. She thought the Prince would finally apologize but she had expected too much. Why do I bother... she rolled her eyes and tried to mask her disappointment by burying her nose in the sweet scent of roses in front of her. "Kindly tell LaFontaine that I appreciate their concern and thank them for these lovely flowers."

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After more than two weeks of being confined in her chamber, she was finally feeling better and had looked forward to go out. The weather was perfect as spring had already made its presence.

It was a beautiful day and she chose to spend her late afternoon tea at the secluded garden of the
Karnstein Castle. She discovered this beautiful garden out of boredom when she was waiting for the Prince to meet her, only to be blown off at the end. Most of the flowers that were growing on this side of the garden were roses. Different colored roses. But her favorite had been the yellow roses. She always makes it a point to touch them and smell this fragrant flower.

Today was a perfect day as she enjoys the sound of the birds chirping, inhaled the sweet scent of the roses and revere the sight of their spectacular bright colors of red, white, yellow, deep burgundy, light pink, orange, peach and lavender.

She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, relishing the rays of the sun touching her face and the cool breeze that comes along. The weather here at the Karnstein Kingdom was more pleasant compared to her home.

Maybe it’s not bad at all to live here, she thought. Suddenly, her appreciation of her surrounding was interrupted when she heard a sound around the bush. She opened her eyes instantly as her heart throbbed; worried that it might be some wild animals. She then turned to the direction of the sound as her eyes caught a figure coming out of the thick bush. She released a breath that she was holding as soon as she recognized the person that was walking towards her.

“I see, you have found my secret garden,” the deep raspy voice uttered. “And it looks like you are having a picnic without inviting me.”

She blushed as she saw the Prince glanced at the white blanket that was spread on the grass beside her; there laid the basket full of cakes and sweets that Perry prepared along with the cup and teapot that came with it.

“Your Highness,” she acknowledged his presence and gave him a bashful smile, glanced at him as he gave her a mischievous smirk before bowing her head. She had almost forgotten that unpleasant moment weeks ago; he still owed her an apology. But she chose not to dwell on her pain and frustration. Since she knew that he would not apologize. He was too arrogant to do that, she thought. 'Don't expect too much’ was her new motto.

“I apologized if I am invading His Highness’ garden, I did not know it.”

“Nonsense,” the Prince replied. “You could come here anytime you want.

She was waiting for him to open up about that awkward and yet painful moment, but she did not see any sign that he would confess soon. So instead, she shoved the thought aside and focused on the present. “Would Your Highness like to join me?” she suggested carefully, sensing that the Prince was not broody today. Instead of an answer, the Prince asked for her hand and she took it instantly as he held it and led her to the blanket to sit. Even if he was arrogant, she likes it that he was a gentleman.

She gracefully sat on the blanket and when she was already comfortable the Prince took the spot across her and sat quietly, with only the picnic basket separating them. She begun to unload the contents of the basket and laid them one by one. Darn! She worried when she realized that Perry just packed one cup for the tea, knowing that she would be alone. It’s alright Laura, don’t panic. She told herself as she finally laid the teapot on the surface.

“Are you going to eat all of these?” the Prince remarked, his eyes wandered at the sweets around him.

She blushed at the comment as her eyes caught the Prince’s astonish reaction at the sight in front of him.
There laid a cream puff with chocolate ganache on top of it, and another one with crisp caramel glaze on it, beside them were two tartlets with vanilla cream, one with strawberry and the other with blackberry dusted with confectioner’s sugar on top of them and a peppermint leaves as a décor and lastly her favorite, the small round cakes that Perry have always baked for her but had never given a proper name, except Laura’s cakes.

Perry had baked three flavors of those small cakes, the first one was a chocolate, sprinkled with flake of dark chocolate on top, the second one was blueberry with lemon cream and lastly the healthiest of them all according to her because it was a vegetable, the carrot flavor with crushed walnuts, cinnamon and vanilla cream cheese. Who would have thought that a tiny princess like her could consume so many cakes and sweets in one eating!

Feeling embarrassed of her sweet addiction, she asked the Prince shyly, “Would Your Highness like a taste?”

“Which one do you like most?” The Prince asked gazing at her warm cheeks.

“Umm… my favorites were those small round cakes,” she replied pointing on them, and then took the chocolate flavor and gracefully offered it to the Prince. “This is the best.” She uttered and the Prince took the offered cake and put it on his mouth. She stared at him for a moment, totally in awe how he gracefully took a bite and never left a crumb. She took the chance also to glance at his face, since this was the first time that she was face to face with him. She found his jawline very attractive even if it was covered with facial hair.

“Hmmm… that was delicious,” was his satisfied reply. “What is the name of this cake?”

“Umm… I don’t know,” she replied grinning. As soon as she caught the Prince’s confused reaction, “It was actually Perry’s original recipe and she just bakes it exclusively for my consumption.”

Seeing that the prince ate the whole cake, she began to pour some tea to the only cup and saucer she had. He was her 'guest' after all, so it was just appropriate to offer him something to drink after eating something sweet.

“Your tea, Your Highness,” she said, presenting him the drink with two hands. She got distracted when the Prince stared at the offered drink and then gave her a smirk and diverted his focus at the two remaining small cakes in front of him, before looking back at her.

“Thank you, Cupcake,” the Prince returned and took the tea from her hand.

“I beg your pardon?” she asked, puzzled. Did he just call me cupcake? she wondered.

“Let’s call these small cakes, Cupcake,” He said to her, as he put the cup of tea beside the two round small cakes.

“Well, that was an excellent idea!” She blurted, giving him a huge goofy smile. She cannot wait to tell Perry that she already found an appropriate name to her favorite dessert. “For a while I thought, Your Highness called me cupcake.”

“I did,” was his nonchalant reply and smirked at her and raised his left eyebrow.

She was about to argue not liking the idea of being compared to a dessert. But the Prince did not give her a chance to comment.

“They kind of look like you; sweet, soft, small and delicious, Cupcake,” he pointed out with a hint of sarcasm.
She blushed at the description, and at the same time a bit annoyed at the nickname. Nobody ever called her another name, except Laura. “Well if it pleases Your Highness to call me that, I have nothing to argue,” she retorted, and gave him a smile. She did not know why she was suddenly enjoying his sarcastic remarks. “More sweets?”

“If you insist,” he returned, as if daring her, giving her again that devilish smirk and lifted his eyebrow.

She cannot fathom how a man can perfectly have a beautiful well-trimmed eyebrow. Most of the men she met do not have perfect eyebrows like him.

Feeling bold, she took the cream puff with chocolate, tore a small piece from it and brought her hand to the Prince’s mouth holding the piece of sweet between her thumb and index finger. She felt the Prince adjusted on his spot and briefly glanced at her before setting his eyes on the sweets, she became nervous as she waited for his reaction. He maintained his composure then he held her hand and to her surprise guided it inside his mouth, feeding him the sweets.

After putting the cream puff in his mouth, she unconsciously touched the Prince’s lips with her index finger, curious at how those thin red lips felt like. But then she realized that she had acted so bold. She nervously gazed at him waiting to be rejected, but she was surprised when she saw fully dilated dark orbs gazing back at her.

The next thing she felt was his mouth enclosing around her index finger and then he sucked it before swirling his tongue around it. She gasped at the sensation and closed her eyes, relishing the feeling of his tongue doing all these wild movements on her finger and before she could not control herself she slowly released it from his hot mouth. Panting she opened her eyes, still overwhelmed. What have I done?!

"I guess we should do more picnics, Cupcake," the Prince suggested smirking.

She bit her lower lip, still recovering from the dizzying contact of her finger against the Prince's tongue.

"And I suggest that you start calling me Prince Carl, instead of Your Highness."

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Suddenly she was shocked at her behavior and tried to compose herself and cleverly suggested the Princess to call her Prince Carl so as to disguise her awkwardness.

After telling the Princess to call her by her first name, her attention diverted when her eyes caught her Valet coming towards them. She sighed with relief. For the first time, she was thankful of her Valet's unannounced appearance, as she was rescued from the embarrassment of having to explain why she sucked the Princess' finger. She rose gracefully and faced the direction of her Valet, as the Princess remained seated on the blanket, still looking sheepish after she unconsciously seize the Princess' finger in her mouth.

"His Majesty requests your presence at the throne room and-" her valet was telling her, but as soon as they got closer and their eyes fell on the Princess' direction, LaFontaine loss their concentration. "Oh! Princess Laura, you're here!"

She rolled her eyes as her Valet focused their attention to the Princess and totally ignored her presence.

"How are you Princess? We were all so worried about you," LaFontaine informed as they gave their hand to help the Princess rose from the blanket.

"I am fine, LaFontaine," the Princess exclaimed, smiling at them with too much excitement. "And thank you so much for the lovely flowers that you sent me."

"Oh, that was from Prince Carl! I just…" LaFontaine slipped.

"Really?!!" was the Princess' surprised remark and focused at her.

She averted the Princess' stare and shot daggers at her Valet for not being too discreet this time. The look that she was giving LaFontaine could melt steel. But instead of reprimanding her Valet, she changed the subject so as to avoid further questions from the Princess.

"You were saying?" she spoke in a deep superior tone, so as to get her Valet's attention.

"Oh, forgive me Your Highness…” LaFontaine uttered after regaining their composure and bowed to her realizing that they were not alone. "His Majesty wanted your presence in the throne room. I think the King wants to go hunting."

"Thank you," she returned and shifted her gaze to the Princess. "Thank you for the lovely sweets
and for inviting me to join your picnic, Princess Laura. I am glad to see you feeling better now and I hope to see you tomorrow if my time permits." She relayed and took the Princess' hand and brought it to her lips gently; this time she wanted to catch the reaction that she had been denied during their first meeting. She stared at the Princess' eyes as she gently kisses the back of the Princess' hand, and prolonged the contact of her lips on the Princess' hand, making sure to rub slowly her stubble on the softness of the Princess' soft skin. She smirked as she finally saw the Princess twitched at the contact of her facial hair. And before the Princess could utter a word, she released gently the Princess' hand and smirked at the Princess, before shifting her eyes to her Valet who seemed to be quietly observing them. "LaFontaine, kindly escorts the Princess to her chamber; I'm sure she needed a rest now after today's activities." And with that, she left them both dumbfounded.

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That night, as soon as LaFontaine bid her goodnight and the door of her chamber closed, she walked towards the four posted bed and drew the heavy drapes to the side so she could get in; then drew it together before getting inside her blanket. After discovering the truth about her true identity and what she really was, she informed her mother never to come to her chamber anymore. She felt like she needed to be on her own and wanted her privacy to be respected since she was already an adult. The Queen respected her decision. But even if she had informed her Queen Mother to stop dropping by in her chamber every night, she still kept her bed covered and heavily draped when sleeping; a routine that would always be a part of her life since she felt more secured and could do what she pleases behind those heavy curtains. And the fact that her Valet was not that keen on knocking when entering her chamber

As soon as her head touched the soft pillow, she found herself smiling as she recalled how the Princess blushed and panicked after she sucked the Princess' finger in her mouth. At the same time, she was beginning to worry why she suddenly took the Princess' finger in her mouth; it was a very bold behavior of her if she would interpret it. She never imagine in her entire life doing that thing to anyone. And she was surprised when her body reacted that way. There was just this moment when she saw her father's mistress lightly clothed and she felt that urge of touching Ell's breast, but she managed to control herself. But today, it was just a finger. The Princess' finger that touched her lips and suddenly her heart pounded madly; suddenly something inside her had awoken; suddenly she cannot control her urge. What more if it was the Princess' hands or lips that touch her? How can her body cope with it? How can she cope with this enchanting touch? Now she was beginning to be scared.

More than two weeks had passed since the last time she saw the Princess, and she was glad to see her today. She was ashamed the last time the Princess saw her; a total fiasco. All she wanted was to irritate and annoyed the Princess of Hollis, like she used to do to the other princess. But the look of lust on Ell's face drove her to madness, after Ell saw her and articulated how very attractive, wild and rebellious she look like with her stubble and 'just get out of bed' hair. She never expected that there was a woman that she could attract strongly with how she looked now. Her original intention was to 'scare off' a certain princess by looking very rugged and dishevel, she never expected that it would be the opposite effect to her father's mistress.

She had no intention of showing the Princess the horny teenage version of her; but Ell was so persuasive and honestly, she wanted some release too, since all this betrothal thing had made her extra stressed. But as soon as she saw the disconcerted and mortified expression from the Princess' face after she was caught enjoying the feeling of Ell's hand stroking her shaft, she felt very ashamed of her action. It was very distasteful and vulgar behavior. Her mother would definitely be furious by how she acted so uncivilized, indecent, tasteless and foolish in front of the Princess of Hollis. She
was the future king; she should not let her emotions and lusts consumed her. And the only thing to correct her mistake was to gain the princess' trust and faith in her; show the Princess that she was not an ill-mannered prince. Her reputation as a refined prince was very important not just to her mother but to her too. She could be arrogant sometimes, as her valet pointed out, but she would definitely not forget her manners.

When she found out that the Princess was sick, she got worried. She was not sure why, but for the first time, she found herself thinking of another person. A person that she had hurt due to her foolishness; although she was dying to know how the Princess was, as she continued to nag her Valet to update her of the Princess’ condition, she still cannot manage to apologize and visit the Princess. Her pride as the heir to the throne was very strong. Perhaps due to her 'future king' upbringing and her mother's advice to her that kings do not apologize. So, instead she ordered LaFontaine to always ask the Princess' lady in waiting, to update her of the Princess' state without revealing to them that it was her who was asking.

As LaFontaine constantly reported to her the Princess' state, she presumed that the Princess just needed time to rest and to calm from distress. She gave it a week for the Princess to regain 'strength'. But when another week came and she learned that the Princess was still not fine, she began to worry and even asked LaFontaine to send some flowers to the Princess, but of course she insisted on telling the Princess that it was from her Valet.

So when she saw the Princess today, she was relieved and at the same time worried.

She was now contemplating why she had acted like that today. And it baffles her why her heart suddenly skipped when she saw that bashful smile of Princess Laura. It baffles her that Princess Laura did not confront nor was angry at her; she was waiting for an argument but the Princess showed no sign of bitterness, so she chose not to open the subject. It baffles her that she enjoyed it when Princess Laura fed her the sweets. But the thing that baffles her the most was how her body reacted when Princess Laura touched her lips and she surprisingly felt like she needed to possess that little finger in her mouth.

And now she could not sleep as the memory of what happened today and the face of that certain little Princess kept her awake and wondering.

"Cupcake," she whispered the name intimately and closed her eyes.

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Her eyelids were still heavy despite that refreshing morning bath. And now, she was sitting in front of her dressing table and waiting for LaFontaine to finish with the daily grooming of her hair and beard.

"There! You're all set." LaFontaine exclaimed as they successfully put on the last finishing touch of her beard under her lower lip, covering the entire area down to the chin.

She ran her right hand at her left jawline eyeing her bearded left cheek on the mirror, impressed at how LaFontaine managed to apply her false beard on without any problem. "Can't I just wear it all the time? It's tiring if I'm going to remove it before I go to sleep, only to put it back again in the morning."

"We can't." LaFontaine replied. "When you wash your face and take a bath, the texture will change. And I need to clean it every day after you used it with a special soap. And besides no one can see you sleeping, so they would not suspect that you have false stubble. We just have to make sure that you're all dressed and groomed before the maid brings your breakfast."
She groaned and gave her valet a frustrated grin.

"Don't complain to me," LaFontaine returned. "You're the one who started this I'm just following your orders."

"Alright!" She relented. "Do you know where she might be today?"

LaFontaine gave her a puzzled look, "Who?"

"Princess Laura!" She concluded, growing impatient. "Who else would I be looking for?"

"I thought you're avoiding her?"

"I… I am. But I told her that if I have time, I'm going to show her some books in the library," she reasoned out, avoiding her Valet's eyes.

"And then what?" was LaFontaine's follow up question.

She furrowed her brows and looked at LaFontaine's direction again, and gave her Valet a puzzled look, totally oblivious of what they were trying to ask.

"The Plan," LaFontaine supplied, impatient, "what's in the agenda today? Are you going to blow her off? Should I fetch Ell again and ask the Mistress to seduce you, since it did not work last time."

"No! There's no plan! And don't fetch Ell again," she reacted rather loud, as she recalled the embarrassing scene between her, Ell and how they were caught by the Princess.

"You're jumpy," LaFontaine remarked and gave her a suspicious look. "Are you finally accepting your betrothed?"

"No, I'm not," she denied.

"Then why do you want to meet Princess Laura?" LaFontaine inquired, not releasing their stare at her.

"I just want to make sure that the Princess would not tell my Queen Mother what she had seen at the tearoom." Was her excuse, "She… she caught Ell giving me a helping hand."

After realizing what she meant, her Valet glared at her.

"What have you done?" LaFontaine accused. "You're just supposed to flirt with Ell to irritate the Princess, not hurt… oh my God, don't tell me that Princess Laura caught you and Ell…"

"I have no intention of doing it, I swear," she defended. "She just came unannounced and too early and Ell… Ell was…"

"… Ell was being Ell. Don't tell me. I already know. And poor Princess Laura, she might be hurting after catching her betrothed cheating on her!" LaFontaine replied rolling their eyes, and began to walk to and fro across the chamber, contemplating. "Have you forgotten that the Queen forbade Ell to have any sexual interaction with you; she could be hanged."

"I know. But I wouldn't let that happen," she said with a trace of regret.

"For all I know, Princess Laura got sick due to emotional distress after seeing you and Ell. That's why the Princess refused to see anyone, except Perry for the past two weeks," was LaFontaine's worried conclusion. "…and that's why you kept asking me how was Princess Laura and ordered me
to give those flowers, because your conscience was killing you."

"I think you're overreacting," she returned, feeling guiltier at LaFontaine's culmination of that awful incident. She hated that her Valet was so smart to have found out the truth. But she does not have any plan to admit it. "I think she's fine."

"And how are you going to fix this thing with Princess Laura?"

"I think I already have that covered," was her proud reply. "Yesterday in the garden, we've had a picnic, remember?"

LaFontaine was dumbfounded after hearing her remark, and looked at her, fully skeptic.

"And how did you manage to win the Princess' trust again?" they asked with a quizzical expression on their face.

"I told you, she looked fine when I saw her," she repeated.

"Did she confront you about that thing with Ell?" was the quick inquiry of her Valet. "…Because most of women would go crazy like an amazon when they see their betrothed with another woman."

"No. We didn't talk about that," she answered with full of confidence. Then suddenly realized, "I was surprised too that she did not ask me; I'm just waiting for her to throw her tantrums at me and accused me of being a cheater, but she didn't. And instead, she behaved like a perfect lady and offered me to join her to picnic. And she even served and fed me those delicious sweets and cupcakes." She related and realized that she was smiling while telling the story to LaFontaine. "I think I'm going to give her a chance." The words were already out of her mouth before she could think of the consequences that her decision might lead to.

"Did I just hear that right?!" was LaFontaine's surprised reply. "The Prince of Karnstein is giving his heart a chance?"

"Hey! I didn't say that I'm giving my heart a chance," she retaliated. "We're not talking about love. Nobody can have my heart," was her confident and certain remark. "I said I'm going to give Princess Laura a chance; to show me how she could cope up with having a mischievous, broody and wild betrothed."

LaFontaine was about to contradict but she did not let them gave a chance.

"And don't expect too much from this decision," she warned her Valet, knowing that LaFontaine favored the Princess of Hollis among the princesses that came to their castle. "This does not change my mind of not marrying."

"We'll see," was LaFontaine's challenging remark.

And before she could utter a retort, her Valet walked towards the bathroom whistling and smiling.

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"What's this?" Princess Laura asked, lifting her gaze from the book in front of her and looked at the cup that was placed beside the book.

The maid just came in a couple of minutes ago, and brought the tray of drinks and sweets that she asked for but instead of letting the maid serve their refreshment she ordered the maid to leave.
"It's hot cocoa," she replied after placing the cup in front of the Princess; and took her seat on the Princess' right side. After confirming from LaFontaine that Princess Laura was in the library, she decided to join the Princess.

"I know, but why didn't you asked the maid to serve it? And how did Your Highness know that I like hot cocoa?"

"I asked LaFontaine to ask your Lady in Waiting which drinks you like aside from wine," she related, as she took a sip of red wine from her goblet that the maid just brought in.

She saw Princess Laura crimsoned at the mentioning of wine as one of the favorites drinks of Princess too.

"I want to personally serve it to you, Cupcake, is that a problem?" she replied and glanced at the Princess' reaction of mentioning the new name and saw the Princess' cheeks crimsoned. "And didn't I tell you to call me Prince Carl, instead of Your Highness?"

Embarrassed, the Princess bowed her head, "I apologized Your- I mean, Prince Carl. And no; it's not a problem at all that you served the hot cocoa to me. I'm just not used to being served by a future king."

"And what exactly do you mean by that?" was her curious remark, thinking that there was a hint of criticism behind the Princess' remark.

"With all due respect, I have met and spent some of my time with some princes who are heirs to the throne, and almost all of them have servants around them to attend to their every need," Princess Laura expressed. "And most of them do not want to get their hands dirty. They are so demanding, not to mention arrogant, egocentric and conceited."

"That is a very interesting analysis," she returned and thought of challenging the Princess' theory. "Do you want to know what I think about the princesses that I have met and spent time with?"

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinion," the Princess claimed and cross her arms on the chest and faced her direction.

She smirked and felt that she was in for a debate, "With all due respect," she started her sentence with the same line as the Princess, as if mocking. "Most of the princesses that I met were pretty but naïve, vain, snob, demanding, lazy, egocentric and lackwit."

"Not every one of them is like that," Princess Laura retaliated. "There are princess too that are hard-working, intelligent, kind, friendly, humble and compassionate."

"Well, not every heir to the throne are arrogant, demanding, egocentric and conceited," she retorted, and can feel the tension arising. But she would not let the Princess win in this conversation. "And I've learned that most of the princesses want the same: to marry a prince, do whatever they desire, own all the finest clothes, shoes, jewelries and golds, then do nothing all day in the castle; wasn't that the reason why you agreed to become my betrothed?"

Suddenly, she realized that she had gone too far and it was already too late to take back that comment. And before she could think of another retort to repair the damage, the Princess already rose from the chair and curtsied before her.

"Thank you for spending the day with me Your Highness. I apologized for leaving early, but I suddenly felt ill," and with that, the Princess gracefully walked out of the library.
It had been a long day and she felt terrible after saying that awful comment towards Princess Laura. Sometimes she hated herself for being temperamental and not thinking first before saying a word. She knew that she had been unfair to judge Princess Laura on why the Princess had agreed to be her betrothed. But she was eager to know the reason why and was not able to control herself today when she asked her that.

Her pondering was cut off when she saw LaFontaine waiting outside by the door of her chamber. She furrowed her brows and sensed that something was wrong since her Valet was always inside her chamber waiting for her there.

"Why are you outside?" She asked curious.

"I just want to let you know that there are things that Princess Laura asked me to return, and it's in your chamber," LaFontaine informed carefully.

She did not wait for LaFontaine to open the door and instead did it herself. As soon as she crossed the threshold she saw all the jewelries, golds and two big chests that she presumed were the Princess' gowns, dresses and shoes that she all gave to the Princess.

She kicked the side of the chest and her temper began to consume her. She ran her hand to her hair. "Give it back to her!" she shouted and walked to her Valet to confront them. "Didn't I tell you not to take it back?!"

"You did. But Princess Laura asked me today to return everything to you," LaFontaine explained calmly. "I reminded her again that you would be hurt if she does not accept it. But she said that she does not need it."

She knew that this was all her fault. But her wounded pride cannot accept this.

"I am the Prince of Karnstein and I order you to return all of these!" was her angry remark.

"Yes, Your Highness." LaFontaine complied.

The following day, the atmosphere between her and her Valet was very quiet. She chose not to ask or talk about what had happened yesterday. And she was thankful that her Valet was silent throughout the morning.

And now she was on her way to the Queen's chamber wondering why her mother had suddenly summoned her so early today. She had not even eaten her breakfast but LaFontaine had informed her that the Queen had an important thing to tell her. She cleared her mind as she saw the door to the Queen's chamber.

She knocked on the door and when she heard her mother's voice the guards opened the door for her to come in. She walked across her mother's chamber and was surprised when she saw all the things that she asked LaFontaine to return to Princess Laura in her mother's chamber.

She tried to calm herself as she approach the bed of the Queen and saw her mother still on bed, eating breakfast. "Good morning my Queen Mother," was her sheepish remark, and stood by the bedside of the Queen.

"Good morning my son," was the Queen's calm and yet firm answer. "Have you eaten yet?"
"No. I haven't... I'm not hungry," she replied.

"Come here, sit with me," The Queen returned and patted the side of the bed.

She complied and walked closer and sat at the left side of the bed and faced her mother. Then she saw the Queen's left arm reached out and the Queen's left hand cupped her right cheek. "What's wrong Carl? What happened between you and Laura?"

"Nothing," was her weak reply, and averted her mother's eyes. But the Queen steadied the hold on her face and gently held her face to the direction of the Queen's eyes.

"Look at me when I am talking to you," the Queen reminded. "Would you like to explain to me why Laura would not accept your gifts?" The Queen asked firmly and released the hand that was cupping her face.

She knew that her mother dislike going around the bush, so she decided to tell the truth. "We had an argument yesterday, and I told her that the reason why all the princesses that I met want to get married was to live in a big castle like ours and have lots of jewelries and golds."

"You are absolutely right," the Queen commented.

Suddenly, her attention was fully focused on her mother after hearing the Queen's remark. She thought that Princess Laura was different among the rest. But her mother's opinion had suddenly broken her trust and faith in Princess Laura.

"So, it's true," she hesitatingly asks, hoping that none of it was true.

"It's true, all of the past princesses that you met like to get married to a rich prince," the Queen reconfirmed. "... Except Princess Laura."

She was suddenly relieved, and her heart pounded madly at the anticipation of knowing the reason why the Princess agreed to become her betrothed. She excitedly sought her mother's eyes and asked earnestly, "So, why did she agree to be my betrothed?"

"The Hollis' was actually an old enemy of the Karnsteins," the Queen related. "Your father was in one of his journey and needed to pass the Hollis Kingdom to be able to travel further to the south, where he had an invitation from the King of Berghausen. So your father asked the King of Hollis the permission to pass, and it was granted, and then your father was invited to sleep and dine at the Hollis Kingdom."

"So, how did I end up being betrothed to the daughter of my family's enemy?" was her curious remark, knowing that it would be crazy to marry off the Prince of Karnstein and Princess of Hollis.

"Because when your father saw the Princess of Hollis, he knew that she would be the perfect wife to our son."

"...Just like that? My King Father made a decision just by looking at the Princess?" was her astonished comment.

"That and by talking to the King of Hollis," was her mother's follow up. "Carl, you know that in every marriage, there is always a reason why Kings and Queens arrange the marriage of their children."

"And what might have been the crazy reason behind this proposal?" was her sarcastic answer.
"For the record, your father and the King of Hollis did not force Princess Laura to be your betrothed," the Queen remarked.

"Well she's lucky because she was given a choice," she retaliated. "And what was the Princess' reason?" was her impatient and curious query.

"Princess Laura agreed to be your betrothed in order to unite our family," the Queen informed. "She told me herself that she wants to bring peace to both our families and end this old dispute between the Hollis and Karnstein Kingdom."

She became silent after hearing that remark from her mother.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Hi! Thank you so much for all your awesome comments, kudos and for letting me know how you love this little fic. It makes me happy while reading your feedbacks :-)


Angry Princess

Chapter Summary

Laura was still mad and hurt of the false accusation from the Prince of Karnstein.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

"And I've learned that most of the princesses want the same: to marry a prince, do whatever they desire, own all the finest clothes, shoes, jewelries and gold, then do nothing all day in the castle; wasn't that the reason why you agreed to become my betrothed?"

The Prince's remark kept on playing in her head since that day she left him in the library. She hated him for accusing her of something that she was not. Even though she was a princess, she grew up not used to having a lot of clothes and jewelries. She grew up sharing her wealth and living simple as much as she can.

She thought that things were beginning to go well between her and the Prince after that awkward incident in the garden the other day; since they both enjoyed each other's company for the first time when they had that picnic. She was even surprised at herself for noticing how attractive the Prince's jawline and how she love staring at the Prince's perfect thin eyebrows that makes him look more mischievous. She even started to like his sarcastic and yet witty remarks. But the biggest surprise for her was when she unconsciously touched the Prince's lips and the Prince sucked her finger and she was overwhelmed at the feeling of it. She did not mention it to Perry yet, choosing to leave that intimate incident with the Prince too personal for others to know. She cannot deny that she had reminisced that moment on and on, until the incident in the library and all the happy thoughts that she had with the Prince disappeared after that accusation. And now, no amount of sweets or hot cocoa could pacify her.

Her contemplation was broken when she heard the door to her chamber opened.

"Laura, aren't you going to dress up for dinner?" Perry asked as soon as the Lady in Waiting entered the chamber.

She had asked Betty earlier to help her change in her sleeping camisole, so that Perry would not force her to go when her Lady in Waiting arrive. "I am not coming to dinner tonight, you can inform them," was her nonchalant reply while sitting on her bed. "And Natalie had already brought my supper earlier."

"Princess, this is the second time that you will skip dinner with them, the King and Queen might worry again," Perry relayed in a motherly tone and sat on the side of the bed and faced her. "You cannot avoid him forever."
"Perry, I could tolerate all of those mischiefs and mocking," she started to explain. "But to accused me of being materialistic and opportunist is the greatest insult that I have ever experience in my life. He has no right to judge me that way."

"I know how you felt Princess, but you shouldn't let your anger overcome you," Perry explained carefully. "I know that you're still upset with him and-"

"I'm not upset with him; I'm furious at him!" she expressed.

"Well, I'm sure the Prince would come to his senses and take back what he said, and-"

"Perry, two days had already passed and I still haven't heard from him," she retaliated. "If he really wants to apologize he could have done it as soon as possible. But knowing him, I doubt if he even thought about it. I think he's doing it intentionally."

"Perhaps he's angry and hurt too because you returned all of his gifts," her Lady in Waiting presumed.

"I don't care if he got angry or hurt, he could keep his gold and diamonds, I don't need them and I'm perfectly happy with out them," she retorted.

"So, what are you planning to do? You cannot remain angry at him and you cannot avoid him much longer," was her Lady in Waiting's worried remark. "And you shouldn't involve the King and Queen into your problem with the Prince."

"I'm not involving anybody in my problem!"

"Laura, you're obligated to join the King and Queen, and the Prince at dinner, not showing up at dinner time is unacceptable, especially if the King and Queen had not done anything wrong to you," Perry clarified firmly. "You should learn to separate your personal problem from your responsibility as a Princess, especially as the future daughter in law. What would the King and Queen say about your conduct? Your training as a future Queen starts here and you shouldn't let your future in laws think that you're incapable of managing your temper and emotions. If you have a problem with the Prince, try to sort it out with him discreetly."

She managed to simmer down after that explanation from Perry, besides her father, Perry was the only one who could enlighten her, "So, what are you suggesting?"

"That you get dressed now and join the King and Queen and the Prince at dinner, and try to remain calm and enthusiastic until dessert," Perry quipped.

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She took a deep breath before entering the dining hall and she was relieved when she saw that the King had not arrived yet. It would be disrespectful if she arrived after the King, although arriving after the Queen was not acceptable either, she walked gracefully towards the dining table and she saw at once the surprised look at the Prince's face. But she ignored him and walked towards where the Queen was sitting and curtsied before the Queen.

"Forgive me for arriving late, I hope I have not upset Her Majesty," was her humble remark, still bowing her head.

"It's nice that you could join us Princess Laura," the Queen started in a lighter and calmer tone. "No, you did not upset me, and I'm thankful that you are joining us at dinner tonight. You may take your seat. The King does not feel well so we will be dining without His Majesty."
She lifted her head and smiled, as she saw the Queen's calm expression and was surprised to find the Queen in an enthusiastic mood. "Thank you, Your Majesty and kindly send my regards to His Majesty." She replied and gracefully walked around the table, as she got closer to her chair, she saw the Prince rose from his chair and instead of letting the royal guard pulled the chair for her the Prince dismissed the guard and pulled the chair for her instead. She glanced at him, not smiling, "Thank you, Your Highness," she said and sat quietly, not bothering to look at him. She noticed that he was quiet too and just nodded when she thanked him. As soon as they all comfortably seated, the servants began to pour wine on their goblets and started to serve the first course.

"Princess Laura, I'm glad that you are here," The Queen started as they began to eat the soup that was served. "I am going to visit the monastery tomorrow and I want you to come."

"It would be a pleasure Your Majesty," was her simple answer. She was relieved to hear that she would be spending her day with the Queen and not with the Prince, whom she still resented. Yesterday she successfully avoided him by spending the whole day in the market square with Perry, and prolonging their shopping and chatting to the people that she met there, so as to avoid dinner at the castle.

"And Carl is everything prepared and in order for tomorrow's arrival of our visitor?" The Queen asked, looking at the Prince's direction. "This is your first time to engage into trading transaction, have you asked your King Father all the necessary things about this contract?"

"Yes my Queen Mother, everything is prepared and I have been briefed by my King Father properly," the Prince replied.

"Excellent," was the Queen's satisfactory reply. "Oh, and Princess Laura, our guest requested your presence too. So, I thought you and I can eat breakfast with him the following day, since my son here is not particularly a morning person. You can help me to welcome our guest and make him feel at home since you knew him."

Suddenly, the Queen's last remark piqued her interest. "It would be an honor to be of help to Your Majesty," was her reassuring reply. "May I know who is this Prince, we are talking about?"

"I believe his name is Prince Viktor of Berghausen."

She was shocked upon hearing the name. Is faith mocking her again? The last person that she wish not to see right now was Prince Viktor.

Prince Viktor would just remind her of her pining for her 'ideal husband'; Prince Viktor would just remind her of how she had been a fool to let him go in exchange for this arrogant Prince that was sitting beside her; Prince Viktor would just remind her how she had been treated with so much love and adoration and she cannot be reminded those things right now; not when she was angry at her betrothed for treating her unworthy, undesired, opportunist and materialistic. She does not know what could happen if she saw him again, especially in this state of her vulnerability. She knew that Prince Viktor would never do the things that Prince Carl has been doing towards her. She knew that Prince Viktor would pamper her and treat her with utmost. How would she be able to control her feelings if she ever sees him again?

This was the biggest challenge that she was facing and she hope and prays that she overcome this trial. Because after all the insults, mockery, mischiefs and being treated unwelcome by her betrothed, all she wished now was to be adored and comforted and no one can expertly do that other than Prince Viktor.
Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for your kudos and feedbacks! I know how most of you feel about the beard, but I assure you, it will be gone when the right time comes. So, don't worry, the Prince would be 'clean shaven' ;-P This might be the shortest chapter, but the next one would be longer and exciting! **hint** "Jealous Carmilla" :-P
Jealous Prince

Chapter Summary

The Karnstein Kingdom was visited by a certain prince from the south, and unbeknownst to Carmilla, her potential trading partner was the one and only prince that Princess Laura was attracted to. 'Simply Jealous Carmilla'

Chapter Notes

Thanks again for your kudos and feedbacks! Here you go... Jealous and possesive Carmilla/Carl

Carmilla

Today, a certain prince from the south was visiting them in hope of a partnership in trading with the Karnstein Kingdom. Their kingdom was well known in producing one of the best cheese in Styria due to the vast rich green pasture of their land, cool climate and steady summer season, the cows and goats that produces the milk have been well taken care of ever since. That was the reason why they have very popular cheese products.

Due to her father being sick and her mother having to attend some important matters in another town, she was appointed by the King to deal with the Prince of Berghausen. The King informed her that the Kingdom of Berghausen produces one of the best wines in Styria.

In order for her to make her trading easier and successful, her mother asked one of the castle's trusted advisers everything about the Prince of Berghausen; from the food that the prince love up to the things that could make the Prince of Berghausen satisfied and happy. Her mother taught her that it was not just her enemy she should get familiarized with but her trading partners too. And she received a list of things that she should follow in order for this trading to work out smoothly. The Kingdom learned that Princess Laura was acquainted with the prince and had asked for Princess Laura's company during his stay, which the Queen approved at once, as long as it was for the good of the kingdom, the Queen explained.

She had been trained by her father a lot of times on how to handle and deal with such kinds. And today was just like any other trading day for her to deal with. Except for the fact that this was her first official assignment alone and she had not met the prince yet.

She received a message that the prince may arrived before or after midnight, so she decided to assign LaFontaine to receive him and instructed them that as soon as the Prince of Berghausen arrived, show him right away to his chamber so that the prince can rest right away knowing that he had travelled so far. She made sure to give a welcome note to the visiting prince since it would be late when the prince arrived and she does not want to disturb him. She apologized on her letter that nobody was there to welcome him since the King and Queen retire early to bed and she does not know exactly what time he would arrive. But she wrote to him that he would be welcome by the Queen her mother and Princess Laura at breakfast time.
She has not spoken with the Princess yet and has not patched things up with her betrothed. This trading was more important for her to focus her attention to, so she decided to deal with her little problem with the Princess as soon as this transaction was over. She knew that she was wrong and that she had hurt the Princess. But she does not know where to begin to fix things between them. Although she knew that apologizing was a very hard thing for her to do, she wanted to make sure that when she apologizes for the first time, it would be worth it. So she needed to plan it carefully.

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It was almost midnight and LaFontaine had already received the Prince of Berghausen and was taken to his chamber, and even though she was still awake, she did not bother to meet him. She thought that the letter from her was enough, and besides, she does not want to disturb him.

She told LaFontaine that she would wait for them until the prince arrived, then she could take her bath and LaFontaine can update her about the prince while helping her. "Did you inform him that I'm going to meet him in the afternoon?" She asked LaFontaine, while they remove her outer tunic. They were both inside the bathroom now and was about to take her bath.

"Yes, I did and had prepared all the necessary documents with regards to the trading contract," LaFontaine replied as they now put the clean sleeping undergarments for her to use on the chair beside the dressing table in the bathroom.

"Good." Was her satisfied remark, while she removed her trousers and gave it to LaFontaine. Dressed in just her braies and white undershirt, she nodded to LaFontaine as a sign that they can leave now and that she was already done with them. She cannot wait to take some hot bath before she goes to bed and was very tired. But she noticed LaFontaine still standing by the door, as if contemplating on something. "What is it?" was her confused remark.

"I was just wondering if you knew about the breakfast meeting between the Prince of Berghausen and Princess Laura?"

She contorted her brows and thought that the message did not reach her; but soon realized that it was the Queen who informed her that her mother invited the Prince of Berghausen to eat breakfast with Princess Laura too, after the Queen learned that the Prince of Berghausen and Princess Laura knew each other. She remembered the Queen telling her that rekindling Princess Laura's friendship with the Prince of Berghausen might help tighten their trading partnership with the kingdom from the south. "Yes, my Queen Mother informed me beforehand." She was about to send LaFontaine off knowing that her bath will soon be cold, but was interrupted again.

"Forgive me, but I am just worried about this meeting," LaFontaine revealed. "What if this prince was the same prince that Princess Laura was attracted to before? He was after all from the south. And I remembered correctly that one of Princess Laura's handmaidens told me that he lives in the Kingdom that was famous for producing wine."

Suddenly, she found herself worrying. Her mood unexpectedly shifted from being tired to irritate. What if it was him? What if Princess Laura was still attracted to him? She pretended to shrugged off LaFontaine's presumption. "Will you leave me now so that I can bath?!"

"Alright, alright… why the sudden grumpiness?" was LaFontaine's confused retaliation.

That night, she tossed sleeplessly in her bed and the thought of Princess Laura meeting the Prince of Berghausen was stressing her out. She tried to salvage any decent sleep she could get before she hears the rooster crow.
The following morning, LaFontaine came a little later and brought her breakfast instead of the maid, since she had awoken late.

"Any news?" she asked gingerly, while cutting a piece of cheese followed by breaking the rye bread into small pieces. LaFontaine was now busy arranging her clothes for the day while she eats her breakfast on the table, near the fireplace.

"About what?" was LaFontaine's nonchalant reply after laying the clothes on the bed that she was going to wear for her fencing practice.

"About the Prince of Berghausen…" she answered pretending to be disinterested as she drinks her tea. "… and Princess Laura," The sound of her betrothed's name together with the Prince of Berghausen irked her ears

This time she got LaFontaine's attention as they looked at her. She met their eyes and waited in anticipation. "He was indeed the Princess' former admirer. Natalie, one of the princess' hand maidens confirmed it to me today as she saw a glimpse of the prince in the dining hall while the Queen and Princess Laura eat breakfast with him."

Upon hearing it, she lost her appetite and threw the piece of bread that she was holding on the plate. She clenched her jaw muscle and ran her fingers through her hair, before shoving the tray of food in front of her. "I'm done!" she told LaFontaine and stood up. She walked towards the bed and took the white fencing trousers and black shirt that was lying on her bed and LaFontaine helped her put it on. Then she went to the bathroom and sat in front of the dressing table, while she impatiently watch LaFontaine helped her with her daily hair and beard grooming.

After LaFontaine was finished, she rose at once and said, "We're going to practice now!" she informed LaFontaine. It was still early but she did not give a damn. LaFontaine confused with her sudden shift of mood, just followed her.

After three hours of vigorous nonstop training, she now found herself resting at the garden catching some fresh air and trying to calm her nerves by listening to the chirping of the birds on the trees.

She was wondering. Why suddenly, she was furious at the thought of Princess Laura and the Prince of Berghausen getting friendly again? She knew that she does not have to worry anything since she does not have any feelings for Princess Laura. And she had revealed to LaFontaine that nobody could have her heart. But today, she felt this rage that just came out of nowhere and she was baffled about her emotions getting out of control. So she decided to channel her anger to somewhere else and maybe, she could control her feelings. And the best way to do that was with her swords.

But poor LaFontaine, she was hard on them during their fencing training that LaFontaine commented that she was extra aggressive today. She was supposed to train her swordsmanship with LaFontaine too, but begged to be replaced by one of the best knights in the castle, afraid that she might accidentally kill them.

She trained instead with a knight and used the Blade of Hastur during training. She rarely used the sword afraid that it might hurt someone since she was not that familiar yet holding such a powerful sword. However, today, she felt like going to battle and releasing out all the rage in her. She was
satisfied with the outcome when the knight missed his sword for the first time since she had trained with him when she was still young.

When she felt herself relaxed and her temper cooled down, she decided to go back to the training room to put the Blade of Hastur back in the cabinet where all the swords were kept. The Queen had asked one of the carpenters to make a large lockable sword display cabinet just for the Blade of Hastur, and it was located in one of the rooms in the training hall where it housed her other swords.

She was about to put the Blade of Hastur back to its display cabinet, when her eyes caught the sight of Princess Laura and presumably the Prince of Berghausen going out of the castle and on their way to the garden. She got mad at what she had witnessed. But instead of invading into their "reunion" she chose instead a less violent approach of dealing with her emotions. She put on one of the royal guard armor and a helmet and decided not to put back yet her sword. After she awkwardly put on the armor and the helmet, she strode her way to the garden.

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When she arrived in the garden, neither guards nor Princess Laura's handmaidens were in sight. That's where her heart throbbed anxiously. She was suddenly worried that her betrothed was alone with another man.

She discreetly walked towards them and saw Princess Laura seated on one of the large stones under the willow tree. She clenched her jaw when her eyes caught the Prince of Berghausen sitting beside the Princess, with only a foot distance between them. They seemed to be having fun because she saw Princess Laura laughing with the prince. She had never seen her betrothed so happy like that, and she realized for the first time how beautiful and enchanting Princess Laura was! Her betrothed was literally like a sunshine that could melt anybody's heart with those beautiful smile and warm gaze. Just by looking at the smiling Princess could make anybody fall for her betrothed, and she just realized it by now; she does not want to share her betrothed to anybody.

She walked towards them, and as her presence interrupted the somewhat private conversation of the two, she caught Princess Laura's confused expression.

"You may leave. I don't need a guard," Princess Laura demanded, looking at her direction.

She almost snapped at the commanding sound of the princess' voice, it was the first time she heard someone ordering her aside from her mother and father. She does not like the sound of it. But she controlled herself and was committed on keeping an eye on her betrothed. "It's the prince's order!" she answered in her deepest voice.

"You can tell the Prince that I am not a child and I do not need any guard," was Princess Laura's arrogant reply.

"A young princess like you should not be left alone with a man," was her clever retort and stood beside the princess, not too close, but just enough to hear what they were saying and enough to see the Prince of Berghausen from where he was sitting.

"Don't you ever talk to the Princess like that!" the Prince of Berghausen reprimanded.

She was about to tell him to back off but Princess Laura put her hand on the Prince of Berghausen's left shoulder to stopped him from standing. She saw the look of annoyance from Princess Laura's face and an irritated prince, and she knew that she won. She smirked inside her helmet and stood still while Princess Laura turned her back on her, and resumed talking to the prince.
She never noticed Princess Laura's hair before, but she suddenly found herself admiring the princess' hair. It was the first time that she was standing closer behind Princess Laura and she cannot help but be attracted to. A small amount of hair from both sides were interweaved to a simple soft braid, while the rest of the dirty blonde curls falls softly below the shoulder. Small white flowers weaved in thin pip berry twigs as a crown adorned Princess Laura's head accentuating the natural beauty of her betrothed's face. She suddenly felt glad at the realization of what Princess Laura was to her, and a flicker of possessiveness possesses her.

Did she really look like this before? Or she had fixed up because she was meeting the Prince of Berghausen? She wondered, as she found herself growing attracted to the Princess. But before she could torture herself with more suspicion, Princess Laura's voice halted her.

"Leave him," the princess suggested. "We should talk about you instead." Once the Prince of Berghausen was calmly seated, he focused his sight again to Princess Laura.

"How are you Princess? You look sad, are they treating you well here?" was the Prince of Berghausen's worried query.

Princess Laura took a deep breath before answering, "Thank you Viktor for asking, you are still thoughtful as always. I am alright and yes, the Karnsteins are treating me well."

"Are you sure about that?" the Prince of Berghausen asked.

She focused her sight on him seeing that he moved closer to Princess Laura. And she felt suddenly threatened by him and how Princess Laura calls him by his first name. But she tried to calm herself.

"Yes I am," Was Princess Laura's reply.

"How about your betrothed? Is he treating you with the best care and respect?"

She felt like she was stabbed at the heart as she heard that concerned question from the Prince of Berghausen. She stilled herself and waited for the Princess to reply.

"Prince Carl had been most caring and gentle since I arrived here," the Princess related and croaked. "He… he made me feel at home at once and I forgot my homesickness."

After hearing that lie from Princess Laura, she could not help but to hate herself for acting like an arrogant fool towards the Princess. Everything that the Princess said was the complete opposite of how she had behaved, and it was killing her to hear how her betrothed had concealed her foolishness. She had been selfish and insensitive and had not noticed that Princess Laura was sad and homesick.

"Oh Laura, if you had just said yes to me, you wouldn't be this far away from your home and you never have to worry, because I would do anything to make you happy," the Prince of Berghausen retorted.

Bastard! She cursed at the prince's daring remark. Then she fidgeted when she saw a glimpse of Princess Laura's cheeks crimsoned and gave the Prince of Berghausen a timid smile.

"Viktor, we're young and impulsive that time. We don't know what we really feel for each other," was Princess Laura's modest and shy answer. "I am sure that there are a lot of princess who are waiting for you to ask their hand in marriage."

"But I'm serious Laura! I have always been and will always be in love with you!" was his passionate declaration. "That's why I cannot ask a woman in marriage... not until I see you married."
Upon hearing it, she took a deep breath and gripped the handle of her sword. *One more comment and I'll slash your throat!* This prince was getting into her nerves. How arrogant of him to say those words! It seemed like he was challenging Princess Laura's feelings when he knew that the Princess was already betrothed to her! She was about to order him to shut up but Princess Laura beat her to it.

"You mustn't say such things. I am already betrothed to Prince Carl," Princess Laura declared.

She was relieved upon hearing it, but contorted her brows when she noticed the princess' head tilted a bit to the side as if hiding its face from blushing. *Is she flirting with him?!* She imagined the princesses that she met and has learned how their bodies react while blushing when they flirted with her. And Princess Laura's body language was not far from the description, even if she cannot see her face.

She cannot deny the fact that the Prince of Berghausen was indeed good looking and neat in appearance, with a boyish charm that every woman would fall in love with. He was clean shaven. He was average in height, just a few inches higher than her and thin like how LaFontaine told her. His hair was like hers, short and neatly cut but blonde in color.

Her appraising on this prince was cut short when she saw his hand touched Princess Laura's hand that was resting on the princess' lap. A pang of jealousy suddenly hit her out of nowhere. She now found herself gripping on the handle of her sword again and has every intention of putting it to the Prince of Berghausen's throat. But she still controlled herself and took a deep breath, and kept an eye on him.

"Laura, will you grant me a last wish before you get marry?" The prince of Berghausen implored as he now took both hands of Princess Laura.

Totally oblivious, Princess Laura asked, "What do you mean?"

But instead of an answer she saw the Prince of Berghausen leaned towards Princess Laura's face.

"Enough!" she shouted, quickly unsheathed the Blade of Hastur and aimed it on the prince's throat before he could claim Princess Laura's lips.

Princess Laura was shocked upon seeing the sword aimed at the prince's throat and stood up. She immediately shoved the princess out of the way and pulled Princess Laura behind her while she faced the Prince of Berghausen. She saw him stood up and unsheathed his sword, anger was written all over his face as he was caught off guard.

"How dare you! You're going to regret this!" The prince of Berghausen warned.

They were about to strike their swords to each other but Princess Laura mediated and stood in between them. "Stop!" They both put down their swords but the tension was still there.

"Stop this nonsense!" Princess Laura implored as her arms spread wide, trying to stop them from attacking each other.

"How dare you put a sword to my throat!" the prince reiterated. "You should be punished for doing that!"

This time she cannot control her rage anymore as the sound of the word 'punish' angered her. She removed and threw the helmet that she was wearing, and revealed herself before him. "How dare you touch my betrothed?!" She accused and aimed the blade of Hastur again to the Prince of Berghausen. "No one touches her except me!"
"Prince Carl?" Princess Laura gasped upon recognizing her. While a puzzled look was marred at the Prince of Berghausen's face as he saw her for the first time.

She was still panting furiously and her hands were shaking as rage overcame her, she was glaring at the Prince of Berghausen and ready to attack him. But she was disrupted when her sight was blocked by a pair of worried brown eyes gazing at her, and then she felt the princess' hands cupped her face.

"My Prince, please..."

She heard the Princess pleaded and she calmed down at the touch of the Princess' soft hands in her face. But she was angry at her too for flirting with him, so she shoved Princess Laura's hands on the side and released from the warm touch of her betrothed. And glared at the Prince of Berghausen and shouted, "I don't want to see your face again in my castle!" she declared before putting down her sword and sheathed it. She walked out of the garden and left the Prince of Berghausen still in a state of semi shock from finding out who she really was, and ignored Princess Laura's pleading.

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She was still furious when she arrived at the training hall and shouted at one of the guards to come to her. Once the guard had bowed in front of her, she threw the sheathed sword at him and ordered, "Fetch LaFontaine!" as she kicked the things that was around her and removed her gloves and threw it.

After a few minutes, she saw her valet arrived still catching their breath. "You called Your Highness?" Was LaFontaine's careful remark. Surely the guard who fetched them had already informed her valet that she was in a bad mood.

"Remove this!" She commanded LaFontaine, referring to the armor as she stood and faced them. "And tell the Prince of Berghausen to leave my castle at once. I'm not interested in our trading partnership." She instructed not having any second thoughts of what will be the outcome of this decision. Once she was out of the heavy armor, she ran her hand through her hair and looked at her valet, "And don't disturb me!" She said before LaFontaine have a chance to ask what happened and she stormed out of the hall.

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Once her anger subsided, she went to the library and spent the whole afternoon reading.

She took a break and gaze at the window. It was already dark and she did not even notice it. She walked in front of the big fireplace that was higher than her and appreciated the warmth that was eliminating from it. She stared absent mindingly at the flames that flowed and danced in an almost rhythmically motion. The sight soothed her as if it was hypnotizing her. It reminded her the evenings she spent at the Queen's chamber, sitting on the floor in front of the fireplace as her head rested on the Queen's lap while savoring the warmth of the fire and the comforting touch of her mother's hands. How she wished she could still do that, how she wished she was still fourteen and does not have to deal with this feeling right now. A feeling she thought she will never encounter.

Few weeks ago, she hated her father for bringing another princess to their castle not just as a potential wife but a betrothed for her. She tried many different ways to drive her off and for this princess to dislike her, but this Princess of Hollis never gives up. She continued testing Princess Laura's patience by taking her for granted most of the time, thinking that the princess would surely reached the end of the thread of her patience and would eventually give up, and yet the Princess was still staying at the castle. She thought of many crazy schemes that she could do to test not just the Princess' patience, but how superficial the Princess was with regards to physical appearance and she
was surprised at the outcome; because until now, she was still wearing the false beard that LaFontaine made just to irk and make Princess Laura dislike her, and yet the Princess was still quiet and not complaining about it. She did not realize how much effort and challenge the Princess underwent just to prove to her that her betrothed was worth it until now.

She did not appreciate Princess Laura nor notice the Princess' beautiful hair until now; until a certain prince threatened to claim her betrothed. And where was this rage coming from as she recalled how she almost slash the throat of the Prince of Berghausen when she saw him almost kissed Princess Laura and put his hands on her betrothed. She never felt this way. She never showed her emotions because she knew that it was a sign of weakness. But one person had successfully tapped inside her cold heart and slowly entered. She was caught off guard and started to get scared.

Her contemplation was suddenly halted when she heard a knock on the door. She crinkled her brows and was irritated to find out that somebody was disturbing her. She knew that it was not the Queen because her mother does not need her permission to come in while the King would summon her if she was needed and she had informed LaFontaine that she wish not to be disturbed, so the guards outside would be informed not to let anyone in at the library. She tried to ignore it but the knocking persisted until she gave up.

"Who is it??" She shouted back.

"It's Laura."

Her heart pounded and she almost melted at the sound of the voice and how intimate it was to hear 'Laura' instead of the more formal titles they use to address each other.

"May I come in?"

She shook her head to regain her sanity from the temporary spell of Laura's voice.

"Come in." She replied in a steady deep calm voice.

She took a deep breath and composed herself as she faced 'Laura'. She uttered the name again in her mind. She remained standing by the fireplace and watched the princess approached her with uncertain steps. "What do you want?" She asked in her deep authoritative voice, as if to stop the princess from coming closer and crossing her personal space. It worked and her betrothed settled right across her with a distance that a stranger will use.

"I would like to ask for Your Highness' forgiveness for what happened today." was the Princess' meek reply. "I know that you did not do it for me, since we both know that you are not fond of me, and you do not care if someone would want me, you might even be happy now because somebody else wants to marry me and you could get rid of me, and you will regain your freedom..."

_How could she babble like that?_ Was her fascinating remark. _Of course I did that for you, to protect you!_ She wanted to say back, but remembered her mother's reminder to her, _"Showing your emotions is a sign of weakness."_ Then her attention caught again the Princess' anxious expression.

"...and instead it was Your Highness' pride that was hurt. And I am the one who caused it." The princess uttered softly in remorse tone. "Please forgive me for my misdemeanor. I have temporarily forgotten that I am betrothed to the future king of Karnstein and that I should have not allowed myself to be left alone and be touched by another man, except you, Your Highness."

She almost lost her composure and confidence as she heard Laura confessed all these feelings towards her. _This woman is going to be the death of me!_ She felt overwhelmed and before she could
break down and tell Laura that she cared for her, the Princess stopped her with another remark.

"And if the Prince of Karnstein thinks that I am not worthy anymore of being his future wife, I would accept that. I would understand if Your Highness would deem me impure and a disgrace," was Princess Laura's courageous declaration.

She released the breath that she was holding as the Princess' confession made her speechless and immobile. Princess Laura gazed at her with full of remorse and shimmering eyes. But she cannot find the words to say what she was feeling right now. She had not been trained to deal with this kind of emotions. Her mother successfully molded her to become a prince and the future king of Karnstein, but the Queen forgot to tell her how to handle and answer to this kind of situation. Her disoriented state was finally broken when she heard a sniff.

"There is no need to answer Your Highness." Was the princess weak comment. "I understand fully what your silence meant... I...I will leave at the crack of dawn."

She was awoken from her disorientation as she saw the princess turned her back and started to walk away from her.

"Laura!" she pleaded and ran after the princess. She grabbed the princess' left arm and gently turned her around, and put her lips on Laura's wet soft ones. She kissed Laura like she had never kissed anyone before and poured out all those emotions that she was suppressing and put it all in the kiss. She does not care what Laura would think about the kiss, she just have to do it! She just needs to claim what was hers a long time ago! ... And that was Laura's lips!

TBC
Is It Alright If I Call You Mine?

Chapter Summary

The reaction of a surprised and oblivious Princess Laura after the kiss. A look at Princess Laura's 'secret life' outside the castle; And Hollstein snuggles!

Chapter Notes

I was inspired by your feedbacks last time, so I decided not to prolong your agonies of waiting anymore. Thanks again for the kudos and lovely comments. Hope you all enjoy this long chapter. I apologize for any mistakes since I'm already sleepy and it's unbeta'ed:-) Good night and Happy Sunday!

Laura

She was caught off guard and bewildered as she felt a pair of thin soft smooth lips met her own, and at the same time a beard rubbed on her delicate skin; she gasped at the thought of that prickly stubble scratching her delicate face, but stilled when she felt how soft it was! And then she realized that Prince Carl was kissing her deeply. She tried to figure out what was going on but her sanity was clouded, as she felt the Prince's lips became demanding and sent her in a state of turmoil; she just closed her eyes and surrendered as this overwhelming sensation consumed her. To her astonishment, she reciprocated his kiss with the same intensity and hunger that he was doing and unconsciously put her hands on his nape, and caressed the back of his neck, urging him to kiss her more.

Then she felt his tongue pushed inside her mouth. She gladly welcomed it and opened her mouth and his tongue gently explored hers. She let out a soft moan, when she felt his hands on her hips and heard his ragged breathing. Her body was in the state of elation as she felt his body claiming hers. She had never thought that she was going to feel this way towards a man's touch but Prince Carl's touches were so gentle but possessive. She felt like collapsing as the dizzying touch of his hands roamed at her sides and then at her buttocks pulling her closer to him, and suddenly she felt his hard bulge against her! She panicked, opened her eyes and pulled off from his embrace; but regretted instantly when she saw the confused look on his face.

"Laura?" Prince Carl mumbled.

She heard the Prince's soft innocent call and she found herself ashamed of what she had done, as she saw his worried expression.

"Have I done something wrong?" was his soft apologetic remark.

She gazed into his eyes, and saw a concerned look and hurt. "No! You did not," she replied right away saving him from falling deeper into the wells of confusion. How can she tell him?

I am just not comfortable feeling your private part rubbing on me!
But instead, she cupped her hands around his jaw line and was surprised again how soft his beard and his face. She did not notice it this morning when she was trying to pacify him she just realized it now that it touched her cheeks and her hands. "I… I am just overwhelmed," was her honest reply and was relieved when Prince Carl gave her a bashful smile. She melted at the sight of it and never thought that the Prince was capable of blushing in front of her.

Then she finally regained her sanity and took this opportunity to ask him while he was in a good mood. She released her hands from his face.

"What's going on?" she asked carefully, still standing close to him. "Correct me if I'm wrong, but I had the impression in the beginning that you don't want me to be your betrothed, but then…this…" she paused and does not know how to tell him 'why did you kiss me' without sounding like she was complaining.

"I… I don't know," he filled in.

She saw him crimsoned and looked at his boots as he too was fumbling for words, and found him adorable in that state of confusion. She grabbed this moment of his weakness and asked "Would the Prince like to tell me why he kissed me?"

He gazed at her and was silent for a moment, as if studying her face then she saw again his bashful smile.

Oh god, he's not making this easier. She thought, waiting in vain and dying of his princely charm.

Is he really this charming?

And before she could drown from his adorableness, his voice held her attention.

"All I know is I don't want to share you. I don't want to see anyone touching you. I just want you for myself," he began to tell in a deep and yet passionate tone. "Am I wrong to claim you like that? … Is it alright if I call you mine?"

She was too dumfounded to reply and a fling of warmth possessed her. She does not expect to hear such words from him, and does not have the slightest idea that he felt something for her. Something inside her tells her that she needed to give him assurance, so without thinking, she uttered the words that first came into her mind:

"But I am yours," she mumbled. And she saw his faced lightened up.

Instead of a reply, he claimed her lips again and kissed it. She reciprocated and found herself enjoying his kiss; how possessive and dominating his lips and tongue on hers; how it made her feel like he was claiming her on and on; and it felt so insane! The feeling of his soft beard rubbing on her delicate face was still making her uncomfortable, but she forgot the uneasiness as soon as he kissed her.

She unintentionally pulled out from the kiss as the need for air arose. He grumbled at the loss of contact, and she found it adorable. She regained her confidence and asked," does that mean I am forgiven?" she asked, remembering the reason why she was here and gave him her most adorable grin. She put her hands around the back of his neck, keeping him closer to her and not wanting to end this intimate conversation with him.

The Prince gazed at her with a different intensity in his eyes. She cannot describe what it was but his
face was glowing and he was smirking at her playfully; she can now see the other side of Prince Carl; the side where he looked like an innocent boy and carefree; the side where he was not thrown into a huge responsibility of behaving like the future king of Karnstein.

"Yes. I think it is appropriate that I forgive my future wife, after that heartfelt confession and apology." The Prince replied not lifting his gaze on her, almost hypnotizing her. His mood changed, and was serious. He put his hands again on her hips. "... And as long as you will swear your devotion to me."

His comment was demanding and sounded dangerous.

Since she arrived at this castle the Prince never bothered how she felt. She does not feel welcome every time she was in his company. He was constantly avoiding her and sometimes rude towards her. He has all the qualities that she does not like in a person: arrogant, conceited, sarcastic, insensitive, egoistic, broody, temperamental, possessive, imperious, has a beard and the fact that he was a man, was driving her insane now!

She was beginning to panic internally and cannot believe that she had to accept all of these traits of her future husband. A husband! She emphasized, trying to remind herself that she likes women; their soft skin, their voluptuous breast, their cleavage, their perky nipples, their gentle touch, their soft skin, their smooth soft face, their hairless cheeks, their sweet smell, their delicious taste, the goddess-like shape of their body, their cleanliness, their calm and graceful movements, and the feeling of warmth and non-threatening way when they make love...

Was she really ready to give up all of these qualities in exchange for this man in front of her; a man that she was not even attracted to? ...A man that does not even have the qualities that she was looking for in a man?

"Princess Laura?"

The deep puzzled and yet gentle voice of Prince Carl snatched her from pondering.

She was met by a pair of kind, innocent and vulnerable dark eyes, and she knew that she just have to give up everything that she wished for a man, she had to forget Prince Viktor… because her heart was dictating her now. She took his right hand, and noticed how soft and delicate it felt in her hand.

She kissed his knuckle before gazing at him and said with utmost sincerity,

"I am yours Prince Carl and I swear to devote myself only to you."

*****

Ten minutes later, she found herself, hand in hand with the Prince walking along the hall towards her chamber. After that heartfelt remark, Prince Carl did not let her go and kissed her again, but not as passionate as the first one. He insisted on walking her to her chamber. When they finally reached the entrance of her chamber, Prince Carl dismissed the two guards that were standing by the door way. They stood there for a while just gazing at each other.

Finally, she broke the silence. "Thank you for being with me tonight."

"No. I thank you for coming to me tonight," was the Prince's humble reply. "And I hope you will forget my savage behavior early today."

"I think I'm kind of thankful that it happened," she commented.

"Huh?!!" was the Prince's baffled reaction. "I did not realize that you had a thing for barbarians,
"Cupcake," Was his sarcastic remark.  

"No! I did not meant, the 'you behaving like a wild cat and being territorial over me'!" She explained. "I'm glad that it happened because I would not have known the truth."

This time she caught the Prince smirking at her, "The truth…" he was trying to mock her and gestured with his hand as if encouraging her to speak further.

He was so bossy, she thought but it did not bother her anymore. And instead of answering him she put her hands around his neck and interlocked her fingers and kissed him. She felt Prince Carl put his hands on her hips. The feeling of his hands possessively holding her hips was beginning to arouse her. She never expected that someone could make her feel so vulnerable and helpless with a mere touch on her body.

They just kiss tenderly and she let him hold her like that until the need for air separated them. Surprisingly, she found his kisses so tender and soft, except for his beard again, that she still found uncomfortable when it rubbed to her cheek. He smelled good and his mouth tasted a hint of mint. She gazed at his face and her eyes roamed at his thin symmetrical eyebrows, deep dark orbs, his smooth pale face, his perfectly pointed nose, his small mouth that was covered almost with moustache and beard, his well-defined jawline and finally the thin red soft lips that had claimed her today, and it dawned on her:

*He's beautiful!*

Prince Carl gave her a puzzled look, "What?" the prince asked in a deep raspy voice that she was beginning to enjoy listening to.

"Nothing,"

She whispered back and hid her head at the crook of his neck, hiding her face and she took the chance to inhale his scent. It surprised her how pleasant and mild.

*He smelled actually good!*

The scent of this man was really driving her insane! Her instinct kicked in and she began to place small kisses at the prince's smooth neck, avoiding his jawline that covered with beard, while her hands roamed at his hair, which she found it surprisingly soft! It was like every body part of the prince that she touches were soft! Except for one particular hard part, which she thought she was not ready to explore. Suddenly, she heard a low purr like sound when her lips touched the back of his lower ear. She smiled at the amusing sound of it and was about to put her mouth on his earlobe, when the sound of a door opening rudely interrupted her followed by the sound of Perry's voice calling her.

"Princess Laura, do you know what time I-" was Perry saying. "Oh… Good evening Your Highness." Perry's voice suddenly changed as she caught sight of the Prince and curtsied in front of him.

She awkwardly released from his arms and they separated a foot away from each other.

"Good evening Perry," Prince Carl greeted back in a low and calm voice. Then he turned his focus on her. "Goodnight Princess. I'll see you tomorrow."

She wanted to kiss him goodnight but the changed in the tone of his voice when he said good evening to Perry signified that he was back into his authoritative attitude. She simply had to wait until tomorrow, when they can be alone again. So instead, she just had to be satisfied gazing at his eyes
and said, "Goodnight My Prince." And then he left.

*****

Once inside her chamber, she felt like she was still floating and in heaven, *what's happening to me?* She asked herself totally oblivious of how she ended up kissing Prince Carl.

The last time she felt like this she was in love and it was with a woman. She was attracted right away from the first day that she laid her eyes on Danny. But right now she was totally confused and still cannot believe that she was beginning to like Prince Carl. There was definitely no attraction on her part the first time she saw him. And the fact that he was a man did not interest her further. But as a princess she has responsibilities to fulfill and one of that was to find a husband and produce an heir for him. And right now, the thought of producing an heir for Prince Carl was sending her mixed emotions.

She would love to be a mother and have children someday. She adored children and babies; she liked the idea of having a castle with lively children playing around the halls of the castle and running after them. She imagined that the parents of her children would be her and another woman, Danny. When they were together she and Danny would talk about spending their life in another land, where no one knew them and escaping from the responsibilities of being a princess. They would paint a house where they would want to live and grow old together. It does not matter if they were poor as long as they love each other. Nobody could stop them from showing how they felt to one another, until one day, reality hit and Danny must marry.

It was the saddest day of her life. She was devastated and does not want to accept the reality. She shoved away all the people that cared for her including her father and never accepted any suitors again. Everything that was around her was worthless, even her life was worthless. If she could not have the woman that she loved, she might as well die. But Perry supported and cared for her like her own mother. Perry slowly nurtured her all the love she needed from a mother and she was thankful to have Perry in her life.

Right now, her confused heart was dictating her that she liked this person, a person she never thought she would give her heart. She agreed to marry Prince Carl out of responsibilities and duties as a daughter and a princess. But she never agreed to love him in the first place. She set her mind on the goal, and that was to marry and eventually, produce an heir. But she never expected that she would be attracted to him. Being noble, she was taught that the kings and queens marry not for love but for power and to continue the monarchy. Love was just a foolish notion of every low born; they were the ones who marry for love! Because they do not have big responsibilities and power to maintain; they do not need to be forced to produce an heir out of loveless marriage. They conceived their children out of love! As she grew up she never knew how her parents were as husband and wife. Her mother died when she was just a small girl and her father never remarried.

She never knew the reason.

The voice of Perry broke her from her reverie. She was now tucked in bed and Perry was finished cleaning and putting everything in order. Perry had been silent since she entered the chamber after she was caught nipping at Prince Carl's ear. But she knew that her Lady in Waiting and mother figure deserved to know what was going on.

"I think I like him," she simply said out of the blue.

Perry's expression warmed at the thought of it and walked towards the bed and sat beside her.

"I'm glad to hear that," Perry replied, relaxing. "How did you found out?"
Perry's question sent her to the wells of confusion. And she wondered:

*How did I found out that I like him?*

This was the most complex question that she was facing now. Everything happened so fast. A few days ago she detested him and had not planned on forgiving him for all of his mischiefs. She was determined to play his game and ignore him too. But everything changed today and she found herself growing attracted to him and questioning herself.

*Why am I attracted to someone who is very possessive and jealous? Why am I attracted to someone who is temperamental and broody? Why am I kissing someone with a beard?!*

She faced Perry and contorted her brows; she honestly does not know. Only her heart knew the reason that her logic cannot fathom.

"I… I have no idea."

*****

She woke up at the sound of the birds chirping by her window, the sun was already up and she felt that everything around her made her happy.

"Good morning Princess!" She heard Perry's loud voice coming from the door.

Yes, it really is a good morning!

She said to herself and remained in bed for a while as she gathered all the memories of yesterday and replayed in her mind how the Prince kissed her passionately; how his hands sends a tingling sensation every time she would feel it on her hips.

Her musing was interrupted when Perry approached her bed.

"Hmmm… You looked like you had a very good night sleep." Perry commented.

"As a matter of fact, I did," she replied in a cheerful tone. "It was the first time I have slept that good and woke up happy since I arrived here. I felt refreshed!"

"Well, I'm glad that you feel that way. Because we're going to be spending the whole day at the market today," Perry informed her.

She was suddenly caught off guard, and her mood changed from musing to panic.

"What?! Is it Monday today?" she asked growing worried.

Every Monday, she and Perry would go to the market square to buy all the ingredients that Perry used to bake the cakes and sweets that she like. They do not rely on the castle's servants to buy the ingredients for them since they do not know all of the ingredients that Perry was using. And besides, they always like to go to the market together because it was like a mother-daughter bonding time to them. Ever since she was a child she always comes along with Perry and Perry's mother to the market. And when Perry's mother died, they promised to each other that they would continue the bonding of mother-daughter going to the market.

"What time is it?" she asked with a hint of panic. She had totally forgotten to tell Prince Carl that every Monday she goes to the market with Perry.

"It's half pass seven," Perry supplied and went to the bathroom to prepare for her bath.
"Damn! It's still early," She fidgeted.

She knew Prince Carl never wakes up before ten o'clock and she needs to go to the market in an hour with Perry. She internally berated herself for forgetting to inform Prince Carl that she cannot meet him at once since she knew that it would take a whole day for them to buy the ingredients they need.

She and Perry would always take their time to buy some things for them in the market. Sometimes they stop by on the street to watch some puppet show. And most of the time they would buy food from cart vendors, like hot pies, pretzels or sweets and they would eat them while shopping or strolling around the market square. These have been their Monday routine. Even if she had already left her home and lived in another kingdom they did not break their Monday tradition. Because this routine had helped her overcome her home sickness; this routine had made her looked forward to mingle with other people; this routine had made her forget how lonely it was to live in the Karnstein Castle; this routine made her happy to know that there were people, ordinary people that she could be friends with and talked normally to them.

When she arrived at the Karnstein Kingdom, nobody knew her except a few people in the castle. And not all of them knew that she was the betrothed of the Prince of Karnstein. The castle had never formally announced it yet, so she grabbed the chance to live a normal life even if it was just once a week, and the only place she could do that was here. Nobody in the castle knew that she and Perry used to sneak every Monday to the market dressed as commoners, except for the three royal guards that always accompanied them. She told Perry that she wanted to know how the commoners live outside and what do they think about.

They managed to get the trust of three royal guards in Karnstein Kingdom to go with them and discreetly guard them, telling them to wear ordinary clothes also, and not the Royal guard uniform. But right now, everything was going to change, and she hoped that she could still continue doing what she liked without Prince Carl knowing it. She thought of writing him a message telling him that she just needed to attend some matter with Perry. The castle did not mind before what they do and Prince Carl did not care before if she was in the castle or not, she even did him a favor of getting out of his sight and let him do whatever he wanted instead of getting stuck with her. They never noticed.

"Laura, you're market dress is ready and so is your bath," Perry informed while she wrote a little note to the Prince informing him that she would meet him in the evening.

"Thank you Perry." She said and folded the paper and sealed it with wax. "Can you please tell Natalie to give this to LaFontaine after we left?"

Perry nodded and took the letter and left the chamber.

*****

It was already dark when they passed at the castle's drawbridge. She was tired but was happy and satisfied that she was able to go to the village. It was refreshing and enjoyable to be carefree and do the things she liked. But the best thing that she enjoyed most was mingling with those commoners who became her acquaintances and friends. Talking to them had inspired her more to help the poor. Almost everybody was nice and genuine. But there were also some people that annoyed her, and one of them was the village's most eligible handsome man: William.

"Princess, maybe next time you can tell William that you already had a beau," Perry said out of nowhere. "I think he will stop courting you when you tell him that."

She was surprised that her Lady in Waiting was thinking of the same person as she was. "William is harmless and he just likes to have the ladies' attention," she returned, not taking his courtship
"By the way, who was that woman that you helped outside the brothel?" was Perry's curious remark.

"Her name was Elsie and she works in the brothel," she answered nonchalantly, but heard Perry's surprised gasp. "What? Why are you staring at me like that? I just gave her water and helped her with her cut. She told me that the owner was mad at her because she broke a plate or something…" was her innocent reply.

"The next time you see her, try to avoid her," Perry warned.

"Why? What's wrong with helping someone?" she asked, and grew curious.

"Because she works in the brothel," was Perry's short unsatisfactory reply.

But before she could ask another question the horse drawn carriage had already stopped at the castle's entrance. Once the door was opened they were met right away by LaFontaine. She stepped out of the carriage, after Perry and LaFontaine assisted her while going down the carriage.

Puzzled, "LaFontaine, what are you doing here?" she asked, seeing for the first time that the Prince's Valet seemed to be waiting for someone or something.

"Thank god you are already here Your Highness," they said and sighed with relief.

"How many times do I have to tell you to just call me Princess Laura," she reminded them nicely.

"And why are you running? Is everything alright?" she asked as they entered the castle followed by Perry and the three royal guards carrying the goods that they bought.

"Everything is not alright when the Prince is angry and broody," they said

"Why? What happened?" was her oblivious remark.

"He… He is mad because you are not in the castle and you did not tell him where you went," LaFontaine explained in between breaths. "He yelled at everybody accusing us of being imbeciles because nobody can tell him where you are."

Oh God. She thought and felt guilty of putting everybody in a bad situation as she recalled how temperamental the Prince was yesterday. "Where is he?" She asked quickly.

"At the library," LaFontaine replied quickly. "And Princess, be careful. The Prince can be a lot to handle sometimes when he is angry."

She gave them a reassuring smile, and said, "Don't worry, I already know how to tame the wild cat."

She managed to change her dress quickly before meeting the Prince. And now she found herself a little nervous as she stood in front of the library door. She took a deep breath before knocking. When she did not hear a reply, she called for him and yet he still did not answer. So, she decided to let him know that it was her and that she was coming in. When nobody answered, she opened the door and entered the library. Her eyes caught him at once, as she saw the Prince sitting on the chaise lounge beside the fireplace. He did not lift his gaze on his book and his brows were contorted as if he was thinking deeply or he was plainly angry.

LaFontaine was right, he looks broody and mad.

She slowly approached him, careful as not to upset him further. She settled beside the chair and
kneeled down beside him, her hands resting on the unoccupied little spot of the chair that divides her and where the Prince sat. "Are you mad at me?" she asked softly, direct to the point.

"Where have you been?" He asked, in a serious deep tone. His eyes never lifted from the book in front of him.

"I was at the market with Perry..." she was not even finished talking when she saw the book he was reading flew over the room.

"At the market!?" Prince Carl burst out. "Don't you know how dangerous it is to go to the village?!"

This time the Prince glared at her.

"It isn't." she replied wondering why he thinks like that.

"How would you know?!" He demanded, not tearing his eyes from her. "You could have been hurt!"

"Because I've been going there since I came here." She simply revealed the truth. "...And nobody has ever hurt me."

He was shocked at the reply, as if she committed a crime.

"Laura, you cannot just go out of the castle's wall like that! You don't know what those savages might do to you!" he scolded, his eyes turned into worry. "They could have abducted you. Or worst... kill you!"

Seeing that he was reddening with anger, she took the Prince's hand that already balled into fist, opened it and held it tight. She felt him calmed a bit at the touch of her hand.

"They are not savages and you don't have to worry because Perry was always with me as well as three of the royal guards." She said, keeping her voice down and calm, and gave Prince Carl a reassuring smile.

"Just three?!" He returned, shocked at the lack of security. "And why didn't I know about this gallivanting of yours?"

Because you were too busy avoiding and ignoring me before. She would like to say that, but refrained instead, not wanting to upset him again.

"Because you're always busy doing your responsibilities in the castle," she replied and looked at his eyes, searching for more doubts. "And I wasn't gallivanting; I was there to help Perry and to shop the things that I need. One day I'm going to tell you what we do at the market." She reassured him. "In the meantime, let's forget about today and just enjoy this moment." She suggested, knowing that it was already getting late.

"You don't know how worried I am, don't do that to me again," the Prince said, his eyes smoldering in pain.

"Please do not worry too much," she said and put her left hand at the side of his neck and caressed the spot under his earlobe, while the other hand remained holding his smooth soft hand. She discovered last night how the prince reacted at the touch of her hands caressing that part of his neck he surely was a cat in his past life she thought amused. "Now, can I get a kiss from my Prince?"

"You have to sit beside me first before you can get your kiss," he teased and made room for her to sit
beside him at the Chaise lounge. She gracefully sat and kissed him lightly, and then released her lips as she made herself comfortable beside him by wrapping her right hand around his waist, careful not to touch the part of the Prince she deemed 'hard', and rested her head on his shoulder. She was surprised to find out that Prince Carl's shoulder was not that big as she thought. Thought it perfectly fitted her.

She felt comfortable and secured after he wrapped his right arm around her and felt his hand ran through her hair, it stayed there for a moment as if he was enjoying the softness of her hair, before resting on her upper arm, caressing it. She was surprised at how she enjoyed cuddling with him. It was their first time to snuggle and it made her dizzy at the gentleness of his touch. She closed her eyes and savored the feeling of the touch of his hand running gently up and down on her arm.

She suddenly wondered why he became silent. She lifted her head from his shoulder and set her eyes on him, and caught him contemplating.

"Are you alright?" she queried, and received a reply at once.

"Yes, I'm fine." He said and stared blankly in front of him.

Not satisfied with his answer, "Because you sound broody."

"I'm just thinking about things," he returned looking down.

Curious, she did not release her eyes on his direction, wanting to catch his expression before asking again, "What things?"

"How it looks like outside?" he said, his voice was coated with sadness.

Suddenly it dawned on her that he had never set foot outside. She remembered the Queen of Karnstein mentioned to her that her son had angst of meeting people and spending time in a crowded place.

"When was the last time you were out of the castle walls?" She asked, careful not to sound like she was prying.

"When I was twelve," he mumbled, and put his left hand, palm down on his leg and slides it towards his knee.

Sensing his discomfort, "Prince Carl?" she uttered softly and he set his focus on her. She saw the longing in his dark eyes. His fear must have been really severe. Instead of asking further, she reached for his left cheek and guided his lips on hers. He dutifully kissed her.

She caressed his bearded cheek, feeling the softness of his facial hair; she was trying to get used to it rubbing to her delicate skin but it still made her uncomfortable. However, the sensation of kissing him and feeling his lips against hers was the best thing she enjoyed most. She cannot deny how it made her warm and dizzy whenever she tasted his lips. It was addicting. She released from the kiss as the need for air arose and gazed at his dark orbs.

"Maybe someday you could come with me at the market?" she suggested and grinned at him.

"Maybe," He replied with a hint of hope in his deep raspy voice.

She smiled contently and rested her head back on his shoulder; and wrapped her arms again around his waist just relishing this moment with him as she relaxed at the warmth that was eliminating from his body and the sound of the fire crackling softly from the fire place.
She woke up at the sound of someone screaming and realized that she was still on the Chaise lounge embracing Prince Carl. She did not know how many hours had passed by, but when she looked at him he looked like he was in pain.

"Ma, don't leave me!"

She touched his face and lightly patted it, "Carl! Carl! Wake up!" She said.

He opened his eyes, and she saw him still hurt from the nasty dream. She cupped his face with her right hand and brought it to her bosom and cradled him, "Shhh… it's just a dream. You can go back to sleep," She said as she wrapped her arms around him protectively, consoling him.

She never expected to see how scared and vulnerable he was. That dream was certainly unpleasant and she was curious who this 'Ma' was the Prince was calling. As far as she remembered, Prince Carl calls his mother 'Queen Mother'.

TBC
Conversation With LaFontaine

Chapter Summary

A look at how the King, the Queen and LaFontaine reacted after discovering that Prince Carl kissed Princess Laura.

Chapter Notes

Thank you very much for all those awesome feedbacks. I am so happy to know that you enjoyed my fic and that you like it. And it's even one of your favorites! When I started this fic I was hesitant that it'll be a favorite or somebody will like it, but after having read your comments it made me glad to know that there were readers who appreciate it :-)

Carmilla

Half an hour had passed since LaFontaine interrupted her sleep together with Princess Laura in the library. She was not surprise at all that the Lady in Waiting was with her Valet looking for the Princess. They had totally forgotten that they should not sleep together since they were not married yet, although they have not done anything beyond kissing and snuggling, the Princess’ Lady in Waiting was still adamant that Princess Laura should remain 'unspoiled'.

The Princess explained that nothing that Perry would deem inappropriate happened. But she was surprised at herself for wanting to spend every moment with the Princess it was like she cannot get enough of her.

And now as the clock struck to midnight, she was sleepy sitting on the chair in front of the mirror. LaFontaine was certainly dying to know why she and Princess Laura were sleeping together on the chaise lounge.

"I kissed her," she uttered out of nowhere while her Valet removed the last piece of false beard from her cheeks.

Puzzled, "You what?" LaFontaine asked, stopping what they were doing and focused on her.

"I kissed Princess Laura."

"Yes!" LaFontaine shouted and jumped where they were standing.

"Stop behaving like a fool."

After that momentary joy, "I knew it! I knew you'll fall for her! How did it happen? Did she kiss you back? Was it good?!"

"Do you want to hear the rest of the story or you'll just interrogate me like a criminal?" was her irritated remark as the sight of her Valet happy about the news makes her want to punch herself for revealing her secret. Now she would definitely be on the receiving end of LaFontaine's scrutiny and
teasing.

"Forgive me. I am just happy… finally!" LaFontaine expressed, then tried to calm down and waited eagerly to hear the news. "So, when did this happen?"

"When the Prince of Berghausen was here," she started and was interrupted by an eager Valet.

"Oh, the day that you almost killed me... so that explains why,"

She was surprised and became suspicious. "Do you know anything else?" she asked not proud of her behavior when she almost killed the prince of Berghausen.

"No. I just thought that something was wrong with your behavior that morning," LaFontaine pointed out.

She focused her attention to her Valet and resumed her story, "I just felt this rage inside me, when you told me that he was the prince that Princess Laura likes and… I thought it will pass when I trained with my sword and let this emotion out. But when I saw them together at the garden, my rage grew stronger and I can't control it; especially when I saw him touched Princess Laura's hands and was about to kiss her..."

"That is jealousy," LaFontaine pointed out. "What did you do then?"

She thought of hiding the truth from LaFontaine, but knowing her Valet, they would certainly find out the truth. "I drew my sword and aimed at the prince's throat."

"You what?!" LaFontaine blurted out.

"I wanted to kill him, but Princess Laura stopped me," was her follow up as she saw her Valet remained speechless, but regained their composure at once.

"Whoa!" LaFontaine interrupted, and was shocked. "You wanted to kill someone because he was touching Princess Laura?"

"It's like I don't want anyone touching her, except me," she explained once again this odd feeling that she encountered. "Is this natural?"

"It's certainly natural when you're obsessed with someone." LaFontaine retorted.

"I'm scared. I haven't felt like this and I don't know how to control these emotions," she returned revealing her feelings.

"Don't worry we'll deal with it one at a time," was LaFontaine's consoling words. "So, what happened? How did she take it? I'm sure Princess Laura was very confused and maybe dislikes you for almost killing her former suitor."

She smirked as she recalled how the Princess confessed to her and how Laura kissed her back. And it would definitely blow LaFontaine's mind when she tell them.

"I kissed her and she kissed me back." Was her proud answer and enjoyed watching how her Valet reacted.

LaFontaine was surprised. "Really?!"

"I know you expected that the Princess is going to hate me," she started to explain, knowing what her Valet was going to say. "But I think she had fallen for my charm," was her confident remark.
"Didn't she felt disgusted by your beard when you kiss her?" Was LaFontaine's curious query.

"No. She never complained about it," was her nonchalant reply. "She even likes to touch my face." She proudly added as she smiled and recalled how Princess Laura's soft hands caressed her cheeks a lot of times. She discovered also how she enjoyed the Princess touching the lower back of her ears, and it felt amazing!

"How did you managed to let Princess Laura touch your face, let alone kiss her and rubbed your bearded cheeks on her?" LaFontaine asked, completely baffled.

"I guess you can ask her," she challenged her Valet. And before LaFontaine can retaliate she remembered that she needed to check on some important thing. "By the way, can you find out who were the guards that went with the Princess this morning? Ask them what the Princess and her Lady in Waiting have done in the village," she related, and suddenly curious about Princess Laura's 'gallivanting'. "From now on I want every detail of the Princess' whereabouts and what she does. And the next time the Princess goes outside of the castle make sure that she has enough royal guards with her. I don't want my betrothed roaming around the village unprotected."

"As you wish," LaFontaine nodded.

"And don't say a word to anyone about this, especially to the Princess," she warned.

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After half an hour, she was now peacefully lying on her bed and was thankful that LaFontaine agreed to stop harassing her with more questions about what happened between her and the Princess. She cannot believe that it was happening too. After living in the castle with just her parents and the people that served her, she never thought that she would care for another person. She never thought that there was a person that could cause her to smile and at the same time cause her to be insanely jealous and possessive. And she never thought she was capable of feeling all of these emotions... until this Princess came into her life.

"Laura," she uttered her betrothed's name as she recalled how the Princess swore to her. "You're mine," she mumbled with a hint of greed in her voice. She did not know how powerful those words were until Princess Laura told her 'I'm yours'. It was very intimate. Not just in the sense of knowing that her father had chosen the Princess to be her betrothed, but to hear it from the Princess itself made her confident and glad.

And she thought how wonderful it was to know that someone liked her and swore to devout herself to her. She never imagined anyone kissing her like that. Ell was the only woman that kissed her but the feeling was very different compared to how she felt when Princess Laura kissed her. Princess Laura's kiss was amazing and the way Princess Laura's hands touched her every time they kiss was one of the things that made her 'melt': it was very affectionate.

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When she woke up today, she was summoned right away to the King's chamber. Yesterday, her Queen Mother received the news of her 'argument' with the Prince of Berghausen and was disappointed at her for ruining the potential trading partnership between them and the Kingdom of Berghausen. She told her mother that Prince Viktor was difficult to deal with. However, they did not inform the King yet about that incident since her King Father was still not feeling well. And today she was informed that she could see and talk to the King.

Her heart was pounding as she approached closer to the King's chamber. It was the first time her
King Father entrusted her of negotiating with a potential trading partner and she ruined it for him.

The guards that were standing by the chamber bowed to her and opened the door right away as they saw her coming. Once she entered the chamber she was glad to see that her father looked better and was standing beside the big table across the room which the King uses for all his work.

"Good morning my King Father," she greeted right away and the King turned to face her and she bowed to him. "I am so glad to see you well."

"Ah, Carl, it's good to see you my child," the King replied smiling at her, and walked towards her direction. "Come here."

She was surprised when the King put his arm around her shoulder and guided her towards the window. She was confused when they stood together by the window and looked across outside.

"What do you see?" the King asked.

Puzzled, she looked at the King to see if he was serious.

"I… I see the castle's courtyard," was her hesitant reply and stared at the King again.

"Look further and tell me what else do you see?" the King encouraged.

She looked out again and scanned the surroundings from the window carefully, and then her eyes caught a familiar sight. She does not realize until now that the window from the King's chamber had the perfect view of the castle's courtyard.

"I see the whole garden from here and the willow tree," she returned not having the slightest idea where this conversation was heading.

"That's right. And everything that happen there, I could see it from here," the King stated. "… Including the fight that happened two days ago."

She was nervous and suddenly worried. The King had witnessed her barbaric behavior and her father certainly knew already what had happened.

"My King Father… I apologized deeply for my unpleasant behavior and for losing my temper. I know there was no excuse for my bad behavior and I would understand if my King Father would not trust me again but-" she was explaining but the touch of the Kings' hand on her left shoulder interrupted her. She looked at the King and contorted her brows when she saw a mischievous smirk like hers.

"Carl, I am not angry at you. In fact I'm proud of you!" the King stated.

She was dumbfounded at the King's reaction. It was totally the complete opposite of her mother's disappointed reaction.

"I have witnessed how you showed Prince Viktor that he should not touch your betrothed and I am proud of you for claiming and marking your right to Princess Laura," the King related with such pride. "You are really a Karnstein; you're fierce and very possessive when it comes to the object of your affection. And you don't want to share."

She released the breath that she was holding as she realized that her father was not reprimanding her but instead praising her. She smiled back at him and regained her confidence. "I just reacted to how I felt, and that is to protect what is mine, my King Father." She added, making sure that the King
understood her true motive.

That remark made the King laugh, "You definitely are a Karnstein, because you sounded like me."

She just gave her father a sheepish smile and did not deny it. "Are you that possessive too when it comes to my Queen Mother?" was her curious query.

"Yes. When I saw you confronted and aimed your sword to Prince Viktor, you reminded me of myself when I was still young and was just getting to know your Queen Mother," the King returned. "I almost killed someone too because he was around your Queen Mother and he wouldn't leave her."

"What happened?" was her excited and curious remark.

"We were invited at a ball and I asked your Queen Mother for a dance, she was still a princess then; a very beautiful princess and I was just a prince like you. She danced with me all night. But then we did not realized that there was a prince who wanted to dance with your Queen Mother too, so he interrupted us and asked your Queen Mother to dance with him. But your Queen Mother was already tired and politely declined him. He did not accept it and tried to force your Queen Mother to dance with him. I stopped him and drew my sword at his throat without thinking, except I wanted to protect this beautiful princess beside me. So we actually fought. I was very angry at him that I almost killed him. Your Queen Mother just stopped me from slashing his throat!"

"That was some story!" She expressed and was happy to find out that being jealous and possessive runs in their blood and that behavior was just natural for a Karnstein. "So, who was that prince who tried to steal my Queen Mother from you?"

The King smirked at her before saying, "It's Prince Viktor's father; The King of Berghausen."

She was dumbfounded again. Was this history repeating itself?

"It looks like the Berghausens like to steal our women," she concluded.

The King laughed so hard and patted her back. "You are absolutely right my child! The one thing they do not know is that the Karnsteins would always kill for their women! Nobody touches our women except us; tell that to your betrothed."

She smiled and said proudly, "I already did my King Father."

"You are certainly are my child!" the King expressed proudly. "I am happy that you already realize how important Laura is to you. I thought you'll going to ruin this betrothal. But I was wrong. Forgive me for accusing you."

"There is nothing to forgive my King Father," she replied, as they stood face to face by the window. "I have done a lot of things that I am not proud of, and I could understand your doubts." She was saying and her voice became serious. "But I want to assure you, my King Father that I will never run from my responsibility again. I accept this betrothal and I will marry Princess Laura."

After that heartfelt confession, her father wrapped his arms around her and patted her back. "I am proud of you Carl." The King stated and released her. "Should I formally announce your betrothal to the kingdom?"

"Can we do it after I propose to her?" was her excited remark.

"But Princess Laura had already said yes," the King reminded.
"Yes; to you, when you asked her hand in marriage for me," she returned, confidently correcting the King for the first time. "I want to ask Laura personally," she relayed in a dreamy state.

"Well you do need something when you ask your future wife," the King said, then walked across the room, opened one of the cabinets in the chamber and took a little box from a drawer.

"What is it?" she asked, curious after her father handed her the little box.

"Open it," was the King's excited reply.

She complied and opened the little box. She gasped and was surprised when she saw a gold ring with a single diamond glittering in the box. "It's beautiful."

"It's your grandmother's betrothal ring," the King commented with pride and love in his voice. "It is yours now and you can give that to Princess Laura when you ask her hand in marriage."

She was astonished and could not believe that the King could be so generous when it comes to her needs. She had just thought of asking LaFontaine to buy a ring that would suit the Princess. But she never thought that the King would give her an heirloom.

"Thank you so much my King Father, for this wonderful gift," she stated, looking at the King with full of excitement.

"I would do anything to make you happy, my child." The King responded and wrapped his arms again around her. "And I want you to know that I would always be here if you needed anything."

"Thank you my King Father, for your kindness and generosity," she replied, happy to know that she had her father's full support. "I think you and my Queen Mother have already provided me with all the luxuries and wealth that I needed until I become a king."

"It's just the beginning my child," the King corrected and smirked at her. "When you become the king you would own everything that I own, aside from the wealth that you have now. So be prepared." The King teased, and sensing that they were both in a happy unserious mode, the King put his hand around her shoulder again, "And if you're in doubt of what to do at your wedding night, you can ask me for an advice. I could ask some ladies to educate you on that matter." The King quipped and smirked at her naughtily.

She gave him a sheepish smile, and cannot believe she heard that from her father. Sensing that she was uncomfortable at his offer,

"I know that you feel embarrass to hear that, but as a King, it is my obligation too to make sure that my heir has enough knowledge and experience when it comes to that matter."

"I will certainly think about it and will let you know." Was the only thing she could say.

"Very well, if you do not have any further question with regards to that matter, I would like to get out of this chamber and wants some fresh air," the King returned. "Put on your riding clothes and boots and meet me at the stable in an hour."

"My King Father, are you sure you're strong enough to go out and ride a horse?" was her worried query, after catching the King coughing. "My Queen Mother would become worried if she finds out."

"Carl, if I stay another day in this chamber I'll go mad," the King retaliated. "And don't worry we are not hunting today, I just want to ride my horse and go around the forest."
"As you wish, My King Father," she agreed and bowed to the King before leaving the chamber.

Once she was out of the chamber, her mood slightly changed as she realized that she cannot see Princess Laura right away since she had to change and join the King in an hour. She was looking forward seeing her betrothed and kissing her betrothed. It sounded crazy, but the first thing that came into her mind was the image of the Princess' beautiful face and how adorable Princess Laura was. She had never been this infatuated, but right now she just needed to see her. Instead of walking to the direction of her chamber, she turned to the opposite wing and strode to the direction of the Princess' chamber. She had thought of just dropping by and see what her betrothed was doing.

Once she saw the door to Princess Laura's chamber, her heart throbbed madly. The two Royal guards that were standing by the door bowed to her right away and made room for her to come in. Usually, she could just order the guards to open the door for her and she could just go in but she still chose to give Princess Laura some privacy. So, she knocked on the door instead. She smiled when she heard the Princess' voice asked who it was.

"It's Prince Carl," she answered and when she received a reply, the guards opened the door for her, and she hurriedly walked inside the chamber.

She smirked and slowed her steps as she saw the Princess standing beside the dressing table, as if waiting for her and ready to greet her. Princess Laura dismissed the handmaiden that was holding the dress and discreetly left them after bowing to her.

Now they were alone.

Her heart beat faster as she approached the Princess and saw Princess Laura still wearing a white long sleeves satin chemise. She felt suddenly warm as her eyes roamed at the creaminess of the Princess' semi exposed bosom.

Her observation was halted when the Princess curtsied to her and said, "Prince Carl, it's good to see you. I apologized if I am not dressed properly."

"I think you look lovely in anything," she teased, and she saw the Princess bowed and gave her a sheepish smile and crimsoned. But then she suddenly remembered her activity with the King. "I am going horseback riding with the King today and I am not sure how long it will take, so I just thought of dropping by and let you know." She explained seriously, even though they both know that they could just relay the message to either LaFontaine or Perry.

"Thank you my Prince, for letting me know," was Princess Laura's sweet reply and smiled at her.

She beamed at the sight of her betrothed's adorableness, and she always felt giddy whenever the Princess calls her 'My Prince'.

"Is there anything else that My Prince wants to say?" Princess Laura teased.

"Yes, I need a kiss from my Princess before I go out," she demanded in a low enticing tone.

With a blink of an eye, Princess Laura was already in front of her and kissing her. As always, she felt the Princess' hand caressing the back of her neck and it made her crazy. This time she did not put her hands on the Princess' hips, and maintained a safe distance between her and the Princess. She was afraid that she might not be able to control herself seeing that the Princess was wearing a thin camisole.

"Would that be enough?"
She heard Princess Laura whispered after releasing from the kiss. She opened her eyes and saw the most beautiful brown eyes and was temporary mesmerized.

"It will do. For now," was her sarcastic reply and smiled at Princess Laura. "I have to go." She uttered softly and saw the disappointed look on the Princess' face. She found the Princess' pout so adorable that she wanted to kiss her betrothed again, but controlled herself, afraid that she might forget her appointment with her father. "I'll see you at dinner."

"I'll be looking forward to it." The Princess replied.

She gazed at Princess Laura and gave her a naughty smirk. "I hope you'll think of me while I'm gone Cupcake." She teased and was hoping to make the Princess blush again, and it worked.

"You're the only one who's always in my thoughts." The Princess replied and gave her a naughty smile too.

She gave her betrothed a lingering look before turning around. She left the Princess' chamber happy and satisfied.

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It was already passed the hour of their actual dinner time when she arrived at the dining hall together with her father. They both enjoyed the ride in the forest and she was glad that they went out.

She walked behind her father and saw Princess Laura and her mother were already on their seats. The King kissed the Queen's cheek before taking a seat. She let her father sit first before she bowed to her mother and then walked around to the other side of the table. She saw Princess Laura curtsied to the King and then to her and she acknowledged it. They remained composed and formal in the presence of the King and Queen. As soon as she was comfortably seated, the Queen looked at her and then the King.

"And what maybe the reason the King and the Prince of Karnstein arrived late?" Was the Queen's strict question.

"My Queen, your son and I just went for a ride in the forest," the King stated and smiled gently at the Queen, before lifting his goblet. "I think we should celebrate your victory my child."

She was trying her best not to touch Princess Laura as she felt the warmth that was crawling inside her just by sitting beside her betrothed, when the King's loud voice caught her attention and looked at her father; totally confused she asked, "Forgive me my King Father but I did not understand what you have said."

"We need to celebrate your victory against Prince Victor!"

The King expressed and she was suddenly worried as she caught the sight of her mother's curiosity.

"Is there anything I need to know?" was the Queen's serious question, looking at the King's direction.

"My Queen, your son scared off the Prince of Berghausen and showed him that the Karnsteins are very protective of their women," the King returned with full of enthusiasm and drunk more wine from the goblet.
"What do you mean scared off?" was the Queen's careful and yet suspicious remark.

She remained silent and prayed that her father would not tell her mother the real story, and watched carefully the conversation between her father and mother while the Princess stopped from eating and observed the conversation in front of them. She could now feel the tension arising as they waited for her father to say another word.

"Carl aimed his sword to Prince Victor's throat when he saw the prince was about to kiss Princess Laura here," the King expressed proudly. "That should teach the Prince of Berghausen never to touch our women. Am I right Carl?"

"Yes my King Father," was her sheepish reply and avoided the direction of her mother. She could feel the Queen's eyes on her and she knew that she was in big trouble. When she received no reaction from her mother, she knew at once that she was in for some reprimanding afterwards. As if sensing her uneasiness, she felt a hand tenderly touched her left leg and switched her gaze to the Princess.

"Are you alright?"

She heard Princess Laura asked and saw the concerned look on the Princess' face. She warmed at the sight of those beautiful brown eyes and how Princess Laura gazed at her with so much affection. She smiled and gazed at the Princess before nodding. "I'm alright, let's eat now." She suggested and they both tried to eat the lamb chops in front of them even if they both felt anxious.

"More wine for the Prince!" the King ordered while drinking his own.

She was torn from her conversation with Princess Laura as the loud voice of the King resonated in the dining hall. They all knew that the King had already too much wine. But it was a normal occurrence during dinner that her father can be drunk from time to time.

The thought of being drunk herself occurred in her mind. The servant poured more wine to her goblet and filled it to the brim. She took her goblet and drank the red wine without spilling the contents. Then she put it down on the table gracefully and motioned to the servant to fill her goblet again. She consumed it at once and asked the servant to continue pouring. She knew that she had already reached her limit, but after this dinner she would need all the courage she can get when she face her mother. She took another swig from her goblet and asked for more. Then she felt again the tender touch of her betrothed's hand on her leg and she turned to look at the Princess' eyes, while her hand still held her goblet, waiting for the servant to finish pouring the wine.

"My Prince, I think you should finish your dinner," the Princess suggested carefully.

"I am not finish yet with my wine," she said in her deep authoritative tone, and ignored the Princess' remark and drank the content of her goblet. She could feel the warmth sensation of alcohol in her body already but she still asked the servant to fill her goblet again.

"I think the Prince had enough wine for the evening, you may go." The Queen interrupted in a calm and yet cold tone.

She remained silent and took a bite of the meat in front of her, but she lost her appetite and just remained seated until everybody were finished eating. She just had to wait for five minutes before the King finished his meal and rose from his seat. The Queen was there to assist the King and rose from the seat too.

She and Princess Laura rose from their seats and bowed to the King and Queen thanking them for
the evening, but before leaving the table the Queen attracted her attention.

"Carl, I want you in my chamber at once." Was the Queen's strict order, and looked at Princess Laura's direction. "Good night Princess Laura, the guard will escort you to your chamber."

She heard the cold and serious voice of her mother, and turned to her betrothed's direction. "Good night Princess." She uttered with a hint of sadness in her voice, before leaving the Princess and helped her mother assisting the King.

"Goodnight my Prince," was Princess Laura's feeble reply and just nodded.

She was upset that she was not able to say good night properly to her betrothed. She was looking forward being kissed by Princess Laura before they both retire to their respective chambers. However, the cold icy stare that her mother had been giving her was a sign that she should control her feelings towards her betrothed and go to her mother's chamber at once and wait there while her mother puts the King to bed.

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She was already in the Queen's chamber when her mother arrived, and she had the feeling of what's to come. The only people who knew how she behaved badly towards the Prince of Berghausen were Princess Laura and her father. When her mother asked her the reason why the partnership between the Berghausen and them did not materialize, she cited bad negotiation as the reason and did not elaborate more. But after her father's announcement about her 'victory' she knew that she needed to explain again to the Queen the truth.

She composed herself, stood by the fireplace and waited calmly for her mother to sit on the chair beside the fireplace. Her heart pounded as her mother sat on the chair, hands rested on the arm rest while looking at her with those icy stare. It had been a long time since she saw the Queen with that cold icy expression. She faced her mother calmly and met the Queen's intimidating stare.

"Come closer."

She heard the cold authoritative voice of her mother and she obeyed. She stopped when she knew that she was already in the Queen's personal space and stood there without tearing her eyes off from her mother's icy glare.

"Carl Philipp Marcus you disappointed me." The Queen stated.

She just stared at the Queen knowing that her mother does not like being interrupted while talking. And she definitely deserved to be reprimanded for not telling her mother the truth and for behaving savagely.

"Have you lost your mind? Didn't I tell you that showing your emotions is a sign of weakness?" Was the Queen's angry and yet calm remark. "What do you think Prince Viktor is thinking now after you behaved like a savage in front of him?"

She wanted to tell her mother that it does not matter what Prince Viktor thought about her, the most important thing was she prevented him from kissing her betrothed. She was not even bothered by what she did to the prince.

"You have to remember that your personal feelings should not overpower you," the Queen stated. "Or else... you will fail as a king. Do you understand me?"
Guilty, she just nodded and looked at the floor. She knew that her new-found feelings towards the Princess had changed her. It made her realized that life could be beautiful when she knew that someone was there that she could call 'mine'.

"Look at me and answer my question!" The Queen ordered.

She was torn from her reverie, regained her composure and looked at her mother, "I understand my Queen Mother." She said in a deep clear tone, just like what her mother taught her.

"I don't know what happened between you and Princess Laura that caused you to behave like that, but I want to remind you that she is your betrothed and her responsibility comes first," The Queen stated in a clear serious tone. "Princess Laura had agreed to unite our kingdom with hers and her primary responsibility is to produce an heir for you. She is not here as your lover, but as your future queen and the mother of your children. You have to make sure that you both will fulfill your duties first as the future king and queen and be a good example to the people of this kingdom. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, my Queen Mother," she responded quickly.

"And Carl… I know that you have your own needs," the Queen related in a serious but mild manner. "I want to remind you that you can already take your own mistress, so that she could appease you if you feel stressed from all your responsibilities. In this way, you can focus on your duties and not be distracted by whatever you're feeling towards Princess Laura."

TBC
Market Day and Friends Day

Chapter Summary

Apart from disguising as a commoner every time she goes to the village's market square, Laura had also met a lot of commoners and made some friends, and one of them had proposed to her.

Chapter Notes

Hi! Thanks again for your wonderful feedbacks and kudos. It was fun learning how some of you felt every time I post a new chapter. If you enjoy reading a new chapter, I enjoy reading your reactions :-D So, to lessen your worries from the previous chapter, here's some 'lighter' update. Hope you enjoy this long chapter as much I enjoyed writing it :-)  

Laura

She was just getting ready to leave the castle's main door and ride the horse drawn carriage that would take her and Perry to the market, when she was torn from her contemplating at the sight that greeted her.

What the…?! She almost cursed when she saw about ten royal guards on their horses surrounding the carriage that she was going to use for her market day. She turned around and faced Perry, who was threading behind her.

"Do you know anything about this?" She asked her Lady in Waiting.

"No." Perry replied and shook her head mirroring the same surprised expression.

She turned her eyes on the group of Royal Guards that was in front of her. "I don't need an escort you may all go back to your posts!" she commanded to the group, and was expecting that she should be heard at once.

But when none of them obeyed, she walked closer to them and shouted, "I command you all to go back to your posts!"

Still, no movement happened. "Did you hear me?!"

And yet, no reply and no reaction. So, she decided to approach the three Royal Guards that were always with them when they go to the market.

"Alfred, what's the meaning of this?" she asked the one with gray hair, the oldest of them and the one she trusted the most.

"His Royal Highness sent these extra Royal Guards to protect you, Princess." The middle aged man replied.
Irritated, she turned around and headed back to the palace and called Perry's attention, "Wait for me here!" she ordered to Perry and her three regular Royal Guards that were wearing their ordinary clothes. She did not even bother to take off her coat and strode back inside the castle.

After ten minutes, she reached the library and knocked hard. She does not care if Prince Carl was studying or in a meeting with some of the scholars. "Who is it?" She heard LaFontaine's voice behind the door.

"It's Princess Laura!"

The door opened right away and she was greeted by a cheery redhead.

"Princess Laura, it's nice to see you!"

"Where is he? I want to talk to him." Was her serious reply, ignoring the Valet's remark.

She crossed the threshold and walked into the room and was satisfied to see the Prince alone and buried in his books; he looked up and saw the Prince's face glowed upon seeing her. She saw him rose gracefully from his chair to meet her across the room. He looked naughty and outrageously wicked with his hair thrown out in disarray and she felt warm at once when she saw him smirked towards her and raised one of his perfectly thin shaped eyebrows.

"Good morning Cupcake, missed me already?" he asked.

She noticed that devilish grin despite the heavy stubble that was covering around his mouth. The sound of his deep raspy voice in the morning made her knees weak and she hated the effect that he has on her. But she tried to compose herself and did not return the smile, and just waited for him to come closer.

*He really likes to tease me.*

He approached without regarding her personal space. She felt the warmth of his breath and smelled the minty scent of it. She looked at him, and tried to control the urge of kissing him as her sight focused on his thin lips that always claimed her lips with full of wanton, she unconsciously bit her lower lip and felt a slight tingle inside her. But she shoved it and tore her eyes off his delicate mouth and glared at him.

"Alright I'm going to regret this but: what's wrong?" the Prince asked, moved beside her and wrapped his right arm around her shoulder.

"Oh I don't know- maybe the ten Royal Guards that were surrounding my carriage and refused to leave even if I've already told them to go away. And the fact that they're going to make my market day uncomfortable and not enjoyable," she babbled and frowned at him.

"Oh, come on Cupcake it's for your own protection," he returned, looking at her with concerned eyes. "I don't want my soon to be wife to just roam around the village with three guards on her side. You don't know what those savages in the village might do to you."

"Oh, come on Cupcake it's for your own protection," he returned, looking at her with concerned eyes. "I don't want my soon to be wife to just roam around the village with three guards on her side. You don't know what those savages in the village might do to you."

"How many times do I have to tell you that they're not savages," she retorted, releasing from his hold and faced him. "And they are actually nice."

"How would you know that they are nice when you don't even know them?" He doubted.

...*Because I actually knew and befriended some of them.*
She was about to tell the truth to him, but refrained for fear that he might worry more and send another group of Royal Guards. And then she wondered…

*Was he overprotective or he just purely doesn't trust the people in the village?*

She does not really like to argue with him this early, so she decided to compromise with him.

"Alright, you can send those extra guards to go with me, but I need you to tell them to wear their ordinary clothes and they should obey everything that I tell them." She demanded, remembering how the Royal Guards did not listen to her order.

She knew that he would ask why, so she decided to beat him to it. "And you will respect my request and don't ask further." And with that, she put her lips on his before he could utter a word and kissed him deeply, while her hand stroked the back of his neck and then fondled the back of his ear. She made sure to take her time petting the lower back of his ear, remembering how the Prince loved it. His beard was still making her a bit uncomfortable but she was surprise that it does not bother her that much anymore. Maybe she was already warming up at the reality that her Prince was hairy and not her ideal man she thought.

When she opened her eyes and released from the kiss, she saw him still enthralled. His eyes looked dreamy, intense and pensive.

*Oh god! How can he look so tragically beautiful?*

And before she could kiss him again and be swooned by his charm, she shook her head and calmed herself.

"Do we have a deal?" She asked in her most angelic voice. Seeing that he lost his ability to speak, she saw him just nodded. "Good!" she replied quickly and gave him a smile. "I'll see you at dinner. So, try not to yell at everyone while I'm gone."

*****

She left the castle with a naughty grin on her face. The way she negotiated her request was a smart move, but she felt a little guilty for putting the Prince under her spell in order for her to get what she wants.

"What are you smiling about?" she heard Perry's curious voice beside her.

"Do you think he likes me?" She asked out of the blue.

"I don't know Princess," Perry replied, staring at her. "The fact that he gets mad when he does not see you and almost killed someone when he saw you with another man, isn't that enough to answer your question?"

"Nah," she just raised her brows, not convinced. "I think Prince Carl almost killed Prince Viktor because he does not like other people touching or looking what he owns. He is like a cat, his very territorial."

"Laura, he does not own you," Perry corrected. "He was jealous because he does not like anyone touching you."

"That's absolutely what I'm trying to say," she retorted. "Prince Carl is very possessive of the things and people around him, like a cat!"
Perry rolled her eyes and just smiled while shaking her head.

"What?!" she asked as she saw Perry's resolved face. "Am I not right? He's like a cat... a very wicked black cat," Was her naïve and oblivious remark.

And before Perry can answer, they felt the horse drawn carriage came into a halt and heard Alfred, the Royal Coach Driver informed them that they have arrived in the place where they used to hide their carriage from the prying eyes of the village people. It was one of the secluded roads that lead from the forest into the village. She was excited to go out and explore the village that she almost forgot to take off her fur coat.

"Princess! Don't forget to take off your coat, and tie your hair," Perry informed right away and handed her a piece of string for her hair.

"Oh. Right," she said as she noticed the expensive coat that was covering her commoners clothes and change into a shabby robe. After that, she gathered her hair and tied it in a messy ponytail. Every time they go to the market, she tied her hair like this so that no one would recognize her in case there was someone she met from the castle.

When they stepped out of the carriage she smiled at the sight of the group of Royal Guards that were dressed in their regular clothes on their horses.

Perry gave her a worried look after glancing to all of them.

"Laura, they still looked like their guarding you," Perry said as her eyes roamed around the Royal Guards still sitting on their strong stallions.

"Don't worry, I have already given orders to them," was her reassuring reply. "I told them to buy the things that the castle need while discreetly looking after us. The only guards that were allowed to come near us were Alfred, Bastian and Fritz."

Still in doubt, Perry gave her a worried look. "Are you sure they are not going to disturb us?"

"No, because I gave them a long list of things and food to buy, so stop worrying and let's go before the vanilla run out." She suggested and they walked together with the other three Royal Guards, while the others dispersed in every direction but still discreetly tailing them.

"I don't think the market is going to ran out of vanilla," Perry commented as she slipped on her arm the shopping basket.

She crinkled her brows totally curious "How can you tell?"

"Because you're the only one who can afford it," Perry told her.

She gave Perry a smile and was not bothered at all at Perry's observation. Because the man that was selling the vanilla to her knew that she was one of the castle's trusted cook and baker.

Her eyes sparkled and were amused as they reach the market square of Karnstein. She cannot contain herself and almost ran. She loved to visit the different stalls and see new things that were being sold or traded. Every week she find new things that fascinated her: from colorful rubies and stones, silk, wools, linens, herbs, spices, incense, cheese, wines, bread, sweets, poultry, meat, fish, carved woods, books among others. She delights also at the sight of the colorful and different kinds of fruits and vegetables that were on the big baskets of each stall. And it put a smile on her face whenever she sees the hens, pigs, sheep, and children running around.
"Prin- I mean Laura, wait for me!" Perry shouted behind her.

To make sure that she got one of the most important things she needed in baking, she headed right away to the stall of one of her favorite sellers.

"Good morning Lukas!" she greeted the thin man with a receding white hairline and approached his stall.

"Laura! Good morning to you too, and Perry," he replied upon seeing them. "How are you ladies doing?"

"We're doing fine Lukas, how about you?" She answered while Perry gave him a smile and checked his product on the stall and walked around the back of it when Perry did not find something interesting.

"Oh, still the same. I have some fine fresh vanillas for you from Spain," He informed right away and laid in front of her the small black vines carefully.

She took the plant and smiled, as she saw the supple oily luster appearance of it, satisfied at the product. "Hmm… they are extra thick today." She pointed out. "What would you want in exchange for these?"

"Two silver coins. But since it's you, one silver is enough." He said, giving her a friendly smile.

"Lukas, it's alright, you don't need to give me a discount. I know that you need to earn a living too," she informed, as she put the vanilla in her basket, then took her pouch and handed the old man four silver coins instead.

His eyes widened at the sight of the four shining coins on his hand and stared at her in disbelief. "L-Laura, this is too much. I cannot accept it. You might get in trouble when the Queen finds out that you're over paying me."

He was about to give her back the two extra coins but she refused it gently. "No Lukas, that's for you. You've been one of the nicest and honest sellers here in the market and I appreciate that you always treat me well and gives me the best product you have." She said looking sincerely at the man's haggard face. "And besides the Prince gave me extra silver coins to buy the ingredients that I needed to make his favorite sweets, so it would not be a problem."

His face lit up and was curious. "Thank you Laura, you are so kind," he replied grateful. "So, what does the Prince look like? We never see him here and I have heard that he does not leave the castle."

She was suddenly caught off guard, and cast a look of confusion to him.

Sensing her uneasiness, "Please forgive me for prying, you don't need to answer it. I was just wondering how our future King looks like." Lukas replied with regret.

After regaining her composure, she smiled at him and gestured for him not to worry.

"The Prince is actually handsome in person," she said feeling warm and glad. "He was also kind and thoughtful in a very special way."

She was about to tell him more but was interrupted when Perry came back.

"Laura, have you found what you're looking for?" Perry asked.
She nodded and gave Lukas a smile, "I'm afraid I have to go. Perry and I need to buy a lot of things today."

"Oh, sure, we can talk again next time," Lukas said and bowed his head to both ladies. "I will see you again next week."

"Good bye Lukas!" They both said and she waved to the old man as they walked further in the busy square.

She looked behind her, checking where the other guards aside from Alfred, Bastian and Fritz who were expertly guarding her in the most discreet way. "It looks like the others are still busy with their market lists!" She chirped with amusement and headed to the stall of cheese.

She was not yet half way to the stall when little pair of hands wrapped around her legs.

"Laura! You're here!" the excited voice said.

She looked down and was happy to find a little girl with a dark curly hair clinging around her thighs.

"Emma!" she expressed in delight and took the little peasant girl in her arms and carried her, while she balanced the basket in her arm. "How's my little princess?!" she asked after small thin arms hugged her.

"I'm fine." The girl said smiling. "Did you bring me some sweets from the castle?" she asked with full of hope.

"Of course!" she exclaimed with the same bright tone as the child. She gestured at Perry who was walking behind her and took a piece of sweets from the basket she was carrying.

"Hello Perry!" the girl greeted as Perry handed her the baked good.

"Hello Emma," Perry replied walking beside them. "How's your mother?"

"She's there." Was the little girl's nonchalant reply, pointing at the stall where their heading. "Thank you." She said to both of them as she received the anticipated baked good. "Laura? What's this?!"

She smiled as she saw the girl's fascinated expression at the sight of the sweets that was on her hands, "It's a Creampuff, it's very delicious and it's the Prince's favorite!"

The little girl's face suddenly lit up with joy. "Wow! You're giving me the Prince's favorite sweets?!" was her remarkable reply. "Wouldn't he be mad if I eat it?!" she asked in her naïve tone.

She burst into laughter and was so happy at the girl's excited comment upon finding that it was the Prince's favorite, but at the same time worried about the Prince finding out that she would eat it.

"No Emma, the Prince wouldn't get mad," she assured, as she looked at those worried dark eyes in front of her. "The Prince is always happy to share what he has."

"And I just baked plenty of them yesterday, so the Prince have enough to eat," Perry added to lessen the worry in the little girl's face.

"How kind of him," the little girl commented not lifting her eyes on the sweets. "May I taste them now?"

Still carrying her in her arms, she smiled at the girl "Yes, you may." She returned glad to see that she was able to put a smile on this little girl. It always worried her how the little girl and her mother
managed to survive with no husband to support them.

"Mama! Laura and Perry are here!" Emma shouted as they approached the stall where a woman with a dark hair and a little older than Perry stood behind it. The woman had the same curly dark locks and pale skin as Emma, but a haggard and thin face.

"And they gave me the Prince's favorite sweets!" Emma said with full of pride, lifting the sweets for her mother to see as they approached the stall.

"Laura! Perry! It's good to see you two!" the dark haired woman greeted them with genuine enthusiasm. "I see that my little girl had found you before you could come in my stall. Have you said thank you?"

"Yes Greta, she did." She responded right away smiling and still holding the child who was now indulging quietly at the sweets in her hand. "It's good to see you too and little Emma here. Sometimes I just wish that I have my own little girl too."

"Really?" she heard Perry's curious comment and saw the sarcastic smirk on her Lady in Waiting's face. "Why don't you tell him so that he could make it formal?" Perry slipped and was tongue-tied at the last comment.

She suddenly glared at Perry as Greta gave them a surprised look.

"Oh Laura! You never tell me that you had a beau," was the excited reaction from Greta. "What's his name? And what does he do?"

She shot daggers at Perry and knew that they cannot lie about it. She smirked as Perry remained silent and shifted her eyes to Greta. "His name is…" she tried to recall the Prince's other names. "Marcus. And he… he works at the castle too with us; his one of the Prince's Royal Guards." She invented, recalling the time Prince Carl and Prince Viktor fought with their swords. She was ashamed at the thought of lying to Greta, but she did not want their cover to be revealed.

Her tension was lessened as she heard Emma butt in and looked at her eyes while munching the Creampuff; she smiled as she saw the little girl's mouth full of cream.

"Laura, what's a beau?" Emma asked innocently.

She looked at Greta first, asking permission and received a nod. "A beau is a male suitor. He is someone that likes you and becomes your betrothed, and then you marry him."

"Do I have to like him too?"

Emma's innocent question caught her off guard. Being noble they always do not have the choice to choose whom they will marry. Just like her and Prince Carl.

She hated to lie again to this innocent child and glanced at Greta again to seek permission and she received a nod. "Well it depends. Because when you grow up, a boy or a man will ask you to be his sweetheart, and if you like him, you can choose him and say yes; But there are certain families, like the nobles and monarchies, their families where usually the ones who chooses a beau for their daughters."

"Who are the nobles and monarchies?" the little girl inquired.

"They are the kings and queens, prince and princesses and rich people," she explained.
"Can I choose the Prince of Karnstein to be my beau?!" Emma asked excitedly.

All three of them burst into laughter after hearing Emma's innocent wish.

"Sweetie, I think the Prince is too old for you," Greta informed.

"You haven't seen him yet, why would you think he's old?" Emma quipped and shifted her look at Perry.

"Perry, is the Prince handsome?" Emma asked.

That piece of information made Perry blushed. "You can ask Laura here how the Prince looks like, because she always brings food to him."

This time it was she who felt warm and fuzzy. Greta and Emma's expression became amaze at the thought of her seeing the Prince. Most of the people she befriended in the village only knew that she and Perry work at the kitchen of the castle and thought that they never see or have contact with the Royal Family. She learned from the villagers that, working closer with the monarchies were a privilege for some servants. In the case of the Karnsteins, having to serve and see the Prince of Karnstein was not just a privilege but an honor too, because the Queen does not allow a lot of servants to see and serve her only son. It had been a mystery for the villagers why the Prince was not allowed to see a lot of people and leave the castle.

Her train of thoughts was interrupted when she saw a pair of small dark eyes staring at her patiently and heard her name.

"Laura? Is the Prince handsome?"

"Yes. He is very handsome and nice," she told Emma, and then held the little girl's gaze, weighing how she will tell the little girl the next sentence. "And I think your mother is right, he is a bit older for you to choose as your beau."

"Why? I'm already five years old!" was the little girl's disappointed remark. "How old is the Prince?"

"He is the same age as me, sorry to disappoint you," she said carefully. Her heart broke at the sight of Emma's hope being crushed. "I tell you what, if I get a chance to talk to the Prince I would ask him to visit the market square one day, and you might see him in person."

"Can you do that?!" Emma's mood shifted and her eyes widened.

She nodded and the next thing she knew she felt two little arms hugged her again. "Thank you Laura!"

She was happy and satisfied after putting the smile back to the little girl's face.

"Emma, we cannot put Laura in a difficult situation," Greta warned. "You know that the Prince never leave the palace and it would be complicated for Laura just to talk to the Prince."

Confused, Emma asked her mother, "Why can't Laura talk to the Prince?"

"Because servants are not allowed to talk to the King, Queen or Prince," Greta explained. "That's the rule and Laura might lose her job in the castle."

"Oh." Emma sighed in defeat.

"Don't fret," she said consoling Emma. She does not want to disappoint the little girl, but at the same
time, she wanted to respect Greta's concern about the relationship between the servants and their masters. "Perhaps I could ask someone to write to the Prince about visiting the market square and perhaps... they could write it there too that a little girl named Emma wants to meet him."

"That's sounds wonderful!" Emma was back in her good mood. The thought excited everyone.

"That's a good idea," Greta agreed but the sound of her voice was not convinced.

"And I know perfectly well who the person we could ask to write the letter and give it to the Prince," Perry was suddenly enthusiastic.

Even she had no idea who Perry was referring to, and gave her Lady in Waiting a puzzled look, "Who?"

"The Prince's Valet of Chamber!" Perry announced.

"What's Valet of Cha-" Emma was about to ask but had difficulty remembering the name.

"Valet of Chamber is the one that looks after The King's or Prince's clothes and other personal needs," she related gladly.

"...But how about the Queen or the Princess' needs? Who takes care of it?" was Emma's worried question.

She smiled and focused her eyes on Perry, gesturing her Lady in Waiting to explain the glamorous job.

"Ah! Lady in Waiting is what they call it," Perry stated, as all eyes stared at the Lady in Waiting. "She is in charge of the Queen or Princess' wardrobe care, supervision of servants, accompanying the Queen or Princess wherever she goes, reading correspondence and writing on the Queen or Princess' behalf. She must also be proficient in etiquette, language, dances, music, painting, horseback riding and embroidery."

"And don't forget, she could also be a friend or like a mother when a Princess or a Queen needed someone to confide into." She added and looked at Perry with full of warmth.

"Wow that was fun!" Emma reacted. "Maybe someday I can be a Lady in Waiting."

"Who knows? Perhaps when you're old enough," she returned and winked at Perry.

"Alright little girl, you can come down now so that Laura can choose the cheese that she wish to buy," Greta ordered. "And stop asking Laura about the Prince."

She put Emma down gently and received a sticky peck from Emma, as the little girl was still eating her creampuff.

"Laura?" Emma tapped her lightly wanting a last attention.

"Yes Emma?" she asked as she went down on her knees to level Emma's sight and gave the little girl her undivided attention.

"What's the Prince's name?" Emma asked.

She smiled before telling Emma the answer and sighed. "His name is Carl. Prince Carl." She supplied the answer pronouncing the name 'Carl' sweetly.
"I like his name," Emma commented and walked around the stall and stood beside her mother.

She just smiled at the young girl and stood up to face the stall full of different cheese, ready to choose what she wanted.

Perry had already chosen some cream cheese to use for her sweets.

She gave the cheese that she selected from the stall for Greta to pack it and asked how much when Perry received the packed cheese from Greta.

"So, how much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching for her pouch of coins.

"It's one silver coin for all," Greta responded.

She took out her hand from the pouch and handed Greta five silver coins.

"Laura! You don't have to pay me that much again," Greta was returning the four other silver coins. But she shoved Greta's hand gently away. "Save it. The four silvers are from my earnings from the castle."

"But this is too much," was Greta's worried reply. "And you might need something for yourself too. You don't earn that much from being a cook, do you?"

"Err… not that much," she answered skeptical. She hated lying but she wanted to help them without revealing her true identity. She took a mental note to ask the cook's wage when she gets back to the castle. "But since I work and live inside the castle, most of my needs were provided by the castle. The King is a generous master."

"Oh. The servants there are lucky," Greta commented. "I will accept your four silvers but you have to take all of my cheese. Because you paid double the cost of all the cheese that I am selling. And I won't take no for an answer."

"Alright, if you insist," she agreed and saw Greta begun to pack the rest of the cheese on the stall. "The Prince would be happy that he has a lot of different cheese to eat every day."

"I'm sure he will, because he likes it, especially the Steirerkas." She said.

"Here you go dear and thank you so much for your kindness," Greta responded while she took the rest of the packed cheese. "I hope His Royal Highness would enjoy it."

"He certainly will and I will let him know that it was a gift from you and Emma," she proudly told her without thinking. Then she saw Perry's expression gesturing for her to hurry up. "Good bye Greta. See you next week. Good bye Emma!" she shouted to the little girl who was busy playing behind the stall.

"Goodbye Laura and Perry!" The mother and daughter waved to them, with happy faces.

When she knew that their earshot away from Greta's stall she remembered Perry gesturing for her to hurry up.

"What's wrong?" she asked while they walked together side by side.

"You cannot tell Greta that you would tell the Prince that it was a gift from them," Perry chided in a hush voice. "Remember, you're a servant, you don't get to speak to the Prince unless he asks you a question."
Feeling like a fool, "Oh. I forgot." She regretted getting carried away.

"Come on, let's find some chocolates," Perry suggested.

And before they could take another step, a muscular clean shaven young man with dark clean cut hair blocked their way and kneeled before them. Her eyes caught the red rose that he was offering to her and she knew right away who the person was.

"Laura my lady," he called with such passion in his voice. "When are you going to marry me?" he asked.

"William! How many times would I tell you that I don't love you and I'm not going to marry you!" she reprimanded. As much as she enjoyed interacting and befriending the commoners in the village, there were few of them who annoyed her, and one of them was this ardent suitor of hers. "And don't ever call me your lady! Some people might hear and they might start a gossip!" she told him as her eyes scanned some of the onlookers and then she caught sight of Alfred, Bastian and Fritz who were always prepared to grabbed this insistent suitor of hers, in case she give them a permission to take him. But she never did that because she does not want to make a commotion and William had always behaved and never touches her, except the persistent proposal from him.

"Let them think that you're my lady," he replied still kneeling in front of them. "You are after all a beautiful maiden."

"Ahem!" Perry distracted him and got his attention. "Laura has a beau and they are going to marry soon."

The look of shock in his face made her step back as he stood up and looked at her with grief, "Tell me that is not true Laura!" He pleaded.

She just nodded feeling sorry for him.

But he did not accept it. "No, you're lying. I don't see a man accompanying you every time you go to the market. You're just telling me this because you want to test my patience and loyalty for you. I won't stop telling you that I love you." He proclaimed.

She sighed and rolled her eyes. Unbelievable! Why can't he take no for an answer! She looked up straight into his eyes.

"Perry is telling the truth, I have a beau and his name is Marcus. He is a Royal Guard in the castle," she explained, emphasizing the words 'Royal Guard' hoping that it might scare him away.

"There is no way I am going to let him have your hand in marriage without a fight," he returned with determination in his eyes. "Tell this Marcus, in the name of love, I am challenging him in a sword fight, in defense for my love to you Laura!"

Suddenly, there were uproar from the people around them, cheering for William and his passionate confession of love and determination to fight for it.

She grew worried when she saw the ten Royal Guards got alarmed by the commotion and were already surrounding them, ready to attack and protect her. She gave Alfred a sign to hold the guards from attacking and that she would take care of the commotion.

And when she was sure that Alfred has the control of the Royal Guards, she silenced the crowd who sympathized with William.
"Alright! I will tell my beau that you want to defend your love and honor, and that you're challenging him to a sword fight. And if he won, you would leave me alone and will not propose to me again!" She suddenly heard 'boos' from the crowd, who were certainly supporting William. "And if you win…"

Perry suddenly grabbed her arm and whispered to her. "Are you sure about this? Where in the world we'll gonna find an excellent swordsman?"

"Don't worry, I'll ask Alfred for the best knight in the castle," was her confident reply and released from Perry's arm and faced William and the crowd. "And if you win… you may ask my father for my hand in marriage and you have to accept all of my father's conditions before taking me to be your wife."

"I accept." He replied and the crowd applauded.

"Now, will you leave me in peace so that I can continue to buy the things that I need?" she requested, but he did not moved away.

"Not before you accept this," he handed the one stemmed red rose to her.

She smiled and hesitantly took the flower, "thank you," she told him and he stepped aside to let her pass.

"How would you explain this to Prince Carl?" was Perry's worried remark as they walked to the direction of sweets stalls.

"He does not need to know." She returned. "I will ask one of the best knights in the castle to play along as my beau, to make sure William lost." She relayed, stating the most logical reason to tell her Lady In Waiting.

Although she knew that William might not be that serious, deep inside her she still worries. What if Prince Carl found out what happened today? And worst what if Prince Carl found out that a commoner in the village wanted her hand in marriage again? She had witnessed how possessive and jealous her betrothed could be. He might end up killing William.

TBC
So Much Feelings

Chapter Summary

The continuation of the day from the Market Day and Prince Carl proposed. And Laura asked Perry a very interesting question.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

It was almost dusk when they arrived at the castle's entrance door. When she stepped down from the carriage after being assisted by Alfred, she was met by a worried LaFontaine.

"Thank god you're already here Princess," the Valet expressed as LaFontaine tried to catch their breath from running towards her.

Confused she asked them right away, "What happened to you?"

"It's the Prince..." LaFontaine uttered.

"What about the Prince?" Perry asked.

"Is he angry again?" she questioned, furrowing her brows. She remembered the last time she went to the village without telling him, and it resulted to the Prince being angry at everyone in the castle. "Why would he be angry when he knows that I was in the market today? I even allowed the ten extra guards that he sent to come with me. And I am not late for dinner."

Regaining their composure, LaFontaine faced her again and said, "He is not angry. But he is broody and impatient. He does not like to wait for someone, especially you, Princess."

"But I thought he won't be finished with his studies until dinner time," she returned, knowing that she had arrived early than she usually do, so that she had time to prepare and change for dinner.

"Well, that's the problem. His Highness cannot concentrate on his studies and dismissed the scholar that supposed to tutor him today," LaFontaine related.

"But why can't he concentrate on his studies and dismissed his tutor?" Was her innocent response. "When I saw him today, he seemed to be in deep thoughts with his books."

"He was." LaFontaine confirmed. "But when you left and the thought of you going to the market made him worried and restless."

"But the royal guards were with me!" she defended.

"I know. But he was not satisfied with just the ten, he even wanted to send ten more as a back-up, and the fact that he cannot be there by your side to protect you was driving him crazy." LaFontaine explained. "I think the Prince is not confident of you going to the market square. He does not like the thought of you being away from him for a long time," was LaFontaine's honest comment.
"I guess I just have to talk to him and explain to him that he should not worry too much."

"Princess, I think His Highness had fallen in love with you," Perry teased.

She gave her Lady in Waiting a lopsided grin, not convinced of what she heard. "Perry, he's not in love with me; he just doesn't want me to meet other men in the market square. And as I was telling you, Prince Carl is like a cat; he is very territorial," was her innocent comment.

Perry just sighed and rolled her eyes.

"Where is he?" she asked LaFontaine, thinking that it was time again to tame the wild cat.

"He is in the rose garden, waiting for you."

She did not waste another minute and went ahead to the rose garden. She did not bother changing her peasant clothes since she thought that it was time to tell him the truth, at how she and Perry spend their day in the market square.

After a few minutes, she reached the rose garden and fumbled her way through. It was already dark but the weak glittery light from the stars that were scattered in the sky helped her to find the secret entrance from one of the bushes that covered that rose garden.

When she came out of the bush and was out in the rose garden, her eyes caught at once the figure that was sitting on the ground. As she walked closer to the Prince, she smiled at the sight and found Prince Carl sitting on a blanket, beside him was the basket that she always used for picnic. There were two goblets on the middle of the blanket and a bottle which she presumed was a wine, some dark grapes, apples, strawberries, loaf and some cheese were also lying on the blanket. She smiled when her eyes caught some chocolate cupcakes which she presumed were the left-overs from breakfast early this morning.

The Prince did not notice her presence, seeing that he was too engrossed from gazing at the stars. She decided to surprise him and carefully approached him from behind. And when she was close enough to him, she kneeled behind him and she was about to put her hands on his eyes to cover it, but his reflex was fast that he stood up at once and unsheathed his sword and aimed at her.

"Whoa! It's just me!" she exclaimed right away and raised her hands as if surrendering.

She saw the confused look on his face and realized that the Prince was trying to decipher who she was. Then she remembered that she was wearing this peasant maiden dress and her hair was tied up in a messy ponytail, and the Prince had never seen her hair like this before; "It's me, Laura."

"Cupcake? You scared me, don't ever sneak behind me like that again," the Prince reasoned out and his eyes scanned her again, before he sheathed his sword, "And why are you dress like that?"

"This is how I look like whenever I go to the market," she explained and rose from her feet and presented her 'peasant alter ego' to her betrothed.

"You're disguising as a commoner?" was the Prince's unbelievable reply, as if not amuse.

"Yes. And please don't get mad," she returned sensing that he was not alright with the idea. "I am doing this because I want to know how to live as a commoner. I want to experience the life outside the castle; talk to the people and mingle with them."

"Hold it, are you telling me that you're socializing with those savages?!"

"How many times do I have to tell you, they are not savages," was her impatient and yet careful
respond. Then she saw his features became serious.

"Laura, you don't know what those people are thinking," he retaliated, his voice deeper and fiercer. "Most of them do not have money, if they find out that you're a princess, they will abduct you and ask for ransom money," was his doubtful comment. "From now on you are no longer going to the village."

She snapped at his retort. She knew that he was over protective and possessive, but to take away the only thing she enjoyed doing in this kingdom was unacceptable and she would not give it up. She had grown to love her life as a commoner even if she cannot do it often. Going in the village and market square had given her knowledge and inspiration on how to help the needy. It opened her eyes to the harsh reality of life and made her humble and grateful for what she had. It had taught her not be ignorant too.

"No, you cannot order me to do that," she retaliated, challenging his temper. "I have people who depend on me and I have big plans for them. You do not have the right to dictate what I should do."

"I am your betrothed and the future king. You shall obey me," was his angry authoritative reply.

After hearing his words, she remembered the reason why she did not want to get married to a man. She hated the fact that women were obligated to honor and obey their husbands. And now she discovered how unfair this tradition was and how degrading to be treated as a 'property' of a man.

"If it pleases Your Highness, you could as well lock me in the tower!" She blurted out without thinking. Her temper was also out of control. She was expecting another retort from him and she was ready to fight for her rights. But the silence and pained expression of Prince Carl held her back. Then it hit her: he was in a way having been 'imprisoned' in this castle due to his angst.

Oh God! She panicked internally, knowing that she hit a very sensitive topic.

She mellowed down and tried to approach him, but he stepped back and avoided her eyes. But she would not give up like this. She walked closer to him and held his cheeks and she guided his face to look at her. But he averted her eyes and looked to the side.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to say that," she uttered and still held his face, as she waited for his reply. But was answered by silence, "Please look at me," she implored and he complied and saw the grief in his eyes. "I cannot bear it if my Prince would remain angry at me." After that heartfelt apology, she saw him calmed in her touch, leaned to her hand and he kissed her palm. She did not release her hands from his cheeks and felt overwhelmed at the contact of his lips kissing her palm. Even though he could be broody and temperamental, this soft and gentle loving side of the Prince was one of the reasons that she liked him. He was so affectionate if he wanted to.

"Can I kiss My Prince now?" she whispered and saw his bashful smile, before nodding. She gave him a gentle kiss and when she released from his kiss she gazed at him, sensing that he wanted to tell her something but he cannot seem to know how to begin. "Is there something you want to tell me?"

He gaze at her silently for a moment, as if composing the words that he was about to say.

"I'm sorry too."

Her eyes widened in surprised and cannot believe that she heard Prince Carl apologized for the first time. She remained calm and waited for him to talk further, not wanting to distract him. He was beginning to be really open and honest to her, she thought.
"I'm sorry for being overprotective. I really care for you; when I cannot see you or be with you whenever you go, I cannot protect you from any harm," he confessed, and looked down at his boots. "That's why I don't want you to go to the village anymore."

She cupped his face again and held his gaze, saving him for feeling ashamed of his weakness. "Carl, I am grateful that you want to always protect me, but I could take care of myself and the Royal guards that are with me are trained and highly skilled, you have to trust them to do their job."

"Very well, if it'll make you happy, I won't stop you from going to the village," he finally agreed. "But if something bad happen to you, I will hang all of them."

She rolled her eyes and just accepted her fate, since she was about to marry the future King.

"Are you hungry?" he asked out of nowhere.

Then she recalled the foods that were laid on the blanket.

"I'm famished!" she declared and she saw him laugh.

Prince Carl took her hand and guided her to seat on the blanket. Once she was comfortably seated, her eyes feasted at the food and sweets in front of her. Then she felt him sat on her left side, and began to pour the wine from a special bottle.

She was amazed as she saw the wine bubbly and sparkling, and the fact that it was not red made her curious. "What kind of wine is this?" she asked, looked into her goblet and smelled it. The aroma of apple and pears enticed her palate right away and tasted it. "Wow! It's sweet!"

"Do you like it?" the Prince asked, smiling and fascinated at her reaction.

She grinned at him, showing how delighted she was after drinking it. "I love it! What is it?"

"It's a sparkling wine from the vineyards of Champagne region in France," Prince Carl said with pride. "It is used when celebrating a coronation of a king."

She stopped from drinking further as she realized the importance of this wine and where it came from. "Why are you serving me a ludicrously expensive wine?" was her concerned question and put her goblet down.

"Because we're celebrating a very important day," the Prince answered nonchalantly, and pulled a little box from his pouch.

Before she could ask what special occasion they were celebrating, she saw Prince Carl genuflected towards her direction, opened the little box and took out the golden ring with a single diamond and presented it to her.

"I didn't realize that calling someone mine could make me smile and make my day beautiful. I didn't realize that the arrival of this little ball of sunshine in my life could turn my world upside down and not to mention crazy. I didn't realize that I could be happy knowing that there is someone out there who likes me despite my ill temper and broodiness. And I didn't realize that all of these things are possible, until you came into my life. Laura Elizabeth Rosamund, would you do me the honor of being my wife, my queen and the mother to my children?"

She was astonished. Prince Carl was proposing in front of her and she was too overwhelmed to describe what she was feeling now and too dumbfounded to reply. She never expected that it could be as dreamy like and lovely as this, and how touching it was to hear his reasons of marrying her.
She never had any reason to marry him except that she wanted to unite and bring peace to both their kingdoms. As the days turned into weeks, and weeks turned to months, she slowly taught herself to accept her fate: that she was marrying a man. The feelings that she have towards her betrothed could be infatuation, or attraction, or simply excitement from knowing that Prince Carl was attracted to her and cared for her, but in her part she knew that there was always something missing: desire; her desire of loving a woman. Nevertheless, the feeling of being adored by someone was always thrilling.

She gathered her wits and calmed herself, and then she held his gaze before answering, "I do! With all my heart, I will marry you, Carl Philipp Marcus!" then she kissed him.

They released from the kiss and the Prince put the ring on her finger, it was a little tight but it fitted her finger.

"It was my grandmother's so it might not fit perfectly," was his worried reply as he had difficulties putting it on her finger.

"It's a little bit tight but it fits perfectly, thank you, it's beautiful," she expressed and raised her left hand, admiring the gem on her fourth finger. "I guessed there's no reason to remove this ring because I'm already bound to you forever," was her confident reply, and gave the Prince a reassuring smile.

"You certainly are Cupcake," was Prince Carl's instant reply. "And there's no turning back now," he teased and smirked at her. "You're already mine."

She grinned at him and then held his hands, "My Prince, I have already said yes before I even came here. I am already yours since that day."

"I know… but I wanted to do it properly, and who knows, you might have changed your mind and didn't want to marry me after you have seen me," was the Prince challenging remark.

"Well, my answer still remained the same it's a 'yes'. So from now on, you have to get used to this little ball of sunshine of yours, because I won't go anywhere," she teased him and earned a naughty smirk from him that she was beginning to like. "Shall we eat?"

"Oh, yes, of course," was the Prince quick reply and served her some cheese and bread.

"This is lovely did you plan all of this?" she remarked admiring the preparation that Prince Carl went through just to propose to her. And she was thankful that they made up.

He took a deep breath before saying, "You have no idea how difficult it was to prepare all of these, Cupcake."

She grinned at the sound of his endearment to her and caught his naughty smirk, "Really? You prepared it all and brought everything here?" she challenged him, knowing that the servant have done it. "You never ask anyone?"

"Well, I kind of ask LaFontaine…"

"I knew it."

Once they were finished eating, the Prince stood up, "Wait here, I'll just get something," he said and disappeared in the darkness.

She continued to enjoy the special wine and poured more on her goblet. After taking a drink, she put her goblet down in front of her and saw a yellow rose dropped in front of her, she was about to pick
it up but she was suddenly surprised when she felt the presence of the Prince hovering behind her. She stayed still and waited anxiously for him to talk, but he remained standing, then she felt him come closer and kneeled behind her. She did not look up to check at him but instead she waited patiently on his next move. The anticipation of knowing he was behind her but not talking or not touching her was making her thrilled and at the same time nervous.

"Cupcake, you look like a naïve provincial girl," Prince Carl uttered his voice raspy, deeper and coated with desire. "Entirely too tightly wound. Such a cliché… I oughta know better-"

"Gee, thanks," she quipped, knowing that Prince Carl seemed thrilled at how she dressed. The fact that her hair was tied up and the creaminess of her nape was exposed, this olive green peasant dress reveals more of her shoulders compared to her princess dresses. The bodice was laced up the front and the full skirt was split down the front to show a modest peek of the white muslin under dress beneath it.

She knew that he was just inches away from her when she felt the warmth of his breath on her bare nape. She calmed herself and patiently waited. She gasped as she felt his lips and beard touched the back of her neck. Her heart throbbed madly as Prince Carl slowly kissed the area at the back of her neck, and on her bare shoulder. She felt his lips kissed her so hard on her left shoulder, as if wanting to let her know that he wants her.

She turned her head slowly to her left, and met Prince Carl's demanding lips on hers, kissing her deeply and pushed his tongue inside her mouth. She let his tongue caress her own before his tongue explored the roof of her mouth. She moaned at the sensation and her left hand reached out at the back and caressed his nape.

She gasped again and a loud moan escaped her mouth as she felt Prince Carl's hand cupped her left breast and kneaded it. Oh god! She shouted in her thoughts feeling the vulnerability of her position, as Prince Carl continued to caress her breast. She closed her eyes and felt for the first time this dizzying sensation that the Prince's hand was doing to her breast. She never thought that her body would react wildly. Now she knew why Perry had warned her not to get too close yet with the Prince. Not until they got married.

She kissed him deeply, while his left hand wrapped around her waist to support her. Then she felt his right hand removed the lace on the front of her bodice and pulled the sleeve of her underdress down, after a few seconds she felt his right hand on her exposed breast and kneaded it. She felt like she was going to collapse at the overwhelming pleasure that her body was experiencing. She began to pant and moaned louder when she felt the Prince's thumb and index finger rubbed her nipple, while his left hand found the base of her core and gently palmed it.

"Carl…" she cried out as she cannot control her body responding crazily to his torturous touches. Her left hand grabbed his hair and she arched her back as if wanting more contact from his hands.

"Laura…" he uttered his raspy voice thick with desire. "You're mine." He whispered in her ears.

It sent a shiver in her body as she heard his deep raspy voice say it, while his thumb and index fingers continued to rub her hardened nipple. She was lost in his touch and cannot escape this maddening sensation. She felt his other hand wrapped around her waist tighter and pulled her closer to him. But when she felt the Prince's hard bulge on her back she panicked and opened her eyes, and released herself gently from his arms.

She regretted her action as she saw the confused look from Prince Carl and stressed at how she was going to explain to him the sudden withdraw. It already happened twice and she still cannot find the way to tell him that she was not like some other woman who could be aroused at seeing or feeling a
man's penis. And instead, she always panicked at the mere contact of it on her body. As if on cue, the sound of someone calling her name yanked her from her worry. She tried to listen if she heard it right, and her ears recognized the voice of Perry.

"Cupcake, what's wrong?" Prince Carl asked totally oblivious from the sound around him.

"Perry is looking for me," she said in a hushed tone and fixed her clothes before standing up.

"Damn it," was the Prince's disappointed reaction and rose.

"Is my hair alright?" was the first thing she worried.

"Cupcake, I almost undress you and you are worried about your hair?" Prince Carl remarked. "Maybe you should pay attention at the loose strings of your dress?"

"Oh!" she expressed as she forgot to tighten the strings, she did it quickly and knitted the top very tight.

She was already finished when she saw the figure of LaFontaine and Perry emerged from one of the bushes.

"Princess Laura, I got worried when you did not return to your chamber," was Perry's comment. And then bowed to the Prince, "Good evening Your Highness."

"Hello Perry," Was the Prince's apathetic reply.

"I ate dinner here together with Prince Carl," was her excuse and motioned for the foods and drinks that were laid on the picnic blanket. And then she was about to show Perry the ring but when she looked down at her hand, she caught the very visible bulge in the Prince's trousers. She faced him and covered him with her body. And tried to tell him about his erection, but he looked too disappointed to notice.

So instead, she decided that it was best that they left first. "I apologize, My Prince, but I've had a long day and would like to rest now." She then caught the Prince's attention.

"Oh, alright, LaFontaine and I can escort you to your chamber," was Prince Carl's thoughtful gesture.

"No!" she shouted and saw Prince Carl was shocked at her sudden outburst. "I mean… you are exhausted, so try to get some sleep too." She said and looked behind her towards LaFontaine and Perry, and was thankful that the two were standing still and quietly waiting for her.

The Prince gave her another puzzled look. "Cupcake, are you alright? You looked like you have seen a beast."

Panicking, "Yes! I mean no… It's not a beast!" she said rather loudly. "I'm just tired My Prince and thank you for the lovely evening," she returned and kissed him under his earlobe, while she whispered, "Your sword is still standing." And then she looked at his fully erected shaft, to let the Prince know what she meant.

Embarrassed, "Oh," Prince Carl said, turned around and walked away from them without looking back. "LaFontaine, go with them! I need to fix something!"
The following day, she was having one of her baking day with Perry at the castle's kitchen when something just popped out of her naïve mind.

"Perry would it hurt?" She asked nonchalantly as she mixed the flour and milk in a bowl. They were alone in the kitchen and Perry was standing across her, and uses a rolling pin to flatten dough on the table.

She received Perry's full attention as her lady in waiting stopped at once from working and looked at her. She knew that Perry would always worry whenever there was something that was hurting in her, be it physically or emotionally.

"Hurt what Princess?"

"On my wedding night…" she began, weighing her words.

Her lack of interest on men became worst when she met different kinds of them and experienced some misbehavior from them, but nothing serious that she could deemed unacceptable.

"…When Prince Carl claim me."

"Oh."

She saw Perry blushed but did not care, because Perry was the only one she trusted to answer this kind of sensitive stuffs.

"Because I heard from Betty that I'm going to bleed," she explained, not wanting Perry to worry where she heard those silly things. Sometimes she liked talking to Betty about this stuff because that maiden of hers hides nothing. But she would like Perry's opinion.

"Well… as someone who wasn't claimed yet I cannot tell you how it felt, Princess," Perry explained carefully. "But I always hear from the married women that it always hurt the first time. And bleeding from a woman is a sign that no man has claimed her yet."

Worried, she gives Perry a follow up question, "Would the husband's size made it hurt?"

"I really cannot answer that. Why?" Perry relayed.

She suddenly felt warm and reluctant, but eventually gave in out of her curiosity.

"Well, it's Prince Carl… he… I… I think his..." She blurted the last words and hid her face from Perry in case she was blushing of embarrassment.

Perry composed herself and faced her, "Have you already seen the Prince's… umm… sword?"

"Wha-?! No!" She quipped, careful not to slip. She just told Perry that Prince Carl proposed but she never mentioned that he kissed her passionately last night. "It's not what you think!"

"Then why are you telling me that Prince Carl's is big," Perry gave her a suspicious look.

"I didn't say it is big! I said, I think it is big," she retorted, getting flustered. "Because the first time we kissed, I, well he actually grabbed my buttocks and pulled me closer to him then I felt something very hard in between his legs, but I think he did not noticed that I felt it. Because I panicked and was nervous I released from his arms and he was surprised and got sad at my sudden withdrawal."
Suddenly she saw Perry giving her an amused smile, a sign that she had babbled nervously.

"That meant only one thing…" Perry gave her a relieved smile afterwards. "Prince Carl is happy kissing you."

"Hmm… that was interesting," she answered giving Perry her 'naughty smart' grin.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for all your kudos and feedbacks :-(
Carmilla told her parents that she proposed to Princess Laura and that the King could officially announce their betrothment. LaFontaine questioned Carmilla when she is going to remove her beard. Laura had said something that surprised Carmilla.

Carmilla

As soon as they were comfortably seated, she focused to the direction to her right and waited until the King consumed the first serving of wine.

"My King Father, I think we can officially announce to the whole kingdom that I and Princess Laura are betrothed," she stated clearly with a hint of excitement in her voice.

The King stared at her and then gave her as satisfied smile, before her father tapped her shoulder.

"Well done my child!" Her father responded with genuine enthusiasm. "Did you like the ring, Princess?" the King said and switched his sight to Laura. But before the Princess can show it, she saw her mother's suspicious stare.

"Is there something that I have missed? You all looked happy and excited," was the Queen's humorless remark.

"Forgive me my Queen Mother," she said at once, not wanting her mother to feel out of place. "I have forgotten to inform you that I have already proposed to Princess Laura and she had said yes." She explained careful not to sound too eager, since she knew that her mother would criticized her of being too emotional. And showing her emotions, especially to her mother, was prohibited."

"My son, what are you talking about?" was the Queen's arrogant and sarcastic reaction. "Princess Laura had already agreed to become your betrothed since the day your King Father visited the Hollis Kingdom. She was already bounded to you before you even met her. You don't need to propose."

Her mother's remarks irritated her.

Why can't she just be happy for what I've done!

She was about to explain to the Queen again that she wanted it done properly but the touch of Laura's hand on her leg refrained her.

"With all due respect, Your Majesty," Princess Laura interrupted gracefully and looked at the Queen. "I also told Prince Carl that it was not necessary, but when he kneeled in front of me and confessed his reasons of marrying me, I was overwhelmed and very happy that moment. I knew that he was hesitant at the beginning to marry me, and I understand it, but as the days went by and I slowly got to know him, I said to myself: I made the right choice. And I do not see myself marrying any other man, except your son." Laura expressed with such elegance and poise before lifting her gaze from
the Queen, and shifted to the King. "I have grown to like Prince Carl for what he is and I care for him deeply."

There was a temporary silence for a moment as all eyes were focused on the Princess, after that heartfelt explanation. She never realized that Laura felt that way. And she was surprised to find out that her betrothed was daring enough to challenge her mother's comment. She and her father never defy the Queen's words; just like what was happening right now. And before the awkward silence can ruin everybody's mood, the cheerful sound of the King's voice brightened the situation.

"Princess, let me see the ring?!" Was the King's enthusiastic request, after finishing the second serving of wine.

Princess Laura happily showed the ring on her finger to the King then to the Queen.

Curious, "It's beautiful. Where did you get it Carl?" the Queen asked, being familiar with jewelries that were precious and of high value.

"I gave it to him." The King answered at once. "My only heir is getting married to the most beautiful Princess in Styria, and I thought, my child should propose properly. So I gave my mother's ring."

"Well I guess Princess Laura deserved that ring," the Queen agreed and the voice lightened up, and then stared at the Princess. "As long as you will not forget your responsibilities as the future queen comes first; and that is to provide an heir for my son and to help him rule this kingdom wisely and preserve the Karnstein's wealth."

"Your majesty, I always prioritize my responsibilities and obligations as a daughter and a princess over my personal needs," Princess Laura stated confidently. "I am ready to accept all the hard works and responsibilities that would be bestowed to me."

After that powerful remark from her betrothed, she noticed her mother calmed down. She gazed at Laura and admired her betrothed's courage, perseverance, enthusiasm and dedication. She never expected that there was another woman who could challenge and measure up to her mother's expectations. She smiled and realized her taste in woman seemed similar to her father's taste: strong willed and confident women.

She reached for Princess Laura's right hand and was about to give her betrothed a reassuring touch, however, her eyes did not catch the goblet beside her, and it fell on the Princess' lap and the red liquid splattered all over her betrothed's dress.

"Oh, forgive me Princess, I did not see that," she apologized at once and rose from her seat to help Princess Laura dry the wine on the dress. Two of the manly servants were about to help the Princess get up and came with table napkins in their hands. But the thought of those hands touching her betrothed's dress made her worried and angry. "Don't touch her!" she ordered and everybody's eyes, including her parents were on her as she stood there and glared at the scared servants in front of her. They retreated at once and left Princess Laura alone.

"My Prince, they were just helping me stand up and gave me cloth to dry my dress," Princess Laura explained carefully.

"Carl, calm down, and let the servants escort Princess Laura to her chamber," the Queen said.

She heard her mother's suggestion but she does not trust the manly servants. "No, I will escort Princess Laura to her chamber," she responded and looked at her father's direction. "My King Father, would you mind if I left the table now? I want to escort my betrothed since it's my fault that
"It's fine my child. Go and help Laura," the King assured and nodded.

"Thank you my King Father," she replied and bowed to the King, and then remembered that she needed her mother's permission too. "Would it be alright to my Queen Mother if I go?" she asked politely, even if she knew that her mother would say yes, since she asked the King first.

"You may go," was the Queen's cold response. "But make sure that the Lady in Waiting does her job, and not you."

"Good night Your Majesties," Princess Laura said and bowed to the Queen and King before leaving the table.

"Goodnight Princess," the King said and nodded.

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Princess Laura hurriedly entered the chamber as she trailed behind the small Princess. She just realized now how she reacted badly when she saw the guards that wanted to help Princess Laura a while ago. She had never been so over protective of someone before and it scared her.

"Should I stay outside and tell the guards to get Perry right away?" she asked as soon as she saw none of the maidens nor Perry was inside the chamber.

"No. Just help me undress," The Princess ordered and begun to struggle to get out of the dress.

"Are you trying to seduce me?" she teased, wanting to see her little princess blushed.

"Wha-?! No!" Laura retorted. "Will you please come here?"

"As you wish, my Princess," she replied making her voice deeper and enticing. Princess Laura turned around when she came closer and motioned for her to loosen the knots on the back of the dress. "I just really don't understand how you could breathe underneath this silly dress." She commented while her hands do the job of untangling the knots one by one.

"Stop complaining and just get me out of this dress," Laura retorted.

"So demanding… I like that in a woman," she quipped and this time she noticed Laura's head tilted to the side, a gesture she discovered when Princess Laura was embarrassed or flustered. She did not comment further as her eyes caught the bare smooth skin of Princess Laura's back. She adorned for a moment how her little princess' back looked beautiful and tempting to her eyes. She had thought of running her hands through the soft silky skin of Laura and kissed again the smooth shoulders of her betrothed. She remembered how soft Laura's skin at her mouth when she kissed Laura's shoulder that night she proposed. She had not felt so aroused like that before, and she did not know if she could control herself if she kissed the Princess' shoulder again.

Then she remembered what her mother said. She controlled her urging and put her hands on her back, knowing that Perry could come any moment. "It's already loose, you can change now." She informed Laura and turned around and stood there with her hands behind her back, her right palm gripping her left wrist. She closed her eyes and began to inhale and exhale, trying to calm her nerves from that sight of Laura's bare skin. It seemed her body was on fire.

This woman is killing me!
"I'm already decent, you can turn around now," Laura ordered.

She breathed a sigh of relief when she heard the word decent. She relaxed and rested her arms on her side before turning around. Her eyes almost cannot believe how beautiful the sight was in front of her when she saw Laura dressed in a thin white camisole accentuating the shape of her betrothed's body. Her hungry eyes scanned Laura's whole body and caught her attention when her sight darted on those perky breasts that seemed visible beneath the silk camisole, and the small nipples that were visibly erected behind the damn cloth. Then she remembered the feeling of Laura's hard nipples on her fingertips, as she rubbed and squeezed it and the softness and fullness of Laura's breast as her hands caressed it.

Damn It! Why is it hot in here!

She complained and felt her throat drying and found it difficult to breath. She prayed the devil would stop tempting her as she felt something throbbed inside her braise.

"Prince Carl?"

Her prayer was answered when she heard Laura called her name and the spell that Laura's body put on her was broken.

"Umm... yes Princess?" she asked innocently, as she saw Laura blushed with embarrassment and nervousness. "Is something wrong?"

She held Laura's gaze and followed it as Laura guided her to the direction of her crotch. She was shocked when her eyes caught the sight of her fully erected shaft; it betrayed her again. And then she realized how it ached badly right now as she felt her balls tightened too. She put her hands and attempted to cover it.

"Oh!" she exclaimed and gave Laura an embarrass grin. "Sorry Cupcake, I remember that I have some important matters that need my full attention. Goodnight!" and with that, she stormed out of the chamber and did not wait for Laura's reply.

She ran towards the opposite wing, and on the way to her chamber she met LaFontaine who was confused on why she was running.

"What's wrong?!" LaFontaine asked, running behind her.

"Tone down your voice. You don't want to alarm the royal guards," she ordered as they pass on the two of them that was guarding the entrance of the wing leading to the hall of her chamber.

"But why are you running?" LaFontaine nagged as they caught up beside her. "And you're sweating and flustered. Have you been doing your 'morning ritual' anywhere else?" they accused.

"Of course not!" She retorted, and was thankful to have finally reached her chamber. She remembered LaFontaine walking in her room without knocking and accidentally heard her doing her 'morning ritual'. So, her Valet knew how she looked like whenever she was done with her 'morning ritual'.

She did not give LaFontaine a chance to reply and instead, she went straight to the bathroom and this time she made sure to lock it. "I'll call on you when I'm ready." She informed before locking the door.

Once she was safely inside the four walls of her bathroom, she removed the strings of her trousers at once and pulled down her braise. She gripped her stiff member right away and stroked it up and
Once she was done and decent, she asked for her Valet to come in. When she saw the naughty smirk on LaFontaine's face she avoided their eyes and she sat right away on the chair of her dressing table, ready for LaFontaine to remove her beard.

"Have you heard already from your source?" she asked in an authoritative serious tone in order to distract her Valet from asking what happened a while ago.

"Yes, he said that person lives alone with his mother in the village and is working at the butcher's store," LaFontaine related while carefully removing the beard. "The mother used to work inside the castle, but had to be sent away when the woman got pregnant."

"How about the guards, are they familiar with the place?" was her follow up question, as she winced a little when LaFontaine took off the facial hair above her upper lip; the most sensitive part.

"They have carefully studied the area around and the ins and outs of it, so they know where's the safest and where's not," LaFontaine supplied, while scrutinizing her hair. "Should I ask the barber to give you a trim soon? You're natural waves are beginning to show now."

"No, not yet," she replied right away. "I still want to enjoy this out of bed look that you're calling. And besides, it's not that long," was her final excuse.

"Alright," LaFontaine conceded and peeled off the last part of the beard. "...And how about this beard of yours? Why are you still not giving it up when you knew that Princess Laura does not like it?"

After hearing that reproach from her Valet; "Calm down, I'm going to get rid of it soon. I just need to do this mission first, before I remove it," was her defensive remark. "And besides, Princess Laura had never complained about it."

She looked at her Valet's reflection on the mirror, as she waited for their answer. But LaFontaine just rolled their eyes after that reply. "What?"

"Nothing," LaFontaine returned. "And what might be this mission you're talking about?"

"I'll discuss it with you tomorrow and you'll going to help me with it," she said and stood up. "In the meantime, I like to take a bath and sleep early, because we have a big day ahead of us tomorrow."

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That night, while in bed, she contemplated on how fast things were happening in her life. She had no intention of marrying and getting involved with someone for fear of being rejected and detested, and then the next thing she knew she was attracted and falling for this Princess and does not want to lose this woman in her life. Suddenly, she had become selfish and does not want to end this passion that she was feeling towards the Princess. She did not thought of the consequences anymore of what these emotions can do to her. All she wanted was to be with Laura and spend all her time with the Princess. Her mother was right; something happened to her and she suddenly found herself having all these emotions that she have never felt before, and it felt so good! She does not care what her mother thought about it. But she would not miss this chance of being happy once in her life, and she knew that, this happiness came from only one person: Laura.

And now, the only challenge she was facing was how to tell the Princess what she really was. She
did not thought about it before since she was carried away with all these affection and sweet gestures from her betrothed. Laura was the sunshine of her life and she does not want that light to disappear!

Suddenly she found herself afraid of losing Laura if she told her soon to be wife about the real her. She panicked and began to feel this anxiety that she use to feel at the thought of people finding out what she really was. She does not want to take a chance.

She does not want to end this happiness with Laura. She would do anything to keep Laura to herself, even if she had to cover and hide her torso for the rest of her life. She would not give Laura a slight chance to suspect that she was not a full-fledged man. She would do everything in her power to keep that secret in order not to lose Laura. Just like what her mother told her: she was the heir and the future King, nothing was impossible.

*****

The following day, she made sure to talk with LaFontaine first about her plan before doing her daily task and going out with her father. It was late in the afternoon when they finished their weekly hunting. The weather was getting milder and she loved it when she was sweating under the heat of the sun.

She had just finished hunting with the King and was already on the way to the castle, when her eyes caught the sight of her betrothed approaching her. She smiled and wished that every time she would come back home, the Princess would always be there to meet her outside.

"What are you doing outside?" she asked and then felt Laura's hands wrapped around the back of her neck before kissing her. "Cupcake, I'm stinking with sweat." She remarked but eventually reciprocated Laura's kisses and automatically put her hands on Laura's hips.

"I don't care. I like your smell," Laura returned and intentionally sniffed the area under her ear, before kissing it too.

"Stop pulling my leg, we both knew that I smell," she said and tried to disentangle herself from Laura's arms.

"But it's true! I like how you smell, it's mild and delicate," the Princess defended. "You smell earthy and at the same time like a rose. And whenever I'm close to you, your smell makes me calm knowing that you're near me; except when you do something naughty, then it makes me…"

She smirked right away at how the Princess blushed easily. "Makes you what?" she demanded and tightened the hold on her betrothed's hips.

"It makes me awake," Laura finished and smiled naughtily. "What are you expecting to hear?"

"Is that the truth?" she challenged and slowly kissed Laura's pulse point, and then switched to the other side and nipped all the way down on the creaminess of the Princess' neck. Then she felt Laura's heaving bosom as the Princess' breath became ragged when her lips feasted on the Princess' bare neck, but before she could go down further to Laura's bosom, a hand stopped her gently.

"Hold it there lady killer, we're outside and I don't have any intention of giving free shows to any curious spectators," the Princess commented and managed to release from the hold and gave her a naughty grin before running to the direction of the entrance to the castle. "Race you!"
"You're killing me Cupcake!" she expressed and ran after Laura.

It did not take long for her to catch her betrothed. Once they were inside, they composed themselves and behaved like an adult, as they stroll along the great hall and to the tea room.

Laura was still holding her hand while walking in the vast hall.

"Is it true?" she asked, as she and Princess Laura sauntered along the castle's hall holding hands.

"What?"

"That you're happy when I proposed to you and that you don't want to marry any other man except me?" she repeated smiling sweetly at the thought of it.

The Princess stopped and faced her and gazed at her eyes with full of warmth. Those beautiful innocent hazel eyes could melt anyone's heart just by gazing at it. Then she felt Laura held her hands firmly.

"It's true," Laura stated not lifting her betrothed's gaze from her. "I thought knowing that I'm already betrothed to you was enough, and then we could get marry afterwards. But the thrill and the happiness that I felt when I saw you kneeled in front of me, asked me to be your wife and the mother of your children was very intense. I never imagined that I could feel like that… at least not with a man."

She got suddenly curious at the last words Laura uttered.

"What do you mean at least not with a man?"

"Huh?!"

She saw the bewildered expression of her betrothed and she was confused too. "The last words that you said…" she tried to salvage the conversation and repeated it. "You said that you never imagined that you could feel like that, at least not with a man. What do you mean by that, Laura?"

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for your kudos and awesome comments. Getting feedbacks from you have given me some ideas also to add in this fic, so thanks for always letting me know how you felt :-)
Laura is beginning to be honest for what she feels. Some Hollstein cuteness.


Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

Oh God! What have I done?!

She panicked internally. Sometimes her babbling can get out of control and just have to say what she always felt. She did not tear her eyes from the Prince's stare and calmed herself until she could clear her head and compose a decent lie.

"Laura, what do you mean by that?" Prince Carl asked once more, his voice deep and authoritative.

She became more nervous when she saw the serious look on his face.

"Not with a man…" she started and thought carefully before she spoke another word. "Not with a man like you."

Prince Carl's expression became more serious and yet bothered. They were both trapped in this awkward silence and the tension was growing thick.

"What I meant is," she tried again as the Prince stared at her silently, waiting for her explanation. "…Not with a man like you who is broody, jealous, superior, over protective and ruggedly handsome," she stated and calmed down when she saw the Prince's expression softened and relaxed.

"I thought for a while you said that you never felt a thing like that for a man," Prince Carl replied and moved closer to her and stared at her. "Tell me Princess, what kind of man do you like?" he demanded.

She gained her confidence as soon as she saw his mood lightened. "Hmmm let me see," she said and grinned at him, while she pretended to think deeply. "I like a man who is broody, very territorial, sarcastic, possessive, intelligent, ruggedly handsome, with beautiful dark eyes that looks like he would always devour me, has dark hair and with a beard. Oh, and he must love sweets too, like me."

"Did you just describe me?" He returned and pretended to be irritated. "I'm serious, Cupcake!"

"But that's the truth!" she teased and walked further to the direction of the tea room. But she felt his hand halted her, and gently turned her around and the next thing she knew, Prince Carl was wrapping his arms possessively around her. She gazed at his face and saw the devilish smirk that she liked, and raised the perfectly shaped left eye brow of his.

"You think you could just get away like that, Cupcake?" He said his voice deep and coated with desire. "You just lied to the future King of Karnstein."
"And what are you planning to do, Your Highness?" she challenged and tried to loose from his arms, but his hold was strong and she felt him pulled her closer to him.

She saw his dark eyes stared at her and then slowly trailed to the creaminess of her neck and then stopped at her breasts. She caught sight of his hungry eyes and she felt a tingle inside her, as she witnessed how he stared at her like she was a prey that he was going to devour any moment from now. He looked wild and dangerous and it was making her aroused at the sight of him.

Prince Carl looked around him. Puzzled, her eyes followed his. They were alone in the long hall and the next thing she knew, Prince Carl gently pushed her to the nearest wall on the corner and started to kiss her deeply.

"Laura…" he uttered in between kisses. "Tell me you want me." He uttered with need.

The sound of his voice every time they kiss was so overwhelming. She never imagined being aroused just to hear the sound of his voice, it was very dark and passionate and at the same time delicate and desperate.

"You're the only one that I want, Carl," She said the first words that came to her mind. And her hands stroked his hair, as she felt his kiss became demanding and his hands explored the sides of her breasts, teasing her. "You're the only one that I adore," After saying those words, she felt Prince Carl released from the kiss, and she saw the pain in his eyes.

"Promise me you will never leave me, Laura," he begged. "Promise me that you will never seek another man's attention, but only mine."

Suddenly, Carl's expression became melancholic. She had never seen him looked so frightened and vulnerable like this. She melted at the sight in front of her and cupped his face gently, and gazed at him. "Carl, I will never leave you. I promise. And I will never look another man except you, My Prince," She uttered and was surprised at the words that came out from her mouth. She never thought that she could say these things to any man. After giving him an assurance, she saw him smiled and put his lips on hers again.

She felt his tongue sought her and opened her mouth gladly for him. His kisses deepened and she felt his hand roamed around her neck, exploring the small amount of exposed skin, and slowly descended to her bosom, before cupping her left breast. She closed her eyes and felt light headed at the sudden contact of his hand fondling her breast. She was beginning to love how Carl touches her; it was very possessive and yet affectionate. It was very different from Danny's touch, which she considered lovely, but not passionate.

"Oh god, Carl…" she cried as the Prince's fingers found her nipple and pinched it against the thin fabric of her dress.

"Your Highnesses…"

A voice suddenly interrupted them from getting more carried away, she opened her eyes and saw LaFontaine in front of her, while Prince Carl continued kissing her neck but removed the hand that was on her breast.

"LaFontaine!" she exclaimed, wanting to call the Prince's attention and to stop him from nipping on her neck.

"Leave now or die!" Prince Carl interjected, still facing his back to LaFontaine.

She tried to gently get away from his hold but his arms wrapped more tightly around her. "What can
"we do for you?" she asked sheepishly.

"…If I could just interrupt His Highness for a moment?" LaFontaine asked carefully. "I have a-"

"Are you blind? Can't you see that I'm occupied?"

She heard Prince Carl added and then burrowed his face deeper to her pulse point and continued to nip on her neck, showing no signs that he would listen.

"No Your Highness; and I am aware that you're engaged into something very important. But I'm definitely gonna lost my head if I didn't relay Her Majesty's message," LaFontaine retorted.

"Please excuse the Prince, he didn't mean to be rude," she returned and glared at Prince Carl to tame him before asking LaFontaine. "What is the message?"

"Her Majesty needs Your Highness at his chamber," LaFontaine related. "The seamstress and the tailors that will make Your Highness's clothes for the wedding are here and brought some samples for the Prince to try it on."

"Tell them to wait," Prince Carl ordered and resumed what he was doing.

But she would not accept this arrogant attitude of him, and instead called LaFontaine's attention. "I think the Prince can go now with you LaFontaine," she said and saw the surprised look on Carl. "The Prince needs a cold shower. He got too excited again and needed to calm down."

"I…"

She heard Prince Carl was about to protest but she silenced him with a kiss instead.

"I've asked Betty to bring the tea and the sweets to the tea room," she said after releasing from the kiss and remembered the reason why she was waiting outside. "I was waiting for you, because I baked some creampuffs for you today."

"But I want my Cupcake," he whined and tried to distract her and put his hands again on her hips and kissed her.

After the kiss, she took his hands off gently from her waist, "Don't let Your Queen Mother wait for you," she scolded him playfully. "I'll be waiting for you at the tea room, so hurry up and do what you have to do."

He hesitated but eventually gave up when she sneaked out of them and headed to the direction of the tearoom. "Thanks, LaFontaine!"

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After almost an hour of waiting in the tearoom, she finally heard the door opened and was surprised at what she saw.

Prince Carl entered and sauntered across the room with full of confidence, her eyes feasted at how attractive he was wearing a red and black checkered tunic, black trousers and black cape, the color complimented well to his pale skin and dark hair. And he oozes with self-confidence and poise. She does not know how he could be so graceful but at the same time so ruggedly handsome. This was the first time she had seen him wear something bright, aside from his regular black tunic and
sometimes purple tunic that he puts on when there was a special occasion. She gaped at him openly and cannot believe that she could be giddy at the sight of how he dresses and carry himself.

"If I had not known you, I would say that you want to devour me right here, right now," Prince Carl said, teasing her. "But since I know that we're not thinking the same thing, I would say that you're surprise that I'm wearing a different tunic."

She just gave him a naughty grin and leered at him.

"I got this from the tailor," he explained. "My Queen Mother thought that I should try a different color."

"You look handsome in that red and a black checkered tunic," was her fascinated comment, and seemed to be paralyzed at where she was seating as she looked up and stared at him.

Prince Carl took a seat beside her and faced her, and smirked naughtily. "So, I look handsome now because I'm wearing a different shade of color. But when I'm wearing my black, you never tell me that I'm handsome?"

"Of course I do!" was her instant retort. "You're handsome even if you're hairy!"

"Huh?!!"

"Err, I mean, even if you have a beard, you're still handsome," she said and was a bit ashamed at how he described him. "I am not actually attracted to men with beard but…"

"But what?" was his sudden and curious remark.

"But I'm beginning to like it, because of you," she honestly told him.

"And what exactly do you mean by that?"

"Because you, my Prince," she started and cupped his bearded face and lovingly scratched his facial hair on his jaw line near the base of his ear like he was a cat. "Had put a hex on me and seduced me."

"Oh come on Cupcake! Tell me what you think of my beard?" He challenged and moved closer. "I want to hear your honest opinion."

"My honest opinion?" She was suddenly caught off guard. But she composed herself and just focused at him and gazed at his face. "Honestly, I never like men with beard." She finally admitted it and did not feel guilty. "When I first saw you, I panic."

"Really?" was his surprised remark. "Then why didn't you turn around and ran back at Hollis?" was his sarcastic reply.

"I'm being honest now! And you're teasing me!"

"Alright, I'm sorry. Carry on," he apologized and gave his attention to her again. "You're saying that you panic when you saw me, is it because I have a beard?"

"Umm… yes." And she finally said it without any hesitation.

"So, you hated my beard, is that what you want to say?" He asked, curious.

"Well, at the beginning. But then as we became closer, I did not noticed it at all," was her honest
opinion. "It's like I have grown to accept it because it's part of you. It's what makes you, you. Do you understand what I mean?"

Prince Carl just nodded quietly while gazing at her.

"I mean, I never thought that I would come to like a man with a beard... but I just found myself, liking you; liking how you are; liking you despite how you're beard makes me uncomfortable," was her genuine remark. "I must say that I liked Prince Viktor because he has smooth face and clean shaven-" she was saying, but she noticed that his mood changed and became serious and he crinkled his brows.

"So, you finally admitted that you like that bastard," Prince Carl retaliated, obviously not happy with what he heard.

She held his face again and made him look at her direction. "Please don't be jealous, you know that you're the only man in my life now." She tried to pacify him, knowing that he was boiling inside with jealousy, and then averted her sight. "I'm not finished yet... hey, look at me." She ordered and when he finally set his gaze on her, she smiled at him and kissed him. She felt him calmed down after that kiss and the wrinkle on his brows disappeared. "What I want to say is; I would never ask you to change just to please me. Because I have grown to like you as what you are now and I wouldn't ask anything for more, because I am attracted to you and like you as you are."

"So, you'll tolerate it, even if my beard is making you uncomfortable whenever I kiss you?" Prince Carl asked, as if testing her.

"Yes, I can tolerate it and I would tolerate it even after we got married, have children and grow old," she teased him, and earned a smile from him.

"You're unbelievable, Cupcake," He returned and wrapped his arm around her. "How can you tolerate something that makes you uncomfortable?"

"Because, when it comes to caring for someone, you'll defy everything just to let that person know that he is precious."

"Are you saying that you care for me that much?" Prince Carl asked suddenly surprised.

She was surprised at what came out of her mouth too. But instead of denying it, she just carried on and let him know what she really felt.

"Carl, I will not deny it, I am growing fond of you and likes you as you are... my big wild cat," she teased him and saw his eyes widened.

"Well, you're big wild cat needs some petting now," he returned and smirked naughtily.

And the next thing she knew, Prince Carl lay on the sofa and rested his head on her lap.

"Don't you want to eat your cream puffs first?" she suggested and put her hand on his hair and began to stroke it.

"Later," he said, closed his eyes and relaxed.

"So, have you chosen what you're going to wear on our wedding?" she asked, and felt a bit awkward at the mention of wedding.

"Yes," Prince Carl said.
"Can you tell me how it looks like?" was her curious reply.

"It's red, with black and gold," he relayed nonchalantly.

"How very detailed it is," she quipped and saw his eyes opened and she smirked at him.

"Cupcake, I am not like you, who explain every tiny bit of detail, when talking about the clothes that I wear." He elaborated and closed his eyes again. "And besides, I wanted you to be surprised when you see me in my wedding tunic."

"But that's unfair," she declared and stopped stroking his hair. "I have described to you what I would wear and you won't tell me yours?"

This time, he opened his eyes and stared at her. "Cupcake, you haven't told me yet what you're going to wear."

"Oh."

"So, can we please go back to petting me now?" Prince Carl implored and closed his eyes again and relaxed.

Instead of stroking his hair, she decided to give him what he like most: she fondled under the base of his ears and caress it. She caught him smiling as if enjoying it and the next thing she heard was a purr sound. She giggled discreetly, not wanting to embarrass him and continued caressing the back of his ear.

As he relaxed on her touch, she took this chance to gaze at Prince Carl's face. She had always wondered how a man could be so beautiful despite having been covered with a facial hair. This was probably one of the reasons why she does not mind having a betrothed with a beard. Prince Carl's features were delicate and elegant. His complexion was flawless and porcelain like; his eyes were deep and the color fits his personality: dark and dangerous; his nose was like from a Greek god and his lips were so soft and kissable; and his perfectly shaped eye brows, she swear, were beautiful and elegant compared to her eye brows. But the most beautiful and attractive part of his face, and the one that she loved was his jawline. It was beautifully sculpted to perfection. She sighed and felt giddy at how the Prince made her feel like she was a mad woman who had a terrible crush to a Greek god of love; maybe she was! But the good thing about it was, she could kiss and touch this 'Greek god of love' that she admired! Suddenly she was overcame by her passion and excitement and decided to claim the Prince's lips.

She stopped caressing the back of his ear and cupped his cheek, before putting her lips on him and claimed those thin soft lips. This time, she kissed him so hard and put her tongue inside his mouth. Then she felt his hand caressed her hair, as she continued to kiss him passionately. She began to feel the heat crawled in her entire body, and her other hand started to caressed the prince's leg. She earned a groaned from him when she released from the kiss to get some air, but put her lips right away on him as their kisses became demanding. Her hand on his leg continued to stroke up and down, but she suddenly panic when her hand accidentally touched the hard bulge of the Prince and quickly released from the contact. She lost her focus and got suddenly confused and pulled from the kiss. When she opened her eyes, she saw the confused look on Prince Carl's face.

"Cupcake, what's wrong?"

"I'm sorry, it's just that… your…" she fumbled for words and hated herself for always have to pull from his kiss or from his touch whenever things got 'hot' and she felt him hard.
"My what?" Prince Carl asked, puzzled.

"I… I like to kiss you, and I like how you kiss me-

"But…” Prince Carl filled in.

She saw his eyes wide and his expression, disoriented. She cannot keep doing this without telling him why. It would be unfair for him if she would lie. He lifted his head a bit from her lap and faced her direction, while waiting for her to reply.

"But I get scared when I feel your hard bulge rubbing on me." She said it without pausing.

"Oh." He remarked and looked at his crotch.

"You see, I tend to panic every time I see and feel it hard," she admitted sheepishly.

This time, Prince Carl rose and sat beside her; leaving a decent space between them, he held her hands carefully and motioned for her to look at his eyes. "Cupcake, why didn't you tell me at once? The last thing I want to do is to scare you," he expressed deeply. "I would never force you to do anything that you dislike," he said with a hint of sadness in his voice.

"Carl, I'm sorry if I'm a tease and you might think I'm a snob too. But-" she was trying to explain.

"It's alright Cupcake, I understand," was Prince Carl's thoughtful reply. "I know that everything that was happening in your life right now is new and overwhelming."

"But how am I going to give you an heir when I can't even bear to touch or feel your…”

"…Penis?"

"See! I can't even say it!" was her frustrated remark and felt ashamed of telling him. Getting betrothed to a man was one thing; accepting that she liked a man with a beard was definitely a miracle! But the thought of a man's sex organ inside her was beyond her imagination and it was making her anxious.

This time, she looked at Prince Carl's face and saw how worried he was and she became troubled at what he was thinking. "My Prince, I would understand it if you're thinking that I am a failure and a cold woman who couldn't please her man-"

"What? No!" was the Prince quick retort. "You are never a failure and not a cold person." He assured her.

"Then why do you look so worried and very upset?"

"Because I don't want my wife to feel pressured of having to produce an heir," the Prince explained taking into consideration everything with regards to her comfort. "Laura, I am not saying that I don't want an heir. Because I do want it, especially when you said yes when I asked you to be the mother of my children," was Prince Carl's fervent remark. "But I would only do it if I have your permission and when I know that you want it too. I want to conceive our child out of love, and not out of obligation."

She was touched at how he cared so much for her. And just wanted to cry, "So what do you mean by that?"

"That I am going to wait until you're ready to accept me and when you're ready to…” he was saying,
but hesitated for a moment.

Curious, she asked at once, "Ready to what?" was her innocent question.

"… To love me." Prince Carl stated.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for your kudos and wonderful feedbacks! It always makes my day bright :-)

I know it's silly, but I am just curious, is there somebody out there who likes Carl/Carm with a beard? And why?
Chapter Summary

A little bit continuation of what had happened on the previous chapter.

And it was one of Laura and Perry's market day and after witnessing William's passionate declaration of love, Alfred, Laura's most trusted royal guard brought with him 'Laura's royal guard betrothed'.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

She was too dumbfounded to comment. It never occurred to her that Prince Carl would bring the topic of love. Since she arrived in the Karnstein Kingdom, her mind was prepared for responsibilities and obligations; but not for love.

And since they were already being honest with each other right now…

"To tell you the truth, I feel something for you," she began, weighing her words as he gazed at her with full of hope in his eyes. "I don't know what to call it but…"

"… but it's not love." Prince Carl filled in.

She saw his face turned serious and the brightness in his eyes disappeared. She hated it every time she saw him in his melancholic state, but she does not want to lie to him.

"Not yet. I hope you understand that it is early for me to put a meaning to what I feel." She added and felt his hand released from hers.

"I understand," he whispered and seemed to lose his enthusiasm, and looked down.

Oh god, he is broody again.

She thought and rose from her seat. His expression changed at once, when she kneeled in front of him. She reached for his face and cupped his cheek, and motioned for him to look at her.

"I hope my big wild cat is not mad at me," she asked in her sweetest voice and pouted at him. She received the reaction that she wanted when he smiled and put his lips on hers and felt his hand caressed her hair.

Prince Carl groaned when she released from the kiss. She stood up and walked towards the table in front of them.

"You had forgotten your creampuffs," she reminded and took the plate containing the Prince's favorite sweets.

"I preferred your lips from those sweets," Prince Carl commented, "Or both,"
She sat beside him and put the plate on her lap while she faced him, "Well, that could be arranged," she answered with full of confidence and saw the surprised look on the Prince's eyes.

Prince Carl smirked naughtily, "Show me," he dared and faced her direction.

She stared at him, and made sure that his eyes were focused on her. Once she got his full attention, she picked up the little creampuff with her thumb and index fingers and slowly put in her mouth and bit it in between her front teeth; she then moved closer to him and passed the sweet that was in between her lips unto his waiting mouth. She felt his wet lips gently on hers as he received the creampuff and disappeared in his mouth before kissing her.

"Ohh..." Prince Carl expressed while slowly munching the sweet that was melting inside his mouth. "I think that's the best creampuff that I've tasted."

She smiled at the sight of him happily chewing his favorite sweets.

"You want more?" she asked in a deep tone and he nodded while his eyes became darker, staring at her with his heavy lidded smoldering eyes. She lowered her head and stared back at him innocently before picking another sweet and put it on her mouth again and then fed him using her lips.

Prince Carl remained silent as she continued to slowly feed him his favorite sweet using her mouth and lips.

After feeding Prince Carl the creampuffs, she rose and took the goblet with wine instead of the tea. She took a seat beside him and decided to pamper him further by holding the goblet for him, "Your wine, Your Highness." She stated and gave him a naughty grin. He stared at her first and smirked.

"So, are you practicing now serving your future husband?" he asked and raised his left eyebrow.

"Well, I might as well start now," she returned and offered him the drink. "I don't want the future King of Karnstein to complain." She said and he dutifully drunk from the goblet that she was holding for him.

She suddenly felt warm, when she saw him licked his tongue after drinking the wine. There was really something about him that always made her giddy.

"As long as you'll always feed me like this, I would never complain." He teased.

She gave him lop sided grin. "I will never forget, Your Highness."

"By the way, I would be very busy for the next days," Prince Carl related. "I might not be able to see you during daytime. So, I'll just see you at dinner."

Since she arrived in the Karnstein Castle, she never questioned Prince Carl's activities, knowing that he was the future king of this kingdom.

"Thanks for letting me know," she said and put back the goblet on the table. Then returned beside the Prince and settled beside him. Prince Carl wrapped his arm around her and they silently enjoyed each other's company. She rested her head on his shoulder and wrapped her arm around his waist. She noticed that Prince Carl was actually fond of snuggles.

*****

It was Monday and she was grinning like a child; she exited the castle's main door followed by Perry. She always looks forward going to the market; disguising like a commoner made her thrilled
and excited at the thought of being just an ordinary person that can roam around the village unnoticed. These frequent trips to the village have been relaxing for her as she was transported to a life of simplicity, carefree, rational, unpretentious, humble and forthright. But most importantly, she liked the genuine and sincere manner of the people she met and befriended with.

*If only Carl could experience mingling with the people of this Kingdom.*

She told herself, realizing that the Prince might like also spending time in the real world of his Kingdom.

It was more than a week now, and she rarely saw the Prince and missed his company. But she never got bored since she kept herself occupied by her princess' duties. The Queen had slowly introduced her to her upcoming responsibilities once she became officially married to Prince Carl and became the crowned Princess of Karnstein.

As future Queen of Karnstein, she was also worried about the people's suffering and poverty. The Kingdom of Karnstein and Hollis were abundant when it comes to the land's crops and products, but they need to work out on preserving this wealth so as the next generation can still experience the same abundance like the present. She had thought of teaching their people how to take care of their crops properly and to protect and preserve it. And she needed the help of her King to accomplish her plans.

She was about to hop in her carriage when her eyes caught a disturbing sight in the front of the carriage.

"Alfred, why is he clothed like that? I told you they should wear their ordinary clothes when going to the market with us," She demanded looking up and pointing to the person that was sitting already at the coachman's seat, clothed in the familiar Karnstein Royal Guards black trouser, red long sleeve tunic with a black panther with a golden crown embroidered on the chest, black cape and full helmet.

"Forgive me Princess Laura, for not asking your permission," Alfred apologized bowing his head in front of her. "I took the liberty of providing the Princess her 'royal guard betrothed'. After all the questioning from last time, it might be safer for the Princess to have her 'royal guard betrothed' by her side."

"Alfred is right Princess," Perry suggested, stepping beside her. "I think it's about time that you introduce someone as your betrothed, so they would stop inquiring who your beau is." Her Lady in Waiting quipped and gave her a sarcastic grin.

She rolled her eyes, conceded and glanced at the royal guard that was silently sitting on the coachman's seat and gave him an annoyed look before shifting her eyes on Alfred.

"Alright! I just hope you have chosen a guard who is a skilled swordsman…" she blamed her coachman as Alfred held her hand ready to assist her to step in the carriage. "…because I do not want to end up being betrothed to William."

She reasoned out but suddenly felt the carriage moved, and she followed Alfred's sight, thinking it were the horses. But was surprised when she saw the Royal Guard rose from the coach seat and looked intently towards her direction. She crinkled her brows and glared at him, "Alfred, what is wrong with him?"

Alfred fidgeted at the sight of the Royal Guard looking down at them. "Oh, he was just overwhelmed at the thought of fighting for you, Princess Laura," Alfred supplied his voice trembling. "I have mentioned to the guard that he might duel someone for your hand in marriage."
She did not break her stare at the guard, as Alfred explained to her the Royal Guard's odd behavior.
"Tell your friend to simmer down." She informed before hopping into the carriage.

As soon as she and Perry were seated comfortably inside the carriage, and felt the carriage moved, she leaned closer to Perry's ear and whispered, "Watch out for that Royal Guard."

Perry gave her a puzzled look and mouthed, "Why?"

"I have a feeling that he cannot control his temper," she mumbled to her Lady in Waiting. "I don't want him to expose our disguise."

"Don't fret, I will take care of it," Perry assured.

"Thanks Perry," she uttered and felt the hand of her Lady in Waiting on top of her hand.

After almost half an hour, she felt the carriage halted and heard Alfred's voice announcing their arrival to the secluded place where they park their carriage and horses. She checked on her window to the left and saw the other royal guards clothed in ordinary clothes that were escorting them. She sighed in contentment as they discreetly dispersed to different directions towards the village after hiding their horses. She was glad that the other guards were obeying her rule of discreet. But her smile vanished as she remembered the Royal Guard that Alfred took with him to pretend to be her beau.

She had forgotten to give him an order and it was too late for her to tell him what to do or not. Perry was already out of the carriage and she rose from her seat and about to go out of the carriage. She lifted her hand to the person outside to assist her on stepping down the carriage, expecting that it was either Bastian or Fritz who usually helps her after climbing down from the back of the carriage. But she was surprised when a black leather gloved hand received her hand and held her gently until she reached the ground and she found the Royal Guard standing too close to her as if blocking her way, "T-thank you." She mumbled and felt a little intimidated at how he towered in front of her with his back straight in those Royal Guard uniform and staring at her.

He was not that tall, perhaps a couple of inches higher than her and even though his face was behind a guard's helmet, she could still feel his eyes penetrating at her and it sent shivers to her skin. She found her composure and looked up at him, "I think it is best that you keep your distance from me, so that it would not draw some attention from the village people."

She did not receive a reply or a nod of obedience, but instead, he stepped aside and let her passed. She walked towards where Perry was standing and handed to her one of the baskets that her Lady in Waiting were holding.

"What was that all about?" Perry asked curious as they resumed walking to the direction of the market square. "Why did he stood there in front of you?"

"That is what I am telling you a while ago," she returned mumbling to Perry. "That guard thinks that I am his betrothed."

"Oh my," Perry began to worry.

She glanced back to check where her personal guards and was surprised to find out that the Royal Guard was trailing proudly behind just five feet away from her, walking with an air of superiority while Alfred, Bastian and Fritz discreetly kept their distance behind the Royal Guard, as if the three were afraid to get closer to this Royal Guard. But she was puzzled when she noticed that the rest of the ten royal guards in their ordinary clothes were encircling them including her personal guards. She
noticed also two of them walking in front of them.

"Perry did you forget to give the other guards their market list?" she asked, while Perry walked cheerfully.

Perry looked at her direction as they strolled along the not so crowded square. She was glad that they were early today and there were not so many people, perhaps due to the heavy downfall early this morning.

"No I have not; I gave each of them their list. Why?"

"Look around you," she ordered, holding Perry by the arm motioning for her Lady in Waiting to walked further so as not to give any hint of suspicions to the guards. "All of the guards are surrounding us."

Perry glanced around her and said, "Oh, calm down Princess, maybe they have forgotten your order." Perry remarked untroubled. "And besides, nobody notice them except that one."

And she knew whom Perry was referring. "I know… it looks like he was enjoying the role."

After several minutes of walking and worrying, they arrived at Lukas' stall and sighed in relief as she saw the smiling face of the old man.

"Good morning Laura! Good morning Perry!" Lukas greeted cheerfully.

"Good morning Lukas," she greeted while Perry smiled and waved at him and stood behind her. "How are you today?"

"Oh, I am fine Laura, just a little worried," Lukas replied.

She furrowed her brows and asked, "Why? What's the matter?" she asked, as she saw the worried expression from the old man.

"It's nothing serious. I am just worried about the weather." The old man stated. "Whenever the weather is bad, a lot of people chose to stay home."

She nodded with concern, understanding how the weather can affect the people's work and trade. "Well, you're in luck! Perry and I are going to make lots of sweets in preparation for the Prince's name day, so I need all the vanilla that you can sell me."

Lukas' worried expression was appeased and he took all the vanilla that he have and packed it and handed it to her. "What would I do without you? I am very happy that you and Perry are working in the castle."

"What would I do without your fabulous vanilla, is what I should be worried about!" she exclaimed as she put the package of vanillas in her basket. "You're the only one who has the best vanilla in the Kingdom and probably in whole Styria."

"The castle never takes an interest on buying my vanillas before," Lukas informed. "I never met a person from the castle's kitchen, until now."

"And how will you know if the buyer is from the castle or not?" She asked growing suspicious.

"Because I know most of the people who live in the village," Lukas explained proudly. "I grew up selling and trading vanillas with my father. This market square is my second home. I ran around here
as a child and knew everybody. I talked to every person that I meet." He said as his face lightened up, recalling his childhood days. "And I know that the person is working in the castle when they refuse to talk and just buy what they need; except from you and Perry."

She furrowed her brows and gave Lukas a narrowed look. "And why would they refuse to talk?

"I do not know. But one thing I am sure of is the workers in the castle are very discreet and unapproachable. Most of them live in the castle that is why we never get to know them well. So, imagine my surprise when I learned that you and Perry are working in the castle and talking to us!"

She laughed at Lukas' comment, even if it confused her to learn something about the workers from the castle. "Perry and I just moved in- I mean, we were newly hired by the King, so, we're just new in the castle and did not know those things about the workers."

"Oh, so where are you two from if I may ask?" Lukas returned.

She weighed the situation and contemplated if she was going to tell the truth or not. "We're actually from the Kingdom of Hollis."

"That is far away from here. But how did you two end up working at the Karnstein Kingdom?"

Lukas' curiosity was causing her to fidget she hoped that she would not slip. Then she remembered how King Philipp complimented the Hollis Castle's kitchen workers when he was on a visit and was served by the best sweets and cakes that they have.

"King Philipp was on an official visit to the Kingdom of Hollis. We were working in the kitchen and served his Majesty our famous sweets and cakes. After King Philipp tasted our sweets, he fell in love with it and he asked the King of Hollis if he could recommend some workers from the kitchen to work at the Karnstein Castle's kitchen. That was the reason why Perry and I ended up in here."

To divert the topic from further question, she asked him this time. "So, how long have you been selling vanillas and spices?"

He cleared his head for a while before answering. "Almost forty years," the old man declared.

"Oh!" She and Perry expressed with awed.

Their conversation was interrupted when Perry sought her attention and motioned to the direction of the Royal Guard that was approaching the stall.

Not wanting for him to destroy this day, she reached from her pouch. "How much are the vanillas Lukas?" she asked with a slight of panic in her voice. But it was already too late, when she felt the Royal Guard's presence behind her, invading again her personal space as she felt the warmth of him behind her, and smelled a familiar scent that confused her.

"It is ten silver, but since it's for the Prince's name day celebration, I am giving it to you for seven silver coins." Lukas offered and was about to say more but was suddenly distracted as his gaze focus on the man in front. "Oh, Laura, you brought a Royal Guard with you!"

She rolled her eyes as she saw Lukas staring at the person behind her. Not wanting to give Lukas the impression that she has a personal guard, she decided to go on with their story and the purpose of this Royal Guard.

"Err… Lukas, this is actually my betrothed Car- I mean Marcus." She caught the surprised look on the old man's face and sighed with annoyance.
“Why is everybody happy everytime I tell them that I am betrothed!” Lukas expressed and held his hand towards the Royal Guard. "I am Lukas. I am delighted to meet one of the Royal Guards, but I am happier to meet Laura's betrothed."

Her eyes caught the waiting hand of Lukas, and sighed before looking behind her and focused her eyes on the Royal Guard's face.

"Marcus,” she called but he seemed not to notice the name. "Marcus, sweetie!” She called and took his right hand and motioned for him to take Lukas’ hand. "You should shake the person's hand when you're being introduced."

Finally, he understood and shook Lukas' hand briefly. However, she trembled when the Royal Guard put his right gloved hand on her hips after shaking Lukas' hand. She found herself helpless as she felt his hand touched her possessively.

"Umm… Laura, I think you should pay now.” Perry butt in, and she managed to release from the Royal Guard's hand.

She felt a bit warm and yet irritated as he took advantage of the situation. But she was more irritated at herself for not releasing from his hold at once. She dug her hand into her pouch and counted the silver on her hands. "Here's fifteen Lukas, thank you and have a nice day!” she uttered quickly and smiled at Lukas before the old man can refuse her generosity and waved goodbye to him.

"Thank you so much Laura!"

She heard Lukas' voice and looked behind and nodded. "Let's go!” she instructed Perry and the others and strode towards the market square's fountain, hoping to wash her face and lessen her annoyance. But her luck turned into worse when a man jumped in front of her and kneeled before offering her a red rose.

"Can't my day get any worse?!” She groaned looking at the sky, as if complaining to God and closed her eyes.

"My beautiful Laura, have you come to accept my proposal?"

She heard the familiar desperate voice of her ardent suitor. But before she could tell William to go away she felt a hand shove her gently backwards. She opened her eyes and saw the Royal Guard standing in front of her, blocking William from talking to her, as if protecting her from any harm.

"Aha! You have finally showed up!” William taunted the Royal Guard. "I thought you got cold feet."

"William!” She tried catching his attention, to tell him that the deal was off. She was nervous and uncertain about this Royal Guard's sword's skill and forgot to ask Alfred if he was good or not. But she was pushed as far away as possible by the Royal Guard, as she saw him and William drew their swords and was about to start the sword fight.

"I will defend my love for you, Laura!"

She heard William shouted to her direction, before taking the first strike. "Oh Perry, what have I done?” She asked, worried as she felt Perry wrapped an arm around her shoulder while they watched the sword fight between William and the Royal Guard. The Royal Guard was thin compared to William's well-built muscular body.
"Why did Alfred chose this guard!!?

She berated herself on and on, as they witnessed William's aggressiveness when it came to sword play. "Why is he not attacking?!" she asked Perry, starting to panic at how the Royal Guard just blocked William's strike and then waited for another attack from William.

The Royal Guard seemed to move his wrist and body in an articulate way, as if it was some sort of dance with a sword. While on the other hand, William used his sword like a barbarian, striking and attacking anytime. Her heart beat faster when she saw the crowd formed around to watch the sword fight and heard the people cheering for William.

"William! William! William!"

But she felt a bit relieved when some of the people from the crowd cheered for the Royal Guard; surely most of them were the royal guards in disguise.

"Marcus! Marcus! Marcus!"

It did not take too long after that shouting and cheering, she saw the Royal Guard stroke in a swift motion and cuts inside and moves horizontally and cuts outside just below shoulder height, and from the right he aimed his sword towards William's heart. William just stood there motionless, but was relieved when the Royal Guard released his sword from William and everybody cheered for Marcus.

She released the breath that she was holding when she saw William left the site fuming, while her Royal Guard turned to her direction as if seeking his price.

"I guess you can approach and thank him after fighting for your 'hand in marriage'," she heard Perry's sarcastic remark and gave Perry a pout before walking towards the Royal Guard.

She felt that all eyes were on her as the crowd became silent and waited for her to congratulate her 'Royal Guard betrothed'. Her smile grew wider as she came closer and saw the Royal Guard opened his arms, as if demanding an embrace from her.

This guard is so arrogant!

She thought and reminded herself that most of the spectators knew that she was betrothed to this Royal Guard, so it was just appropriate to give him a hug. So, without further ado, she ran towards him and gave him a decent hug.

But she was caught off guard, when she felt him wrapped his arms possessively around her hips and held her tight. Then she felt his left hand went down and touched her buttocks. She was about to push him but he released from the embrace, sensing her uneasiness.

But the torture did not end there, after they released from the embrace the crowd began to chant:

"Kiss! Kiss! Kiss!"

This time, she stepped back two feet away from him. She could tolerate the embrace, and the touching of her ass, but kissing a stranger was not an option. She was a princess and betrothed to the future King of Karnstein, she would not allow it. And if Prince Carl found out, he would certainly hang this guard.

She twitched and looked down as she saw the Royal Guard kneeled in front of her bowed his head, pulled up the cover of his helmet, her eyes widened when she saw his hand took her right hand and he kissed gently the back of her hand. She was surprised at the softness of his lips as they touch her skin but cringed when she felt his beard rubbed her hand. And before she could take a peek of his face, he put down the cover of his helmet and hid his face again behind it. He stood up and offered his arm to her. She took it gladly and they ignored the crowd's demand:

"Kiss her on the lips!"
They left the crowd and she was thankful that all of the commotion and stress were over. She was just worried how she would tell the Prince if he asks her how her day was. "Thank you by the way," she uttered as they walked towards the market square, her hand still clinging to his arm.

She felt a bit annoyed when she did not receive any reply and he did not even bother to look at her direction while she talked to him. She never uses her status in life to criticize, complain or demand to someone, but this Royal Guard should be taught the proper manner of behaving in the presence of a lady. She was about to reprimand him and order him to take out his helmet, when she felt a pair of little hands enclosed behind her. She stopped and turned around, knowing who it was.

"Emma! It's so nice to see you!" she expressed and took the little girl in her arms. She noticed that Emma might be scared at the presence of the Royal Guard beside her, as the little girl did not utter anything, and glanced at the Royal Guard beside her before whispering something in her ear. She smiled and nodded to the little girl.

"Yes, this is Marcus, the one that I told you."

The little girl gave him a puzzled look and whispered to her ear again. When she met those dark eyes again, she nodded to her. "Yes, he is handsome." This time, the Royal Guard turned his attention to both of them, sensing that they were talking about him. The little girl whispered to her ear again, and this time she did not know what to answer. "I guess you should ask him." She suggested and they turned to his direction.

"Marcus, can you carry me?" Emma asked, opening her arms for him to take her into his arms.

She saw his hesitation, but lifted and passed Emma to him before he could say no. If there was one person she did not want to let down, it was Emma. The Royal Guard could complain to her afterwards, but right now, the little girl looked excited to see and talk to her 'beau' and she would not deny that happiness.

"Come on let's go to your mother." She informed and walked towards her favorite cheese stall. She looked behind her, and saw the rest of the royal guards trailing them.

"Where could Perry be?" She thought. And before she could worry, she was already near the stall and smiled when she saw Greta waving at them.

"Hello Greta!" She greeted cheerfully as they arrived at the stall.

"Laura! How are you?!" Greta said and stared at the person who was carrying Emma. "And who do we have here?"

"This is Marcus, Mama." Emma informed.

"Your daughter is very smart, she remembered my betrothed," She said, and set her eyes on the Royal Guard who seemed to be uncomfortably carrying Emma, as the child curiously touched his helmet. "Marcus, this is Greta, Emma's mother and one of my favorite people here in the village." This time, he did not forget his manners, and offered his hand to Greta, while he struggled to carry Emma on the other. Greta shook his hand.

She gave him a smile of approval before focusing her attention to Greta.

"It's nice to see him with you," Greta commented. "But it would be nicer if we can see his face." Greta teased her and smiled.

She suddenly felt warm and gave Greta a modest smile and looked to her side to check if the Royal
Guard heard what Greta said. She sighed with relief when she saw him standing a few meters away from them. She smiled as Emma continued to explore his helmet and he cannot complain about it.

"He is a little shy," she told Greta. "It is his first time to go publicly with me, so he is not used to it," was her excuse.

Greta accepted her reason with a nod. "By the way, where's Perry?" Greta inquired.

"Oh, she's with us, we just went ahead." She said but her attention was interrupted when her ear caught the sound of a metal fell on the ground.

"Laura, you're right, Marcus is handsome!" Emma informed excited.

She turned around and set her eyes quickly at the direction of the Royal Guard and saw him without his helmet.

Her eyes widened and opened her mouth slightly, and dropped the basket that she was carrying as her eyes adjusted at the sight of the person in the Royal Guard's clothes and stared at him with disbelief.

It can't be?! She tried to be rational but her eyes were not lying.

Upon realizing who it was she ran towards him as the shocking truth of the Prince disguising as a Royal Guard unfold before her eyes. She did not know how he managed to calm down and go to the crowded market, but she would surely ask him later on. She was just thankful it was not crowded today, or else, the Prince might have panic and suffered from angst. Her heart melted when she saw him smirking naughtily towards her, while he still struggled carrying Emma.

"Hello Cupcake," he said in his deep enthusiastic raspy voice.

Her heart throbbed as she saw his face still sweating from the helmet that he wore; his hair was more disheveled, but his presence made her warm and fuzzy, "What are you doing here? And why didn't you tell me?" she asked, panicking that he was outside of the castle. "Are you alright? How do you feel? Do you want to go home? Can you breathe normally?"

"Why Laura, is Marcus sick?" Emma asked curiously, stopping from touching the Prince's beard.

She had forgotten that they were not alone, and she quickly replied to the little girl. "No Emma. Marcus is not sick he is just not use to going out and meeting a lot of people. He gets tired easily when he is with lots of people."

"Cupcake I'm fine, stop worrying." He assured her and cringed a bit as the little girl on his arms pinched his cheeks.

"Are you sure?" she asked still anxious.

He nodded and then lifted his left eyebrow. "By the way, you still owe an explanation why another man was proposing to you." He said in a serious manner, and then smirked, "And you owe me also a kiss after that sword fight."

She smiled and her nervousness disappeared after hearing the last phrase. She obliged and tiptoed in front of him as she put her lips on his and gave him a well-deserved kiss, while he balanced Emma on his arms. "Stay there. I'll be right back. And I'm going to explain everything when we get home." She ordered and saw Emma blocked his sight as the girl touched the Prince's hair with fascination.
When she turned around to the direction of the stall, Perry had already arrived and upon seeing her, her Lady in Waiting walked towards her.

"Where's Emma? I have her creampuffs here," Perry said, carrying a pouch with sweets. "Oh, there she is!" and walked towards where Emma and focused her eyes on the pouch before unwrapping the sweet.

Suddenly, she forgot to inform Perry and followed her Lady in Waiting and was about to warn her that the Prince was the Royal Guard. But she was already too late, when Perry stood frozen in front of the Prince who was disguised as the Royal Guard.

"Your Royal High-" Perry had uttered in shock.

"Yes Perry, I am the Royal Highness' guard." The Prince finished the sentence for Perry and glared at the Lady in Waiting.

She did not know if somebody heard it. But she needed to rescue Perry from the shocking presence of the Prince, as her Lady in Waiting remained in awe in front of the Prince and Emma.

"Perry, where's that creampuff that you're going to give to Emma?" she asked as she touched Perry's shoulder.

"Perry!" Emma shouted. "Did you bring me Prince Carl's favorite food?"

Suddenly she saw the Prince gave her a suspicious look, and then smirked at her when she gave him a bashful smile.

"Um… yes Emma, here you go," Perry said and awkwardly gave the sweet to Emma while the Prince looked at them smirking.

"Come on Perry, Greta is going to show us the new cheeses that she made." She informed and guided Perry towards the stall, Perry almost bowed to the Prince before leaving; she just stopped her from doing it.

"Perry, are you alright?" Greta asked right away seeing Perry was still in shock.

"Don't worry about her," she answered right away standing beside Perry. "Perry met someone a while ago and she cannot stop thinking about him."

She had not a chance yet to check the cheese when they heard Emma shouted. "Mama! Marcus likes creampuffs too!"

They all looked to the little girl's direction as she saw the Prince approached closer to the stall and stood on her right while still holding Emma. Her heart melted when she saw the Prince's mouth and the beard around his mouth was covered with cream, while Emma's face and hands were covered with chocolates and cream. Emma took another bit from the pouch of goodies and licked the chocolate on top, then put the rest of the creampuff on the Prince's mouth, while Prince Carl accepted the sweets and ate it without complaint. They all laugh at the sight of the Prince and Emma sharing the creampuffs.

"Emma, sweetie, be careful, you're putting cream all over Marcus' face," Greta warned, and took Emma, "What would the Prince say when Marcus returns to the castle and sees his Royal Guard like that?"

"I think the Prince would get envy if he sees me eating creampuffs like this," Prince Carl commented
"Come here," she ordered the Prince to face her, and took a white handkerchief from her pouch and began wiping the cream on his mouth. She smiled at the thought of him being 'dirty' and messy. She had never seen him so disheveled before. "I think I'm beginning to like your 'messy' look." She whispered and kissed him on the lips. They both got carried away and temporarily forgot that they were not alone, until they heard Emma chiming and they stopped kissing.

"Marcus! Can you take me to see the cows?" Was the little girl's excited remark as they saw the herd of cows passing through the middle of the market square.

"Do you want to sit on my shoulders?" The Prince asked with a thrill in his eyes and received an excited nod from the little girl.

"It looks like you're the one who is more excited to see the cows than Emma," she accused playfully.

"Do you know that one of my favorite animals are cows?" He returned, taking Emma from Greta's arms and carefully put the girl on his shoulders. "Come on Creampuff, we've got some cows to watch!"

She stood there by the stall and watched the Prince carry Emma while they headed to the middle of the market square. She noticed right away the royal guards discreetly followed Prince Carl and encircled the Prince right away, while Bastian and Fritz remained by her side. When she saw Alfred trailing behind Prince Carl, she sighed with relief.

"Laura, is something wrong? You looked worried?" Greta asked at once.

"No, nothing is wrong," she returned hiding her worries of how Prince Carl would manage to calm down once it get crowded.

Sensing her troubled state, Perry took her basket and offered to stay. "Laura, I could choose and buy the cheese that we need. You can join his Ro- I mean, Marcus and Emma."

"Alright," she answered right away and looked at Greta before leaving the stall. "We'll be back with Emma."

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It turned out that it did not get crowded in the market square as it should be. She was wondering why there were few people who showed up. But otherwise she was thankful that Prince Carl was able to enjoy strolling around the market square like a commoner. She was impressed also with the royal guards in their 'commoner clothes' that were guarding them carefully.

"You seemed to be enjoying your little tour," she teased, as they walk side by side along the market square her hands clutched in Prince Carl's arm. "If I haven't known, I would have said that you have already been here many times."

"I actually did." Was his simple reply.

She was surprised and stopped to face the prince. "I beg your pardon?"

"I have been in the market lately," the Prince replied smirking as if teasing her of not knowing the truth. "I and LaFontaine."

"And why didn't you tell me?" She demanded, and put her arms on her hips. "I was so worried that..."
you might have some panic attack or something, because I thought that this is your first time to come out in the village, and the thought of you thinking that it was dangerous to come in the village would make you nervous and send you to frenzy and."

A pair of soft lips halted her from babbling and scolding and she found herself drawn to the kiss and forgot his little crime.

"Young man,"

A frail voice of a woman caught their attention and they both released from the kiss and faced where the sound came from. Right beside them stood an old woman looking at the Prince's direction.

"Can you help me carry this sack of wheat to my house?" The old woman requested. "I think I hurt my back trying to carry it."

"Certainly," Prince Carl took the heavy load right away and swayed it over his shoulder, it caused the royal guards at once to react and Alfred already signaled the royal guard that was nearest to the Prince to take the load. The royal guard was already approaching the Prince to take the heavy sack from him, when the Prince shook his head and signaled for the royal guard to go back to his position. "This is quite heavy. You should not carry this thing you might break your bones." Prince Carl replied his voice thick with worry.

"I know, but my husband was ill and we do not have wheat to make our bread," the old lady reasoned out, while rubbing her back.

"I think you should take a rest for a while," she suggested and led the old woman in the nearest rock and sat there. "My name is Laura and this is Marcus," she introduced themselves while the royal guards remained their distance discreetly. "Don't you have a son or a daughter that could help you when you go to the market square to buy foods?"

"My name is Martha. No, it was just me and my husband. My son died in the forest protecting the King," the old woman related and diverted her attention to Prince Carl. "That's why when I saw you it reminded me of my son."

"Our condolences to you and your husband," she said right away sensing that it affected the Prince to hear what the old woman just told them. "May we know when your son died?"

"It was a long time ago, but I still miss him. Especially when I see some Royal Guards," the old woman relayed. "You reminded me of my son, strong and brave."

The Prince nodded quietly, he seemed to be contemplating on something, but she turned her attention to the old woman again. "How are you feeling now?"

"I feel much better, thank you."

She looked at the sky and it was beginning to get dark. "Why don't you tell us where you live and we could help and come with you?"

The old woman nodded and held her hand, showing them the way, as Prince Carl walked beside her and the rest discreetly trailing behind. "Is it far from here?" She asked worrying that Prince Carl cannot endure the long walk while carrying a heavy sack of wheat.

"No, it's just around the corner of the Church," the old woman pointed out the little church of the village.
And then she faced Prince Carl who was walking quietly. She gave him a worried look before asking, "Are you sure you don't need your horse to put that?"

"Certainly not! I have strong muscles to carry this sack," he replied proudly.

After a quarter of minutes, they arrived at a small cabin, while Alfred and the rest of the royal guards encircled the house and peeked inside as discreetly and fast they can. After checking that it was safe for them to come in, Alfred nodded to the Prince and they followed the old woman who was already inside the cabin. Once they were inside, she was surprised to see how cozy and warm the old woman's cabin was.

"Where should I put this?" Prince Carl informed right away, referring to the sack on his back.

"You can put it beside the table over there." The old woman returned.

The house was small so it was easy to see at once where the kitchen and the dining area and receiving area.

"I apologize that I have neither ale nor bread to offer both of you," Martha relayed as they stood in the middle of the house.

"Oh no! We are fine!" She disclosed.

"I feel awful asking Marcus to help me and I cannot even give him ale," was Martha's confession.

Prince Carl faced the old woman and said, "I tell you what, the next time we come in the market square, Laura and I would visit you and we are going to bring some ale and bread. Would that lessen your worries?"

The old lady nodded and was almost in tears after that offer. "It would be a pleasure to have both of you visiting me again. And thank you for helping me. You are both kind and generous."

"It was nothing Martha," she said to Martha, and took out her pouch of coins. She gave the whole pouch with silver coins to the confused old woman and looked at her.

"What's this?" The old lady asked.

"It's a little gift from me and Marcus," she started and hoped that Martha would not ask further. "We work at the castle and the King always gives us extra coins for ourselves when we do our errands in the market. Maybe next time, you can buy some bread that is already baked, so that you don't need to carry a heavy load of wheat to make your food. And to buy some medicine for your ill husband."

And before she could finish talking, she felt the old woman's hands wrapped around her. "Thank you so much." Martha replied and was almost in tears.

After the old woman gathered her composure, she led her to sit on the chair. "It was nice meeting you Martha. But we have to leave now since it is already growing dark. Will you be alright now?"

"Yes, do not worry."

"Good bye Martha and take care of yourself," Prince Carl said and gave the old woman a hug before walking out of the little cabin.

She was surprised to see the Prince mingled with a commoner and never expected that he could be approachable. She remembered that the Prince considered the people in the village as savages, but
after witnessing how Prince Carl interacted with some of the locals, she now knew that his notion about the people in the village had changed.

Once they were outside, she hooked her arm in his and kissed his cheek.

Confused, "What's that for?" Prince Carl asked.

"For being an amazing person," she stated and smiled at him sweetly.

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When they arrived at the castle, she informed Perry to go ahead and asked her Lady in Waiting if Perry could send someone to bring some refreshments in the tea room. She wanted to take a rest first with the Prince before they get clean and change to their normal clothes.

"Come on," she informed Prince Carl as she pulled him by his hand on the way to the long dimly lit hall to the tearoom. She was thankful that this hall does not have a guard except by the entrance of the tearoom.

"Cupcake, why are we running?" he whined.

"Because…" she said and when she saw the little dark corner where Prince Carl took her and kissed her, she looked around her. Once she knew that they were alone, she pulled Prince Carl on the corner and put her arms around the back of his neck, "I want to do this." She said in a deep voice before she kissed him.

She felt Prince Carl pushed her gently on the wall and put his hands on her hips, and was careful not to get his crotch too close to her.

"Cupcake, what's gotten into you?" he asked in between kisses. "It's not that I'm complaining, but I never expected that you would assault me here in the dark corner."

She released from their gentle kiss, after hearing him teased her. "I just want to reward my Royal Guard beau for fighting William." She said and grinned at him, but was suddenly alarmed at the changed of expression on him after she mentioned William's name. Now she regretted it.

Damn it! Me and my big mouth!

The playful mood between them had disappeared as she saw him glared at her, his brows wrinkled and his smirk faded.

"What does that imbecile wants from you?" Prince Carl asked his voice authoritative and serious.

"Nothing, he was just teasing me, I guess," she said looking at his eyes and still resting her arms on his nape, careful of the words that she was using to avoid upsetting him further.

"Did he touch you?" Prince Carl demanded.

"No!" she answered right away, as she felt his gloved hand tightened its hold on her hips. "And I will never allow any man to touch me." Then she saw him raised his left eyebrow, and huffed as if not convinced of her words.

Irritated, "But you let me touched, embraced and kissed your hand while I'm disguised as a guard," he replied.

She gave him a sheepish look but defended herself right away. "I did. Because I need to pretend and
convinced them that this Royal Guard is my beau,” she reasoned out. “While I still don’t know that it's you, I was very annoyed and irritated when this Royal Guard put his hand on my hips. And when you put your hand on my buttocks, I want to push you. But I needed to control myself because I needed to pretend that you're my beau. But deep inside I was mad and was thinking that My Prince would be furious when he finds out that I let some Royal Guard touched me. And when the crowd were shouting and asking you to kiss me, I said to myself that I would slap you in the face if this Royal Guard kissed me!

After that honest declaration, she felt Carl's gloved hand touched her neck gently, as if marking his claim on her while the other hand remained on her waist. Her hair was still tied up in a messy pony tail and it gave his right hand more access on her sensitive neck. The feeling of the Prince's leather gloved hand touching slowly her bare neck gave her goose bumps. Then she felt Carl's hand touched her hair and pulled it gently to the side so as to show more the creaminess of her neck. The sensation of his warm breath on her neck made her knees weak. She closed her eyes as the anticipation of what Carl was going to do next and dominating her body aroused her. And the next thing she felt was his teeth sinking on her neck and sucking it; the sensation was very different from the previous times that the Prince nipped and nibbled on her neck. This time it was very possessive and somewhat aggressive and yet erotic. She did not know how many times Carl bit and sucked her neck, but she was becoming dizzy as he continued to devour her neck, and his right hand found her breast and started to knead it.

"Carl…” she whispered as her hands caressed his nape.

"You're mine Laura," Prince Carl declared as his kisses became hungrier.

His voice sounded dangerous and she knew that she needed to reassure him that she would always be his. She managed to cup his face and stopped him from nibbling more on her neck, before she cannot control herself of the maddening sensation that Carl's mouth was doing in her body. She brought his lips on hers and kissed him gently to pacify him. When she finally felt him calmed down, she released from the kiss and gazed at him while still gently holding his face.

"Carl, I promise that I would always be yours no matter what happened," she uttered and smiled at him and saw the wrinkle on his brows faded.

"I don't want you to talk to that imbecile again," he said, his voice gentle now.

She felt his hands wrapped around her waist, drawing her closer to her, but not too close to touch his crotch.

"I won't, I promise," she returned and kissed him, and realized how insanely jealous Carl could get when she was around men. She thought that he was just jealous of Prince Viktor, but it turned out that the Prince was very territorial and dangerously possessive. The thought of it thrilled her, but at the same time scared her a little when his temper gets out of control and was consumed by jealousy. Their kiss was rudely interrupted when they heard a gasped followed by a loud sound of metal and jug and other things dropped on the floor.

"What the?!" she expressed and released from the kiss and looked over Prince Carl's shoulder to see who it was. Prince Carl did not even bother to turn around to check it and as usual did not let her go.

"Don't tell me that it's LaFontaine again, because I swear they-” the Prince was saying.

But she lovingly cupped his left cheek with her right hand, to calm and stop him from talking, he managed to still and kept quiet, while she looked closely to the person that was finished gathering the things that fell on the ground and rose. She smiled when she recognized the face of one of her
handmaids looking at her direction with shocked and bewilderment.

"Sarah Jane, what are you doing here? Are you alright?" she asked, worried at how her handmaid stared at her as if Sarah Jane had witnessed a crime.

"With all due respect Princess Laura, I don't think Prince Carl would like it if he finds out that you're kissing a guard," Sarah Jane related, her voice shaking. "He might hang you for being unfaithful and I don't want to lose a friend and our Princess."

She smiled and saw Prince Carl rolled his eyes in front of her. But the Prince did not turn around and just smirked at her.

"Thank you for your concern Sarah Jane," she started and tried to suppress the laugh that was threatening to come out of her mouth. "You are truly a good friend. But I don't think you need to worry about me being hanged."

"What do you mean Princess?" was Sarah Jane's confused remark.

She turned Carl around and let him finally faced Sarah Jane to enlightened her handmaid. "Because the guard that I am kissing is actually Prince Carl!" she exclaimed as she giggled.

"Your Highness! Forgive me for being impertinent. I did not know that it is you, Your Highness," was Sarah Jane's nervous reply and bowed upon recognizing the Prince.

"Prince Carl, allow me to introduce one of my hand maids and childhood friends, Sarah Jane," she said after regaining her composure.

"You may look at me Sarah Jane," Prince Carl said seeing that Sarah Jane was still bowing her head. "It's a pleasure to meet you. And I like to thank you for being considerate and honest." Prince Carl commented and smirked at them. "Now I know that I could count on you in case my Cupcake here decides to kiss someone else aside from me."

"Hey! I would never do that," she quipped and playfully slapped Carl's arm.

"I'm just kidding Cupcake," Prince Carl said and wrapped his arms around her to console her.

She felt warm and happy at the feeling of Carl's arms protectively around her. But she suddenly became worried when she remembered the sight of that woman, Ell, touching her Prince in a very intimate way. She had not fully seen what the woman's hand was doing to Prince Carl's private part. And during that time she does not care. But what if, it happened again? What if Prince Carl touched or even looked at another woman aside from her? What would she feel then?

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Again, thank you so much for your never ending kudos and awesome comments. It's nice to know how you like and love this humble fic. And to those who answered my question, thanks for being honest and letting me know. Coz I want to hear both sides too. Anyway, I hope you all enjoyed the long update and have a nice weekend :-)

Chapter Summary

It is Carmilla's 20th Name Day and she decided to celebrate it in a not so traditional way.

Chapter Notes

Hi! I know that you're all waiting for an update and probably wondering why it took me a week to post the next chapter. Well, I cut my finger with a very sharp knife (again) at work, so I needed to wait till my finger healed so I could type properly on the keyboard and use both hands.

Thank you for your kudos and for the feedbacks. It's always nice to know how your reactions at each chapter because I take some ideas from it. Honestly, the last part of this chapter was from the idea that I got from the discussion between darkbluemint and Grumpy_Teddybear.

And some of you might think that I am ignoring your request to "shave" Carl/Carmilla's beard, I am not. I just need to follow the plot. In the meantime, enjoy the update!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Carmilla

The heralding of the trumpet in the whole kingdom could still be heard to wake up the whole kingdom, but she was already up and dressed for her celebration and was already nagging LaFontaine.

"How about the creampuffs, did Perry baked lots of them?" was the first thing she asked while descending the grand staircase of the castle. "I promised Emma that I'll bring lots of them the next time I go to the village."

"Yes, Perry and the bakers had been baking since the other day," LaFontaine replied while checking their list. "They've packed already half of it."

"What do you mean half of it?" Was her irritated reaction upon finding out that her Valet did not follow her order. "I told you to pack everything; I don't want them to get hungry."

"Don't worry, Perry had baked some cupcakes too and they were already packed and ready," LaFontaine replied. "Perry said that Her Majesty ordered the kitchen to make some creampuffs too for tonight's celebration. That's why she needed to save half of it, since we don't have enough ingredients to make more creampuffs."

"As long as it's enough to feed the whole village," she said as they reached the Great Hall and took the exit to the hallway where the servants used going to the side door of the castle. She does not want
"Her parents to know where she was going today,"…How about the ales and beers?"

"Alfred had already taken care of them, and appointed some of the guards in uniform to distribute it upon your arrival in the village, like they used to do. Then you can join them, so that it would look like you and Princess Laura were part of the servants and guards from the castle who distribute food and drinks to the village in celebration of your name day."

"And the pies, bread and sausages, are they all prepared?"

"Everything is prepared and ready. I have delegated all the distribution to the Royal Guards in uniform and instructed them how they will give the food and drinks," LaFontaine explained. "And I asked Armitage to bring extra guards in their ordinary clothes to guard you and the Princess since it would be crowded in the village due to your name day celebration."

"Who's Armitage?" she wondered.

"He's the new knight that His Majesty selected to be your guard every time you would go out."

She stopped and faced LaFontaine, suddenly annoyed. "What do you mean my guard? I don't need one," she exclaimed and then realized something. "Did my King Father know that I went to the village?"

LaFontaine just nodded in silence.

She glared at her Valet. "But how did he found out?!" was her exaggerated remark and ran her fingers through her hair.

"Apparently, His Majesty received a tip and got worried that the heir to the throne was roaming around the village for the first time."

"Who's that traitor who told my King Father? I am going to hang him!" was her furious remark and balled her fist. She thought that she managed to keep her secret from her parents. "I told Alfred and all the guards not to mention it to the King, why can't they obey my order?!"

"It was Princess Laura who told the King."

"What?" she cannot believe what she just heard.

"The Princess was worried for you since you never set foot in the village," LaFontaine started to explain. "She's afraid that you might have panic attack and she does not know how to protect you."

"But that's insane!" she retorted, growing mad at how the people around her were treating her like a weak child. "I could take care of myself and I have managed to overcome my angst, what more do they want?"

"They just want to make sure that nothing bad will happen to you, in case something goes wrong."

"Does my Queen Mother know about this as well?" was her irritated remark as she breathed rapidly.

"No. Her Majesty does not know about it," LaFontaine assured. "Princess Laura told His Majesty about her daily trip to the village dressed as a commoner and begged the King not to tell anybody, since she does not want the Queen to worry."

She sighed and was very relieved to hear it. The Queen was over protective when it comes to her and she does not want her mother to get involved in this little secret of hers and Laura's. She was
about to complain how all the people around her thinks that she was helpless, but was distracted when her eyes were suddenly covered by a hand from behind.

*What the-?!* She stopped and the next thing she felt was a pair of soft lips kissed her on her right cheek, and the hand was removed.

"Happy name day!" Laura exclaimed and stood in front of her.

All her anger and irritation disappeared as she saw the beautiful ecstatic little ball of sunshine in front of her, giggling and jumping in front of her. Laura moved closer and hugged her before kissing her on the lips. She put her hands around the Princess' hips and enclosed Laura in her arms.

"Happy name day, My Prince," Laura mumbled. "Why is my big wild cat being broody on his name day?"

Laura cupped her face and gazed at her. Every time she feels Laura touching her face, she melts at the contact and everything in her body just calms down. The Princess surely knew how to pacify her.

"Nothing," she uttered softly and smiled. "And thank you."

"Are you excited to go now?!" Laura asked cheerfully.

"Not as excited as you," was her sarcastic remark. It was Laura's first time also to witness how the castle distributes food and drinks in the village every time the King, the Queen or her celebrate their name day. It had been a tradition in their kingdom to declare it as an official feast day.

"Of course I'm excited! It's my first time to celebrate it as a commoner and I'll be celebrating it with you! And there would be lots of cupcakes and creampuffs!" Was the Princess' hyper reply.

"Cupcake, you're unbelievable!" she said and cannot fathom where all these energy comes from, as Laura began to drag her out of the door, too excited to go to the village.

Once they come out of the side door of the castle, four horse drawn carriages, around twenty Royal Guards in uniform and an additional thirty guards in their ordinary clothes were already waiting for them. She walked to the carriage where Alfred, and the other two guards that guards Laura were standing. Alfred bowed to her before handing her a Royal Guard's helmet.

"Happy name day, Your Highness," Alfred said after bowing.

"Thank you Alfred," she gave him a smile and nodded. Among the Royal Guards, Alfred was the one who had been there with her since she was young. That was why she respected him like a father. She was about to put on her helmet to complete with her Royal Guard disguise but suddenly remembered something. "Where's this Armitage?" she asked LaFontaine who was standing behind her.

"He's the one who's clean shaven and clean cut, wearing a black tunic and black beret," LaFontaine informed, discreetly looking at the knight's direction.

She stared at the knight for a while and studied him, before turning to Laura. She took the Princess' hand and guided Laura like a knight to the carriage, once Laura was inside the carriage, she turned around and was about to climb to the driver's seat beside Alfred, but was confused when she saw her Valet stepped inside the carriage and sat beside Laura.

Confused, "What are you doing?" she asked her Valet. "I didn't ask you to go with me." She said and had a hunch that LaFontaine was planning on something.
"…But I did," Laura chimed in. "Perry is busy preparing for the banquet for tonight, and I needed someone to help us."

LaFontaine just grinned at her.

After hearing those words from the Princess, she just rolled her eyes, put on the helmet and did not complain nor question them anymore. She knew that those two had already planned it ahead of time and just wants to make sure that she would be alright, in case it gets over crowded at the village. She climbed at the driver’s seat and sat beside Alfred and ordered him to drive.

After almost half an hour, she found herself entering the village. All the Royal Guards in disguised had encircled her, Laura and LaFontaine while they marched together with the other Royal Guards in uniform who were assigned to distribute the food and ales. As they walked closer, the noise became louder and before they could reach the town square, she was amazed when she saw that the village people were already starting the feast!

She gawked at the sight in front of her and cannot believed how cheerful and delighted the people in the village celebrating her name day compared to the boring people that they invite in the castle. There were many tables and chairs that were put outside and people were drinking, eating, cooking, and grilling food outside. A lot of children were playing and running, some of them were watching puppet show or playing with small animals.

The whole village was decorated with the Karnstein's banners and flags of different colors added to the colorful sight. There were groups of men and women who were dancing too while the troubadours sung and played their instruments. She was fascinated when she witnessed some men juggling wooden spheres in their hands. Her interest was piqued when she saw one juggled with torch of fire in his hands and was amazed how the man does not burn himself. She spotted also two men dressed in black shirt and stockings, and their faces were covered with white powder. They looked like they were acting out a story through body motions without a speech. There were a lot of entertainments going on in the village and she was overwhelmed how the commoners, even if they do not have fancy clothes and fancy foods and drinks, they looked happier and more satisfied.

"Carl! This is amazing!" Laura said, standing beside her on her right, looking at the sight and fascinated.

"I know Cupcake, and I don't have any idea that it's like this," she responded, and held Laura's hand as they walked slowly into the crowd. While LaFontaine remained in awe and silently walked on her left side.

As they approached the town square the crowd began to gather, as the royal guards began to distribute the food and drinks. It looked like all the people in the village were outside and celebrating. It was not this cramped the last time she was here.

Suddenly she felt an intense wave of fear. She began to feel dizzy and felt like she was going to throw up. Her whole body began to shake and she could not catch her breath. She gripped Laura's hand tight.

"Carl? What's happening?!!" Laura asked worried and held her tight.

"Take out his helmet!" LaFontaine ordered the Princess.

And Laura removed it at once. Then she felt LaFontaine put their arms protectively around her as they guided them out of the maddening crowd; while Alfred and the other guards quickly and discreetly formed a circle around them to protect them from the growing crowd.
She felt like her heart was pounding out of her chest.

"He's having a panic attack; we need to get him out of here." LaFontaine suggested.

"But it's already too far to go back to the carriage!" was Laura's anxious remark.

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"Marcus?"

She heard a voice beside her but cannot decipher who it was. She tried to slowly move her head to the direction of the sound.

"Marcus?"

She heard it again and was wondering why she was being called by her third name. She opened her eyes as it adjusted to the light and saw a pair of dark eyes staring at her. Then she recognized who it was.

"Creampuff," she mumbled and smiled at the little girl that was slowly capturing her heart.

"Laura! Mama! Marcus is awake!" Emma shouted over the room and left her.

Seconds later, Laura was kneeling beside her and stroking her hair. "Hey, how's my big wild cat?" Laura uttered softly, and looked at her with full of worries. "You scared me."

She just smiled and felt Laura's lips on hers. "Cupcake, I'm fine…stop worrying," she expressed and tried to get up, and found herself lying on a small low bed. "Where am I?" she asked as her eyes roamed around the four walls of the room which seemed to be the bedroom, dining room and kitchen as well.

"We're at Greta's house," Laura replied and helped her up to sit. "Try not to move yet. LaFontaine is getting some herbs for the nausea."

"What happened?" She asked.

"You've had a panic attack," Laura related. "And then you passed out. We took you here since Greta's house is the only place I know that's safe."

"Did someone notice it?" she asked at once, not wanting to expose their secret.

"No," Laura assured her and held her hand. "We managed to pull you out of the crowd, as quickly and discreetly as possible. I'm just thankful that Greta and Emma were still at home and haven't gone out yet."

"Who carried me?"

"It was Alfred," Laura filled in. "He was beside you right away when you began to shake."

She felt relieved at once upon learning that it was Alfred who took care of her. If there was someone who knew her secret aside from LaFontaine, it was Alfred. She was about to ask more but was interrupted by a cheery voice that screamed inside the room.

"Marcus!"

The dark haired little girl returned inside the house and hugged her at once upon seeing her sitting on
"Hey, Creampuff, thanks for letting me sleep in your bed," she said while Emma was still hugging her.

"Laura said that it's your name day too!" the girl said with too much excitement, and totally ignored what she said.

She glanced at Laura and totally oblivious at what was happening now.

"While you were sleeping, Emma and I had a little chat," Laura said and put the little girl on her lap. "She knew that today is Prince Carl's name day. And she got curious when are mine and yours; so, I told her that today is your name day too!"

She smiled to both the ladies that were sitting beside her, and then she suddenly realized that she does not even know when Laura's name day was. Not wanting to put herself in an embarrassing situation of not knowing when was Laura's name day, she asked the little girl instead.

"Yes, that's true, today is my name day too," she said looking at the dark haired girl beside her. "Did you found out when is Laura's name day?"

"Yes! It's the 10th of August!" Emma proudly answered.

"Is that right?" she asked and they both looked at the Princess' direction. Laura nodded and just smiled at them. "How about you Creampuff, when is your name day?"

"Mine is on the 4th of October," Emma declared and asked, "Can you and Laura and Perry and LaFontaine come to my name day?"

"Of course Creampuff!" she exclaimed and received a hug from Emma.

"Yay!"

"What's this commotion all about?"

They heard Greta's voice as the woman entered the room carrying a bowl, put it on the table and sat at the chair across them beside the little dining table.

"Mama! I invited them to my name day!" was Emma's hyper remark.

"Oh, sweetie, Laura and Marcus works at the castle, they need to ask first the permission of the King or Queen if they are going to take a free day from work," Greta explained. "And Marcus has a very important job since he is one of the guards of the Prince, he cannot just leave Prince Carl alone."

She heard Greta explained and glanced at Laura.

"Greta, I'm sure we could fix our schedule since we still have time to ask permission from their majesties, isn't it Marcus?" Laura asked and winked at her.

"You heard what Laura said Creampuff," she said right away to Emma, whose smile came back. "I'll ask the Prince right away when I come back to the castle if I can be free from work on your name day."

"Thanks Laura! Thanks Marcus!" Emma exclaimed and gave them both a hug and remained on her lap, and curiously touched her face, beard and hair, like the first time she and Emma met.
"How are you feeling now, Marcus?" Greta asked.

"I feel better now, thank you very much for letting me stay and sleep on Emma's bed," she said, assuming that it was the little girl's bed.

Greta smiled at them, "Actually it's mine and Emma's bed. That's where we sleep," Greta informed.

"Oh, well, thank you for letting me sleep in your bed," she said and felt embarrassed at having to sleep in a woman's bed and glanced at Laura who was giggling beside her. "And I hope you don't mind that I slept on your bed," she added and knew that she was blushing by the amused reaction of Laura.

"Yes Greta, imagine what would people say when they found out that a Royal Guard had slept on your bed," Laura chimed in, while still giggling. "They might think that you brought a man in your house and invited him in your bed; that would be a scandal!"

This time she glared at Laura, as she was teased and put in an awkward position. She did not know what the people would say if someone, especially a man who was not their husband, sleep on a woman's bed. She was brought up to be a proper gentleman and she does not want to put Greta in an awkward situation in case someone found out that she 'slept' on Greta's bed.

"I am just being polite here," she returned and faced Laura. "What if someone found out and spread a gossip. I don't want to ruin Greta's reputation."

"Calm down Marcus, nobody's going to know," Greta smiled and assured her. "And besides, the first thing I'm going to worry about is how Laura is going to react if she heard the news that you slept on my bed. But since Laura is here, I am not afraid if they would gossip about it."

"Oh, My Prince, you should have seen your face in the mirror, you're so worried and so adorable!" was Laura's enthusiastic remark.

"Marcus, why did Laura called you 'My Prince'?"

Suddenly, there was silence as all eyes were on hers. Laura was having some fun and did not actually think about refraining from using the endearment.

She looked at the little girl and said, "Because in Laura's eyes, I am her prince charming."

"And in Marcus' eyes, I am his princess," Laura added.

"Can I call also my beau, 'my prince'?" was Emma's innocent query.

"Sweetie, you're still young, you shouldn't be thinking about these things," Greta said. "Laura and Marcus are grown-ups and would be married soon. They can use whatever endearments they want."

"That's right Creampuff, a young girl like you shouldn't think about a beau," she added playfully lecturing the girl in front of her. "Wait until you grow up, then you can call your beau, whatever you want to call him."

"But I already have a beau!" Emma retorted.

"Emma! What are you saying?" Greta criticized at once.

"I'm sure Emma is just telling us whom she likes" Laura filled in, to lighten the situation. "So tell us, who is your beau?"
"It's Prince Carl!" Emma declared.

She felt suddenly shy and at the same time flattered.

"Umm… Marcus, I forgot to tell you that Emma wants the Prince of Karnstein to be her beau," Laura said, and pretended to be serious.

"Is that true, Creampuff?" She asked and stared at the little girl on her lap who was blushing. Emma just nodded. "But you haven't seen the Prince yet, how would you know that you like him?"

"Because Laura told us that the Prince is very handsome," Emma reasoned out.

"Laura said that?" she asked and then glanced at the Princess. "I am jealous now that Laura told you that the Prince is more handsome than me."

"Hey, I didn't say that Prince Carl is more handsome than you," Laura retaliated. "I told Emma that Prince Carl is very handsome. But you are very very handsome, and even more handsome than the Prince!"

"Don't you agree Greta?" Laura focused her sight on Greta who was silently having some fun watching and listening to them.

"I agree, I think Marcus is very handsome even if we haven't seen the Prince of Karnstein yet," Greta retaliated and looked at them, as if contemplating. "Marcus, excused me for asking this, I know that it's inappropriate, but you can choose not to answer it. Since you're guarding the Prince, I am just curious why he hasn't set foot yet in the village and why he doesn't like to go out of the castle's perimeters? Is he afraid of something?"

This time, the atmosphere grew serious and she saw the worried look on Laura's face as Greta waited for her to answer. She knew that Laura was nervous at how Greta innocently asked the question that she was avoiding all the time.

"I could be punished, or worst, I could be hanged for telling very sensitive information about the Prince-" she explained and saw the worried look on Greta's face.

"Oh Marcus, I'm sorry, don't tell me. It's alright, I wouldn't ask any more about the Prince," Greta interrupted and seemed to regret asking that question. "I am just overwhelmed knowing that you two works in the castle, and the thought of knowing how the royal family is makes me curious, especially the Prince, since we haven't seen him yet. I am sorry that I put your lives in danger due to this foolish question of mine."

Suddenly, it was she who grew curious. "Does it bother you or anyone else from the village that the Prince hasn't showed himself to the people?" she asked in an authoritative tone that she always used.

Greta looked uncomfortable and took time to reply. "Marcus, please forgive me if I have offended you. You sounded annoyed-"

"No, I am not annoyed and you did not offend me," she corrected right away and changed the tone of her voice into a deep and less authoritative tone that she was used to.

And before they could continue their conversation, LaFontaine's arrival distracted them and Emma walked towards them.

"LaFontaine! What are those?" Emma asked eyeing on the box on their right hand and a little jug on the left.
"Oh, do you have the creampuffs that Perry packed for Emma?" Laura asked and stood from where she was sitting and took the box of sweets and returned to where she was sitting. "Emma, come here," the Princess called and Emma sat on Laura's lap as they both opened the box of sweets.

"Yes, I also have some tea with herbs that could calm you down and lessen the nausea," LaFontaine informed and sat beside Greta.

"I think I'm fine and don't need it anymore," she said but received a glare from Laura. "Alright, give it to me, before Laura lectures me," she said and took the jug with warm tea and started to drink it.

"Oh, I almost forgot, I have a bowl of hot soup for you, Marcus," Greta was about to stand and fetch it.

"Greta, it's alright, you don't have to-"

"Nonsense, you're going to eat it so that you'll have some energy," Greta said and fetched the bowl of soup and handed it to her with a spoon. "Laura told me that you have forgotten to eat, because all of you needed to go right away to distribute the food and drinks. That's why you felt dizzy and passed out. You need to put something in your stomach before you go back out there."

She had no choice but to accept and eat the soup. "Thanks." Then she suddenly remembered that LaFontaine was not been introduced yet to Greta. "I'm sorry I forgot my manners, I haven't introduce LaFontaine my Va-"

"...best friend," Lafontaine filled in. "Laura actually introduced us earlier, while you were sleeping."

She just gave LaFontaine a smirk and raised her left eyebrow at the mention of the word 'best friend'. "Did they tell you also how to address or call LaFontaine?" she asked, knowing that it was important to her Valet the proper way of calling or addressing them.

"Yes, Laura explained it everything to me and I understand it," Greta replied.

She was not even finish eating half of the soup when she saw Emma's hand holding a creampuff in front of her mouth.

"Happy name day Marcus!" Emma shouted.

She smiled and gladly opened her mouth and Emma put the creampuff inside it. She munched at the sweet happily and kissed Emma on the cheek.

"Thank you Creampuff!" She said, and then saw Laura gazing at her with those innocent naughty eyes and she was reminded how aroused she felt the last time Laura fed her with a creampuff using the Princess' mouth.

"Laura! Why didn't you tell me?!

Suddenly they were all eyes on Greta as they heard the dark haired woman shouted and looked at Laura's finger.

"Did Marcus already propose?" Was Greta's excited reaction as Laura showed the ring.

"Yes! He did!" was Laura's equally excited reply.

She just rolled her eyes and looked at her Valet who seemed to be growing worried at the sight of two women getting very excited at the thought of proposal.
"So, what did you get Marcus?" Greta asked Laura.

Laura just grinned and blushed, "I kind of forget about it." Was Laura's sheepish reply.

"What? You didn't give Marcus something of yours?" was Greta's shocked reaction.

"I don't think it's necessary," she said.

"What do you mean something of mine?" Laura asked innocently and crimsoned more. "Shouldn't that be given on the night of our wedding?"

"Not that one," LaFontaine corrected right away. "Traditionally, it means something you own; like the pieces of clothes that you wear," LaFontaine tried to explain. "Like for example a sleeve from your dress, a stocking that you use or…"

LaFontaine was not even finished yet when Greta whispered something to Laura's ear, and made Laura blushed even more. She does not need to know what Greta had whispered to Laura, because the thought of it had already sent a tingle down her crotch. And before her imagination could embarrass her, she drunk the remaining tea that LaFontaine gave her, stood up and handed the bowl of empty soup to Greta.

"Greta, thank you so much for welcoming us to your home," she stated and she saw them stood up too. "We'd like to stay longer but we need to go back to the castle to prepare for tonight's banquet. The servants and the guards are most occupied and busy during the evening feast at the castle since we need to serve and escort the noble guests, and I hate to say it but their extra demanding too, am I right, LaFontaine?" she said and elbowed her Valet and smirked at them.

"I agree. Their broody too," her Valet retorted.

"Oh, so you work in the castle too," was Greta's surprised remark and looked at LaFontaine. "What do you do then?"

"I'm Prince Carl's Valet de Chambre," LaFontaine proudly declared.

Greta was shocked and stared at LaFontaine with fascination. "Oh my, I think you're the nearest and closest person that I could say I have seen or met the Prince. Because I know that being the Valet is the most demanding and yet closest person that could get to the King or the Prince. And since we haven't seen the Prince of Karnstein yet, the people are more intrigued and curious when we hear something about him and meet the people who had been close to him and had actually spent more time with him, like you," Greta explained, referring to LaFontaine at the end. "I wish I could meet the Prince of Karnstein someday."

"I'm pretty sure your wish would be granted," Laura added and grinned at Greta. She went on her knees and hugged the little girl beside her. "Sorry Emma, but we need to leave now. But you can already go out and have some fun outside."

"Please tell Perry the creampuffs are delicious!" Emma said and then turned around.

"Bye Marcus and happy name day!" Emma said.

"Thanks Creampuff, and I'll see you next time," she replied and pinched Emma's cheek lightly, while Emma waved goodbye to them. She smiled when she saw Laura waving goodbye too like Emma, her betrothed was definitely adorable. "Good bye Greta."

"Good bye and thank you too." Greta returned as they walked all together on the way out.
After the evening feast, Laura whispered to her ear to meet her in the tea room.

And now the anticipation of waiting for her betrothed was killing her; she tried to calm herself and sat comfortably on the sofa with her legs fully apart and her arms spread wide on the sofa's back. She felt that all the nerves in her body were awakened as her heart beat faster and her palms sweat. These feelings that she has towards Laura had slowly possessed her, and she does not know how long she could contain it. It was overwhelming and all she wanted was to be with Laura all the time and touch the Princess.

She turned her focused on the door when it opened. And she saw Laura, walking towards her, giving her an adorable grin. She smiled and tried to relax.

"So are you here to give me your underwear?" she asked at once.

"What?! No!" Laura retaliated.

She felt like a pervert for presuming and felt ashamed for her lasciviousness. But when she caught Laura blushing, she smirked naughtily.

"Isn't that the reason why you'd asked me to meet you here, Cupcake?" she said in a deep enticing tone. "…to give me your gift."

The Princess walked closer and stood in front of her and stared at her timidly, and then gave her a lopsided grin.

"I'm here to give your present, but not the one in your mind," Laura said, reached behind and removed the necklace that she was wearing.

Laura bends down and kissed her before putting the necklace around her neck. She discreetly sniffed on Laura's pulse point while the Princess puts the necklace and closed her eyes briefly.

"There, you can take a look,"

She was awakened from her temporary bliss and saw Laura standing in front of her, motioning to look at the necklace. She looked down and held it in her fingers to get a better view: it was a gold chain with an anchor pendant.

"It's beautiful, thank you," she uttered and pulled Laura to her right leg to sit and put her right arm to support the Princess' back, while her other hand rested possessively on Laura's leg.

"My father gave that to me when I was a child," Laura related after releasing from the kiss and touched the pendant on her chest.

But the sudden contact of Laura's hand on her chest caused her to panic. She released the Princess from her arms and lap like she was burned. She rose from where she was sitting and distanced herself from Laura.

"Carl? What's wrong?" Laura asked, suddenly confused and worried at the sudden withdrawal. "Did I do something that hurt you?" the Princess asked, careful not to touch or even get close to her.

"Umm… No. You didn't hurt me," she said and took a deep breath, ran her fingers through her hair and looked absent mindedly around her, avoiding Laura's eyes to hide her fear. Her mind was in
terrible turmoil. How would she explain it without revealing the truth? And then the next thing she felt was Laura's hand seized her left hand and held it gently. She relaxed at the touch.

"Carl, look at me," Laura whispered.

She gazed at Laura and calmed down. She was debating on telling her betrothed the truth or lie. But when she saw the confused and worried look on the Princess she decided to do the right thing. "I… I'm just not comfortable at someone touching my chest," she started, "I actually don't like being touched there."

"I understand," Laura mumbled. "Thank you for telling me and being honest. The last thing I want to do is to make you uncomfortable and nervous."

The Princess' soothing voice always pacified her and she liked how Laura can easily do that to her body and mind. She was thankful that Laura did not ask the reason why. Then she saw Laura smiled and she felt her confidence came back.

"You cannot touch my chest… but you're welcome to touch me anywhere," she suggested with a hint of naughtiness in her voice and smirked at the Princess.

Laura giggled and kissed her at once. And while her hands where wrapped around Laura's waist, she was surprised when she felt the Princess' hands touched her buttocks. She grinned and released from the kiss.

"Did you just touch my butt?" She accused the princess playfully.

"No." Laura replied innocently.

"Yes you did!" She replied and felt Laura's hands moved up and wrapped around her nape.

"I didn't!" Laura expressed and tried to suppress a smile.

"You're lying! I felt it!" She said and stared at those naughty hazel eyes, before retaliating. "If you don't confess, I would demand you to give me the gift that I wish," she uttered, her voice deeper and raspy.

"What if I don't want to give it?" Laura challenged her.

"Then you won't see your big wild cat for a week," she replied and saw the disappointed look on Laura's face. She was just teasing the Princess, but it looked like Laura was beginning to believe her.

"Seriously, you'll gonna do that?!" The Princess asked.

"Why not? Since you're not giving me what I want," she reasoned out, pretending to be serious. "I am officially you're future husband, I can demand what's rightfully mine."

"Well, I call it extortion," Laura retorted.

"How can you call tradition extortion?" She said, and remained sober even if she found it amusing to see Laura growing serious. "You have to give something to me that is yours Cupcake; we both heard Greta and LaFontaine said it."

"Alright, I'm going to give you one of my underwear when you take me to my chamber afterwards," Laura conceded. "Are you satisfied?"

"No." she answered right away and stared at Laura seriously. "I want the one that you're wearing
right now."

She saw Laura's mouth opened slightly and was too dumbfounded to reply. The Princess' cheeks crimsoned and she did not release her gaze on Laura.

"I beg your pardon?" Laura asked almost out of breath.

She leaned slowly on the side and put her mouth near Laura's ear and whispered in a husky voice, "Take off… your underwear… and give it to me…" she ordered, and felt Laura's bosom heaving and breath becoming deeper. "I want to smell you tonight when I go to bed," she whispered once again and felt her bulge hardening, as she imagined the things she would do with it. And then she faced Laura again and only saw arousal in the Princess' fully dilated eyes.

"If you really want it, you have to take it off yourself," Laura demanded in a low tone.

This time she felt her shaft throbbed and hardened as she heard the enticing voice of Laura commanding her to remove the underwear that she had been thinking since this morning. She gently released her arms around Laura's hips and retained her gaze on the Princess, checking for any sign of reluctance. But when she found none, she slowly kneeled in front of Laura. Not breaking their eye contact. She put her hand inside the dress and rested her hand on Laura's calf before slowly dragging it upwards at the smoothness of Laura's thigh. She heard Laura elicited a low moan when her hand got closer to the Princess' private part. Her hand brushed on Laura's mound before she put her fingers on the waist band of Laura's underwear and pulled it down slowly and torturously as she can while staring at Laura's face. Her breathing became ragged as she witnessed the excruciating agony of Laura, trying to suppress the arousal that she caused to the Princess' body. When she drew low enough the underwear, Laura stepped carefully out of it and she gently took it and put it in her trousers' pocket. She stood in front of the Princess and stared at Laura like she was going to devour the Princess any seconds from now. Laura's eyes glanced downwards and caught the hard bulge in her trousers. Laura blushed at the sight of it and looked back to her eyes and gave her a timid smile.

"It looks like your excited with your other gift," Laura uttered awkwardly.

She saw the sheepish look on Laura's face as they both glanced at the very visible bulge in her trousers. She tried to cover it with her other hand, but was distracted when she heard Laura's voice.

"Carl, I'm…" Laura said, nervous and looked on the floor.

She got worried and cupped Laura's face gently, and motioned for Laura to look at her.

"Cupcake, what's wrong?" She whispered and moved closer to Laura, careful not to rub her hard bulge on the Princess. "Did I scare you again?" she asked and wrinkled her eyebrows, "Because, I could leave now, so you don't have to see it," she uttered softly, and calmly, remembering how Laura felt about seeing her erection.

"Noooo! Stay," Laura replied at once. "Don't leave me," the Princess whispered.

Her heart melted as she heard Laura's sweet voice; she just loved it whenever Laura was shy and embarrassed, like an adorable child. Then she felt the Princess' arms rested on her shoulders and encircled around the back of her neck. "Then tell me why do you look so upset?" she asked gently, and this time she just rested her hands on her sides, making sure that she does not come too close to Laura for fear of scaring the Princess due to her hard bulge.

"Because I feel bad every time you catch me panic, became fidgety and squeamish every time I see your hard thingy." Laura babbled.
She chuckled after hearing that adorable babbling of the Princess.

"Why are you laughing?" Laura asked, annoyed.

"Sorry Cupcake, I just find it very amusing every time you're nervous and babbling," she returned, and she felt Laura was about to release the hands that were encircling around her, but she reached up and held it back. "Don't," she said quickly and Laura did not move. She kissed Laura's lips gently and apologized. "Cupcake, I'm sorry for making fun of you. I won't do it again," she said and became serious. "I'm just curious, what it is in a penis that makes you nervous?" she asked and this time Laura's face crimsoned like never before upon the mention of the word 'penis'.

"I… I don't know," the Princess replied.

"There must be a reason why you're always panicking every time you see my hard bulge," she said in a most gentle and calm tone. She does not want to upset Laura, but she wanted to get to the root of the problem. "Tell me Cupcake, have you seen or even touch a penis before?" she asked and wished that Laura was going to say 'no', since she does not like the idea of her future wife seeing another man's cock.

"No! I haven't seen a penis yet," Laura defended right away. "And I couldn't actually say that I have already touched one, because I just accidentally ran my hand on yours."

She heard Laura's panic babbling and she tried to restrain from smiling. Laura was really killing her with those adorable babbling.

"Alright, I believe you. But I have a suggestion..." she said and thought carefully about the words that she was going to say. "You can say yes or no. But I just want to help you overcome your fear, and I know I'm going to sound selfish with this suggestion, but I assure you, I have no personal motive. Because I have told you before, and I am telling you again, I am going to wait until you're comfortable and ready."

"Alright, what are you suggesting?" was Laura's curious remark.

"Touch my penis."

She saw the shocked expression on Laura's face and she put her hands on Laura's waist right away to compose the Princess. Then she saw Laura tried to say something but the words cannot seem to come out, and she knew that the Princess was stressed. She had to think of a way to distract and calm Laura and to wait till her penis was limp.

"Cupcake, look at me," she whispered, and tried to maintain their eye contact.

"What do you see?" She saw Laura smiled timidly and she smiled back.

"You," Laura uttered.

"When you see me, what do you see?" she asked her voice calm and cool.

This time Laura grinned and those beautiful hazel eyes brightened.

"I see my possessive, broody, big wild cat," Laura teased.

She smirked at the description and just accepted the fact at how her Cupcake described her.

"Thank you for that very accurate and well complimented description of mine," she retorted.
"You asked me what I see," Laura retaliated. "I just told you the truth."

"Alright, I accept it," she conceded and smirked back at Laura. "Do you feel comfortable and happy whenever you see me?"

"Of course I do, what kind of question is that?" Laura returned.

"Are you happy now that I am near you and holding you?" she asked in a deep raspy voice, and stared at Laura.

"Yes," Laura returned in a husky voice.

When she heard that deep voice of Laura, she backed out a little but still held Laura's waist and glanced at her crotch. She took a deep breath and smiled at Laura.

"So, Cupcake… would you like to touch it?" she asked in a most calm and gentle manner, and gaze at the Princess. She saw the hesitation on Laura's face, and then saw the Princess took a deep breath and released the hands on her shoulders. Laura looked at her crotch and wrinkled its brows.

"Why is it small now?" The Princess wondered.

"Because I am not having an erection," she said nonchalantly. "Touch it," she uttered gently. And Laura carefully put a hand over her shaft, and slowly touched it with those trembling fingers.

"It's soft!" The Princess expressed innocently and looked surprised at the discovery of a limp cock. "But how come it's hard the last time I touched it?" Laura asked like a curious child.

"Because you make me excited and happy whenever you kiss and touch me," she teased and gave Laura a naughty smirk. She was about to suggest if Laura wanted to see it, but changed her mind, and thought it would be too much for Laura to touch and see it for the first time at the same moment. So instead she would just let Laura touch it more. "Try to hold it and rub your hand on it," she ordered and was about to say gently, but it was too late and Laura grabbed it excitedly. "Whoa!" she exclaimed and flinched.

"Oh god, Carl! I'm sorry! Did I hurt you?" Laura asked, worried and released the hand right away on the shaft.

After recovering from the pain, "I'm alright Cupcake, just try not to crush it; we still need to produce an heir, you know," she teased, to calm Laura.

"How can you still tease me when you're already in pain?" Laura retaliated and motioned for them to sit on the sofa. Once their comfortably seated, Laura asked, "What can I do to make the pain go away?"

She heard the Princess' gentle soothing voice and gazed at those naïve-looking hazel eyes. "You can stroke it gently," she gave Laura a sheepish smile and thought of taking a chance.

"Alright, but you have to tell me how soft or how hard-" Laura was telling.

"Not hard. No hard touching," she expressed it right away. "Just imagine that you're petting a cat."

"Really!? You're comparing your penis to a cat?!" was Laura's sarcastic remark.

"Why not?! I am after all your big wild cat!" She retaliated, and saw Laura yielded when she caught those hazel eyes rolled.
"Sometimes, I don't know if you're the big wild Karnstein panther or my little fuzzy cuddly kitty," Laura teased back.

She moved closer to Laura and spread her legs wide and relaxed, while Laura sat sideways and faced her direction. "I could be both, Cupcake," she supplied and took Laura's hand and gently put it on her thigh. Laura got the message and glanced at her, she gave her a nod and the Princess carefully touched her member. Once she felt Laura's hand relaxed on her shaft, "Try to use the palm of your hand and gently rub it up and down," she instructed softly and she was beginning to like how Laura was fondling her shaft, the Princess was a quick learner she thought. "Then squeeze it- whoa!" she was about to say gently, but Laura got carried away again.

"I'm sorry!" Laura apologized at once and screamed too.

The Princess was about to release the hand on her shaft, but she gently put it back and covered Laura's hand with her own and guided the Princess on how to gently stroke her shaft. When she felt Laura picked up the right rhythm, she released her hand and gazed at Laura.

"Am I doing it right?" the Princess asked innocently.

"Yes, Cupcake, I like it," she returned and she was beginning to be aroused at Laura's caress and closed her eyes.

"Carl?"

She opened her eyes and tried to calm herself as she heard Laura's voice. "Yes Cupcake?" she asked calmly while catching her breath.

"Why is it getting bigger and harder?" Laura wondered.

She looked at her crotch and as expected, she has an erection. She tried to calm down and do not want Laura to panic at the sight of it. "It means that I am so happy and excited at the way you're touching me Cupcake," she tried to explain without losing her mind at the sensation that Laura's hand was still doing on her member. "It also means that I find you beautiful and want you," she added and put her lips on the Princess' and kissed Laura gently and slowly.

"Really?" Laura asked in between kisses, as if teasing. "How does My Prince want me?"

"Naked," she retaliated in between kisses, and suddenly she felt Laura withdraw from the kiss, released the hand on her shaft and she felt a hand lightly slapped her arm.

"Carl!" Laura reprimanded and rose from the seat. "I know what you're thinking!"

"I didn't mean it Cupcake!" She returned and was frustrated at the loss of Laura's hand on her shaft and for telling Laura how she really felt right now.

"Tell your big cat there, to calm down," Laura ordered. "And we need to go now. I don't want Perry to worry."

She groaned, "Seriously, Cupcake?" You're going to leave me like this? Because you don't want your Lady in Waiting to worry?" she asked in a sarcastic tone and does not have any intention of leaving the sofa.

"Carl Philipp Marcus," Laura stated and glared at her. "Our deal does not involve a naked me, so stand up and take me to my chamber now. I don't want Perry to have a heart attack when she found out that you tried to lure me and took my underwear."
Suddenly she remembered that Laura was actually naked underneath that silly dress. Still standing in front of her, she held Laura's hand and smirked at the Princess, "I could touch you down there too and you can tell me if it makes you feel good." She said in a deep enticing voice.

She smiled when she saw Laura came closer, bend down to cup her face and gazed at her before saying:

"My dear Prince Carl," Laura uttered in a deep tone. "It's not happening."

The Princess said and released the hand on her cheeks, turned around and walked to the door.

"Oh come on! It's my name day today!" she expressed and rose from the seat and followed the Princess. Then she saw Laura stopped and turned around and faced her, as she got near to the Princess.

"And I already gave you my underwear, so you got your wish on your name day," Laura teased and resumed walking.

She frustratingly followed the Princess. As they came out of the tearoom she tried to hide her erection using her cape. Just the thoughts of Laura not wearing anything underneath that dress was still making her hard.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter (Laura's POV): Sleeping Carmilla
Sleeping Carmilla

Chapter Summary

Laura wanted to surprise the Prince after she learned from LaFontaine that Carl was exhausted from the celebration. But instead she was the one who was surprised.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

Today she woke up inspired and happy. After Carl left last night, she cannot help but be smitten by his thoughtfulness and being considerate about her feelings. She knew that the Prince was always thinking first of her needs before 'his' needs and she was thankful to have a betrothed that does not force her to do something that she does not like. The one thing that she liked also with Carl was he was willing to solve any problem or misunderstanding in their relationship at once and always wanted to make sure that she felt comfortable and happy. She felt like Carl was pampering her too much and it thrilled her!

She never expected that this arranged marriage would make her giddy, but as days passed by, she found herself accepting and liking the Prince in every possible way. She does not just like Carl's positive traits but she was surprised to discover that she tolerated his negative attitudes too.

The sun was already up and she had already bathed and dressed for the day and had been in the kitchen to eat a little cupcake before she eats her breakfast. After meeting Lafontaine in the kitchen and learning that the Prince was still asleep, she left LaFontaine, Perry and her handmaidens in the servant's dining room, still eating their breakfast. And she thought that she and the Prince could eat breakfast together today for the first time.

She was already wandering throughout the dark hall carrying a candlestick with her on her way to Prince Carl's chamber when she realized that she might have taken the wrong wing. A servant informed her that the Prince’s chamber was just the opposite wing from hers. Although the maid offered to accompany her, knowing that she was still not that familiar with the halls and chambers at Karnstein Castle, she declined politely the offer and told her that she could manage. She saw two guards at the start of the passageway awhile ago and followed the narrow dark hall, that seemed to be endless. She wondered if this was really the way to the Prince's chamber since it was isolated and far away from the rest of the other chambers.

Right now she was having second thoughts if this was really the right wing and was debating on going back or walking further. She recalled that on the wing where her chamber was located, it was guarded and it has two other chambers one beside her room and another one opposite across her room, where Perry sleeps. But when her eyes finally caught a large wooden door, she decided to walk further and hoped that it was the Prince’s chamber. She carefully knocked on the door and waited.

Having not received a reply, she knocked again a little harder and waited for the answer; Nothing.

Maybe this is not the right chamber.
She got impatient and thought that she did not come all the way to this wing for nothing, so she decided to check it.

“Carl?” She called out. “Are you awake? It’s Laura.”

She said and put her ear on the door, trying to listen at any sign of movement in the room. When she heard nothing, she became disappointed and pushed the door carefully. She felt lucky when it opened and interpreted it as a welcome; being curious all the time, she entered without hesitating and thought that maybe this was another chamber or hall that she could explore since she was already there.

She was surprised to find out that the chamber was dark, and no source of light was burning anywhere else. She had thought that maybe this was really the wrong chamber because it felt like it was bigger than her chamber and Perry's. She walked further and her eyes beamed at the sight of a big four post bed with an elegant burgundy drape enclosing the bed. She wondered why the curtains were drawn closed.

*Maybe this is a guest chamber.*

She told herself seeing that the heavy drapes were all drawn in and covering the bed. She tiptoed towards the bed trying not to bump to anything as she held the candlestick on her right hand. When she got closer to the right side of the bed, she carefully fumbled on its heavy drape to find the opening while she held her candle on a good distance from the drape to avoid accidentally burning it.

She finally found the partition and carefully slid the curtain to her left. She was taken aback at the sight of the back of a naked woman’s body was revealed; the woman was sleeping and lying on the side with the head resting on the upper arm, and nothing covering the woman except the white fine linen that was softly entangled in the lower leg.

She became speechless and froze at the erotic sight in front of her. She felt all her nerves awaken and her body never felt so hot as before. Something deep inside her resurfaced; something that she had not felt since she came to this castle: her desire and lust for a woman. She felt this sudden tingling in her core and an intense sensation that she had not experienced before. Her heart pounded madly; she had trouble thinking about anything other than to put her hands on this woman’s body and to quench her desire.

*Oh god, she’s beautiful!*  

Was her initial reaction as her eyes roamed at the creaminess of the woman's feet; the calves were chiseled into perfection while the legs were smooth, toned and lean. She had never felt so aroused just by gazing at a sleeping figure before.

*How can she sleep like this?*

She remarked as she adored the perfectly sculpted smooth body like of a goddess. When her eyes reached the rear she swallowed and bit her lower lip as she tried to control the urge of touching those beautiful well-proportioned buttocks. Finally, her eyes ached at the fine curve of the woman's small hip and well-toned back muscles. And she felt the tingling sensation down her intensified. She remembered seeing Danny naked, but this woman's body in front of her had really taken her breath away, literally.

*You’re so beautiful.*

But her worshipping was halted when the figure in front of her shifted and lay on the back. Her jaw
dropped as her sight focused on those perky round breasts and pink nipples, she felt the throbbing sensation between her legs became extreme and a low moan escaped her mouth. She took a deep breath to calm herself and decided to gaze at the face of the most beautiful body she ever laid her eyes on.

Who are you?

She delighted at the sight of this woman's smooth porcelain-like face, the eyebrows were perfectly symmetrical, the nose was pointy and perfect, the mouth was delicate and the lips were thin and red.

However, she was taken aback as she recognized that perfectly chiseled jawline without the beard.

What the…

She thought, confused. She closed her eyes for a moment to shake off the deceiving image; when she opened her eyes she darted her sight downwards. She was disoriented when she saw a penis in between the woman’s hairless legs!

She darted her eyes again at those breasts to confirm that it was a woman’s breast;

How could this be possible?!

She mentally berated herself that it was not possible, so she decided to come closer and put the candle that she was holding above the head of the person. She gasped at the shocking revelation as she saw a necklace with anchor pendant around the woman's neck and recognized the necklace that she gave the Prince. Her mind struggled to understand what her eyes were seeing and she became disconcerted as Carl's face unfolded right before her eyes without the beard!

“Oh my god!”

She exclaimed, and panic overcame her and did not realize that she had shouted. But before she could run, the Prince’s eyes had opened and were staring at her with the same intensity of shock and with fear.

“Laura?!”

She heard the panic in his voice. But before she could utter an explanation she saw the Prince dashed out of the bed wrapping the white linen sheet around his body and ran to the direction of the door.

“Carl!” She tried to call him, but to no avail.

*****

“LaFontaine!” She shouted as she desperately searched for the Valet, and sighed with relief when her eyes caught them talking to Perry at the servants dining room.

“Princess Laura?” was LaFontaine's confused remarked after being torn from their conversation from Perry. “What’s wrong?” They ask, sensing that she was in the state of panic.

“You have to help me find the Prince,” she said in between breaths as LaFontaine and Perry’s worried eyes focused on her. “I think he detests me.”

“What made you say that?” was LaFontaine’s puzzled comment.

“I saw him naked!” She delivered anxiously and paced across the room.
“Oh, Princess, I’m sure it’s alright for you to see His Highness in that state,” the Lady in Waiting quipped, trying to calm her with that remark. “After all you’re going to become his wife,” Perry added smirking.

“You don’t understand!” She pleaded crinkling her brows and stopped pacing as she switched her focus to LaFontaine. Her mind was in terrible turmoil. She does not know how she would explain the shocking sight that she discovered. When she saw LaFontaine’s shocked reaction, she did not release her gaze at them.

“How naked?” LaFontaine asked, their brows furrowed.

“Very. Very. Naked.” She declared, emphasizing every word; clenching her teeth and giving LaFontaine a nervous grin.

“Oh god.” She heard Lafontaine uttered, as the color on their face faded to white. “Where is he?” She sensed the seriousness on their voice and became more anxious.

“I don’t know; he just ran off!” She relayed as she recalled the look on the Prince’s face: betrayal; invasion; fear; anger; bewilderment. But before she could explain further, LaFontaine had already made their way to the door. She was about to run after them, but a hand held her.

“Princess, I think it would be best for you to just wait in your chamber,” Perry suggested, giving her a comforting nod.

“Oh Perry, what have I done?!” She cried and the next thing she felt was a pair of consoling arms around her.

“Hush dear,” Perry had whispered, as they walked out of the dining area. “Everything would be alright.”

*****

The night had already fallen and she was still anxiously waiting for any news from LaFontaine, but to no avail. She asked Perry to be with her tonight at her chamber until everything calmed down. Lying on her bed with her head resting on Perry’s lap, she felt secured as Perry stroke her hair while the Lady in Waiting patiently sat on the bed.

Perry’s touch always pacifies her every time she was upset. “Would you like some warm milk and honey?” She heard Perry’s comforting words.

“No.” She mumbled, as she absentmindedly stared at the door.

“…How about some midnight sweets?” Perry suggested.

She just shook her head. She lost her appetite today and did not eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and ignored all the cakes that Perry baked for her. Sensing that nothing could entice her to eat tonight, she heard Perry begun to hum the tune of her favorite lullaby when she was still a child. Perry used to sing that every time she was scared of sleeping alone. She found herself relaxing at the continuous caress of Perry’s touch on her hair and the soft familiar sound of her favorite song.

*****
A gentle tap on her shoulder, followed by Perry’s voice woke her up from her deep sleep. She groaned as the strong beam of light met her eyes and quickly averted it as she adjusted her sight on the brightness. She took a moment to shift from slumber state to wake up and as she gathered her thoughts, only one person was on her mind:

Carl

She hastily got up from her bed and shoved the warm blanket to the side. But as soon as her feet touched the cold floor, everything went spinning and the next thing she saw was darkness.

*****

“Perry?” She groaned and slowly opened her eyes and found Perry’s worried orbs staring back at her.

“Shh dear, I’m here,” was Perry’s consoling remark, as she felt a hand touched her forehead.

“What happened?” She asked, as her eyes followed Perry’s hand and saw her dipped a rug on the basin beside her bedside table. She flinched when she felt the wet cold rag on her forehead. “Prince Carl. I need to see him.” She whimpered as she remembered that moment of invasion.

“No dear. You’re sick and you need to rest,” was Perry’s strict command.

“But I need to talk to him,” She retaliated, as she tried to get up from her bed but was stopped right away by Perry’s hands, and she was tucked in bed again.

“You stay right there young lady!” Perry scolded, pointing the index finger on her as if she was a child again that being reprimanded.

She conceded and gave Perry a pout, “He’s furious at me, I need to apologize to him,” was her worried remark.

“I understand your situation. But you need to eat and get well first before you do that.” Perry said in a motherly tone. “Here, I made you some chicken consommé.”

She calmed down and settled on a sitting position as Perry put down the wooden bed tray in front of her that contains the bowl of her favorite soup garnished with carrots cut in small pieces in a shape of a flower, while her eyes rejoiced at the sight of the small round cake topped with flakes of dark chocolate. She smiled and felt like a child again that being pampered. She inhaled the delicious aroma of the soup and caught the smell of parsley, celery, leeks, chicken, and carrots, and felt suddenly famished. Before she could say anything, Perry was already feeding her the soup.

“LaFontaine has a message for you,” Perry stated, in between feeding her.

“Did Laf found him?” She asked anxiously, as she paused before accepting the next spoonful of carrots that Perry was about to feed her.

“Yes, they found him.” Perry acknowledged. “But the Prince isn’t in his chamber right now, so you could just stay put and rest until you’re well enough to stand and talk to him.”

Curious, she asked the Prince’s whereabouts. She knew that Perry was hiding something from her, “But where is he?”

“I don’t know, dear,” Perry returned and gave her the cup of milk with honey and drunk it.

“LaFontaine told me that the Prince is safe and that his resting for a while from all the anxieties that
happened lately.”

She was overcome with guilt and lost her appetite. Perry was about to give her favorite sweet but refused it and shook her head. “Thank you Perry, but I think my stomach is full,” she said, as she wiped her mouth with a table napkin and motioned for Perry to remove the bed tray in front of her.

“Laura, stop worrying too much,” Perry commented. “Take some rest and I will be back to bring you some dinner.”

She just nodded and gazed at the window. The sun was already descending as red and orange light sprawled over the sky, another day had passed and all she could think about was her Prince. She had not even noticed Perry left her chamber until she heard the sound of a door closed. She began to contemplate; it had not yet sunk to her the astonishing truth. Was Prince Carl a man or a woman? She kept asking herself. She should have been feeling a strong pang of revolt at the revelation of her future husband’s real identity. She should have been ordering Perry and her handmaidens to pack their things and go back home since she was deceived into marrying someone who was different. And yet, she does not feel any repulsion or detests. She even felt ashamed of herself for accidentally discovering the truth; she felt that she had invaded his deepest darkest secret when she saw him naked and vulnerable.

*****

Four days have passed since that awful incident, and she was still in the confinement of her chamber. She had slowly regained her strength and felt much better now, but she chose to remain in her chamber so as to avoid having dinner with the King and Queen. She cannot face them yet; not until she talked to Carl. The Prince has not been seen yet in the castle according to Perry; LaFontaine told Perry that Prince Carl caught the flu. She grew more worried, she cannot forgive her self if anything bad happened to him. A knock on the door snatched her from blaming herself. “Come in!” She said, and when the door opened she was surprised to see the Queen. She curtsied right away and greeted the queen, “Your Majesty.”

“I’m glad to see you well, Princess Laura,” the Queen started. “We both know the reason why I am here.”

The Queen was direct to the point. She stiffened and felt nervous; ashamed at invading the privacy of the Prince. But at the same time, she felt a certain power that she was holding against the Queen after discovering the dark secret of the Karnstein Kingdom.

“I apologized that you found out like this,” was the Queen’s unexpected remark. “You see, we have tried so many times to make his life as normal as possible, and we have sought a lot of help from different lands but no one could tell us the answer and a cure.”

She felt anger brewed inside her.

*Why do they need to cure him?*

She thought, irritated. Even if she found out the truth, it never occurred to her that Carl’s situation was a kind of disease that should be treated. She admitted that she was shocked but she never felt any repulsion towards him.

“Carl was born a girl but with both male and female parts.” The Queen related.

She was disconcerted right away at that first sentence. But she remained silent and would like to know the whole story.
"We hid her from the people and told the whole kingdom that my child had a rare disease that only a warmer climate can heal the child, thus she must live in a warmer place. We sought the help of my midwife who knew about the secret and asked her to be the wet nurse and maid. The King sought the help of the best chirurgeon in this land that specialized on these matters, and asked him what could be done to cure his child? The chirurgeon told us that nothing could be done because our child was the only kind that he encountered in his whole life. He had read some books about a fish that had been born as a female but grew up to become a male. But that was just a legend, he said. Having no solution to the problem, he strongly suggested that we wait until the child reached puberty, and maybe, like the fish in the legend; our child would become a full pledge man when she grew up. However, that was not the case with Carl."

Her head felt like it was about to explode due to all these bewildering facts. “But how did the castle managed to hide his secret, if he was born a girl?” was the thing that bothered her because she became one of the victims too of deceit.

“The King declared a law that every royal heir that is born from that time does not need a royal announcement until the child turned 15.” The Queen explained. “And the law states also that the people cannot ask or demand the castle any important information about the newly born heir, including the sexuality and name. And if they do, they would be punished. The King added also that a new law would allow a female firstborn, not just male, to inherit the throne. And with regards to the people that were involved in taking care of the Prince, they all vowed and swore to the Karnstein Kingdom that nobody can know the truth.”

_Or else all of them would be hanged._

She presumed. Interpreting the Queen’s last remark as a threat to all that would break their promise of silence; including her. She recalled what Lukas told her about meeting the workers from the castle; how silent and careful they were of not talking about what was happening inside the castle.

“Princess Laura, I would understand if you do not want to marry my son anymore,” was the Queen’s unexpected remark. “I just want what’s best for the Kingdom; for the Prince to find a wife and produce an heir. We did not intend to deceive you. I was planning to tell you all of these things before you get married to him. But now that you discovered the truth, you are free to decide if you want to marry my son or leave this castle and go back to your Kingdom. However, we would like to ask for your silence regarding this matter.”

She contemplated what she was going to answer. She does not know if the Queen was really planning on telling her about the Prince’s real identity or she was just deceiving her and would keep the secret until she married the Prince and she would be stuck in this deceitful marriage. Not having the patience of waiting, she noticed the Queen turned her back and walked towards the door.

“What’s her name?” She asked before the Queen could leave her chamber. She knew that it was a bold thing to do, to just ask the Queen like that.

The Queen turned around and faced her, “I beg your pardon?”

“What’s her name before she became the Prince?” She repeated and waited anxiously for the reply as she saw the Queen’s fierce reaction.

“Carmilla.”

TBC
To give you a better image, this chapter was inspired after I saw this in a museum:

Chapter Summary

How Carmilla felt and reacted after Laura discovered her secret.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Carmilla

She ran as fast as she can through the darkness, ignoring the chilly air at the hall, ignoring the hard cold marble on her feet, her mind was in total chaos and her body was shaking, and tears began to flow out of her eyes. She felt frightened, exposed, vulnerable and furious; she felt like her twelve year old self again when she arrived for the first time in the castle and wanted to escape from the hands of the Queen. Only this time, she was running away from the truth and she was seeking for her Queen Mother.

After a few minutes, she reached the Queen's chamber and ran quickly towards the entrance.

"Open the door!" she demanded to the two guards that were standing beside it. She walked inside quickly and found her Queen Mother still on bed and sleeping. She walked closer and stood at the side of the bed.

"Mother," she cried her voice weak and saw the Queen woke up at once.

"Carl? What's wrong?" The Queen asked, confused.

She just stood there wrapped in a white blanket, waiting for her Queen Mother to fully awake. She had not felt so scared like this and all she wanted was the warm protective arms of her mother.

"Laura saw me."

After saying it, she just saw the familiar restrained expression of her mother. She sighed when the Queen moved aside and opened the warm blanket that was covering her mother and motioned for her to get in and come to bed. She obeyed at once, without saying a word and once she was in bed, she felt her mother's arms enveloped her as she rested her head on the warmth of the Queen's bosom for the first time.

There was just silence and her mother's consoling arms as she bawled like a child.

*****

She slowly opened her eyes and averted the strong rays of sunlight that met her sight, and she wondered where all the light came from. She was not used to waking up in bright surrounding. She forced her eyes to open and realized that she was not on her bed, as she noticed no heavy drapes around her. Then her other senses awoken and she recognized that she had slept on her mother's bed. She turned around and saw an empty space beside her, and right after that, she felt a strong pang in her head and groaned in pain. She decided to close her eyes again for a few seconds, testing if it will go away. But it did not.
Then she wondered again why she was in the Queen's chamber and not hers. She slowly tried to recall what happened before she slept. And then she remembered…

"Laura,"

The realization of Laura discovering what she really was came as a blow to her. She reacted instinctively and shoved the blanket that was covering her and thought of going to Laura. But when she rose from the bed, she discovered that she was fully naked and the nagging pain on her head hindered her from standing properly. She decided to lie back on the bed.

"Damn it!" she expressed, frustrated and angry at herself for feeling weak. The pain in her head grew stronger and she decided to close her eyes and rest for a while.

*****

She did not know how long she had slept, but when she opened her eyes to her surroundings, the chamber where lighted with the weak rays of the sun coming from the window. She took a deep breath and rubbed her temple as this stubborn headache remained plaguing her. She noticed a serving tray with a bowl of soup, a goblet and a jug of water on the bedside table. And she suddenly felt thirsty. She carefully got up from the bed and sat first, testing if she could stand without a problem. When she felt confident, she got out from the warmth of the blanket and shivered slightly as the cool air in the room hit her naked body. She took the jug and poured the water on the goblet and drank. She felt relieved after that drink and never realized how thirsty she was until now. She poured another round and consumed it and put back the goblet on the serving tray.

The bowl of soup beside it looked delicious though it was not hot anymore. But she had no appetite for any food right now and ignored it. She turned and glanced around her, searching for any signs of her mother. Then she saw some folded clothes on the chair by the fire place, and recognize that it were hers. She walked across the room to retrieve it. But before she could reach the chair where her clothes were placed, she caught her reflection at the full length size mirror that where standing beside the fireplace. She stood in front the mirror and stared at her naked body. Her eyes browse her face; then her breasts; before landing on her crotch. She stared at her genitals and focused her sight carefully on the phallus she took a moment to look at it, trying to find what was wrong, searching for a reason why she has it.

For a moment, she had wished that she was a full-fledged man and wished that she never have her breasts to avoid this disorientation; to avoid hiding her naked body. But she regretted right away the thought of not having a woman’s breasts, because she loves her breasts. It was a reminder of what she was when she was young; it was a part of her that meant a lot to her too even if she had to hide it. Her breasts had been neglected and undervalued because of this damn obligation that she had. She stared at herself once again, searching for a flaw, searching for a reason for Laura to loathe her; searching for a reason to be called an abomination. But she failed. All she could find in front of her was a beautiful body; an imperfect beautiful body. She closed her eyes and she felt a drop of tear fell from her left eye, and she realized how she had been so cruel to herself; how she had treated herself like an abomination; how she treated herself with little sympathy; how she treated her body like a curse, when in fact she was unique and beautiful in a very extraordinary way! She opened her eyes looked again the reflection of herself on the mirror and smiled as she accepted her true self and appreciated the perfect sight in front of her.

*****

After putting on her clothes and composed herself, she decided it was time to confront and tell Laura
the truth. She had been in her mother's chamber for almost a day and thought that she was brave enough to tell the truth. She walked to the direction of the door and opened it, but was surprised when the two guards that were guarding the door blocked her way. She glared at them, angry at how they behave.

"What's the meaning of this? Let me pass!" she ordered, but they did not moved from where they were standing. She was about to reprimand them, but a familiar face passed through the guards and bowed to her.

"Bertha, what's the meaning of this?" she asked the Queens' Lady in Waiting.

"Your Highness, we received a strict order from Her Majesty not to let you out of her chamber," the middle aged tall woman said.

The first time she met her mother's Lady in Waiting, was when she was young and been put to her chamber to be disciplined. She could never forget this woman, because she was the maid who took care and disciplined her the first time she arrived in the castle. Her mother's Lady in Waiting was stricter, taller, and bigger than the Queen and never smiled.

"Bertha, I am not a twelve year old anymore, I order you to tell those guards to get out of my way," she complained and glared at the woman. "I am the heir to the throne and you will all obey me!"

"Prince Carl, the Queen had given me the authority to confine you in her chamber. And we both know that I would obey first Her Majesty and would not hesitate to do anything, just to keep you in this chamber; even if you're already a grown up man and not a child anymore." Bertha declared, warning her.

Suddenly, she felt like she was twelve year old again. This woman had always scared her since she arrived in the castle. She knew that Bertha was one of the people that knew her secret and the only person that her mother trusted when it comes to taking care of her, whether she was sick, having tantrums, or simply needs a nanny that would accompany her whenever she wants to roam around the castle.

She tried to ask her nicely, even if she knew how strict the Lady in Waiting was. "There is something that I need to tell my betrothed, and it might be too late if I can't talk to her." She implored, but just received a stony stare from Bertha.

"It's the Queen's order Your Highness," Bertha concluded.

After hearing Bertha's answer, she tried to compose herself even if she was already boiling mad inside, "Fine." She returned bitterly and closed the door.

She walked to and fro across the Queen's chamber, growing worried every second that passed. Right now, she felt helpless and powerless. She cannot fathom why her mother would confine her and would not allow her to talk to Laura; surely there must be something going on; something that was serious and complicated.

Suddenly she was overcome with fear and started to lose hope.

What if Laura was shocked at discovering what she really was and was frantic? What if Laura cannot accept the fact? And worst, what if Laura was repulsed at what she really was?

All these worries kept pouring in in her mind and she felt like exploding as anxiety possessed her. She cannot just stay in her mother's chamber and do nothing. Without having any second thoughts, she opened the door again and faced the two tall bulky guards that were blocking her way.
"Get out of my way!" She shouted at them, losing her temper. But they did not heed and remained standing there. She tried to hit one of them, but the guard was quick and took her arm and pushed her inside and closed the door. She stumbled and fell on the floor; she stood up right away and walked to the door. But she grew furious when she discovered that they had locked her inside. "Open this damn door! I command all of you!" She called many times but they did not reply. She punched the door as her anger overcame her and did not care even if she saw her fist bleeding. "Let me talk to Laura!" She demanded and hit the door again when nobody opened it. "You will all be hanged when I get out of here!" she threatened and was boiling mad and kicked the door and punched it again and again until she felt numbed from the pain.

*****

She did not know how long she had slept, but when she opened her eyes, she found herself back on her mother's bed. She winced right away at the throbbing pain that she felt from her right hand, as her senses awakened; she brought her fist to her face to check how bad it was. But she was surprised when she saw a bandage wrapped around it. She slowly opened her eyes and realized that it was already dark, but the chamber was softly lighted and she saw the blazing fire that was illuminating from the fireplace. She groaned in pain as she tried to move her hand again, and the next thing she knew, her mother was approaching the bed and sat on the side and faced her.

"How are you feeling?"

She heard the Queen's firm and yet worried voice.

"I'm fine," she mumbled and did not met her mother's eyes.

"What were you thinking, acting like a fool?" the Queen lectured. "I have given Bertha and the guards a strict order to confine you here because I knew that you are not thinking straight, and what did you do? You disobeyed my order and hurt yourself. It's a good thing Bertha alerted me right away of your outbursts, or else you'll bleed to death on the floor."

She remained silent and just accepted her mother's reprimanding. If there was one thing she learned when she was young and was being scolded by her mother; was to never reason out and answer back.

"How could you talk properly to Laura when you're incapable of controlling your emotions and cannot think straight?" The Queen remarked in a clear and authoritative tone. "I want you to stay here for the meantime because I know that you are not ready to handle whatever Laura is going to say."

This time she cannot just remain silent and was aching to know what happened.

"So, what did Laura said?" was her careful reply, and looked at her mother's eyes, hopeful.

"Nothing; her Lady in Waiting informed me that the Princess is sick," the Queen relayed.

She grew worried upon hearing it and thought that maybe Laura had so much stress and anxiety after discovering the truth. Her rumination was halted when she felt the Queen's hand on her cheek.

"Carl, I know that you are worried. But I promise you that whatever Laura would say I would make sure that it would not hurt you," was the Queen's reassuring remark. "You are my precious son and I would not let anybody hurt you."
She just nodded and contemplated on what her mother just said. She does not know if she would feel relieved or worried. Since she knew that her mother would do anything to protect her.

"Right now, I want you to obey me and stay in my chamber until I know what Laura thinks about you," was the Queen's strict order. "Let me handle this until you recover from all of this chaos. And I don't want you to throw any tantrums again. Bertha is here to take care of you."

"Why can't my Valet do that?" she asked right away, not wanting to be treated like a twelve year old again.

"Because Bertha is the only one that could take care and discipline you in case you have those outbursts again," the Queen stated firmly. "Do I make myself clear?"

She just nodded meekly and knew that there was no point of arguing with the Queen.

"Yes, my Queen Mother."

*****

That night while lying on the Queen's bed and trying to catch some sleep, she recalled at the pleasant things that she was planning before Laura discovered the truth.

She was supposed to surprise Laura by showing up beardless and 'clean shaven' after the day of her name day. She told LaFontaine that the only reason why she still had her beard was because she wanted to go to the village again and give foods and drinks to the people in celebration of her name day. And of course, she needed her beard as part of her disguise.

When she arrived to her room that night after Laura bravely faced her challenge of touching her penis, she thought that the Princess might also feel more comfortable towards her if she finally remove the beard that was making Laura uncomfortable. She does not have any plan of removing it yet, since she enjoyed going to the village and disguising as a royal guard. But right now, she thought that she needed to pamper her Princess. She admired Laura for being patient and tolerating her beard and thought that it was time to really show her betrothed how she looked like without the facial hair.

She knew that Laura was attracted to men who were clean shaven and hoped to charm the Princess by looking like the prince that Laura was attracted to. The thought thrilled her and was looking forward of mesmerizing Laura with her charm and clean shaven appearance. She had dreamt of Laura growing attracted to her and hopefully, the Princess might begin to develop an attraction and eventually fall in love with her.

But all her plans were spoiled the moment Laura barged in her chamber and saw not just her beardless face but her entire being. She began to worry how Laura reacted at that moment of truth after discovering her female side. She had vowed before that she would do everything in her power to hide what she really was and to make sure that she was the man that Laura expected as a betrothed, a man that would provide Laura love, protection, wealth and satisfaction. She had promised to herself that she would be the most gentle and caring man for the Princess: the perfect husband for Laura.

She was ready to tell Laura that she loves the Princess and was thankful and happy to have a woman like Laura in her life. She was about to tell Laura that she would do anything for her Princess just to make Laura happy and satisfied. Because she was afraid to lose Laura; she was afraid that another man, particularly Prince Victor might steal Laura from her; she was afraid that Laura might not be satisfied being with her, if the Princess find out that she was not a full pledge man.
She tossed sleeplessly on the bed as the thought of losing Laura utterly worried her. She was thankful that her mother decided to sleep with her father to give her privacy and peace of mind. However, it did nothing to lessen her anxiety.

*****

The sound of the door closed roused her from her slumber. She slowly stretched her legs and arms and forcefully opened her eyes, but shut it again as the strong light from the rays of the sun hurt her eyes. She was not used to waking up in a bright surrounding and being greeted by the sunlight in the morning.

"Good morning my son," the Queen greeted.

She heard the calm and firm voice of her mother. Once again, she tried to open her eyes and grumbled at how bright it was. She rose and saw her mother sitting by the side of the bed, holding two or three books on the lap.

"Good morning my Queen Mother," she greeted back and sat on the bed.

"Carl, it's almost noon. You need to eat something," the Queen stated, motioning for the untouched tray of food that was laid on the bedside table.

She just nodded, even though she does not have any appetite for food.

"I brought some books for you to read so that you won't be idle while in here," the Queen informed and laid the book on the bed. "You need to be productive all the time."

"Thank you my Queen Mother, I will read them afterwards," she said, and wondered how long her mother intended to confine her in the Queen's chamber. She was aching to ask the question, but changed her mind knowing that the Queen had already made a decision and should not be questioned. And instead, she had thought of asking how Laura was. "How is Laura?" was her careful query.

"LaFontaine informed me that the Princess is still sick and has not come out of her chamber yet," the Queen stated firmly. "Carl, stop worrying about Laura. What you should be doing is to focus on your duties as the heir to the throne. You cannot let this predicament distract you from your obligations."

She just nodded silently and dutifully accepted her mother's order. She knew that her mother was trying to divert her attention from Laura by reminding her of her responsibilities.

*****

It had been four days since she was confined in the Queen's chamber; and it had been four days have passed without hearing anything from the Princess. Laura's silence was slowly killing her. A lot of things flashed in her mind but the one thing that bothered her was:

Is she really sick or is she just trying to avoid me?

She had worried about it for days now. She cannot even imagine the thought of Laura avoiding her. She felt like she cannot survive not having Laura in her life. Laura had already been a part of her daily life. The Princess was her little ball of sunshine; every time she sees Laura everything around her brightened up; Laura made her life bearable. Even if she felt that she had this heavy burden of
being the future king, it does not matter to her how hard it was since she knew that there was this person beside her that made all the things seemed easy, just by looking at the Princess, knowing that Laura would always be there and would never leave her. She remembered that Laura assured her that she was the only man in the Princess' life right now and promised not to leave her. However, she was beginning to doubt that promise after Laura discovered the truth. She knew that the Princess made that promise because Laura knew and believed that she was a man. But right now everything seemed to fall apart.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thank you! I am overwhelm and happy from all your feedbacks, reactions and kudos :-D But I need to warn all of you about the coming angst to prepare yourself ( don't say I didn't warn you :-P )
Chapter Summary

Before she could finally talk and explain to Carl everything, Laura was summoned by her uncle to come home at once, due to her father's condition. She was very worried and asked Perry and her handmaidens to travel with her back to Hollis' Kingdom.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Laura

After the Queen left yesterday, she chose not to be disturbed and asked Perry not to bring her dinner anymore and requested her Lady in waiting that she may be left alone to rest and be not interrupted of her sleep. She cannot let Perry stay with her since her Lady in Waiting would definitely ask her what was wrong.

And today, she asked Perry again for some alone time and just ate a light brunch followed by a piece of chocolate cupcake for dinner. The day was almost over and she found herself on her bed contemplating of all the things that the Queen revealed to her.

She was in total shock yesterday after the Queen told her everything and her mind cannot grasp all the information about her future husband. She sighed and then smiled as she recalled all the things that she and Carl went through; how they began as a total stranger who hated one another, until they became at ease with each other's company, and learned to respect each other's needs and boundaries. She was glad that they discovered each other's weaknesses too and were very understanding and considerate to one another. She felt lucky to have found a betrothed who respected her every wish and does not force her to do something she disliked.

As much as she was shock about the reality of the true identity of the Prince, she cannot find in her heart to dislike Carl because all she could feel was just fondness. She was fond of him and everything about him. She liked how he treated her with so much care and gentleness and showered her with his full attention.

The friendship that they established in a short period of time had made her realized one thing: she adored Carl. She had grown to like her Prince even if she hated his beard and was making her uncomfortable; she was fond of her big wild cat and how protective Carl was of her; she tolerated his broodiness and accepted his possessiveness even if sometimes it scared her when he was over jealous.

She never expected that her life would be this challenging after discovering the truth. But then again, it was up to her if she would make a fuss out of it. She was the one who was going to spend her life with Carl and it was her decision if she would accept and see her partner as a man with a female body or a woman with a penis? She felt like her head was going to explode.

However, she felt that it was shallow and foolish to decide what she really wants based on what Carl was. Does it really define what a person was, based on his or her sexuality? Would it make Carl less gentle and more aggressive if she thought of him as a man, or would it make Carl delicate and gentler
if she thought of him as a woman? But then again, would it make any difference if Carl was a woman instead of a man? Her affection towards the Prince cannot be ruined by just one imperfection. So, what if Carl was different? Would it matter to her? Would it matter if her future husband had a female body?

And then she was reminded again of the sight that astonished her. Carl's body reminded her how she loved and worshipped a woman. She had never felt so aroused in her entire life, until she saw the goddess like body of her betrothed. And she thought:

*Carl is beautiful inside and handsome outside!*

She was now in utter confusion and cannot fathom which she liked most: the ruggedly handsome Carl with a beard that she had grown to like or the beautiful clean shaven Carl that she preferred?

She pondered and tried to find a reason to like or dislike one of them. But she cannot find one. She tried to choose which one she preferred. But her heart cannot choose. She purely liked him for being Carl as a person and the special qualities that defined his whole being. It does not matter if he was a girl before and then a man now or a combination of both. What mattered most was she found a very compassionate person who liked her and would die for her. Carl's feelings towards her were genuine and it surpassed his physical features. He can be diabolical sometimes but he was sweet as an angel when he wanted to. And Carl treated her like she was the most desirable woman in the world that sometimes she suspected if he was falling in love with her.

She was torn from contemplating when she heard the door to her chamber opened and saw Perry entered with a paper on hand.

"Laura, it's from the Castle, a Royal Guard delivered it now," Perry informed and handed immediately the letter with a wax seal of their kingdom to her.

She opened the letter with trembling hands and sat on her bed, while Perry stood in front of her, waiting anxiously what the letter was about.

"It's from Uncle Spencer," she said after reading the letter and handed the missive to Perry to read it. She rose from the bed and walked to the window and stared absent mindedly outside. "I haven't talked to Carl yet. What shall I do?" was her hopeless remark.

Perry walked closer and stood by the window beside her. "Laura, the King is sick and I think your Uncle is right, you need to go home for a while, since your absence makes the King lonely and sicker. Perhaps if he sees you, he's going to be happy and feel better. Whatever your problem with the Prince can wait and-

"I don't think it can wait," was her sudden reaction. She knew that her father needed her, but she needed to fix things with Carl. And she does not want to leave until they patch things up. "I told you Carl is angry and hates me, that's why he hasn't shown himself yet."

"Laura, I don't understand why he could remain angry this long," Perry retaliated. "I know that invading his privacy is unacceptable, but you just did it to surprise him. And besides, his surprise would eventually be revealed when you two meet; it's just that you saw him first... and naked."

Suddenly, something piqued her curiosity and faced her Lady in Waiting. "What do you mean 'his surprise'?"

Perry gave her a guilty look and tried to avoid her eyes, but she held Perry by the arm.

The Lady in Waiting sighed and gave her a resigned look. "LaFontaine slipped while we were eating
breakfast and asked me not to tell you so as not to ruin the surprise, but I guess there's no need to hide it anymore," Perry related. "The Prince asked LaFontaine to shave his beard on the night of his name day. They said that Prince Carl wanted to give you a gift by being clean shaven, since he knew that you're uncomfortable with his beard and hated it. LaFontaine also told me that Prince Carl is willing to do anything to please you," Perry continued. "Laura, I think His Royal Highness is falling in love with you, and would do anything to please you up to the extent of remaining clean-shaven and smooth for you, so that he doesn't hurt your delicate skin." Perry added. "I guess all the men in your life are willing to sacrifice and shave their beards because they love you that much."

After hearing those words from Perry, she suddenly missed him. She never demanded or asked him to shave for her. She had completely and whole heartedly accepted him with a beard. She admitted that she hated it in the beginning. But as time goes by and Carl had begun kissing her all the time, and she had begun to enjoy his kisses, she became accustomed to the feeling of his beard rubbing on her skin. And then she became comfortable with it until it does not bother her anymore that much. Although there were times that his beard tickled her, especially when he was kissing her shoulders. But it does not make her cringe anymore. In fact, she sometimes felt aroused when his beard touches her neck all the way to her bosom.

She longed to see her Prince now; she longed to tell him that she still liked him and that nothing had changed; she longed to tell him that she wanted him and needed his touch; missed his possessive and yet gentle hands on hers. And she longed to kiss him; she does not care if he had a beard or not, she just wanted to taste his lips and assure him that she liked and wanted him.

"Did LaFontaine mention where the Prince is?" she asked, her voice full of hope and longing.

"I'm sorry Laura, even LaFontaine did not know where His Highness is," Perry answered quickly. Disappointed, "But how did they know the Prince's condition? Surely, they must know where Carl is?!" she remarked, upset.

"LaFontaine hasn't seen the Prince since the day that you went to the Prince's chamber," Perry explained calmly. "Her Majesty just informed them about the Prince."

Suddenly a crazy idea crossed her mind, "I'm going to ask the Queen where Carl is." She was about to walk to the direction of the door when she felt Perry's hand seized her arm.

"What are you doing? Are you crazy?" Perry exclaimed.

"I need to know where Carl is!"

"Laura, it's almost midnight!" Perry quipped. "I don't think Her Majesty would be happy to see you knocking on her chamber at this hour."

She calmed down and was enlightened by Perry's words. She sat on her bed, frustrated that she cannot do anything right now. "But what am I going to do? I needed to reassure Carl that everything is alright. And I want to see my father too and Uncle Spencer wanted me to go home at once and had already sent the Royal Guard escorts to fetch me tomorrow!"

Perry sat on the bed, "Laura, I know that you want to please all of them. But you cannot do all things at once. I tell you what, why don't you try to write a letter instead to Prince Carl, and tomorrow morning, when you tell the Queen and the King that you needed to go home, you can ask them to give the letter to the Prince."

Her Lady in Waiting's suggestion gave her hope.
"Alright, I'll write to him instead," she returned and gave Perry a reassuring look. "And please tell the girls to prepare and pack-"

"I have already given them a heads up, since I have a hunch that they might want you to go home, after I saw the Royal Guard," Perry replied. "So, don't worry about it sweetie. Just try to write the letter to your Prince and I'll see you tomorrow."

"Thank you Perry," she replied.

"Goodnight Princess," her Lady in Waiting responded before walking out of the chamber.

After Perry had left, she sat right away at the study table and pulled the drawer and took out a paper and started to compose a letter to Carl.

*****

The next morning, she found herself entering the throne room before departing for Hollis Kingdom. As she walked further, she noticed that it was just the Queen who was present.

"Good morning Your Majesty," she greeted and curtsied to the Queen who was sitting on the throne.

"Good morning Princess Laura, what can I do for you?" the Queen asked, curious. "You looked like you are going somewhere."

"I am, Your Majesty. And I apologize for this short notice, but my father needs me and my uncle ordered me to go home right away due to my father's deteriorating health," she explained clearly, and to avoid any misunderstanding she presented a folded paper with both hands to the Queen at once. "I apologize for my boldness, but I would like to ask Your Majesty if Her Majesty could give this letter to the Prince." The guard that was standing beside the throne took the paper from her hand and handed it to the Queen.

"I am sorry to hear about your father. Kindly send my regards and tell him that we wish him well," the Queen replied. "I would make sure to give this to Carl."

"Thank you Your Majesty," she said and bowed to the Queen grateful. Then she looked at the Queen again and composed herself, as if preparing for a speech. "And I want to let Your Majesty know that nothing has changed on my part. I am not breaking my commitment to both our kingdoms and I would continue to fulfill my duties and obligations to this kingdom."

"Thank you for thinking first about the welfare of our kingdoms, I am impressed of your braveness and your decision," the Queen remarked with a firm voice.

"I keep my word and honor my promise," she replied. "A mere imperfection would not make me change my mind from marrying your son, Your Majesty. I like Carl very much and I have sworn my devotion to him. He is the only man that I wish to marry and no one else."

"I hope you know what you are saying," was the Queen's challenging remark. "Because once you tie the knot with my son, there is no backing out anymore. And I hated to say this, but I am very protective of my son and I don't want to see him hurt. So, if you are not completely certain about marrying him, you still have the chance to say it."

"Your Majesty, I know that you doubt my integrity, but I assure you, I am completely certain that I want to marry your son," she replied firmly. "And to appeased Your Majesty, I am ready and wish to be married to your son as soon as I return from my journey," was her confident retort. "I had thought of waiting for my father to become well so that he could travel here and walk me to the altar when I
get marry. Unfortunately, my father is getting worst and I don't think he could manage to travel this long. And right now, my priority is to become the wife of the Prince of Karnstein and to fulfill my promise to him."

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for your kudos and I really appreciate all the feedbacks to this crazy story. I hope you'll still enjoy reading it even if we're in the 'angst stage' of Hollstein. Oh, and belated Happy Women's Day to all the girls/women out there :-)
Chapter Summary

Carmilla's reaction after Laura left Karnstein Castle.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Carmilla

When she saw the group of guards wearing yellow and black uniforms arriving in their castle yard, she became worried at once. Although she has not seen yet the Hollis' Royal Guard's uniform, she knew that they were from Laura's Kingdom when she saw the black bear with a golden crown on a yellow background of the Hollis' banner. She remained looking out at the window and was puzzled at the number of Hollis' Royal Guards that were waiting outside their courtyard. Her mother has not mentioned anything about it.

And then it hit her:

Is Laura leaving?

Suddenly she found herself growing anxious at the presence of around three dozen Royal Guards from Hollis Kingdom and some carriages. Are they here to fetch Laura? …But why?

Then her hope diminished and fear overcame her. She balled her fist as she stared and watched the royal guards outside, waiting anxiously what would happen. She waited in bated breaths and was alarmed when she saw the Princess' handmaidens all three of them get in one of the carriages, followed by the guards loading five chests on the top and back of another carriage. Her heart pounded fiercely.

Are those Laura's things?

She refused to accept, and waited anxiously if any other person would come out again. She almost lost her balance and her heart broke when she caught the sight of Laura followed by Perry getting into another carriage.

Laura?!

Her hands held tightly on the window sill. She was in total disarray as she watched Laura's carriage drove fast out of their courtyard, that she did not have time to react or to shout to Laura and beg the Princess not to leave her! And all she could do was to give her betrothed one last look as she caught a glimpse of Laura's face on the window of the carriage and gazed languidly at the horses until it disappeared from their courtyard.

"Noooo!"

She collapsed on the floor and bawled. How can Laura just left without even talking to her?! Was Laura so disgusted at her that the Princess did not even bother to say goodbye?! Was their relationship not that worth saving? How about the promises that Laura made to her?
"You promised not to leave me!" she bellowed as anger and pain overcame her.

It did not take long before the guards were alerted at her screaming, and the next thing she heard was the sound of her mother's shoes on the marbled floor approaching to where she was.

"Carl! What's the meaning of this?" the Queen exclaimed. "Stand up!"

She did not obey her mother but just looked up and stared at the Queen's angry face.

"Tell me, did Laura finally leave me?!" she demanded, still in tears. She does not care if her mother could see her like this. Then she saw her mother's face softened and kneeled in front of her and held her hands.

"Carl, Laura did not leave you. She just needs to go home because her father is ill and they needed her," the Queen related.

"But why didn't she talk to me? Why didn't she ask for me? Why didn't she meet me first before leaving?" was her confused and anxious remarks.

"Laura does not have time to wait for you, because they needed to leave at once," her mother relayed and rose. "But before she left, she told me that nothing has changed and that she would still fulfill her promise to both our kingdoms, and that meant, remaining betrothed to you."

After hearing those words, she managed to calm down. "Does she have any message for me?" was her hopeful query.

"She would come back as soon as her father became better," the Queen answered. "Now, get up and stop crying like a child. I didn't raise you to be sensitive and love sick fool. Act like a true prince and be strong."

She tried to gather her composure and stood up and dried her tears with her hand. She was relieved to know the truth but there was still a shred of doubt that was brewing inside her.

"And stop whimpering like a girl," the Queen ordered. "I don't want to see you like this again, do you understand?"

She just nodded and tried to calm down.

"Do you understand?!" the Queen demanded.

She caught her mother's icy glare and straightened her back. "Yes, my Queen Mother, I understand." She said in a firm deep voice, suppressing her sobbing.

"I am beginning to suspect that you're falling in love with the Princess,"

She tried to avert her mother's eyes.

"Look at me Carl," the Queen ordered. "Are you in love with Laura?"

She cannot deny it anymore. Her feelings for Laura were very strong and it consumed her.

"Yes."

She was waiting for another reprimanding from her mother but she was surprise when the Queen just stared at her quietly.
"She did not leave any message for you."

She heard the Queen stated then turned around and left her.

*****

She was startled at the sound of the door opened and heard the voice of her Valet greeted her. She remained lying on her bed and tried to ignore it. She had totally forgotten how annoying LaFontaine was every morning after having stayed for almost ten days in her mother's chamber. Her mother did not let her go back to her chamber at once for fear of she might do some foolish things again, after the queen saw how she reacted upon discovering that Laura left.

Last night was her first evening sleeping in her chamber. It had been a week now since Laura left for Hollis Kingdom. Ever since Laura had left she never had a decent sleep. She cannot focus on her studies and did not read the books that her mother brought during her stay in the Queen's chamber. She did not eat all the foods that Bertha brought her and just ate when she hears her stomach rumbling.

And today she had no plan of getting out of her bed, but had to discard the idea when she felt her bladder were about to burst and decided to get out of her bed. Once she came out of those heavy drapes she saw her Valet waiting for her by the fireplace. She ignored LaFontaine and went to the bathroom. She stood in front of the chamber pot and emptied her bladder. And afterwards she washed her hands and saw herself in the mirror. She looked awful. It was only more than one week that she had not seen Laura but she was already wasting. She was already devastated. She ignored the reflection in the mirror and walked out of the bathroom; she was about to go back to her bed again, when LaFontaine's voice stopped her.

"Your bath is ready and warm, and I have brought also your breakfast," LaFontaine said.

"What are you doing here? Didn't I tell you that I am not leaving my chamber," she complained and was irritated that her Valet walked towards her.

"Your Highness, we don't need to leave your chamber, if that's what you want," LaFontaine began to tell. "But you do need a bath and some nourishment."

She heard LaFontaine's 'polite' tone that her Valet always used to convince her to do something that she differed. "I am not leaving my chamber, but you are."

"Alright, I am going to leave you alone after you have taken your bath and eaten your breakfast."

She knew that her Valet could be such a persistent person and would never leave her alone. "Fine! I'm going to take a bath now but afterwards I want you out of my chamber." She commanded and saw her Valet bowed to her in an agreement.

*****

She felt like the days were dragging as she counted how long Laura had been gone. It had been ten days without her little ball of sunshine in the castle, and she felt how empty and silent their castle was without Laura.

Another day was over and she found herself lying on her bed, worrying again if Laura would really come back to their castle; worrying if Laura would come back to her.

What if Laura found someone else? What if Viktor asked her again? What if she decided to break our betrothal?
She cannot avoid but to think all of these crazy things since Laura had not talked to her or not even sent her a letter. She was afraid that she was losing Laura; she was afraid that Viktor might steal Laura from her, since she knew that the Berghausen Kingdom was in the south too, near Hollis' Kingdom.

*****

Each day her fear grew stronger. She began to suspect if Laura will really come back to her and fulfill the promise that the Princess' made. She recalled Laura telling her that she was the only man in the Princess' life and no one else. But how could she still believe Laura, when the Princess just left without a word of reassurance? How would she feel secure when she had not heard anything from Laura? She was slowly losing hope. And doubt was quickly taking over her thoughts.

*****

She was slowly tearing apart. It had been three weeks now; three damn weeks of patiently waiting if her betrothed would really come back to her; three grueling weeks of trying not to lose her sanity as she kept reminding herself that Laura still belonged to her; three crazy weeks of still wondering what Laura thought of her.

It was her fault. She hated herself. She had been wallowing in pain since she learned that Laura had left the castle to go back home. Although her mother assured her that Laura was coming back and that everything would be alright, her heart still did not want to believe. She had not talked to anyone since she transferred back to her chamber. She was neither talking to LaFontaine nor the Queen about what she felt.

She was supposed to destroy this betrothal and send Laura back to Hollis Kingdom frustrated and broken hearted, and instead, she committed the biggest mistake of her life: showing her vulnerability and falling in love to Laura. And now she was left hanging in a thin thread.

What a fool she had been to believe that somebody could love her for what she was; what a fool she had been to let this stranger come in to her heart and make her weak.

What a fool she had been to take a chance on love. She did not leave any reservations she just let herself fell into the charms of Laura without thinking of the consequences. And now that the truth was unveiled she was in complete chaos!

And what a fool she was for having been distracted of love and forgotten the ultimate problem of how she would explain to Laura what she was. She just let herself be dragged with the wave and flow of love.

Who was suffering now?!

The thought of losing Laura was tormenting her. She loves Laura. But does Laura still want her?

*****

It was almost a month since Laura went back home. It was almost a month where she had wallowed in pain, sorrow, and disorientation.

She was losing Laura.

She was losing love.

She was losing hope.
She did not know where she would be tomorrow, without Laura she was lost.

****

Her state of despair did not go unnoticed from her mother. She was now summoned to talk to the Queen and found herself alone at the throne room with her mother. The last time she had talked alone to the Queen in the vast room was when she was twelve and the time she found out that she was heir to the throne of Karnstein Kingdom and that she had to accept this new life and identity. The scenario right now was similar from that but this time she was not scared anymore.

"Come here." The Queen beckoned in a calm but firm tone.

She walked closer to the Queen's throne and stopped when she met the four steps that separated the floor and the throne. She found her mother still intimidating when seated at the throne, grand and powerful while looking down at her, but she did not care. She knew that she was in for a hard reprimanding from her mother and she was ready for it. She met her mother's cold icy glare and prepared herself for whatever punishment that was waiting for her.

"I did not raise you to be a pathetic broken hearted prince that was pining for a certain woman," was the Queen's authoritative remark while sitting calmly on the throne. "Have you forgotten what I always tell you?"

"No, I have not, My Queen Mother," she replied with the same calm and firm tone, not tearing her eyes off from her mother's glare and mirroring the same inexpressive facial expression of her mother's.

"Then how come you are acting like a pathetic fool?!"

She heard her mother's authoritative voice raised. But she did not flinch. She was already immune to it. And she knew that her mother was disappointed at her.

"Carl Philipp Marcus, you are the heir to the throne of Karnstein Kingdom, what kind of King you will become if you let your heart take control over you?" was the Queen's challenging question. "A king should rule; not fall in love. Love is a hindrance from becoming a powerful king. You have an obligation first and foremost to the Karnstein Kingdom to be an accomplished ruler and to protect your people. And you have an obligation to me and to your King Father to be a successful heir. How can you become a strong and successful king when you cannot control your emotions?" Was her mother's honest critic. "You are marrying Princess Laura because we need to continue the monarchy. She knew that she had an obligation to fulfill that is why she did not break the betrothal. There is no problem about the princess finding out the truth, I took care of it."

She suddenly worried when she heard the last sentence that her mother uttered. When it was relating to her secret she knew that her mother would always do whatever it takes to protect the integrity of the kingdom. She was curious what her mother and Laura had agreed upon, but nonetheless she did not pry.

Her mother had informed her that Laura agreed to marry her out of obligation to her kingdom and to the Karnstein's. But did Laura mention something about marrying her out of love? She never knew. She never heard it from Laura.

"And Carl… don't forget that you are the love of my life, my son," the Queen's voice became gentler. "You are my source of happiness and the most important in my life. That's why I want what is best for you: to become a great king."
She felt like her confidence returned and her mother's reassurance lifted up her spirit. She felt fearless and strong.

Her contemplation was halted when her mother spoke again.

"If you ever commit to this marriage with the hope of combining love, you will fail as a king. Do I make myself clear?"

She nodded and just swallowed everything that her mother told her. "Yes, my Queen Mother." She replied in a confident and deep calm voice.

"Do you have anything you want to say?"

She contemplated for a moment.

A month of silence from Laura was enough. She was not used to being left alone. She was not used to being ignored. She was not used to waiting. And most of all her patience was running out.

Suddenly, she found herself not wanting to disappoint her mother again. And she felt like there was something inside her that was triggered, and she was in the state again where she seeks her mother's trust, attention and approval.

"Forgive me for being weak and for forgetting my obligations, I have been temporarily distracted," she spoke with candor. "I promise to obey all the things that you said and will never disappoint you my Queen Mother and my King Father."

After that heartfelt confession, the Queen nodded and gave her a satisfied smile.

"I am pleased to know that," was the Queen's reply, and beckoned her to come nearer to the throne and kneeled in front of the Queen. She looked up at the Queen's icy glare turned into a warmth gaze, and she felt her mother's right hand cupped her left cheek tenderly and kissed her other cheek before whispering into her ear:

"I'm happy that my son is back."

She closed her eyes for a moment as she heard those words and felt satisfied and secured. There was something in a way her mother does things that made her obey. And this time she would make sure that her mother would be proud of her.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thank you again for your kudos and feedbacks ;-) And sorry again for the angst. If it's very painful, I'll send you a chocolate to ease your pain :-P
Heartache

Chapter Summary

After a month of staying in her home kingdom, Laura is finally back in the Karnstein Castle and is looking forward to see and patch things up with Carl.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

She sighed as she stepped out of the carriage and faced the Karnstein Castle's entrance. It was almost midnight and she was exhausted from the long day trip from Hollis Kingdom to Karnstein Kingdom. Nevertheless, she was glad that she was already in the castle and was looking forward to see her Prince. She had never seen him for over a month, nor heard from him and she wondered if he was still angry at her. She had hoped that the letter that she gave to the Queen would somehow enlighten Carl's mind, but she was disappointed when he did not reply.

When she entered the castle she cannot help comparing the light atmosphere of her home to the dim and silent aura of the castle that she lived in now. She took a deep breath and caught the musty and damp smell of the castle and the fragrance of rose in the air. She smiled as her nose caught the familiar scent of her Prince. When she arrived in the Karnstein Castle she was impressed at how the whole castle smelled of rose. It was rare that a castle in Styria have rose garden since it was a delicate flower to grow. But here, they mostly use the flower as fragrance to the linens and clothes that the King, the Queen and the Prince's used and as decorations. Often times, dried rose petals were scattered on the floors of each chamber. However, she did not use it to make her chamber smelled good, when Perry suggested that they scatter some to her chamber. She told Perry that she just want to make her chamber simple, clean and smelled neutral.

As she walked through the great hall on the way to the grand staircase, she cannot help but to look at the opposite wing when they reached the second floor and the hall leading to her chamber. Carl's chamber was located at the farthest end of the opposite wing: the most isolated chamber. And she cannot help but to wonder why the Prince would choose to sleep there. Speaking of the Prince, she was wondering also if Carl missed her at all during the times she was gone. Then something she never thought of slipped in her mind.

I wonder if he has grown his beard again?

She thought and wondered why it suddenly occurred in her mind. It was over a month since the last time she saw him. When she was in their castle, she wrote to him and mentioned in her letter that he did not have to shave just for her, because she liked him and had grown to love him with a beard. She felt ashamed and seemed demanding after learning from Perry that Carl wanted to please her by being clean shaven, which she thinks was inappropriate. Because she told Carl that she accepted him for what he was and would not ask him to change anything in him just to please her.

But she cannot deny that the Prince was handsomer when she saw him without facial hair. How she craved during that moment to kiss those beautiful soft looking cheeks and touch the Prince's smooth perfectly chiseled jawline. Now that she saw him without a beard, his jawline looked more enticing
to kiss. And she imagined kissing Carl's alabaster throat. She was curious how it felt to put her hands on his smooth jawlines and caress it like she used to do before when Carl would want some petting from her like a cat. And she realized.

*God! I missed my big wild cat!*

She sighed with longing and recalled how Carl loved her touch, and how she loved gazing at his face, while he closed his eyes and savored the touch of her hand. Her Prince was so easy to please and pacify, and she was glad to discover his weaknesses. It only took one kiss from her to stop him from brooding; it only took the touch of her hand on his cheek to control his rage; and she only had to pout and give him a puppy sad eye look to get him to obey her. She felt overwhelmed and cannot wait to touch his face, kiss him and put her arms around him! She missed him so much!

And before she could turn around and walk to the direction of Carl's chamber, her eyes already caught the sight of her chamber's door and the two guards that stood beside it had already opened the door to welcome her back.

*****

She woke up at the sound of the chirping of the birds outside her window and she smiled as she caught the scent of rose in the air. She slowly opened her eyes and saw Perry putting a bouquet of different colored roses in the vase by her bedside table. She got excited at once, got up and gaze at the roses.

"Did Carl send those?"

"And good morning to you too Princess," Perry said.

She gave her Lady in Waiting a sheepish look, after forgetting her manners. "Sorry I'm just excited… good morning to you too."

"These are from their Majesties," Perry cleared. "They said that they are so happy that you are back in the castle and wish you a pleasant day on your return."

The smile on her face vanished and she was disappointed to find out that it was not her Prince who sent it.

"Have you seen Carl?" she asked Perry, full of hope.

"No, unfortunately; and neither LaFontaine," Perry sighed.

She wondered where he could be. Curious, "What time is it?"

"It's already past noon Princess," Perry informed.

And she realized at once why her Prince was not there to welcome her back. Everyone in the castle were already working and doing their daily tasks, while she still sits on her bed in the middle of the day. She felt like a spoiled princess.

"Why didn't you wake me up?" she asked and had thought of joining Carl for lunch today.

"I know that you were exhausted last night, so I didn't wake you up. I brought your lunch," Perry said and motioned on the wooden serving tray beside the flowers. "Should I put it on the table or you'll eat there?"
"Thanks. Please put it on the table," she returned and got up from her bed. She walked to the window and looked out, as she enjoyed the sight of the stunning garden and the different varieties of flowers that were in full bloom; from white edelweiss, bright red and yellow daisies, to the amazing blue, purple and pink hyacinths, dainty pink and peach carnations and majestic sweet smelling lilacs.

She loved this view from her window, and she loved how the Karnstein Castle maintained its beautiful garden of flowers and trees compared to the Hollis' Castle, where they mainly grow trees with fruits and vegetables.

But nothing would compare to the elegant red, white, blue, yellow and orange roses that were growing at Carl's secret rose garden. She loved that garden not just for the roses, but the significance of it: She and Carl had their first picnic there and Carl proposed to her in the rose garden.

*****

After eating lunch, she went to the throne room at once to thank the King and Queen for the flowers and to let them know that she had arrived safely. She was informed by the Queen at once that she need to start planning about the wedding and had already provided her some people to help with organizing.

Her hands were already full as she received a long list of 'to dos' on her first day back in the castle. She reminded herself that she should get used to it since she was about to become the Crowned Princess of Karnstein after she get married to Carl. Her obligations would be official and the list would grow longer. But she does not mind. She enjoyed helping people and working hard. She was never idle when she was in their castle.

Before dinner she caught LaFontaine in the kitchen and asked the Valet where the Prince was since she had not seen him yet after she arrived. The Valet told her that the Prince was with the King and the King's men, discussing about a new trade partnership, but would stay in the library before dinner. She was about to ask more about the Prince, but LaFontaine was summoned by the Queen.

*****

Few hours later, she found herself walking on the dimly lit hall to the library. Her heart was pounding in anticipation of seeing her Prince and the mixed feelings of not knowing if Carl was still angry at her or he had already forgotten that awful incident.

She had assured him on her letter that she still liked him and that her feelings never change towards him even after finding out the truth. She admitted that she was shocked and cannot believe it, and was still confuse the first week that she was still at the Karnstein Castle. However, during her stay at the Hollis Castle, she realized that she missed Carl and that she was longing for his presence. She remembered the time he got angry when he did not saw her for a day and he gets broody or mad whenever they don't get to see each other.

She wondered how angry he was now after she had been away for a month. She wondered also if Carl missed her as much as she missed him. She wrote a second letter to him when she was at her kingdom, stating how sorry she was again for what happened and that it does not matter what he was. Because she grew loving him for what he was even if he was different. She had also stated there that she was growing fond of him the last time they were together but was not able to tell him, because she was not sure of what she felt. But right now, the distance reconfirmed it: she felt something deeper other than attraction towards him. She waited for a reply eagerly, but was disappointed when he did not answer again.

On the last week of her stay at their castle, she wrote him a letter again asking him if he was still
angry at her. And to make things easier for both of them, she reassured him that she was not breaking their betrothal and as soon as she arrived home they can talk about finalizing their marriage and announcing it to both kingdoms. She hoped that this assurance would erase any doubt on him with regards to what she feels. But she never knew what he thought of.

Her heart pounded fiercely and she sighed; she does not know what to expect when she knocked on the door of the library.

"Come in."

She heard Carl's quick reply, but she could tell from his voice that he was serious. She slowly entered the dark library and saw him standing by the fireplace, his back facing her. Her eyes caught sight of the crown on his head. He never wore it except during special occasions. She remembered him telling her that he disliked it because it was heavy and it reminded him of his heavy responsibilities as the future king; then he teased her and told her that, it was better not to wear his crown so that it would be easier for her to caress his hair if she would kiss him; which was true. She remembered that Carl liked the feeling of her hands running though his hair while his head was resting on her lap, and heard him purred when she caressed him there.

She had thought of wrapping her arms around Carl as soon as she entered the room, but the stiff shoulders and the hands of the Prince behind him told her that he had been contemplating. She disregarded the idea and stood behind him with a decent distance between them like an acquaintance instead of lovers.

"I missed you." She uttered softly.

She was expecting by now that Carl would turn around and kissed her, but she was disappointed by the lack of reply and action from him. She took a deep sigh and tried to get his attention again.

"I... I want to apologize for what had happened last time. I did not know-"

"Nobody knew, except my parents, some of the servants and my Valet." Was his cold reaction. "And you."

She took a deep breath again, and grew tense at the tone of his deep firm voice. She had never felt so intimidated at how he talked with that cold and authoritative voice of him. She had witnessed a lot of times when he loses his temper and shouts at everyone. But she knew that at the end of the day, she could tame him and Carl would surrender to her kisses. However, at this moment, she was not sensing any of those things from her Prince, except this cold authoritative aura.

"Carl, please... will you look at me?"

She requested, not used to talking to him with his back facing her. But when he did not move an inch, she gave up and just continued, "I want you to know that nothing had change. I still like you even if you..." she was about to say half woman and half man but she was confused and did not want to make things worse. "Different... I mean different like in a good kind of different way that I still like, you know." She babbled and she hope by now he was already softening from her being half-witted. But she was treated by silence again.

She thought of provoking him to stir his emotions, so that he would flare up and then she could pacify him and kiss him at the end.

"Fine! Do you want to know the truth?! I was shocked! I never met anyone like you. I cannot believe that it was possible for a person to be both and that I never found out or never had any
suspicion that you possess both-" she was about to mention both man and woman's appearance, but controlled herself not wanting to hurt him.

And instead of a reply, she was distracted by his arms now resting on his sides, and she was alerted when she saw his hands balled into fist. She panicked and thought that Carl had misunderstood what she was trying to convey, and the thing she wanted to say was: she accepted and liked him for what he was.

But instead of saying it, it was an automatic reflex for her to hold him and kiss him just like they used to do when they were fighting and would make up.

Without hesitating, she touched the back of his left arm, gesturing for him to face her, but as soon as her hand made contact to his arm he turned around quickly and avoided her touch, as if he was burned.

"Do not touch me!" he reprimanded, his voice fierce.

"Carl…" she mumbled and was about to say sorry again but was taken aback by his violent reaction.

She gasped when she noticed his face, clean shaven and very neat looking, just like when she saw him while he was sleeping, but neater and colder. His hair was neatly trimmed and tamed.

As their eyes met, she could no longer find the deep, warm, caring orbs that she used to see. And instead, it was fierce and icy. She contorted her brows and was hurt at how he reacted. It seemed like she was talking to a stranger. Gone was the broody but passionate bearded Prince that she used to like; now it was replaced by this intimidating cold person that looked strange in her eyes. She cannot deny that he looked more attractive now that he was clean shaven and his smooth face was visible and beautiful than ever, compared when he had a beard. She hated that beard, but she had grown to love it because it was a part of him that she had accepted whole heartedly. Instead she was met by a different Carl. A Carl that was cold, withdrawn, serious, aloof and intimidating. And she worried and wondered:

*What happened to my Prince?*

"You do not need to spend your time with me," Carl said.

She was distracted from her rumination as she heard his deep cold voice and looked at him.

"From now on, I would be very busy, and can no longer be with you whenever you want me," the Prince stated. "If you want to give a message to me, you can relay it to my Valet. They will manage all of your needs and questions."

"Carl, we are about to get married, you must reserve some of your time for me," she commented and would not accept this arrangement.

"I am the heir to the throne and my duties and obligations to the Kingdom come first," he stated firmly. "And you will accept that and will not demand any of my time for you."

She was hurt upon hearing the last remark. But she would not have it.

"No, I won't accept it," she returned and saw the anger on his face after she rejected his proposal. "I am going to be your wife soon and I demand what is rightfully mine; and that means you and your affection." She blurted and was surprised to see him speechless. "You may not want to see my face, but I couldn't remain in a marriage where I don't see my husband nor talk to him. You can use the whole day fulfilling your duties as the heir, but when night comes, I want to be with you," was her
bold demand.

"What you're asking is too much, Princess," Carl returned with sarcasm. "After we got married, you are going to remain sleeping in your own chamber and I would continue to sleep in my own chamber. You cannot force me to spend some time with you, and you certainly cannot ask me to give you some attention. Because my time is precious and should be spent for more important things rather than be wasted on your childish needs. And I don't need to discuss or explain any further to you, since I have already decided. And from now on, you will call me Prince Carl, or Your Highness and nothing else."

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for all your feedbacks and kudos :-}
Love Letters

Chapter Summary

The continuation of Carmilla and Laura's confrontation. And Carmilla discovered that her mother hid something from her. While the King and Queen were excited to wed them as soon as possible.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Carmilla

"How can you say those words?" Laura retaliated still unconvinced. "I was just gone for a month... and yet... I could no longer recognize the Prince that I left behind... What happened to you?" the Princess' feeble and desperate remark. "Please tell me you don't mean it." Laura implored. "Because I don't know how I could live with you under the same roof without touching and holding you."

"Don't you dare talk to me like that," she reprimanded. She was irritated at how Laura does not give up easily; she clenched her jaws and increased the pitch of her voice. "I am your future husband and the heir to the throne; you shall obey and accept all the things that I am telling you. You will respect me and agree with all my conditions, and you will not use that tone of voice to me."

She remained glaring at Laura and noticed the Princess' brows wrinkled, while those hazel eyes smoldered in pain, and those beautiful lips quivered, as she witnessed how Laura tried to suppress the tears that were threatening to come out. But she did not yield.

"I have mentioned many times in my letters how much I want you; how much I like you; how much you mean to me," Laura uttered in a brittle tone. "Doesn't that mean anything to you?"

She stared at the Princess for a moment and she almost lost her composure and was temporarily snatched from her outrage. What letters?! Her brows furrowed and her eyes narrowed. She does not recall any letters that she received from Laura. But it does not mean she will yield to her feelings. She reminded herself again that she needed to be strong and be firm in her decisions. Then she heard her mother's voice in her head:

"How can you become a strong and successful king when you cannot control your emotions?"

She took a deep breath and said, "I don't know what you're talking about."

"I wrote three letters for you, didn't you received them?" the Princess asked with a trace of desperation.

She averted Laura's eyes; her thoughts in terrible turmoil and faced the fireplace. "I did. But it doesn't matter. I have made up my mind. This discussion is over. You may leave now. And don't you dare question me again," she warned in a firm arrogant tone. "Or I will break this betrothal!" And before she realized, the words were already out of her mouth and she regretted saying it.

Then there was silence.
She felt her heart pounding fiercely.

The anticipation of waiting for Laura to react to the threat of breaking their betrothal had sent her to frenzy. She twisted her signet ring on her right pinkie and bit her lip. What if Laura accepted the challenge? Could she take it? Was she ready to lose the love that she had finally found?

She held her breath when she heard Laura's voice and her shoulders stiffened.

"Before I leave, I want you to know that there was not a single day that I didn't think about you while I was gone." Laura confided. "...I missed my Prince." The Princess whispered in the air.

And the next thing she heard was the sound of footsteps on the floor then the door opened and finally closed.

She breathed a sigh of relief. She shut her eyes and bowed her head, while her right hand reached for her temples and rubbed it with her middle and index finger. She was very aware of how Laura was hurt by her words, but to hurt the one she loves was more painful.

*****

When she arrived at the dining hall her mother and Laura were already in their places. She walked quietly towards her mother.

"Good evening my Queen Mother," she uttered and bowed to the Queen, before kissing her mother's hand.

"Carl, it's good to see you my son," the Queen returned after acknowledging her presence. "I was telling Princess Laura here that we could finally set the date of your wedding on the next full moon."

"And that would be when?" she asked, while still standing in front of the Queen.

"Next Wednesday," her mother confirmed.

"With all due respect My Queen Mother, I don't think we have enough time to prepare in a span of ten days," she replied, knowing that preparing for a wedding was a big task. But deep inside her, she knew that she was not emotionally prepared for it. She glanced at Laura who seemed to be silently listening to the Queen and caught Laura's melancholic smile.

"My son, in case you have forgotten, your mother is the Queen and your father is the King. Nothing is impossible when it comes to our Prince's happiness," the Queen remarked with great pride.

And before she could comment, they heard the guards opened the door and announced the King's arrival.

She bowed to the King and Laura rose from the chair and curtsied to her father. When she saw her father took a seat, she walked across the other side of the table and was about to take her seat, but she was surprised when Laura curtsied to her too.

"Your Highness,"

She heard Laura uttered after curtsying to her and did not meet her eyes. Ever since they became close, she asked Laura never to bow to her again. And now, she felt hurt at the way Laura treated her. The awkwardness and tension that was growing between the two of them was interrupted when the King spoke, and they both took their seat as the guards pulled their chairs for them.
"Carl, Your Queen Mother informed me that you and Princess Laura can get married on the full moon," the King began and took a swig of wine from the goblet right away. "I think it's a good idea. What do you think Princess?"

The servants had already started serving the soup and pouring the wine, and she noticed that Laura was not touching the soup.

"I think it is perfect Your Majesty," the Princess answered in a weak voice. "I have promised Her Majesty that as soon as I came back from our kingdom, His Highness and I will get marry at once."

"How about your father, is he coming?" the King asked carefully.

She glanced at Laura and saw the Princess' head bowed and Laura's lips quivered. She ached at what she witnessed. But before she could react, the King's voice caught their attention again.

"Oh Princess, forgive me I didn't mean to hurt you," the King related and was staring at Laura now.

"No, Your Majesty, it's alright, I just missed my father," Laura said and looked up and focused on the King's direction. "As I have mentioned to Her Majesty, my father cannot walk me to the altar on my wedding day, since he has not the strength to travel that long. But my uncle will do it instead."

"That's nice to know, Princess Laura," the Queen related. "So it's settled then."

Seeing that both her father and Laura had not opposed to her mother's proposal, she nodded to her mother's direction.

"Excellent," the Queen said. "Princess Laura, tomorrow you could show me the list and we could discuss what more we need."

"Yes, Your Majesty," was Laura's simple reply.

"Carl, have you thought about which ring you and Princess Laura would use?" the King asked.

Suddenly she was disoriented. And had thought of asking Laura what the Princess liked. They have never talked about it. And she knew that Laura was not that fond of jewelry. But she still respected her betrothed.

"I haven't honestly thought about it my King Father," she replied and looked at the Princess. "Perhaps we could ask Princess Laura what she likes."

Laura looked at her.

"I am not really particular when it comes to jewelry so it does not matter to me which kind," the Princess responded.

"Princess Laura, these rings would be the symbol of yours and Carl's love and fidelity, so you shall both choose it," the Queen said. "I would ask for the goldsmith to come to the castle, so that you and Carl could tell him how you like your wedding band."

"Forgive me for my ignorance Your Majesty…"

She heard Laura saying, but saved her Princess from being embarrassed. "My Queen Mother, Princess Laura and I would take care of it."

"Very well, I trust that you would choose the best," The Queen commented and gave them a satisfied grin.
They all went back to eating the main course and she noticed that Laura barely ate the vegetables and beef on the plate. She tried to avoid conversing with Laura and asked her mother instead the one thing that was nagging in her mind since she left the library.

"My Queen Mother, could I have a word with you alone at your chamber after dinner?" She asked.

"Certainly my son,"

She nodded in thanks and tried to finish her beef even if she was having a hard time swallowing it due to the tension that was brewing between her and Laura.

When it was time for the dessert to serve, she discreetly observed the Princess beside her; her brows furrowed and she swallowed hard when she saw Laura refused the cupcakes that the servant had offered the Princess.

"What's the matter Princess, do you have a toothache?" the King suddenly commented. "You never say no to dessert."

"I apologize Your Majesties, but I am not feeling well," the Princess answered. "Would it be alright if I retire to my chamber now?"

"You may go and rest now Princess, I'm sure you're still tired from your long journey," the King relayed. "Carl-

"My King, the guards can escort Princess Laura," the Queen suggested. "I hope you'll be well soon"

She stood up as the princess rose from the seat. Laura bowed to the King then to the Queen and lastly when it was time to bow to her, she caught the sadness in the Princess' eyes.

"Goodnight Your Highness,"

Laura mumbled without looking into her eyes.

"Goodnight Princess and I hope you feel better tomorrow," she said in a firm deep tone.

*****

"Didn't you receive my letters?"

"I did. But it doesn't matter. I have made up my mind."

Laura's pleading was still in her mind, nagging her like a conscience. She cannot take it anymore. She needed to know the truth.

She composed herself and made sure that she was in control of her emotions before arriving at the door to her mother's chamber. When the guards of the Queen's chamber saw her coming, they bowed to her and opened the door right away.

When she entered the chamber, her mother was already sitting on the chair beside the fireplace. She walked closer and stood a meter away from where her mother was. Fuming inside, she tried her best to calm in front of her mother.

"Laura told me that she sent some letters for me," she said in a calm deep voice. "Is it true?"
Instead of an answer, she saw her mother's apathetic expression and then rose from the chair gracefully. The Queen walked to the study table by the window and retrieved something from its drawer. And returned to the chair and sat calmly, before handing three letters to her that was still sealed with wax.

"It's true," was the Queen's firm and calm reply. "Laura handed me the first letter right before she left for the Hollis Kingdom, and the two remaining letters were delivered here from the time she was staying in her kingdom."

Her mother kept an eye contact with her and she did not release it.

"Then why didn't you give it to me?" she demanded and clenched her jaws. She felt the veins in her neck throbbing.

"Carl, the reason why I kept out those letters from you it's because I don't want you to break down again," the Queen explained openly in a firm and deep tone. "I don't want you to make a mistake of falling in love, while I'm preparing you to become the king. I know that it is hard for you not to be able to show your feelings to Laura, but you will get used to it. Right now the most important thing is for you to focus on your strength and sanity. I don't want you to lose control again. You can choose to open and read those letters. However, you have to promise and make sure that after you read the content, you could still remain focused and strong like you are right now."

She sighed and looked up when she saw the Queen rose and walked closer to her. 

"Do I make myself clear?" the Queen remarked not breaking the eye contact.

"Yes, my Queen Mother." She replied clearly and nodded.

Then she felt the Queen's knuckle rubbed on her cheek gently, "I hope my king would not disappoint his mother." The Queen whispered.

She closed her eyes and swallowed as the touch and words of her mother possessed her. "I won't," she replied in a low deep voice and opened her eyes. And the next thing she knew the Queen was holding her hand and beckoning her to sit on the floor while her mother sat on the chair.

"Come here,"

The Queen motioned to put her head on the Queen's lap. She obeyed and removed her crown and placed it beside her on the floor together with the letters on her hand before she rested her head on her mother's lap. The last time she did this was when she was fourteen and she felt calmed and contented at the Queen's caress.

"Let me clear your mind and ease your worries, my son,"

She heard her mother's soothing voice as she felt the Queen's smooth hand stroked her hair and face. Her body started to calm down and she closed her eyes as she felt the warm caress of the Queen's hand.

"I have missed this," the Queen uttered softly. "I think you should always come to my chamber every night so that I could help you relax before you go to bed … would you like that?"

She lifted her head from the Queen's lap and looked at the Queen's caring eyes. "Yes my Queen Mother, I think I'd like that very much."

And then she felt her mother's delicate hands cupped her face.
"I am happy to hear that and I am looking forward to seeing you every night in my chamber," the Queen returned. "Remember, you are precious to me Carl, and I am always here to protect and love you, my king."

Her pride soared after hearing those words from her mother. The only thing that was in her mind now was to meet her mother's expectation: and that was to be the king that the Queen desired.

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When she arrived in her chamber she saw her Valet emerged from the bathroom. She walked to her study table and put the letters in the drawer. Then she removed her crown and put it on the table before facing her Valet and let LaFontaine help her take off her clothes and boots. They stood there in silence and she knew that her Valet had realized at once that she was not in the mood for some small chat. When she was down with just her braise and under tunic, she turned around and walked quietly to the direction of the bathroom, while her Valet gathered her used clothes and boots and left the chamber.

She closed the door of the bathroom and removed the remaining clothes in her body. Once she was naked, she touched the anchor pendant of her necklace that was hanging around her neck and kissed it before she got in the bathtub. As she sat and the temperature of the water calmed her body, she cannot help but think of the things that happened today.

She knew that she was hard on Laura and it was unfair of her to treat her Princess like that. But she had duties and obligations to fulfill and she had promised to give her whole self to become a successful king, even if she had to sacrifice her love and own happiness. She remembered the letters from Laura and contemplated on what she would do with it. Then her mother's voice lingered in her thoughts:

"I hope my king would not disappoint his mother."

She closed her eyes and tried to enjoy the hot water calming her body, while she comes to a decision.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

I hope everybody's alright. Thank you for bearing with the angst. I really appreciate all your generous feedbacks, kudos and for letting me know how you like this little crazy fic, even if I know that you're heartbroken from reading it. And I was surprised how some of you reacted strongly to the last update. I didn't expect that it would result in that kind of reaction from some of you. So, thanks for letting me know. And to those who thanked me for this fic, you're welcome... I'm glad to hear from you.
Wedding Preparations

Chapter Summary

Laura receives some gifts from her parents and becomes emotional. Despite having trouble working out her relationship with the Prince, Laura is still enthusiastically preparing for her upcoming wedding.

Chapter Notes

Let me just straighten out something, I know that the previous chapter had been very disturbing and creepy to some of you, and I totally understand it. But it is not what some of you think. Although some of you are right about one thing: 'the Queen wants to be the only woman that Carl loves', because:

Firstly, the Queen is very possessive and overprotective of Carmilla. If we are to analyze the story from the beginning, Carmilla is isolated from the outside world, with only few people around her. Carmilla's only source of affection is her mother and they have built a special bond, and that bond came back when Carmilla is hurt when Laura left. She had this void again in her heart that must be filled in, that's why Carmilla decided to obey all of her mother's wishes.

Secondly, Carmilla is the heir. The Queen wants to make sure that Carmilla is not distracted, and the Queen wanted to make sure that by always inviting Carmilla to the Queen's chamber to spend some time with her, she can have that constant control over Carmilla. I know that it sounded creepy but the main intention of the Queen is to control Carmilla since the Queen knew that Carmilla is in vulnerable state, and the Queen believes that the only thing that could pacify and give Carmilla strength is her love and attention.

And lastly, the previous chapter is a taste of what's to come when Laura and Carmilla become married. I know that some of you out there are still young and does not have an idea of the typical daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship. And this is the stage of Laura's life as a married woman that I wanted to tackle later on. There are a lot of women who are still fighting with their mother-in-law for their spouse's love and attention. So, imagine what will Laura do if she had a manipulative, controlling, possessive and over protective mother-in-law? We should take into consideration here that, Carmilla is not just the only child of the Queen, but also the Queen had been deprived to be a mother to Carmilla for over half of Carmilla's life, the Queen wanted to still protect and take care of Carmilla despite Carmilla being already an adult. And also there is the part where Carmilla is different and the Queen always wants to shield Carmilla from all the reasons that could hurt the Prince, including Laura. These are the reasons why the Queen does not want to release Carmilla in her "claws".

I guess this story would be longer than I ever intended to write. So, let me know what you all think. And an endless thanks to all your kudos and wonderful feedbacks, and for your patience with regards to the angst. It will just be a little while (the angst), and then we could go back to your favorite Hollstein goodness. Hope you'll all bear with me.
And I am glad to know how you felt every time you see a new chapter; it makes me want to write more :-)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Laura

"Laura, the goldsmiths are here. They're waiting at the tea room," Perry informed.

"Can you please tell LaFontaine, to tell the Prince to meet me at the tearoom?" she said as she gathered the papers in her hands, and rose from the chair of her study table.

"His Highness is already in the tearoom as well as LaFontaine," Perry returned.

"Oh." She was surprised that the Prince was already there. "Alright, can you please tell Betty to bring some refreshments to the tearoom?"

She received a nod from her Lady in Waiting before leaving her chamber.

*****

Upon arriving at the tea room, she cannot help but to be emotional as she saw Carl sitting on the single chair at the farthest end of the center table, with LaFontaine standing beside him. Her attention was torn from the Prince, when the two men rose from the sofa and bowed to her as she approached them. One in his early adult, more likely her age she presumed, and the other, the middle age man with a white beard.

She curtsied first to Carl and greeted him.

"I apologize to keep His Highness waiting, I thought Your Highness is still outside," she remarked still bowing her head, after he rose from the chair.

"It's alright, I saw them outside and showed them here right away," Prince Carl said in a deep calm voice.

She took the seat across the two men and motioned for them to sit down, while Prince Carl took a seat after she sat comfortably.

"I have drawn some examples here and I just thought Your Highness could check if these suit Your Highness' standard," she said and showed the papers to the Prince on her left.

Carl stared at all of the three papers and she saw his gaze locked on a certain drawing. She hoped that it was the one that she favored the most, but she did not want to dictate him what to choose and instead waited for him to know what he thought of them.

"I think they're all nice," Prince Carl remarked. "But why is that one twisted?"

When she checked the one where his finger pointed at, she smiled and took the paper and held it in front of him; ready to explain.

"Compared to the other bands, this one is infinite." She said and saw him contorted his brows. "It means the ring has no end and no beginning and it continues forever in a circle."
Still curious, Prince Carl asked, "And what does it symbolizes?"

*It symbolizes that my love for you has no beginning and no end… its forever.*

She had thought of saying those words to him and was lost at the sight of his gentle dark orbs, and she gazed at him unintentionally.

"Princess? Did you hear what I've said?"

The Prince's cough tore her out of reminiscing and shook her head. "Oh, forgive me Your Highness, I just… umm, where were we?"

"The symbol of this ring?"

She heard him filled in.

"Ah yes, it symbolizes, two parts merging as one, just like our families; it’s a relationship. Both sides still exists but they are also both a part of one."

"So, in other words, it means: two becomes one," Prince Carl concluded.

"That's right," she added and smiled at him.

"Do you like it?" he said, serious.

She was surprised when he asked. She never thought that her opinion mattered to him, since the day he told her that she should obey him and never question him.

"Actually, that's my first choice, but of course, Your Highness' opinion is more important than mine," she relayed, in a low voice, showing to him that she was giving him all the rights to decide. Showing to him that she was respecting his decision of not to question him anymore and obey him.

"It's settled then," Prince Carl remarked and looked at the goldsmiths' direction. "We're choosing this one," he pointed at the sketch of the twisted ring.

She suppressed her excitement seeing that he was serious. She was certainly satisfied with his decision.

"I still have some matters to attend," the Prince faced her. "I would leave it to you to decide which material and other details you like in the rings."

"I would gladly do it," she returned.

"Your Highness, may we take the size of your finger?" the older of the goldsmiths asked and rose from his seat.

She saw LaFontaine took the ring gauge and assisted Prince Carl into measuring his finger, while they all waited for the Prince to finish. After LaFontaine found the perfect size, the Prince rose from his seat and left them.

"Your Highness, may we take yours now?"

She saw the younger goldsmith focused on her direction and was about to give to LaFontaine the ring gauge, but she halted the young man's hand.

"It's alright, you can take my measurement," she conveyed and the young man dutifully obliged, and
smiled at her.

After finding the perfect size for her, she caught LaFontaine staring at her.

"What?" She asked, totally oblivious to why LaFontaine was looking at her.

But before the Valet could reply, her attention was diverted to the older goldsmith.

"How would Your Highness like the rings?"

"I would like it in gold, but I like the edges in platinum, could you do that?" she asked, knowing that platinum was a rare metal to find.

"Yes Your Highness, we could cater to all needs," the older goldsmith responded with confidence.

She smiled wide to them, and felt excited at her request being fulfilled. "…and the engraving inside the rings, you could put our first names: Carl on my ring and Laura on the Prince's ring. But can you add these words together with my name on the Prince's ring?" she asked, and wrote the words on the paper where she drew the ring that they have chosen.

"Certainly, Your Highness," the older goldsmith replied right away.

"Good! So, I'll leave it all to your good hands and I trust that you keep it confidential with regards to my special request on the Prince's ring."

"We are at your humble service Your Highness, and we are honored that you entrust us to make the Royal wedding bands."

"Thank you for making it possible," she returned.

After they had agreed on all the materials to be used and finalized the details, she thanked the goldsmiths and asked them to stay for a while on the tea room to eat some sweets and drink some tea. On the way out, LaFontaine walked with her and she remembered that she had an unfinished conversation with them.

"Do you want to tell me why you're staring at me while the goldsmith was taking my measurement?" she asked in a calm tone, as they walked through the hallway.

"It's a good thing that His Highness had already left when they took your measurement." LaFontaine commented.

She furrowed her brows and stopped on her tracks and faced them. "What exactly do you mean by that?"

"Princess, have you forgotten? His Highness does not like any man touching you, not even your finger, or else he would have flared up,"

"Oh my, you're right." She uttered and just realized by now. Even though they were not that close anymore, Carl was certainly not going to be please if he had seen the young goldsmith held her finger.

*****

The following day, while reviewing her wedding 'to do' list, her attention was interrupted when she saw Perry come in the chamber with a package on the Lady in Waiting's hands.
"Princess, you have a package," Perry informed.

Her eyes followed the direction of the package that was placed on the table in front of her.

"Do you know where it came from?" was her curious question as she fumbled for the knots of the package, while Perry looked patiently at her.

"Laura, it's from your father, according to the royal guard that delivered it," Perry informed.

"But I never asked Papa anything," she replied and successfully untied the knot around it.

"Well, since His Majesty cannot come to your wedding, I am definite that it is his gift for you," Perry presumed.

When she finally opened the box, her eyes caught first the white fabric that was on top of it and pulled it out at once. She smiled and ran her hand on the soft smooth silky texture of the fabric.

"Princess, that's your mother's veil!" was Perry's excited reaction and admired the fabric. "I remembered that His Majesty informed me that you should wear it on your wedding day."

She was astonished. She never expected that she would have the chance to see and wear her mother's wedding veil. She suddenly missed both of her parents and cannot control her tears.

"Perry, I missed my Mama," she cried and Perry's hands were already wrapping around her. "I wish she's still here to see me get married." She cannot help but to sob on her Lady in Waiting's shoulder.

"Shhh… I'm sure that your Mama is happy that you're about to marry," Perry consoled. "And I think she is proud to see her daughter had grown into a beautiful and kind princess."

The familiar hands of Perry rubbing on her back had always pacified her and she was thankful that her Lady in Waiting was always there to fill her mother's shoes, in case she needed or just simply missed her mother.

After regaining her composure, she laid the veil carefully on her bed and admired it, and tried to imagine how her mother looked like wearing the veil and wedding gown.

"Laura, there's still something inside the package," Perry informed and handed the little box. "Here, open it."

She took the small box and opened it with delight. Her eyes widened and her mouth opened wide when she caught the sight of a pair of diamond earrings. Then she noticed the small paper that was folded beside the earrings. She opened it and read what was inside:

'To my beautiful daughter. Love, Papa.'

"Oh Perry, I hate it that I cannot hug them both right now!" She exclaimed fully frustrated at the absence of both her parents. "I'd like to thank and embrace my Mama and Papa." She exclaimed and sat on the edge of her bed. She felt a lump in her throat and tried to suppress another cry. But she failed and bursted into tears as the thought of being away from her father and not seeing her mother again. Receiving a gift from both her father and mother made her ached for their presence and touches. Perry was beside her at once and embraced her tight.

"Try to be strong Laura and remember that even if they are not here physically with you, it does not mean that they don't love you," Perry stated.
Once she calmed down, Perry released her from the embrace. She was still whimpering when Perry looked at her.

"Wait here, I'll get you some hot cocoa and your favorite cupcake," Perry informed.

She just nodded and wiped the tears that was flowing from her eyes, and decided to lie down on her bed as Perry quickly left the chamber.

She was torn from her nap, and did not realize that she dozed off when she heard a light tap on the door. She furrowed her brows and did not get up, and remained lying on her side with her back facing the door.

"It's open!"

She shouted and did not move from her bed and decided to close her eyes again. She heard the door opened and felt someone walked across the room and then stood by her bedside. She grumbled as the person remained standing by her side as if waiting for her to get up from bed; sometimes Perry could be annoying.

"Alright, I'll get up now and eat the cupcake," she remarked, still half awake. She turned around and was about to get up from her bed, but the sight of the figure in front of her prevented her from moving. "Y-Your Highness… What can I do for you?" was her dumbfounded remark, and she sat on the bed instead of rising. She saw his brows furrowed; his eyes were melancholic as he gazed at her. She suddenly felt self-conscious and remembered that she had been crying, so she wiped her face with the back of her hand and brushed any residue of tears from her eyes.

"Why are you crying?"

She heard his deep, firm and yet calm voice. She rubbed her temple and tried to hide her face from his sight. "It's nothing Your Highness. I am just being silly, that's all; nothing to worry about." She replied and was expecting that he would accept her explanation. But instead of replying, she saw him sat on the bed, across her.

"Tell me what's wrong?"

Her heart almost breaks at the sound of his low gentle voice. She missed that sweet tone of his voice. She missed it when he gets worried about her and would soothe her.

"I just missed my Papa and Mama," she simply said and looked at him. She was surprised when she discovered that he was still gazing at her with those melancholic eyes, and the wrinkle in between his brows never fades. "I received a package from my father today, and it contained my mother's wedding veil and a pair of earrings from my father. I got emotional after I saw the gifts and wished that my parents are here on my wedding day. But we all know that it would never happen; that's why I cried. I missed them so much. I never feel so alone in my life; until now." She confessed and felt a lump in her throat formed again.

She bowed her head, and concealed the tear that escaped from her left eye. Then her senses suddenly awoken when she felt a soft hand cupped her left cheek and a thumb gently brushed away the tear on her face. And the next thing she knew, Carl's hand was gently caressing her left cheek and motioned for her to look up. The familiar soulful dark eyes of her Prince met her gaze and she almost melt at the sight of it. She missed that look; she missed that vulnerability from Carl; she missed those gentle eyes gazing openly at her. She was hurt and all she wanted was to put her lips on his thin red ones but she remembered that she cannot touch him. And she did not want to upset him again; like before. So she patiently waited for him to make the first move. She remained calm and did not tear her gaze
from him. If Carl does not want her to touch him, she would prove to him that she could be obedient, but she will show him too what he was missing.

Without releasing from his touch, she carefully tilted down her head and slowly looked up at him through her lashes. She batted her eyelashes and grinned at him; not showing her teeth. Her heart beat faster when she saw Carl's fully dilated eyes and she felt his breathing became ragged and his hand on her cheek slowly crawled down to the side of her neck. But before anything else could come into fruition, she heard the door opened and they both released their gaze and the spell was broken when she saw Carl rose from the bed and looked at the direction to the door.

"Your Highness," a surprised Perry greeted and curtsied in front of the Prince. "Forgive me for intruding, I did not know that Your Highness' wants some alone time with the Princess."

"It's alright Perry, I am just here to check on Princess Laura," Carl explained and glanced at the direction of the bed and then to Perry again. "LaFontaine told me that the Princess is upset."

She furrowed her brows and remained sitting on her bed. "How did Laf knew?"

Perry approached the bed and stood beside the Prince. "I told them Princess, because I was looking for some chocolates to make your hot cocoa, but the kitchen told me that they're already empty. So, I got you a wine instead and some carrot cupcake instead of your favorite chocolate ones."

"I have already sent LaFontaine to the market square to buy some chocolates," the Prince chimed in in a serious tone.

She saw Carl crimsoned while she and Perry focused their attention to him and looked at him with their eyes wide for a moment.

"That's considerate of you," she remarked, so as not to put him in an awkward state, since Perry was still staring at him in disbelief.

"Yes, well I just don't want you to be cranky, while preparing for the wedding," was his sarcastic comment.

"Oh. Yes, of course not," she retaliated, and caught him smirked, but he turned serious again.

"I know how grumpy you could be without chocolates." The Prince added.

She was about to tell him that he was the grumpy one, but she was taken aback when he moved closer to her and took her right hand gently and held it in his soft hands. He gazed at her and said in a soothing tone:

"Before I go, I want you to know that you're not alone." The Prince mumbled.

And before she could comment on what he said, Carl removed his hands gently from hers, turned around and walked to the direction of the door.

She sighed and smiled.

TBC
To give you a better image of their wedding bands, you could check these links:
http://www.amulet.co.uk/mcol/m-colour.htm (it's the third to the last on the left side);
https://www.etsy.com/market/mobius_ring
Meet The In-Laws

Chapter Summary

Carmilla is meeting Laura's family for the first time and is very nervous.

She is also nervous that Laura might back out from the wedding. She would not be appeased until she tied the knot with Laura and signed the marriage contract.

And the last part is a look at how Carmilla felt before her wedding

Chapter Notes

Hope you'll all enjoy this very long chapter; I got a headache now after finishing the remaining 8 of the 30 pages of this update. I've been up since 4 a.m. (stupid summer time) and worked, but I made sure to finish the update for all of you :-) So, here you go…

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Carmilla

"They have arrived!"

She heard LaFontaine yelled after entering the library, her Valet approached her and she closed the books that were laid in front of her.

"Where are they now?" she asked, and felt her palms sweating, as she rose from the chair and waited anxiously for LaFontaine's reply.

"They're at the throne room, being welcomed by His Majesty and Her Majesty," LaFontaine answered in between breaths.

She ran her hand through her hair and did not know what she would do first. She suddenly felt like a lost child as she paced to and fro across the room. "Where's Laura?" she croaked.

"In the village with Perry," was her Valet's quick reply.

She took a deep breath and tried to compose herself, but she felt like she was losing her confidence. "How do I look?"

"Do you want my honest opinion?"

"Just answer the damn question!" she exclaimed, as her heart pounded crazily.

"You look like, you're about to be hanged," LaFontaine quipped and held their breath.

"Why do you have to tell the truth? Why can't you just lie to me?!" she retorted and she felt her
"You told me to just answer the question," LaFontaine defended. "You didn't tell me to go easy on you."

"Arrgh!" She grumbled and left the library, followed by her Valet.

"What?" was LaFontaine's innocent remark.

"Most of the time I value your honesty," she exclaimed, as they strode along the great hall to the throne room. "But sometimes, I just need you to pretend that everything is alright; like now. Can't you do that?!" was her frustrated comment.

And before LaFontaine could utter a retort, they have already reached the grand entrance to the throne room and the Royal Guards had already opened the large wooden doors for her.

She gathered her composure and walked slowly, she found herself swallowing constantly as she walked closer to her parent's thrones and saw her mother talking to a woman with dark reddish brown hair and pale skin. The woman reminded her of Laura the first time she saw the Princess; it was like sunshine. The woman was smiling while talking to her mother. If she was not mistaking, the woman was probably ten to fifteen years younger than her mother. Then her sight shifted on the men that her father was talking to. She studied the older man's face and was also smiling to her father while they were talking, and she thought, were they all like these? Were they a family of sunshine? She focused her gaze to the man and saw that he had the same hair color as Laura's, and he was clean shaven. The man looked the same age as the woman that her mother was talking to and had a clean cut. Then she caught sight of the young man that was standing beside the older man. He too had a lighter hair and clean shaven; an almost carbon copy of the older man beside the King. He looked a little younger than her. Her scrutiny was disrupted when she heard her father's voice called everybody's attention, as the King caught sight of her approaching to their direction.

She took a deep breath and remembered to smile.

"Your Royal Highnesses, allow me to introduce my sole heir and Princess Laura's betrothed, Prince Carl Philipp Marcus," the King proclaimed, and motioned on her direction.

All eyes on her and she bowed to her right first; to her father and to the two men standing beside her father. Then she walked closer to her left and bowed first to her mother then to the woman beside the Queen.

She felt her father stood beside her and motioned to the direction of their guest, as her father introduced them individually to her.

"Carl, this is Prince Spencer of Hollis, the younger brother of the King of Hollis," the King said.

She shook his hand firmly and saw him smiling genuinely at her. Her anxiety lessened and she managed to return the smile. "It's an honor to meet you, Your Royal Highness."

"The honor is mine, Prince Carl," the man returned. "And thank you for inviting us to come early. My brother is worried that Laura might be lonely since he cannot come."

"She is, Your Highness, but I'm sure she would be very pleased when she finally sees her family," she replied, and found it easy to talk to him. "And please, call me Carl, I am soon to be your niece's husband, it is just fair to call me by my first name."

"Very well, if you like that, I wouldn't oppose to it," he replied and smiled again at her. "Because
Laura calls me Uncle Spencer, and she calls my wife there, Aunt Jordana. I guess you could call us your Uncle Spencer and Aunt Jordana too."

She smiled and nodded, and felt comfortable at the warmth of Laura's family. "I will, Uncle Spencer."

"I would like you to meet my son and Laura's only cousin, Johann," Laura's uncle motioned for the younger man beside it.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Prince Johann," she said and shook his hand firmly. "Just call me Carl."

"It's a pleasure to meet you too, Carl," Johann said. "And you can call me Johann."

She nodded and returned his smile too. And when her father motioned for her to the side where Laura's aunt and her mother stood, the woman was already smiling at her and she felt like she was standing in front of an older Laura, as the aura that this woman was sending was like a ball of sunshine too.

"Carl, I'd like you to meet Princess Jordana, Prince Spencer's wife and mother to Prince Johann," she heard her father said, and she was about to kiss the back of the woman's hand, but she was caught off guard, when the woman embraced her tightly, and held her for a while. While she carefully wrapped her hands too on the woman's waist; she caught sight of her mother lifted its left eye brows and close-lipped smile.

"Oh Carl, we're so thankful that our Laura finally found her Prince,"

She heard the woman said, and released her from the embrace. Then she was caught off guard again when the woman cupped her face with both hands, like Laura used to do to her, an then gazed at her with fascination.

"Laura is right, you are very handsome, but she told me that you have a beard," was the woman's puzzled remark.

She felt Laura's aunt's scrutinizing eyes on her. "Err… I shaved it for Laura," she commented and the woman released her face and smiled.

"I guess Laura's charm had an effect on you too," Laura's aunt teased her.

"What do you mean?" the Queen chimed in.

She saw right away her mother's curious expression.

"Our little Princess was not fond of beard; when she was a small child Laura asked the King to shave his beard, or else she would not kiss her father," Laura's aunt related. "And since then, the King ordered that all the men who are close to the Princess to shave their beards too. That's why my husband and my son never grew a beard, including Laura's personal royal guard."

"That's very interesting," the Queen commented.

She recalled LaFontaine telling her the story behind the beard hating Princess, and she just realized right now that Laura had a personal royal guard. A pang of jealousy hit her and she was suddenly irritated at the thought of her Princess having a man beside Laura all the time. Her worrying was interrupted when she heard again the voice of Laura's aunt.

"That's why, I was surprised when Laura told me that her betrothed has a beard and that she likes
Carl very much," was the woman's excited remark.

She was glad to hear from Laura's aunt that the Princess likes her very much.

"I guess your little Princess where not the only one who has a charm here," the Queen returned.

She heard her mother's retort and wished that it would not result into something serious.

"I guess not, because your son here looks the perfect prince that any mother would choose for her daughter," Laura's aunt replied.

She was flattered at the compliment and cannot help but to give the woman a shy grin as Laura's aunt appraised her. While her mother displayed a proud smile.

"Thank you so much for the compliments," she said, and was aware that she was blushing while Laura's aunt's attention remained fixated on her. "I have to thank both my parents for the beautiful genes that were bestowed on me. And I have my mother to thank for molding me to be a better prince."

"I think it's time for all of you to take a rest first and freshen up before dinner," the King suggested, and led them out of the throne for the tour of the castle. "We could show you around the castle before you all retire to your chambers."

She breathed a sigh of relief and was thankful to be interrupted by her father. Meeting Laura's family was overwhelming and she was surprised that they were nice and warm people, and not the typical snobbish tight-lipped monarchs.

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With the help of LaFontaine and Perry, she managed to hide to Laura that the Princess' family was in the castle and arrived early as Laura expected. And now, she found herself walking to the hall that led to the family dining hall. She informed her mother that she would come late since she had some matters to attend to, but assured the Queen that she would arrived before the King.

"Have you checked if Laura's family is already in the dining hall?" she asked her very reliable Valet that was walking beside her.

"Yes, I have escorted them myself and assigned them to the proper sitting arrangement," LaFontaine supplied the information. "Her Majesty is there to keep them company and I informed your Queen Mother that Princess Laura would be late too since they had important things to buy for the wedding in the village square."

She still felt nervous dining with the Hollis' and this time with Laura. She hoped that Laura's family would not notice the awkwardness between the two of them.

"When is the Princess coming?"

"Any minute from now, so you could just wait for her by the door to the dining hall and meet her there," LaFontaine replied and stopped when they realized that they were already at the entrance to the dining hall.

"How do I look like?" she asked, wearing her red and black checkered tunic.

"I think the Princess would definitely love how you look," her Valet replied and grinned.
This time she gave LaFontaine a smirk and stood by the entrance to the dining room. Not a minute had passed and her eyes had already caught the sight of her Princess walking towards them. She held her breath and straightened her back as she saw Laura bowed to her.

"Your Highness," Laura said and stood for a while by the entrance, confused. "Were you waiting for me? Because I didn't know or I might have forgotten that we should meet here, please forgive me."

"Yes, I'm waiting for you. But you don't need to apologize because I didn't mention it to you," she told Laura, to save the Princess from the embarrassment of feeling guilty. "I just want to tell you that I have a surprise for you."

She saw those hazel eyes widened at once. Her heart melted upon seeing those innocent and yet naughty curious eyes of Laura's. The Princess certainly loved surprises. But she noticed that Laura did not laugh nor jump like the Princess used to do whenever Laura was happy.

"So, if you would follow me to the dining hall, you could see it for yourself," she suggested and she walked first to the door, followed by the Princess.

Once they were inside, Laura was speechless and just stared at those familiar faces that were staring back at them. But the Princess managed to gather her composure and greeted first the Queen before running to the woman that was beside the Queen and they hugged at once.

"Auntie Jordana!" Laura exclaimed after releasing from the long embrace, not satisfied, the Princess ran to the other side of the table and hugged Johann, then the uncle that had already opened his arms to receive the excited Princess.

"Uncle Spencer! I'm so happy to see all of you," the Princess declared and released from the embrace. "Why didn't you tell me that you're all coming today? Why didn't you tell me that you'll come early?"

"We're supposed to come two days before your wedding," Laura's uncle started to explain. "However, I received a letter from your betrothed requesting me if we could come earlier. So, here we are!"

"I'm so glad to see you," the Princess returned. But their little family reunion was cut short when the royal guards announced the arrival of the King. They all bowed to the King and waited for the King to sit before they could all take their seats.

Laura excused herself from her uncle and was guided by one of the maids to seat beside her aunt to the right, while her aunt sat to the right of the Queen.

She walked to the other side of the table and sat across Laura, since her chair was now occupied by Laura's uncle, and sat comfortably beside Laura's cousin to her right.

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After dinner, they all left the dining hall together. She breathed a sigh of relief after surviving the first dinner with her in-laws. Who would have thought that it was more nerve wrecking to meet Laura's family than meeting Laura for the first time? She was glad that no one noticed the awkwardness between her and Laura. She was thankful that she had to converse most of the time with Johann and Laura's uncle. Her train of thoughts was interrupted when she heard her father's voice calling them.

"Carl, shall we go to the library with Prince Spencer and Prince Johann, so that the ladies here could go to the tearoom and talked about the wedding?" the King remarked, as they gathered outside of the dining hall.
"Yes, my King Father," she replied right away and let them walked ahead after she saw her father leading the way. She had thought of talking to Laura and was curious to know Laura's reaction to her surprise even though she knew that the Princess was happy. But when she glanced at the Princess, Laura had already turned its back on them and was already chatting with the Queen and Laura's aunt. She looked down and bowed her head and followed her father.

*****

She felt this throbbing pain in her head as her senses slowly awoken.

"Good morning! It's time to wake up!"

She heard the annoying voice of her Valet and covered her head with a pillow to muffle the irritating sound. But it did not stop. She knew that LaFontaine would not stop to annoy her if she did not reply and inform her Valet that she was already awake.

*Damn it! Why can't I have a break from all this madness!*

Right now all she wanted was to stay in her bed and sleep throughout the day, and just wake up whenever she wanted too. She closed her eyes again and tried to regain her sleep. But the sound of LaFontaine's voice persisted throughout the chamber.

"Your bath is ready! Are you awake now?!!"

She threw the pillow that was covering her head and cannot withstand her Valet's nagging anymore as her irritation overcame her.

"Leave me alone!" she yelled back, as she remained lying from her fully draped four posted bed. She could imagine the naughty grin on her Valet's face after hearing her reply.

"I need to get your hunting boots. You can take a bath now while I go to the shoemaker, then I'll help you right away to dress when I come back!" LaFontaine returned.

"Come back, never!" She retaliated.

"I'll bring your breakfast too when I return with creampuffs!"

She knew that LaFontaine was aware of her bad mood, and did not retaliated anymore. But a creampuff for breakfast will certainly make her less grumpy. After a few seconds she heard the door opened and then closed.

"Thank you," she uttered and was relieved to have some peace in her chamber. But she groaned again when she felt this nagging pain on her temple and in addition to that, she felt this throbbing ache on her crotch. She reached down under the sheet and her right hand found her shaft hard as a rock. She rolled her eyes and started to work her hand up and down through the hardness of her member. Sometimes she finds it pleasurable to do her 'morning ritual' when she just dreamt of Laura after she had awoken, but most of the time she find this morning hardness a nuisance. Then she grew worried as the thought of Laura waking up in the morning beside her with a hard shaft would definitely send Laura into a panic state. She sighed in frustration.

Then she remembered telling Laura that after they got married they would remain sleeping in their respective chambers... the thought suddenly hurt her.

*****
She never felt exhausted in her life and was thankful that she was already in the seclusion of her chamber. Hunting two days in a row was not her thing. After starting her morning hunting with her father, Laura's uncle and Johann, again, and not to mention visiting some of their farms and giving a tour to their guests on their vast land, she also had to spend her evening reviewing all the contracts that her father had given her for this new trading agreement.

And now, as she waited for LaFontaine to finish preparing her bath, she cannot help but to miss Laura. She just saw Laura briefly the other day when they had dinner together for the first time with Laura's relatives. She was expecting that Laura would noticed the red and black checkered tunic that she wore that day, but she was disappointed when the Princess did not complimented her. Yesterday, she was with her father the whole day hunting and spent most of their days outside. They missed eating dinner with the Queen, Laura and Laura's aunt and they ate late already, while the ladies have already retired to their chambers. And today, she was with her father again and she learned from LaFontaine that the Queen took Laura and Laura's aunt to visit the monastery and had eaten there instead and, were tired that all three retire to their chambers at once upon arriving at the castle.

She did not even bother to go to her mother's chamber yesterday after finding out that her mother was already asleep. And today, after she was finished reviewing the contracts, she had thought of going to her mother's chamber but Bertha informed her that the Queen does not want to be disturbed. She felt that she was left out. Her mother was not available and she had not seen nor talked to Laura for two days now. Usually, seeing the Princess every night at dinner was already enough to calm her nerves, and for her to feel secure that her betrothed was there beside her. And sometimes, if Laura was in the castle, she could get a glimpse of the Princess as Laura went on the Princess' day to day works. But as they prepared for their wedding, they become busier and she rarely sees her Princess. But she was glad to see that her betrothed was happy after Laura's relatives arrived in their castle.

Her rumination was interrupted when she saw her Valet emerged from the door of the bathroom. She stood up so that LaFontaine can remove her clothes, but she was distracted when LaFontaine handed her a small box and a letter.

"It's from Princess Laura," LaFontaine informed.

A smile escaped her mouth and she was excited to open it, but had to wait until her Valet left. She undressed quickly and when she was just in her under tunic and braise she dismissed her Valet at once.

"Thanks," she uttered and headed to the bathroom, without glancing at her Valet.

"Aren't you going to open it?" was LaFontaine's curious remark.

"I will, when I'm done bathing and after you have left," was her sarcastic retort, and gave her Valet a devilish smirk. "Now, go! I don't want your nosy nose here anymore."

*****

She bathed as fast as she can and put on her robe at once after she was finished; she did not bother to put on her sleeping wear yet. It could wait, she said to herself and walked out of the bathroom with her eyes focused on the little box and letter on her study table. She tore the seal of the letter and opened it as her heart pounded with anticipation.

To His Highness Prince Carl,

I cannot find the words to thank you for inviting my family to come earlier. It means a lot to me that they are here, it helps me forget my homesickness and distracts me from
the fact that my father cannot come to my wedding.

Please accept my humble token of appreciation for His Highness' kind gesture and as a thank you for choosing me to be the mother to your children. I hope I could fulfill His Highness' wishes and I promise to be a dutiful wife to the future King of Karnstein.

Your humble servant,

Laura

She cannot help but to feel emotional after reading Laura's letter. She found the letter thoughtful but at the same time a bit formal and less personal. She put the paper on the table and took the little box that came with it and opened it. Her eyes widened as she saw a cuff bracelet in silver with five emeralds, her birthstone, on the middle. She smiled as she admired the jewelry on her wrist. It looked gorgeous on her and fits perfectly. After she had admired enough the bracelet, she took the letter again and read it one more time. She sighed as she read again:

'…thank you for choosing me to be the mother of your children'.

She removed the bracelet and placed it back to its box and she folded the letter again and placed it on the table and then put the box on top of the letter.

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The following day, she woke up feeling fully revived. She did not give LaFontaine a hard time waking her up and was now on her way out to the castle's courtyard.

Her mother had asked their guests to have lunch outside at the garden since the flowers were already in full bloom and the grass were full and beautiful. As she walked outside she cannot help but to admire the white edelweiss, bright red and yellow daisies, dainty pink and peach carnations and the blue, purple and pink hyacinths. But most of all she liked the sweet smell of lilacs that was lingering in the air.

The weather was perfect, the sky was clear and the sun was blazing. It would certainly leave a color on her pale skin, she thought. She felt the summer breeze caressed her face and she closed her eyes and inhaled the fresh summer air. She loved summer and all of its beauty. But nothing could compare to the beauty of her little ball of sunshine, as she caught sight of Laura clothed in a long luxurious off shoulders purple velvet dress with a metallic purple gold and black spiral brocade belt. The sleeves were long and the back was laced in an elegant corset style, with fine purple satin ribbon, emphasizing the Princess' curves. She licked her lips when her eyes focused on the smooth slender neck of the Princess and she ached to touch and kiss it. She discarded the thought right away as she approached them, and noticed that her father were already there talking with Laura's uncle and aunt together with her mother, standing on the left side, drinking wine, while Laura was sitting on the grass beside Johann. She walked closer to the left side first and paid her respect to her parents and Laura's uncle and aunt, before going to the direction where Johann and Laura were seated.

As she approached the two, she cannot help but to feel envious at how the cousins played around and bantered with each another. She smiled when she saw Laura hit Johann on the arm, and saw the Prince of Hollis' painful reaction. She remembered that Laura had hit her hard on the arm once, and it hurt, but she did not say anything to the Princess. And now, she can hear Johann complaining how the Princess' hand was like an iron. She had not even come nearer to them when suddenly; Johann
rose and ran on the opposite direction. Her eyes widened and her mouth opened slightly when she saw Laura got up and ran after Johann. Laura was not even in the middle of catching the Prince of Hollis when she noticed her Princess reached for its foot and limped on one foot. She ran at once towards Laura as her heart pounded.

"Laura? Are you alright?!” she asked, her brows fully contorted as she saw the agonizing pain on Laura's face. She assisted the Princess at once to sit on the grass.

"I think I stepped on something," Laura commented and pulled her dress up to check. She gasped when she saw Laura's bare foot bleeding. She took out her handkerchief at once and wrapped it around Laura's foot to stop the bleeding. But it looked like it will not stop it from bleeding.

"Come on, I'll take you inside now,” she ordered and lifted Laura in her arms.

The Princess was caught off guard and she saw Laura's eyes widened and was about to say something.

"Do not talk. And put your hands around my neck," she ordered and walked as fast as she can to the direction of the castle. She could feel the warm breath of Laura on her face, and she caught the glimpse of Laura's pout. She tried so hard to control herself from kissing those soft lips. Laura was certainly adorable even when frowning.

To distract her from kissing the Princess; "I don't understand why you are not wearing your shoes," she commented, and sounded annoyed, as they approached the entrance to the castle. She was thankful that Laura remained silent. "Get LaFontaine! The Princess is bleeding. Tell them to come to the Princess' chamber as fast as they can!" She ordered to the first royal guard that she saw. She climbed the grand staircase without a problem and sighed with relief when she saw the Princess' chamber. The guards opened it at once and she was thankful that Perry was inside.

"Your Highness…” Perry bowed and gave them a confused look. "What happened to the Princess?"

"The Princess wasn't wearing her shoes, and stepped on something sharp and hurt her foot," she exclaimed and laid Laura carefully on the bed. "Get some clean linens and a basin of water and soap," she ordered and removed her cape and rolled the sleeves of her tunic.

"Your Highness, you don't need-" Laura was about to protest.

"I ordered you not to talk," she reminded Laura, and received a pout from the Princess and crossed its arms. She saw Perry came out from the bathroom with a basin and soap and she washed thoroughly her hands. "Give me the linens," she asked the Lady in Waiting and handed one to her. "Get some more clean water," she ordered and then sat on the edge of the bed and removed the handkerchief that was around the Princess' foot and changed it with the clean linen. She had not even asked how the Princess was feeling now, when she saw her Valet walking towards the bed.

"What happened?" LaFontaine asked, and glanced at the Princess on the bed with their brows contorted.

"The Princess had hurt her foot and is still bleeding," she explained as she showed LaFontaine the wound. "You might want to check if there's something inside the foot."

"How are you feeling Princess? Does it hurt too much? Do you feel anything inside your foot?" LaFontaine asked and turned to Laura's direction, but just received a heavy sighed and narrow look from Laura.
She rolled her eyes and remembered what she told Laura. "You may talk now."

"Thank you… Your Highness," Laura exclaimed with a trace of sarcasm. "I just stepped on a sharp stone and no, I think there's nothing in there."

"Alright, I'm going to wash the wound and disinfect it, and put something on it to ease the pain, then I'll wrap it with a bandage," the Valet remarked and opened the pouched and rummaged on the contents, and took out some small bottles, bandages and salve. "Ah, right on time." LaFontaine exclaimed as Perry approached with a clean basin of water and soap. They washed their hands and smiled back and thanked the Lady in Waiting.

She stood there behind her Valet and watched LaFontaine like a hawk at how they would dress the wound. But before LaFontaine can start, her Valet had noticed her hovering behind and faced her.

"Your Highness, maybe it would be better that you relax and take a seat beside the Princess," LaFontaine asked nicely.

"Don't tell me what to do!" She retaliated and stood straight.

"Forgive me Your Highness, I just want to let you know that I could do this, and Princess Laura would be healed in no time." LaFontaine remarked.

Then she noticed all three pairs of eyes stared at her with a trace of uneasiness. She tried to mellow down and walked to the chair beside the bed and sat there instead of sitting on the bed beside Laura. "Go ahead and do your work." She ordered and tried to calm as she saw Laura cringed while they washed the wound. She almost jumped beside Laura to hold the Princess, but she saw Perry sat on the other side of the bed at once and held and consoled Laura. She slowly sat back on the chair and controlled her emotions. She wished that it was her who was consoling and touching the Princess.

It did not take too long and LaFontaine had already wrapped the Princess' foot with a bandage and stood up and face Laura. She rose from the chair and checked LaFontaine's work, then gave her Valet a nod after she was satisfied with the result.

"It's already finished. It's just a small cut, nothing serious, but I recommend that you stay in bed for two days, so that it would heal fast," LaFontaine remarked and smiled at the Princess on the bed.

"But I still need to do-" Laura protested.

"No." She silenced the little Princess at once and walked closer to Laura's bedside. "You will stay in bed as what LaFontaine suggested and will not do anything, until your wound is healed. And you will obey me," she ordered in a firm deep tone, and emphasized the last sentence. The Princess remained silent at once and crossed its arms. She looked at the Lady in Waiting's direction and said, "Perry make sure that the Princess would remain in bed for two days; you can take over whatever the Princess needed with regards to the preparation for the wedding."

"Yes, Your Highness," Perry agreed and nodded.

"I will provide you two extra maids to do your job, so that you can concentrate on what the Princess needs for the wedding," she said in her authoritative tone, but she suspected that Laura might convince the Lady in Waiting to not obey her, as she caught Perry and Laura glancing at each other. "I hope I could trust you on this matter, Perry, since I know that the Princess could be a little persuasive when it comes to getting what she wants."

"I am not!" Laura protested.
"Then don't try anything foolish and listen to what LaFontaine had told you," she reprimanded.

"It's just a little cut, I'm not dying yet!" the Princess retorted.

After hearing the last sentence, she was not able to control her temper and sat beside Laura and glared at the Princess, while pointing her index finger on Laura, as if like a child. "Don't. Ever. Say. Dying. Again." she berated the Princess. Then she saw Laura's eyes widened, and the Princess' shoulders hunched and shrunk back to bed. She regretted her action at once and rose from the bed and left the chamber fuming. She hated that she cannot control her temper when it comes to Laura's well-being. Just the thought of Laura dying made her crazy and frightened. Laura was her life and she did not know how she would live without the Princess.

*****

That night, when it was time for her to retire in bed, she noticed that her Valet was quiet. She knew that LaFontaine was mad at her too, after scolding the Princess.

"How is she now?" she asked LaFontaine in a calm low tone, as her Valet began to remove her cape.

"I gave her some chamomile tea and something to ease the pain, so she's probably sleeping now," LaFontaine replied.

"Is she mad at me?" she asked sheepishly and avoided her Valet's eyes.

"Yes… she hated when you glared at her and pointed your finger on her face like a child," LaFontaine said carefully. "But after you left, I explained to her that you're just upset, and that you don't want anything bad to happen to her. I also mentioned to her that she's very precious to you that's why you're over protective when it comes to her."

"Did she understand what you've said?" was her worried remark.

"I think so… because she kept quiet after I told her those things," LaFontaine replied.

"Thank you," she returned and looked at her Valet.

"For what?"

"…For saving my butt every time I screwed up when it comes to Laura," she said with full honesty. "…For being patient with me and tolerating my crazy temper… and for always being honest with me."

Her Valet's expression lightened up, "What are friends for?" LaFontaine said and grinned.

"And yes, speaking of friends… I wish you could be my best person and take care of our rings when I get married…"

"…But we all know that I can't, because I'm not your relative and I'm not a monarch," LaFontaine finished for her.

"And it's so unfair!" She exclaimed and suddenly realized that she does not have a best man! "Now I have a best man crisis!"

"Don't you have any cousins that you could ask?" LaFontaine suggested and furrowed their brows. She looked down on the floor. "I don't have any cousins from both sides," her voice suddenly soft
and low. "Both my King Father and Queen Mother are only child."

LaFontaine remained silent and stared at her for a moment. "You mean to say you’re the youngest and the last heir of Karnstein Kingdom?"

"I guess so… because my father never mentioned that we have any relatives," she relayed. "…Although my Queen Mother told me when I was a child that her father, had a sister, but never married and did not have any children."

"Well you better produce as many heirs as you can as soon as possible, to keep the Karnstein monarchy alive," was her Valet's smart remark.

"It's easy for you to say that, when you're not the one who has a wife that's afraid of penis," the words were already out of her mouth, before she realized it. And now she regretted talking comfortably with LaFontaine, and she wished that she could just leave her chamber to avoid LaFontaine's sarcastic remarks.

"Did I just hear that right? The Princess is afraid of penis?"

She put her hand at once to cover LaFontaine's mouth. "Do you have to say it again?"

LaFontaine glared at her and she removed her hand on their mouth.

"Are you serious?" was her Valet's unconvinced query.

She rolled her eyes and turned her back on LaFontaine and walked towards the bathroom. But LaFontaine ran after her and blocked her way. "Then how are you going to produce an heir?" was LaFontaine's worried remark.

"You know, that's the last thing on my mind right now," she retorted, and glared at her Valet. "What I should be worrying now is who would be my best man?"

Her Valet hesitated for a moment and she expected another witty retort from LaFontaine with regards to Laura's 'penis angst'.

"Why not ask Laura's cousin?"

Suddenly her eyes widened and smirked at her Valet. "Johann?"

"Why not? He's Laura's cousin and soon to be your cousin-in-law," LaFontaine explained. "It seemed you like him and had been pals with him in a short span of time. And I think, he is a nice lad and very down to earth, like Laura. Actually, Laura's family is all nice and down to earth like her. It's like they're a family of ball of sunshine!"

She chuckled at LaFontaine's similar opinion as hers. "I know, right?!" She expressed and was surprised that she was not the only one who noticed it. "I wonder if Laura's father is like them too."

She rubbed her chin as if she still had a beard.

"Alright, first thing in the morning, ask Johann if he could be your best man," LaFontaine suggested.

"I will. Thanks again for saving my butt," she teased.

"Oh no, I am writing everything you owe me on my list, and would ask for a payback when the time comes," LaFontaine quipped.

"You are so shrewd; you’ll make a great Master of Treasury," she commented and smirked at her
"Why not? You'll going to need someone whom you trust when you become the king?" LaFontaine replied and grinned.

"And who would be my Valet?" she asked with full of sarcasm and lifted her left eye brow.

"Me, who else?! You know how versatile I am!"

"Alright, I will put that in mind," she conceded. "Leave now, because I don't want my bath to get cold."

It was the night before her wedding day and all she could think about was:

What if she didn't show up?

Until now, she still had doubts. Until now, she still did not trust Laura. Until now, her heart was still suffering. Until now, she had not felt this joy of being married soon to the one that she loved.

She had gone through a lot of pains and sacrificed her happiness, and had surpassed all of these challenges in her life. But the thought of totally losing Laura would certainly crush her. She did not want to think about it. She knew that Laura had promised her mother that nothing had changed. But until she had not heard Laura say 'I do' she would not be appeased. She took a swig of wine from her goblet and imagined how Laura would look like in a wedding gown. Her cupcake would certainly be the most beautiful woman in a wedding gown, there was no doubt about that.

"Alright, that's enough,"

She was torn from her pondering as she heard the voice of her Valet behind her, and snatched the goblet that she was holding from her hand.

"Hey! I'm not finished yet," she complained, but she knew that LaFontaine will not give it back, as she saw her Valet went to the bathroom and then returned afterwards with an empty goblet.

"We don't want you drunk and screwed up at your wedding day, do we?" LaFontaine retaliated.

"Do you know what she's doing now?" she asked out of the blue, and saw her Valet's brows contorted. "Laura, I mean."

"Probably sleeping; so that she is fully rested and beautiful on her special day tomorrow, why?"

"I haven't seen her yesterday, and she refused to see me today, is she still angry at me?" she asked, worried. She felt a little guilty for not visiting the Princess the other day, to check how Laura was doing. And instead she asked LaFontaine to constantly check on the Princess and made sure that the wound was taken care of.

"No, the Princess is not angry at you; she just didn't know that you're in the castle, she though that you went out with your parents together with her relatives, that's why she didn't ask for you," LaFontaine explained. "And you are definitely not allowed to see her today."

Her attention was caught and she grew more worried. "I though you said, she's not mad anymore?" she asked her brows furrowed.

"No, she refused to see you, because it's bad luck to see the bride the day before your wedding."
"Oh." She breathed a sigh of relief.

"Now, can you move your butt from the chair so that I could remove your clothes?" was LaFontaine's daring remark. "You had a big day to face tomorrow and you need to look fresh and revitalized; not like a drunk thief."

"You sounded like my mother," was her annoyed response and rose from the chair. "By the way, have you packed Laura's gift?"

"It's already taken care of," LaFontaine returned and rolled their eyes.

"What?!" she asked after she caught that expression from her Valet.

"You know that you've been asking me about that for the last twenty four hours," LaFontaine retorted. "You sounded like a parrot."

She just glared at her Valet and did not react anymore. LaFontaine was right.

*****

Her senses were roused slowly by the sound of heralding trumpets and at the same time the ringing of the church bells from the castle's chapel.

She groaned and was already irritated that her sleep was disturbed so early. What could be the occasion that the church bells were ringing too aside from the trumpet? And she heard it again the continued 'Ding-Dang!' sound. She buried her head inside the pillows around her and tried to salvage the remnants of her erotic dream. But the sound of the door opened and the click-clack sound of shoe heels on the marble floor yanked her from sleeping further.

_Mother?!_

She felt like cold water was poured on her and she desperately fumbled for that piece of cloth around her bed. Once she found it, she tucked it deeply under her pillows, and instantly reached down inside her braise.

_Damn it!_

She groaned as she felt her morning erection. She hated when her mother comes to her chamber unannounced in the morning, while she was still in bed. She knew that the breathing exercise that she used to do does not work anymore, since she had not done it for a very long time. She tried thinking of another way to make it go down. Perhaps think about the animal that she fears or a person… and immediately, the face of her mother's Lady in Waiting flashed in her mind.

"Carl? Are you awake?"

She did not answer her mother until she knew that her 'big cat', as Laura called it, was down.

_Come on!_

She grew impatient and tried her best to imagine Bertha naked. After a few minutes, she reached down and felt it soft.

"Carl? Do you hear me?"

"Yes, my Queen Mother. I'll be out in a minute," she answered firmly, her voice deep and raspy. Once she knew that she was decent, she got up and carefully opened the curtain on her bed and
stepped out of her bed. The rays of the sun met her sight and she evaded it. Once her visual had adjusted, she saw her mother at once standing a foot from her, with LaFontaine holding her purple robe. Her Valet walked closer to her at once and she slipped her arms on the offered robe and tied the front afterwards.

"Good morning, I hope you'd had a good sleep," the Queen said and smiled. "How are you feeling today?"

"Good morning my Queen Mother," she said and the next thing she knew, her mother leant on her and kissed her on the left cheek. She contorted her brows and wanted to ask why her mother was in her chamber early in the morning. But she did not want to sound rude, so she decided to answer the question instead. "I feel fine, thanks for asking."

"That's good to hear," the Queen returned.

She was about to ask again why her mother was here, but the sudden opening of the door awoken her completely and she saw her father entering her chamber for the first time followed by two maids each carrying tray of breakfast.

She looked at her mother and contorted her brows. "Why is everybody here?" was her puzzled remark, but before the Queen could answer, she already saw her father approaching quickly towards where she was standing. She was about to bow to her father, but the Kings' arms wrapped around her and hindered her from doing it. She felt her father's warm assuring embrace and wrapped her arms around the King too. When the King released from the embrace, she can't help but to get confused at the commotion that was happening right now. She stared momentarily at the King and lost her ability to speak. Sensing that she was confused, she felt her father's hands grabbed both her upper arms and said:

"My only heir is getting married today I think I should help you too in preparing!" the King exclaimed, "How are you feeling my child?" was the excited question of the King.

She cursed the alcohol that she consumed last night for making her forgets her wedding day. She tried to compose herself, straightened her back and looked at her father confidently.

"I'm fine and I'm excited My King Father!" she exclaimed in a deep and firm tone.

"It's great to hear that," the King said. And then whispered something in her ear, "I hope you're fully prepared for your wedding night," the King mumbled.

She felt the warmth in her body climbed up in her face and stared at her father momentarily. How could she tell the King that her soon to be wife was afraid of penis? She nodded many times and gave her father a reassuring grin and thought of something that her father would like to hear.

"I am fully prepared and can't wait to claim what is mine, my King Father," she proclaimed and earned a proud smile and a laugh from the King.

"That's my child! Show your wife who's in charge!" the King shouted excitedly.

She joined the King in laughing, and was interrupted when they heard the sound of the Queen clearing its throat.

"I think, we should focus first on helping Carl dressing up," the Queen stated in a cold tone. "We thought that we could eat breakfast here together with you," the Queen returned and motioned for the bountiful breakfast that the maids had lain on the table across the room.
She and her father remained silent at once and nodded to the Queen, and followed her mother to the table where their breakfast was waiting, while she saw LaFontaine go to the bathroom to prepare her bath.

"I appreciate that my King Father is here to help me, as well as my Queen Mother," she relayed and looked at her mother, then her father as they gathered around the small table.

"Carl, today is a very important day for you and for the kingdom as well," the King said. "I and your Queen Mother are here to give you moral support and to let you know that you're not alone. And we want you to know that we are very proud of you for accepting your destiny of marrying a princess and making sure that the Karnstein's line of heir would not be broken. It's all in your hands now, for our family to grow."

She swallowed hard after hearing the last words from her father. To produce an heir was surely making her stressed and anxious.

"Thank you my King Father, I would try my best not to disappoint you," she simply said and took a big bite of creampuff.

*****

It took her three hours to finish before everything was satisfactory in her mother's eyes. And now, she stared at her reflection on the full length mirror. While LaFontaine made a finishing touch and her mother sitting on a chair in front of her, still checking what was lacking. The red tunic with golden linings and gold buttons that her mother had chosen for her to wear seemed to fit her perfectly and accentuated her color, together with the black trousers. On her shoulders were black patches with an embroidered black panther on a white background, the animal in the Karnstein's coat of arms and the image of her crown. An elegant green sash with black linings to represent the color of Styria and one of the colors of Karnstein Kingdom was placed horizontally from her right shoulder over her tunic. Four medals were pinned on her upper left breast: the first medal symbolizing the Styria Imperial Royal Crown; the second medal symbolizing the Royal Imperial Crown of Karnstein; the third symbolizing the Royal Imperial Crown of Morgan, her mother's Kingdom; and the last medal symbolizing her own Royal Crown of Prince of Karnstein. After they become officially married, Laura would get a similar medal like hers symbolizing the Royal Crown of Princess of Karnstein. She smiled at the thought of Laura becoming a part of her.

The last time the kingdom had a big event was during her coronation day, she was then fifteen and barely an adult. She just went in there and did her duty: to become the Crowned Prince of Karnstein. She remembered that LaFontaine as there to assist her too and her mother and she was nervous at the beginning. But she eventually overcame her fear, once she was inside the throne room after LaFontaine taught her to relax. And today, as she stared at the mirror and she could not help but to feel happy that she was about to get married. She had never imagined that this day would come in her life. And she never imagined that there was a woman who was willing to accept and marry her for what she was.

Suddenly, she felt anxious and a sense of doubt clouded her thoughts. She had never talk seriously with Laura lately, and with their arrangement now, fear began to overcome her. She began to breathe heavily and she twisted her ring on her pinky. Sensing her uneasiness, LaFontaine looked at her and knowing that the Queen was sitting in front of them, her Valet leaned closer and asked.

"Are you alright?" LaFontaine whispered and glanced sideways to the Queen.

"What if she didn't show up? What if she changed her mind and realized that I am not the one?" She murmured in between breaths. Then she felt LaFontaine's hand on her upper left arm, as if trying to
"She will come. Have faith in her," was her Valet's simple response.

She was alleviated from her worries after hearing those reassuring words from her Valet and only friend. "Thanks, I hope and pray she will."

"Trust me, she will come. You have waited for so long and now, try to accept in yourself that you are about to marry the woman you love and that nobody is going to stop you," was LaFontaine's encouraging words.

She smiled and nodded to her Valet. Then they heard the sudden opening of the door and they all turned their focus on the direction to the door. She saw her father fully dressed now in a red tunic and black trousers also, walking towards her wearing the biggest smile: a father's proud smile.

"Carl, are you ready to tie the knot?" was her father's sarcastic remark and winked.

She smiled wide and nodded to her father. She walked towards the Queen and assisted her mother, and offered her arm for her mother to hold. And together, they left her chamber with her parents on her both sides and LaFontaine behind her on the way out to the hall.

As they began to descend the grand staircase, she heard the trumpets herald, and she got goose bumps when she witnessed all of their household staffs and royal soldiers inside the castle looking at her, as if adoring her on her wedding day, totally mesmerized. She waved to them and gave them a genuine smile, as they bowed and cheered for her. She was touched at the servants' gesture and cheering, and she felt loved by these people who had served her in her entire life in the castle. She never realized that they were this happy for her. She almost forgot her worries and was overwhelmed.

She searched for some familiar faces among the crowd that were there to wish her good luck, and she was happy when her eyes caught sight of Alfred, Bastian, Fritz, the maid that always brings her breakfast, smiling genuinely at the sight of her. Even Bertha was there, standing like a statue as if suppressing to smile, but bowed to her when their eyes met and gave her a controlled smile instead. Then she saw Ell, standing all the way back, as if hiding, when their eyes met she received a modest smile from the Royal Mistress, and she gave Ell a shy smile. Then her brows contorted and did not notice anyone from the Hollis' Kingdom, then she realized at once: Perry and Laura's handmaidens were definitely in Laura's chamber, helping the Princess dress for the wedding; preparing Laura for her! The thought of it made her smile and warm inside. How could it be possible that there was one person in the world that was meant to be hers? It still felt surreal!

After a quarter, she found herself standing anxiously in front of the entrance door to the castle's chapel. Standing on her right was her father, and on her left was her mother, ready to march down the aisle with her.

"Carl, remember, we love you and we are proud of you, my son," her mother uttered and kissed her on her cheek.

She smiled after the kiss and nodded to her mother, "Thank you my Queen Mother, and King Father," she replied and glanced at her father.

"Are you ready?" The King asked in a firm tone.

She took a deep breath and nodded to the direction of her father. "Yes my King Father," she uttered
and saw her father signaled to the royal guards that were holding the door's handles, and opened it wide. The next thing she heard was the bright lively sound of trumpet playing and recognized the piece that her English Music teacher taught her once to play in violin.

Then she took a step and walked down the aisle thinking only of the woman she loves and nothing else. The anticipation was killing her and cannot wait for Laura to become hers.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for taking some time to leave feedbacks and for letting me know how you like this fic, and for always giving me kudos :-) 

In case you're curious which piece played during the wedding procession, it's: The trumpet Tune in D by Jerimiah Clarke. And you can hear it here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMsTIO8zERI
HOLLSTEIN WEDDING

Chapter Summary

The Princess is having doubts marrying the Prince; what would change her mind?

And Laura learned that her handmaiden friends have a certain name for the Prince of Karnstein.

Chapter Notes

It's natvanlis' birthday! Thought we might have a little celebration in a form of Hollstein Wedding :-) 

I suggest that you listen to the Pachelbel Canon in D Major, using earbuds/earphones when reading the part where Laura was about to walk down the aisle to get the better feeling of it. I listened to it while writing that part and it's amazing. There were many versions but I think the link below suited best for this Medieval set up.

You can find the version here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvNQLJ1_HQ0

I know that most of you are nervous and excited for this chapter, and probably thinking that Laura might get cold feet and back out, after those cold treatments from Carl.

Well, it's all in here now… And yes, Laura would definitely teach Carl some lessons in the near future for being cold and rude towards her.

;->

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Laura

"Good morning sunshine!"

She grumbled as she slowly came to consciousness. It was so unusual hearing Betty's voice first thing in the morning.

"Rise and shine Princess!"

She was supposed to ignore Betty's call and go back to sleep, but the cheery voice of Sarah Jane yanked her from dreamy state.

"Your Prince Charming is going to see you soon!"

She smiled and knew what Natalie was up to.
"Princess, I bet His Royal Highness is going to look hot in his wedding tunic; don't you want to see him soon?"

She heard Natalie added and she rose and sat up in bed. Natalie's last sentence caught her attention. As she opened her eyes fully, she saw Sarah Jane adding more logs on the fireplace, while Betty hanged the wedding gown beside the full length mirror and as if on cue, Natalie had placed the serving tray on her lap containing her ideal breakfast of hot cocoa, chocolate cupcake and some blue grapes. She noticed the unfamiliar bowl of porridge and her nose was enticed by the smell of cinnamon on top of it. And before she could ask Natalie what that bowl of porridge doing in her tray, she decided to ask the last thing that Natalie said.

"What do you mean His Royal Highness looks 'hot'?" she asked and contorted her brows. She had never heard the term 'hot' being used to described a person.

"It means that Prince Carl is gorgeous and at the same time appealing," was Betty's shameless reply, standing beside the dress table while putting out from the drawer the hairbrush, pins, powder and all of those things that were going to be used later on.

"Betty, be careful of the words that you used, you might offend Laura," Sarah Jane criticized in a low tone, and approached the bed. "Sorry for Betty's lack of tact." Sarah Jane added and sat on the right side of the bed.

"It's alright, I'm used to it," she reassured her and smiled. She was surprised when Natalie sat also on the left side of the bed facing her too. "And I'm not offended at all. In fact I'm delighted that you girls find my soon to be husband, 'hot'."

"I heard His Royal Hotness is going to wear a red tunic for the wedding," Natalie remarked. "Red would surely make him more handsome."

She narrowed her eyes and focused her sight to Natalie, "Did I hear that right? You called Prince Carl 'His Royal Hotness'?"

"Yes! And I'm the one who used first that term, isn't it fancy?" Betty said and sat on the foot of the bed, giggling.

"Does the Prince know that you girls are calling him that?" she asked and was suddenly curious what Carl thought of it.

"Oh no! His Highness does not know about it," Sarah Jane defended right away. "We're just calling him 'His Royal Hotness' when it's just us; even Perry doesn't know about it."

"Because Perry would surely disapprove of it," Natalie chimed-in. "...And would say that it's tasteless and disrespectful to the Prince.

"Don't worry, I won't tell Perry," she said and gave them a reassuring smile.

Then she heard all of her friends giggled and did not notice that the door opened.

"Girls, now is not the right time to gossip!"

Upon hearing the strict voice of her Lady in Waiting, all three handmaidens rose from the bed and returned to their respective tasks.

"Laura, you should eat the porridge that's on the tray," Perry ordered after entering the chamber and approached the bed and saw the bowl untouched. "You have a big day ahead of you and you would
need a lot of nourishment today. "Sarah Jane, can you prepare the Princess’ bath now?"

"Yes Perry," Sarah Jane answered dutifully and walked to the bathroom.

"Betty! Where's the bouquet?" Perry questioned across the room.

"I thought the gardener is going to bring it," Betty reasoned out.

"No. I told you to pick it up together with the gown," Perry retorted. "Run to the gardener now and fetch it!"

Betty nodded and ran at once and left the chamber.

"Natalie, do you have Laura's shoes?" Perry asked.

"Yes, it's right beside the gown," was Natalie's proud remark. "And I also have the silver coin from His Majesty."

She stared at Natalie and opened her mouth slightly.

"It's a tradition to put a coin inside the bride's shoes on her wedding day to bring good luck," Natalie said and winked.

"Princess, I forgot to mention that your father had sent the silver coin that your mother put in her shoe the day they got married. Your Aunt Jordana gave it to me yesterday," Perry explained.

"Oh, I didn't know that. I never realize that getting married is full of superstitions," she commented and dipped her spoon on the porridge, and took a spoonful of it to her mouth and ate it without complaining. She was aware that the ceremony would be long and she would definitely be hungry if she just ate the cupcake.

"It's not superstitions; it's tradition," Perry objected and walked to the dressing table and checked all the things that was laid on the top of the table. "Natalie, can you ran to Betty and tell her that it should be white lilies and yellow roses.

Natalie ran at once without any question and was out in a flash. After a few minutes, she saw Sarah Jane came out from the bathroom.

"The bath is ready," Sarah Jane remarked and smiled while approaching the bed.

"Thank you," she returned and smiled at her handmaiden. She put down the spoon on the side after finishing the porridge.

"Sarah Jane, can you take down the tray to the kitchen," Perry ordered to the handmaiden. "I'm going to help Laura with her bath; then we could start with her hair, when Betty and Natalie arrived."

Sarah Jane nodded gracefully and left the chamber with the serving tray.

"Try to rest for a while, before you take a bath," Perry suggested.

*****

"How are you feeling Princess?" Perry asked, while standing by the dressing table.
"Honestly? I don't know," she replied as she looked at Perry through the mirror, while her Lady in Waiting dries her hair. The bath was definitely refreshing. "But I feel weird that I am about to become someone's property."

"Laura, you shouldn't dwell on that stupid law," Perry suggested.

"But it's true. The law gives the husband full rights over his wife," she reasoned out, and was confused also why she was suddenly arguing this matter with Perry. "After the wedding, I will effectively become the Prince of Karnstein's property. Then I would have to obey all of his desires."

"Oh Princess, don't think about that; it's just wedding nerves, it's perfectly natural," was Perry's optimistic reply. "Every bride feels like that, even the groom."

"But Perry I feel like… I am about to marry a different person," was her hesitant retort.

"Laura, you are about to marry Prince Carl and he still is the person that you've grown to like," Perry clarified.

"No Perry. He is not the same person," she retorted.

"Don't say that," Perry returned and started brushing the hair. "You're just not used to seeing him clean shaven and neat looking."

"I'm not talking about his physical appearance I'm talking about his personality. It's like he was the total opposite of the Prince Carl that I met for the first time…” she exclaimed and tried to think of the right words to say. "…It's like I'm going to marry a stranger!"

"Hush dear, he is still the same broody Prince inside, just without the beard and not the rugged type that you used to see before," Perry retaliated, and looked on the reflection of both of them on the mirror. "And don't you think he looked more handsome now that he was clean shaven and clean cut? Isn't that what you like; a smooth clean looking man?"

She knew that Perry was trying to calm her nerves, by mentioning all the things that she liked. "I do… but that Carl is… cold, reserved and aloof," was her bitter comment. "He doesn't even remember to smile anymore. What if he remained like that for the rest of our married life?" she asked and began to recall how Carl treated her lately. "I would prefer the broody Prince with a beard from this clean shaven cold aloof Prince.

Their conversation was interrupted when they heard someone tapped on the door.

"Come in," Perry exclaimed.

She smiled at once when she saw the Valet entered the chamber and walked towards them.

"Laf! What can we do for you? Aren't you supposed to be helping His Highness now?" she asked after LaFontaine bowed to her. She was distracted when she saw a little box with a dainty yellow ribbon. "What's this?" she asked as LaFontaine handed it to her carefully.

"It's from His Highness, a token of his appreciation for agreeing to marry him," LaFontaine said nonchalantly. "And yes, I would help him soon I just need to give you that."

She opened it right away and was mesmerized at the sight of the sapphire and diamond owl brooch in white gold.

"It's beautiful! Please tell him, thank you," was her excited comment.
"The Prince said that he wants you to wear it every day," LaFontaine added.

"I will, and thank you again," she told the Valet and had noticed that they were not cheery today. "Laf? Is something wrong?"

She saw the Valet looked on the other side, then to Perry.

"Umm, Perry, could you leave us for a moment?" she asked her Lady in Waiting.

"Certainly," Perry nodded and went straight to the door and left the chamber.

"Care to tell me what's bothering you?" She asked carefully.

"It's about my friend…"

She contorted her brows and narrowed her eyes, and then she shook her head. "I don't understand what you mean. Care to elaborate more?" was her patient remark.

"I have a friend… and I found out that he is very nervous, because he's getting married today," LaFontaine relayed, as their brows furrowed and crossed their arms. "He never imagined in his entire life that someone would want to marry him. I told him that, he should take his chance and maybe, someone would accept him for what he is. He refused to believe me, because he thought that nobody could like him. He said that he doesn't believe in love and doesn't need someone else; but when he met this person, his outlook in life changed deliberately."

"And why may I ask?" she mumbled.

"Because he thought that there's no such thing as real love, till he found this person and felt how amazing it is to be with her," LaFontaine concluded in a low tone.

She was dumbfounded and cannot reply properly. She remained silent and gazed at the Valet. Any trace of doubts in her heart slowly vanished, as LaFontaine's words sunk in her. She swallowed hard and felt a lump forming in her throat. She does not know how she would react. All the words that LaFontaine told her now contradicted on how Carl was treating her lately. She never imagined that Carl never believed in love; she felt proud and happy to be the one who broke that spell.

"I have to go now, Princess. And thank you for listening to me," LaFontaine commented. "I would see you afterwards."

She heard the strange remark of the Valet, as if telling her to 'show up' at the church afterwards. And before the Valet could leave the room, she drew their attention.

"Tell your friend not to worry; I'm pretty sure his bride would show up," she remarked. "He just needs to have faith in her." She stated and smiled genuinely towards the Valet. She received a nod and a wide smile before LaFontaine walk towards the door and closed it.

As soon as LaFontaine left the chamber, Perry came in at once.

"Is everything alright with LaFontaine?" was Perry's curious and yet worried remark. "I hope they are feeling well."

She smirked and noticed a hint of worry on her Lady in Waiting's tone of voice.

"LaF is fine, they just needed some friendly advice," she returned and looked at the gift again on her hand.
"Laura, it's beautiful!" Perry remarked after having a good look at the elegant brooch.

"I know and I'm grateful for it... but he wants me to wear it every day," she said nonchalantly. "I don't know why I have to wear it every day; it's not even a wedding ring."

"I know that you don't like wearing jewelries, but I think I know why the Prince wants you to wear it every day," Perry replied and smiled.

She raised her left eyebrows and waited impatiently for Perry's theory. "Tell me."

"It's Prince Carl's way of telling you that he wants you to look modest and doesn't want other men to see the opening that shows your breasts; to avoid temptation." Perry explained. "Laura, His Highness is really over protective of you."

If you only knew.

She commented to herself and rolled her eyes.

*****

Surrounded by Perry, her three handmaiden friends and her Aunt Jordana, they all gave her space so she could move comfortably as she rose from the chair of the dressing table and walked to the full length mirror to get a better view of herself. She has not even seen her reflection on the mirror when she heard the ladies around her gasped and saw their gazes fixated on her and freeze.

She cannot believe what her sight met, as she slowly looked at herself on the mirror at how she was magically transformed by her Lady in Waiting and handmaidens into a beautiful bride.

She opted for a simple but elegant white long slim Chantilly lace gown with silhouette lace long sleeves. The pleated skirt was made to resemble an 'opening flower'. The train measured almost nine feet long according to Perry. Her mother's ivory silk tulle fingertip-length veil with embroidered flowers on the edge was held in place by a 'halo' tiara lent to her by her Aunt Jordana. Her hair was fixed in a loose bun with side-swept bangs creating a soft effortlessly romantic hairdo, that goes naturally with the simple and yet elegant diamond earrings that her father gave her. She smiled at her reflection and wished that her father and mother could see her now. And before she could get emotional, she heard the excited voice of her aunt standing beside her and adoring her reflection.

"Laura dear, you're so beautiful!" Her Aunt Jordana exclaimed. "If only your father and mother could see you now they would certainly be proud of you.

After hearing that remark, she cannot help and a tear fell on her right eye. "Oh, Aunt Jordana, my day would have been perfect if they're here," was her honest reply and sniffed.

"Oh, Laura, I'm sorry for making you cry," her aunt apologized and she immediately felt the warmth of the people that loved her when Perry, Betty, Natalie and Sarah Jane surrounded her and gave her a hug, careful not to ruin her dress and hair.

"See, you're not alone," her Aunt quipped after they released her from a hug.

"We all love you Laura and are here to support you," Perry said.

She cannot control her emotions anymore and bursted into tears.

"Oh, Betty, where's the gift that we made for the Princess?" Sarah Jane asked.
And the next thing she knew, Betty was handing her a white silk handkerchief with the initials 'LHK' elegantly embroidered in blue. "Here, take this with you."

After wiping her tears and recovering from crying, she faced them all and smiled genuinely, "Thank you for always being with me and for not letting me feel alone. I love you all and I'm very grateful for all of your love," she declared and smiled till it reached her eyes.

"Laura, are you ready?"

She heard her Aunt Jordana asked as they remained gathering around her.

"Your Uncle is pacing nervously outside your chamber since I came in," Her Aunt Jordana informed. "He's worried about you…I think he's more nervous than your father."

"Oh, I think I should tell Uncle Spencer that I'm alright," she returned and was touched, knowing that her Uncle was worried for her, but before she could do anything else…

"Did you know that your Uncle had a man-to-man talk with Prince Carl the other day?"

Her eyes widened. She did not know if she would be relieved or happy or sorry for Carl after hearing that news from her Aunt Jordana, and cannot help but to smile and be curious.

"What did Uncle told Prince Carl?"

"Your Uncle told your husband to be that he shouldn't hurt our only Princess, or else, we would declare war again to the Karnsteins!" was her Aunt's enthusiastic reply. "And he told Carl to always shave if he wants a kiss from you."

After hearing that last sentence from her Aunt, she felt a bit ashamed and bowed her head and grinned. "Uncle thinks that I'm still a child."

"Don't you hate beards?"

"Yes, I do. But after becoming betrothed to Prince Carl, I got used to it and his beard didn't bother me anymore," she revealed and smiled at the thought of Carl kissing her and being tickled by his beard sometimes.

"Hm, did I just hear that right? Our Princess is not bothered anymore of being kissed by someone who has a beard?"

She heard her aunt's intriguing remark and saw her Aunt gave her a sideway glance. "But only if it's Carl," she uttered out of nowhere and was surprised by what came out from her mouth.

"Aww, I think our little Princess is in love, is she Perry?"

"Umm, I honestly cannot answer that Your Highness," was Perry's careful response. "But we all know that His Royal Highness is over protective and doesn't want any man looking at the Princess."

"Hmm, I think your Prince is the jealous type, Laura," Her Aunt Jordana remarked.

And before she could reply, their attention was captured by a strong knock on the door.

"Oh god, Uncle Spencer," she exclaimed and they have totally forgotten that her Uncle was waiting outside.

"I think we better hurry," was her Aunt's worried reply. "Carl must have been anxious by now."
As they arrived at the hall leading to the chapel, everything was surrounded by white roses and her nose caught the wonderful fragrance of it. Her heart pounded and her hand clasped tightly at the arm of her father's brother who was escorting her to the altar. Her Uncle must have noticed her nervousness when she felt him stopped and turned to her direction.

"Laura, are you alright?"

She heard her Uncle Spencer asked, as they stopped midway to the hall.

"Yes Uncle, I just need to take a breath," she returned and she felt Perry on her side.

"Princess is everything alright?" was Perry's worried remark.

"Yes, can you just lift the veil for a moment so that I could catch some fresh air," she asked, seeing that she did not have an available hand as she was holding the bouquet of white lilies and yellow roses on her left hand, and still clasping her uncle's arm with her right. Or she simply cannot move due to anxiety.

Perry faced her and lifted the veil. She felt like she can't breath and her surroundings were so small, she felt like she was drowning.

"Princess, try to take a deep breath," Perry ordered. "And then exhale. Inhale. Exhale"

She repeated the process and after seven attempts she felt her nerves calmed down. She nodded to Perry and motioned to put her veil down then she looked at her uncle Spencer to her right, and signaled for him that they can continue to walk.

When they reached the end of the hall and the entrance to the castle's chapel, she saw the two guards held the handles of the doors, ready to open it wide. They stood there for a moment and she stared at the closed door. She contemplated what would be her future once that door opened and she stepped inside it…

She could never live in their castle anymore; she would never see her father everyday again; she would never be the Princess of Hollis anymore, but the crowned Princess of Karnstein; she would become a part of the Karnstein Family and Queen Lilita and King Philipp would be her new mother-in-law and father-in-law respectively; her freedom was not hers anymore to enjoy, and she had to ask permission to the Prince every time she would go somewhere else; her body would not be hers anymore but for Carl to claim; and above all, she would spend her life with Carl and no one else. Then suddenly, the thought of spending her life with the Prince made her sad and happy at the same time. She was looking forward for this day to happen and to officially fulfill her promise to everyone. However, she did not know if she was happy and ready to tie the knot knowing that Carl was not the same person anymore towards her.

Her uncle's voice interrupted her train of thoughts and she saw him smiled towards her.

"Laura, everything's going to be alright," was her uncle's reassuring comment. "I felt nervous too when I was waiting for your Aunt Jordana to come and march down the aisle. But when I saw how beautiful your auntie is, and the thought of spending my life with her, everything fell into places and I felt relieved."

She almost cried at what her uncle said and suddenly missed her father. "I wished Papa is here too."

"I know Princess, but you know that he sends his blessings and love to you on this day, so don't
worry." Her uncle said and kissed her on the forehead.

She nodded and tried to compose herself, as she and her uncle together with Perry behind standing on the side, stood with their back straight and signaled to the guards that they were ready to go in. She understood that once she stepped inside, she was no longer Laura Elizabeth Rosamund Hollis but Laura Elizabeth Rosamund Karnstein.

Once the guards opened the door, her ears caught right away the calm sensuous plucking of the theorbo, the gentle silky sound of cello, the lustrous eloquent sound of violins, and the soft demure tone of baroque organ weaving in harmonious tone. She closed her eyes for a moment and let the soft melodious tune calm her nerves.

Then she opened her eyes and let the soothing sound carry her. She confidently marched down the aisle of the chapel, never tearing her eyes at the sight of the altar, ignoring the crowd of people that were seated on the rows of chairs on both sides. She just let the soft harmony wafted her through the aisle, and as she came closer to the altar her heart pounded madly as her eyes caught the sight of her dashing Prince in a red tunic and black trousers standing alone at the altar, gazing anxiously at her direction with those soulful dark eyes.

God, he's beautiful!

Carl was certainly a combination of beauty and grandeur. She looked up and locked her eyes on him, never tearing her sight away from him. His eyes were so melancholic and at the same time delighted upon seeing her. He just remained standing there majestically, waiting for her to come closer. He looked as if he was not convinced yet that she was there, about to tie the knot with him. He must have felt nervous when it took time for her to come in and march down the aisle.

She smiled and felt this tears threatening to come out, as she witnessed Carl's nervous, serious and yet glowing expression as he waited for her to ascend the altar. He looked like he was anticipating her arrival immensely as he saw him take deep breathes.

Was he really nervous?

When LaFontaine indirectly told her that Carl was nervous, she did not believe them fully. But after seeing his face and his eyes, she was finally convinced.

She and her uncle walked up to the five steps to the altar, and when they finally stood on the base of the altar, they bowed in front of the tabernacle and then her uncle turned to the right and she saw Carl bowed to her uncle before he presented her right hand to Carl. Once her Uncle stepped down and left her on the altar. She took a deep breath as she beheld the face of her future in front of her, after Carl received her hand.

"You're beautiful." Carl whispered out of the blue.

She almost fainted at how he uttered passionately those words and was caught off guard. She gazed at him and her eyes caught sight of his melancholic dark orbs. She wanted to tell him also how handsome he was but she became speechless after his surprising remark. She saw those perfectly symmetrical eyebrows contorted again. She could tell that he have been worrying too much; perhaps afraid that she would not show up. But even if Carl was not smiling, she could feel that he was overwhelmed and happy too, as she caught those dark eyes glistening with unshed tears. She knew that he was suppressing his feelings and all she could think about was to kiss him there and then. But reminded herself that they were in front of many people.

Just minutes ago she was panicking as doubts clouded her thoughts. Just moments ago she was
debating with Perry that she does not recognize anymore this Prince that she was about to marry and how she worries that she would become Carl's property after they got married. But right now, every doubt in her mind vanished as she saw the intense look on his face, and all she could think about was:

*I want to marry him.*

She remained gazing at him as he carefully guided her to the chairs in front of the altar. She cannot help but to admire him wearing his red tunic regally. Natalie was right, red accentuated Carl's color and good looks. He looked devastatingly handsome with his hair short and neat, his face clean-shaven and smooth, his eyes dark and melancholic, his symmetrical eyebrows contorted, his soft red lips firmly closed and all she wanted was to kiss that smooth porcelain like neck of him, as the absence of facial hair made his jawline enticing to her eyes.

*God, when did he became so wonderfully handsome even if he's serious and not smiling?!*

Once they both positioned themselves near the chair facing the altar, and as she got closer to him, he leant and she heard him uttered in his deep raspy voice that she loved and said to her:

"I can't wait for you to be my wife."

She gave him a modest smile and began to feel emotional; she cannot fathom where all these feelings were coming from. How come all of a sudden Carl was being romantic and sweet towards her? Did Carl really mean it as a wife whom he could cuddle and kiss like he used to do before? …Or as a wife of the future king and mother to his heirs? She felt like crying and at the same time laughing. She never felt so overwhelmed in her life, as the reality of getting married to Carl unfolded right before her eyes. How could he be cold and aloof and sweet at the same time? Was Carl teasing her? Or he was just genuinely telling her what he felt right now? She was about to look at him in his eyes, but then she saw him focused his sight on the altar as the cardinal began with the ceremony.

The piney and lemony sweet aroma of burning frankincense and the earthy black licorice scent of burning myrrh, felt like a sedative that relaxed her, as her nose caught the smell of them. When she heard the sound of the cardinal chanting the mass in Latin, it brought her to reality and she tried to forget all of these crazy thoughts and listened intently as the cardinal proceeded with the ceremony. She could wait after the ceremony and tell him also how handsome he was and ask him what he really meant with the last thing he said.

When it was already time to obtain the consents and exchange vows, she tried her best not to be emotional. As the cardinal faced Carl and asked him first:

"Carl Philipp Marcus, do you take Laura Elizabeth Rosamund to be your wife? Do you promise to be true to her in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love her and honor her all the days of your life?"

"I do," Carl replied in a firm deep voice.

Then her heart pounded as the cardinal focused to her and asked:

"Laura Elizabeth Rosamund, do you take Carl Philipp Marcus to be your husband? Do you promise to be true to him in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love him and honor him all the days of your life?"

She smiled and said confidently, "I do."

And the next thing she heard was the cardinal proclaiming:
"You have declared your consent before the Church.
What God has joined, men must not divide."

She breathed a sigh of relief. At this point, she knew that she and Carl were now husband and wife. She tried to get a glimpse of Carl and saw his expression appeased.

Afterwards, she saw Johann came up to the altar and stood beside Carl. Her cousin handed the cardinal the wedding bands and returned to his seat. And the cardinal started blessing the rings:

"Lord, bless and consecrate Carl Philipp Marcus and Laura Elizabeth Rosamund in their love for each other. May these rings be a symbol of true faith in each other, and always remind them of their love,"

"Amen," she and Carl both responded.

Then the cardinal gave Carl his ring.

When Carl turned to face her, she felt a lump in her throat forming as he saw him gazing at her with his soulful dark eyes, as if he was overwhelmed and cannot wait to declare to the world that she was about to be his wife. She was thankful that the wrinkles between Carl's brows were gone, but he still looked serious. Carl took her left hand and held it. She felt her hand quivering and had to take a deep breath. He waited till she calmed down and held her left hand firmly. She tried to look him into his eyes without bursting into tears, she swallowed repeatedly as all her emotions resurfaced, and then she heard him recited in his deep firm raspy voice:

"With this Ring I, Carl Philipp Marcus, thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Then she felt him put his ring carefully in her finger. She sighed and felt happy to be wearing his ring from now on. She sniffed and tried to hold back her tears. Carl must have noticed it, and before the cardinal could hand to her her ring. Carl held her left hand, bowed his head and kissed her hand gently. It made her smile and happy, and she calmed at the sensation of Carl's lips touching her hand. After Carl released her hand, she composed herself and looked at the cardinal and nodded, to signify that she was ready. The cardinal placed her ring on her hand, and she held it tightly. She faced Carl and made sure that he held her gaze. Once she knew that those dark melancholic orbs were focused on her, she took a deep breath and smiled as she held Carl's hand gently and recited with all her heart:

"With this Ring I, Laura Elizabeth Rosamund, thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

After putting her ring on his finger, her eyes widened as she saw him genuinely smiled for the first time, since she came back to the castle. She smiled back at him and she was surprised when she saw him mouthed the words 'thank you'. She smiled even more and gazed at him with full of warmth. Her heart was filled with joy and she cannot imagine how intense it could be to marry Carl; to marry her broody Prince.

Then they focused their attention back to the cardinal as she heard him declared:

"Forasmuch as Princess Laura Elizabeth Rosamund and Prince Carl Philipp Marcus have consented together in holy matrimony, and have pledged their love and devotion to each other, and have
declared the same by the joining and the giving of rings, by the power vested in me, and as witnessed
by the King and Queen of Karnstein, family and friends, I now pronounce you husband and wife."
"You may now kiss the bride."

Once she heard the cardinal said 'you may kiss the bride', she was overwhelmed and the thought of
feeling Carl's lips again on hers sends her into daze. This time she would definitely touch that smooth
jawline.

She faced him slowly and bowed her head slightly as he lifted her veil from her face. Once she felt
the fresh air met her face, she gazed at Carl under her lashes and gave him a timid smile. She was
surprised when she saw him smiling at her again, his face glowing and his eyes were now a picture
of happiness and not the melancholic ones that she saw lately. He stared at her for a moment, as if
studying her face, and the next thing she knew, she felt his hands cupped her face gently and claimed
her lips. She was supposed to cup his face and run her hand on his smooth clean shaven jaw. But
once she felt his lips again on hers, she does not have a choice but to follow what her body was
dictating her: she closed her eyes and surrendered to his kisses, as the thought of being married to
Carl sent her to frenzy.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

And special thanks to the creampuffs who are always generous and kind enough to let
me know that they like this crazy story. I certainly appreciate your feedbacks and kudos
;-)
The Look Of Love

Chapter Summary

Ever wonder how Carmilla felt while waiting for Laura at the altar and during the ceremony? Here's a look at Carmilla's POV during the wedding.

This chapter shows also their first dance as a married couple.

Chapter Notes

I think this is the perfect song for this Hollstein fic. I know that it's set in Medieval and the song had never existed during that time. But we could always imagine that Dusty Springfield lived during that time and sang at Hollstein's Wedding. So, let your imagination take over and try to listen to the version of Dusty Springfield's The Look of Love. You can check the link below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tf1d65OHYXo

Thank you so much for all of your wonderful feedbacks, I am overwhelmed and happy to read all of your reactions/feedbacks. You're all welcome and thank you for trusting on my writing ability even if I suck in my grammar.

Carmilla

She stood there anxiously and tried very hard to compose herself. It had been almost half an hour and nobody had said anything when Laura would come. It was driving her insane as the minutes dragged and the anticipation of waiting if Laura would show up or not. She reached for her pinky, looked at it and twisted her signet ring, as she waited anxiously for things to happen.

What if she changed her mind? What if she didn't like me at all?

She brushed off the doubts in her mind and she put her arms on the side and stood straight. But her anxiety was slowly overcoming her, as she felt her hands sweating, and her hand fidgeted on her signet ring again. She tried to control it and balled her hands into a fist. She felt that she was about to lose her self-control and thought that this was foolishness. She cannot help but think of all the possible reasons why Laura would not marry her and only one thing came into her thoughts: Maybe Laura was ashamed to have a husband who was not a full-fledged man. And the thought of it made her paranoid.

But once she looked up and caught sight of LaFontaine's face smiling at her, she mellowed down. She remained her focus towards LaFontaine and saw her Valet gesturing for her to take a deep breath. She nodded lightly to LaFontaine. She took a deep breath and recalled the breathing exercise that LaFontaine taught her every time she felt exploding with panic. She closed her eyes and tried to focus on her breathing.
After attempting for the fourth time to calm her nerves, her ears suddenly caught the calm sensuous plucking of the theorbo, the gentle silky sound of a cello, the lustrous eloquent sound of violins, and the soft demure tone of baroque organ weaving in harmonious tone. Her body relaxed as she let this soft harmony caressed her nerves.

But her tranquility was disrupted when she heard the sound of people standing from their seats. She slowly opened her eyes and her heart pounded fiercely as she saw the door of the chapel opened wide. And there she saw her bride standing by the door, dressed elegantly in white wedding gown. She gazed at Laura and cannot believe that her Princess was there.

_She came._

She uttered to herself and almost choked as this lump that formed on her throat and as this overwhelming feeling of seeing Laura's figure appearing at the chapel's door sent her to frenzy. Her breathing became ragged and she felt this tear threatening to burst out of her chest, but she controlled her emotions.

With each step that Laura took and with each heart beat that she felt, she cannot help but to be overwhelmed. She furrowed her brows; time seemed to slow down while she stared at Laura marching down the aisle. She cannot believe what her eyes were seeing. And all she could think about was:

_Does she really want to marry me?_

She swallowed hard and closed her eyes for a moment, to check if she was not hallucinating. When she opened her eyes, she saw Laura gazing at her through that thin wedding veil. She did not release her gaze at her bride, afraid that if she winked, Laura might disappear. Her heart beat fiercely and she cannot control her emotions as the beautiful enchanting sight of her bride comes closer to reality. The agony of waiting for her bride to come to the altar was the most excruciating thing she ever experienced next to waiting for Laura to show up. If she could only hold Laura's hand and feel it, then she would be appeased and convinced that she was not hallucinating.

She revered the sight of her beautiful bride walking towards her. She had never imagined in her life that she would find love; she had never imagined in her life that someone would accept her for what she was and never judge her.

Laura had never said the word love to her, but to agree to marry her was an enormous gift. How her heart melted and she almost went down the altar to meet her bride as Laura walked towards her. But she held her breath and just stood with her back straight and totally composed; she needed to control herself and her emotion.

She managed to bottle up all her emotions inside her and she hoped that she could last till the ceremony was over without exploding.

_You're the future King. Get hold of yourself!_

She reminded herself and she stood with utmost dignity and confidence. As her Princess came closer, she furrowed her eyebrows and cannot help but to admire Laura and considered herself very lucky to have captured the most beautiful and coveted princess in Styria. And now, the most beautiful and most coveted princess in Styria would soon be her wife.

Laura oozed with poise and elegance. She loved how innocent and yet seductive Laura was especially when Laura gazed at her under those thick brown eye lashes, as if inviting her to devour the Princess.
She exclaimed and did not forget to thank the Creator for this wonderful gift. She never imagined this day would come. She was too overwhelmed to see Laura in that elegant white wedding gown marching down the aisle to tie the knot with her, that she did not even bothered to look around her. Her eyes were totally focused on Laura the whole time.

As Laura and Prince Spencer ascended the altar, she gave her respect first to Laura's uncle and bowed her head lower than intended. Then she focused her attention to Laura's uncle. Her heart pounded madly and she remained composed and still furrowed her brows, too overwhelmed as Laura's uncle passed Laura's hand to her in marriage; transferring to her all the rights and ownership of Laura. Signifying that Laura's family would no longer have control over Laura or Laura's possessions and that she would respectfully take on the responsibilities and obligations that Laura's father once have. It would be her duty now to take care of Laura, as the King of Hollis' relinquished all his rights to his daughter and transferred it to her.

Now Laura belonged to her.

The thought of Laura belonging to her made her ecstatic. After receiving the hand of her Princess, and as soon as Laura's uncle stepped down to the altar, she gazed at her bride and she cannot imagine the bliss that she was experiencing right now. This was real and she was not hallucinating as she felt the softness of Laura's hand against hers.

She cannot imagine there was this one person that would offer herself to her to become her wife. She cannot thank enough destiny, faith and even God for bringing Laura into her life. She felt like crying as she stood there and see this wonderful blessing became real. She thought of wrapping her arms around her bride and just hold Laura, knowing that, at last, she already have someone she could call her wife; someone who could warm her and hold her every night and kiss her; someone who would stand by her side and tell her that everything would be alright, and make her smile when she was feeling all the burdens of being the future king. But she had to control her urges and emotions, as this path to becoming officially married to Laura was not over yet.

Instead, she said the only thing that was on her mind right now.

"You're beautiful," she whispered adoringly to her bride. And saw the surprised look on Laura's face. She waited for the Princess to reply but Laura seemed to be shocked. Maybe Laura was still in denial and cannot accept the fact that they were about to get married. So, instead, she tore her eyes reluctantly to Laura's and led her bride to their chairs. She felt hurt at the lack of Laura's enthusiasm, and thought that Laura was just fulfilling the duties and obligations as a Princess. She tried not to dwell on these negative thoughts that kept on nagging her mind. But once she felt the nearness of Laura, as they took their seats and become closer, she cannot help but to tell Laura what was inside her heart right now.

"I can't wait for you to be my wife," she uttered softly, and does not care what Laura would think. Laura could just plainly ignore it or accept it but right now she needed to let these words out of her heart, or else she would burst with all of these emotions that were threatening to explode.

She was relieved when Laura gave her a modest smile, but still, she felt the Princess' smile as a forced smile, perhaps just to be nice to her. And when she saw that confused expression from Laura, she decided to ignore it and just focus her sight on the altar. She cannot help but to still remain anxious as she saw and felt her bride still not fully convince of marrying her. She would be appeased once she heard Laura say 'I do', but in the meantime, she felt like she was still hanging on a thread, as Laura's reaction seemed dim.
She saw the cardinal was about to begin the ceremony and looked at the altar, she prayed and hoped that Laura's heart would be enlightened, and hopefully the scent of the burning incenses would help to lessen her anxiety as she saw the cardinal held the Thurible and began to swing it around the altar and spread the incense around them. The smoke of the burning incense surrounded them like a fog, as if embracing them protectively, she suddenly felt safe and calm at the sight of it. She let herself be lulled by the calming smell of the sweet earthy aroma of the myrrh and frankincense and focused her attention to the ceremony.

When the cardinal approached her, she stood with her back straight and held her composure. She knew that the cardinal was about to obtain their consents to married and she hoped and pray that Laura would say the word 'I do'. She took a deep breath as the cardinal recited:

"Carl Philipp Marcus, do you take Laura Elizabeth Rosamund to be your wife? Do you promise to be true to her in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love her and honor her all the days of your life?"

"I do." She replied with as much determination as she could muster.

After uttering those precious words, she held her breath, as the cardinal looked at her bride and asked Laura:

"Laura Elizabeth Rosamund, do you take Carl Philipp Marcus to be your husband? Do you promise to be true to him in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love him and honor him all the days of your life?"

"I do."

After Laura proclaimed those precious words, she discreetly breathed a sigh of relief and she felt calmer; and when the cardinal proclaimed:

"You have declared your consent before the Church. What God has joined, men must not divide."

She felt this amazing joy inside her heart as Laura came closer to becoming officially her wife. At last! She now has a wife to call her own; a queen to support and help her in her reign; and a beautiful mother to bear her heirs. Suddenly, she was looking forward for the future and she thought for the first time: life was beautiful.

Her daydreaming was interrupted when she caught the sight of Johann standing beside her and carefully handed the wedding bands to the cardinal. She became more excited at the thought of wearing Laura's ring and her ring on Laura's finger, symbolizing their union.

After she heard the cardinal blessed the rings, she gathered her composure and concentrated on what to do next, as she received her ring from the cardinal. She gently reached for Laura's left hand and held it. But she suddenly became anxious when she felt Laura's hand trembled. She looked up and gazed at Laura, but the Princess avoided her gaze. Her heart pounded madly and thought that maybe Laura was having second thoughts. She waited for any sign of reluctance from her bride, but when she felt Laura calmed down, she held Laura's hand firmly and waited for Laura to look at her. Even if it was painful, she would not put the ring into Laura's finger if her bride was not totally certain, she thought. She held her breath and waited agonizingly for Laura to look at her.

And there it was! Laura finally held her gaze. She almost burst into tears when she saw those beautiful hazel eyes gazing at her. She gathered her strength and tried her best not to show her fear, before reciting in a deep firm tone:
"With this Ring I, Carl Philipp Marcus, thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Gently, she put her ring into Laura's fourth finger, and as soon as it was secured, she felt Laura released from her hand, and she was a bit disappointed at the sudden lack of contact. She bowed her head a bit and she cannot take it if Laura was not that pleased to wear her ring.

*Maybe she's really just fulfilling her duties.*

She thought and was totally disheartened. But when she heard Laura sniffed, she worried at once and she looked up and gazed at her bride. She was surprised to see Laura almost in tears, and she found herself confused as hell. She never wanted to see Laura upset; and her first instinct was to console Laura. She took Laura's hand gently, bowed her head and kissed her bride's hand. The only thing that was important now was to make Laura feel better. She does not care if the cardinal had to wait for her before they could resume the ceremony. When she felt Laura relaxed and she no longer heard her bride sniffing, she reluctantly and gently released Laura's hand. She did not dare look at Laura for fear that she might upset her bride again. Deep down inside, she was thinking that Laura was indeed hesitant to marry her and just fulfilling the duties of a Princess. And Laura does not have a choice but to marry her. When she saw the cardinal handed Laura the ring, she suddenly felt her heart ache. She does not want Laura to marry her out of obligation.

*If you really don't want to marry me, just let go.*

She thought and she carefully looked at Laura's face, to check if Laura was ready to put the ring now and just be over with it. Once their eyes met, she was surprised and never expected to see a smile on her bride's face! Then she felt Laura reached for her hand, held it gently and said:

"With this Ring I, Laura Elizabeth Rosamund, thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

She almost burst into tears and cannot believe how Laura beautifully uttered each word and she felt the sincerity of Laura's declaration. And suddenly, she felt appeased and all the doubts in her heart disappeared. The next thing she felt was Laura putting, at last, the ring on her finger; she smiled with all her heart as she accepted Laura's ring with full of love. She never felt so happy and fulfilled in her life, and this was all because of Laura. She held Laura's gaze and mouthed the words 'thank you' to her wife, for accepting her. Her eyes widened when Laura smiled wider and seemed to be amused. After they have gazed and smiled enough to each other, they focused their attention to the cardinal in front of them, and heard:

"Forasmuch as Princess Laura Elizabeth Rosamund and Prince Carl Philipp Marcus have consented together in holy matrimony, and have pledged their love and devotion to each other, and have declared the same by the joining and the giving of rings, by the power vested in me, and as witnessed by their Majesties King Philipp and Queen Lilita of Karnstein, their Highnesses Prince Spencer and Princess Jordana of Hollis, family and friends, I now pronounce you husband and wife."

Then she saw the cardinal looked at her and smiled, before saying:

"You may now kiss the bride."

After hearing those words, she felt like she was a little child on a Christmas Eve overly excited to open her gift, and she thought:
Best gift ever!

And with that, she lifted Laura's veil gently and she felt more excited when she saw her beautiful wife gazing at her under those thick brown eye lashes, as if inviting her. She felt like she was under Laura's spell as she gazed at her wife lovingly. Then she cupped Laura's face gently and claimed what was rightfully hers: her wife's soft lips.

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She held Laura's hand gently and led her wife to the middle of the ballroom. The one thing she appreciated while taking different lessons when she was young was when her mother secured a well-known Russian dancer to teach her the art of dancing. And now, she could show her wife one of her hidden talents. Opposed to what her mother like, she informed the musicians first to play a certain song that her Valet proudly presented to her as their gift.

She saw LaFontaine escorted a woman to stand beside the musicians, and gave each musician a music sheets. LaFontaine informed her beforehand that they hired someone to compose a song and music for this special occasion. She hoped that LaFontaine does not disappoint her.

She stood a meter apart from Laura and gaze at the Princess with all her heart as the first note struck and the singer's cool soothing, but seductive voice played in the air; she was glad that it was a voice of a woman. As the music played, she felt confident at once and it hypnotized her body. She smiled before taking Laura's left hand and put Laura's right hand on her shoulder, while her left hand wrapped around Laura's waist. She received a smile from her wife as she led Laura to dance.

The look of love
Is in your eyes
The look your heart can't disguise
The look of love
Is saying so much more
Than just words could ever say
And what my heart has heard
Well it takes my breath away

They danced slowly to the smooth beat of the music and did not lift her gaze at Laura. Her heart swelled at every line in the song. LaFontaine certainly knew how she felt towards Laura.

I can hardly wait to hold you
Feel my arms around you
How long I have waited
Waited just to love you
Now that I have found you

Suddenly, she began to feel emotional as each lyric struck her right in her heart. She contorted her brows and her breathing became ragged, as she heard the song and saw Laura's smoldering eyes. She tightened her hand on Laura's hip and drew the Princess closer to her.

You've got the look of love
It's on your face
A look that time can't erase
Be mine tonight
Let this be just the start
Of so many nights like this
Let's take a lover's vow
And then seal it with a kiss

She remained her gaze at Laura and found the same intensity of emotions in the Princess' eyes as she saw fully dilated hazel eyes. Then she felt Laura's hands crawled slowly on the back of her neck and the Princess wrapped its hand around her nape.

\[ I \text{ can hardly wait to hold you} \]
\[ \text{Feel my arms around you} \]
\[ \text{How long I have waited} \]
\[ \text{Waited just to love you} \]
\[ \text{Now that I have found you} \]
\[ \text{Don't ever go} \]

This time she felt a burst of tear threatening to come out, as she heard the last line, 'don't ever go'. She had waited indeed for too long for love; and now she still cannot believe that it was in front of her, gazing at her with so much adoration and affection. She swallowed the lump that was forming in her throat, and tried to fight the tears inside her.

\[ I \text{ can hardly wait to hold you} \]
\[ \text{Feel my arms around you} \]
\[ \text{How long I have waited} \]
\[ \text{Waited just to love you} \]
\[ \text{Now that I have found you} \]
\[ \text{Don't ever go} \]
\[ \text{Don't ever go} \]
\[ \text{I love you so} \]

They were still dancing but she cannot control herself anymore; she wrapped both her arms around Laura's waist tightly and she burrowed her face on the crook of Laura's neck as she heard the two last lines: 'Don't ever go, I love you so' and let her tears come out. Then she felt Laura's left arm wrapped around her shoulder protectively, while the Princess' right hand held her head gently on the crook of its neck to hide her face.

And the next thing she felt were Laura's soft wet lips on her neck and heard Laura's voice whispered a soothing I'll always be with you' to her ear.

TBC
Chapter Summary

A continuation from Hollstein's Wedding dance. And a look at Hollstein's wedding night.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Laura

*I'll always be with you.*

She whispered to his ear as she tried to console her Prince; her right hand still holding his head gently. It felt amazing to hold Carl so close again. She wished that she could always hold him like that. She took a deep breath and sniffed his scent while Carl still burrowed his face on her neck. The last time she smelled his familiar scent was months ago.

*God! I missed you so much.*

She could feel the warmth of his breath against her skin. And she just let him cry quietly, stroked the back of his neck and just held him tight. It felt so good to see and feel him like this.

She never expected that he would be this emotional. It had been so long since Carl touched her. She never expected that he would bare his feelings like this again. And she wondered, why.

The song was beautiful and she never heard anything like it. She never heard a lady troubadour sing before and this woman was certainly the best among them.

But the most astonishing thing that she discovered was how skilled Carl was when it comes to dancing. They never had a chance to dance before and she never thought that he was such a graceful and amazing dancer.

She let the music weaved its magic and just let their bodies swayed to the smooth melody of it. It was definitely like a magical moment, as she held Carl so closed to her. She hoped that this enchanting moment would not be broken. But unfortunately every song had its end. When the music faded, she still held Carl tightly, as if afraid to let him go in fear of the spell would be broken.

As if on cue, after the music died, it was replaced right away by a much livelier music. Then she felt a hand tapped on her shoulder and when she turned around she saw the image of her father-in-law.

"May I have this dance?" King Philipp asked.

She hesitatingly released Carl from her arms and saw her Prince's face changed right away into a serious and composed expression.

"Carl, you're mother wants a dance with you," the King suggested.

She saw the look of hesitation from Carl's eyes before she let go of him; she nodded to assure him
that it was alright. Then she found herself face to face with the King and smiled at her father-in-law as the King led her to dance. She saw Carl discreetly wiped his face before approaching where the Queen was sitting, and escorted his mother to the dance floor.

But her heart pounded fiercely as she saw Carl's eyebrows furrowed again while dancing with the Queen. She saw Carl nodded all the time and it seemed like the mother and son were in deep serious conversation. She wondered what could have change Carl's mood as she saw his warm expression turned to serious and reserved.

The music was not over yet, but she saw Carl escorted the Queen back to the chair and she narrowed her eyes when she saw Carl left the ballroom. Her sight followed where he headed and if her hunch was correct, he used the exit near the door to the secret garden. The voice of King Philipp brought her back to her senses and she shook her head and cleared her thoughts.

"Forgive me, I didn't catch what His Majesty said," she commented in a sheepish tone and looked at the King.

"I said, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart, for making this wedding possible and for giving my son a chance," was the King's genuine remark. "I never thought that Carl would actually agree to get marry. But I guess my son found something special in you and he suddenly changed his mind."

She smiled timidly and felt honored to hear those things from Carl's father. "I should be the one thanking His Majesty, if it was not for Your Majesty's visit to our castle, I would have not known that the Prince of Karnstein is a wonderful person. Thank you so much for choosing me to be the wife of your son."

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After dancing with the King, her Uncle Spencer and Johann, she politely excused herself and went to the hall leading to the exit to the garden.

Once outside, she expertly navigated her way through the rose garden and she sighed and smiled when she saw Carl standing outside gazing at the stars.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you," she said in a pleasant tone as she approached him. His back was facing her; sensing that Carl did not acknowledge her presence and remained silent: "Carl? Are you alright?" she asked.

When he turned around and faced her, her heart throbbed, furrowed her brows and uneasiness overcame her as she saw again the reserved and cold expression of her Prince.

"Why wouldn't I be?" he said in a deep firm tone.

She shook her head slightly and narrowed her eyes as she tried to decipher his mood.

"You were crying while we're dancing," she explained. "I just thought-"

"You must be mistaking, Princess," Carl returned with an air of arrogance.

She took a deep breath. "What's going on?" she asked fully confused. "Why are you denying it? I saw the tears in your eyes and felt it on my shoulders."

"I don't know what you're talking about, Princess," he returned coldly. "Maybe you're the one who cried?"
"Carl, we just got married, and you're already lying to me," she retorted and was irritated as he twisted her words.

"Princess, I am grateful that this wedding happened. But we both know that this marriage is for the good of our kingdoms, and that we should not forget our obligations first," he reasoned out. "And may I remind you to call me Prince Carl."

Suddenly, she felt like bursting into fury. But before she could show to him her anger, the voice of LaFontaine caught their attention.

"Excuse me for interrupting Your Highnesses, but His Majesty said that it is time for the Bedding ceremony," LaFontaine informed.

She opened her mouth slightly and contorted her eyebrows, not knowing what LaFontaine just said. Sensing that she was totally unaware of what would commence...

"I gathered that no one informed you about the Bedding ceremony after the wedding feast?" Carl had guessed and motioned for the Valet to come closer.

"N-no," was her ashamed reply.

"My Valet would explain it to you and afterwards they would escort you inside," Carl replied in a superior deep tone.

She just waited for the Prince to finish giving instructions to LaFontaine, and did not ask him further, knowing that he was in his cold reserved self again.

"Did my King Father inform the others that I just want him and you to help me dress at my chamber?" the Prince asked their Valet.

"Yes Your Highness," LaFontaine answered. "His Majesty is the one who would present to you your nightshirt, and then I would be the one to help you with the rest."

Satisfied with the reply, "Very well, I would leave you both now and make sure that Princess Laura is comfortably escorted to her chamber afterwards."

And with that, she saw Carl left without saying another word to her, as if she was not there by his side. To make things less complicated, she decided to forget the sudden change of Carl's mood and faced the Valet for some explanation.

"What is this ceremony that His Royal Highness cannot tell me?" she demanded and saw the Valet's hands fidgeting as she waited for the answer. "Laf, what does this ceremony mean?"

It took a while before LaFontaine replied and she saw them paled.

"The Bedding ceremony is the part where the groom and bride go to their separate chamber to prepare and dress themselves," the Valet began relating. "Traditionally, the men of the groom's family and friends would take him to a separate chamber, and help him dress and prepare. The highest ranking male royal, in this case His Majesty, would present Prince Carl his nightshirt for the bedding ceremony. While on the other hand, the women of the bride's family and friends would take her to her chamber and help her prepare and dress. And since it's, Her Majesty who, is the highest ranking female royal, the Queen would present your nightgown."

"I don't get it, why do all the trouble of presenting the bride and groom their nightshirt and nightgown, when Carl has you and I have Perry to help me?" she asked and rolled her eyes.
Traditions were always giving her a headache. She hated it when people cannot choose or decide in their free will and would have to follow some silly traditions. "...And why do some of the men and women have to take the bride and groom to their chambers and help them dress?"

"Because after the women helped the bride, they would put you in bed and once you're ready, the men would take Prince Carl to your chamber and put him to bed with you," LaFontaine expertly relayed. "And afterwards, the bishop would bless the marriage bed for fertility and then everyone would leave, so that both you and Prince Carl could consummate your marriage."

After hearing those words from the Valet, she was totally speechless and too dumbfounded to reply.

*What kind of silly tradition is that?!*

Not only was she panicking at the thought of having a lot of people inside her chamber before her wedding night, she was also tormented.

She had forgotten her wedding night: the night she dreaded the most.

She adored Carl, but they both know that she was not fully prepared for this to happen and they were not able to discuss it. After being separated from him for a month and with all this craziness between Carl and her; and the stress of getting married right away, she forgot all along her fear. And now she was panicking and frightened, as the moment of losing her virginity approached.

"Princess Laura, are you alright?" LaFontaine asked with full of concern.

She shook her head and tried to clear her thoughts of her impending fate. "Umm, yes." She lied and tried not to show LaFontaine how nervous and worried she was.

"Oh, and I forgot to tell you," LaFontaine reminded. "The morning after the wedding night, the women, including the Queen would come to the chamber to check the marital bed to see if you're a virgin and if the marriage had been consummated."

This shocked her even more and the idea was driving her mad. "And how can they tell if I am pure or not? Or if the deed had been done?"

"When they see a blood on the white sheet," the Valet answered.

Then she remembered what Perry told her, when she was asking her Lady in Waiting what to expect on her wedding night. Right now, she was in terrible turmoil. She had no choice but to surrender her virginity to Carl and face her fear.

She silently walked towards the castle with her heart pounding fiercely, her shoulders hunched and looked down, while her mind was in total chaos.

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After gathering her strength, taking a long hot bath perfumed with rose oil and asking LaFontaine to make her some chamomile tea, she now found herself in front of the full length mirror as her three handmaidens and Perry surrounded her and prepared her for her wedding night. This time, the atmosphere in her chamber was silent, with the Queen and her Aunt Jordana being present in the room and ten more other elderly women that she recognized as wives of some of the noblemen and courtiers.

After her handmaidens had dried and brushed her hair, just dressed in her silk white robe, she walked towards where the Queen was sitting. She saw Perry handed the Queen her nightgown, while the
other women and her Aunt Jordana stood around her.

The Queen rose from the chair, stood in front of her and graciously handed her the nightgown that she was going to wear for her wedding night. After receiving it she bowed her head and looked at the Queen.

"Thank you Your Majesty," she uttered, with poise.

"Remember, you have an obligation to produce an heir for the Karnstein Kingdom," the Queen declared in a firm voice. "Everything that you do should be for the best interest of the kingdom, and your personal worries and agitation should be set aside."

"I will not forget, Your Majesty," she replied firmly, concealing her anxiety as best as she can.

"And you have to remember that you should remain submissive and should not dominate your husband," the Queen informed with utmost importance. "The heir to the throne is the next powerful person after the King; as a wife, you should honor and obey all of the Prince's desires in bed and never refuse him of his needs at all times."

"I will, Your Majesty."

After agreeing to everything, she received a satisfied but controlled smile from the Queen.

"You may dress now."

She heard the Queen said and she bowed her head before heading to the bathroom together with Perry.

After Perry removed her robed and helped her put on her nightgown, they hurriedly went out of the bathroom, knowing that the Queen was waiting.

Once she was in the middle of the room, she saw Sarah Jane and Natalie put a white sheet on the bed, after her handmaidens had securely placed the white sheet, her Aunt Jordana together with the Queen and the elderly women inspected the white linen.

"Laura, you may now come to bed," her Aunt Jordana informed after all the women checked the bedsheet.

She dutifully come to the bed and sat on the left side.

"Call the Prince and tell him that his bride is ready and waiting for him," the Queen ordered.

She saw Betty nodded and bowed to the Queen before leaving the chamber.

While she tried her best to remain calm and waited silently as her heart beat rapidly.

After a few minutes, the door to her chamber opened and she felt more agitated when she saw the King entered with Carl already dressed in his purple robe, followed by his Uncle Spencer, the bishop and around ten other familiar faces that she knew were noblemen and the King's advisers, and some of them husbands to the matrons in the room. Her eyes followed the group of men that escorted the Prince to the right side of the bed. LaFontaine helped the Prince removed his robe, and her eyes widened when she saw Carl clothed in his white short night shirt and white braize.

After they successfully put Carl to bed with her and covered them with the sheet, she saw everyone gathered around the four post bed and the bishop stood by the other end of the bed, faced them and began to pray silently and then said:
"Bless this bed and His Highness, Prince Carl and Her Highness Princess Laura, that they may share this gift of life and bear the kingdom an heir."

Right after the bishop recited the prayer, she calmed down a bit when she saw all of the people inside her chamber disappeared one by one in her sight. She caught Perry mouthing the words 'good luck' before leaving and her Aunt Jordana smiling at her, totally oblivious of her nervousness. Then she saw LaFontaine approached the right side of the bed, carrying the purple robe.

"Your Highness, I would put your robe here," LaFontaine informed in a low voice and put it on the bedside table beside the Prince.

She saw Carl just nodded silently and when she met LaFontaine's lingering gaze, she felt like crying as she saw the puppy sad eye expression of the Valet; as if commiserating with what she felt right now. Her eye contact with LaFontaine was broken when she saw the King approached the bed and the Valet discreetly left the chamber.

She noticed that everyone had left, and they found themselves alone with the King. She swallowed hard and waited for whatever the King would command her to do. After receiving all those orders from the Queen, she would not be surprise anymore of what the King would tell her to do. This wedding night felt like a torment as she was forced to do something she did not accept. Her rumination was interrupted when she heard the King coughed and she automatically focused her attention to His Majesty. But she was surprised when she saw the King stared at the Prince's direction and saw Carl looking at his father's eyes intently.

"Carl, be gentle and loving to Laura," the King uttered.

Her eyes widened and she cannot believe what her ears had heard. And then she saw King Philipp gazed at her with those kind warm orbs and smiled.

"Good night Laura," the King said softly.

"Good night Your Majesty and thank you," she returned and gave him a timid smile and then bowed.

"Carl, remember what I told you," the King reminded.

"I will my King Father," the Prince replied firmly and bowed before King Philipp left the chamber.

Once she heard the door closed, her heart started to beat rapidly and she remained lying on the bed with her eyes focused on the ceiling, avoiding Carl's direction. With bated breath, she waited for what would happen next.

"Look at me," Carl demanded.

She was startled by his deep and yet mild tone and flinched. She slowly turned to her left to face him and kept her distance. Her heart pounded madly as she saw Carl's eyes stared at her face for a moment. It felt like she was being tortured as Carl looked at her, devoid of emotion. Right now she did not know if she was anxious of the thought of having Carl's penis inside her or she was nervous at the intimidating sight of her Prince. She was definitely face to face with the cold reserved Carl and had no choice but to submit to him.

"You will obey everything that I will tell you and will remain silent," Carl stated in a serious deep voice. "I don't want to hear any comment from you, except when I tell you so."

She nodded meekly as her heart beat harder. She never imagined that she would feel frightened like
this in the presence of Carl. And before she could lament at the loss of the old Prince that she had grown to like, the sound of Carl's cough drew back her attention to him.

"And never touch me," Carl declared.

The orders of the Queen and together with his demands would certainly send her in the pit of madness. Not only was she anxious of the idea of him putting his penis inside her, but all these demands were making her deranged. And all she wanted was to shout and let all these emotions out of her mind and body. But instead, she tried to calm and reminded herself:

*This is for Karnstein Kingdom.*

She told herself and abandoned all of her worries and fears, as the thought of producing an heir stuck to her mind. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath and tried to pacify herself as she prepared to offer her body to him.

When she opened her eyes, she was met by a pair of concerned dark eyes. She furrowed her brows and was confused at what she saw. She remained silent and looked down as she waited for him to make the first move.

"You may sleep now. I am sure you are exhausted," Carl uttered.

After hearing those words her eyes widened. She looked up and sought his gaze, to make sure if she heard it right. She narrowed her eyes and stared at him like an idiot.

*Did he just tell me to sleep?*

Perhaps sensing her confusion, "I want you to sleep and rest," he reiterated. "I am already tired and I don't want to explain further. If you don't want to sleep yet, it's your choice. But I am going to sleep now and I don't want you tossing around the bed and disturbing me."

She sighed and felt like this heavy load was lifted from her shoulders. She was surprised to hear that, but she was also thankful about his decision. And before she could smile at him, to thank him, Carl turned his back on her and lied on his side.

With the sheet covering only their lower body parts, she stared at his back for a moment and watched his shoulders relaxed as his breathing became deeper and his body calmed. It was her first time to see him sleeping and the presence of him beside her made her happy and sad at the same time.

She had longed for this night to happen, where she could wrap her arms around Carl and just hold him while sleeping. Then she suddenly had the urged to touch him and was about to reached for his arm; but the image of what happened the day she touched him and he became furious flashed in her mind.

How she wished she could caress that short soft hair, she knew that he used to like it, especially if she stroked the back of his ear. She had wished to kiss him good night and feel again his soft wet lips on hers. But she was deprived of it. She felt crying as she gazed at the sight of him lying so close to her, feeling his warmth and yet, she cannot touch him; not even the tip of his hair. She remained her gaze on his back until her eyelids became heavy; a tear drop escaped her left eye before she succumbed to sleep.

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Her senses were slowly roused as her ears caught the sound of knocking on the door. She forcefully opened her eyes and tried to adjust at the brightness that was illuminating from the window. She was
certain that the sun was already up and nearing noon as the strong rays of the sun surrounded her chamber. She smiled when she heard the birds tweeting by the window; then her attention was robbed by the persisting sound of knocking on the door.

Sometimes, the handmaidens would tease her and wake her by just knocking on the door until she woke up and shouted for them to come in. This time she would not yield to their trick. She decided to close her eyes again. But the knocking persisted and she thought of ignoring them. Her left arm was about to reach behind her to grab her sheet and cover it over her head. But she suddenly found herself stuck and cannot move! She opened her eyes wide and tried to turn around, but she cannot release from the hold. She looked down and saw a hairless arm wrapped tightly around her, and then her eyes roamed at the sight of this pale smooth arm, and stopped when her eyes recognized the silver cuff bracelet with green stones. She held her breath and she suddenly felt warm, when she realized whose arm it was!

What the?!

She carefully turned around, and she almost gasped when she saw the sleeping sight of Carl. Her body and mind cannot comprehend what was happening right now.

Why is he here?!

Was her puzzled remark as she tried to ignore the tingling sensation that her body felt, as Carl's warm body laid beside her. And before she could panic further, she heard a woman's voice and the knocking persisted.

"Carl?! Princess Laura?! Are you awake?!"

She suddenly regained her memories and she remembered everything that happened yesterday, and what LaFontaine had told her.

Oh my god! They're here to check the sheet!

She recalled and her breathing became ragged. How they would explain to the Queen and to the matrons and her aunt about the absence of the blood on the sheet? It would imply that she was not pure if Carl would tell the Queen and the others that they have done the deed.

She had no choice but to wake him up and asked him to tell the truth.

"Your Highness, wake up!" she said in a hushed and panicky tone, and carefully touched him on his arm. "Prince Carl, wake up!" she asked, frustrated at how hard to wake Carl up. She shook him this time till he opened his eyes.

"What?!" he whined.

She saw him gazed at her innocently, and then her heart almost melted when he smiled and realized that she was there beside him.

"Laura? What are you doing here?" he mumbled sleepily, totally oblivious.

Seeing that he has not fully understood yet the situation: "You're in my chamber, on my bed and last night was supposed to be our wedding night, but we didn't do it, and now the Queen and the others are here to check the sheet and see if I was pure or not," she babbled immediately not waiting for him to fully awake. "Carl, they would check for my blood on the sheet as a sign that you've claimed my virginity!"
This time she saw his eyes widened and his expression mirrored her face.

"Bloody hell!" Carl exclaimed, after realizing their predicament. He turned around hastily and reached for the pocket of his robe that was on the bedside table, and took a vial from the pocket. "Move over," he ordered her, and she complied. Then he poured the red liquid from the bottle on the middle of the bed and hid the vial under his pillow.

"What's that?" she asked.

"It's a chicken's blood," he said. "We would tell them that we have consummated our marriage and-"

"Carl! Laura! We're coming in!" was the impatient call.

She heard the voice of the Queen and before the door open; Carl had already wrapped his arm around her, and felt his arm brushed accidentally on her breasts. The sudden contact of Carl's arm made her nipples hard. He removed it right away and rested his arm on her waist instead. Still, the mere contact of his hand and arm on her body was driving her insanely aroused. She remained unmoved and remembered not to touch him, as she lay on her back waiting for the Queen to see them in their 'intimate' state.

"Good morning! How are the newly-weds?"

The Queen asked, and she saw the same group of people that were present last night, minus the King and the men.

"Good morning My Queen Mother," Carl replied and released from the embrace, and got up and sat on the bed, his lower body still under the sheet.

"Good morning Your Majesty," she greeted the Queen and got up from the bed, after Carl released from the embrace. She stood beside the bed and bowed her head to the Queen as she saw her Mother-in-law walked to the side of her bed, together with the group of women and her Aunt Jordana.

"It's a custom and tradition that the women of the castle would check the matrimonial bed for sign of your purity and consummation." The Queen expressed.

She saw Carl lifted the sheet for them and a look of satisfaction could be found on the Queen's and everyone's face, when they caught the sight of blood on the white linen sheet.

"Perfect!" The Queen exclaimed.

Then she saw the Queen faced towards her direction. "Did you remember all the things that I have told you?"

"Yes Your Majesty," she nodded meekly and did not release her eyes from the Queen's fiery ones.

"Very well, we would leave you two alone and I would send the maids to bring your breakfast afterwards," the Queen related.

"Thank you Your Majesty," she returned and bowed her head as she saw the Queen walked to the other side of the bed where Carl was sitting.

"Carl, are you that tired that you cannot even stand up and give your Queen Mother a kiss?" The Queen asked in an authoritative voice.
"Forgive me, my Queen Mother," Carl replied, got out of the sheet and rose from the bed immediately.

But as soon as she saw Carl out of the bed and standing in front of the Queen, dressed only in his night shirt and braise, she understood why the Prince did not get up from the bed earlier. She saw the Queen lifted right away its hand and gave it to Carl to kiss, instead of kissing his mother on the cheek. And the next thing she heard was gasped from the women around them and saw their faces reddened as they witnessed the sight of the Prince of Karnstein’s penis erected to its full glory.

She smiled discreetly like a devil, as she witnessed this awkward scene, and knew that it was her breasts that had awaken the Prince's 'cat'.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for all of your feedbacks and kudos ;-)
Married

Chapter Summary

A look at Carmilla's POV on what happened on the wedding night. And LaFontaine was traumatized of something they did.

Chapter Notes

First of all, thank you for all your feedbacks and for letting me know how some of you feel. I just want to let you all know that this is a slow burn fic and it takes time for the characters to develop and grow. I just can't throw some loving without any challenges and problems. Real life is hard and complicated, it's not just about love and happy times, it's also struggle and pain.

I know that some of you feel that Laura's submission to Carl/Carm is a big mistake; and I respect all your opinions. But as one reader pointed out, Laura is also a very dedicated person in this fic, which is also in the canon. Laura is also unselfish and would think of others first before herself and would almost sacrifice anything for the people that she loves and around her. Laura in this fic has the same sense of duty and dedication; compared to Laura in the canon, Princess Laura has to follow some ethics and traditions since she's just starting her way of becoming a newly crowned princess in a new kingdom. Obeying the Queen's orders and submitting to Carl is one of the responsibilities that she ALREADY KNEW and expected of her to do when she agreed to their betrothal. If we go back to the earlier chapters, Princess Laura doesn't like this tradition of being submissive to a man, that's why she wished not to marry. But her duties and responsibilities as a princess of her kingdom and an obedient daughter drove her to this decision to accept the things that she doesn't like (marrying a man; submitting to a man and obeying orders from others, such as the Queen and Carl). Everything that Princess Laura had done in the previous chapter (36) was already expected of her to do and a part of her duty. That's the reason why Princess Laura cannot just say no to the Queen and refused to submit to Carl.

If we would take into consideration how much freedom the Laura from the Canon and Princess Laura here, we could say that living today is much easier compared during medieval times. Princess Laura agreed to submit because she was thinking that it was her duty but also she loves Carl/Carm and she wanted to fix this problem between her and Carl/Carm. She had set aside her fear because she loves Carl/Carm and she also has a duty, and that is to produce an heir, that's why she had no choice but to submit to Carl/Carm.

And did anyone appreciate the fact that Carl/Carm decided not to consummate their marriage and just told Princess Laura to sleep instead, out of his love for the Princess, because he/she knew that Laura is afraid of penis? I know that Carl/Carm sounded like a rude uncaring husband and that everyone hated him for treating Laura like that. But he has reasons why he/she were doing it.

With regards to Carl/Carm always obeying what the Queen Mother is telling him/her,
going back to the earlier chapters, we could tell that the King Father was always
travelling and were always not there in the castle. The task of molding Carl/Carm into a
Prince had fallen to the Queen Mother this is the reason why Carl/Carm is always
following the Queen Mother's wishes. Carl/Carm had been isolated in the castle with no
communication from the outside world, that's why Carl/Carm cannot distinguish (yet)
that some of the things that the Queen Mother are saying are wrong. The Queen Mother
is always reminding him/her that the welfare of the kingdom comes first, that's why it's
already fixed in his/her mind that everything that the Queen Mother is saying is for the
best of their kingdom.

And to make you all feel appeased, Carl would definitely realize the truth, and that it
would involve the King Father telling him/her how to become a really great King. This
chapter is already finished and is written beforehand, but I just need for the characters to
go through a process, so that it may not seem force and be realistic as possible. They
have to struggle first and learn through the process. I can't just give them an instant
gratification.

Thanks for your patience and continued support for this fic, and for those wonderful
feedbacks and kudos.

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Carmilla

She paced to and fro inside the bathroom of her chamber, while she waited anxiously for her Valet to
arrive. She had forgotten all along the most important thing in this wedding night: not to consummate
their marriage.

The Princess never asked her not to do it, but she knew that it would frighten her wife if she would
claim Laura's virginity just for the sake of tonight.

She would never hurt her wife and she did not want Laura to loath her in bed; that was not how she
imagined her married life would be.

So, even up to the last minute, she forced her Valet to come up with a solution of how they would
lure her Queen Mother and the matrons when the group of women come and check the sheet of their
matrimonial bed after the wedding night.

She almost leapt when she heard the loud knock on the bathroom's door.

"Who is it?"

"It's me, LaFontaine."

She opened the door right away as she hid behind it, knowing that the King was waiting outside in
her chamber. She closed the door right away after slipping her Valet in.

"What took you so long?!" she asked in a hushed tone, as LaFontaine put a vial on the top of the
dressing table and then faced her. "You look like you've seen a ghost? And why are you trembling?"
"The butcher had already slaughtered all of the chickens and pigeons for the feast and had already cleaned and threw away all the garbage," LaFontaine tried to explain, their voice shaking. "I have to ask a boy to get me a chicken from the barn, and I have to slaughter the innocent chicken myself, so that I could get what you want," the Valet complained in a low tone. "I hope God would forgive me for killing that poor chicken."

"Try to get hold of yourself and forget about the chicken!" she ordered seeing that her Valet looked disoriented. "What have you told my King Father again?" she asked, as LaFontaine helped her put on her purple robe and then slipped the vial filled with red liquid inside the pocket of her robe and then she securely tied the strings around her waist.

"I told his Majesty that I have forgotten your night shirt and that I need to retrieve it from the laundry room," LaFontaine replied.

"But where's the damn shirt?!" she asked, seeing that her Valet had nothing in their hands. Her stress level was already reaching its peak because of that damn chicken blood that she needed. She told LaFontaine that she would not come out of her chamber without that blood; even to the extent of letting the King wait for her, as they create an excuse just to retrieve the thing that would prove Laura's virginity.

"I have already given it to His Majesty before I came here. Just go to your King Father, so that he could already perform the ceremony of handing to you your night shirt, then you'll have to come back here, so that I could help you put it on."

"Alright, thanks. I'm going now," she informed her Valet and tried to regain her composure before facing her King Father, but she was distracted when she caught the worried expression of LaFontaine. "Stop thinking about the chicken!" she reprimanded in a hush tone before leaving the bathroom.

She walked with her back straight and her chin up across the room and towards where the King was sitting. Her King Father stood right away upon seeing her approaching. She bowed to the King at once and composed herself.

"Forgive me my King Father for letting you wait, I take all the blame of this carelessness," she declared.

"It's alright Carl, you don't need to apologize. I managed to take a quick nap while waiting, and I felt refreshed," the King said and smiled. "And besides, things like that are bound to happen at weddings. I remember that I accidentally poured the wine that I was drinking on my night shirt during the bedding ceremony, and my Valet had to retrieve a new one for me too."

She felt relieved after hearing her father's response, and gave him a smile when her father simply handed her the night shirt.

"Here, put this on now so that I could already take you to your bride," the king informed and winked at her.

"Thank you my King Father," she replied and bowed her head before leaving.

Once she was inside her bathroom, she untied her robe and LaFontaine stood behind her and helped her take it off. Then she remembered the precious vial in her robe's pocket.

"Careful, the vial is in there," she ordered and faced her Valet dressed in her braise and the white linen that was wrapped around her chest.
"I know, you don't have to tell me, I'm the one who put it there," LaFontaine replied and hanged the robe on the chair beside her dressing table. Then they held the night shirt for her to put it on.

After putting on the night shirt, LaFontaine retrieved the purple robe and held it for her, so she could put it on again. Once she securely tied the string, they left the bathroom and walked inside her chamber and face her King Father again.

"Before we go out, I need to tell you something," the King related and motioned for them to sit on the bed. While LaFontaine waited by the door.

They both sat on the right side of the bed and faced each other. Then her King Father put his right hand on her shoulder and looked at her in the eyes.

"The most important thing in the wedding night is your bride's comfort," the King explained sincerely. "You need to treat your wife with utmost respect in bed and you have to be gentle to her. Remember, it's her first time; it would be painful for her if she is not comfortable and relax. She would need time to become ready, so you should show her how much you adore and love her. You should always look her in the eyes and ask her permission first before claiming her. Always be gentle and loving when you touch her, and never hurry up. And don't forget to tell her how beautiful she is and how you love her."

"I will my King Father," she nodded sincerely. She was about to stand up but the voice of the King caught her attention and she paused.

"And Carl, if you think your bride is not ready, you don't need to do it. There's no shame in not doing it," the King reminded gently. "You could just spend the night holding each other. You don't need to hurry up consummating your marriage. There would be plenty of nights and days to do it. What matters most is that she feels secured in bed with you."

She nodded and gave her King Father a genuine smile. "Thank you my King Father I will remember everything that you told me."

"Shall we go?" the King asked and motioned for her to go first. "Oh, and I have to warn you, there are around ten men including the bishop and Prince Spencer waiting outside the door of your chamber; and every one of them are excited to put you in bed with Laura."

She smirked at her father and she received a smirk from him too. And they proceeded to the direction of the door.

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"Carl, remember what I told you," the King reminded.

"I will my King Father," she replied firmly and bowed before the King left the chamber.

Once she saw the King stepped out of the chamber, she recalled the last thing that her father told her: "What matters most is that she feels secured in bed with you."

She was definitely going to tell Laura not to worry since she has no intention of consummating their marriage and even if her King Father reminded her that it was alright not to do it, she would still not claim Laura. Not this way. She excitedly turned to face her wife; to tell the Princess that they would not do it and that she just wants to hold Laura in her arms as they sleep. But when her gaze focused at Laura, she felt this sudden pain in her heart and she furrowed her brows as she saw the frightened expression in her wife's face.
She suddenly felt unwanted and undesirable while Laura avoided looking at her direction and just stared at the ceiling. She swallowed hard and tried to fight this lump that was forming in her throat. She had just witnessed her own wife avoided looking at her, perhaps disgusted at what lies inside her braise and inside her night shirt. For a moment, she lost her confidence as she replayed in her mind the facial expression of her wife.

What does she expect? Laura does not like penis.

She tried to erase all of these negative thoughts in her head.

So, she took a deep breath and tried her best to control her feelings. And before facing her wife she reminded herself that she had a beautiful body and if the Princess cannot accept it, then she would not force Laura. She was different and she would live with it whether Laura accept it or not. She gathered her confidence and controlled her feelings and said:

"Look at me," she ordered in her deepest firm voice.

She almost lost her composure when she caught Laura trembled just by looking at her.

*Does she hate it that much?*

She wondered all of a sudden and she thought of leaving Laura in bed so that her wife would be spared of having to forcefully sleep with her in bed. Her heart ached at the look of fear in Laura's eyes as she came face to face with her wife. She stared at the Princess and she contemplated what to say next. She was too hurt at how Laura looked at her so she decided to be her firm and cold self to conceal her pain.

"You will obey everything that I will tell you and will remain silent," she commanded in a firm deep voice. "I don't want to hear any comment from you, except when I tell you so."

She saw Laura nodded quietly and was thankful that there was no complain from her wife, oftentimes she felt hurt too whenever she have to be firm with Laura. But she had to do it. She had to be firm or else she cannot prove to her Queen Mother that she was capable of controlling her emotions. Then she caught Laura staring at her and she felt like giving in to her feelings, as she saw those beautiful hazel eyes. She tried to cough to break the stare. She does not know what was in Laura's mind, but the look in those brown eyes showed yearning. If her wife suddenly uttered a single word, she knew that she would yield to whatever Laura want. So she decided not to let it happen.

"And never touch me," she declared.

The look on Laura's face changed from yearning to blank expression, and she was thankful that she did not hurt her by saying those words. But when she saw the Princess' eyes closed she panicked inside and grew worried.

*What have I done?*

She hoped that Laura was not crying; she held her breath and waited anxiously for those beautiful brown eyes to open and gazed worriedly at the Princess.

*I'm sorry.*

The words were already in her thoughts and she would definitely say it as soon as she found out that she had hurt her wife.
She held her breath and gazed at the Princess' face; when those hazel eyes opened she felt relieved when she found no trace of tears. She composed herself and thought not to prolong Laura's anxiety anymore.

"You may sleep now. I am sure you are exhausted," she uttered.

Her eyes caught the surprised look of her wife and she knew that Laura would be confused that she had decided not to consummate their marriage. She waited for the Princess to focus those confused brown eyes to her.

"I want you to sleep and rest," she reiterated. Then she felt her emotions taking over and she thought of telling Laura the truth.

*I don't want to hurt you and I am willing to wait for you to accept me, no matter how long it takes.*

She longed to say those words, but she forcefully suppressed her feelings and instead, she decided to tell a lie.

"I am already tired and I don't want to explain further. If you don't want to sleep yet, it's your choice. But I am going to sleep now and I don't want you tossing around the bed and disturbing me," she said in a cold tone and turned her back right away from the Princess, afraid that she might not be able to control her feelings any longer if she caught her wife smiling at her.

Suddenly she longed for that smile; Laura's cheerful mood was contagious that whenever she sees that adorable smile she cannot help but to kiss her Princess and just wrap her arms around Laura. She loved kissing and touching the Princess and the thought of her wife reciprocating her kisses and being aroused at her touches always drove her libido wild.

She tried to brush off all of those thoughts; she cannot think of them now. She cannot have an erection when she knew that Laura was just lying inches apart beside her. She does not want to scare her wife. But she felt that her body was not cooperating. She discreetly reached for her crotch and discovered her hard bulge. She removed her hand right away and tried to perform the breathing exercise that she used to do when she was younger and did not have an idea yet that she could use her hand.

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She woke up again and did not know how many times now. It was her first time to sleep on Laura's bed, and she cannot find a decent sleep. She was thankful that Laura was still sleeping. The weak light from the fireplace and the lack of curtains around her, and the fact that she was lying beside Laura were certainly the cause of her poor sleep.

She carefully removed her arm under Laura's head and tried to stretch her numb arm. She smiled and gazed at her wife. Sometime in between her dozing off and waking up, she found Laura snuggled beside her. She inevitably turned around and faced Laura's direction while she was asleep and Laura might have taken the chance to cuddle with her sleeping form. Her heart melted at the beautiful sight of her wife and she carefully kissed Laura's lips. Then she looked at her wife to check if she had woke the Princess, she sighed when she just found those eyes tightly closed and the sound of Laura's low snoring made her smile. She lay on her side, enclosed her right arm above the Princess' head and her left arm over Laura's waist and wrapped her wife protectively in her arms, before kissing Laura's forehead and whispered:

*I love you.*
She closed her eyes and she relished the feeling of Laura's sleeping form in her arms for the first time, and wished that they could just stay like that forever.

*****

It's the evening after her wedding night and after spending the afternoon and eating lunch with Laura's family before travelling to Hollis' kingdom, she now found herself sitting on the chair of her study table, relaxing. She was glad to have been back in the seclusion of her own chamber. She was about to close her eyes and just take some quick nap but the sound of the door opened caught her attention, and she knew right away who entered without knocking.

"You won't believe what they're talking about in the castle!" was LaFontaine's excited remark, as her Valet approached to where she was sitting and stood in front of her.

"When would you learn how to knock?" she asked desperately. "Leave me alone, I want to take some nap." She ordered but the thrilled look of her Valet's face told her that they have not been listening to any word that she was saying. "Why are you smiling like that?" she asked and was suddenly curious of the thing that was causing her Valet to smile like a fool.

"...Because you, my friend, are the talk of the town today!"

She lifted her left eyebrows and gave LaFontaine her undivided attention.

"And what kind of nonsense are they talking about this time?" she asked, knowing that the servants could gossip from time to time, but it never bothered her, since it was just petty gossips, and not harmful.

"After your stunt this morning with Her Majesty and the matrons, the news spread like fire inside the castle and among servants," LaFontaine proclaimed proudly.

She then recalled the awkward scene when her Queen Mother pointed out her 'sword', as her Queen Mother called it, standing and drew some attention among the matrons, including Laura's aunt.

"I am not sorry that it happened; that should teach them a lesson not to intrude on the morning after my wedding night," she reasoned out.

She knew that it could happen since she always has erections in the morning when she wakes up. But having Laura beside her and accidentally brushing her arms and feeling Laura's breasts, had made it harder for her to remain soft. "I requested my Queen Mother nicely not to come to Laura's chamber to check if Laura had bled; since I knew that my wife had never slept with a man. But she still insisted on doing the virginity test."

"Well, you should be thankful for the blood of that innocent poor chicken that saved you and Laura from being under the scrutiny of the matrons and Her Majesty," LaFontaine related, and turned quiet.

She noticed the sudden silence and changed of mood from her Valet and remembered how disoriented and trembling Lafontaine was yesterday.

"Are you still thinking about that chicken?" was her curious remark. "I told you to forget it."

"How can I forget it when I saw it died in my own hands?!" LaFontaine blurted.

"Calm down," she returned in a low voice and observed that her Valet have not yet overcome the shock of slaughtering a chicken. "Let's not talk about it, alright?" she said and she saw them relaxed. "And I'm sorry that I have to ask you. I want to thank you also for all the things that you have done
for me yesterday. I really appreciate it. If it wasn't for you, I would have been grilled by my Queen Mother and the matrons for not consummating my marriage. They're going to think that I cannot let it stand, and my Queen Mother might bring in a mistress for me to practice to use it."

"Well I think you've already proven to them yesterday that you can definitely let it stand; when you made a group of women blushed and almost fainted at the sight of your morning glory," was Lafontaine's sarcastic remark. "By the way, how would you explain to them that you cannot touch your wife because she is afraid of your penis? And since we are on the topic of penis, how would you solve this little problem of yours? They'll going to ask for an heir soon, you know."

"I have just been married for one day, can't we not talk about this business of producing an heir?" was her irritated remark and stood from the chair. She walked towards the window and looked absentmindedly outside.

"I just want to tell you that you can always talk to me, if you need to vent or ask for some advice," LaFontaine said nicely. "You know, women need to be loved and cared all the time. They want to feel that they are the most attractive being in the eyes of their partners, and they always want to hear how their partner adore and cherish them."

Suddenly, her Valet's advice caught her attention. She turned around and faced LaFontaine. "And since when did you know what women want?" was her challenging question and raised her left eyebrows. Then she caught her Valet crimsoned and avoided her eyes. "Is there something that you're hiding from me?"

"Why would I hide something from you?" LaFontaine retorted. "I have made a solemn vow to her Majesty to protect you and be truthful to you, in everything that I do, and had promise not to get my personal life involved in my duty as your Valet."

"So, you mean to say that I cannot ask about your personal life, while you get to ask and intrude in my personal life?" She retaliated and wants to get to the bottom of this thing that her Valet was hiding from her.

"It's different when it comes to your personal life; you're the future King, your personal life is everybody's concern," LaFontaine reasoned out. "And whether you admit it or not, I would always be involved in your personal life. Who else would have thought about retrieving a chicken blood to save you from the embarrassment of having to tell the Queen and the Matrons that you haven't consummated your marriage yet?"

She silently conceded and accepted the fact that she needed the involvement of her Valet, not just for helping her with her daily needs as a Prince and the heir to the throne, but also as her friend; whom she could rely on and asked for advice or help when it comes to her relationship with Laura.

"Thank you, again, for suggesting that idea," she told her Valet, grateful for the help. "I was nervous that they won't believe that it was from Laura's, but once they saw it, they assumed right away that we've done it and that Laura was a virgin." She said, grateful. "I know that Laura would feel nervous about the wedding night, that's why I tried to tell my Queen Mother not to come to Laura's chamber."

"You're always welcome," Lafontaine replied with sincerity. "But what if I wasn't able to come up with such plan when you ask me to help you, would you still consummate the marriage?"

"I would rather face my Queen Mother and the matrons and tell them that I cannot do it, instead of hurting Laura and putting my wife in a horrible state, just so I could prove to them that I have proudly claimed my wife's virginity," she delivered with utmost sincerity. "I care for Laura and the
last thing I want to do is for her to have an anxiety attack while I claim her virginity."

"And I am glad that you thought about Princess Laura's fear, and respected it; and that you did not force her to have sex with you, even if everyone is harassing you to produce an heir right away."

"I have told Laura that I would only do it if I have her permission," she said, and this time her voice turned serious, as she recalled that time, that they were still in good terms. "I may be her husband and have full rights on her, but I still respect her feelings when it comes to having sex. I don't want my wife to think that I am a beast and only want her body. I want to make love with her; not claim her virginity just for the sake of producing an heir."

"I wish you could say that to her in person, so that she would understand how you care and respect her so much."

LaFontaine's suggestion suddenly struck her like a dagger. She knew that her Valet was aware of this sudden change of her attitude towards Laura, but they never knew how hard she was treating Laura. She had chosen to be cold, aloof and indifferent towards Laura because she did not know if she could follow her mother's orders, without her emotions getting in the way. If she would remain showing Laura her feelings, she might not be able to remain a strong and confident heir. She remembered her mother always telling her that her emotions were too strong and intense that she needed to restrain it. But in the process of becoming strong, she knew that she had to pay the consequences.

"Have you heard anything from her?" she asked nonchalantly. And she saw the smug look on her Valet's face.

"Why are you asking me that?"

"Nothing; forget that I asked," was her defensive reply, and regretted her action.

"Oh no, we don't avoid the topic when it involves the Princess," LaFontaine retorted. "Have you done something inappropriate again towards Princess Laura?"

The sound of her Valet's question was very protective and she knew that LaFontaine would definitely criticize her again. "She was suddenly not talking to me during lunch and dinner."

"And why is that, may I ask?"

She hated it when LaFontaine was being protective of the Princess and she always end up becoming the bad one after their conversation.

"I don't know… she preferred talking to her cousin than me, and she laughed while Johann teased her. But when it comes to me she turned serious and quiet at once," she related.

"Could it be that you've done something that she deemed inappropriate, that's why she was giving you the silent treatment?" LaFontaine suggested.

"I kind of told her not to touch me last night," was her courageous and honest remark.

"You told your naïve, kind, adorable, sweet and beautiful wife not to touch you on your wedding night?! That's just telling the angels and the goddess of love to go away!" was LaFontaine's exaggerated retort. "How can you reject her? Princess Laura is the epitome of adorableness and sweetness and goodness and gentleness?! She is literally the sunshine in this kingdom!"
She rolled her eyes and knew that this was about to happen. "Alright! I'm the bad one, and it's my fault and I'm the one to blame! Are you happy now?"

"No. You have to tell me why you are acting like this, if I am the one who is in a relationship with you, I would be mad with this constant changes of your feelings," was LaFontaine's serious remark. "You changed since she found out the truth," they accused. "Tell me, did she told you that she didn't like the way you are; which I doubt that she would find you unattractive in her eyes, because I just knew that she really likes you so much because she does not judge people and like them for what they are, and not who they are, and I simply wouldn't believe that she doesn't like you anymore, since she agreed to marry you even if you're being a pain in the ass to her."

After that long rant from her Valet, she become speechless and did not know if she would tell the truth, since it involved her family's integrity. Then she realized that honesty should come first.

"I was scared..." she started and hesitated for a moment. But when she saw LaFontaine listening intently she became confident and knew that her Valet would not judge. "I was scared that if I show my love to her and be honest to what I feel towards her, I would become soft and vulnerable, and my Queen Mother doesn't like that I am being too emotional. My Queen Mother is always telling me that showing my emotions is a sign of weakness, and in order for me to become a great ruler, I should learn to control it, since it might bring me to downfall. She said that I should learn to control my emotions to become stronger," she explained openly. "And in addition to Laura's fear of penis, I think she still cannot accept that I have a unique body."

After that honest remark, there was just silence around the chamber.

"Did it occur to you that in your process of becoming stronger, your deliberately hurting Princess Laura?" was LaFontaine's careful and honest remark.

She shook her head a bit and bowed her head and massaged her temple with her left index and middle fingers.

"Well, I don't have any choice, do I?" she replied and looked at her Valet again. "It's either you want a strong indifferent ruler or an emotional weak ruler!"

"But you do have a choice," LaFontaine responded softly. "You just need to try first and see what would happen. Because what I see now is, you're already closing your heart at the chance of finding true happiness. You're pretending that you don't care for her and treating her like she is your property, and not your wife. She has feelings too and I could see that she is hurting by the way you act towards her, like you're some arrogant Prince that doesn't care. The throne is already yours and would always be there for you; but Laura wouldn't be always there if you kept on hurting her."

"So, you're suggesting that I stop listening to what the Queen of Karnstein is telling me and just do whatever I feel?" was her sarcastic remark. She hated that everything that her Valet told her was true.

"What I mean is, listen to what your heart is telling you," LaFontaine replied firmly. "It doesn't hurt to tell and show your wife that you care for her, even if you wouldn't dare tell her that you love her."

"And who told you that I love her?" was her defensive reply.

"You don't need to, it shows. You're just afraid to admit it," LaFontaine retaliated.

Suddenly, she became speechless and did not know how to reply.

"And have she ever told you that she does not like what lies underneath those clothes?" LaFontaine added.
"I'm exhausted and I want to take a bath now," she commented in an authoritative tone. And her Valet knew that it was their cue to finish this conversation, as she saw LaFontaine silently nodded and went to the direction of the bathroom.

*****

Lying alone on her own bed, she woke up appeased even if they had not consummated their marriage yet. The most important thing was Laura was already married to her. She felt happy and overwhelmed despite the fact that they were not in good terms. She just wanted to enjoy this moment, knowing that Laura was officially hers and no one could steal Laura anymore from her. Her greatest fear was to lose Laura from Viktor. But right now, she had a reason to smile knowing that Laura had chosen her. Then she caught sight of her left hand, she brought it closer to her and gazed at the ring that Laura had chosen. It was the first time she looked at it closely. It was unique and beautiful; just like her and Laura. She loved the simplicity and elegance of the gold surface and platinum edge. She suddenly had the urge to read her wife's name on her wedding band and removed the ring from her finger.

Her heart gave a sudden lurch when she discovered what was engraved inside the ring:

_Yours and only yours, Laura_

She felt like crying after reading the text. Her wife definitely requested the goldsmith to add that special words and she knew that the Princess wants to reassure her of one thing…

That Laura belonged to her.

*****

After eating her midday meal she decided to take a break from writing some trading contracts and thought that she could use some fresh air and smells the roses in her garden.

Once she arrived at the garden, her eyes caught right away the sight of her Valet kneeling in one of the corner bushes. She walked to the direction of LaFontaine and saw her Valet in deep thoughts and their head bowed.

"What are you doing?" she asked and saw her Valet startled at the sight of her standing behind them.

"Please don't sneak like that again," LaFontaine replied. "I'm praying."

"What?" she asked and furrowed her brows. She moved a little closer and glanced down at where LaFontaine was staring, and she discovered a mound of dirt with a white rose on top of it. "Is that what I think it is?"

Her Valet rose and face her, "Yes, it's the chicken and don't complain that I buried her there. Because I think she deserved a proper burial right after that cruel night."

She remained silent and did not argued anymore, after seeing the distress look on her Valet's face. She was about to tell them that it was alright, but the familiar voice of her wife caught their attention and they both turned and focused their sight towards the Princess. Laura bowed to her at once.

"Your Highness," the Princess remark while curtsying. "I didn't mean to interrupt, but I just want to speak with La-" Laura was saying but was suddenly distracted at the sight of the Valet sniffing.

"Laf? Are you alright? What happened?" the Princess asked and approached LaFontaine at once and held their arm, and looked at them with furrowed brows.
Seeing that her Valet became more emotional after Laura's worried expression, she answered the question.

"LaFontaine just buried the chicken that they killed," she said a she observed how sympathetic her wife was to her Valet.

"But why didn't you just let the butcher kill it if you can't tolerate it?" was Laura's puzzled and yet concerned remark. "It's not your job at all."

"I need to do it because His Highness was desperate and in need of a blood to prove to Her Majesty and the matrons that you're a virgin," LaFontaine stated.

"Oh." Was the Princess surprised remark. "You did that for me? Oh Laf, I'm sorry you have to get through with the pain and trauma of killing it." Laura exclaimed and embraced the Valet at once.

She felt a pang of envy as she witnessed her wife consoling her Valet. She knew that she should not feel this way, but she missed Laura's embraces and touches and she cannot take it that Laura was touching and embracing another person in front of her. Laura did not even bothered to look at her and just embraced her Valet. So, she decided to leave and walked discreetly towards the opposite side.

She had not even reached the middle of the garden when she heard Laura's voice calling her. Her heart throbbed and a discreet smile formed in her lips.

"Your Highness!"

She turned around carefully, and pretended to be not excited that her wife had finally noticed her. And her eyes caught the pretty sight of her wife running towards her. How her heart melt at how adorable and lively Laura was.

"Yes Princess?" she asked in a low tone and stood on the spot and waited for the Princess to come closer to her. She focused her gazed at Laura and furrowed her brows as the Princess stood in front of her; respecting her personal space.

Still panting, "I... I just want to thank Your Highness about the other night. It's so considerate of you to..."

Sensing Laura's uncomfortableness, "It's nothing," she filled in at once. Then there was silence as their eyes both met, and she saw the yearning in Laura's eyes. She suddenly felt self-conscious and broke the awkward silence. "Umm..." she uttered and considered the words that she was going to say. "I was very stressed out and exhausted on our wedding night... and I know that I have said some bad things to you..." she expressed and was having a hard time telling Laura how sorry she was, as she remembered LaFontaine reprimanding her of telling the Princess not to touch her. "What I'm saying is... I didn't mean it. I..." she was still fumbling for words, but she lost her concentration when she saw Laura's adorable smile. She sighed and wished that she could just kiss her wife.

"It's alright Your Highness, I understand," Laura replied immediately.

She gave the Princess a satisfied smile, thankful that she does not need to elaborate more. Laura really knew her when she was nervous and apologizing. She admitted that she was not used to it, and Laura was aware of it. But she had to try and be more open.

TBC
Chapter Summary

After a week of performing her duties as the newly crowned Princess of Karnstein, Laura is back again doing one of the things she likes: going to the village and disguising as a commoner again.

Laura learned from the handmaidens that some of the girl servants admire the Prince.

Although Laura and the Prince are sleeping in their respective chambers after their wedding, she demanded Carl to do something for her every night.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

"Laura, are you alright?"

She was torn from her contemplation as she heard the soft and low voice of Greta. She shook her head lightly and looked at one of her favorite people in the village.

"Umm… I'm sorry, I…" she fumbled for words and was sure that she heard what Greta said a while ago, but lost her focus as she remembered again how Carl together with the King had been busy after their wedding entertaining some of the guests who had chosen to stay in the castle to discuss some potential new trading partnership. She cannot deny that she missed him so much.

She was thankful that she had been busy also running the castle's household for the first time, as the Queen entertained the wives of their guests. The distraction made her think less how she missed Carl. She tried to conceal her disorientation and picked up the nearest cheese in front of her. "I'll take this," and then handed it to Greta.

But instead of packing the cheese, Greta put it back and walked to the nearby stall and talked to the young girl who was standing behind it.

She was surprised when she felt Greta's hand, gently took her arm and led her out of the cheese stall.

"What are you doing?" she asked as she was led to the way out of the village market.

"We're going to my place," Greta replied nonchalantly.

"But you cannot leave your stall… and Perry is going to-"

"I told Ida to look after my stall and informed her too that, if a certain curly redhead comes and looks for us, she could just tell the woman to go shop further," Greta explained. "And don't worry, I also told Ida that we'll be back before sunset."

Seeing that she had no choice, as Greta had already dragged her along, she nodded and followed her.
After almost a quarter she found herself sitting at Greta's small dining area, that happened to be beside the bed where Carl once slept on; she sighed as she recalled that day when her Prince had an anxiety attack and everyone got worried.

"Here, drink that, it would help you to relax," Greta suggested and took the seat across the other side of the small table.

She smelled the hot liquid in the cup and caught the smell of mint. "Hmmm, it smelled good," she uttered and blew on the cup before carefully taking as small sip. They both just sat in comfortable silence, and Greta did not utter a single question.

The mint tea definitely made her feel better and she drunk the remaining liquid in her cup. "Do you have some more?" she asked and motioned for her empty cup.

"Yes, of course;"

She saw Greta rose from the chair and took the kettle that was covered with coal and poured the tea on her cup. "Thank you Greta."

"Your welcome," Greta answered and filled the half empty cup of hers, before returning the kettle on the fireplace and sat again on the chair.

"I just miss Ca- I mean… Marcus," she uttered out of the blue and she was not surprised to be talking about her personal life to this woman whom she just knew lately; Greta evoked trust, care and loyalty. She waited for Greta to react, but the dark haired woman just looked at her intently. "He… he and I seldom had a chance to be together."

"Why?" Greta asked carefully.

"We've become busier in our daily tasks, but I think he's avoiding me too," was her doubtful remark.

"Well, maybe he really is very busy," Greta presumed. "Guarding the Prince of Karnstein can be a very demanding job."

"Actually, we've had a fight… but that was a long time ago," she related. "I don't even know if I could call it a fight, because we never fight on anything… maybe sometimes… but not that serious," she expressed and fumbled for words, on how to describe the cause of this problem. "I'm sorry if I don't make any sense.

"Let's just say you and Marcus had a disagreement," Greta supplied the word.

"Yes. A disagreement," she nodded and looked around her absent mindedly as she tried to tell the story. "It happened after his name day… I tried fixing the problem but the situation got worst and we did not get a chance to talk about it, until I have to go back to my hometown and stay with my sick father for a month."

"Oh Laura, I'm sorry to hear that. How is your father doing now?" was Greta's concerned remark.

She took a deep breath and then focused her attention to Greta. "Thank God, he's doing fine, or else I wouldn't go back in Karnstein Kingdom and would take care of my father," she said and suddenly missed her old man.

"It's good that you're allowed to take a vacation that long from the castle," Greta commented. "But of course, taking care of your father is more important than work."
"I have asked the Queen and explained my situation to her, and she understood it," she explained. "But Marcus didn't understand it. I think he interpreted it as, me getting away from him and breaking our betrothment."

"Didn't you tell him that your sick father needed you before you went back to your hometown?"

"I did. But not in person because he... he's not available or rather he was busy during that time and I didn't wait for him to return, and I just wrote him a letter explaining everything," she relayed and suddenly felt sad at the thought of Carl not acknowledging her letters. "I even wrote him another two letters while I was at our cas- I mean home."

"Have you asked him if he receive all of it and how he felt about the content of your letters?" was Greta's curious remark.

"I did, and he plainly said that it doesn't matter," she returned and started to get frustrated as she recalled the lack of reaction from Carl about her letters. "I even wrote in the letter that I'm in love with him and that I never thought that it will happen, but it did! But he never said anything about it. And now I felt he is not acknowledging my feelings for him, and he's always working and didn't have time for me anymore. Because he told me that his duties to the kingdom come first before me, and that I shouldn't demand anything from him, not even his time or affection! Greta, I don't know what to do anymore!" she bursted out and for the first time all of those frustrations and anger resurfaced.

"Oh sweetie, I'm so sorry to hear that," Greta returned and rose from the chair.

And the next thing she knew, she was bawling as Greta embraced her tight and she just wrapped her arms around Greta's waist as she felt the dark haired woman's arms held her consolingly. She let out all of the hatred and frustrations that she was suppressing and just cried like a child.

When she felt relieve and had poured out everything inside her, she carefully released from the embrace and Greta took the chair that was across the table and placed beside her and sat near her.

"Here, take this," Greta handed a handkerchief to her. "Just let everything out and if you must cry again, then cry!"

She wiped the tears on her face as she whimpered and felt Greta's hand rubbing her back consolingly. "I hate him because he's taking me for granted and I felt like I'm just an ornament that he could keep and tell the people around us that he has a wife!" Suddenly she felt the hand that was rubbing her back disappeared and she saw Greta standing in front of her.

"Did you two get married already?!" was Greta's surprised remark, and waited eagerly for the answer.

"Y-yes," was her hesitant reply, and knew that she could not deny it anymore. "And I'm sorry that I didn't tell you before and didn't invited anyone to the wedding feast; it's just simple and just us and some family and closed-friends," she said sheepishly. "It happened too fast and I thought that everything would be alright again with me and him if we get married, but I was wrong. After our wedding, he resumed working and immersed himself in his duties."

"Oh Laura, I hope that you and Marcus could work this out," Greta commented and kneeled in front of her. "Have faith and patience. Sometimes men could be insensitive to our feelings and would seem indifferent, especially those men with noble bloods," Greta related and rose. "But if you could talk to him again, like a really heart to heart talk, then maybe he would realize his mistakes. Laura, being in a relationship is a very complicated responsibility, especially when you're already married..."
and always see each other; your bound to discover something that he does suddenly irritates you and vice versa."

"But that's the problem! We don't see each other that often anymore!" she exclaimed. "And I don't get a chance to have a heart to heart talk with him, because I feel like I have to compete with his work, with his mother, with his father, just to have his attention."

"Wait a minute, are you living with your in-laws?"

She suddenly paused and had to think twice before replying; she reminded herself to control her feelings before she accidentally reveal everything to Greta. "Yes. They work and live in the castle too," was her lame excuse and hoped that Greta would not focus on the topic of her, living together with her in-laws. "But they are totally nice and decent people and they treat me like their very own daughter."

"It's good to know that. Because sometimes, living together with the in-laws can take a toll on a marriage."

"I don't think it would happen," she defended.

"Well, if you think it won't then I respect your judgment," the dark haired woman commented. "But if you ever need to vent or talk to someone about your problem, I want you to know that I'm here for you. You can always come here and even stay with me and Emma if you feel like you need a break."

"Thank you so much Greta, you had helped me a lot today," she returned and smiled. "I had never told anyone about it and I just kept it inside me, because I don't want to bother the people around me."

"But that's where you're wrong. Everybody needs someone they could rely on, that's why we have family and friends!" was Greta's high pitched remark. "You mean, you haven't told Perry about your problem with Marcus?"

"No. Because Perry admires him and thinks that he's a great person," she replied. "And besides, she knew Marcus and had approved of him to be my husband since we came in the castle."

"Well, your secrets are safe with me and I vow not to tell anything bad about Marcus either, but if he hurt you badly I would make sure that he would get his own dose of medicine," Greta proclaimed.

"Thanks Greta, I felt safe and cared," she added and hugged the dark haired woman.

"What are friends for?" Greta remarked after releasing from the embrace.

She smiled wide after hearing the word 'friend'. "Yes, you are truly a good friend and I'm glad that I met you."

"No Laura. You're the real good friend. You're naturally kind and generous to others also, not just to me, so thank you," Greta said with genuine sincerity.

She gave her a satisfied smile and hug Greta again. "What do you mean I'm kind to others too?" she asked out of curiosity.

"Laura, this is a small village, almost everyone knew each other," Greta informed.

She just stared at her new friend and raised her eyebrows.
"Do you think nobody would notice that you're always giving extra coins to us vendors whenever you buy something from the market? And that old lady who lives near the church, she told us that you and your husband, she thought that Marcus is already your husband, you both helped her carry the sack of wheat or something that she bought, and afterwards you gave her some money," Greta babbled. "And not only that, I heard that you helped someone who works in the brothel when you saw her in trouble."

"I have extra coins and I don't need so much, so I thought I could share it to those who need it," was her honest reply. "And it's Marcus who helped the old lady carry her sack, not me."

"But you're the one who gave her a pouch of coins."

"It was actually from me and Marcus, because we feel sorry that she lost her son and that they didn't have anyone to help them, and her husband was sick, and they don't have any son to help them anymore," she said and tried her best not to sound boastful. Then she remembered Greta mentioning about the woman who works in the brothel and she became curious. "By the way, how did you know about the woman that works in the brothel?" she did not recall anymore the name, but she remembered that Perry warned her to avoid that person.

"Elsie is a very good friend of mine," Greta disclosed.

She suddenly wondered why her new found friend was acquainted with a not so liked and unwanted woman in the village. Her surprise did not go unnoticed to the dark haired woman in front of her, and she felt her shoulders tensed.

"You're probably shocked and wondering why I am friends with a prostitute?" the dark haired woman returned.

"Elsie and I have been friends since we're young," Greta related proudly and her expression turned serious. "She was desperate for money; both her mother and father became ill, and she needed to support and helped them because her brother left the village and did not want to have the responsibility of taking care of their sick parents. That's why she was forced to work at the brothel because she needed money at once, and does not know any job that time. And when her parents died, she tried looking for a decent job, but nobody would accept her because most of the village people knew that she used to work in the brothel."

After hearing the truth from Greta, she suddenly felt ashamed at how she perceive the image of a prostitute; now she realized that not all of them were immoral women, as what she heard from the others.

"That's just sad and cruel… I mean, it's cruel because she was force to do something she disliked and the fact that it is degrading and unpleasant…" she was telling, and suddenly had to think twice what she was saying. "I'm sorry if I sound like an ignorant; I don't have any intention to judge her or the people that work there. But I was told to avoid the brothel and the women who are working there, because they're saying that it is a house of sin. But after you explained to me what happened to your friend, I realized how narrow minded and ignorant people are."

"I know Laura. I was one of those people too; until one of my friends became a prostitute and then I realized how people are so judgmental and hypocrite." Greta said and looked out at the small window absent mindedly. "I remembered how hurt Elsie was the first time she did it. People thought
that it's pleasurable for the women who work in the brothel to sell their body to any man."

"I'm sorry to hear that," she felt suddenly affected by these revelations from Greta. "How is your friend now? Is she alright?"

"She is fine now; she said that it didn't bother her anymore that people cursed her job," Greta replied. "Elsie slowly accepted it and ignored everything the people say around her. She even became more confident because she is bragging that she could control most of the men in the village who had been her patron, because she knew what they want in bed."

She grinned sheepishly towards Greta.

"So, if you have any problem regarding… you know what I mean… just let me know, and we could ask someone who is expert on that field." Greta teased.

She just gave Greta a demure smile and did know how to response.

When she regained her composure, an idea flashed in her mind. "You know, now that you mentioned that there are women out there who want to change their work, but cannot find a decent job because of these image that they had from working in a brothel; I just thought, maybe we could help some of them, and we could create a livelihood for women who does not have a job, or have been rejected by some people," she babbled excitedly.

"That sounds like a great idea, Laura," Greta said in a hesitant tone. "...But what kind of jobs? And how could we start creating jobs when we don't have resources? Plus the fact that most of us here in the village were poor is one of the challenges that we'll going to face. Although there were farmers and noblemen who owned some lands and animals; I don't think they would be interested to join us; it would still be difficult to some of us to contribute financially for that plan of yours."

"You don't need to think about finances," she uttered excitedly. "My mother gave me some jewelry that she still inherited from my great grandmother and grandmother, I don't use all of them, I could sell or trade some of it, and then we could use it as a capital. I know that it sounded foolish, but since I'm married now and my father have already paid Marcus and his family the dowry, I think I could use some of the jewelry that remains in my possession," was her unbelievable remark.

"But Laura, that's yours. You should use it when you and Marcus start a family," was the dark haired woman reply. "You should be thinking of your future too and how you will provide for your children."

"Marcus and I haven't talked about it yet," she related, her tone suddenly changed and became somber. "We're definitely planning on having children... but I don't think it'll be now since we're both busy in our duties," was her honest reply.

"Wouldn't be Marcus furious if you suddenly use your jewelry on something?" Greta remarked. "I mean, that's part of your inheritance, so what's yours are his too."

"No, I assure you, he wouldn't get furious," was her confident response. "Marcus is generous too and wouldn't mind me using my money or jewelries to something. And besides, it'll be our little secret."

"So, you mean to say that you're not going to tell Marcus about this ambitious plan of yours?"

"Not yet. I want to do this on my own," she said, and was excited at the thought of this plan coming into fruition. "I want to prove to myself that I could be an independent woman and would not rely on my husband when I need something. Just like you." After that passionate explanation, she saw a
wide smile on her friend's face. "It's true! I admire you for being independent and raising Emma alone. I can't imagine how you manage to work and at the same time take care of your daughter. You inspire me with your strength and independence."

"Thank you for that surprising compliment," Greta commented and seemed to be overwhelmed. "I never thought that I would be an inspiration to you. I only have determination and the two cows that my late husband left me. I never thought we would survive, but with God's blessing, and with help from some of my friends and neighbors, I was able to learn how to make cheese and make it as a source of our livelihood."

"And if you can do it, so is the other women who are alone or are left by their husbands, and felt that they're life is hard because they never have a man beside them," was her passionate remark. "We need to teach them to be independent and have hope and determination like you."

"You know, you care so much to all the people that you meet," Greta related.

"I don't know, I just thought that I need to share my blessings and I feel awful that there are people who are struggling and suffering, while I live in a big castle, sleeps in a warm bed and eat all those good food," was her guilty comment.

"When you said that you live in a big castle, you sounded like you really live there, as a queen!"

She suddenly paused after hearing those comment from Greta. She grew worried and stared at the dark haired woman for a moment and blamed herself for not being careful. She really needed to pay attention to what she was saying. But when she saw the smile on Greta's face she calmed a bit.

"Relax, I'm just teasing you," the dark haired woman said. "I won't tell the Queen of Karnstein that one of their kitchen servants is claiming that the castle is her home."

She sighed with relief and smiled towards her new friend. "But that's true! I'm one of the lucky servants that live in the big castle and can eat the same food as the royal family; but only if there were left overs. The cook there is very strict and she sometimes doesn't want us to touch or taste the food that is served to their Majesties and Royal Highnesses. But when it comes to baking those desserts, I and Perry got to taste those delicious sweets first, before it is served to the royal family. Actually, I heard from the footmen that it's mainly the Prince and the Princess who eat the sweets! Sometimes the King… but the Queen seldom eats dessert," She babbled in a high pitch.

"Really?!" was the dark haired woman's fascinating reaction. "Speaking of the Prince and the Princess, how was the newly-weds?!" was the excited remark of Greta. "We were so happy and excited that they finally got married. But we're disappointed when they didn't get out of the castle, ride on a horse carriage and take a tour to the village to greet the people."

She was totally caught off guard and did not know what to say. It had been a tradition for the monarchies to parade around the village after a royal wedding, so that the people of the kingdom can greet the newly-wed. She knew that the people would asked for them to come to the village someday but she felt like she was going to lose one of the things that she liked doing in the Karnstein Kingdom once she revealed her real identity.

"Err, they were fine and the wedding was a success, but I didn't get to see the Prince and the Princess, because we're so busy preparing for the banquet," was her smart excuse, and felt relieved after coming up with that reason. "And with regards to the Prince and Princess not greeting the village people, I think it has something to do with the Prince's anxiety. The Princess is probably waiting for the Prince to come first to the village; maybe she doesn't want to deprive his Royal Highness' the chance of meeting first the village people."
She knew that her excuse was accurate and true, but felt a bit bad of having to use Carl's angst as the major reason.

"You are definitely right about that, and the village people understood very well, but of course, there would always be the longing from the people to meet our future King and Queen," "I guarantee that they would come to the village and meet all of you someday," was her confident remark. "…When they're ready."

"I do hope so. But we definitely had a wonderful time during the wedding, because the King and Queen had sent lots of food and ales to the village," Greta related with great enthusiasm. "Everyone was dancing, drinking and eating till the crack of dawn!"

"Really?" was her excited and curious remark. "Was it like the same when Ca- I mean Prince Carl had a name day?"

"No, this time there's plenty of food and ales and the feasting lasted for two days," the dark haired woman informed with so much delight in the eyes. "But there were not enough sweets; Emma was disappointed when she didn't find her favorite creampuff."

"Of poor Emma, they must have served everything in the banquet," she reasoned out, knowing that she and Perry were the only ones who could bake the creampuff and no one else. "Tell Emma that I'm going to make a lot of creampuffs for her, and I will take them with me the next time I come here."

"Oh, she would be happy to hear that, thank you Laura," Greta returned.

"I think we better head back to your stall now. Perry might be waiting already for me." She said and faced Greta and then gave her new friend a hug. "Thank you again for being such a good listener, and for telling me that you're my friend. I never had a lot of friends, I'm so glad that I met you."

"It's my pleasure, and I'm thankful also that you trusted me," Greta returned and smiled, before walking towards the door.

*****

After hosting another dinner to their guests, and spending the whole day in the market square, she was thankful for that warm bath that Sarah Jane prepared. She felt more relax and refreshed. Perry was asked by the Queen to make more sweets for the guests so, she now found herself at the company of her handmaiden friends instead.

Her attention was suddenly diverted to Natalie and Betty, as the two handmaidens that where combing her hair and moisturizing her legs and arms began giggling.

"Alright, what are you two giggling about?" was her suspicious remark, and suddenly checked her face on the mirror in front of her for any sign of unusualness.

"Nothing Princess," was Natalie's abrupt reply.

But when she saw Natalie's facial expression on the mirror, the handmaiden was totally blushing. She shifted her stare towards Betty and the tall handmaiden had the same color on her face, and seemed to be suppressing a giggle.

"Alright, what is it?" she asked, impatient. "I won't be able to sleep if you two won't tell me why you're both blushing and giggling like a fool."
"Sorry Princess, we're just curious how you managed to take the whole …," was Natalie's sheepish response.

Unsatisfied with Natalie's cryptic reply, "Betty, what in the name of dragons and cats is Natalie talking about?" was her impatient remark and looked at the tall handmaiden that was standing beside her. This time she locked her stare at Betty. She saw the tall handmaiden grinned at her.

"Nat's talking about the wedding night and the possibility of His Royal Hotness' having a large asset," Betty revealed.

She saw Betty's cheeks in a deeper red and she furrowed her brows.

She was unprepared and did not know how she would react upon learning the girls talked about her Prince's private part and wanted to know also how her wedding night went on. She chose to ignore the wedding night and thought of a way to divert this conversation away from that unpleasant night.

"Why are you suddenly interested in the Prince's…" she was saying but had to swallow hard as she imagined what they were talking about; although she had not seen it yet totally, she felt like Carl really possessed something, as she recalled the first time she touched his hard bulge. "…Sizable umm… asset."

"Because we've heard about what happened the morning after your wedding night," Natalie replied. She did not know if she would laugh or worry, when she remembered that scenario with her Prince and the matrons and the Queen. Her Aunt Jordana even teased her and told her that her husband seemed to possess a well-endowed tool.

"So, it did reach the servants…" was her calm comment. "And what else are happening down there?"

"Well aside from breaking some of the girl's heart, because His Royal Hotness was already taken; they also envy you," Betty elaborated in a dramatic way.

"They don't need to envy me; I'm certain that they could find some boys or men who are as handsome and as you pointed out, has a large asset as the Prince."

"That's true. But you don't know how most of the girl servants here adore and desire His Royal Hotness," Natalie commented.

She was suddenly surprised at that revelation from Natalie. Since she arrived in Karnstein Kingdom, she had never heard any gossiping like that from the servants and had thought that the servants in this castle were so discreet and serious at how they work.

"Alright, tell me, what do the girl servants think of the Prince?" was her challenging remark, sensing that her handmaiden friends seemed to be withholding some juicy information to avoid hurting her. "I won't get upset or jealous."

But before Natalie and Betty could utter a word, Sarah Jane's reappearance from the bathroom caught their attention.

"Nat, Betty, don't include the Princess in your gossiping," was Sarah Jane's firm and yet careful comment.

"It's alright Sarah Jane, I could use some gossiping, and I promise not to get upset," she assured them and sat comfortably on her chair and smiled, as if waiting for one of them to talk.
"Well, we learned that most of the girl's find His Royal Hotness not just handsome, but they also like how refined and courteous he is whenever they meet him in the castle," Natalie started seriously. "Although they knew that His Royal Hotness can be a bit temperamental sometimes; the quiet, mysterious, broody characteristics of Prince Carl makes him more attractive and interesting to most of these girl's eyes; because they think that he is very intelligent and a loner that needs some love and affection, and they wish to make the Prince smile and happy. They even call him the Brooding Prince. So, even though His Royal Hotness seemed to be snobbish and quiet, he still has these qualities that the girl servants find fascinating and interesting. And the fact that he is hot and handsome added to their admiration towards His Royal Hotness."

"The girl servants are even more swooned when they heard about the incident between the Prince and the matrons and her Majesty," Betty related amusingly. "They were amaze that despite the Prince lacking in height, he was not deprived in the other parts of his body…So, is it true? Does his Royal Hotness possess such a large asset?"

"Betty!" Sarah Jane reprimanded. "I'm just curious," Betty retaliated. "Because as what I heard…the Prince of Karnstein has quite a-"

And before the tall handmaiden can finish the sentence, "Betty, I am not going to discuss the Prince's private part and I think you girls should refrain from talking about it. Because I don't know what I would tell my husband if he ever finds out that I'm talking about his private part with you girls. And besides, I think I deserve to be the only one to know that."

The thought of talking about Carl's penis made her uncomfortable. She envied how the handmaidens could just naturally talk about it; she should really try to find a way on how to overcome this fear of penis. But right now, she was not in the mood and her wedding night was not an event that she wanted to recall.

Their pleasant chitchat was interrupted and they were all startled when they heard a knock.

They looked at the direction of the door. Perry usually just enters her chamber without knocking.

"Who is it?!" she asked.

"It's Prince Carl!"

She heard the deep raspy voice of her Prince and she suddenly felt her heart throbbed with anticipation. Aside from their wedding night, Carl had not been to her chamber again; even though they had agreed to still sleep in each other's chamber, she knew that he could come and sleep to her chamber whenever he wished to since the Queen informed them that her chamber was also to be the matrimonial chamber.

"Come in!" she replied, turned around from her seat and faced the direction of the door. As soon as the words were out of her mouth, she saw the door opened widely and her eyes focused on her Prince.

Her heart suddenly pounded as she saw him sauntered across the room wearing the red and black checkered tunic that she liked on him and this time he was clean cut and beardless, his crown on his head, his black cape was clasped around him and swinging delicately as he walked. Carl looked devastatingly handsome and he oozed with elegance and sensuality. Her handmaiden friends were right. Carl definitely suits the title of His Royal Hotness. She suddenly felt the room became hotter
and she fidgeted on her seat as she saw and felt Carl come closer to her.

This time he was not wearing that serious expression that she always sees in him, but the wicked look on his eyes sent her a shiver. Then she saw him arched his left eyebrow and caught him glanced at her breasts, through the thin silk camisole that she was wearing. She felt her breathing became ragged and she squeezed her legs tightly together and tried to ignore the tingle inside her underwear.

The handmaidens gathered immediately on her sides and bowed to the Prince as Carl approached them. She bowed her head and remained sitting as Carl stood in front of her, almost invading her personal space.

"Good evening My Princess," Carl uttered in a deep calm tone.

She was surprised.

Her ears were used to hear him call her 'Princess' or 'Princess Laura' lately. He never calls her 'My Princess'. She tried to calm her nerves as furiously as she can as this behavior of Carl was driving her insane.

"Good evening ladies. I was wondering if I could have a moment with my wife?" the Prince asked in a deep raspy calm voice and glanced at the handmaidens.

She quickly looked at the girls around her, and when she met their gaze she nodded at once and smiled at them before they bowed their heads to her, and then to Carl again before leaving the chamber.

After the door closed, she felt the tension around them became thicker and an awkward silence transpired.

Not knowing what to say, and the fact that she was still in this 'crazy position' she gave him a modest smile. Her heart skipped a beat when she saw him arched his left brows again and gave her that devilish smirk that she missed so much. She regained her confidence and composed herself and wondered what his up to? It had been so long since she saw him smirk like that, and she felt like the old Carl was coming back. But she did not let her hopes high. She does not want to destroy this mood and instead pretended to be casual.

"Good evening Your Highness," she plainly said and did not elaborate more.

She does not want to sound eager or question his presence.

"I… I was craving for my cupcake…" Carl uttered out of the blue.

Her eyes widened, her shoulders tensed and she opened her mouth slightly as she heard him said those sweet words.

"…I mean a cupcake. I was craving for some cupcakes and thought of asking Perry if she could bake some tomorrow?" was his calm and yet awkward remark.

Her shoulders slouched and released the breath that she was holding and closed her mouth again.

She had expected too much.

"Umm sure, I could tell Perry to bake for you," she replied with a trace of disappointment in her voice, and saw the confused looked in his eyes. "Is that all Your Highness?"
"Umm… yes. That would be all," he replied in a casual tone.

She unintentionally bit her lower lip and tried to fight these emotions that were brewing inside her. It seemed like her disappointment did not go unnoticed to Carl and she suddenly found him standing closer to her. She looked up and saw him gazing at her with those sincere dark eyes. Her heart pounded madly at the nearness of him when her nose caught his familiar scent.

"If there's anything I could do for you…” Carl asked his voice soft and deep.

This time she did not hesitate.

"Always kiss me goodnight."

She uttered in her sweetest voice and without a trace of doubt.

Instead of a reply, she saw Carl filled the gap between them and felt his right hand on her waist and he carefully leaned in to kiss her.

She closed her eyes as she felt Carl's lips gently claimed hers. She relished the sensation of Carl's soft wet delicious lips on her mouth and missed the way he kissed her: intense and possessive.

But before she could get carried away, she felt a cold air passed in front of her, and saw him gazing at her, his eyelids half closed, his mouth slightly opened… and then a smirk.

Carl was smiling at her.

She reminded herself and cannot believe what her eyes have been seeing and was dumbfounded. And before she could utter a comment…

"Good night."

She heard Carl whispered and his deep raspy voice made her shivered; and before she knew it, they were already a meter apart and she saw him smirked at her again before he carefully turned his back on her and walked to the direction of the door.

Her eyes remained focused to the door even after Carl exited and the guards shut it again.

She remained sitting on the chair, and her right hand reached for her lips and touched it lightly, she closed her eyes and cherished the moment she had with Carl.

That night, she went to bed with a smile on her face and happy thoughts of her Prince coming back to her.

*****

The following day, after eating her midday meal, she decided to go to the courtyard immediately to wait for the Queen. Once every month, she and the Queen visit the nuns in the monastery; one of the duties of the Queen; which to be passed unto her.

The horse drawn carriage that would take them to the monastery was already waiting in front of the main door of the castle, but she chose to stay outside and wait for her mother-in-law.

Suddenly her attention caught the familiar sight of the back of Carl from a distance, as her eyes focused at the Prince standing under the willow tree, talking to Alfred. She smiled as she recalled
how Carl kissed her goodnight last night, and interpreted it as a sign that the Prince was slowly opening himself again to her.

But her smile suddenly faded when she saw a woman, with a familiar face approached to the direction where her Prince was. She furrowed her brows and crossed her arms on her chest, as she saw the woman bowed to Carl and then seconds later Alfred left them alone. A pang of jealousy suddenly possessed her.

"What does she want?" she grumbled and watched the Prince and that woman like a hawk. And before she could utter another complain, the voice of the Queen tore her from this strong emotion that was slowly conquering her thoughts and body.

"Princess Laura, are you alright?"

She was caught off guard and tongue-tied as she felt the presence of the Queen beside her, before she could turn around to answer the Queen's question; her mother-in-law’s toneless voice interrupted her and she saw the Queen staring at the direction where Carl and the woman were.

"That is Elleanor, one of the Royal Mistresses," the Queen said matter-of-factly. "It's perfectly natural that the King and the Prince has a mistress. Because men have these needs that a mistress can satiate. We on the other hand are here to provide them heirs and support them in ruling the kingdom."

After hearing the Queen’s words, she breathed deeply and uncrossed her arms and hid it at her sides as her fists clenched. She remembered that woman in an intimate moment with Carl before and although she did not actually saw what they were doing before, she felt that this woman could not be trusted. And the Queen's remark reconfirmed her hunches.

Right now, she felt this rage growing inside her and all she could think about was to confront Carl.

Just last night Carl kissed her and she was glad that he was slowly showing his true self again to her.

Was it all a lie?

It had not even been a month since they got married, and Carl was already unfaithful. She had been patient and dutiful; so as to make this marriage and union between her kingdom and Karnstein's successful, but right now, she felt that she cannot take it anymore. After that kiss last night and the sight of him together with that woman; she definitely cannot tolerate it anymore.

When she followed the Queen get inside the carriage, her mind was already settled:

She would no longer let Carl hurt her.

TBC
your generous kudos. I know that the previous chapters have been like a roller coaster ride of emotions and understand your frustrations. I appreciate all your honest feedbacks. But as what I've mentioned before, I need the characters to go through a difficult path. I hope you'll bear with me. Thanks again for letting me know that some of you appreciate this fic.
Realization

Chapter Summary

A week after their wedding, Carmilla's attitude towards her relationship with Laura changes for the better after having that conversation with LaFontaine. But Carmilla was not fully showing her feelings to Laura, still afraid that it would affect her ability of being strong and powerful king in the future.

A hunting trip with the King helped her realize many things; and bravely faced and read the content of Laura's letters.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Carmilla

She was relieved that most of their guests have already travelled back to their separate kingdoms and they were successful establishing a trading partnership to all of them. Only one kingdom had been hesitant to be their partner: the Strakas. Nonetheless, the King was satisfied of the outcome and how she helped in negotiating.

And now, she was trying to enjoy this little time that she had while waiting for her Valet to help her dress into her hunting attire before going to the forest with the King.

She admitted to herself that after that conversation with LaFontaine, her outlook in her relationship became more positive. She told herself that she will try to be more open and understanding but not fully, since she did not know if she could handle her emotions towards Laura without jeopardizing her ability and strength as the heir. But it was not the only reason why she was hesitant to show her love to Laura.

At the back of her head, there was still this underlying cause of her doubt, reminding her that the Princess agreed to marry her because of the promise that Laura made to the Karnstein and Hollis Kingdoms. She knew that after Laura found out the truth about her, things would never go back as they were. And since they were going to spend their life together, the Princess could pretend to like her for the sake of their marriage and producing an heir. She knew that her wife would never love her the way that she loves Laura. But this new positive outlook that she had towards her relationship made her hopeful that maybe someday, Laura could learn to love her.

'Always kiss me goodnight.'

She replayed again in her thoughts as she sat on her bed and reminisced what happened last night. Laura's voice was like music to her ear that always hypnotizes her body. After hearing those words from her wife, she had no choice but to obey and do Laura's wish.

She was glad that she visited Laura last night and did not regret the outcome. She was supposed to only say goodnight and show her wife that she could be approachable; she wanted to slowly regain Laura's trust and wanted her wife to feel comfortable again in her presence. But the events of what happened last night turned into more favorable.
Her reminiscing was abruptly interrupted when she heard the door opened. She rose from the bed at once and walked towards the full length mirror that was beside her study table. She began to unclasp her black cape and removed her crown. Few seconds later, LaFontaine was already on her side helping her change.

"I thought we've talked about telling or showing again the Princess that you care for her," LaFontaine said out of the blue and took the cape.

She furrowed her eyebrows upon hearing it and gave her Valet a side glance.

"We did; and that's why I went to her chamber last night to say goodnight, and I even kissed her," she retaliated and wondered what that comment meant.

"Then why were you talking to Ell a while ago?" was LaFontaine's suspicious comment.

"Because she came to me and congratulated me for finally tying the knot," she returned right away.

"What else did Ell tell you?"

"That my wife is pretty and adorable and look very naïve…" she uttered, and her voice became weaker on the last word, as she recalled how Ell emphasized the words 'very naïve'.

"And…"

She avoided LaFontaine's stare and turned her back on her Valet, before telling: "And she told me that if I ever need to release some stress…She's there to help me."

This time she did not escape LaFontaine's glare, as her Valet faced her.

"And what did you tell her?"

"I thanked her for the lovely offer, and I told her that it's not necessary because I'm already married," she proclaimed confidently.

"You declined her offer?" LaFontaine remarked with a hint of doubt in their voice and raised their eyebrows.

She cannot blame her Valet for doubting her, since LaFontaine witnessed how drawn she was at Ell's charm.

"Of course I would decline it…" she was saying but still caught the suspicious and unconvinced expression of her Valet. "Why does everyone thinks I need a mistress?!" she snapped, remembering how her mother forced her to take a mistress so that she would not be distracted of her feelings for Laura. "And for your information, I was talking with Alfred before Ell came to me, so there was someone with me aside from her; only, Alfred needs to leave at once to prepare the horses."

"Alright, I believe you," LaFontaine acknowledge and grinned. "And I'm also glad to hear that you kissed the Princess last night. So, how did she react to your sudden thoughtfulness? Did you bring her some roses? Did she reciprocate your kiss? Did you tell her that you miss her? And why did you suddenly kiss her? I thought you're going slowly but surely?"

She felt that her head was going to explode after those excited questions from her Valet.

"No, I didn't bring any flowers," she answered the easiest question that she recalled. "And she's the one who asked me to kiss her; she told me to always kiss her goodnight and she reciprocated my
“I am satisfied.”

For now,” was the Valet’s reply.

She just rolled her eyes after that comment and put on the hunting tunic that LaFontaine offered to her. After buttoning it, LaFontaine handed her the black leather hunting gloves.

Tonight, Her Majesty and Princess Laura would eat their dinner at the monastery with the nuns, and His Majesty had a meeting with the elders from the village and would dine with them at the Upper Hall,” LaFontaine informed. “Do you like to eat your dinner in the family dining hall or should I ask the maid to bring it here?”

The thought of eating without Laura did not interest her.

“Just ask the maid to bring it here, thank you,” she replied and was about to leave when she remembered Laura’s request of goodnight kiss. “Would you know what time they’re arriving?”

“Unfortunately, I don’t know. But they usually arrive before midnight,” LaFontaine responded.

Alright, thanks,” she returned and walked to the direction of the door followed by her Valet. She had thought of dropping by again at Laura’s chamber to grant her wife’s request, but tonight, she would need to pass since she knew that she would be exhausted after hunting with her father. She would just bring Laura some flowers tomorrow to make up for not kissing the Princess tonight.

*****

“Carl?”

She was halted from her train of thoughts as she heard the voice of her father, and saw the King staring at her with furrowed brows. She barely heard what her father was saying since Laura had been occupying her thoughts.

“I apologized, my King Father, I did not catch what you’ve said,” she remarked, ashamed for not paying attention to what her father was telling her. Then she saw the King halted the horse and she stopped too.

“I think we need to take a break. We’ve been riding for hours now,” the King suggested and dismounted from the horse, walked to the nearest tree and tied the stallion before sitting on the grass under the shade of an oak tree.

She followed her father and dismounted from her stallion. After securing her horse, she smiled when her eyes caught the sight of the red ripe plums that were abundantly hanging on the trees beside them. They had not brought any food with them but just a little jug of water, and thought that her father might be hungry. She walked around the tree and reached for the lowest and plucked two shiny red plums before sitting beside her father.

“My King Father, I thought you might want to eat something while we rest,” she said and offered the red smooth fruit to her father.

“Oh, bless you my child!” the King exclaimed after receiving the plum and took a bite at once. “Thank you Carl, that’s delicious.”

“You’re welcome my King Father,” she returned and took a bite of her plum too, and tasted the
sweet soft juicy fruit while they both silently ate under the shade of an oak tree.

"So, how is married life? Are you and Laura getting along just fine?" the King commented in between munching the red fruit.

She was caught off guard and did not know how to answer that question. "Laura and I are both fulfilling our duties and doing well." She cautiously replied and took a big bite of the fruit and chewed it slowly, while she awkwardly waited for her father's reaction.

The King threw the last bit of his plum to one of the bushes and rested his back on the trunk of the tree and relaxed.

She did the same thing. Then she rested her back on the tree's trunk and enjoyed the fresh breeze of the forest and closed her eyes to relax.

"You know, after I and your Queen Mother tied the knot we had a problem understanding each other," the King related in a casual tone. "Unlike you and Laura, we had a short time getting to know each other and we were married right away when your Queen Mother arrived in the castle."

She was about to focus her sight on the direction of the King, but when she caught a glimpse of her father staring at nothing in particular, she just silently listened and relaxed back.

"As the heir to the throne, I felt like I have this heavy burden on my shoulders in addition to being newly married and producing an heir, and pleasing your grandfather and grandmother, and the people around me."

The Kings' remark suddenly caught her full attention and she was surprised to discover how similar her father felt to what she was going through right now. She wanted to tell him that she felt exactly the same way. But shoved the idea and listened further to what the King would say.

"I focused my time and myself to being a great heir and I did not want to disappoint anyone and worked hard to prepare myself to become a great ruler," the King was telling and took a deep breath. "But as I engaged more to my duties as a future king, I became unhappy and had wished that I am just an ordinary peasant boy who does not have a big responsibility."

She uncomfortably moved to where she was sitting as the last comment from her father had a surprising effect on her.

"In order for you to be strong, it should start inside you: inner strength. You need to feel secured," the King started in a casual tone. "You should love and have faith in yourself. A king is allowed to make mistakes and you'll commit a lot of it as you start your journey. You may fail in some things, but never regret that you did it; because it's better to try and do it, and learn from that mistake."

She sat still and felt relieve to hear these things from the King. The Queen never gave her any room for mistakes. Her mother always demanded perfection from her.

"Being a king is a strenuous and demanding job. There would be difficult decisions to be made and not everything is pleasant. When you're in your deepest most difficult state, you will need someone to keep you secure and sensible. Someone who would support you and make you whole again," the King continued, as if telling a story. "When something goes wrong, no matter how big the problem is, if you knew that at the end of the day there is a loving arm that would hold you and tell you that she loves you; then everything would be alright."

She felt a lump in her throat as she fought the emotions that were threatening to burst inside her. Sometimes it baffled her how her father knew all these things that were bothering her. However, she
remained calmed and controlled her emotions.

"I obeyed the people around me. And gave myself to serve the kingdom, but I reserved a portion of myself too for your Queen Mother."

This time she was curious what her father was referring to and looked at the King’s direction. She saw her father turned and stared at her too.

"Carl, you need to open your heart to your wife. Don't be afraid to tell her how you really feel; it won't make you less of a prince or king," the King revealed. "In a relationship you need love, faith, respect and communication. But first, you have to prove to her that you are capable of being loved. You have to show her that you love her. Be faithful to her. And the rest would fall into places and become better."

After hearing that heartfelt advice from her father, she cannot help but to give her father a hug, and she was not disappointed when the King enveloped those big arms around her and held her consolingly in silence.

"You might be wondering, what’s the connection of being a great king and loving your wife," the King added after releasing from the embrace. "Behind every great king, there's a great queen behind; don't forget that."

She received a wink from the King after hearing those words, they both chuckled and rose to their feet and walked towards their horses.

****

It was already dark when they arrived in the castle. Instead of dining alone in her chamber, she asked her father if she could join him meeting the elders from the village. She thought that her father could use some help and assistance in case there were some difficult problems to be decided, and in this way she could learn how to handle them in the future.

After hunting with her father, meeting the elders from the village and hosting a dinner, she was totally exhausted as soon as she stepped in her chamber. She wanted to go straight to her bed and just sleep and was growing irritated that her Valet was not in her chamber yet.

But when she saw her desk, the thought of Laura's unopened letters inside the drawer made her alert. She walked right away to her study table, opened the drawer of her desk and retrieved the three unopened letters inside it. She put it on her desk and stared at the letters that she was so afraid to read. She drew a deep breath before sitting on the chair and then removed the leather gloves that she was wearing and placed it on the table.

She did not know which one was the first, second or the last letter, so she just picked the nearest to her and removed the seal, she guided the letter near the candle so as to see and read it properly. She held the paper with her shaking hands as she read on and felt her heart pounded fiercely since she did not know what to expect from Laura’s letters.

My Dearest Carl,

I hope everything is well and alright there. I want to let you know that I'm coming home on Friday.
I don't know if you have received my two other letters. But before I return there I want you to know that I miss you. I miss you so much.

My father has been better since I arrived. Perhaps seeing me made him happy and stronger. I'm sad to leave my Papa; I wish I could stay by his side always. But I felt that I don't belong here anymore. Because every day and every night that I spent here in our castle, makes me missed you more. There's not a single day that I haven't thought of you.

I want you Carl and I can't wait to be married to you. I can't wait to start my life together with you; and most of all I can't wait to wake up every morning and feel you beside me, and see your face when I open my eyes.

All I need is you, My Prince. And I am looking forward spending my days and evenings in your arms.

Nothing has change. Except for one thing... I am in love with you.

Yours and only yours,

Laura

P.S. When I get back there, I want us to get married as soon as possible.

And there it was: Laura's declaration of love to her. She almost choked while reading it and cannot believe what her eyes just read. She read again the last part of the letter to check if Laura had really written 'I'm in love with you'. She smiled after confirming it and noticed the closing that Laura wrote: 'Yours and only yours'; the note that was engraved in her wedding band.

She placed the letter to her right side while she picked the next one and opened the seal excitedly. She took a deep breath before reading the next letter.

My Dearest Carl,

First, I want to apologize for not waiting for you to become well. I heard that you are sick and cannot see me yet. I tried asking LaFontaine where you are, so that I could visit you, but they don't know where you are. Unfortunately I received a letter from my Kingdom asking me to come home at once. My father is becoming sicker every day and I am afraid that I might not be able to see him alive if I stay another day in Karnstein. That's why I decided with a heavy heart to travel to my kingdom at once.

Secondly, I want to apologize for accidentally entering in your chamber and unintentionally finding you in your most vulnerable and private state. Sometimes my curiosity leads me to trouble and I don't have any intention of invading your privacy and uncovering your secret. I admit; I was shocked at the beginning. But I told myself, you're still the same person that I have grown to like and nothing has change, except that you have shaved your beard and you look even more handsome. Although I'm familiar and comfortable being with the Carl with a beard, still, I like you and accept how you look now... What I mean is, I accept and like everything in you.

Please write to me at once after reading this letter, because I would not be appeased not knowing whether you're still mad at me or that you have already forgiven me. And please thank Her Majesty again for handing this letter to you.
I hope you can forgive me for my misbehavior and curiosity.

I'm sad to go, knowing that you're unwell. But my sick father needs me. How I wish I could take care of you too.

I will miss you.

Still Yours,

Laura

She sighed after reading the letter and a tear drop fell from her left eye. Laura definitely did not change and accepted her after discovering her true identity. Right now she did not know if she was angry at her mother for not giving the letters to her or she was angry at herself for obeying her mother and not bravely opened and read Laura's letters right away after she received it.

She carefully laid the second letter on top of the first that she read and picked the last one. She gently tore the seal and opened the last letter and read it slowly.

My Dearest Carl,

How are you? I hope you are fine and doing well. I haven't received a reply from you yet, I hope you had already forgiven me. Each day that passed without knowing if you have forgiven me or not, makes me more miserable and guilty for being too curious.

My father is still a little ill but on the road to recovery; he sends his love to you, by the way… I need to take care of him in few more weeks, and hopefully I could travel back there. Sometimes I think of staying longer here, because I have been homesick. But right now, all I could think about is when I can go back there; when can I see you again; when can I touch you and kiss you again.

I missed my big wild cat…

Today I baked and made your favorite creampuffs, and I suddenly cried after eating one. I realized how much I miss you. I missed the time when we're in the tearoom and I was feeding you with creampuffs while you're kissing me. How I wish I could still do that… How I wish you could still kiss me like that.

Carl, you might not believe me but I think I'm beginning to fall in love with you. I thought it will not happen. But it did! Since I arrived here, all I think about is you; what you're doing; if you're well; what kind of dessert are you eating now, since I and Perry are not there to make your favorite creampuff; if you went to the village (I hope not, because I'll worry that something like before might happen and I'm not there to take care of you); or you're staying in the castle, reading books (as usual) and doing your duties; or you're just plainly being broody again. I'm sorry I have to mention that last part; because I'm wondering if you missed me too and thinking of me.

And I wonder how you look like now? I know it's silly of me to ask since it had just been three weeks since the last time I saw you. But I'm just curious if you remained clean shaven or grew your beard again since I'm not there. But I want you to know that it doesn't matter to me if you choose to be clean shaven or grow a beard, I'd still like you and want you… That's right. You read that right. I want you. Not just for the sake of fulfilling my obligation as a daughter and a Princess and uniting my kingdom and yours. I want you because I found what I'm looking for in you. I know it sounded
crazy but you're the one I wish to spend my life with. You are everything that I could ever want in a lover and partner and I am so glad I have met and found you.

I think I have to end this letter now. I'm beginning to sound like a silly girl who is madly in love to a handsome prince in her dreams. But if you would ask me, I am really beginning to fall in love with you.

I hope you will keep in touch soon. I terribly missed you and I'm worried that you're still upset with me. I hope by now you've already forgiven me. I promise not to go to your chamber without your consent.

Oh, and kindly send my regards to Her Majesty and His Majesty. I hope they're fine and kindly relate to them that my father is doing better, and I'm looking forward travelling back to Karnstein.

Always yours,
Laura

Wow. She exclaimed in her thoughts.

She was shocked.

She sat there staring at those letters like it were the most valuable things on earth.

She never thought that she could find it:

…Love.

After sitting on the chair for a moment and waiting for the truth to sink in; she finally recovered her sanity when her eyes caught the sight of the ring on her left hand. She quickly rose and ran towards the door.

She did not know what time it was but she cannot wait any longer… She wants to hold and kiss Laura at once and tell her wife that she was sorry and she loves her too.

As she exited the wing from her chamber and was about to turn to the wing that led to the Princess' chamber, her eyes caught the sight of her Valet approaching towards her.

"Where are you going?" was LaFontaine's confused remark.

"To my wife," she answered at once and did not slow down and felt LaFontaine following behind her.

"She's not there."

She abruptly stopped and faced her Valet.

"What do you mean she's not there?" she demanded, furrowing her brows. "I'm not in the mood for some foolishness right now," she warned and glared at LaFontaine. She saw her Valet paled, swallowed hard and took a deep breath before answering her question.

"Didn't Her Majesty inform you that the Princess' left for Hollis' Kingdom before sundown?"

She heard her Valet asked as she glared at them. She was furious and frustrated now at the thought
of Laura not being in the castle.

"No! Nobody told me that my wife had left the castle!" she exclaimed as her anger slowly took over. "And why did my wife suddenly decided to travel to her kingdom without telling me?! Isn't she supposed to be in the monastery with my mother?!”

"I heard from Perry that the Princess requested Her Majesty if they could go home early because Princess Laura suddenly felt unwell," LaFontaine carefully related. "And Perry told me that when Her Majesty and the Princess arrived in the castle, Princess Laura received a letter from her Uncle Spencer stating that the King of Hollis' is seriously ill again. Perry was surprised when Princess Laura decided to leave immediately and asked the Queen for permission to leave at once."

"But why didn't she wait for me?! I am her husband and I'm the one she should ask first!" she declared losing her temper. "She doesn't have the right to just leave the castle without my permission!" then she recalled how late it was and the thought of Laura travelling ten hours to Hollis Kingdom in the middle of the night made her paranoid and more furious. "And why can't she wait for the sun to set before travelling?! What if there are savages out there waiting to abduct her?!"

"Err…It seems like, the Princess saw you talking with Ell before leaving for the monastery," LaFontaine commented in a low tone. "Perry told me that maybe that's one of the reasons they left at once."

"But that's ridiculous! I never have any intention of talking to Ell, she's the one who came to me, and I have never done anything wrong!" she defended.

"And I also heard from Perry that the Princess was very angry after Her Majesty told the Princess that it's perfectly normal for the King and the Prince to have a mistress," LaFontaine explained cautiously. "Apparently, Princess Laura misinterpreted it and thought that you have taken a mistress and presumed that it was Ell."

"But I never said I want a mistress! Why does everybody is assuming that I want a mistress?!" she bursted out and was tired of accusing her of wanting a mistress.

Suddenly, a wicked thought passed in her mind. And she realized that her mother might have done it on purpose, so that her wife would think that Ell was indeed her mistress, since her mother strongly suggested for her to take a mistress in order for her not to be distracted of her feelings for Laura.

She turned around and walked the opposite way.

*****

After learning from the servants where the Queen was, she now found herself striding towards the tearoom, as her eyes saw the door. With her both hands balled tightly in fists, clenching her jaw, she stormed in the tearoom without giving her respect to the Queen and she did not hesitated to bow to her father either, when she saw the King sitting beside her mother.

"How could you do this to me?!” she demanded and faced the Queen.

Sensing her rage, she saw the King stand up, put the cup that he was holding down the table and looked at the servant that was serving them.

"Leave us!" the King ordered.

And right after the servant was gone, the King stood in the middle of her and her mother.
"Carl, what's the meaning of this? Don't talk to your Queen Mother like that!" was the King's firm order.

But she did not heed her father's warning and walked closer to her mother. "You know that I and Laura are not in good terms, why did you feed her with those lies?!

"Carl! Show some respect to your Queen Mother!" the King commanded in a deep firm voice.

Then she looked at her King Father's direction and said, "How can I respect her when she is not respecting anybody here?!

"Stop saying this nonsense to Your Queen Mother!" The King reprimanded. "And why are you furious?! Why don't you talk to your wife first before attacking your Queen Mother!"

Instead of looking to her father, she focused her stare at her mother who was still sitting quietly. "Well, apparently, my Queen Mother had given my wife permission to leave the castle and to go home to Hollis. And now, I am left again here wondering how I could tell my beloved wife how sorry I am to hurt her, because my manipulative perfectionist Queen Mother have been dictating me to control my feelings in order for the kingdom to have a strong perfect heir to the throne," she uttered, her voice tinged with bitterness and thick with sarcasm.

"Carl! Don't call your Queen Mother like that! She is not manipulative; she is just thinking of what's best for the kingdom!" the King defended.

This time she felt this tear threatening to burst and her eyes began to shimmer with unshed tears. But she still controlled it and glared at her King Father.

"What about what's best for me?!" she demanded fiercely. "Since I came here, I have obeyed everything that you asked me to do. I have dutifully fulfilled every single responsibility that were imposed to me; I have agreed to marry someone just to make sure that I could provide the kingdom an heir; and I have listened to everything that my Queen Mother is telling me without realizing that I am slowly driving away my wife. I thought everything that my Queen Mother is telling is the truth. Until today…"

"What about today?" the Queen inquired suddenly. She kept quiet and waited for her King Father to explain, as they all exchange glances. And when she did not utter a word, the Queen looked at the King.

"My Queen, I told your son, to become a strong king, he needed to open his heart to his wife," the King revealed. "I told Carl that his wife is the only one who could keep his heart and mind stronger. Therefore he needs to show Laura that he loves and cares for her."

"Totally the opposite of what you've told me, my Queen Mother," she quipped in a sharp tone. "And you even suggested that I take in my own mistress; which I deemed inappropriate."

And this time both her parent's attention were focused on her. She took this chance to criticize her parent's odd arrangement when it comes to her father's mistress.

"I don't know what's the purpose of these mistresses are, when I do have a wife," she began and saw the King and Queen tense reactions. "Tell me my Queen Mother, how can you accept that my King Father had another woman to pleasure him in bed?"

"Carl! That's enough!" the King demanded. "Do not provoke your Queen Mother like that!"
"Philipp..." the Queen uttered and held the King's hand, and sat up straight. "This agreement between me and your King Father has nothing to do with your problem.

This time she gave her Queen Mother her undivided attention as she waited impatiently at her mother's explanation. She cannot help but to clench her jaw and felt the veins on her neck throbbing.

"I wanted you to become the perfect heir because I don't want the people of this kingdom to find any reason for you not to be the king," the Queen related in a calm but firm voice, chin up. "We all know that there are people who knew your secret and we cannot guarantee if all of them will remain loyal to us. Carl, I'm doing this because I want to show the people that they can have a strong king that they can rely on. I am afraid that if they find out that you're not entirely a man they might question your ability of ruling the kingdom."

"But I am fulfilling all the duties and responsibilities of an heir to the throne!" she defended.

"I know. And I am so proud of you," the Queen agreed firmly. "...That's why I grew worried when Laura came into your life and I saw you slowly falling for her; and I thought: I couldn't let her just dictate you what to do. Because I don't know if she is capable of taking care of our kingdom."

"But she is!" she replied firmly and never doubted her wife's capability of helping others. "Laura is the kindest, most generous and helpful person that I ever met. She has a pure heart and she always think of others first before herself. She is the kind of person that you can always rely on whatever happens. I don't see any reason why Laura's love is a threat to me of becoming a great king." She uttered passionately and remembered how Laura used to help the servants and the village people. "And I don't need to tell my wife what to do because she is naturally born to become a queen!"

After that passionate defense she caught the sight of her parent's stunned expression.

She tried to gather her cool and waited for any of them to react.

"I guess I owe you and Laura an apology." The Queen stated.

Suddenly her eyes widened and she caught also the surprised look on the King's face. She immediately focused her eyes on the Queen and held her breath, as her heart pounded in anticipation of what the Queen was going to say next.

"I apologized for being hard and strict on you and for dictating you what to do in your life," the Queen relayed in a soft tone.

She suddenly calmed as she heard her mother's sincere tone and saw her mother's soft expression and gaze. She held her mother's gaze and listened intently to what her mother was about to say.

"When I first saw you after all those years, I realized for the first time in my life that I have someone I could call my own," the Queen related in a gentle tone.

It was her first time to hear her mother talked lovingly that way and she was surprised to hear her mother opened up. She and her father remained silent and focused their attention to her mother.

"I cried that night after you arrive in the castle and was happy to know that I finally have you back. When I saw how beautiful you've grown up, I was proud for the first time that I and your father created you. I've regretted since that day that I let you grew up with another woman, and feel guilty of letting you live with your wet nurse. That's why I swore to myself that I would devote all my time and love to you," the Queen continued relating in a coarse tone. "As you grew up and became the Prince, I became satisfied at your outcome and I'm very proud that I've accomplished my goal. I love you Carl and I invests all my time and attention so that you can be the Prince that I want. When you
were young, I was happy whenever you sought my attention and affection. I love taking care of you. I felt wanted and loved because you depended on me in everything that you do. And when Laura arrived in the castle and you became interested in her, I felt like I was abandoned when you started to spend more time with her and I saw how you adore her. I guess I just can’t accept the fact that you’re already a grown man and that there’s already someone who will take care of you.”

The silence in the room cuts like a dagger after that heartfelt confession from her mother. She never had a single idea of how her mother really felt towards her. They were separated for twelve years, but in spite of everything, the mother-child bonding that they established for one another was strong since she came in the castle. She admitted that she felt closer to her mother than her father since the Queen had always been there for her while she grew up. Her Queen Mother had showered her the most with everything. And now that she was already an adult, it seemed like her Queen Mother was not yet ready to let her go. She felt calm and enlightened after the Queen’s revelation.

She walked towards where her mother was sitting and kneeled before the Queen and held her Queen Mother’s hand. The Queen’s soft expression remained and she gazed at her mother, before saying:

"My Queen Mother, I love you and I will always will," she confessed sincerely. "No one can take your place in my heart, and I owe you my life. I owe you and my King Father for bringing me in this world. And I am thankful that you have molded me to be the Prince that you want, and I am not going to disappoint you. After learning that I'm your son, I thought of only one thing: to make you both proud and satisfied of my outcome. I love both of you, especially you my Queen Mother, but I am not a child anymore. I am already a grown up, please let me make my own decisions from time to time, although I know that I would still need both of your approval in some matters, but I want to decide on my personal life," she explained further and glanced at the King. "But my life would not be completed if I don't have the love of the woman that I love. I vow to you that I would always remember everything that you and my King Father have taught me and would be forever grateful for all your love and support to me. But right now, I hope you will give me a chance to prove to you that I am capable of taking care of my personal life with my wife."

And with that, she wrapped her arms around the Queen, and felt her Queen Mother embraced her too, and not too long she felt the King's strong and big arms wrapped around them protectively. They stayed holding each other for a while and she felt a sense of belonging, as her mother and father both held her for the first time.

*****

That night she tossed sleeplessly on her bed.

The thought of losing Laura made her paranoid.

She could no longer ignore this.

Not again.

Now that she found it…

Real Love.

TBC
I'm always glad to see your feedbacks and thank you for taking some time to let me know how you feel about an update. And thanks again for your generous kudos. I really appreciate your support and patience…

And excused me for that mushy letters (Laura's)… I don't know if I should include it or not, but I felt emoting last night and I remembered someone asking if we ever see/read Laura's letter. So, if you have any violent reaction regarding the letter, blame it on them :-P

Have a nice day :-)
Chapter Summary

While staying at the Hollis Kingdom to take care of her sick father, Laura's rage did not go unnoticed to some of her close friends. She was glad also to do another thing that she likes doing before.

Chapter Notes

Thanks mightywiz for the idea and the title for this chapter ;-) your comment inspired me to write and explore Laura's rage; and to BallsyHollis who asked me if I could substitute sword fighting instead of krav maga, thanks for the idea too.

I apologize for the frustrations that the previous chapters had caused you, hope you'll still bear with me.

To everyone who left kudos, thanks for not forgetting this crazy fic. And huge thanks for all your awesome comments, it always makes me smile to see your feedbacks and for reminding me that you still loved this fic despite the angst and drama… and yes, I also appreciate all your constructive criticism.

Laura

"Ouch!"

She heard the cry behind the guard's helmet and stepped a meter backward to let her opponent recover from the heavy blow that she threw on her opponent's shield.

Four days had passed since she arrived at her kingdom, and this was just the third day of her training but she felt like she was getting the hang of it again.

Without giving a warning, she lunged forward and her opponent quickly dodged her. But being small and fighting someone taller than her gave her the advantage of swiftly turning around, hit her opponent on the back with the pommel of her sword, and then kicked the back of her opponent's knee. She saw him stumbled on the ground and fell then turned to face her. She was about to attack and point her sword to her opponent's breast plate while lying on the ground, when a cry of panic brought her back to her senses and her opponent removed the helmet and pleaded.

"I surrender!"

She saw the panic on her personal royal guard's eyes and removed her helmet too.

The rage inside her body grew stronger with each passing day.

"Kirsch! We just started!" she complained and encircled him. "Stand up and fight me like a man!" she challenged him and saw Kirsch rose from his feet, but he left his sword on the ground and raised
both his hands. "Pick up your sword!"

"Honestly, you've been a fiery tiny ball of rage since you arrived here," Kirsch said in a hysterical tone and ignored his sword on the ground. "I don't know what kind of devil possessed you little princess, but I don't feel like dying today."

After hearing Kirsch' comment, she threw her sword on the side and stormed out of the training room. "Ahhh!!" she shouted.

*****

"Laura, you hardly touched your soup," Perry remarked, eyeing the bowl on the side table. "You need to eat properly."

"I'm not hungry," she returned. After spending her afternoon horse riding in the nearby forest after Kirsch bailed out on her, and then talking to the chirurgeon about the condition of her father, she lost her appetite and found herself thinking of Carl. It had been four days since she left Karnstein Kingdom, and if Carl really missed her he would have sent a letter now asking her how she was doing and the condition of her father.

"I heard that you've been very hard and aggressive towards Kirsch today," Perry commented out of the blue and sat on the bed.

"I am not!" She defended right away after being interrupted. "I told him that I haven't practiced my swordsmanship since I moved in at Karnstein and I want to train again. How difficult is it to fight a little princess like me?" was her irritated comment.

"Very difficult, especially if it's a little raging princess," Perry commented and smirked. "Kirsch told me that he won't be there tomorrow but he had already assigned one of the best royal guards to train with you." Perry added.

She just pouted her lips and ignored Perry's message. As long as she could release this anger that was brewing inside her, she does not care whoever she would fight tomorrow. Since day two, she asked Kirsch to train with her; as her confidence of using the sword came back she put all her feelings in her 'duel' with Kirsch. Her thoughts were full of hatred about Carl and his mistress and she was thankful that she found a way to expressed it through her 'duel' training. "How dare him," she mumbled out of the blue as she laid her head on Perry's lap. She was still angry, hurt and felt betrayed. "I shouldn't have married him." She begrudgingly said, lying in bed while Perry stroked her hair.

"Oh Princess, don't say that," Perry replied.

"I think he doesn't give a damn about what I feel," she commented and sniffed.

"Of course he cares for you, you're his wife! And you'll be the mother of his children," was Perry's cheerful reminder.

After hearing that last sentence, she became more furious, "Yes, I am his wife and I'm here to bear him an heir, while I get to share him with his mistress!" was her sour remark.

Perry stopped stroking her hair and looked at her for a moment. She lifted her head from Perry's lap to face her lady in waiting and sat on the bed, "what?"
"He might have a mistress but I'm sure it's just for the sake of … umm… how should I put it?" was Perry's careful comment. "…satiating his appetite?"

"What kind of need or appetite does Carl or the King has that only a mistress can satiate?" she asked, totally naive of what the Queen and Perry was referring to. All she knew was a mistress could comfort and please the Prince or the King by being there by their side; by talking; serving them food or wine; to amuse them by dancing or singing; or help them relax.

Then her mood shifted from upset to furious when the scene where that woman's hand touching Carl's private part crossed her mind and imagined what that woman did.

Suddenly it flashed in her mind how aroused and pleasured Carl was when she was stroking the Prince's private part for the first time and how it felt good.

"*It means that I am so happy and excited at the way you're touching me Cupcake.*"

She remembered those words from Carl that day and the look of satisfaction in his eyes.

"*It also means that I find you beautiful and want you.*"

Then she felt this rage and jealousy taking over her whole body. The thought of her Prince being aroused and attracted to another woman almost made her explode.

Now she understood what kind of needs the Queen and Perry was talking about and the purpose of the mistress.

"You mean to say, Carl can have intercourse with his mistress and can do whatever he wants to that woman?!" was her hysteric question, and the idea of the mistress kissing her Prince and touching Carl intimately sent her to maddening rage; she wanted to be the only woman in Carl's life!

Seeing that she was on the verge of exploding, Perry held her hand firmly.

"Laura, there are things that a princess like you cannot do to your husband, that only a mistress can do," Perry said carefully.

"Perry, what are you talking about?" she replied and released her hand from Perry's hold; her frustration possessing her. "Just be honest and tell me because I think I deserve to know the truth since I'm already an adult and it concerned my husband."

Her Lady in Waiting took a deep breath and faced her with dignity, before uttering:

"Very well, if you insist," Perry started and looked her in the eyes. "Men have a very strong sexual appetite. A princess like you is taught and expected to be pure, decent, conservative, demure and docile. If you remember what the priest told you before you get married, there's only one position in bed that is allowed by the church, and that is, the man being on top of the woman and not the other way around. And that is the only way that you and your husband should use to consummate your marriage, and procreate. According to the book you should not enjoy your intercourse with your husband because it's considered a sin."

"How could that be a sin?" she asked, totally irritated.

"Because when you feel pleasure from sex it would become lust," Perry answered.
She recalled the priest even told her that it was unnatural for a woman to be on top of her husband and entering her from the rear was a sin and can interfere with the natural order of male-female roles. Then she remembered that the priest mentioned that oral sex was considered a sin too since it could only be practiced for pleasure and not for procreation. And she was informed that as the princess and wife of the future king, her duty was to produce and bear Carl's heirs; and not to take pleasure in sex with him.

"So, it's alright that a mistress can pleasure my husband, but when it comes to me, I should not take pleasure in having sex with my own husband?" she retaliated, growing angry at these moral issues.

"I don't recall anything written on the book about that," Perry relayed.

"Then why do they allow mistresses in some kingdoms?" was her frustrated question. She never heard or sees a mistress in their kingdom while she was growing.

"Because after a hard day a king or heir wants to be pampered and taken care of," Perry proclaimed. "They wanted company and someone to talk with any time of the day; or just plainly someone to amuse them so that they could relax after having been stressed from the day's work."

"Isn't that what the wife's role? To take care of their husband and pamper them?" was her innocent reaction. "...And vice versa? I mean, I would like some pampering also from Carl and snuggles."

"Laura, not every princess or queen has the time and the energy to always to do that," Perry revealed. "You may not notice it yet, because you're still a newly crowned princess, but once His Royal Highness became the King, your role as the Queen would multiply too."

She took a deep breath before replying to her lady in Waiting. She considered these rules insane and double moral.

"Isn't it a sin to have intercourse with another woman aside from one's lawful wife?" she challenged. "So, these silly rules would rather let my husband commit adultery, because I cannot engage in pleasing him in bed?"

"Well, that doesn't state in the book. But I get your point," Perry agreed.

"I don't understand why I have to follow some silly rules on how I should be intimate with Carl," she retorted. "It's ridiculous and totalitarian!" she added vehemently. "I would not be dictated on how my actions would be in bed with my husband. What I do in the privacy of my own chamber is my personal concern and no one else's!"

She saw the worried look on Perry's face and she knew that Perry was used to hearing her contradict to all kinds of silly rules and ridiculous traditions.

"Laura, I understand how you feel and I knew that you'll going to react like that," Perry began. "Just make sure that no one can know what you and Prince Carl would do in your private moment, because not obeying the rules can be punishable too."

She became more provoked at Perry's comment. "Are you serious?!" was her dismayed remark.

"Yes. And if you don't believe I will get you the book which has the rules of sex and other things and the penance for breaking them," Perry suggested. "But I have to warn you, you may not like or may be shocked at some of the illustrations that are drawn in the book."

Her curiosity was piqued. "Why? What kind of illustrations are they?" she inquired.
"There are illustrations of the forbidden sex positions," Perry declared.

Instead of being appalled she became more challenged at the sound of it. "Bring me that book, and don't tell anyone that I ask you to." She ordered and her inquisitive mind began to form a wicked scheme.

After Perry left her chamber, she contemplated on the things that were happening in her marriage. Carl taking in a mistress was very unfair and an insult to her. They both know that she still had not overcome her fear of a penis; but she had been open and willing to overcome it when Carl suggested that she touched his. It horrified her many times to feel his erection but after that day when she saw how Carl enjoyed the touch of her hand on his private part: she discovered that it was not horrifying at all to touch it.

When Carl showed and explained to her the flaccid and hard state of his penis, she understood better how his body reacts to certain things. And she was proud to discover that her touches and kisses made him happy and excited. She loved kissing him too and his hand touching her body. But she did not realize how her touches could arouse Carl quickly. She knew that she still have a lot of things to learn about being married; and she was willing to learn and overcome her fear not just for the main purpose of producing an heir, but to be more intimate with Carl. Except, right now, her Prince seemed to be impatient to wait for her to overcome her fear that he took a mistress immediately after they got married.

The thought of Carl having a mistress had been tormenting her since she left Karnstein Kingdom and she did not know how she would take it that her Prince was kissing and touching another woman aside from her. She did not know how she would face him and be intimate with him, knowing that he has another woman in his bed. It was very painful for her to accept and she did not want to accept it… She did not want to be hurt again.

Before she closed her eyes and surrendered to sleep, only one thing was on her mind: she wanted to leave him.

She woke up to the sound of the birds chirping by the window and the sound of the door opened, followed by Perry's voice.

"Good morning!" her Lady in Waiting exclaimed carrying the serving tray of breakfast. "Natalie is coming in a few minutes to help you bathe and dress. I need to check something in the kitchen because the cook wanted me to plan the meal for tonight, and then I have to go to the market square to buy the ingredients that I'm gonna need; His Majesty asked me if I could bake some lemon curd tart and Crème Boylede. Betty is asking if she will unpack everything that was in the trunk, or she could leave your things inside so she doesn't need to pack it again when we go back to Karnstein Castle."

"Tell Betty to take everything out from the chest and put it back in my closet," she replied and received a surprised look from her Lady in Waiting.

"Are you planning on staying for a month again?" Perry asked in a serious tone while putting the serving tray on her lap.
"No. I'm planning on staying more than a month," she said and took a sip of her hot cocoa. "I missed our cocoa here, it taste better than any other cocoa in Styria." She said casually and ignored the puzzled expression of her Lady in Waiting. "Thanks, you can go back downstairs, I'm sure they all missed how you organize and plan everything in the castle. I'll go to Papa's chamber after this then I could help you in the kitchen afterwards."

And before Perry could leave the room, the Lady in Waiting turned back and walked towards the bed again.

"I know that you would decline it again, since you've declined his invitations last time when we're here, but Prince Viktor sent an invitation asking if you would like to have some tea with him, any day of your choice." Perry informed. "Should I write a letter of thanks and tell him that you cannot make it?"

She looked up at her Lady in Waiting, as Perry waited for her reply. "Don't answer him yet. I'll take care of it." She saw Perry's left brow raised and gave her a suspicious look. "Thanks Perry." She returned and avoided her Lady' in Waiting's eyes and focused her sight on the blueberry cupcake, hot cocoa and grapes that were in front of her."

*****

After tending to her father and being kicked out of the kitchen by Perry for excessively washing the kitchen tops, tables, the dishes and everything she could find dirty in there, she decided to head to the training room.

As soon as Sarah Jane was finished helping her put on her metal breastplate, she asked her handmaiden for her sword and Sarah Jane handed it carefully. "Don't forget the helmet," Sarah Jane reminded and picked it up.

"Thanks. But I don't need it. You may leave and put the helmet back," she ordered.

"But Princess, you need to protect your face and head too," was Sarah Jane's concerned remark.

"I could protect myself, I don't need it," she reiterated but her handmaiden refused to leave.

"Princess, Kirsch is not training with you today, you don't know how this royal guard fights, what if he accidentally hurt you?" Sarah Jane remarked. "His Royal Highness might get worried, or worst, he might get angry at the guard that hurt you."

"Sarah Jane, I know how to take care of myself," she insisted growing impatient. "I know how to use the sword and I've had a bit of practiced with Kirsch these past few days, so it won't be a problem."

And before Sarah Jane could utter another worried remark, their attention were interrupted when they saw the royal guard that she was about to 'fight' with arrived. She smiled when she saw that the guard was not that tall as Kirsch, and thought, *this would be easy.*

"My opponent is here now, go!" she ordered her handmaiden and saw Sarah Jane reluctantly left the training hall.

As the guard approached her, she saw him bowed and started to walk around her.

*Huh! He thought he could fool me with this silly trick!*

She thought and studied how the guard moved. Unlike Kirsch, her opponent today was only armed
with a sword and helmet but without a shield and breast plate; just dressed in his yellow and black uniform. And she thought that this guard must be very confident and good with his sword for not to protect himself. Or this guard was under estimating her capability, because she was a woman. Her last guess irked her.

She took the first strike and he successfully blocked her. Then the guard took a double strike and advanced to her but she quickly blocked him and she countered confidently with her sword, and moved forward. She gave him a double strike of her sword and he blocked both and stepped backwards. And before he could strike, she turned around swiftly and lunged forward and thrust the point of her sword to the guard's side cutting off a piece of his tunic. She suddenly became worried.

*Oh god, did I hurt him?!*

But before she could check if he was wounded, she saw the guard advanced forward and strike hard. She blocked it but he quickly retaliated with another hard blow on the side, she swiftly turned around and blocked it on the side and then faced him. But he was aggressive and continued to advanced and strike her continuously, leaving her no choice but to block his hard blows and defend herself desperately.

Then she managed to stop his strikes when she swiftly turned around and hit him behind with the pommel of her sword, just like she did with Kirsch. She was about to kick the back of his knee but he swiftly turned around and avoided her foot. She got angry for missing it and saw him waiting for her to attack. Her temper overcame her and she attacked him.

"Ahhh!" she exclaimed and lunged at her opponent openly. He quickly blocked her thrust, and she almost stumbled after he pushed her; her fighting skill was challenged to the peak. She has not recovered yet, and he already swung his sword in a sideward strike. She dodged it and she received another blow from him.

After that hard blow from her opponent, she was stunned. This royal guard has no reservations. She saw him advancing towards her; she retreated and gave herself time to recover. Confident, she stood straight and lunged forward, he blocked her again; their swords locked, and she was dazed as she came face to face with him. She wished she could see those eyes behind that helmet. She pushed him, freeing her sword.

Their battle heated up and her emotions were overcoming her, when she turned around to countered him on his side, she was seized and he trapped her and wrapped tightly both his arms around her. She missed her sword and heard it fell on the ground, while she saw him still holding her and his sword, carefully away from her.

She got furious at the sudden body contact and the thought of losing to him. She struggled to get loose at his arms but he was strong and his hold was tight that she lost her temper and shouted:

"Get your hands off me!" she demanded. But he did not obey her and held her tightly and she felt him leaned closer to her right ear and heard him said:

"Can we talk?"

TBC
Chapter Summary

Laura's rage was getting out of hand, while Carl tried to win her back. Something unexpected happened to the King of Hollis that made Laura snapped at Carl.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all your wonderful replies. I'm touched also to know how you like this fic. And I'm happy to know how excited you feel every time you see an update. To be honest, I never thought that I could reach 40 chapters writing this story. Because I don't have any plan on posting and sharing it; I just wrote it for fun and to entertain myself because I was frustrated by the lack of updates in some fics that I am reading. And when I end up writing more than 15 chapters, I decided to take a chance and share it; even though I know it wouldn't be that interesting, since the premise of the story sounded crazy. But with your enthusiasm, continued support and for always letting me know that you still like this crazy little fic, I got inspired to write more. So, I hope you've been entertained by this crazy fic. And thanks for always leaving kudos.

Laura

"Can we talk?"

Her eyes widened in confusion and she stiffened as she recognized the faint sound of deep husky voice... and there was silence. Her heart pounded madly; she slowly tilted her head to the right to look at the face that was hidden behind the guard's helmet. The arms that were tightly wrapped around her slowly loosened and she was released from the grasp. She turned around and stepped back. She found herself facing him, staring at his direction with furrowed brows; knowing that he was looking at her behind the mask of metal. She stood there staring at him like she had seen a ghost, hesitating; figuring out how it could be possible that he was standing in front of her.

She took a step forward and with both her hands, she slowly lifted the helmet from his head. Once the face of her Prince was revealed, she gasped and dropped the helmet and stared at him, totally dumbfounded. She almost melted at the sight of him as she realized that it was really Carl. She cannot imagine how he managed to travel so far away. And she cannot deny that her heart was happy to see him now.

Perhaps sensing her bewilderment, he remained calm, as if waiting for her to recover from this confusion; she caught sight of his brows contorted and he gazed at her with those dark melancholic eyes, as if he was pleading.

Her heart throbbed fiercely at the sight of Carl in front of her, as she caught the longing in his eyes. God! She missed those eyes; she missed those gaze when he looked vulnerable and tragically beautiful. And all she wanted to do was to cup his face and seize those soft red lips. But the thrill of kissing him vanished when she was reminded of the reason why she was angry. Her enthusiasm was
replaced by hatred and she glared at him; she saw the look of panic in his eyes and Carl reached for her arm, but she quickly avoided his touch and without a word, she turned her back at him and strode towards the door.

"Laura!" Carl cried desperately.

But she blocked all the sounds in her surrounding and did not give him a chance to talk to her; she closed the door hard and ran on her way out of the castle.

*****

She was still fuming mad when she arrived at the stable. The servants that were taking care of the horses were not surprised anymore when she arrived and asked for her white stallion, Unicorn. She had been horse riding alone every day since she came home.

She received Unicorn as her birthday gift from her father when she turned sixteen. When she moved in at the Karnstein Castle she left the horse behind, unsure if there were people who could take care of her horse in the new kingdom that she was living now.

Today, however, she had too much hatred and pain in her body, and the only way she knew how to release it, aside from sword fighting, was to go out into the woods. After the caretakers made sure that she was ready and safe to go, she hopped on her stallion right away and led him out of the castle and into the forest that she always take refuge in. She was a little nervous when she rode Unicorn few days ago; it had been months since she used her horse. But after she touched him he eventually recognized her touch and calmed on her hand.

After half an hour of non-stop riding, she reached the forest that she loved. Only she and her father knew this secret hideaway of hers. When she was young, she would spend almost a whole day in this forest discovering the wonders of nature with her father. She liked picking berries, eating apples from the trees, making fire and drinking water from the streams. But above all, she loved this place because of its calming effect that induced her.

It was almost midday when she decided to take a rest on the spot under the old oak tree that she and her father used to eat their packed food whenever they take a tour in this forest. She tied Unicorn at a strong branch and took refuge under the vast tree.

She sat and rested her back on the oak tree, not minding the rough texture on her body as the bark grazed on her arms. She was thankful that the weather was pleasant today, a perfect contrast to her mood. The chirping of the birds and the buzzing of the bees caught her ears at once and she closed her eyes, using her other senses to appreciate the surroundings around her. Her ears caught also the sound of the nearby streams flowing over the pebbles and the sound started to calm her. She felt the gentle breeze caressed her face and she inhaled the scent of the pine trees that came along with it. She loved nature and its effect to her body.

Her eyes remained shut and she took a deep breath, glad that she was able to escape from all the chaos and heartaches just for a short moment. She continued to inhale and exhale deeply and when her body and mind finally relaxed, she let sleep took over.

The sun was almost setting when she finally awoke. She felt a pain on her neck after having fallen asleep while sitting; she stretched her arms and limbs and searched for Unicorn. She sighed with relief as she saw her stallion still standing on the spot where she tied him.

She reached the castle at sundown and was exhausted for not eating the whole day. She just drunk from the streams at the forest and do not have the appetite either for some berries or fruits from the
forest. She was met by Perry right away when she arrived at the castle's main door.

"Where have you been? Everybody's looking for you!" Perry stressed out. "And Prince Carl has been worrying since you left and he was a bit upset because nobody knows where you are."

She recalled the first time she went to the village without telling Carl exactly where she was going, and she could imagine how mad he was now of not knowing where she was. But this time, it did not affect her anymore. "I don't care what he thinks and feels," she retorted, while they walked through the long narrow hall on the way to the grand hall.

Once they arrived at the grand hall, her attention was caught right away as she saw Carl approached her direction to meet her; the wrinkle on his brows, sharp look in his eyes, tight lip and his long strides told her that he was not pleased of what she had done. But she did not care and straightened her back and faced him with the same serious expression as his.

"Where have you been?" Carl demanded in a deep firm voice.

She just ignored him and passed right at him. "Don't turn your back on me!" was his angry remark. Then she felt his hand grabbed her arm, and she stopped to face him.

"I'm in my own castle and I can do whatever I want without asking anybody's permission or telling people where I will go," she retaliated and was about to walk further.

But Carl did not release his hand on her arm and held her tighter.

"In case you have forgotten, you are no longer a part of this kingdom; the right as your protector was passed unto me when your Uncle gave away your hand to me at our wedding. You're already a Karnstein and you belong to me; you're my responsibility," he said in an authoritative deep tone.

She hated every time he used this tone to her as if she was one of his properties.

"Oh yes, I belong to you," she returned, her voice thick with sarcasm. "Because you need a wife to produce an heir; just like you need a mistress to pleasure you."

She felt his hand tightened on her arm and glared at her. Irritated, she eyed at the hand that was grasping her, until he noticed her stare and then carefully, he released her. She looked up at him again and saw his expression changed; as if surprised that she retaliated.

She was confused when his facial expression softened but her hatred overshadowed her reasons and love for Carl. She felt that he was about to say something but she won't have it. She won't listen to him anymore.

"Go ahead and get mad at me for disrespecting you; isn't that what you want, to show me that you're strong, dominant and superior?" she provoked him.

Carl just stared at her and was shocked and before he could utter a reply…

"If you'll excuse me, Your Highness, I have to check on my sick father," she remarked in a cold sarcastic tone, and left Carl speechless.

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It was already midnight when she returned to her chamber.

While staying in her father's chamber, she gave a strict order to the Royal Guards that were standing
by the door of the King's Chamber to not let anyone in while she tended to her father; to make sure that Carl cannot follow her. And she was thankful that he was out of sight when she left the Kings' chamber moments ago.

"At last, you're here,"

The voice of Perry startled her after she closed the door behind her.

"His Highness had been waiting at the grand hall since you left him there, he just retired to his chamber when LaFontaine convinced him that it'll be better to talk to you when he's rested and recharged from their exhausting journey," Perry related. "And in case you're wondering where your husband sleeps, we've put him at the guest's chamber near the Queen's chamber."

She did not comment on what Perry just said and just let her Lady in Waiting help her take off her training trousers and tunic that she used early this morning. After removing her boots, dressed only in her underwear and camisole, she walked to the bathroom to take her bath, but Perry's voice halted her.

"Prince Carl wants to talk to you, he asked me if he could eat brunch with you tomorrow," Perry related in a serious tone.

But she pretended not to hear it and walked further.

"Laura!" Perry shouted.

She turned around and pouted to Perry.

"Sweetie, you cannot ignore him further. He had traveled all the way from Karnstein just to talk to you, at least give him a chance to explain…"

"Perry, I don't care if he had traveled that far," she retaliated and recalled the time she came back from their castle and she was too eager to see him and explain to him that everything was alright and that she loved him. And right now, she thought of giving him his own dose of medicine. "I didn't ask him to come and I'm not interested in obeying his demands and orders anymore."

"Well, maybe he realized his mistakes and he wants to apologize to you, that's why he's here," Perry tried to convince her, but she knew too well her Prince.

"Do you know that Carl is not that keen when it comes to apologizing," she returned, her voice bitter. "So stop defending him. Tell him that I am visiting a friend tomorrow and I'll be gone the whole day." She replied and turned her back to Perry and walked towards the bathroom, not giving Perry a chance to respond.

*****

When she woke up that morning, her mind was already made up; she would not let anyone dictate her, what to do and she definitely doesn't want to see Carl. Right now, she does not have the heart to talk to him or hear anything about him. She would do anything to avoid him.

She heard the gentle crow of the rooster, signaling the approaching dawn. She knew that it was still early and the entire castle, except for the bakers, the footmen, and cooks, were still sleeping, but she was already eager to start her day and get out of the castle.

Without hesitating, she got out of bed and decided that she would not wait for her Lady in Waiting to
come and help her. She could manage to prepare and dress alone since she would go out and she won't wear anything fancy. She quickly headed to the bathroom to change, so that she would have time to eat at the servant's dining hall before everybody come.

*****

It was already dark when she arrived at the castle.

As soon as she set foot on the grand hall, Perry ran towards her direction.

"Laura, thank God you're already here!" was Perry's hyper comment.

She suddenly became nervous and the only thing that came into her mind was her father.

"Did something happen to my father?" was her anxious question and she quickly ran towards the grand staircase on the way to the King's Chamber before Perry could speak. She was berating herself for losing her temper and for letting Carl get over her nerves. She should be thinking of her sick father instead of arguing and avoiding Carl.

When she reached her father's chamber she saw LaFontaine standing by the door and was about to tell her something, but she disregarded it and opened the door and ran towards her father's bed. The sight completely surprised her when her eyes caught her father sitting on his bed with his back resting on the headboard talking with another person who was sitting on a chair beside the bed. She was surprised to see her father's cheek had color on it and his face was happy. Her focus from her father was disrupted when she saw the person stood up and faced her direction.

"My wife finally arrived, Your Majesty," the calm deep raspy voice uttered.

She stood there for a while at the sight of her father and Carl staring at her direction rendered her speechless.

She was shocked; shocked at the sight that her father looked fine and strong and not dying; shocked at the sight that Carl was here; shocked at the sight that the two most important persons in her life have finally met and they were probably talking about her.

"Laura."

She heard her father's weak voice called her and walked towards him right away. She was overwhelmed to see him well and talking.

"Papa!" She uttered right away and put her arms around her old man. She hugged him for a while and thankful that he was still alive, and then released him as her emotions subsided. She cannot control her happiness of seeing him fine and she suddenly found herself crying in front of her father.

"What's the matter my little Princess?" was her father's concerned question.

"I thought… I thought you…” she stuttered afraid to say the inevitable.

"Died?" Was her father's light remark, "Not yet… I still want to see my grandchildren."

She felt a bit embarrassed at her father's comment. "Papa!" she scolded him playfully like they used to do. "And why are you assuming that I will have a lot of children?"

"Because I asked Carl how many children he wished to have, and he said three," her father replied and motioned to the direction of Carl who was standing quietly behind her, perhaps still testing her
mood towards him; or he was plainly shocked at the bantering between her and her father. She never saw the Prince in a light or funny mood with his father or his mother. The Karnsteins were reserved and serious.

She was suddenly self-conscious when she realized that Carl moved closer to her. She was still angry at him, and it made her angrier at the fact that he wanted her to bear three heirs; however, she temporarily hid away that hate. She did not want her father to feel the tension between the two of them. The awkward silence was broken when she saw her father looked at Carl's direction and said:

"You two better work hard on producing those heirs!"

She heard her father's tactless remark and felt embarrassed. "Papa!" this time she annoyingly scolded him, she did not look at the Prince's direction afraid that he might see how embarrassed she was but was surprised when he replied at her father's challenge.

"Don't worry Your Majesty, I would gladly grant your request." Carl supplied enthusiastically.

She shook her head discreetly and rolled her eyes, knowing that her father's attention was focused to Carl. She did not know how long she could pretend being alright with him. But when she saw the satisfied happy look on her father's face, her anger subsided; and had wished that the situation between her and Carl was as happy and lively as this conversation.

"Laura, your husband isn't just handsome and intelligent but an obedient Prince too, I really like him!" her father's attention was suddenly diverted to her, and she did not know how to respond to that comment.

She was spared from having to reply when her father suddenly coughed.

"Papa, are you alright?" she asked, anxiously, as she rubbed gently his back. "I think you better take a rest now. You have been too excited and I'm worried that you might use up your energy."

Then she suddenly felt Carl's warm breath above her as he came closer to help her tucked the King to bed.

"My wife is right Your Majesty. I think it is best that we let you sleep now, so that the Princess would not worry," Was Carl's comforting words. "I will come back tomorrow and visit you again, Your Majesty."

"Very well, if you two insists," the King returned and lied on his bed.

And as the King lay in bed, she saw Carl bowed to her father and bid him goodnight. Then he walked away and headed towards the door.

She waited for Carl to leave first, and she sat on the bed beside her father for a moment. She was still boiling mad at the Prince and did not want to see his face nor talk to him.

But her sulking was interrupted when she heard Carl called her. She got annoyed.

"Laura, are you coming?" he asked calmly and stood by the door, waiting.

She was about to say no, but the voice of her father halted her.

"Laura, I'll be fine. You don't need to stay with me." She heard her father's reassuring words and felt relieved, but she still did not stir. "Your husband needs you, go to him. For the first time in his life he had travelled this far, just to tell me that he loves you and will offer his life for you; he even formally
asked me for your hand in marriage. I think he deserve to be treated well at our home knowing that he put his comfort and fear aside just to see me, and I think no man would do such a noble and humble deed unless he loves you."

She felt a single tear dropped from her left eye. Her hatred had clouded her judgement and her feelings, and did not realize how difficult for her Prince to face his fear and put his comfort into test.

She did not know if Carl was telling the truth or lying about telling her sick father that he loves her and will give his life for her, but right now she will comply to what was necessary: treat her guest with honor and repay him the kindness that he deserve for bravely travelling that far just to visit her sick father. She would swallow her pride and forget for a moment the problem between her and Carl. She knew that he will deny about having a mistress, and perhaps he would force her to accept that he need a mistress since she cannot provide what he needed.

She hesitantly stood up and kissed her father on the forehead, and composed herself before walking towards the Prince. She would play the best hostess and show him the hospitality of the Hollis' Kingdom.

When they closed the door behind them, she saw Kirsch waiting outside of the chamber.

"Your Royal Highness," Kirsch bowed to Carl who was trailing behind her and when their eyes met, she smiled towards the Royal Guard who had been like a brother to her since she was a child.

"How was the King?" Kirsch asked hopeful.

"He was actually well and talking too much!" was her excited reply and she saw Kirsch's unbelievable expression.

"So, the medicine that the little ginger gave to your father really worked!" was Kirsch excited reply.

Confused, she became serious and confronted Kirsch, "What medicine?"

Before Kirsch could utter a word, Carl sought her attention and faced her.

"When LaFontaine found out from Perry how your father became sick, they started to mix some herbs and spices that they used to make for their father," Carl explained. "It turns out LaFontaine's father have a similar symptoms like the ones your father have. So, they offered to make the same medicine that LaFontaine's father is using."

After hearing that careless decision and action both from Carl and LaFontaine, the anger that she was suppressing exploded. "Does LaFontaine even know how to make one?! What if it turned out wrong and my father died?!!" was her anxious remark, thinking that LaFontaine cannot just experiment on her father. "Carl, how could you let your Valet do such a thing to my father?! You cannot just dictate all the people around you what to do! You're being arrogant and superior again. You don't even respect me and ask me if you could do that to my father! All you think about was you're always right and everybody should obey you. Well, guess what, I will not comply to your demands anymore! If you think you could drag me back to your kingdom and be manipulated by you again, so that you can have someone to bear your heirs, well you're wrong. I hate you and I'm not coming back!" She disclosed, poured out all her frustration and anger. She did not care what Carl think about what she had said. She was tired of the people around her dictating her, 'what to do and what not to do'. She definitely had enough of his arrogance and was tired of being manipulated by him. And how dare him ordering LaFontaine to experiment on her father! What if it had gone wrong?

She walked out; left Carl stunned by her rage and did not give him a chance to explain further. She
would not let him control her again.

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After tossing sleeplessly to and fro in her bed for the past hours, she groaned when she heard the rooster crowed. After that fight with Carl, she cannot sleep and just kept on thinking about him. She knew that she had gone too far, when she exploded and poured out all her frustrations and anger on him. Her frustrations towards on her sick father, her anger towards Carl and her frustrations of not overcoming her fear and not having consummated her marriage yet had drove her to madness. And now she realized that she might have been 'too violent' towards him.

Suddenly, her contemplation was interrupted when she heard a soft knock on the door. She wondered who could it be.

"Who is it?!"

She asked but there was no reply, and instead, she heard the knock again. Irritated, she got up from her bed and walked towards the door.

When she opened the door, she was surprised to find Carl standing in front of her; he was still wearing the black tunic from last night and not his sleeping wear. His eyes swollen and red, his hair disheveled, he looked like he had never slept for days and for the first time, she noticed that his face was thinner and his eyes deep, hollow and lifeless.

"Carl?" she asked, and was caught off guard of his presence.

"When you wake up tomorrow I'll be gone," Carl stated in a firm and yet low voice. Suddenly she found herself panicking inside and anxious. She was about to tell him that she had been stressed out and acted crazy and was out of control last night, but he motioned for her not to speak.

"But before I go, I want to let you know that I’m sorry to have caused you pain. I never realize that you became unhappy living with me and hated me. I don't want to hurt you more," he said, his voice weak and raspy. "… so, I'm giving you your freedom, and you can stay here or go back to Viktor… and we can…” he was saying, his voice hoarse. "…we can dissolve our marriage since we haven't consummated it. I… I want you to be happy, Laura... so I'm setting you free.“ He said in a weak tone and looked down.

After hearing those words, she felt this unshed tears threatening to burst and lost her ability to speak. She had been hard on him. He does not deserve that outburst from her last night. He was definitely hurt by all the things that she had said and blamed himself for acting like a prick towards her. He was about to turn around and walk away, she panicked and the thought of losing her Prince drove her insane.

"Stay!” she implored, stepped forward and grabbed the back of his neck with her right hand, gently but swiftly, she pulled him close to her to face her and then captured his soft wet lips, and kissed Carl; putting all her love and passion on the kiss.

"All I want is you, Carl," she uttered between kisses and sobbing, and continued to devour her Prince's soft lips. She smiled when she felt Carl's hands touched her hips and he reciprocated her kiss with more intensity and passion. He did not stop kissing her until the need for air arises and he released from the kiss. Still afraid of losing him, she wrapped her arms around him tightly and clung unto him, "I'm sorry to have snapped on you like that," she mumbled, her arms still clinging around
his neck, as if she was hanging on for her dear life. She was afraid to release him from her touch, and she nuzzled her nose under his ear and kissed his neck.

"No, I deserve it," he uttered sheepishly.

When she heard him talked, she still did not let him go, and she felt relieved when she felt Carl's arms encircling her waist, holding her too. Realizing that there was no way she will let him go, he continued his explanation. And this time, she listened to him and just nuzzled on the warmth of his neck, inhaling Carl's scent that she loved so much.

"And I'm sorry if I have treated you like that, I didn't mean it. That's why I came here, to tell you that I'm sorry for everything that I have done. From now on I will respect your every needs and I would try to be honest to what I feel for you. And I'm not going to order or demand anything that is against your will... and, I want to tell you that Ell is not my mistress and I don't have any plans taking a mistress."

After listening to his fervent explanation and finding out that he does not have a mistress, she released him and faced him. But his hands still held her hips on the side. While she rested her hands around his neck.

"Why didn't you tell me these things before!?" she asked, frustrated.

This time she saw his left eyebrow raised.

"I was going to tell you, but you kept on ignoring and avoiding me, and then you snapped at me," was Carl's snarky comment. "Then you told me that you hate me. So, do you hate me?"

"Of course not," she murmured, ashamed. "I could never hate you. I was angry that's why I said it." She felt guilty for being insensitive and selfish.

"I felt like, I was stabbed in my heart when you told me that you hate me," was Carl's honest remark.

"I said I'm sorry," she mumbled, her voice low and full of guilt. Then she got worried when she noticed his cheeks thin and pale. "You looked like you haven't eaten in days."

"I actually did not eat dinner." Her Prince simply replied.

She got worried and wondered what was wrong with the food. "Didn't the food here meet your expectations?" she asked, thinking that he might be adjusting also on eating a different kind of cuisine, since it was his first time to eat in a different place with a different cook.

"I have not the chance to neither see nor taste the food," Carl answered patiently.

"Why not? Didn't Perry inform the kitchen that you are here?" She questioned, confused. The Hollis Castle was well known to entertain and feed their guests the most delectable food and sweet, it would be unacceptable and disgraceful not to treat the son-in-law of the King the way he should be treated.

"Perry did actually inform the kitchen and told me that the cook had prepared dinner fit for a king," The Prince related calmly.

"Then why didn't you come and eat?" She asked still baffled, thinking that he was picky when it comes to eating food not prepared by the Karnstein's cook.

"Because I don't want to eat without you," Carl replied. "I just asked Perry to bring me some bread
and cheese to my room, for lunch and dinner.

She suddenly felt guilty and at the same time touched by his mindfulness. She held his hand and gazed at his confused eyes. Here she was, not caring how Carl had been since he arrived at their castle. She was busy nurturing her anger that she had forgotten to care. She had not even asked him how he managed to survive the long journey from Karnstein to Hollis Kingdom, and now she was dying with guilt and worry, and was panicking at how she would take care of her poor Prince. Then she remembered what her father told her and she became more ashamed of her behavior:

"He deserve to be treated well at our home knowing that he put his comfort and fear aside, just to see me and I think no man would do such a noble and humble deed, unless he loves you."

Sheepish, she gazed at her Prince, "Thank you and I'm sorry," She uttered as soon as she got the Prince's attention. She saw him furrowed his brow, thinking that she was not making any sense. "Thank you for travelling all the way here to visit my sick father and to ask him for my hand in marriage… it's-" she was considering if she would really say what she felt and utter 'romantic', then she remembered what he said; that he should be more open to what he feels; and she should do the same thing too. "It's so romantic of you… and I'm sorry that I ignored you and did not welcome and entertain you."

"You're very welcome my Princess. It is an honor to finally meet the father of my wife and to see where you grew up," Carl answered with a sparkle in his eyes. "I came here to apologize to you too, and to tell you that I just read your letters the day you left. And that's how I discovered that you want and love me."

She blinked her eyes many times and was unbelievably surprised to hear that. "You mean to say we've gone through all these misunderstandings and arguments because you thought that I don't want you and do not love you?!"

Carl nodded sheepishly.

"I may be the future king of Karnstein, but I'm bound to make stupid mistakes," he defended.

She just smirked at him, gave him a kiss and then held his hands. "Well, in case you still doubt, I want you and I'm in love with you, and there's nothing more to tell, except I missed my big wild cat!"

"I missed you too, Cupcake," Carl replied. "And you are forgiven for ignoring the poor Prince of Karnstein." He added with a hint of sarcasm and smirked at her.

Feeling defensive, "I said I'm sorry!" she reasoned and she knew that he had begun: teasing her. She missed their bickering and bantering.

Carl did not let her get off easily.

"And you also left your Prince starving today and yesterday." Was his snarky retort.

She opened her mouth, shocked, and was about to utter a retort but she cannot find the words, and she was distracted when she saw Carl's 'puppy sad eye' and pouting at her.

"Alright, come with me." She ordered, and took her Prince's hand, and led him towards the stairs.

"Where are you taking me?" Carl asked, suddenly confused as they ran downstairs.

"We're going to the kitchen," she informed as they reached the ground floor not releasing his hand.
“What are we going to do in the kitchen?” the Prince asked but still following her. “Are you allowed to go there?”

She suddenly stopped upon hearing it and did not know if he was teasing her again or playing like a fool. “We’re going to make food, and yes, I am allowed to go to the kitchen.” She answered growing impatient from all these questions, but when she saw the surprised innocent look on her Prince’s face after she mentioned that she was allowed to go to the kitchen, she dropped her suspicions of him teasing her. Curious, she asked. “Don’t tell me that you haven’t been in your castle’s kitchen yet? Because that’s really-”

The Prince replied right away, “No, I haven’t. My mother had forbidden me to neither come to the kitchen nor talk to the cooks and servants.”

She suddenly felt sorry for him upon learning how strict the Queen of Karnstein. She decided not to ask further knowing that her mother-in-law was aloof and distant. “Well tonight, I’m going to make food for us and we’re going to eat in the kitchen.” She said and they resumed walking towards the dining hall on the way to the kitchen.

Carl just gave her a puzzled look and asked, “All the servants are sleeping; can you cook?”

She found his question a bit insulting, because she grew up in the kitchen and learned how to cook, bake and make sweets. She just did not have a chance to cook in the Karnstein kitchen because the cook would not allow her and Perry to touch the foods that were served to the Karnstein Family. She was just lucky that the Queen gave her permission to use the part of the kitchen where she and Perry can bake their sweets.

“Of course I can cook! …And bake; and make sweets!” was her hyper remark.

“Really?” Was the Prince’s serious remark. “Who taught you?”

She rolled her eyes at his comment. “The castle’s cooks, bakers, servants and Perry,” she replied proudly. “I grew up watching what they’re doing in the kitchen. And when I was old enough, they taught me everything that they cook and bake in the castle.”

“That’s amazing. I wished I have learned how to cook too.”

They have already arrived in the kitchen and found no one in sight and everything was clean and no food was on the table.

“Well, maybe someday I could show you how,” she suggested and started opening the cupboards to get the materials and ingredients that she was going to cook. “In the meantime, why don't you sit over there by the table and wait till I find something we could eat.”

Carl obliged quietly and took a seat by the small dining table over the room, and observed the surroundings around him.

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After half an hour, she placed a hot bowl of pottage in front of Carl and another bowl across him for her. She came back and took a rye bread with Steirerkas cheese, Carl’s favorite and put them on the table. She saw the surprised look on his face when she placed the cheese in front of him.

“The pottage goes well with your favorite cheese,” she commented as she took the seat across, facing him.
"You know my favorite cheese?" He asked, impressed and gazed at her.

"I'm your wife, of course I know." She said and smiled proudly at him and watched how he would react. "And I know also that you like your beef raw; you loved blood sausage and you hated garlic."

He just smiled and looked at the soup in front of him and inhaled it. "It smells good, what's in it?"

"It's a vegetable pottage. There's cabbage, carrots, leeks, celery, green beans, onions, parsnips, onions, turnips and finely chopped parsley," she babbled excitedly. "And I hope you like it."

"I'm definitely sure that it's delicious and I'm going to like it because you cooked it," he returned and smirked.

"How can you say that you'll like it and it's delicious, when you haven’t even tasted it?" was her curious remark.

"Because when I was a child, I learned that I should be grateful in every food that I eat and compliment and respect the person who made and cook it. And be thankful that I have food on the table and not starving. So, thank you for making this," Carl stated genuinely, before dipping his spoon in the bowl of hot soup in front of him.

She was totally impressed of what he said and did not realize that he could be so grateful, when it comes to food. She had heard him always saying thank you to the servants and footmen during dinner time, but she did not realize that he really meant it.

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"Goodnight," the Prince uttered before leaving her by the door of her chamber. "And thank you for the wonderful meal. It's the best pottage that I ever tasted."

"Thank you and good night," she replied and wanted to kiss her Prince, as she eyed his red lips and found it very enticing without the beard surrounding it. Actually, she was attracted at this clean shaven smooth look of Carl as long as he was not being cold and aloof, like his mother.

Suddenly, she felt lonely upon hearing the Prince saying goodnight to her.

Don't go, please.

She hoped and prayed. They had a lovely time awhile ago; she enjoyed eating and making food for him. And now, she did not want to let Carl go. She cannot think of any excuse for the Prince to stay.

And before her Prince could turn around and walk away, she did not manage to control herself. She took one step forward and captured his red lips with her own and kissed Carl. She felt Carl gently kissed her.

But she was not in a mood for some gentle kisses so, she deepened the kiss and put her arms around the Prince's neck and fondled it and, she felt Carl's hands automatically held her hips.

Her breathing became ragged at the contact and she felt Carl's tongue deepened the kiss. She moaned at the sensation and her hands continued to caress Carl's hair and nape. She did not want to end this kiss, she did not want to end this enchanting moment, the moment where she was kissing the 'cold, aloof, clean shaven Carl' that she married, for the first time, and not the 'broody but soft in the inside sweet bearded Carl' that she had grown to love; she felt like being in a relationship with two different persons and wondering which of the two was she attracted the most.

While still kissing her, she felt her Prince's hands still holding her hips, but keeping his distance, careful not to get his bulge near her. And she remained fondling the back of his neck, not giving him
a chance to separate from her. It felt wonderful to kiss and touch him.

Her lust was taking over. There was no way she would let Carl sleep in the guest's chamber. She released from his kiss and gazed at those dark wild eyes with full of wanton, before she leaned closer to his ear and whispered, "I want you in my bed."

TBC
Loving You

Chapter Summary

It's Carmilla's first time to sleep in Laura's bed; in Laura's own chamber in the Hollis' Castle, and the thought of claiming Laura's virginity knowing that Laura's father and the entire Hollis clan were sleeping in the same castle and the fact that her wife was afraid of penis was making her nervous and insane.

Chapter Notes

Firstly, I am overwhelmed and happy to read all your previous comments and never realized how invested some of you out there on this crazy fic. Thank you for appreciating and showing love to this story. I know that some of you are wondering how/when this story would end, honestly I don't know when or where it's going to end. As what I've said in the previous chapter note, I'm writing as long as you (and me) are being entertained, and some of the ideas that I have on this story are inspired by some of your comments too. So, if you have anything in mind, feel free to tell me and maybe I could make a story out of it ;-)

Secondly, please excuse me for the delay and my lame attempt of writing smut. I just want to warn you, I'm not a smut writer, so I hope you'll all bear with me after reading this chapter :-P

Thanks again for not getting tired of leaving kudos and comments. I really appreciate your generosity and time :-) 

*****

Carmilla

"I want you in my bed."

She heard and felt Laura's warm breath in her ear. Her eyes widened in surprise, her breathing and pulse quickened as her ears caught those sweet words.

She was stunned and her body tensed. She did not expect this to happen. She may be horny from time to time and had promised her father-in-law to produce an heir soon, but the thought of claiming Laura's innocence and virginity for the first time under the Hollis' roof was not she had in mind when the time come to consummate their marriage.

But when Laura pulled back and their eyes met, she saw fully dilated hazel eyes gazing at her with full of desire. She just had to give in. And the next thing she knew, Laura grabbed her hand and led her inside the Princess' chamber.

Once the door closed, she was surprised when Laura broke away from the hold and stood a meter
apart from her and stared intently at her direction.

Puzzled, she waited and remained unmoved.

Was her wife trying to tell her to wait first?

Or worst…

Did Laura get cold feet?

They just made up due to miscommunications she definitely did not want to be misunderstood again, even if she was already itching for Laura's touch.

She remembered her father's advice of respecting and making her wife at ease in bed with her, she definitely would not want Laura's first time to be unpleasant.

But the way Laura looked tonight. The way her wife stared at her, it was making her frustratingly insane and she cannot think properly!

She had been fantasizing about kissing Laura in ways her wife would never imagine.

Then she grew worried…

*Did she just want to sleep or sleep, like the 'naked kind of sleeping together'/?*

She was unsure if Laura had already overcome the fear of touching or seeing a penis despite showing her wife how to touch her shaft. They had not a chance to explore further how far Laura would willingly see or touch her penis without panicking.

She did not want to presume…

But those stares from Laura was sending mixed signal.

Her heart throbbed fiercely.

She felt like she was about to receive the gift that she had been longing for.

*Breath Carmilla!*

She was starting to get aroused.

She was thankful that the chamber was dimly lit, with only a candle from the table as the source of light, or else, Laura would have caught a glimpse of the bulge on her trousers.

She tried to be rational but Laura's action was driving her insane. She knew that her wife was not keen on touching or seeing her penis, and they just enjoyed kissing and touching each other just like they do before. But inviting her in bed and knowing that they could fittingly 'do the deed' prompted her to think that maybe... maybe Laura was ready…

…Or maybe Laura just wanted to snuggle and sleep beside her?

Her musing was interrupted when she saw Laura's hands reached for the string of camisole.

And her eyes widened in excitement as she watched her wife started to untie the strings of the front of the same white thin camisole that had once betrayed her.
She was already losing her confidence and panicking a moment ago... but the sight of her wife's chest heaving provocatively; slowly removing the unwanted piece of cloth; and the anticipation of what she was about to see sent her libido into frenzy.

Her heart skipped a beat and she felt like exploding at the sight of Laura slowly pulling the sleeves down off the shoulders. She felt her mouth drying and licked her lips, and swallowed hard at the anticipation of fully seeing her wife's bare breasts for the first time, as Laura's hand pulled down the other sleeve and the unwanted silk garment fell on the floor in a graceful swoosh. She felt her shaft aching to get out at the constraint of her braise and tight trousers, as the beautiful half naked body of her wife was revealed to her for the first time, and she just gaped openly.

"Come here," Laura beckoned in a deep enticing voice.

She shivered at Laura's commanding and seductive voice. She complied and walked slowly towards her wife, never tearing her sight off from those hazel eyes.

Once she was inside Laura's personal space, she stopped and was stunned at the beautiful sight in front of her. Her breathing became heavy and she saw also the rise and fall of Laura's chest; they could both hear the ragged sound of their breathing and she felt her shaft hardening like a rock.

It was killing her to just stare at Laura's bosom; she wanted badly to put her hands on them and caressed those soft round breasts. But this time, she wanted her wife to make the first move, and she wanted to make sure that Laura was ready to whatever would happen tonight. This time was different compared to those moments of their heavy make out and petting; this time it was for real and she wanted Laura to feel at ease.

She was caught off guard, when Laura reached for her hands, and her wife slowly guided and put them on the breasts that she was dying to touch.

Her breathing became more ragged as she saw Laura's hands rested over her own hands, while she cupped Laura's fully round breasts.....

"Feel me Carl," Laura implored.

She complied and squeezed and massaged both Laura's breasts firmly. She growled while looking and kneading those full breasts in her bare hands. It felt insanely wonderful!

She was rewarded by soft moans from Laura. When she looked up she saw the arousal in her wife's eyes and she smirked. Laura grabbed her face gently and kissed her lips; she felt Laura's tongue parting her mouth, demanding entry. She welcomed it and kissed her wife deeply, while her hands still fondled Laura's breasts.

She had been dreaming and imagining what she would do with these breasts once she get her hands on them; the overwhelming feeling of kneading Laura's bosom caused her to lost her decency; her breathing became heavier and she cannot control herself anymore as this animalistic instinct consumed her!

She released from the kiss; wet her lips before putting her mouth to one of those fully erected nipples. She growled at the sensation of Laura's erected nipples inside her mouth and sucked it hard, then swirled her tongue around the little hard bud, before ravaging the other breast.

Laura moaned louder as her mouth shifted from sucking one nipple to another, while Laura's hands caressed her hair and the back of her neck.

Was the incoherent message that she heard as she feasted greedily on her wife; her hunger almost overwhelming.

She reluctantly released her mouth from Laura's left nipple, and put her mouth on her wife's lips while Laura led them to bed. They managed to come to bed without releasing from the kiss and Laura sat at the end of the bed, hands intertwined around her neck. She managed to untie her tunic while Laura continued to kiss her deeply and interrupted Laura's kiss in a jiffy while she pulled her tunic off over her head.

Then she was only left with her short sleeves white under tunic, braies, trousers and footwear.

She released from the kiss and stood in front of her wife and untied her trousers impatiently, then she met Laura's gaze and was greeted by heavy-lidded eyes, she felt more aroused and grew worried when she remembered her bulge, so she quickly bend down to hide it and removed her boots first; followed by her socks and then the tight trousers.

When she looked up she sighed when she saw Laura already in the middle of the bed.

Dressed only in her braies and short sleeved under tunic, she crawled on the bed. But was suddenly seized; Laura must have removed the underwear while she was busy removing the rest of her clothes; and now she found herself gaping at the entire nakedness of her wife spread gracefully in the middle of the bed waiting for her in all its glory, beauty and elegance; as if an offering for her to devour and consume.

She was ecstatic as the erotic sight of her wife unfolded before her eyes for the first time and took her time to revere the natural beauty of Laura.

Her eyes caught immediately the sight of the well-toned flat stomach of her wife. Then Laura's smooth legs and toned arms. Every part of Laura's body was beautifully toned and delicate. And that long wavy honey brown hair, that were loose and flowing freely down her wife's shoulders were a sight to behold! Then she shifted her focus on her favorite part of Laura's body: the breasts. How she loved those round perky breasts! After having the first taste of it, she cannot wait to feast on them again. Then her eyes caught glimpse of the unkempt tuft of honey brown hair in between her wife's legs, and found herself staring at the natural beauty of her wife; it's so mysterious, mischievous, confident and provocative. She found it beautiful and wild at the same time, and it excite her to see and explore this part of Laura's body.

Bloody hell!

She exclaimed in her thoughts and felt her rigid shaft aching like never before. She tried to control her lust as insanely as possible. She cannot just go charging and banging Laura; she wanted this moment to be easy on her wife.

She focused her sight at her wife's beautiful face instead. She adored that face so much, she liked gazing at it and running her hand at every delicate part of Laura's face. But most specially, she loved that mouth and those red delicious lips that always claimed her own.

An overwhelming pride possessed her as she gazed at her wife; Laura looked so fresh, innocent, delicate, and beautiful and she was proud to have captured the most coveted princess in Styria.

You're mine.

She thought and reminded herself how precious the Princess of Hollis before claiming her wife. But suddenly, she was reminded that this was Laura's first time. This was not about her and her pride of
winning the Princess of Hollis' heart; it's about Laura's comfort, easiness and feeling secured with her on bed. She remembered her father's advices: it was about respecting and pleasuring her wife first.

Even though she was hard as a rock and aching for a release, she focused her mind on Laura. She was going to take it slow.

Perhaps witnessing her aching and desire…

"My Prince…I am you know…" Laura uttered in a husky tone and gave her a come-hither look. "…yours."

She smiled and her breathing became harder after Laura offered herself to her.

"You're beautiful," she uttered softly and held Laura's gaze, and received a timid smile from her wife. She revered that beautiful sight for a moment, to let Laura know how she adored her wife.

Then she dipped her head and kissed slowly Laura's lower legs, knees, thighs; placing several slow lingering kisses on them. She glanced up and saw Laura's eyes closed, savoring the sensation of her lips. She slowly kissed her way up on Laura's flat stomach and took time to lick the inside of Laura's navel.

She heard Laura moaned and she continued to place light kisses on Laura's stomach, kissing her way up to those breasts that she was craving. She put her mouth on Laura's left breast and sucked it gently this time, relishing the feeling of Laura's nipple hardening in her mouth then her tongue licked the areola and sucked that hard little bud again. She felt Laura's hand tangled on her hair, urging her to take the neglected breast. She complied and sucked Laura's other nipple so hard that it elicited a loud moan, and she felt her member throbbing. She released her mouth and planted slow small kisses on Laura's neck. And then claimed her wife's lips.

She just kissed Laura like they did the first time: intense and demanding.

As the need for oxygen arose, she pulled gently away from the kiss and traced small kisses on Laura's throat, under the pulse point and slowly treaded lower, kissing Laura's bosom again.

She heard her wife elicited a low moan as her lips reached the valley between Laura's breasts and she placed small gentle kisses on the area. She felt Laura's hands continued to caress the back of her neck and guided her mouth on the left breast; she happily complied and sucked it gently and torturously. She can't get enough of those breasts!

Then she fondled the other one and put her thumb and index fingers between those erected nipple and rubbed it until it hardened in her touch; before putting her mouth to it and licked it lightly by the tip of her tongue, teasing Laura to the edge before sucking it greedily. She felt her shaft thickening and her mouth claimed the Princess' right breast wantonly and did not release it; not until Laura's back arched and heard her wife moaned in pain and pleasure.

"Carl…" Laura whimpered in between ragged breaths.

She switched to the other breast and gave the same attention that she gave to the other, before running her hands at the softness of Laura's inner thigh reaching Laura's pubic area. She moaned as she felt the softness of her wife's pubic hair and ran her hand to the folds of Laura's dripping core; her wife was so wet; she carefully inserted one finger testing how Laura would react and when she received a moan and not a flinch, and felt the Princess' hips bucked against her finger, she added another one and pump gently inside Laura's core. She started slow and wanted her wife to feel the sensation of being pleasured and loved. The moans that Laura elicited were like music to her ears, as...
she learned to discover how to touch her wife for the first time. It was beautiful and intimidating at the same time. She wanted to please her wife badly and hoped that she was doing the right thing. She gradually increased the pace as she felt Laura's nails dug deeply on her back.

"C-Carl-"

She heard Laura pleaded and saw her wife flushed. She matched the pace of her finger to the writhing of Laura's hips, and to the pitch of Laura's cries. The deeper she thrusted the deeper her wife's fingernails sunk to her back. She moaned at the sensation of exploring and touching Laura intimately for the first time as her fingers slid in and out her wife's core; while Laura's hip bucked faster. She could feel that Laura was towards climax and she thrusted faster. Then her fingers curled and hit a certain spot and Laura shrieked and shuddered.

"Caaaarl!"

She heard her wife exalting her name and the next thing she felt was Laura's cum dripping all over her hand. She smiled and felt satisfied that she was able to please her wife.

When she knew Laura's breathing evened, she released her fingers inside and kissed her wife deeply and slowly, giving Laura time to recover.

Her desire for Laura was insatiable. She was stiff and aching, but she does not want to pressure Laura.

She poked her tongue at her wife's mouth and was reciprocated by the same intense kiss from Laura. But instead of feeling Laura's hands caressing her nape and hair, she was caught off guard when she felt Laura rubbed her sensitive rigid shaft. She closed her eyes and groaned at the sensation of Laura's hand finally giving her penis the attention it was seeking while she continued to kiss her wife. She had not expected this from Laura. But this daring move from her wife was driving her insanely aroused. It felt wonderful to feel Laura's hand fondling her member. She could just come right there and then and would be satisfied and be thankful that Laura managed to touch her penis without panicking!

Overwhelmed at the sensation on her hard member, she grew more aroused when Laura started to trace small kisses on the lines of her jawbone, kissing its way up behind her earlobe while still stroking her aching shaft. She felt Laura's tongue flickered behind and around her earlobe, before taking it, sucked it momentarily and slowly released it. She did not realize she would be aroused too by this bold gesture from Laura. Then she felt Laura's warm wet tongue slid on her right ear and slowly licked the outer and inner rim. She felt her head spinning at the growing arousal as the tip of Laura's tongue devoured her ear while her wife's hand stroked her member.

"Carl, I want you inside me." Laura whispered enticingly to her ear.

After hearing those words, she opened her eyes and released from Laura's naughty ministrations on her ear, and felt the hand on her shaft disappeared.

Did she just hear that right? She was totally dumfounded. Even if the chamber was dimly lit, she knew that her wife could feel just how hard and thick she had gotten after that undressing stunt, nakedness, feasting on those lovely breasts and the torturous ministrations on her member.

She sought Laura's gaze reconfirming if she had heard it right.

But she did not need to ask anymore, as she felt Laura's hands began to pull down her braies; she shifted and managed to strip down in no time. She was thankful for the small amount of light,
because she does not want her wife to see her shaft in its full glory. It might send Laura in a full panic mood. And when they finally got rid of the unwanted garment, she placed herself gently above Laura and gazed at those fully dilated hazel eyes as she sought Laura's permission, when she received a nod from Laura, her hands carefully straddled Laura's legs, and placed herself in between Laura's thighs. She held Laura's gaze and maintained eye contact.

"Are you sure?" she mumbled, her voice laced with worry and concern. She received a genuine smile from Laura as if appreciating her for being considerate on their first time.

"Without a doubt in my heart," Laura reassured and reached out, cupped her left cheek and kissed her.

"Tell me if I am hurting you," was her last worried remark as she pulled out from the kiss, while Laura's hand remained cupping her face; and gazed at her while she bare everything that she felt in front of Laura's eyes.

Her wife nodded and gave her a reassuring smile and said:

"I want to let you know that I didn't mean what I've said before…" Laura mumbled sheepishly. "The me, not coming back to your kingdom and not wanting to produce your heir. I was furious and I shouldn't have said it… and just so you know, I am honored and would gladly bear you three heirs. I would be a fool not to have three beautiful children with you."

She just smiled genuinely and almost cried. She was too overwhelmed to reply and was bursting with happiness inside. Never in her life had she dreamt of having her own children; let alone having children with someone she love. Laura's love, assurance and the thought of having three beautiful children with the woman she love made her life worth living and beautiful.

She leaned on Laura's hand that was still cupping her cheek and kissed the palm of her wife gently. The contact of her wet lips instantly sent a shiver to her wife and she heard Laura gasped.

She put her lips back on Laura's own and this time, Laura's tongue explored her mouth hungrily, as her right hand found again Laura's left breast and fondled it. She discovered that this breast was the most sensitive part of her wife's body when it comes to pleasing, so she concentrated on that part and claimed Laura's left nipple without hesitating. She licked the areola and sucked the little bud greedily like before and shifted to the other breasts and gave the same attention that it deserved. Laura moaned in pain and pleasure of being sucked too hard and she felt Laura's hands tangled wildly in her hair. She touched her wife downwards and felt Laura's hips bucked at the contact of her hand on the sensitive core. Laura was wet again and dripping.

Before claiming her gift, she dipped her head and kissed her wife's moist mound; the familiar scent that was purely Laura was more intoxicating compared to the times that she sniffed Laura's underwear, and it was driving her wild! She wished to devour Laura right there and there! But she was unsure what her wife thought of being kissed and licked down there. She focused instead on what Laura thought was appropriate.

Her heart throbbed fiercely and hoped that Laura would be alright. Pre cum were already oozing out of her knob as she grabbed the base of her stiff aching member and carefully put it inside Laura's center. She moaned as her knob slid gently inside Laura's wet mound and she stilled; waiting for her wife to grow comfortable at the size of her shaft and relishing the hot wetness of Laura.

When she saw her wife relaxed, she begun to thrust gently at Laura's wet tightness, carefully penetrating. But she froze and suddenly panicked when she saw Laura winced in pain.
"Cupcake, are you alright?" Was her worried remark and was about to pull her shaft out. But her wife held her buttocks in place, encouraging her to continue. Laura did not comment and gave her a reassuring nod and a forced smile.

She thrusted in a steady, slow and gentle motion, concentrating on the sensation that it gives her as she finally claimed Laura. She burrowed her head into Laura's neck, feeling the warmth skin of her wife and inhaling Laura's scent while she slowly makes love to her wife.

But the combination of Laura's hand running along her hair, Laura's nail scraping at her back and loud moans drove her mad and brought out her animalistic instinct; she suddenly found herself thrusting faster and deeper unto Laura's tight core and then she felt the thin barrier of Laura's virginity had broken. And moments later Laura's moans were becoming sharper and louder.

She felt the pressure building inside her, but she waited as Laura's moan became shorter; breathing ragged and she felt Laura contracting; then a sudden gush of warm juice hit her member, and Laura shouted her name for the second time. She growled, thrusted and plunged deeper as her shaft started to spasm and shoot her loads inside her wife while Laura squeeze and tightened on her member; she moaned at the sensation as she came. She collapsed on top of Laura as they both catch their breath.

She never felt more secured and loved, as Laura's arms held her tight, while her face nuzzled on Laura's warm neck. They savored the moment not wanting it to end, as she remained sheathed in the warmth of Laura's tight mound. For the first time in her life, she felt so close and near to someone that it felt overwhelmingly intense. She was exhausted but the wonderful feeling of her wife's hands caressing the back of her neck and the other stroking her back felt so wonderful. She wished she could just nuzzled there and be held by Laura like that forever.

But she suddenly remembered that Laura might be hurting, so she carefully pulled out and felt Laura cringing afterwards.

Her eyes sought worriedly Laura's and she could tell that her wife was trying to hide the pain.

"I'm sorry Cupcake." She uttered in a low sheepish tone.

"No. Don't be," was Laura's reassuring remark. "I wanted it… I wanted to feel you inside me. It hurt but I feel wonderful being so close to you. So, stop worrying."

She just nodded, felt guilty but overwhelmed and kissed her wife. She decided not to ask further, even if she was dying to know how her wife felt.

"I love you Laura," she uttered in a deep raspy tone. "And thank you." She added and Laura reached and cupped her left cheek, and she felt those little fingers of her wife traced lovingly over her jawline.

"I love you too, Carl," Laura whispered back.

TBC
Big Grumpy Wild Cat

Chapter Summary

It was the morning of their first love making and real honeymoon, and someone had already started to interrupt them.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Laura

"Laura! You have to wake up!"

She was startled and was snatched from her sleep as the sound of Perry's voice entering in her chamber held her attention. She was too sleepy and too exhausted to open her eyes, but Perry's voice was extra hyper and loud today; she needs to get up before Perry wakes the whole castle. When she tried to move, she felt a heavy weight on her chest and she cannot get up. She almost panic and did not know what was on top of her. When she opened her eyes, she received the biggest surprise of her life, as she saw a sleeping Carl nuzzled on her naked bosom like an innocent child; she immediately covered Carl and her nakedness with the sheet, as she saw Perry approached her bed. She sneaked some pillows beside Carl to make it look like she was surrounded by pillows.

"Perry, it's still early, what are you doing here?" she grumbled holding the sheet up till her jaw.

"It's almost noon. You have to get up, Prince Carl is missing!" was Perry's hyper remark, as her Lady in Waiting approached the foot of the bed. "LaFontaine told me that His Highness was so heart broken and furious after you had a fight with him, that he remained awake the whole night and refused to sleep. Then he ordered LaFontaine to pack in the middle of the night, and wanted to leave the castle before dusk. But when LaFontaine came back to check on him he was not in his chamber. You should have talked to him yesterday and the other day. Laura, the poor prince is in love with you, can't you see it?!" Perry reprimanded. "And do you know that he refused to eat because he wanted to eat with you and no one else? I just have to force him to eat the cheese and bread that I knew he likes and brought it to his chamber."

"But…" she tried to cut into the conversation, but Perry motioned for her to keep quiet.

"No. This time, I'm not going to listen to any of your excuses or whining," Perry retaliated. "You, little girl have been unreasonable and unfair to him. I know that you're angry but he came all the way from Karnstein Kingdom just to say sorry to you and to fix the problem. LaFontaine told me everything… It's normal for newlywed couples to have miscommunication and misunderstanding, but when he comes to you to talk, you should listen…," was Perry's strict advice. "And should I give you another reason why Prince Carl is in love with you?" was the Lady in Waiting's challenging remark. "LaFontaine told me that Her Majesty did not allow His Highness to travel to Hollis' due to his condition. But even if Prince Carl was not ready to travel that far and long, he did not listen to his mother and still left. He had a horrible journey because he was not used to it; LaFontaine told me that he panicked and passed out; the entire journey was very unpleasant for him, because he felt nauseous, dizzy and threw up many times during the travel. And he hadn't any decent rest or sleep since he came here because he was worried that you're still mad at him and refused to see him."
After hearing that lecture from her Lady in Waiting, her hold on Carl tightened. She felt horrible at the way she treated him when he arrived, and did not realize what Carl had gone through just to say sorry to her.

"And now he is missing and we're afraid that he might have done something foolish. Laura, we need to find him!" Perry exclaimed, and walked closer to the foot of the bed. "Sweetie, LaFontaine told me that since you arrived in the Karnstein Castle, Prince Carl became happy and inspired. You have to go back to him so that he won't be grumpy again and my LaFontaine would not have to deal with his broodiness forever…"

Suddenly, they both caught themselves staring at each other after hearing the last sentence. She wanted to confirm if she heard it right, but before she could tell Perry not to worry, and ask her Lady in Waiting what did she meant by 'my Lafontaine', she felt Carl moved under the sheet and without a warning, lifted his head from her bosom and showed himself to Perry leaving her torso bare as the sheet covering her slid down together with Carl.

"Can't I have a decent sleep?" Carl grumbled, half awake and grumpy while looking at Perry.

The looks on Perry's eyes were a mixture of shock and surprised. Her Lady in Waiting was rendered speechless after having seen her naked under the sheet with the Prince resting his head on her breasts a moment ago. She did not mind Perry seeing her naked, but seeing her naked with Carl felt awkward; she was thankful that Carl chose not to remove his under tunic, or else, Perry might have a heart attack.

"Your Highness, I didn't mean to intrude. I have no idea that you're here. LaFontaine had been worried and searching for you the whole night," Perry informed while bowing. "They thought you did something crazy."

"I will do something crazy if you don't stop talking and interrupt my sleep-" was Carl's snarky comment.

"Forgive me Your Highness," Perry apologized and bowed again.

Before he could throw another snarky remark on Perry, she grabbed the sheet and covered both of them and she lied on her side, and held Carl near to her; she touched Carl's nape to silence him and put gently his face back on her bosom and wrapped her arms protectively around his head, so as to cover her bosom too. She grinned when he did not resist and nuzzled back comfortably in the warmth of her breasts; after their love making last night, and Carl giving an extra attention to her bosom, she discovered that her breasts could calm the big grumpy wild cat beside her. And she was right! When she felt him calmed down in her arms, she took over the conversation.

"I'm sorry Perry, we didn't know that LaFontaine is looking for Carl," she said in a mild and low tone, trying not to wake again the big grumpy wild cat on her bosom. "Please tell LaFontaine not to worry because the Prince is with me, and we're sorry for not telling them."

She saw Perry just nodded, seeing that her Prince regained his sleep and was snuggled comfortably on her chest.

"Alright. But do you like me to bring your lunch now?" Perry asked in a hush tone. "You and His Highness should eat something if you're, you know…" Perry suggested with a raised eyebrow.

She felt a bit shy after the last sentence from Perry, and gave her Lady in Waiting-Mother Substitute a timid smile. After Carl claimed her virginity, she was ecstatic at how Carl adored and revered her in
bed, and her lust for him was overwhelming that she decided to take another round last night. Now, she felt not just exhausted but sore, and she does not know if she had the strength to come out of her chamber today.

"No thanks. I think I could use some sleep too, and I don't think Carl would be awake for the next hours," she mumbled back, while stroking gently his hair. "He's exhausted and just wants to sleep. And don't worry, we sneaked in the kitchen last night and ate." She reassured her Lady in Waiting, that they were not hungry. She knew that Perry would be worried.

"Alright, you can relax the whole day. I'll leave you alone, to rest and to recharge your energy; after all, you need to be ready when he wakes up," "Perry commented nonchalantly, before turning around and walked quietly to the door.

She thought that Carl had gone back to sleep after that grumpy snarky remark that he threw on Perry, but as soon as the door closed, she gasped when she felt his wet lips on her left breast and was instantly aroused at the contact; and the next thing she knew, Carl was sucking her nipple gently. She turned her gaze on him and moaned at the sight of Carl caressing her right breast and his mouth on her left nipple suckling also the areola. She closed her eyes and savored this torturous sensation of his mouth on her breast.

Oh God!

She exclaimed in her thoughts as Carl continued to suckle on her left breast, as if never getting tired. She opened her eyes and gazed at him; and was surprised to see his eyes closed and she saw calmness on his face, while her head was spinning due to arousal and stimulation on her breast. She loved what he was doing and it seemed to relax him, while it sent fire bolts in her body and she can't control her arousal; a soft moan escaped her mouth.

God!

It was so amazing and torturous at how he suckled her breasts. She did not imagine that he would be so into them. Was he really this fond of her breasts? She tried to calm down and tried her best to stroke his hair gently, and not dig her nails on him while he remained suckling. After seemed to be a torturous forever, he released her nipple and she heard his low steady breathing against her breasts, she smiled and can't help imagining him purring like a cat. She kissed his forehead and cradled him in her arms. There would be more days to satisfy her needs, but right now she does not want to disturb him. She closed her eyes and thought that they both needed a well-deserved sleep, even if her nipples were throbbing with arousal.

*****

When she woke up for the second time that day, she knew that the sun was almost setting when she saw golden rays softly scattered around her chamber. The weather outside was too beautiful not to be missed. But she doesn't have any desire to leave her bed; not when her Prince was lying and cuddling beside her. And she thought; this moment was more beautiful than the sunset outside, as she and Carl basked in the aftermath of their love making.

Last night was the most beautiful night in her life. She felt amazing and wonderful while Carl made love to her. She did not imagine that it could be intense and crazy at the same time. She was nervous and worried when she asked him to do it, but with his gentleness and loving touches, she surprisingly surrendered herself to him. She admitted that the darkness and not seeing his 'sword' helped a lot to calm her nerves and slowly overcome her fright. And now, she was wondering if she could be confident to do that again.
Suddenly her curiosity shifted, as she noticed Carl still wearing his under tunic. She respected him when he decided not to take off his shirt and did not touch his chest when they made love. She knew that he might still feel uncomfortable showing his chest to her. But she was dying to see him naked and touch his breasts too. She did not know how she could tell him that she liked his breasts without creating any suspicion from him that she loved seeing and touching woman's breasts and body.

She took a deep breath and hoped that if she asked him about the idea of getting fully naked with her while they make love, he would not be offended or get angry. She absentmindedly caressed his face and ran her fingers softly at his jaw line. She gazed at his perfectly sculpted jaw line and cannot help but to be infatuated by this certain part of his face. She remembered comparing his handsome face to a Greek God before, because she was so in love with his jaw line. But after some time she realized that it was not just his jaw line she was falling in love with; but him. She was thankful that he remained clean-shaven, and she could revere and enjoy touching his smooth face; but sometimes she missed the Carl with the beard too and remembered how adorable and sweet like a kitten he looked, whenever she caressed the sides under his ears.

Her gaze remained fixated on him and absent-mindedly stroked his face, and prayed that she could control herself from waking him up and kissing him.

God! How could he be so beautiful?! Few days ago she was fuming mad at him and almost decided to separate from him due to all the heart aches that he caused her. She should have remained angry at him for not realizing all his mistakes and for not apologizing 'fully' to her. She admitted that she had been so hasty to kiss and forgive him from all those painful things that he did to her. She did not know why she suddenly acted like that and just forgave Carl right away. She stopped caressing his face and she wondered how Carl could have managed to remain indifferent towards her the past months.

"I hope you're thinking about me right now and not another man,"

She was snatched from her contemplation and saw her Prince had awoken now. She smiled when she caught him gave her a narrow look and smirk; she knew that he was teasing her.

"I just surrendered my whole self and gave my body to you last night; how could you assume that I'm thinking of another man?" she asked, as if challenging him.

His expression softened and she saw the innocent, vulnerable and charming prince that she loved. She almost melted when she caught that bashful smile of his, and realized that she was easily captured by Carl's charm. She hated it that Carl could just render her speechless and smitten.

"Cupcake, you know that I'm just teasing you," Carl told her at once. "Is something bothering you then?"

"The truth is… I actually hate you," she said in a firm tone, and watched his cheerful, confident expression morphed into a serious and worried expression, and saw his brows furrowed. She waited how he would react.

"You hate me?" was Carl's surprised question.

"Yes." She confirmed and saw him rise and sat on the bed to face her fully. She remained lying on her side and did not tear her eyes on him, while she notice his gaze turned into glare. She tightened her hold on the sheet that was covering her bosom and felt like Carl was about to take that statement seriously, as the smirk on his face faded and his jaw clenched. "I hate you because you just came and knocked at the door of my chamber looking like a poor cute kitty, displayed your irresistible broody
charming self and swept my feet off."

The creased on his forehead disappeared and she felt his right hand cupped her cheek gently, and gazed at her.

"Cupcake, how many times do I have to apologize and say sorry to you before you fully forgive me?" Carl asked his voice low and tender. "I am sorry that I have treated you badly and I promise not to do it again."

She sighed, but not yet fully contented. Then she remembered how cold and indifferent he was the first time she met him after she returned from their Kingdom.

"I wondered how you managed to be so cold and aloof to me, knowing that I was hurting inside," she asked, her voice serious and breaking. "Do you remember the time when I arrived from home and I went right away to the library to see you because I missed you and wanted to tell you that I love you? But you shouted at me and rejected me when I tried to touch you?" she elaborated, so he could remember immediately.

"What did really happened during that time when I was away?" she asked and for the first time, she was confident to confront him. "I feel like it hasn't anything to do with those unread letters, and yet you still treated me indifferently."

This time, his facial expression became serious and saw him took a deep breath before looking at her eyes.

"You're right, it had nothing to do with the letters," he started, his voice mellow and raspy. "When you left the castle after finding out what I really am, I thought you hated me and I lose control. I became depressed and my Queen Mother saw how I wasted while you're away. She didn't mentioned to me about your letters and."

"Whoa! Hold it right there," she interrupted him, surprised at what she heard. She was beginning to grow angry at what happened. "I personally handed your mother the first letter, why didn't she give it to you?"

"Because she was afraid that if I find out that you're in love with me too, I'd be distracted due to my feelings for you; and I'll be unfit to be a king," Carl stated carefully. "My mother was afraid that I'll become weak because she knew how I want you badly in my life; she witnessed how I've fell in love with you; she witnessed how I surrendered and lost hope when I thought that you would never come back to me. And she saw what you could do to me in case you did not return to me..."

"And how would you be if I didn't return?" she interrupted, fully curious.

"Devastated," Carl answered in a serious tone.

She fell silent.

She did not realize how deep and intense Carl's feelings for her.

And now, she was thankful that she discovered what really happened when she left Karnstein Kingdom during that time.

There was a part of her that she hated her mother-in-law for not giving her letters right away to Carl, but there was also a part of her that understood why the Queen did that.

It seemed unfair and very manipulative of the Queen to do these things to her son, but as the mother of the love of her life, she would respect all of the Queen's decision; for now.
"Look," Carl uttered. "I know I'm not so good with the 'feelings' thing… but I'm sorry that I listened to what my mother told me and didn't trust you and my feelings for you first. My mother could be strict and overprotective sometimes, and you might misunderstand her, but she just wants what's best for me and for the kingdom."

"I understand," she assured him and will give the Queen the benefit of the doubt. She looked down. Deep inside her, she was already taking a mental note at how her mother-in-law could be, and she would not forget easily what the Queen did.

Then she looked up and caught Carl still furrowing his brows.

"So, am I already forgiven for all the bad things that I've done?" was his hopeful remark.

"Not quite."

"What?!" was his surprised reaction. "I'm the future King of Karnstein, you cannot remain angry at me for a long time!" he grumbled.

She knew that he would react like that; she was unsure if he was serious or just teasing her, but likewise, she needed to teach him a lesson.

"Is that how you apologize to a woman; especially to your wife?" she questioned, teasing him. She held the sheet tightly on her chest, rose and sat on the bed too, and faced him. She was ready for some bickering and bantering with him. But she was surprised when she saw him remained serious and raised an eyebrow and she realized: he was serious. "Didn't someone tell you that when you apologize, you need to be humble and sometimes… like in our case… you need to please, woo or court me, your wife, so that I'll feel special and important?"

"No."

"What?!" was Carl's serious reply. "I was told that I don't need to apologize because a king should not say sorry… But when I met you, I realized and felt that, there are times that I need to say sorry." He related in a deep firm voice. "Because I know that you won't talk to me, if I didn't apologize to you."

She was surprised at that confession from him. No wonder he was not that keen when apologizing, she thought and suddenly learned some things about him.

"It's good that you realize that I will not talk to you if you don't say sorry and kiss me, if you've done something to upset me," she teased and gave him a naughty grin. She was about to say something more, but his lips suddenly claimed hers and Carl kissed her deeply.

"I'm sorry Cupcake," he whispered in a low, calm and raspy tone, after releasing from the kiss. "I promise I'll make it up to you."

She smiled and found his gesture sweet. And she thought:

*Now he's learning.*

She opened her mouth slightly, and was about to tell him that he was already forgiven, but changed her mind when she heard his last comment, and wondered what he was going to do. Suddenly, her curiosity nagged her.

"Tell me, what are you planning to do to woo me?" she asked excitedly.

But before he could reply, a loud knock on the door caught both their attention and they both stared at the door.
"Who is it?!" she asked and grabbed tightly the sheet around her chest.

"It's LaFontaine, Your Highness!"

And before she reply she glanced at Carl who was covered half ways by the sheet, and caught glimpse of his braies and realized that he might have put it on after they made love last night, for her sake.

"Come in!"

After a few seconds, she saw a shy and somewhat careful LaFontaine bowed to both of them and stood by the foot of the bed; the same spot where Perry stood this morning.

"Forgive me for interrupting, Your Highnesses," LaFontaine said and still bowed their head.

She was about to say it was alright and remembered that she should thanked them and asked them how they found out a cure for her father. But the voice of Carl beat her.

"What do you want?" Carl asked his Valet.

"I need to dress your wound and change your bandage, since you refused to let me change it yesterday, and you might get infected if we wait another day before changing it. Because the germs at your skin and in the air and the germs inside your body or organ, can infect your wound and might go deeper into the tissues and muscles, and might affect your organ, resulting to exposing you from any illness and dangerous diseases," LaFontaine babbled nervously.

She panicked instantly after hearing LaFontaine's remark and was shocked as she caught Carl just rolled his eyes, as if not taking it seriously.

"What wound?!" she demanded, glared at Carl and waited anxiously for his reply. But when he did not reply, she shifted her glare to LaFontaine and waited anxiously for them to talk. She did not have any idea how LaFontaine could explain those things like a doctor, but she wanted some answer.

Then she felt Carl's hand reached out and touched her knee.

"Cupcake, it's nothing to worry about," Carl said nonchalantly, and switched his sight on his Valet.

"You can leave now and wait for me at my chamber," he ordered LaFontaine.

"No, they won't leave this room until you tell me how and where you got it?" she demanded and glared at Carl. But he remained silent. Seeing that she cannot coax him to tell the truth, she shifted her stare to LaFontaine instead. "It's either you speak or I'll tell Perry that you withheld a very important information from me."

"His Highness was wounded by your sword, when you had a sword fight with him," LaFontaine explained nervously and avoided Carl's direction.

"Wonderful! That's just great!" was Carl's snarky remark after his Valet did not heed his order. "My Valet is more afraid of my wife and her Lady-in-Waiting, than me!" he exclaimed bitterly and rolled his eyes.

"Thank you LaFontaine," she said and turned to face Carl. He was still shooting daggers at LaFontaine but she gently cupped his face with her left hand and motioned for him to look at her direction. "Why didn't you tell me?" she asked her voice coated with worry, as she gazed at him. Then she caught him rolled his eyes again, as if irritated that she had found out and LaFontaine revealed it. "Carl Philipp Marcus, do not roll your eyes when your wife is talking to you," she
scolded him. "Show me your wound," she ordered and he dutifully obeyed her and unfolded his under tunic and showed the bandage on his side. "Does it hurt?" she asked seeing that the bandage was kind of big.

"No." Carl replied firmly.

"I'm sorry Carl, I didn't know that." she was apologizing but Carl's index finger touched her lips and silenced her.

"Shh, Cupcake, I told you, it's nothing. It's just a scratch," Carl said reassuringly.

"I could have stabbed you due to my foolishness and anger," she berated herself after Carl released his finger on her lips.

Then she felt his hand cupped her cheek gently, and whispered: "I'm not hurt, so don't worry," was his gentle reassuring remark. "And if it makes you better, I'll go with LaFontaine now and take a bath then I'll let them dress my wound. Would that be alright?"

She nodded and then kissed him deeply and she felt Carl's hand wrapped on her waist automatically. After releasing from the kiss, she still cannot be appeased.

"Can I see it?" was her curious remark.

"Cupcake…" Carl opposed.

"Alright, go and take a bath and change your bandage," she returned, unsatisfied. She felt Carl moved closer and kissed her on the forehead.

"After I take a bath, I'll go to your father; I promise His majesty that I'll visit him today," Carl said after releasing from the kiss. "You stay here in bed and rest more. And then I'll see you at dinner."

She just nodded and watched him got out of her bed and saw LaFontaine already beside her Prince helping him put on his tunic and trousers. Then she remembered something…

"LaFontaine," she called and saw the Valet looked at her direction. "Thank you so much for giving my father that medicine. And forgive me for over acting and getting mad… I'm just worried that it wouldn't work out and my father…"

She was saying, but she saw LaFontaine walked to her side, left Carl dressed on his own and sat beside the bed and faced her. They smiled at her and held her hand.

"Princess, you don't have to worry anything," they mentioned. "My father taught me to make that medicine, and he had been using it for years now. And when I check up His Majesty, he has the exact symptoms like my father, so I knew right away what it is."

"How'd you know if the person is sick or not?"

"My father taught me and the books that I've read," LaFontaine simply replied.

"Your father seemed like a very intelligent man," she commented, and saw Carl approached them, fully clothed and ready to leave. "What does he do?" But before LaFontaine can answer, her Prince smiled wide at her.

"I forgot to mention to you," Carl started and put his hands on his Valet's shoulder, as if showing how proud he was of them. "LaFontaine is not just my Valet, but the Karnstein Castle's Royal
Apothecary. So, their job is to make medicine to me and my parents. And they grew up watching and learning from their father, who happens to be my King Father's doctor and the doctor that helped my Queen Mother when she gave birth to me."

After finding out the truth, she was speechless and amazed. She had no idea that LaFontaine was a person of science and medicine and came from a family that cures and helps people of their illness. And before she could make a fool of herself by remaining dumbfounded, her Prince walked close to her and kissed her lips.

"I'll see you later Cupcake," Carl uttered and smirked.

Then she felt him pinched her cheek lightly before turning around towards the door followed by his Valet; his very intelligent Valet, she thought.

When they left her chamber she felt embarrassed and ashamed of lashing out at Carl and accusing him and LaFontaine of putting her father's life in danger. She under estimated his concern towards her father and did not realize that he cared for her family as much as he cared for her.

She lied comfortably again in her bed and remembered that Perry told her to take a rest and to 'recharge' her energy, and be ready when Carl wakes up; she just realized now that her lady-in-Waiting had teased her.

She was about to reclaim her sleep when a knock on the door caught her attention.

"Come in!" she shouted across the room, thinking that Carl must have forgotten something. But she was surprised when Sarah Jane walked in.

"Sorry to disturb you Princess, but your guest has arrived and his waiting at the Grand Hall," Sarah Jane said after bowing.

She contorted her brows and gave her handmaiden a narrow look.

Sarah Jane must have noticed her confusion…

"Remember, yesterday? When you asked me to accompany you in the village," Sarah Jane hinted. "You met Prince Viktor and he asked you if he could visit His Majesty, and you agreed even if I tried to tell you that His Royal Hotness might get jealous and angry? Well, he is here now… with flowers."

"Oh, crap!" she exclaimed the first word that formed into her mouth, not knowing what it meant; and got out of her bed in no time. "Ouch," she winced as she felt the soreness in between her legs, Carl surely made an impression on their first night and she did not even saw his 'sword'.

She tried to stand up carefully and Sarah Jane was beside her at once to help her. She was now blaming herself for not thinking clearly yesterday, while she was angry at her Prince and ignoring him.

Her pride and anger consumed her the past two days and did not even think about her Prince's feelings when she found out that Viktor wanted to see her; all she wanted to do was to show Carl that she could also do whatever she wants without asking his consent, and could decide on her own; just like him taking a mistress without asking her consent… and now, she never thought that she would be deliriously worried, as the image of her Prince and Prince Viktor meeting in her castle nagged in her mind.
Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for your continued love and support to this story. Your comments/feedbacks and kudos kept inspiring me to create more chapters for this fic :-D
Laura was worried and panicking, knowing that Prince Viktor and Carl would meet.

**Chapter Notes**

**Warning: Biting. Angry sex. Possessiveness and Jealousy**

I'm not sure to which/what degree can I label sex as an angry sex. But since there's biting involve and Carmilla is furious in this chapter, I'd say this goes under 'angry sex', just to be safe. And I assure you, Laura is safe.

Let me know, if I am right about the description of angry sex here, because I never tried writing it, until now. So, excuse me again for this lame attempt of writing another smut chapter. You've been warned :-P Thank you again for all your comments and kudos :-) 

**********

Laura

When she arrived at the Grand Hall, the sight that met her caused her stressed level to reach its peak. There she saw Prince Viktor standing, his back facing her and patiently waiting in the middle of the hall, she noticed right away the bouquet of white roses in his hand that Sarah Jane mentioned earlier; she hoped that the flowers were for her sick father and not for her. She took a deep breath and walked towards him.

She was already a few meters nearer to Prince Viktor and was about to greet him, but the image of someone coming on her right distracted her and she shifted her gaze on that direction instead. Once her sight caught who it was, she almost panicked. She wished the earth could just swallow her alive at this moment, when she saw Carl approaching her direction, carrying a bouquet of yellow roses in his hand! He was smirking at her as he sauntered to where she was standing. She did not break her gaze on him. But her heart beat harder when she saw her Prince noticed the person standing on the other direction; the smirk on Carl's face instantly vanished and his eyes narrowed, and his brows furrowed.

Carl glared at her, and then she carefully lifted her gaze on him and slowly looked at Prince Viktor, when her guest finally noticed her.

"Laura! I didn't know that you're already here," was the surprised remark of Prince Viktor.

She gave him a timid smile and Prince Viktor noticed that they were not alone, shifted his gaze on the other person in the hall.

There was a deafening silence as they exchange glances, and glares from Carl and found themselves
standing awkwardly in the presence of each other. She could feel the tension between Carl and Prince Viktor when she caught them exchange glares. Then she noticed Carl's left fist balled tightly and when she looked at his face, she knew that he was boiling mad with the way he clenched his jaw and did not tear his stare at Prince Viktor.

She did not know how she would approach the situation and decided to tell her Prince first the reason Prince Viktor was there.

"Umm, Carl, do you remember Prince Viktor of Berghausen?" she asked in a low and calm manner and looked at her Prince, who was now flushed and seemed fuming inside. She hoped and prayed that he would behave this time.

"How can I not forget the man that tried to steal my wife?" was Carl's snarky comment, his voice deeper and raspier; and he was still glaring at Prince Viktor. "You just don't give up, do you?" Carl snarled.

She moved closer to Carl after that remark, as if trying to block him from doing anything and touched his left elbow, but as soon as her hand made contact with his, he glared at her as if warning her not to touch him.

"Why does this bastard kept on intruding in our life?" Carl questioned, not lifting his glare from Prince Viktor. "Does he know that you're already married to me and that he should stop seeing you? You're already mine Laura, you should tell that to him."

"Carl, Prince Viktor is a family friend-" she was explaining, but it seemed like he became angrier upon the mention of family friend.

"I don't care if he's a family friend! He has no right to talk to my wife!" was his angry statement and his attention was shifted to the quiet guest in front of him. "Didn't I mention to you last time that I don't want to see your face again?"

"I apologize Prince Carl, if I seemed to be intruding," Prince Viktor said in a calm manner. "But as a family friend and trading partner of the Hollis', I am here to visit and pay my respect to His Majesty. And I personally asked Princess Laura if it's alright that I come today, and she gladly invited me. And as far as I remember, I am welcome to this castle anytime, since the Kingdom of Berghausen and the Kingdom of Hollis are partners and friends."

Her eyes worriedly sought Carl's face upon hearing the last remark from Prince Viktor, and when their gaze met, she saw rage on those dark orbs and before she could explain, Carl turned his back on her without saying a word; he walked out of the Grand Hall fuming mad and threw the roses that he was holding on the floor.

"Carl!" she called and tried to stop him, but he seemed too angry to acknowledge her. Then she felt Prince Viktor touched her left hand and her attention was focused on him.

"Viktor, please excuse my husband, he… he is just very protective of me," she apologized.

"I understand, you don't have to explain," was his reassuring words.

She sighed and was thankful for his understanding. She was dying to go after her Prince, but it would be rude of her to leave her guest and send him away, after all, he was there to visit her father, not her, she convinced herself and tried to weigh what was really appropriate to do. She knew that she made a mistake by not telling it to Carl, but she had already created a trouble and she needed to face it.
"I didn't know that he's here," Prince Viktor commented. "Why didn't you tell me? I could have come some other time to visit your father."

She felt ashamed of his comment and knew that she put them all in a terrible awkward situation. "It's alright, you don't have to worry about him," she assured him and motioned for them to walk. "I will explain to Carl that you're here to visit my sick father."

Prince Viktor just shrugged at the remark, and he looked at him.

"What? You are here to visit my sick father, right?" she asked innocently and motioned to him to stop. Then they faced each other. Her heart pounded as she saw him gazed at her for a moment.

"Laura, I know that you're already married," he said his voice morphing into whisper. "But I'm still in love with you and I will not stop loving you."

"Viktor… I…" she fumbled for words and still cannot believe his undying love for her. She did not want to hurt him and he had been a good friend of their family, and their fathers were still partners in trading. "You know that Carl is very possessive; I don't want you to get in trouble with him." She reasoned out, and she was supposed to tell him that she does not love him, but she was interrupted when she felt him took her hand gently.

"I know and you don't have to remind me how he is, because I won't forget that day that he almost killed me," he said and let out a sigh. "But when I saw you at the village market, you looked unhappy and I thought that you needed some cheering up, that's why I asked you if I could come by."

She held his hand firmly and looked at him. She was certainly unhappy when they met, but after talking and resolving her problem with Carl, she thought that it was time for him to stop pursuing her.

"Viktor, I'm glad that you noticed how I was yesterday," she said. "You're really a nice person and thank you for telling me that you're still fond of me. But you and I both know that I'm already married to Carl… and I love him. I love Carl and I want to spend the rest of my life with him."

After that truth, he released her hand and she saw the dejected look on his face. He gave her a forced smile and nodded.

"I respect your decision," he said, as they walked to the direction of the King's Chamber. "But I want you to know that, I am still here as a friend and if you need a shoulder to cry on, I'll be available."

"Thanks," she replied without putting any malice on his offer.

*****

Three hours had already passed since Prince Viktor bade her goodbye, and yet, there was still no sign of her Prince in the castle. She was about to send a search party to look after Carl, but Perry informed her that her Uncle Spencer took Carl for a tour around the castle and its vicinity.

But it was already an hour before midnight; she had already retired to her chamber, hoping to lessen her fidgeting, but she remained upset.

A light tap on her door broke her from worrying. Thinking that it was Carl…

"It's open!" she said.
But she was disappointed when she saw a tall figure approached her bed and saw one of her handmaidens instead. Then she remembered that she gave an order to all of them to tell her at once when the Prince arrived.

Betty bowed and stood by the side of the bed.

"His Royal Hotness has arrived, Princess," Betty informed, smiling.

"Where is he?" she asked, eagerly. "Is he on his way here?"

"I heard him ordered LaFontaine to go to his chamber, so His Royal Hotness is probably in the guest' chamber,"

"Thank you Betty, that'll be all. Try to get some sleep now," she ordered right away and her handmaiden bowed and left her chamber. As soon as Betty left the room she got out from the bed, slipped on her slippers and put on her robe. She knew that Carl would avoid her.

*****

After a few minutes, she found herself knocking and standing in front of the guest' chamber. She felt her heart pounding and the anticipation of meeting a furious Carl made her anxious. She was startled when the door opened but sighed when she saw LaFontaine opened the door instead.

"Princess Laura, what can I do for you?" LaFontaine asked after bowing, and opened the door wide.

She entered, walked across the room and searched for any sign of Carl in the chamber; she was confused when she did not saw him.

"Where is he?" she asked, worried and turned to face Carl's Valet.

"He's taking his bath. He won't be long now," LaFontaine assured while gathering the Prince's used clothes. "Before I leave, is there anything I can do for you?"

Suddenly, she was torn from her worry, and realized that she was about to be left alone to deal with Carl. She admitted that LaFontaine's presence made her feel safe and relieved. But she needed to face and fix this alone.

"No. Thanks, LaF. You can leave," she replied and saw them bowed their head. "Goodnight."

"Goodnight Princess," LaFontaine mumbled and was about to leave but turned around. "And may I just remind you that he's not in a good mood."

"I know." She said and gave them a worried grin and crinkled her brows before leaving the chamber.

She remained standing on the middle of the room, waiting for him to come out of the bathroom.

After a few more minutes, her heart pounded madly when she heard the door of the bathroom opened and she saw Carl emerged, wearing his braies and short sleeve under tunic. He was caught off guard when their eyes met and he realized that she was there standing a few meters in front of him.

"Can we talk?" she asked in a low and soft tone. But he ignored her and he just walked pass her. She reached out, caught his arm and held it tight.

"Do not touch me!" Carl yelled.
She released immediately her hand. She was startled and recognized the rage in his voice. When their eyes met, she saw the other side of Carl that she dreaded, and remembered the time when they met at the library and talked for the first time after she returned from a month visit from their kingdom. But this time, he was more furious and colder and his eyes were narrowed, hard, cold and piercing. He looked wild, dangerous and about to explode.

But she did not allow her fear to overcome her, and instead she followed him and took his arm, and swiftly turned him to face her.

"I am not going anywhere, until you listen to what I have to say."

She caught the surprise look on his face after daring him. And he slowly walked closer to her, his presence almost intimidating, as she witnessed again Carl in his serious, cold, aloof and authoritative self, just like his mother; and this time she knew that he was boiling mad inside.

"Why did you invite that bastard?" he asked his voice low and suspicious.

She took a deep breath and swallowed before replying. "He… He wanted to visit my father."

"Liar!" Carl hissed. "You invited him because you want to see him!" he accused her.

"No! I didn't," she defended, fumbling for words. She knew that it was partly true. "I don't want him Carl, please believe me."

"You've always wanted him, right from the very beginning," he snarled, his voice thick with bitterness. "You would have married him instead, if my father didn't come here and saw you."

She was suddenly caught off guard. Everything that Carl mentioned was the truth and she cannot deny it. She hated that he knew it, even if she did not confirm it to him. She was now growing worried as he remained furious and she doesn't know how to pacify him.

"Carl, you have to believe me, I would never marry him," she tried to convince him and lied. But he seemed not convinced and saw him furrowed his brows and he gave her an icy glare.

She was losing him.

She panicked and walked closer to him, and was about to touch his face, but he avoided it and he growled, and the next thing she knew, Carl grabbed her hips and pushed her against the nearest wall. Then Carl's mouth claimed her lips and roughly kissed her; and she felt his right hand touched possessively the back of her neck while her heart pounded anxiously at this wild behavior of his. She could feel his rage through his aggressive kisses. He seemed not satisfied, Carl bit her on the lower lip and she immediately tasted the coppery liquid flowed from her lips. He sucked and licked the blood from her lip to stop from flowing further.

She tried to cup his face to control him, like she used to do; but he didn't let her, as if showing his in control over her, and instead, he bit her neck and sucked hard on her pulse point. She can't help herself but to moan in pain and pleasure, as she felt Carl's teeth and lips devoured her neck savagely. She cannot deny that she was beginning to be aroused with this savage behavior of her Prince.

Without a warning, Carl fumbled impatiently on the tie of her robe, and once he removed the unwanted clothe, he tore the thin camisole that was covering her decency and she was left with just her underwear. She was shocked at his action but she didn't object. Carl immediately claimed her left nipple and sucked it hard, causing her to moan. She ran wildly her hands on his hair matching the aggressiveness of his kisses.

"You're mine Laura!" Carl growled in between sucking and biting and his hand found the right
breast and kneaded it. "…Don't you dare forget it!"

She was about to apologize and reassure him that she belonged to him. But she felt, this strange throbbing and tightening in between her legs and her head spinning at the mixture of pain and pleasure that Carl was doing to her body. She moaned and she felt his teeth scraped over her left nipple and bit it until it throbbed in pain and pleasure. Then he did the same thing on her right nipple, and she screamed and felt her center growing moist and wet.

When she recovered from the pain, she tried to reassure him. "Carl…I will never forget," she uttered in between breathes, and she felt Carl released the nipple and kissed his way up to her shoulders, and suddenly she felt his teeth sunk on her left shoulder and then she was nailed by his warm body on the wall.

Oh god!

She moaned when she felt his hard erection pressed on her center and she grew anxious. It doesn’t feel this hard yesterday when they made love for the first time, she noticed, and thankful that he was wearing his braies. Maybe it was due to his rage, she thought. And before she could worry how very hard he was now, she felt his hands on her remaining barrier; he released from biting her shoulder and tore her moist underwear. Was Carl about to remind her that she belonged to him? Her heart pounded madly as she witnessed this animalistic behavior of her Prince; it was dangerously hot and scary.

He growled after successfully tearing it apart and then faced her; but she was surprised when he stopped and stared at her, still catching his breath. Confused, she sought his gaze and all she saw was lust, rage and possessiveness in Carl's eyes. She waited anxiously and was expecting that he would claim her any second.

Instead, she felt his hand held tightly her upper arms, and then saw him closed his eyes, groaned frustratingly and burrowed his face on the left side of her neck and felt him sucked hard on her sensitive skin.

Then she knew right away that he would not do it; not without her permission, even if his raging with lust and anger, and was in the verge of exploding. But a thrill rippled through her as Carl displayed this savage, aggressive, ferocious side of him. She withdrew from his hold and grabbed his face, and still saw the lust and rage in his eyes; she led his hungry possessive mouth on her own and she kissed him aggressively too and stroked his nape possessively. She felt her lust was taking over her. She could feel her own wetness dripping from her core.

When she knew that Carl was responding roughly like before, she nibbled in his ear, and whispered, "Take what's yours."

And that was all it took for him to remove his braies and free his hard shaft from the constraint of his braies.

Panting, she closed her eyes and wrapped her arms around his neck, preparing herself for the inevitable. She moaned as his length plunged in one full swift motion and she was surprised how wet she was and how easily he pushed deep inside her. She could feel him throbbing inside her and Carl thrusted deeply without any caution. She heard him groaned as he claimed her.

She tightened her hold around his neck and her moans became shorter and quicker, while he thrust deeper and harder. As if not satisfied at how deep he could go, she felt him lifted her and she wrapped her legs around Carl's waist tightly, and he begun to thrust again. She screamed due to pain and pleasure and could feel Carl's rage and possessiveness in every slam of his rigid shaft inside her;
Carl thrusted deeper and deeper, faster and harder, filling her with his thickness; she felt her muscles tensing right away, and contracting as the intensity build up and she surrendered. She cried out as the waves of pleasure burst out and consumed her. Her arms tightened around Carl and she felt him grow harder and thicker, she clenched Carl's erection and heard him growled. She felt him slammed at her with one full deep hard thrust, and released a full-throated thunderous roar as he shoot his warm juice inside her. His body shook against her and she held his face protectively near her bosom, as they both relaxed from the bliss of their climax.

Once they recovered from their peak, Carl gently pulled out his shaft from her, and carefully put her down. Then she caught him gazing at her face. She felt relieved when she saw his expression soft and tamed, but his brow still contorted. She waited for him to talk first, not knowing what was in his mind now. Her heart melted when she saw him gazed at her with full of worry. "Are you alright Cupcake?" was Carl's worried sweet remark. "I'm so sorry-"

She cut him off, and kissed him gently, and gazed back at him. "I'm alright… I just need to lie down and rest-" she was not even finished with her sentence, when Carl suddenly lifted her off from her feet like a bride and carried her towards the bed, and put her gently on top of it. Once she was comfortably in bed, she caught a glimpse of his penis for the first time, as he stood by the side of the bed and was about to join her. Her eyes widened and she released a loud gasped. Her shock did not go unnoticed to Carl, and he grabbed a pillow at once and covered his crotch. She was suddenly breathing heavily. "No wonder it hurts!"

She worried in her thoughts and cannot imagine how it fitted inside her. Carl did possess a well-endowed member. "Cupcake, look at me," Carl uttered in a low calm tone. "It's alright… we… we're finished and I just need a few minutes before it goes limp."

She focused her gaze on his dark orbs. The sweet and thoughtful remark from Carl and his worried expression calmed her down. He remained standing beside the bed, as if careful not to scare her. "How come it's still big?" was her worried and stupid question, as she tried to erase the image of his thick 'sword'. "I don't know, but it happens from time to time, even after I released," Carl expressed, his voice also tense and worried. "If it's making you uncomfortable, I could leave you for a while and come back when it's already small."

"No!" she grumbled like a child and pouted at him. "I don't want you to leave. I want to cuddle with you."

"Cupcake, how could we cuddle when you're panicking at the sight of it?" he asked, frustrated. "Maybe you can put your braies on, and then we could cuddle," was her solution, and saw Carl rolled his eyes at how impossible she was. "Alright, but don't jump off when you feel it," he warned and turned around to retrieve his braise and put it on, while facing the wall.

She was satisfied when he approached the bed wearing his braies, but his full erection was still fully visible in his braise. She tore her eyes out of it, and she smiled at him when he lay beside her. Carl
gathered her in his arms, while he tried to carefully place a pillow in front of his crotch.

"Don't you think it's a bit odd that you're nervous at how my 'cat' looks like, when it had already been inside you for the fourth time?" was Carl's snarky remark.

She grinned as he remembered how he referred to his penis; but grew sheepish at his remark. She really did not know what was going on with her. All she knew was, whenever Carl was making love to her, she gets distracted and everything around her was nothing, except Carl; and when she surrendered herself to him, the world does not mean anything to her anymore.

"I don't actually know what's happening to me," was her honest answer. "All I know is whenever you make love to me, I feel at ease, safe, and wonderful that all my fears and inhibitions disappears," she uttered and gave him a smile. "But when I saw that it looks like a raging panther instead of a fuzzy wussy cat, it reminded me of my fear and I panicked."

Carl burst into chuckle after hearing the last sentence. She felt more embarrassed and pouted at him.

"Hmm… So, I'm a raging panther?" was Carl's proud and sarcastic reply.

"Yes! And if you want to know, I would prefer the fuzzy wussy cat right now, so I could snuggle with you," she retorted, growing annoyed at his teasing.

"I think it would help the raging panther to transform into fuzzy wussy cat, if you put your camisole on," Carl suggested and smirked naughtily with an arched brow.

She released from his hold and suddenly aware of her nakedness; she covered her breasts with her hands, and suddenly felt shy.

"Cupcake, you're so adorable when you're blushing," Carl teased.

"Oh, shut up!" she retaliated and grabbed the sheet instead and covered her body. "How can I wear my camisole when you ripped it apart," she commented and saw him raised his eyebrow.

"Well, if I know, you liked it very much," he replied, confidently and earned a weak punch on the shoulder. "Ouch! Is that how you show your love to me?"

"No. But it'll be a regular thing if you don't stop teasing me," she hissed and put her head back on his shoulder, and rested her face at the crook of his neck.

They remained silent for a moment, savoring the afterglow of their intense love making. They did not say anything about the sex, but she definitely enjoyed and was turned on by Carl's wild behavior in bed. She stroke absent mindedly his stomach, while he caressed her hair.

"I'm sorry for inviting him," she uttered carefully. "When I saw him in the village market, I was very angry at you, that I didn't think what you'll feel if you see him again." She related and he seemed to be listening carefully, as he remained silent and stopped caressing her hair. She raised her head from his shoulder, looked up and sought his gaze. "Carl, you don't have to worry about Prince Viktor, because I don't love him."

He stared at her for a while, his happy expression morphing into a serious one.

"I don't want you to see or talk to him anymore," he replied, his voice deep and full, and sounded dangerous. "You belong to me Laura… only to me." He emphasized the last three words.

Carl can be intimidating sometimes; she slowly nodded to him and tried to understand how he feels,
as he looked at her with his warm, dark possessive eyes. She did not know if this trait of him runs in the family or a part of his upbringing.

Possessive Carl thrilled her and at the same time scared her. She just hoped that she could always control and tame this trait of his, as they become more intimate and closer.

She was thankful that he did not attacked Viktor when they met. She knew that she could easily defend herself and convinced Carl that she does not want Viktor, since she honestly does not feel anything for him.

And then she wondered…

What if Carl meets someone that she had feelings for? Can she convince her possessive Prince that he does not have to worry anything?

TBC
Midsummer Night's Eve

Chapter Summary

A continuation of their conversation in bed from the previous chapter.

It's Midsummer! And Carmilla gets to celebrate it for the first time in Hollis' Kingdom.

Carmilla

"Laura?" she called, confused at the sudden silence, then her wife stared blankly at her. "Did you hear what I've said?"

Forbidding her wife not to talk to any men that she deemed a threat to her was her right as Laura's husband. The law stated that a husband has full authority over his wife; and she was not just Laura's husband but the heir to the throne of Karnstein Kingdom, that should give her more rights over her wife, and Laura should accept it, she thought.

"Cupcake, talk to me," she requested in a soft deep tone and cupped Laura's right cheek gently. "Are you alright?"

"Hmmm?" Laura uttered. "I'm sorry, what did you say?"

"I said if you're alright," she replied and was reminded at how she had been rough with Laura, when she noticed a round red bruised on Laura's throat.

"Why wouldn't I?" Laura returned, smiling.

She was partly embarrassed at how she would talk about it. She released her hand from Laura's cheek and sat on the bed and rested her back on the headboard, while Laura lay on the side holding the sheet over her bosom and stared at her.

"I apologized for not being gentle a while ago," she uttered and saw Laura was about to speak, but she put gently her index finger on her wife's lips. "Just hear me out first," she begged and Laura relaxed. "I... I don't know what had gotten into me. I have all these emotions inside me that were threatening to explode and the thought of that bastard getting near you and wanting you made me furious," she finally admitted her fear, and saw Laura nodded slowly, urging her to go on. "I don't want, and I don't like, that you're being friendly with any men. I don't like men touching you. And I get mad whenever I see someone likes you and wants you."

"Carl, I understand what you mean... but I think you should try to separate those men who are just friendly to me because they're acquaintances and those men who are flirting with me," Laura commented in a calm voice. "I am a Princess, and talking to people are a part of my life, please try to understand that not all men want or have feeling for me."

"Laura, you're beautiful and lovely. any men would want you!" she retorted and saw tint of redness on Laura's cheeks. She has no idea why her wife was so oblivious. "Why can't you see it?"

"Carl, I am used to people being nice to me, because I grew up mingling and talking to them, especially the commoners," Laura explained. "So, I never put malice on their friendliness towards..."
me."

"Well, I don't want you to be friendly with them anymore," was her selfish reply and received a groan of disapproval from her wife.

"Please don't ask me to do that, because I like talking to people about their problems and helping them," Laura retorted. "And as the wife of the heir to the throne of Karnstein, I am bound to talk to other men, nobles, princes and kings alike, about the welfare of our kingdom and other political affairs; so that we could build a strong and good alliance with other kingdoms."

After that explanation, she understood a bit what Laura meant. But she still does not want her wife to be extra nice when meeting and talking with men.

"Alright, you can talk to them… but don't smile at them. Because you're smile is very captivating; some men might think that you're flirting with them," was her grumpy remark. She glared at Laura when she caught the amuse smile on her wife's face.

"Carl, I'm in love with you, so you don't have to feel threatened by anyone, because the only person that I want is you… only you," Laura uttered. "And I'll try not to smile too much when I'm talking to any men if that would make you appease."

She smiled upon hearing the last words. How Laura could always make her smile and happy was beyond her reasoning. She leaned down and kissed her wife long and hard on the lips, ecstatic that she was the only one in Laura's life. She now felt confident and appeased, knowing that she was the only one who was occupying Laura's heart. She did not know what to do if she ever found out that there was another person that Laura loves aside from her. But she was still not contented…

"Tell me, am I the only one you love?" she asked in a low raspy tone, wanting to reassure her place in Laura's heart. There was a sudden silence as she waited in baited breath and watched her wife stared at her, as if Laura was caught off guard by her question. "Answer me Laura," she got impatient and her heart beat faster in anticipation. "Am I the only one you love?" she demanded, her voice louder and deeper.

Laura let out a soft, "Yes."

She calmed down after hearing the answer that she wanted. But the doubtful expression on her wife worried her.

"Are you sure?" she asked, her voice full and deep. Her insecurity was slowly taking over her.

Throughout her life, she never had to share the love of her mother and father; even when she was young, she knew and felt in her heart that her Ma and Da loved only her. Her mother even told her that she was more important than the King, her father.

"You're the love of my life, my son. You are the most important person in my life, more important than the King."

She remembered what her Queen Mother used to say to her, and she felt confident and contented by the thought of being the one the Queen loved most.

And now that she was married, she wanted to make sure that she was the only one in her wife's heart. Laura had told her many times that she was the only one; but she wanted to hear it again and again.

"Yes Carl, I'm sure," was Laura's firm reply. "You're the only one that I love. And you're the only
one that I want."

She calmed down after that reply and felt ecstatic; she leaned down; put her left hand gently but possessively at the side of Laura's neck and claimed her wife's soft lips right away and kissed it wantonly. She just needed to mark her ownership on Laura. But she totally forgot that she bit her Cupcake there and was already too late when she realized it, and heard Laura whimpered after she released from the kiss.

"Oh god, Cupcake, I am so sorry," was her worried remark and release carefully her hand on her wife's neck.

Then she remembered that Laura might be sore and hurting due to their rough sex. And she had already forgotten to ask how her little wife feels now.

She was still bewildered why she behaved like that. Her love for Laura was intoxicating and intense that her emotions always consumed her. Her mother was right she really cannot control her emotions when it comes to Laura.

"It's alright, don't worry about it," Laura said nonchalantly.

"No, it's not alright," she retorted and gazed at her wife with full of worries. "I behaved like a beast towards you and I cannot accept that you'll tell me not to worry," she exclaimed and was on her knees now and was almost hovering Laura. "Let me look at you," she ordered and checked first her wife's throat and saw other small red bruises on the sides of Laura's neck. She was thankful that she did not see any blood on Laura's lips.

"I told you, I'm not hurt."

She heard the impatient remark of her little Cupcake, while her eyes roamed around the collar bone, and saw bruises and marks of her jealousy. She cannot imagine how she could do that... then her sight caught a teeth mark and bruised on Laura's left shoulder and felt bad at how painful it looked like. "That's it, I'm calling LaFontaine." She expressed and had already rose from the bed and stood beside it but Laura's hand halted her.

"What are you doing?" Laura asked, totally surprised.

"I'm calling LaFontaine so they could check on your bruises for any sign of cuts or internal bleeding," she remarked, knowing that her Valet could do wonders to any type of pain or sickness and she knew that LaFontaine likes treating and curing people. "They could give you some medicine or salve to soothe the pain."

"I told you I'm alright please stop worrying and get back in here," Her wife begged and halted her to go back to bed. She lifted the sheet and crawled inside and lay carefully beside her very naked wife. She gathered Laura in her arms again and she heard Laura giggled when she moved closer to her wife.

"What are you smiling about?" she loosened her embrace and was suddenly curious, and her heart melted at the sight of those big round beautiful brown eyes gazing up at her and that adorable smile that makes all the men fall in love with her wife.

For someone who has received a lot of bite and bruises, Laura seemed to be not bothered by them.

"Because I get to snuggle with you the whole night," Laura expressed in a cheery voice and grinned naughtily. "…my big wild cat."
She smiled back and wrapped her arms protectively around the little ball of sunshine of hers, and she felt Laura settled warmly on the crook of her neck and embraced her too. Then she suddenly felt Laura's leg accidentally rubbed on her crotch and she caught her wife's surprised look.

"Careful, you don't want to wake up the panther again," she teased, and knew that she would easily get hard again if Laura kept on getting near it.

"Tell your panther to sleep now, because I'm exhausted and sore,"

Her wife retaliated and she began to worry again and she looked at Laura, "I'm really sorry Cupcake. I swear, I'll never do it again," she expressed deeply and saw her wife looked up and gazed at her.

"I told you I'm fine," Laura reassured. "Let's get some sleep and maybe tomorrow I'll feel better. Goodnight my Prince."

"Goodnight Cupcake," she replied in a deep low raspy voice and kissed Laura's lips gently before they both closed their eyes. She smiled and surrendered confidently to sleep knowing that she was the only one that Laura love and the only one in Laura's heart

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She turned and slowly roused as she felt warmth hit her face and was annoyed; she lazily opened her eyes and was grazed by the strong rays of sun on her face. She shut her eyes and turned around to avoid it; but was surprised to hear someone grumbled. Confused, she slowly opened her eyes and widened at the sight of a very naked Laura sleeping beside her; the sheet had fallen off down Laura's calves. And her senses were suddenly stirred.

She reminded herself that she has a wife now and have to get use to the sight of waking up beside a naked woman.

Bloody Hell!

She exclaimed and she remembered what Laura said last night: that her penis looked like a raging panther. Her wife was right, as she felt now this raging hardness in her braise. She smirked like the devil and then gaped at the sight of her very naked wife. If this was the sight that was going to greet her every time she wakes up, she would no longer ask for anything else as long as she lives, she thought and was very grateful for this gift. She was very tempted to put her hands on those perky round breasts, and touch those perfectly erected nipples that were exposed in the chilly morning air.

She looked down at her shaft; it stood straight up and was stiff as a rock, and throbbing. Her initial reaction was to grab and pull it out and stroke it. But after her eyes caught the lovely sight of her naked wife beside her, her libido dictated her to touch Laura. She was about to run her left hand gently at the smoothness of Laura's thigh. But then she remembered what her father told her: she must think of Laura's comfort above all. She groaned in frustration and she mustered all her self-control, covered Laura with the sheet instead, then rose from the bed and walked to the bathroom. Once she was out of the warmness of the sheet and bed, her body met the chilly morning air and she shivered at the sensation and groaned on her way to the bathroom.

Once she closed the door of the bathroom, she untied her braies and pulled out her rigid shaft and started to stroke it up and down in the familiar pace that she liked. She grew harder and thicker under her touch and moaned while thinking of her naked wife on the bed.

After a few minutes of relieving herself, she went back to bed and carefully crawled inside the sheet, careful not to wake her Cupcake. Once she was inside the sheet and was about to put her arms
around Laura, she was suddenly ambushed and her arms were held and nailed on the bed, and the next thing she felt were soft wet small kisses on her face, jaw line and throat and found a very naked Laura on top of her.

She just relieved her aching hardness and seeing her wife naked on top of her was absolute cruelty!

"Cupcake?!" she expressed as Laura still nailed her on the bed and sat on her stomach, legs resting beside it. She could only see Laura's breasts and torso, and was thankful she had her braies on and was not in full skin contact with Laura's center. But the thought of Laura's mound hovering near her crotch was driving her insane and she felt her erection coming back. "What are you doing?!" was her surprised remark, as Laura devoured on her neck and nibbled on her ears and under her earlobes and continued to place small wet kisses on her neck and throat.

"I'm greeting you 'good morning' and showing you how happy I am to wake up beside you," Laura remarked and then moved on the side and covered herself with the warm sheet. "...Although I didn't find you beside me when I woke up and wondered where you are."

"I was in the bathroom," she said nonchalantly, and slid her hand under the sheet and found Laura's left breast and began to caress it.

"What are you doing?" Laura asked and narrowed her eyes. "You know that I still feel-"

"I know," she filled in at once and smirked naughtily on the little Cupcake in front of her. "I am just massaging it." Was her poor excuse.

"Really?" Laura returned, suspicious. "I know what you're thinking."

"Are you trying to tell me that I have no self-control?" was her challenging question. She watched Laura's bosom heaved up and down while torturously caressing Laura's breast.

"You can tell that to the bulge in your braies," Laura retaliated and motioned downwards.

Her eyes focused at once on her crotch and caught the very visible bulge of hers; it betrayed her again.

"It means we're happy to see you," she reasoned out and gave her wife a devilish smirk, before moving on top of Laura and shove down the sheet that was covering her wife's bosom. She smiled at the lovely sight in front of her and revered again Laura's perky round breasts. "Now that's what I call my ideal breakfast." She uttered and saw Laura blushed after that remark. She was about to dip her head and 'eat' her breakfast, but a loud knock on the door interrupted her from feasting on Laura's breasts. She growled and knew that it could either be her Valet, who always liked to interrupt her or her wife's Lady in Waiting. "Who is it?" was her grumpy remark, and immediately felt Laura's hand cupping her left cheek, as if to calm her.

"It's me, LaFontaine! I brought your breakfast!"

"Go away! I already have my breakfast!" she yelled back and earned a glare from her wife. "What?" she commented playing innocent. "I don't need food. I have you."

"Carl!" Laura reprimanded. "They might be having a hard time carrying the tray of food."

She sighed and rolled her eyes, and resigned. She shifted and covered her wife's bosom before sitting on the bed beside Laura. She was about to say 'come in' but a high pitch voice shouted behind the door.
"Your Highnesses! We're coming in!"

She had not even time to reply, when suddenly the door to the guest's chamber flung open, and in came Perry carrying a big tray of seemed to be their breakfast followed by LaFontaine with a basket of fruits and vegetables. She had not even time to process in her mind why her Valet was carrying that basket, her eyes widened when she saw Sarah Jane came in carrying another basket covered with cloth and bowed in front of them. She thought she had seen the last of it, but her eyes caught Laura's tallest handmaiden entering the chamber and carrying another basket with some bottles.

"What's the meaning of this?!" she demanded, surprised and a little irritated at her unwanted visitors; the two handmaidens remained bowing their heads while everyone stand by the foot of the bed. "What the hell are these?!" was her grumpy remark.

"Good morning everyone!" Laura exclaimed immediately. "Please excuse Your Highness, he's hungry and grumpy. Where did these come from and why did you all bring it here?"

As soon as she heard her wife's excited remark, she decided to remain silent, sat on the side of her bed and glared at those people who interrupted her morning snuggles with Laura.

"It's gifts from the farmers, fishermen and people in the village," Perry explained and approached the bed and put the large serving tray in front. "They heard a rumor that you and Prince Carl are here for your honeymoon. That's why they sent all these foods to keep you both strong and revitalized."

Laura just grinned. "We're not in our honeymoon," the little Princess tried to deny but received a side glance and smirk from Perry, then eyed the camisole and robe that were scattered in the room.

She furrowed her brows and her eyes scanned at the food in front of them, and thought that it was not her regular breakfast. She saw loaves of white bread instead of her regular dark rye, honey, bowl of strawberries and cherries, plate of cut figs. She smirked, finally contented when she saw her favorite cheese, the Steirerkas among the foods on the tray.

"Oh! Is that hot cacao?" Laura exclaimed happily and pick up the cup at once. "Carl, you have to drink yours too, it's so delicious because this are made here."

She took the hot cup and took a sip and didn't regret it. She put it back on the tray, noticing that there were still baskets of goodies waiting for her to be check.

"What else are there?" she asked and motioned for LaFontaine and the handmaidens to come forward. Her Valet presented first the baskets of fruits and vegetables that mostly colored red.

"I met the farmers from the village and they told me to give these to both of you and to always eat it," LaFontaine said and held out the contents one by one in front of them.

She widened her eyes when she saw the first content, and did not know why the people from Hollis Kingdom want them to eat this vegetable.

"They said to use a lot of chilies in your food, because it increases blood circulation and stimulate the nerves," LaFontaine explained, and took the next. "Here's some cherries and strawberries that are packed with lots of nutrients to regulate your heart. And the watermelon, that causes blood vessels to relax and speeds up circulation," LaFontaine informed and smirked before saying: "And to make you arouse."

"I don't think Carl needs watermelon," Laura suddenly chimed in after putting a cherry in the mouth. She playfully shot daggers to her wife, who seem to enjoy teasing her.
"What about those?" she asked motioning for the basket that Sarah Jane was carrying.

"That's the gifts from the fishermen," Perry's revealed. "It's oysters and salmon."

"It is said that oysters increases sex drive among men and-" LaFontaine was saying but she interrupted them immediately and glared at the amused Valet of hers, not wanting to hear another comment about foods, arousal and sex. She knew that LaFontaine was enjoying this lecture about aphrodisiacs.

"And what do you have in there?" she asked Betty as the handmaiden smiled while approaching her and bowed again. This handmaiden of Laura seemed to be cheery and friendly compared to the other two.

"It's red wine and dark chocolates Your Royal Hotness," Betty exclaimed excitedly.

She furrowed her brows and wondered what Betty called her.

"What did you just ca-" she was about to ask but Laura's voice interrupted her.

"Betty said Your Royal Highness," Laura clarified and smiled excitedly. "I think we've seen them all. Shall we continue to eat our breakfast?" was the little Princess suggestion and grinned.

She nodded to Laura and smirked. At last they can be alone again, she thought.

"Perry, please send our gratitude and thanks to those who sent these, and tell them that we love the gifts," Laura said genuinely.

They all bowed and headed to the door, except for Perry and LaFontaine. As the two tidied the room and prepare the things they would need.

She was already excited to eat her favorite cheese and ate a small bit of it at once. She closed her eyes, as the flavor melted in her mouth; it felt heavenly as she savored the cheese. It had been a long time since she tasted this kind of Steirerkas; there were many varieties of Steirerkas that she had eaten, but she did not expect that she could eat again the best in her opinion. She felt like crying and was growing emotional.

"Carl? Are you alright?"

She heard Laura's voice. She opened her eyes and was snatched from her reverie.

"Yes, I'm fine," was her weak response and search for the Lady in Waiting. "Perry, where did you get this cheese? Did someone from your kitchen made it?"

"No Your Highness," Perry replied. "We don't actually eat that kind of cheese here in the castle. I just asked one of the handmaidens to buy it in this small village, because I knew that it is your favorite cheese."

She just nodded and smiled at Perry.

"Thanks. I couldn't actually say that it is the best, but it tasted almost like the best Steirerkas cheese that I've eaten," she replied.

"Well, I'm glad you're happy with your cheese," Laura commented with a hint of sarcasm. "Because I've been waiting for you to drink your hot cocoa and tell me how good it is. But it's not hot anymore, so, how can you enjoy it."
"Relax Cupcake, I'll drink it up just for you," she said and pick up the cup of cold cocoa and emptied the content. "Wow! That's the best cocoa I've ever tasted!" she remarked, teasing her wife.

"You didn't mean it." Laura retorted and pouted. "You're lying…"

She moved closer to the sulking Princess and put her arms around Laura's shoulder, careful not to let the sheet fall off.

"Cupcake, I'm just kidding," she said in a low deep sweet tone, as she woos back her wife. "You know that I like cocoa too, I just got overwhelmed after I've tasted the cheese, because it's my favorite too." She then saw Laura gave her a lop-sided grin and then claimed her lips and kissed her tenderly.

They almost forget that they were not alone…

"Ahem!" LaFontaine expressed.

She growled and reluctantly released from that passionate kiss from her wife. She arched her left brow and stared on her Valet.

"Why haven't you left yet, you and Perry?"

"…Because it's already time for you to get out of bed Your Highness. You can resume your honeymoon tonight, when you go to bed," LaFontaine informed and winked at the blushing Princess instead.

Laura gave them a sheepish smile and focused the attention to the Lady in Waiting that was busy picking up the discarded clothes on the floor.

"The girls and the servants are asking if you're coming with us to the forest tonight." Perry asked after retrieving the robe and camisole on the floor, then glared at the ruined camisole and discreetly folded it.

"Of course I'll come, and Carl too," Laura replied.

She arched her left brow and gave her wife a confuse look. "What are we going to do in the forest at night? You know that there are wild animals lurking behind the trees and bushes in the dark."

"Have you forgotten?" Laura excitedly asked. "It's Midsummer eve!"

She remained silent and waited for her wife to explain further. Laura seemed not to notice. She contorted her brows, she had heard of this celebration during summer time but she never got the chance to celebrate it. "What do you exactly do during Midsummer?"

"You mean you haven't celebrated Midsummer Night's Eve?" was the shocking question from her wife.

She gave Laura a sheepish smile and shook her head lightly.

"Umm… I've heard about it. But I never get the chance to celebrate it. My mother is overprotective and she doesn't want me to go anywhere; and in addition to that, my father is worried about my angst of being in a wide space and in the crowd," she reasoned out.

"Well, everyone celebrates it during the eve of the longest day and shortest night of summer," Perry gladly informed. "We lit a huge bone fire at night and we sing and dance around it. They say that we
have to light a bone fire to protect us from evil spirits that roams freely when the sun is turning southwards again, and the night becomes longer."

"Hmmm, that sounded fun," she exclaimed and then suddenly worried at how she would feel at the presence of many people. "Would there be lots of people coming?"

Perhaps sensing her worries…

"No Carl, only us from the Castle," Laura assured. "My father had this private area in the forest guarded and protected, so that no strangers and no wild animals, especially bears, since Hollis' Kingdom have lots of it, could come in the area. Papa is overprotective too and did not allow me to go to other places or join the village people in the forest when celebrating midsummer night eve."

"I think it sounds great," she replied and did not know that her father-in-law was over protective of her wife. But nobody could beat her parents from being over protective, she thought. "What time are we leaving?"

"We'll leave around dinner time, and eat and drink and dance there," was Laura's excited reply. "I would help Perry prepare the things and foods that we'll take in the forest."

"Can I help too?"

"Umm… Forgive me for interrupting," LaFontaine said. "I just want to remind you that His Highness Prince Spencer had invited you to have lunch with him and His Majesty, for some possible trading in the south."

Laura immediately gave her a puppy sad eye look, and pouted.

"I'm sorry Cupcake, duty's calling," she returned and pinched Laura's cheek. "I tell you what, when I'm done with my lunch meeting with your father and uncle, I'll go and help you at once."

"I don't think it would be that quick," Laura replied. "Since Papa had been well and strong, he told me that he would like to talk to you about some political stuff and trading, since your father is a very good trade's man."

"Oh," was her weak reply.

"Don't worry Your Highness, I'll make sure to bake your favorite creampuffs," Perry said. "Shall we go Princess?"

"I'll see you tonight My Prince," Laura said before kissing her on the cheek; and then wrapped the sheet around its body before getting out of bed.


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After joining Laura and the others from dancing around the bone fire, she and LaFontaine decided to take a break and sat under the oak tree and observed the people around them, while they drink mead.

The sight of people eating and drinking; dancing around the huge bone fire; children playing and running around, and the look of satisfaction on their faces made her heart swell. It was really very good and happy midsummer night's eve indeed. She never had a chance to celebrate this kind of
feast and the Hollis' certainly takes care of their people and was always abundant in foods and drinks.

"How come we never celebrate like this?" she asked and received a confused look from her Valet. "Look at them! They're so happy and very satisfied, and they looked like they don't have any problems or huge obligations in life."

"Because they're all drunk," LaFontaine replied nonchalantly, as they began to hear some people singing loudly.

Their conversation was halted when they saw Laura coming to their direction and they both noticed the Princess exhausted and a bit tipsy.

"Are you still having fun?" she asked as Laura approached and without any qualm sat on the grass and settled in front of her. "Hey, you're cold;" she noticed and wrapped her arms and cape protectively around her little Princess.

LaFontaine was on their feet at once, "I'll go ask Perry for the Princess' coat."

She gave them a nod and then felt Laura's head rested on the crook of her neck.

"Hey, you're cold;" she noticed and wrapped her arms and cape protectively around her little Princess.

"I want my panther," Laura mumbled out of the blue.

Her eyes widened and felt her pulse racing. She hoped and prayed that the devil would not tempt her.

"Carl, can you carry me to bed,"

She heard Laura's sweet request and she felt two hands wrapped around her neck. Her wife was surely exhausted and a bit drunk, she thought. But she still found Laura adorable even in a drunken stage.

"Are you alright Cupcake?" was her worried question and glanced at her wife and saw those tired half lidded brown eyes.

"Where's my giant wild cat?" was Laura's worried upset remark.

Knowing that her wife was drunk, and she would like to avoid upsetting her little Princess, she held Laura's hands and said, "I'm here."

"No! You're not my giant wild cat!" Laura reproached.

"I am your giant wild cat," she said in a low calm voice, trying not to upset Laura further. "I'm just not giant right now."

After a few minutes, she sighed with relief when she saw LaFontaine arrived with the coat and she put it around Laura.

"Please tell Perry that we're going home, my wife needs to rest," she ordered and LaFontaine nodded to her and walked to the direction where they came from.

After several minutes, she found herself sitting with a sleeping Laura on her lap inside the carriage on the way to the castle. LaFontaine and Perry sat on the other carriage behind them, while a group of Hollis' Royal Guards including the tall Royal Guard, whom she remembered named Kirsch surrounded them.
The ride to the castle takes quarter of a minute, and she too could feel exhaustion claiming her. But she decided not to sleep and tried to stay alert. It's not that she does not trust the Royal Guards of Hollis, but she felt more safe and confident if her own Royal Guards were with them. But right now, she had left them in the forest still feasting and gave them a rest day, except for Armitage who refused to leave her side and was the only Royal Guard from Karnstein. In exchange, her father-in-law provided them the best Royal Guards as their escort tonight.

She decided to look out of the window to remain awake. It was still bright even if it was already past midnight. The road from the castle to the forest was not that scary at all, since she saw on the way earlier, that there were some houses, more likely farmers who were living around this part of the forest. They have passed also to some group of people who were outside of their houses and dancing around a bone fire. She was surprised that there were still some people who were walking outside, probably going home from celebrating. Most of them were drunk and others were still singing while walking and she thought that the people here in Hollis were insane! Insane but happy and contented in their life. In a few days that she had stayed in Hollis, she cannot help but to wonder at how the people here were so friendly and warm. She feels like they were very cold and aloof in Karnstein Kingdom compared to the people here. Perhaps due to geography, she thought, since her Kingdom was located in the north and Laura's in the south, where it was always warm and they have more sunshine here, was her crazy theory. No wonder her wife is like a little ball of sunshine. The one thing it fascinate her also was how trustful the people here. Her father-in-law informed her that everybody trust each other in his kingdom that the crime rate was very low.

Her admiration at how Hollis' Kingdom could be the best kingdom in Styria was interrupted when their carriage passed along a group of four women walking to the direction where they came from.

"Stop!" she demanded and shouted on the window, and Armitage ordered the others at once to stop. She motioned for Kirsch to come, and she held Laura tightly and felt her wife shifted on her lap at the rapid stop of their carriage. "Bring to me the woman in dark brown dress! And don't ever let her get away!" she commanded Kirsch, pointing to the four women who have not walked farther from them. Kirsch nodded at once and turned his horse to the opposite direction.

She never felt her heart throbbed fiercely as it did now, while she waited for Kirsch to seize and bring the woman to her.

TBC
Carmilla

The whole entourage that consists of two carriages and thirty royal guards that bear the royal banner of the Hollis Kingdom halted in the middle of the road.

"Carl?" Laura mumbled, confused at the sudden stop.

She did not reply and her eyes remained fixated outside, looking out from the window of the carriage.

"What's going on?" was Laura's puzzled remark and sat in an upright position.

She felt Laura's right hand, covered her left hand. But she ignored it and ordered Armitage to come forward. "Fetch my Valet!" she commanded.

After a few minutes LaFontaine stood by the door of the carriage and she let them in.

"Your Highness," LaFontaine bowed before Armitage closed the door of the carriage behind them. "What's going on?" they asked, their eyes narrowing, after the door shut and sat on the opposite side of the carriage.

She ignored the question and faced her wife, "Laura, I need you to go with LaFontaine and sit in their carriage, and go home," She ordered in a firm and authoritative voice.

"No, I want to stay with you," Laura whined.

As expected the little Princess refused.

Stress was beginning to consume her and her patience was running out. She took a deep breath and avoided Laura's eyes and shifted to her Valet.

"LaFontaine, take the Princess to the castle; now," she ordered.

She gave her wife one last look and saw Laura's puzzled expression while LaFontaine guided the tipsy Princess out of the carriage.

She caught a glimpse of the woman who was already waiting outside after Lafontaine and Laura climbed down from the carriage; she saw the little Princess glanced at the woman that was being held by Kirsch and Armitage, before walking further to the next carriage.

When she knew that the other carriage had driven away. She examined discreetly through the curtained window the woman.
The once smooth glowing face that she knew was now wrinkled with age, and the trace of hardship can be seen on the haggard face and thin body of the woman. Compared to her mother's dark shiny perfectly combed dark hair that was always neatly tied up in a perfect bun, this woman's rich golden long hair was tied up in a messy bun.

After a few minutes of studying the woman's face, she took a deep breath, not once but thrice, and composed herself. It never took her long to gather her emotions and control it, but right now she was struggling with her feelings. She inhaled and exhaled again and reminded herself that she was strong and fearless.

When she regained her confidence back, she cleared her throat and said:

"Bring her to me and do not disturb us!" she commanded to the two Royal Guards.

The anticipation of being face to face with this woman was killing her. It seemed like forever as she sat there waiting for this person to come inside.

The tension was cut when she saw the woman entered her carriage with bowed head and kneeled before her.

"Your Royal Highness, please forgive me for whatever trouble that I may have caused," the woman beg anxiously while sobbing. "I am just on my way home from the village after selling my cheese."

Eight years have passed since the Karnstein Royal Guards seized this woman and separated them, but the pain still lingered in her heart.

She fought this strong emotion that was threatening to burst out; and reminded her self that she was strong and fearless.

But at the same time she felt remorseful. She felt partly responsible for this woman's suffering because she was a Karnstein.

She cannot take it anymore...

"Look at me," she ordered displaying her authoritative image.

The old woman carefully and nervously looked up.

There was total silence.

She furrowed her brows waiting anxiously if the woman would recognize her, while she stared intensely at the woman. She watched those blue eyes searched her own dark orbs.

She became anxious as the woman took time to recognize her.

When their eyes met with clarity and realization, her heart skipped a beat as she watched the scared confused blue eyes transformed into surprise.

She almost melted at the sign of recognition.

The woman gasped, "Is it really you?"

Old familiar eyes were now gazing at her with so much love and warmth; unshed tears were threatening to fall from those blue orbs.

She slowly leaned down and brought her face closer for the old woman to see. Then she felt
trembling rough hands carefully touched her cheeks. Once she recognized those familiar loving hands that caressed her face every night, she leaned into the touch and closed her eyes. She put her right hand over the rough hand that was still cupping her face, and the next thing she felt was teardrops escaping her eyes.

She never imagined that she could still feel these loving hands that stroke her hair and face every night before she goes to sleep. It was overwhelming and she wished she could remain under the care and loving touches of this woman.

Slowly, she opened her eyes.

"Ma," she breathed out and somewhat lost her ability to speak. She immediately ushered the old woman to sit beside her.

"My beautiful child."

The warm sweet mellow voice of her Ma sounded like music to her ears. She wrapped her arms around the woman and rested her head in the crook of her Ma's neck. All these old familiar feelings resurfaced when she felt the loving arms of her Ma cradling her securely and stroking her hair.

She felt like a child again and was overwhelmed at the old familiar scent of her Ma: the scent of her childhood.

Nothing can compare the feeling of joy that she felt now as she was reconciled with her Ma. Nothing can compare the excitement that she had now as she felt again the warmth-loving embrace of her Ma.

"I have missed you," she mumbled in between sobbing while still burrowing her face on her Ma's neck.

Her Ma might not be her biological mother but the intensity of love and care that her Ma provided her can surpass a real mother's love for her own child.

"I have missed you too my love,"

She heard her Ma whispered consolingly to her, as they both cried with joy and stayed holding each other; relishing this reunion.

When their emotions subsided and their sobbing ceased, she released from the embrace and gazed at her Ma, as if revering the old woman while still holding her Ma's rough hands. Happiness and satisfaction could be found on her Ma's face.

"How did you know?" she asked astonished.

"Through your eyes," was the confident reply. "Do you remember what I use to tell you when you were a child?"

"That the eyes are window to one's soul," she supplied the answer and smiled.

"...And through those eyebrows that always contorts every time you're sad, scared, angry or brooding," was her Ma's additional answer.

She smiled sheepishly after hearing her Ma's perfect description of her brows. They both relaxed and she heard her Ma let out a sigh. And those blue eyes were now studying her. She felt a bit uncomfortable as her Ma take in how she looked like now. Gone was the little girl with long wavy rich raven hair in a blue dress. And instead, a young man with a short hair in black tunic, black
trousers, black cape and black boots was in front of her Ma.

But her worry disappeared when their eyes met and she saw a smile on her Ma's face.

"You've grown up perfectly handsome as I imagined," the old woman uttered. "You looked very much like your father."

She heard her Ma's surprising compliment. She had mixed feelings of how her Ma would accept her now.

"Do you still love me, even if…?" she asked in a weak, unsure and hoarse tone, thinking that her Ma could be uncomfortable finding her as a man, and not the girl that she was.

"My child, I will always love you no matter what you are; it doesn't matter how you look like now, and how you were before," Was her Ma's reassurance. "What matters is you're still the same person inside: the passionate and loving person you are. You are beautiful in your own unique way; you should not forget to love and accept yourself."

After that heartfelt reply from her Ma, she cannot help but to wrap her arms tightly around the old woman that she considered her 'other' mother. She cannot imagine that the love of her Ma still burns in both their hearts and despite not being bonded in blood; they were bonded by their love and faith to each other.

"I thought I lost you for good." She uttered after releasing from the embrace.

"I never stop hoping that one day we will meet again," was her Ma's heartfelt comment. "I knew in my heart that I would see you again."

A drop of tear escaped her eye and the next thing she knew, her Ma's hand was caressing her cheek. She leaned unto the touch and closed her eyes, relishing the moment. One quality of her Ma that she adored so much was loving her unconditionally.

She opened her eyes and asked, "How long did you know that I am different?"

A look of remorse was suddenly found on her Ma's face and released the hand that was caressing her face.

"Since you were born… And forgive me from hiding the truth from you," her Ma stated. "The Queen, your real mother ordered me not to tell it to you."

"I understand." She nodded and gave her Ma a reassuring smile and held the old woman's hands. "And there's no need for you to ask for forgiveness. You did nothing wrong. But…" she said, uncertain if she should really ask her Ma about it.

"But what?"

"I want to know the truth," she began; this would be a difficult path for both of them to thread through, and it would confirm if her parents were really telling the truth; if there's one person who could tell her the whole truth that would be her Ma. Her mother and father told her many times how she ended up living with her Ma and convincing the whole Kingdom that they have a prince. Her mother even told her that everything was taken care of and that she should never ask or talk about her old life. But she was dying to know the other version of the story.

"Since the day you were born, your parents and the midwife that helped the Queen in giving birth knew that you're different," Her Ma started as she listened intently. "I was that midwife. When I told
"And what?" she asked impatiently, feeling that her Ma does not want to hurt her for revealing the truth. "Ma, you can tell me everything even if you think it would hurt me. I've gone through a lot of pain, so this would not be different for me."

Suddenly, she saw her Ma's sad eyes staring at her; then reached for her face and touched it briefly before continuing.

"She refused to give you milk," Her Ma resumed and touched her hand. "Your mother cannot accept the fact that you are different and would not even look at you. When the King finally came to see you to ask if you're a boy or a girl, I cannot reply. He was shocked too when I showed you to him. He was confused and asked your mother if she really did gave birth to you. Both I and the Queen confirmed his doubt and everybody in the castle was forbidden to come to the Queen's chamber except me. When I informed your father that the Queen would not give you milk, he ordered me to do it."

She felt her Ma's hand tightened on hers. Her initial reaction was to get angry at her mother, but she knew that her mother and father's reaction after finding out the truth was perfectly normal for any parents that were expecting a beautiful and perfect child. She understood also that her mother was in no position to take care of her that time, due to being emotionally unstable.

"I did it wholeheartedly because I do not want you to die from hunger," she heard her Ma's worried reply. "I was a wet nurse so I have plenty to give you. You were a strong infant despite your uniqueness. You were healthy and always cried for milk."

She smiled and felt embarrassed at her Ma's lighter comment. Her love for this woman grew stronger as she found out how her Ma saved her life. When her Ma saw the little smile on her face, her Ma resumed talking.

"When the King, your father learned that you're accepting my milk and have no problem with it, he secretly sent you and me to an isolated house in the middle of the forest that became later on as our home." Was her Ma's unending confession. "Your father was worried about your mother's mental state after your birth. He ordered me to take care of you and keep you alive, since the Queen cannot take care of you. He provided everything that we needed and sent royal guards to protect us. He informed me that he would take care of everything and my only concern was you."

Wondering how the King managed to see her safety, she touched her Ma's hand and politely interrupted. "If my father sent some royal guards to protect us, how come I never see them?"

"You've seen them," Her Ma reassured. They live in those little houses that were in the vicinity of the forest. They were the ones who were working in the mine at night, the farmers that planted the wheat during daytime and the herders who take care of the sheep and cows in the mountain. They're our neighbors."

She was dumbfounded after discovering the truth at how her father discreetly made sure that she was safe and being well taken care off. "Is that the reason why you forbid me from talking to strangers?"

Guilty, her Ma nodded. But she does not have this feeling of hate towards her father and Ma. They just both wanted to protect her.

"And you probably knew already that Da is the King's trusted friend and doctor," the old woman resumed. "Da always made sure that you're in good health and he grew fond of you because you've always enjoyed being with him and spending time doing that father-daughter thing that you never get
a chance to do with your real father."

"Honestly, the times that I spent with you and Da is one of the happiest moments in my life," she revealed what was in her heart. "I have never doubted that you and Da are not my real mother and father. All I knew was I have a happy and contented life with you and Da. I never felt that I was different while growing up with you."

"…Because you're not different. You're unique and beautiful," her Ma corrected right away. "And even if Da and I were entrusted by the King to take care of you, we've grown to love you and treat you as our own child.""

"And I'm very thankful that you and Da treated me like that…" she regarded.

Then she found herself contorting her brows and she felt her Ma's hand clearing the lines on her forehead, as if reading her mind.

"But what?" her Ma asked.

She managed to coax a smile after her Ma's question. This woman really knew how she behave and think.

"…But I wish someone had told me right away that I'm unique," she returned and looked down. But her Ma's hand reached for her face and motioned for her to look up.

"I and Da were bound by an oath. We do not have the rights to tell you that," her Ma informed. "I hope you're not blaming us for-"

"No, I'm not," she cleared out; and decided not to push through with it. "Let's forget about that. How about you? Did you get married and…" the thought of her Ma having a child aside from her made her jealous.

Then suddenly a sense of longing for the old days overcame her. And she was reminded how her Ma and Da became her family. She thought that living in a small cabin in the middle of the forest with her Ma and her Da visiting and staying once a week was her life; until her Queen Mother revealed to her where she really lives and which family she belonged. And now she must face the fact that her Ma might have another family.

"Did you… did you get married and had other children after they took you away from me?" she asked, hiding her curiosity.

"I did get married and had a husband. But we never had a child,"

She sighed and was happy to be the only child in her Ma's eyes, but she felt sorry at the same time that her Ma did not have a child. "Where's your husband?" was her curious remark.

"He… He died before I came here."

She was shocked at the thought of her Ma living alone, without a husband nor a daughter or a son to take care of her Ma.

"Don't tell me you're living by yourself?" she said and grew worried for her Ma. "And how long have you been living here?"

"I do live alone in a small house in this area. A friend of mine from Wien, where I lived before have relatives here who herd cows and makes cheese. When my husband died I decided to go back to
Styria, my birth place, and thought of living here again."

"But why didn't you go back to Karnstein instead?" was her curious naïve question. "You could have live in our old house and I could take care of you, and you don't have to work for a living," was her sincere suggestion.

"My child, I was banished from Karnstein. The Queen sent me to Wien and told me that… if I love you, I would let you live peacefully with your real parents, so that you can grow up and become the Prince that you ought to be. So I chose to remain in Wien and let you live in your castle with your real mother and father," Her Ma explained.

She furrowed her brows and was emotional after hearing that part of the story. One way or another she would need to live in the castle and meet her real parents. It was her destiny. And her Ma sacrificed that happiness of living with her in order for her to become what she really was: the Prince Carl Philipp Marcus of Karnstein.

"I never want to leave you, but I have no choice; your mother had been clear about me not returning to Karnstein Kingdom anymore when she asked one of the Royal Guards that took me, to travel and escort me to Wien," the woman explained. "And let's face it; your Mother had yearned for you for so long. It's time that I return you to her, so that she could experience being a mother."

She was speechless. Her Queen Mother really made sure that nobody would remind her of her past. She understood why her mother needed to do all these things, but she felt sorry that her Ma had experienced all the heartaches and hardship of being connected to her.

"Ma, I'm sorry that you need to undergo all these madness, just to protect my identity," she related and she was starting to have a bad conscience.

Then she felt a hand squeeze lightly her left hand and rested there.

"My love, you don't have to feel sorry," her Ma reassured. "It's your destiny. And we all love you; someone has to sacrifice. And besides, something turned good when I moved in Wien. I met my husband there and we live a full life."

She felt relieved hearing those last sentences.

Suddenly, her curiosity was piqued. "But how come you didn't have any children?"

"My husband had a problem." Was the honest reply.

"You could have divorced him since he cannot give you children," she returned, sighting one of the laws that she knew.

"I loved him. Having a child was my least priority. And I never wished for another child because in the span of twelve years that I lived with you, I've experienced the joys of motherhood. I don't need to experience it again because I was already satisfied and happy that I got a chance to become a mother while taking care of you. You are very precious to me and will always cherish our times together in my heart even though I'm not your real mother."

She was touched at how her Ma cherished their life and love together. She thought that her Ma had totally forgotten her, but it was the opposite. Unshed tears threatened to fall from her eyes and she felt a lump forming in her throat. She was trying her best to fight her emotions, but she can't this time. She took both her Ma's hands and brought it to her lips and kissed them while she let her tears fall freely.
"Thank you. I never thought that you still considered me like your own child," she spoke softly and sincerely. "Honestly, the love that you had shown me is greater than the love from my mother. The Queen has a different way of showing her love to me, although I know that my mother loves me very much and always prioritizes me above everything, but yours are selfless, satisfying, lighter, tender, and unconditional."

Then she felt her Ma's right hand released from her hold and brushed the tears off from her cheeks.

"Shhh, you will always be my special one and now that we met again, you could always see and visit me here. But promise me that you won't tell the Queen about this or anyone. I don't want your mother to think that I'm here to ruin your life and agitate the peace of your kingdom."

"My Queen Mother doesn't know you as a person, that's why she thought of you like that, but she had changed now and had not been that strict and hard towards me," she explained while sniffing. "I wouldn't tell anyone. But I hope one day you'll agree to meet my wife."

The looked on her Ma's serious face morphed into excitement and they both found themselves smiling.

"Are you married now?!"

She heard her Ma mumbled excitedly and looked at her with wide eyes; she cannot help but to be excited too.

"Yes, just this summer. I'm married to the former Princess of Hollis," she informed happily.

"So, you're the lucky Prince. I'm so proud that you captured the Princess' heart. Because I heard that she is not just beautiful but very kind to her people," was her Mas surprised reaction. "I never pay attention to the lives of the royal families anymore, to avoid suspicion; that's why I only knew that the Princess got married to a Prince from the North, but I never realize that it was you. When I moved in Wien, I taught myself to forget everything that I knew about your kingdom, as a promise to your mother and to protect you. And since I arrived here months ago, I live a low profile life and never go to the village that often, to avoid any problems. So I never see the Princess either," her Ma explained. "But I heard that she's the most beautiful and most desired Princess in Styria. Every Prince in the neighboring kingdom wanted the Princess of Hollis to be their wife. According to the story from the people, the Princess was very picky choosing a husband. How did you manage to win the Princess' hand?"

"It's actually my father who asked the King of Hollis for the Princess' hand," she commented and was very thankful that her father stopped by at Hollis Kingdom. "My father was on his way to another kingdom, but he needs to pass here and asked the King of Hollis his permission. He was granted permission to pass and was invited to dine and sleep in the Hollis Castle too. And when my father saw the Princess, he decided right away to ask the King of Hollis."

"Does your wife know about your unique trait?" was the blonde woman's careful remark.

She smiled wide before answering. "She does. And I am very grateful to God for giving Laura to me. She never let me feel like I'm different; she just loves me without borders and purely."

"I am so thankful and happy that you found someone that loves you unconditionally," her Ma said. "You are very lucky to have found real love."

She agreed and nodded happily to her Ma. "And when you're ready, I want you to meet her."

"I will let you know," her Ma returned. "By the way, what do your parents call you now?"
She was suddenly caught off guard and realized that her Ma really did not know anything about her after they separated.

"Carl," she uttered softly. "Carl Philipp Marcus."

"I think Carl is a great name,"

She saw her Ma gave her a contented smile, and suddenly, she remembered the law that her mother implemented.

"I need to tell you that my mother created this law; anyone caught calling me by my old name would be punished," was her worried explanation.

"I know. I am the first one to hear that law, and I vowed to obey it," the old woman replied. "They can forbid me to call you that name, but they cannot forbid me to love and treat the heir to the throne of Karnstein as my own child. You're still the same child in my heart and I would never stop loving you."

She took a deep breath, overwhelmed at how her Ma loves her like before.

"Thank you for not forgetting to love me," she remarked; fully grateful that she still have the love of her 'other' mother despite the changes in her life and identity.

"You're my only child, even if you did not come from me. I will love you as long as I live."

"I love you too Ma," she said, and contemplated if she will tell Laura. She vowed to be honest with her wife but she did not want to disappoint her Ma.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Like it? Love it? Hate it?

It's always nice to hear from you. Thanks for your comments and kudos.

Have an awesome summer :-D
The Prince and the Handmaidens

Chapter Summary

After meeting her Ma, Carmilla felt like the luckiest and happiest person in the world. She was contemplating if she would tell Laura her little secret or she would wait for a while, still confused, she decided to ask Perry's help by making breakfast first for her wife. Then Carmilla discovered a secret that the handmaidens are hiding from Perry that led also to another discovery at how the Laura's Handmaidens call her.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Carmilla

When she arrived at the castle, she felt like she was floating in the air after the emotional encounter with her Ma.

"What have you been up to?"

"Bloody Hell!" she exclaimed as LaFontaine came into view from the dark corners of the hall. "Don't ever sneak on me like that!" she reprimanded in a hush tone, as her Valet walked beside her to the grand staircase.

"Sorry, I can't help it. You looked like a naughty cat that just stole a big fish and feasted on it," LaFontaine grinned.

She tried to hide her excitement and hoped that her Valet would stop asking further. "Where's my wife?"

"Sleeping in her chamber," LaFontaine replied. "And she was confused why she had to ride with me and Perry. I think you should be prepared to explain that; and about the woman that we saw standing outside your carriage… did she do something wrong?"

"I am tired and I don't want to talk about it," was her grumpy reply. "And don't you ever mention to anyone about that woman. Do you understand me?"

She saw her Valet nodded and grinned.

"I promise. I don't know why you're making a big deal out of it," LaFontaine said nonchalantly. "I've already prepared your sleeping wear at the guest's chamber you can change there, and then sleep at-"

Before LaFontaine can suggest that she join Laura in the Princess chamber, she dismissed the idea.

"No. I want to sleep alone tonight," she remarked in a serious tone.

"As you wished," LaFontaine returned.

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As soon as she heard the door closed, she smiled right away and mused about meeting her Ma. She never thought that she will meet her Ma again. She felt blessed for all the things that happened lately: winning back her wife's love and finding her other 'mother'. Everything happened in her favor.

She wished that she could just live at Hollis Kingdom to be near her Ma. How perfect would it be…? But she could only hope and dream.

She was thankful that she decided to go after Laura at Hollis Kingdom and did not heed her Mother's order; or else she wouldn't meet her Ma again and she wouldn't know how Laura loves her. Since the day she and Laura kissed and made up, she never felt so happy and appeased in her life. Aside from taking a break from her obligations and responsibilities in her kingdom, she was ecstatic also of the degree of intimacy that she have now with Laura. She never imagined how intense and fulfilling to be so close and intimate with someone. She admitted that her little wife had captured her heart and she had this intense craving of wanting to touch and see Laura all the time.

She sighed and realized that she missed the warmness of her wife lying beside her. But she was too excited with her reunion with her Ma; she wanted to be alone and determine how to explain everything to her wife. She only knew that her mother told Laura that a wet nurse took care of her… Laura never knew the rest of the story.

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She woke up like a child on Christmas morning and thought that it was one of the best sleeps she had in a long while even if it was just few hours; no nightmares, just dreams, mostly consisting of Laura. She looked up at the window and noticed that the sun has not risen fully, as if on cue, she heard the rooster crowed.

After discovering that her Ma was alive, she felt like this void in her life was filled again. She felt amazing. She felt inspired. Perhaps it's the aftermath of her excitement after meeting her Ma: Why on earth I'm awake at this ungodly hour of the day?

She wondered and was surprised her body and mind were fully awake. Then she smiled. She looked forward to see her Ma again today and hoped that she could escape Laura's suspicious eyes and prayed that Kirsch will shut his mouth. That personal Royal Guard of Laura had been a great help to her when they escorted her Ma on the way to the little house in the forest. Now she knew where her Ma live and Kirsch made sure to remember the way.

Then she remembered what LaFontaine told her last night. What could be a better way to explain it without Laura becoming suspicious?

She smirked as a thought crossed her mind and she rose at once from the bed.

But before she could put her robe on and head to the door, her attention was caught by the visible bulge in her braies. She groaned and strode to the bathroom to take care of her morning wood.

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After spending more than ten minutes taking care of her 'unwanted erection', she now found herself walking through the hall leading to the kitchen and servant's hall. It was still quiet and luckily she had not met anyone yet.

She entered and sauntered in the kitchen. Her eyes caught right away the curly red hair of Laura's Lady in Waiting standing in front of the kitchen’s counter and were already busy kneading some
dough. She walked closer and noticed to her right three female servants busy removing the feathers of a chicken, cutting vegetables and stirring the hot food in the big pot on the fireplace; while on her left, the large servant's dining table was already occupied by Natalie and Sarah Jane, eating breakfast.

Just dressed in her purple robe, and hiding her face under its hood from the strong rays of lights, she approached them and said, "Good morning," in a low raspy voice so as not to attract the attention of the others. She saw Perry turned right away and the two handmaidens, still half awake, did not notice her, until Perry stared at her face and bowed to her.

"Your Highness! To what do we owe this pleasure?" Perry exclaimed and glared at the girls who were now fully awake, to rise from their seats and bow their heads.

"Please sit down," she told the handmaidens and turned her head to the right to check if the other servants noticed it. She sighed when she saw the others, still immersed at their work. "I'm sorry to disturb you," she said to Perry. "But I want to surprise my wife and make her breakfast today." She found Perry staring at her with open mouth. She cleared her throat and Perry was awoken from the shocking state.

"Umm, I'm sorry, did I hear that right? Your Royal Highness would like to make Princess Laura's breakfast?" Perry replied.

"Yes. Is that a problem?" she questioned the Lady in Waiting. She was never confident of engaging to friendly conversation, except with Laura, LaFontaine and sometimes Perry, but right now she felt this careless, 'happy-go-lucky' attitude possessing her. "What do you think ladies?" she looked at the two handmaidens and flashed a smile at them.

"I think it'll be romantic Your Royal Hot-Highness," Sarah Jane commented and smiled.

"It usually sends Perry into chaos modus when someone tries to make the Princess' cupcakes aside from her; so I think it'll be interesting to see it," was Natalie's naughty comment and received a glare right away from Perry.

"Come on Perry, please let me do it," she begged. "I will follow your every instruction and I promise to be a good pupil."

Perry sighed and gave up, "Very well, if Your Highness insist. But you have to eat your breakfast first; you need energy to work. Should I bring some cheese, figs and rye bread at the main dining hall?"

"No, don't bother," she replied and walked closer to the long dining table. "I could eat here with these lovely ladies, if that's alright?" and looked at the handmaidens for permission, seeing that the trestle oak table has a wooden bench that can seat ten people on each side.

"We would be honored to eat at the same table with you, Your Royal Highness," Sarah Jane responded, while Natalie just nodded; speechless when she took the seat next to the dark haired handmaiden. "What's that?" her eyes scanned the food in front of her.

"It's porridge, Your Royal Highness," Natalie spoke, "…And some nuts and berries."

"Hmm, it looks delicious, may I have some?" she asked and Perry moved beside her to serve her, but she took the spoon and bowl from Perry. "I'm sorry Perry, old habit. I'll serve myself; you can go back to your dough."

After serving herself, her eyes searched for a cup but found instead a wooden goblet. Her mouth always craved for the roasted rich taste of barley tea and the smoky scent made her calm. But when
she saw Perry kneading dough and the handmaidens eating, she decided to take the one on the table and poured it on the wooden goblet near her and drinks.

"Whoa!"

She expressed after the liquid crawled down on her throat, waking her body. And before she could ask why there was ale at breakfast, Perry stood beside her with a cup of hot drink.

"This is mint tea, Your Highness," Perry served in front of her and smiled. "It's not the same tea that His Highness drinks, but it's the only hot drinks we have here."

"Thanks Perry. I never imagine that you drink this early in the morning," her naïve comment, eyeing on the ale.

"We're already used to it, Your Highness," Perry said. "Should I fetch your favorite cheese and bread too?"

"No, thanks. I think I could manage to eat this," she replied and did not want to trouble them anymore. "It's just porridge," she took a spoonful of the cooked thick lumpy wheat with nuts raspberries and blueberries and was relieved that it tasted good compared to how it looked like. "Hmm, that's delicious." She exclaimed as the two handmaidens watched her with amused eyes, as she dig in to the bowl of porridge.

"I'll just go and check the preparation on the main dining hall, I'll be back right away," Perry said.

"Go ahead, I'll be fine here and wait for you," she said and Perry bowed to her before leaving the kitchen.

She was not even finished eating half of her porridge when she heard someone arrived in the kitchen and walked right away to their table. She continued eating and bowed her head that was still covered with hood, so as to avoid making a commotion. She glanced at her side and saw Betty sat on Natalie's far left, while she remained quiet on Natalie's right side. She glanced at Sarah Jane, sitting across Natalie and when their eyes met she shook her head to signal Sarah Jane not to announce her presence.

"You two seemed awfully quiet today, did Perry scolded both of you again?" Betty asked while scooping porridge from the pot. "Oh, by the way, Kirsch told me that he cannot go with you to the market today," Betty said, referring to Sarah Jane.

"Why?" Sarah Jane wondered after drinking the ale and put down the goblet on the table.

"He said that he's escorting His Royal Hotness after lunch and he doesn't know how long," Betty replied.

She furrowed her brows when she caught Sarah Jane glanced at her and looked down, while she wondered what just Betty called her. She was curious now; it's the second time she heard it, but did not catch exactly the right word. Natalie might have noticed her curiosity, the dark haired handmaiden looked at her and she just smirked at Natalie and she received the same smirk from the handmaiden as well.

"Do you know when Prince Carl wakes up?" Natalie asked out of the blue and looked to the left.

"I am not His Royal Hotness' Valet," Betty answered without looking at Natalie and poured ale on the goblet beside the bowl of porridge. "And we all know that His Royal Hotness doesn't wake up before midday."
"Betty, what if Prince Carl-" Natalie said but Betty interrupted the black haired handmaiden in the middle of the sentence.

"Perry isn't here, so there's no need to use His Hotness' formal name," Betty commented while eating porridge.

A crazy though crossed her mind, "What do you mean by His Royal Hotness?" she asked in a gruff tone and both Sarah Jane and Natalie looked at her.

"Oh come one, how many times do I have to tell the other servants here that Prince Carl is gorgeous and handsome that's why the three of us calls him, His Royal Hotness," was Betty's oblivious and irritated reply. "And unless you look like His Royal Hotness, I suggest you stop asking me what it meant by 'hotness', because nobody in this castle looked as hot and gorgeous like Prince Carl."

She caught right away the blushed on the cheeks of the other two handmaidens, and gave them her sweetest grin before bowing to hide their embarrassment. She does not have any idea that Laura's handmaiden friends were attracted to her.

"Does the Princess know?" she asked and hoped that Betty would not recognize her yet. She needed to know if Laura knew about this petty attraction.

Betty gave one wicked chuckle but remained focused on the food, not bothering to look at the person she was talking to. "Are you jealous that we think Prince Carl is very handsome? Of course the Princess knows it! We don't hide any secrets from our friend…” was Betty's cocky reply, having been friends with Laura since they were young.

Sarah Jane was about to utter a word but she quickly signaled to remain silent.

"…secrets like?" she asked Betty again before putting another spoonful of porridge in her mouth. She was enjoying this conversation.

"Secrets like… His Royal Hotness having a big cock," Betty uttered with pride.

She coughed upon hearing it, as the porridge got stuck in her throat.

"Betty!" Sarah Jane scolded and rose from the seat. "Don't be too confident when talking about Prince Carl's cock!"

While Natalie stood up and got worried. "Your Hotness! I mean, Highness, are you alright?"

Why do they keep on saying cock?!

After recovering from her cough, she drank from her cup and put down the hood, looked at Betty's direction to reveal herself to the tall handmaiden. When she caught Betty's attention she saw the lanky handmaiden's eyes widened. She smirked before saying, "Good morning Betty."

"Oh my god!" Betty panicked, after realizing who she was talking to and rose. "Please forgive me Your Royal Hotness, I mean Highness," Betty begged, rose from the bench and bowed.

"I guess I could ask you what 'hotness' means," she said, with a hint of sarcasm. She found it amusing to see all Laura's handmaidens flushed and quiet. Then she motioned for them to sit down. "Please, take your seats and let's finish eating breakfast. I must say, this is the most interesting and most entertaining breakfast I ever had. We should do this again," she suggested while she watched the embarrass expression of the handmaidens. She thought of asking Betty's remark about her penis but chose to ignore it. She doesn't want to embarrass the tall handmaiden further; she took a mental
note to ask her wife instead.

To break the awkward silence while they all tried to eat their breakfast.

"So, tell me Betty what 'Hotness' means?" she asked at once, intrigued at the term.

"It means gorgeous Your Highness, and with strong sex appeal and very attractive that it can make the girls hot and arouse just by looking at him," Betty answered at once without hesitation.

"Betty, isn't too early to be talking about your dream man?" Perry cautioned. "And I think you shouldn't talk things like that in the presence of His Highness."

They heard Perry's strict voice and they all kept quiet.

"It's alright Perry, Betty is just describing someone she met," was her excuse.

"I hope their behaving well at your presence, Your Highness," Perry commented while standing at the other end of the oak table. "The girls can be very chatty sometimes."

And before she could reply, she saw all the flushed and worried expressions of the handmaidens. She noticed how all three girls' back stiffened after Perry entered the room.

"I actually enjoy their company. I never had a dull moment with them," she told Perry and caught the confused look on the Lady in Waiting's face, while she saw the handmaidens sighed with relief.

"And they all behave like a perfect lady," she added and earned a discreet smile from Laura's friends.

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"Are you sure you don't want me to carry the tray?" LaFontaine asked before opening the door of Laura's chamber.

"No thanks, I can manage, you can go back," she said and signaled for her Valet to open the door. After crossing the threshold, LaFontaine closed the door right away. She walked carefully to the room, not wanting to disturb the sleeping Princess. But she smirked when she saw Laura already up and sitting on the bed, as if waiting already to be served.

"Good morning Cupcake," she greeted in her alluring deep raspy voice and got the attention of Laura at once. "How are you feeling?"

"Good… morning?" was Laura's surprised remark. "Where's Perry and why are you carrying that tray?"

"Because…" she uttered, and placed gently the service tray in front of her wife and kissed Laura on the lips. "I made you breakfast," was her proud remark and sat on the bed across her wife; she lifted a glass from the tray and offered it to Laura, "Drink this first," she ordered and Laura stared at the odd drink.

"Eww… what's this?"

"It's owl's egg. It's a cure for drinking too much alcohol last night," she informed while watching with amused eyes her wife's shocked expression. "I asked LaFontaine to make it so that you'll feel better."

"But I feel better…"
She raised her left eyebrow. "Are you sure? You were drunk last night," she recalled and knew how it felt like to have a hangover.

"Just a bit," Laura bragged and grinned. "I ate a lot of sweet cabbage soup yesterday before I went to the feast and Perry gave me a bowl again before going to bed, to hydrate my body."

"Do you always eat that after drinking too much?" she wondered and was shocked how her wife could feel better after feasting.

"Yes, ever since I was young," Laura revealed. "We from Hollis Kingdom enjoy eating and drinking a lot, that's why we have to find a good cure for hangovers. There are different types of cure, but the sweetened cabbage is the one that works for me... and the least scary."

"I think I should tell Lafontaine to ask Perry how to do it," she thought and remembered all the odd cure that her Valet gave her every time she had a hangover. "So, are you ready to eat your breakfast?"

Laura was dumbfounded and looked at the contents of the tray. "Did you prepare all these?" referring to the warm cup of cocoa, a goblet of water with sliced cucumbers, bowl of red grapes and sliced red apples and three chocolate cupcakes on the plate, and the long stemmed white rose on the side.

"I did. And I'm the one who baked your cupcake today," was her proud reply and saw those brown round eyes stared at her.

"Y-you," Was the Princess doubting remark. "You baked these?"

"Yes. I woke up early and asked Perry to help and teach me," she said and handed Laura the cupcake. "Here, taste it while it's still warm."

Laura took a bite and those round hazel eyes widened, "Wow, it's really good!"

She rolled her eyes and cannot imagine that her wife underestimated her cooking capability. "Are you expecting a-" but before she could finish the sentence, a pair of soft wet lips that tasted chocolate claimed her own lips, and she found Laura kissing her tenderly.

"It's delicious," Laura said after releasing from the kiss while munching the cupcake. "Thanks for this wonderful breakfast it's so sweet of you."

She gave her wife a smile and took some grapes and put it into Laura's mouth. Her wife dutifully accepted it and accidentally licked her fingers.

She saw her wife blushed at once. "Did you just do that on purpose?" she teased.

"Of course not!" Laura replied and pouted.

"I love it when you're pouting, I want to kiss you more," she commented.

"And I hate it when you're teasing me," the Princess replied and pretended to sniff and displayed a puppy sad eye.

"You really know how to get my attention," she said and moved closer to her wife.

"I'm not asking for your attention," Laura retorted and pouted even more.

"Well, you did and I wouldn't let you go until that pout disappeared," and with that, she kissed her
wife lightly and gazed at Laura. "You're killing me, you know that." She commented and placed her lips again on Laura's, closed her eyes and this time she deepened the kiss and put her right hand on Laura's neck and caressed the softness of it.

She reluctantly released from the kiss as the need for air arose and opened her eyes. If Laura had not been eating breakfast, she would have devoured her wife by now after that fervent kiss.

"May I ask why the Prince of Karnstein made me breakfast?" Laura asked and continued to eat the chocolate cupcake.

"I just feel like it," was her confident reply.

"Are you sure? Or you're trying to hide something from me or did something-"

"Cupcake, can't I just be nice and sweet to you?" she said and felt partly guilty. "I want you to feel special and this isn't the last time I'll make you breakfast in bed, although I preferred you as my breakfast," she remarked in her deepest and enticing voice, and Laura blushed at once.

"Your fault, you didn't sleep here last night," Laura quipped and paused, after realizing something. "And why didn't you sleep here last night?" the sweet voice morphed into suspicion. Laura paused briefly, as if recalling what happened last night. "And why did I end up riding with LaFontaine and Perry and not with you? Where did you go? What did you do? When did you arrive home?"

Suddenly, she was bombarded with questions that she does not want to answer. "Slow down Cupcake, I feel like a criminal being interrogated."

"Answer me!"

Her back stiffened upon hearing that commanding voice of her wife. She contemplated if she would tell the truth or not. Then she remembered what they have talked about after they made up: be honest.

"I saw someone that I knew," she started and piqued Laura's curiosity.

"Who?"

"My wet nurse," she replied and looked at Laura's expression, to check if Laura remembered about her Ma.

"The one that took care of you when you're a child?" was Laura's surprised reply.

She nodded and watched how her wife's eyes widened in surprise and waited for the follow up question or remark.

"She's here? But how come she lives here and not in Karnstein," Laura wondered.

"Because she was sent to live as far away from me as possible, so I won't be distracted while my mother and father raised me," was her honest remark. She saw the wrinkle on her wife's brows and has not realized yet the setting of the story. "I grew up different from what I am now," she hinted, and saw Laura nodded after realizing the truth. "My mother thought that I would be better off without my wet nurse around me while I grew up at my real house, with my real parents while they groomed me to become the real me."

She saw a hint of worry in Laura's eyes. She waited for her wife's reaction, but did not receive any.
"I know that my mother had already told you about my real self," she continued and she was thankful for Laura's non-judgmental reaction. "But I'm sure she never told you that I grew up with my wet nurse for the first twelve years of my life, knowing that my wet nurse was my mother." She took a deep breath and relieved that Laura took it lightly. "I call her Ma, my wet nurse. She's the best mother that I ever had while I was a child. She loves me like her own and took care of me like I'm the most precious child in the world; she and Da." She received a puzzled look from her wife.

"Who's Da? Is he your Ma's husband?" Laura wondered.

"No, he's not Ma's husband," she corrected and she did not know if she will reveal Da's relationship with her Valet. "He did not live with us, but he always visits us, since he's the one that brings us our foods and everything that we need."

"Well, he sounded like he's a father only, he doesn't sleep and live with you," Laura commented.

"You can say that; Da was the father that I thought I had before," she explained. "Because when I was a child I didn't know what a family. All I know was I have a mother who's always there to take care of me. And I have like a father, Da, who, I was informed had to always go away to work so that we could have food and everything that we need to live. Sometimes, he sleeps in our little house, but I never saw him and my Ma sleep together. All I knew was, whenever Da was with us, my Ma and he always talked about how they could take care of me in the best possible way. They told me that I'm the most important person in their lives and that I should not be surprised that they're always talking about me." She was about to resume her story, but noticed her wife was itching to ask something. "Do you have something in mind?"

"I'm just curious, and forgive me if I doubted, but…" Laura answered. "…Did you ever feel like they've love you genuinely?"

She smiled after hearing the question. "I had the best childhood. We may not be the ideal family that I knew now, but Ma and Da had loved me like I'm they're own child. Although Da did not live with us, he was there not just to take care of our material needs and to check my health he was like a father to me. Da taught me how to play ball, ride a pony, hold and use a wooden sword, he even taught me how to milk our cows-

"You have cows?!" Laura's excited remark.

She laughed at how her wife's eyes brightened and widened at the mention of cows. "Yes, and chickens, goats and cats too!" was her proud reply.

"So, that explained why you're excited to see the cows at the village with Emma!"

Guilty, she just nodded and the smile on her wife's face was priceless.

"Ma used to make this cheese, that I love, and Da told me that I should learn to help Ma milking the cows and tending the goats and feeding the chickens, as I grew older," was her happy remark, as she recalled the days in the farm. She did not realize that she was smiling and was excited as she tells Laura about her childhood life.

"Wow! I didn't think that you enjoyed more your childhood than I did," Laura retaliated. "When I was a child I can't even go to the castle's barn to touch the animals or own a cat, because my father was over protective; he's afraid that the animals might bite me due to my curiosity."

"I guess you're father had a point," she teased and earned a soft slap on her left arm from Laura. "Ouch!"
"You're so mean," the little Princess expressed and pouted.

"I'm just kidding," she replied and pinched lightly Laura's cheek. "As I was saying, Da had been the father that taught me everything that any father would teach his child. Ma told me also that I was lucky that whenever Da would visit us, he always use his time to play with me."

"What do you mean?"

"During that time, I didn't know what obligations or responsibility meant," she revealed. "Our life in that little house was simple and we're always happy. Da rarely talked about his job or any problem, that's why I didn't know that life outside our home could be unpleasant or cruel," she said. "At that time, I only knew that Da worked in the village and he need to cure sick people and in return we get our food or things that we need from the people that he cured. And when he comes home to us, it meant that we got to relax and enjoy our time together, because he comes home only once or twice a week. But when something should be fixed or broken in the house or in the barn, Da would fix it and I would help."

"It sounded like you certainly had a very loving family while you're a child, even if the definition of your family was very different from the usual family," Laura commented, "How about you and your Ma? What do you usually do together?"

"Ah, I and Ma, do almost anything together, but the favorite thing I enjoyed doing with her was gardening," she related and suddenly felt nostalgic. "My Ma taught me to plant roses, vegetables and fruits. We have this beautiful small garden of roses in our old house. As I grew up, I told her that I could make a living out of selling roses because Ma said that the roses that I planted always grew the best and the most beautiful."

"But she's right, you have a green thumb and the roses in the castle are the most beautiful roses that I've seen in my life," Laura praised.

"You're just saying that because you're married to me," she teased.

"No, I'm saying, you'll make a fine gardener and I could hire you to make a rose garden for me," Laura grinned naughtily.

"You'll do that?" she raised her eyebrows and challenged Laura's comment. "What if I'm just an average farmer and gardener that sells roses, do you think you'd be attracted to me?"

"I think whatever you might be, I will always be attracted to you," Laura reasoned out.

"What if I never met my real parents and remained living with my Ma in a little house in the forest," she asked, testing what her wife would reply. "Would you still want me and fall in love with me?"

She was met by a wide grin right away, and the next thing she knew, Laura leaned over to her ear and whispered:

"I would still like you and love you even if you're Carmilla Karnstein."

TBC

Chapter End Notes
I always think that it felt good to wake up to see an update from my favorite fics especially when I've had or have a bad day… just thought I could do the same thing too, to those who are having a bad day right now :-) 

It's always nice to hear your comments and receive kudos, thanks; and be safe when you go out there and catch pokemon ;-)
Chapter Summary

Carl's unexpected reaction and what he felt about Laura saying his old name.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

Carl narrowed his eyes and the wrinkle on his forehead said that he was not happy at what he heard.

**Damn! What have I done?**!

"Where did you hear that name?" Carl demanded his voice cold and deeper. "No one, including you, should utter that name."

"I…" she wanted to tell him that she loved him whether he was a man or a woman but it seemed she made him mad at her attempt at letting him know.

Carl's jaw tightened. "Do you know that it's forbidden to utter that name and whoever caught saying that would be punished?"

"I'm sorry, but I didn't know that and I didn't mean to offend you," she defended but won't be intimidated; she decided to tell him, "It was Her Majesty who told me."

After that remark, she saw the surprised look on his face.

Shocked, "My mother…? But how…?"

"After I found you sleeping naked in your chamber," she explained weighing her words. It looked like he did not expect the Queen to divulge his old name to anyone again, let alone his wife. "The Queen confronted me after she discovered that I found out your true identity."

"But my mother wouldn't just tell it to anybody," Carl reasoned out; surprised at his mother's change of heart.

He grew more confused by the moment.

"I asked her," was her confident reply. Carl furrowed his brows again and narrowed his eyes and gave her a long icy stare.

"Do you know what happens to those who knew and say that name?" Carl's voice swelled and became authoritative and firm. "…They disappear; others were severely punished and thrown into a dungeon," his voice full of anger. "And those who remained loyal to the castle swore to my mother to forget that name and the girl who owned that name."

She remained silent. The Queen left out that one important detail.

Of course, Carl's parents need to protect his identity and keep his secret as buried as possible; he was
the heir to the throne of Karnstein Kingdom; how could she be so naïve and insensitive about the situation?

"I didn't mean to make things complicated," she apologized. "I was curious who you were before, that's why I asked Her Majesty. But other than that, I have no intention of telling anyone your old name. And I apologized for being nosy," she said but her thirst for the truth was not quenched. "…But as your wife, I think I'm entitled also to know the truth," she explained her concern. "I'm entitled to know how you grew up and became the prince. I've been silent about that part of your life and respect your privacy. But now, I think it's about time that we talk about it."

"What's to talk about?" he grew more irritated and he raised his voice, the one that he used to the servants when he's angry. "You already knew what I am, and I just told you about my Ma and Da aren't you satisfied that you already knew my old name and had seen the real me, what more do you want?!"

Upset at Carl's sudden irritability, "I want you to open up to me!" she snapped. "I want you to tell me everything that happened when you're a child. I want you to tell me what you felt when you found out that you're unique."

Carl rose from the bed, walked three steps away and turned his back on her. He ran his hand through his hair, "It's the past. And I've just told you how I live in the small house with my Ma and Da," he replied, growing frustrated and turned around to face the bed. "Why do you have to dig more? Does it matter to you that much? …Because as far as I know, you shouldn't be prying on someone's past," the veins on his throat were throbbing, as he tried to control his voice that was lower now but sharp. "Tell me, Laura, are you still bothered that you married someone like me? Have you really accepted what I am? Do you really love me?"

"What kind of questions are those?!" she retaliated and got out of the bed and walked towards him. Her eyes caught his hands balled in a fist. "Of course I've accepted you for what you are. Carl, I fell in love with you after I found out what you really are," she claimed and reached for his hands to open them and held them tight. "...I fell in love with you as a person."

"When you look at me, what do you see?"

And she finally heard that question.

She reached out for his cheek, cupped it tenderly and moved closer to him.

"I see the person that I love and my soulmate," she whispered and was rewarded with a bashful smile from him. "And I'm sorry that I'm so nosy and intrusive. I never realized how insensitive and selfish I am for not thinking that it's difficult for you to tell me about your childhood, and your parents were doing everything to protect you and your identity," she confided and thought Carl was raised to control his feelings so as not to look 'less powerful' since he was a future king. It will take time for him to open up fully to her, she just needed to be patient. "From now on, I'll not force you to tell me those things in the past. And you're right, past is past. It's the present I should be thinking." She gave him her assurance. And his expression softened. "Carl, I love you, and I promise to respect you."

"You're not selfish and insensitive," he corrected. "You're just curious… as always. But I want to clear this curiosity in your head. So, ask me now what's really in your mind and heart."

"There are so many things that I've been dying to ask you before," she revealed, she released her hands that were cupping his cheeks and reached for his hands and held them again. "But now, I realized, it doesn't matter anymore. It doesn't matter anymore if you're a girl before, and a man now,
or that you still have a female body-

Carl stood straight and composed himself, "Laura, you know from the start that I am a man, I am the Prince of Karnstein and the heir to the throne; I cannot change that anymore," he said with an air of superiority and firmness in his voice.

"I know," her frustrated reply, and realized from what he just said that he was adamant being a man to fulfill his duties and obligations as the future king. "That's why I'm telling you that, no matter how you feel about yourself, no matter what you think about yourself, I'll accept you wholeheartedly," was her honest opinion, mindful that his obligations and responsibilities as the future king was significant in his life.

"But you know… there's a part of me that would always be confused…" he mumbled.

Her nose twitched with excitement and her curiosity was piqued after hearing his comment, yet she remained composed and patient. "What do you mean?" she whispered.

"In my heart and in my mind, I am Carl… But…" he hesitated, his voice morphing into a whisper, "…deep inside me, there's still this slight feeling… that I'm Carmilla… and it never disappears."

She wrinkled her brows and imagined how difficult for him to struggle with his identity. Even she cannot give him a correct answer or give the right encouraging words. So, she followed her instinct and hugged him. She felt his arms wrapped around her tightly. His embrace shouted a thousand words, and despite the silence, they knew that deep in their hearts they understand and accept each other. They remained silent and held each other, relishing this moment. She felt good that he had opened up and she knew that he was relieved.

When they parted, she cupped his face again and gazed at his melancholic eyes.

"Whatever you feel about yourself, I want you to know that I accept you and I love you," she reminded him. "I love every part of you and your whole being," she returned and saw him smiled. "I will never judge you and I will always be open to whatever you need," she reassured him; showing to him that he could be whatever he wants to be with her. "You see, when I first saw you, I have neither feelings nor any attraction for you. In fact, I don't like you at all," she admitted and saw him raised his left eyebrow. "I know, you're thinking, what the hell I'm talking about… but hear me out first," she begged and saw him smirked and still raised his left eyebrow. "But as time goes by, I realized that I'm becoming attracted to you, and the next thing I knew, I'm already falling in love with you. And this happened after I saw you naked."

"Cupcake that sounded like a confession of a pervert courtesan,"

"Carl! I'm trying to be serious here," she whined and gave him her most dramatic pout.

"I love it when you react like that," he teased and leaned for a kiss.

But she avoided his lips, "No, you have to listen to me first before you can kiss me." She demanded and he gave her a naughty smirk as he recovered from the embarrassment of a failed kiss.

"Alright, what does my wife desires?" he said, in a deep husky voice.

"When we make love, I want you to show me your whole self," she said and knew that he was about to object, so she continued to speak. "I want to touch your breasts and make love to them, just like you make love to my breasts." She explained, weighing her words. "I want you to know that I love both 'the Carl and the Carmilla part of you'."
The smug look on Carl's face disappeared; he took a deep breath before answering.

Hesitating, "I'll try, but in my own time," he replied.

"I understand. I'll wait when you're ready," she said and was thankful that he accepted her proposal; and since she managed to coax him to be more open to her, she thought of not giving up with regards to his name. She wanted to call him something that was part of his past and his present. "And Carl, since I cannot call you with that old name of yours… and since I don't want to end up in the dungeon and be hanged-

"I didn't say anything about being hanged," Carl corrected.

"To be hanged or not to be hanged; whatever kind of punishment it is, I will not call you that name anymore, respect your mother's will and protect you," she reasoned out and grinned at him. "But I want to call you that is purely for your ears only."

"Cupcake, I have three names, you can use all of them when calling me," he said, frustrated by these endless demands. "Plus I have my other name that you love to call me every time I'm jealous: your big wild cat."

She giggled at the mention of his pet name.

"Aside from my big wildcat," she uttered, displaying her signature 'captivating smile' at him. "Can I call you 'Carm'?"

She did not tear her eyes from him. She grew worried when she saw his brows crinkled; and prayed that he agrees.

"Carm?" he uttered and paused for a while, testing the sound of it in his ears, "…Carm."

"It's a combination of both Carl and Carmilla," she said. "And I'll just call you that when we're alone and when I knew that it's safe," she explained and hoped that he would agree. "It'll be my personal term of endearment to you… if you know what I mean," she teased and batted her thick eyelashes. "…Or I could just call you my big fuzzy broody panther; your choice," she added, leaving him no choice to disagree.

She saw him smirked and gave her his signature 'seduction eyes' look and she knew right away that she got the response that she wanted.

"Carm… I think I like that very much," he said, his voice raspier.

She giggled, excited that he agreed and kissed him. "Thank you," she exclaimed, took his hand and she led them back to her bed. "I think you should join me, to celebrate your new name," was her giddy suggestion, seeing that there were still remaining cupcakes and fruits on the breakfast tray.

"I've already eaten breakfast at the servant's hall with your handmaidens," he said nonchalantly. "I was up early."

After hearing his comment, her eyes widened and cannot believe what she heard. "You…? The Prince of Karnstein, who never set his foot in his own castle's kitchen, and the broody, quiet, aloof, reserved prince that the servants think of… dined at the servant's hall with the servants?!!"

"Is that how the servant's think about me?" he worried at the description he heard.

Carl looked unaffected at how she reacted and remained in deep thoughts. She did not expect that he
would someday do that. He was too reserved and too 'upper class' to mingle with the servants. She felt a sudden surge of joy as she realized that her Prince was trying to mingle and be approachable to others. Her first impression of the Karnsteins was cold, reserved and aloof, Carl must have seen from her that mingling and talking to the servants and commoners were natural and pleasant.

She was strayed from her train of thoughts when she heard him cleared his throat. She was confused when she saw him staring at her and giving her that suspicious look that said she had done something wrong.

"What?"

"You knew all the time that your handmaidens are calling me His Royal Hotness, why didn’t you tell me?"

Guilty, she displayed her most adorable smile and put her arms on his shoulders, while her hands stroked his nape and the tip of his hair. "Because… it's their secret, and I don't want to betray my friends by revealing their little crime. And besides, they adore you and like you, just like the other servants from your castle. I shouldn't deprive them of their admiration to you," was her smart excuse.

"I never realized that there are servants in my castle that are attracted to me. How did you found out?"

**Well, I know one who is very attracted to you…**

The King's Mistress was already on top of her list, given a chance to kill someone.

She dismissed her evil thought and focused on reality instead.

"Well, if you have three handmaidens who love to listen to gossips and talked about anything," she began giving him a lop-sided grin, "You will know everything that is happening in the servant's hall and what they're talking about," was her confident reply.

"Did you tell them that I have a big cock?" Carl asked out of the blue.

This time, the confident grin on her face vanished as Carl gave her a suspicious look.

"What?! I didn't tell them that," she retaliated, she felt her blood rushed to her face at the mere mention of the word 'cock'; for her, the term 'cock' was too vulgar, too strong and scary to hear.

"I heard from Betty that, they, your handmaiden friends, never hide secrets from you. So, I thought, the reason why Betty said that you have a-" Carl finished for her.

"That is not what she meant," she defended. "The reason why Betty said that you have a-"

"… big cock," Carl finished for her.

"It's because the servants heard from the matrons that you possess a well-endowed," she paused and can't seem to say the word 'cock' and instead said, "… 'cat' when they saw your erection the morning after the bedding-ceremony after you got out of bed to greet the Queen." She babbled and received a naughty smirk from him, "so, that's the reason why Betty thinks you have a big one… and you shouldn't believe in gossips, you're not sure if it's true or not."

"How about you?" Carl wondered.

"What about me?" she asked naïve and felt him pulled from the embrace and stood in front of her
"Do you think I have a big cock?" Carl asked and gave her room to appraise him.  

She was totally dumbfounded.  

Is he teasing me?!

"What's the matter Cupcake, cat got your tongue?" he taunted and smirked like a devil. "You don't think that the matrons and Betty might be right about their speculation, do you?"

She grew annoyed at his comment.  

"Are you challenging me?" she asked and felt her pride wounded at his comment. He had a point; she never set her eyes fully on his penis, just a few stolen glances. She just knew that he might be thick and big by how he fills her up fully when Carl was inside her and the way it hurts, and how sore she felt afterward.

"Should I take Betty's and the matrons' words that I have a big cock, or I'll let you decide if it's big or not?" Carl provoked more and stepped back until he was in the middle of the room as if displaying himself to her. "You're the one who told me that I shouldn't believe in gossips. But how can you tell if it's true or not when you haven't seen or touched it 'properly'?

Then it dawned on her… was he testing how far she had overcome her fear?  

There were several times now they had sex but she never touched or looked at Carl's penis. She knew that when they make love, she should also be a giver and not always the receiver. But Carl doesn't seem to mind it and was always mindful of her fear. She loved touching him but she had not yet come close to touching the most intimate part of his body, and the part that she wants to touch was off-limit.

But the way he asked the question was like a challenge to her. Does she need to feel guilty for not being 'active' in bed? Was he testing her limits to see how far she could handle the sight of his so-called well-endowed 'tool'? Well, there's only one thing to find out… and she will not give him the benefit of seeing her backed out at this challenge. She needs to girl the hell up! If he can play this game, so can her. And she planned on teasing him too.

She composed herself and straightened her back, "Alright, I will take your challenge, but on one condition," she replied and walked slowly towards him. She stopped when she was two meters away from him, gave him a naughty grin and said, "I get to look and touch you. But you cannot touch me," she decided that a little challenge on his part can be fun. She wanted to see how far Carl can control himself from touching her. "If you ever touch a tip of my hair or my finger, it means you lose in this challenge and you have to accept whatever I say. So, if I decided that you're small, you'll have to swallow your pride and accept it," was her naughty suggestion.

"Alright, I accept," Carl's confident reply, "but on one condition too."

"And what's that?" she asked and pretended to be bored by raising her right hand and looking at her fingernails. She knew that Carl gets easily aroused and there was no way he could control his lust for her. He will definitely lose.

"…that you'll not beg me to touch you and kiss you when the situation heats up…and you cannot kiss me on any part of my body, even if it's a peck on the cheek, the only part you can touch is my 'panther'," he demanded, "if you break the rule, you're the one who loses and you have to live with the fact that I have a big 'panther'."

"Ha!" she exclaimed as if mocking him, amused at his cockiness, and how he called now his penis, a
'panther' instead of a 'cat'.

*He has the nerve to tell me that when he's the one who's always horny!*

"Alright, I accept your conditions; let's get on with this, so we could see how I win," she provoked him and just saw him stare at her. She waited for him to retaliate but she was surprised when he began to untie the strings of his robe, her eyes followed what he's going to do next and she saw him took his robe off and let it fall on the floor. When she looked up at him, she received a naughty smirk.

"Your turn," Carl said and nodded slightly.

"What?! We never agree that this is a stripping challenge," she returned and saw him wearing only his white short-sleeve shirt and white braies.

"I think it's just fair that you undress too since I need to see you, then you get to see how big I am," Carl declared with too much confidence in his voice and gave her a wide smirk.

She felt a tingle after hearing his cocky remark. "You are so full of yourself, my Prince!" she reproached.

She knew that Carl was eager to see her breasts. So she decided to prolong his agony, there were only two things that were covering her body. She removed her underwear instead, placed it on the ground and received a groan of disappointment from him. Now, she was just one thin silk camisole away from winning this challenge.

"That's unfair," he complained, "...you should remove first your camisole, then your underwear."

"Well, we never agree on which cloth to remove first, just like we never agree that I am undressing too," she retorted and displayed her naughty grin. "Your turn..." she said sweetly, knowing that Carl was about to remove his last chance of winning this game.

Her heart pounded madly as he pulled down his braies and she focused her sight on his crotch. She gasped discreetly when her eyes saw Carl's relaxed pale penis hangs freely out of his braies. Carl may not have been blessed in height, but he was surely blessed in the size of his organ. Her eyes perused over the length of his shaft. She was fascinated at how smooth, a bit veiny, and thick his shaft was, and the paleness of it was a great contrast to the dark curls that Carl has in between his pale smooth legs.

For the first time she did not panic at the sight of it and she thought that it does not look that 'big' and 'scary' at all; then she remembered the first time she touched Carl's penis, it grew thick and long. And she realized: this was just how it looked like when it's soft. Her breathing became ragged and she did not know if this was due to her initial fear of penis, or she was getting aroused at the sight of his 'well endowed' member. There's only one thing to do.

She tore her sight away from his crotch, looked up and moved slowly towards him. Carl's expression was now serious and she can tell that he was nervous too. She caught the concerned look in his eyes and knew that he was thinking about her fear. She was now close and could touch him, but she did not dare. Not yet. A temporary silence passed through them and she found herself staring at his worried gentle dark eyes.

"Are you alright?" Carl's concerned remark.

She took a deep breath before answering and tried to smile and calm down. But all the nerves in her body were stirred by the anticipation of seeing how his member becomes 'bigger'.

"Yes."
Perhaps sensing her nervousness from her short reply, she saw Carl's expression softened and he gave her a bashful smile instead of his signature cocky smirk.

"You don't need to touch it if you don't want to," he offered, his voice full of concern.

She swallowed and took a deep breath again and set her sight to his crotch. "I want to touch it," was her brave remark. "I want to see it grow," Her nervousness disappeared when she heard Carl chuckled.

"Cupcake, the way you've said grow, it sounded like you're just referring to a kitty," Carl teased.

"Well, you're the one who told me to imagine it like I'm petting a cat when you asked me to touch you," she retaliated and grinned.

She was about to touch it, but Carl stepped back and she looked up, and got distracted.

"Do you remember what I've told you?" Carl asked.

She crinkled her brows and stared at him.

"Touch it like you're petting a cat, not too hard, and always be gentle, and if you have the urge to squeeze it; do it with tender loving care," Carl reminded calmly like he was explaining it to a child. "And remember, we still need to produce heirs, so try not to crush it," was his sarcastic remark.

"I remembered everything, you don't have to remind me," her impatient reply and she saw him rolled his eyes, before moving closer to her again.

"Alright, let me see how you make me big," he said in his deep raspy voice.

She saw him nodded, giving her the go signal before she looked down. She suddenly felt a tingle downwards after hearing his comment, and she could feel his breath on her face as she positioned herself in front of him near to his crotch. She reached for his soft penis, touched it carefully until she got comfortable holding it. Once she was confident, she began to fondle it but was startled when Carl's penis suddenly twitched and she released it. When she looked up at him, he saw his eyes fully dilated and his breathing ragged. She was about to say something but the look of lust in his eyes, made her aroused. She did not realize a mere touch of her hand could arouse Carl quickly. She put back her hand and gently stroked his semi-erect and semi-hard member. She got curious when she watched it grow thicker and harder.

She was starting to get aroused, knowing that she made Carl hard. She needed to think of a way to distract her arousal, and to avoid asking Carl to touch her. "Is that it?" her naïve question, after witnessing him grew, and stepped backward for a moment. She caught Carl opened his eyes and knew that he was enjoying it.

"No, that's just the start," he mumbled nonchalantly and gave her a devilish smirk. "It's not yet pointing to heaven, so you still have to work more," he teased.

She was too dumbfounded to reply and felt her core growing moist at his teasing and the sight of his semi erected shaft. If they prolong this teasing, she would definitely lose. She needed to tease him back. She stepped back two steps, and she saw the confused look on Carl's face and caught him raised his left eyebrows. She paused for a while, to make sure that he could see her fully, she cleared her head as she got distracted from the erect penis that was dangling in front of her as if teasing her.

She gathered her composure and sought Carl's stare, and she locked gaze at him. Slowly, she untied the strings in front of her camisole, and drew the left sleeve down off from her shoulder, she did the same thing too with the other one and watched Carl grew hungry at the sight of her stripping her
remaining clothing. Once both sleeves were out of her shoulders, she let the silk camisole fall freely on the floor, she stepped out of it and walked fully naked towards Carl. She made sure to stand straight and proud, to show the fullness of her breasts. She saw Carl breathed quicker. The hunger in his eyes was visible. The way his eyes appraised her, caressing the curves of her body and revering her breasts were already enough to make her wet. She smirked as she caught him licked his own lips, a habit of Carl that she learned before he put his mouth on her nipples. When she was closed enough to him, she noticed that she does not need to 'work more', as Carl sarcastically suggested for him to get bigger. For the first time, she saw his beautiful smooth pale shaft in its full glory, pointing to heaven. She could tell that Carl was fully erect now, the veins along his throbbing thick shaft were clearly visible and surging with blood; she knew that he was aching to touch her.

She never realized that it was this thick and large when she caught a glimpse of it for the first time when they had sex. And now, she definitely feels aroused and proud at the thought of making Carl very hard and fully erect. And she knew damn well that her breasts were the ones that made her Prince happy. The hungry look that Carl was giving her was making her more aroused and she felt her nipples hardening. She hoped that Carl would not notice it, or else, he would flirt and tease her until she gives up and beg for his lips to suck her erect nipple. She needed distraction.

"Betty was right," she said as she catches her breath. "You do have a big cock," her confident remark, and used the word 'cock' to exaggerate her comment.

The smirk on Carl's face was priceless. It was a huge ego boost to him coming from her.

"...And all because of your pretty pink hard nipples that were shouting for my mouth's attention," Carl commented in a deep husky voice. "Tell me Cupcake, don't you want my lips and tongue to play and suck your nipples?"

She gasped and almost moaned at the thought of it, she was lucky that she can still control her libido. She knew Carl was already aching hard. And he was already on the verge of exploding from frustrations; he's just good at hiding it behind his snarky remarks. She was growing impatient and wanted to see him break and yield to his lust. She needed to tell him the right words.

She leaned closer to him, careful not to touch his body; she took a deep breath and moaned in his left ear before whispering in her most sultry voice:

"Don't you want your raging hard cock inside my wet tight vagina?" she heard Carl growled after her comment and knew that she managed to distract Carl from flirting further when she saw his eyelids half open, dizzy from arousal. Any second now, she knew he would give in and touch her.

But she was surprised when his parted lips turned into a naughty smirk and moved to regain his personal space. She got annoyed when he didn't take her bait, and before she could take another step to make sure she wins, Carl licked his lips, provoking her further and said:

"There's still one thing that you don't know about me," Carl uttered.

Her heart throbbed fiercely. What do more secrets Carl have? She narrowed her eyes and waited for his reply. But instead, he moved closer to her, careful not to have any body contact. He leaned closer on her left ear, just like she did a few minutes ago and whispered:

"I always make sure that I win," Carl uttered in his most enticing and deepest voice, and stepped back again.

Her eyes followed his every movement and she contorted her brows when he just stood right in front of her and stared at her. When Carl knew that her attention was focused on him, he put his hands on
the hem of his shirt.

Her eyes widened and her lips parted when Carl lifted his shirt off his head and let it fall to the ground.

He gazed at her and shot her with his signature 'seduction eyes' before he removed the pin on the side of the white linen that was binding his chest...

... and he began to slowly unwrapped himself in front of her.

*Oh. My. God.* she told herself and knew that she was about to lose.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

I know that a lot of you have been asking about this 'talk', so let me know what you feel /think. And thanks so much for your wonderful replies and generous kudos. I'm not satisfied with how I wrote the last part, nor I didn't know how I ended up writing that, and didn't have time to revise again, so bear with me and my craziness :-P
The Carmilla In Me

Chapter Summary

Laura definitely lost the challenge. Carm visited Ma to catch up with what happened in their lives, while Laura discovered a lot of surprising and unexpected things about Carm and her relationship with the Queen mother. The Prince of Karnstein has another title aside from His Royal Hotness.

Chapter Notes

Sorry all for leaving you hanging too long, this chapter took time to write since I'm not a smut writer :-P

I'm supposed to post the first part but didn't have a chance to finish it before I took my holiday. And yes, I enjoyed my holiday, to those who asked. But when I get back, work get in a way of writing Hollstein goodness ;-p

Anyway, I hope this will compensate the long wait…and I think this deserved to have a top!Laura tag since we all knew that Carm has always been on top at the most Hollstein fic.

Thanks for your patience and for continually showing your support for this fic. I really appreciate all your feedbacks and kudos :-)

Breast loving, anyone?

***********

Carmilla

She watched the white linen that was binding her breasts drop on the floor.

Fully naked, her senses heightened. She gasped and shivered with little fear and delights when her nipples caught the cool air in the room and felt them hardening; her shaft tightening; and her heart fluttering. She felt vulnerable uncovering herself in front of someone, even if it's her own wife. Her Valet might have seen her several times naked every time she change her clothes, but the feeling does not compare what she was going through right now, as she fully exposed her true self to another person.

The confidence that she felt a while ago when she knew that she will win vanished.

When she looked up, Laura was already standing close to her; fully dilated brown eyes gazing at her. She followed her wife's curious eyes lingered down to her breasts. She swallowed hard and stood still, vulnerably naked as Laura's lust-filled eyes explored her breasts and erect nipples.

The scene drove her insane.
"Are you alright?" Laura's voice was full of concern.

"I'm fine," she croaked, trying hard not to show her nervousness but failed miserably. Laura moved closer, careful not to have any contact with her fully erect penis between them. She could feel the warmth of Laura's body and smell her sweet lavender perfume; the Princess' eyes were bright with excitement and curiosity.

"May I touch you?" Laura uttered voice full of desire.

She let out a low nervous chuckle to shield her fear, "Touch me anywhere you like, Cupcake, I'm all yours," she teased to cover her uneasiness.

After she finally granted her wife the right, she got confused when Laura took her left hand instead.

She followed Laura's lead; and walked towards the four post bed that looked very inviting and calming to her eyes, as the gentle breeze from the window wafted the thin silhouette white curtains around it. When they reached the bed, Laura removed the tray of food and put it on the floor, before climbing to bed.

Lying on the farther side, giving her room to lie down; Laura beckoned her through those silhouette drapes.

"Come here and lay beside me," the Princess ordered in a husky voice.

She drew the soft thin lace curtain to her right and stood by the side of the bed. She held Laura's gaze for a moment and took time to revere the beautiful sight of her naked wife, facing her direction, lying gracefully on the side amidst tangled white sheets and soft pillows; and basking under the weak early morning sun that was bouncing off the floor and scattering soft rays of light around the chamber.

Her eyes focused right away on Laura's perky round breasts and erect nipples that she had been dying to put in her mouth. She had missed fondling those soft breasts. But her attention was snatched when Laura parted her own legs. Her eyes delighted at the thick dark brown bush in between her wife's legs, and imagined Laura's center glistening with wetness. She had dreamt many times tasting Laura and running her tongue at those soft dark brown curls that was beautifully and naturally covering Laura's mound. Just the thought of it brought her to raging hardness and she felt her shaft already leaking with pre-cum.

She cannot take it anymore; she carefully climbed the bed and lay gracefully on her side beside her wife and faced Laura, forgetting her inhibitions.

Laura cupped her face right away and leaned in to give her a slow sensual kiss. She growled at the instant contact of Laura's lips on her mouth after being deprived of touching her wife and being teased wickedly; she put her left hand right away on Laura's waist and reciprocated the gentle kiss with a tender one and closed her eyes.

The closeness and the warmth that was emanating from her wife's body felt wonderful and overwhelming. She never thought that being physically close to Laura makes her feel secured and calmed.

But she was aching and hard as a rock, her kiss became demanding and her tongue probed persistently, requesting entry. Laura parted her own lips and gladly let her in.

Laura didn't disappoint her and sucked her tongue. But she was cut off right away when her wife broke from the kiss and felt Laura's lips planted small kisses on her jawline that she suspected her wife likes so much.
"I think I'll die if I can't kiss you here…"

She heard Laura mumbled in between trailing kisses along her perfectly chiseled jawline. She smirked; she was right, Laura loved it and she was thankful that she inherited her father's jawline.

"When I first saw you, I didn't notice it yet, because it's covered with beard, and I hated your beard that time," Laura commented in between kissing. "But as time goes by, I noticed how perfectly beautiful your jawline even if it's covered with beard. I even imagined you looked like a Greek god…"

She smirked again after discovering her wife's weakness, and thought of testing the Princess.

"What if I grew my beard again, would you still kiss me there?" was her naughty remark.

"Of course I will; clean-shaven or not," Laura replied right away. "I'm madly in love with you; there's no amount of beard that could stop me now from kissing you."

The smirk on her face grew wider, satisfied at Laura's revelation.

"Then show me," was her challenging remark.

After hearing that comment, Laura pushed her gently to lie on her back. She took a deep breath while her wife hovered above her, settling both knees on each side of her hips and gave her that naughty smile that was purely reserved for her. She could feel Laura's mound hovering above her erection, and it added to her excitement.

"God, you're so beautiful," Laura whispered. "…I love every part of you."

She smiled upon hearing that; she took a deep breath and held Laura's gaze.

"I don't know Cupcake… I think the view here is more exquisite," she remarked in her deepest alluring voice, and saw the blushed on Laura's cheeks as her eyes revered Laura's breasts and then looked down at Laura's toned abs and the tuft of dark brown curls that was beautifully covering Laura's mound; she can see Laura in her full naked glory and it's driving her insanely aroused.

"Then her eyes shifted back to Laura's breasts that looked invitingly soft and bigger, she licked her lips, ready to claim her favorite part of Laura's body.

But before she could devour those soft breasts in her mouth, she gasped when she felt Laura's fingers ran lightly above her chest, touching and caressing around her breasts, avoiding the nipples; skimming her skin and the tiny hair on her body into a delightful tease. She was caught off guard; nobody had ever touched her chest and the sensation of Laura's soft hand caressing it sent her to maddening daze. She never expected to feel this way. She moaned instantly. Her wife took time fondling her breasts before lightly pinching her nipples; she can't help but to moan louder, as she felt her little buds of nerve grew hard at once. Now she understood why Laura always screams whenever she pinches and sucks her wife's nipples. She never imagined how sensitive the breasts and nipples can be, since she never touch it for the sake of pleasure, it was always her penis that gets the full attention. And now, she regrets that she never paid attention to her breasts and neglected it. She suddenly felt this amazing sensation that she never knew before. She closed her eyes, relishing her wife's sweet ministrations on her breasts. Then she felt Laura kissed her right nipple lightly and licked it, lavishing attention to each of them before gently putting it in her mouth and sucked it. She elicited another loud moan and ran her hands on Laura's soft thick hair to show how she enjoyed it. She felt like bursting already and did not know how long she could hold the lust that was threatening to explode on her shaft and took a deep breath.

"Cupcake…" she moaned and felt Laura's tongue still sucking her right nipple and fondling her other
breast, devouring every bit of it. Her right hand snaked in between them, found Laura's mound and
discovered that she was not the only one leaking with pleasure. Her suspicion was right Laura's core
was dripping with arousal. She took a deep breath as her hand ran gently through the soft moist curls
on Laura's pubic area and heard Laura moaned too. "You're so wet…"

"…All because of you," Laura mumbled in a husky tone in between kissing and sucking those fully
erect nipples.

Her wife remained feasting on her breasts and had slowed down in a torturous phase. She removed
her hand from Laura's mound, placed them both at Laura's hips and focused instead on the sensation
and pleasure that her body was going through under Laura's sweet torturous ministrations. She was
going dizzy from arousal and moaning desperately while Laura still tortuously devours her breasts; she
almost explode when Laura's hand caught her raging member and touched it lightly. She groaned
and her sight blurred from all the maddening sensations that she feels right now.

"My Prince, may I top you?" was Laura's husky remark.

With her eyes half opened and drowning from arousal, she nodded lightly through the lust filled haze
that was clouding her brain. She understood at once why her wife asked her permission. Laura was
after all already on top of her; she does not care anymore if this position was accepted or not, all she
wants was to be relieved of this lust filled torture. Laura shifted on top of her.

"Carm…" Laura whispered lovingly.

Her heart swelled at the mention of her name that Laura considerately had taken from both her male
and female names and intimately had chosen to call her.

When she opened her eyes fully, the sight almost made her come as she saw Laura again in full
frontal glory. She can't deny that seeing Laura on top of her and watching those disheveled dirty
blonde locks fall like a curtain in front of her, and seeing those soft breasts dangling in front of her
eyes sent sparks of fire in her member. She's going crazy from witnessing all these beautiful erotic
sights of Laura.

She caught her wife giving her that naughty grin again, and the next thing she felt was Laura's
fingers running down her breasts and lightly teasing her sensitive nipples, before running down to
her stomach and stroking her raging rigid shaft.

"Cupcake…" she whined. "If you keep on teasing me, I'll end up exploding before you do."

And she was answered by giggles. The look of excitement in her wife's eyes and that naughty grin
tells her that Laura enjoyed being in control.

"Look at me Carm."

She gasped when Laura took the base of her stiff shaft, rubbed the head to the mound's entrance
lightly before guiding it inside her wife's dripping mound. She growled witnessing the act and from
the frustrations of Laura's teasing. And she thought, one day, she will teach her wife a lesson.

The hotness and tightness of Laura's core squeezed her rigid shaft at once, and the sensation of being
inside Laura and watching her wife sunk in her hard raging member had sent all the blood in her
body to her member. She was aching, throbbing, raging, hard as steel, she was afraid that she might
explode sooner.

"Cupcake…" she breathed out weakly and put her hands on Laura's waist as Laura adjusted to her
thickness. The anticipation of waiting what her wife's going to do next and surrendering herself to
Laura was killing her. But she still worried about Laura's comfort. "Does it hurt?"

Laura gave her a smile, "A little. But don't worry."

She was about to pull out and set Laura on the side, but her Princess remained on top of her and Laura took her hands and guided it again on the Princess' hips.

Once her wife was confidently settled in her length, Laura began grinding her hips in small circles.

Her breathing became heavier and she groaned at the sensation of Laura's tight hot core slowly riding her, she began to move her hips in synch with Laura's and as they both found the perfect rhythm, they slowly but torturously savored the feeling of being connected. It felt amazing and maddening to be connected with Laura through body and soul.

"God, Cupcake, it feels so good…" as she felt this lust filled haze possessing her again.

Before she could close her eyes and drown in this maddening sensation, she felt Laura increased the pace and without a warning, Laura took her hands and put it on those perky breasts of the princess.

She was suddenly alert.

"I told you to look at me," Laura ordered.

The act sent her to a maddening heat and she growled. She felt her animalistic nature awoke and squeezed roughly Laura's breasts, while Laura continued to ride her.

As if it's not enough to drive her crazy, Laura leaned down and captured her right nipple and sucked it hard. She growled at the pain and pleasure. It drove her wild and she placed her hands on Laura's buttocks and pushed her hard shaft up inside Laura's dripping core. Noticing the changed of thrust, and making sure that she was alert and raging, Laura released her nipples and began to slide up and down on her hard erection, she rested her hands on Laura's hips again, finding the right pace as she guided Laura. Laura elicited a loud moan as she thrusted deeply and increased their pace.

"Carm…” Laura uttered and closed her eyes while sliding in and out.

Deep inside she could feel Laura tightening and squeezing her hardness every time the Princess mounted on her rigid shaft. She felt her shaft pulsing, expanding and tightening each time she plunged inside Laura's hot dripping core.

Laura gyrated on top of her, never breaking the rhythm and almost teasing her to the edge. She did not know how long she could hold it, as Laura kept going faster, in and out and rocking her hips. The feeling of her ridge rubbing against Laura's walls and tight center, and not to forget the beautiful sight of her naked wife in full glory on top of her was making her insanely aroused and ready to burst.

She could feel her wife's breathing quickening by the heaving of Laura's bosom. She wanted to last forever this sensation and the sight of Laura on top of her, but at the same time, it's driving her frustratingly aroused as she felt Laura's tight hot mound squeezing her every time Laura mounted.

Laura quivered and kept going, faster, in and out. She rocked her hips in synch with Laura's rhythm, grinding against her. Her head was spinning and she felt Laura contracting around her. And the next thing she knew, Laura lost her balance and leaned over her and grabbed her shoulders to steady herself. Her hands held tightly her wife's hips and she found Laura's breasts in her face. She took the opportunity and her mouth caught Laura's left nipple and she sucked it hard. Caught off guard, Laura shrieked in pain and pleasure. She released the nipple and caressed Laura's breasts and pinched the
nipples with both her hands instead, and earned quick short moans from Laura. Then she thrusted faster and harder, sending Laura on the verge of orgasm, she continued thrusting until she felt Laura quivered on top of her, squeezed her stiff shaft tight, shouted 'Carm' and next thing she felt was Laura's cum flowing over her balls.

With one final thrust, her body tightened as she emptied her balls, releasing all her warm heavy loads deep inside her wife's wet tight mound and screamed Laura's name, as her orgasm washed over her.

Panting, Laura collapsed on top of her and she put her arms protectively around her wife. She was still sheathed inside Laura; although she loved the feeling of her member buried inside her wife, the thought of hurting Laura with her still hard member inside the Princess made her panic. She was about to pull aside but Laura stopped her.

Lying on top of her and nuzzling in the crook of her neck, Laura protested, "No, I want to feel you inside me."

"Cupcake, you'll be sore if I remained inside you," was her concerned remark, and began to stroke Laura's hair.

"I don't care," Laura returned and nuzzled deeper.

"Alright, but don't complain to me if you can't..." she was murmuring but was silenced by a pair of soft wet lips.

"I love you Carm," Laura uttered sweetly after releasing from the kiss and smiled.

That was all it took for her to be silenced, and her little wife seemed to be doing a good job of convincing her every time Laura wants something. She was now regretting telling Laura that her smile was captivating that it drives men crazy whenever she smiled like that. It had the same effect on her.

"I love you too Cupcake," was all she could say as she melt at the beauty of Laura and the feeling of Laura's body and hers connecting.

They held each other and she cannot deny the fact that it felt more wonderful to hold Laura when they were both naked after making love. It felt more intimate and overwhelming. She fumbled for the sheet and covered them, while Laura nuzzled back in the crook of her neck and rest.

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When she woke up, the sun was almost high, and discovered they were both lying on their sides but still close and holding each other. Then she noticed that she was still inside Laura; carefully, she pulled her now soft penis out of Laura's core. She felt the surge of their combined cum flowed as she pulled out. Becoming one with Laura was the most amazing thing she felt. She gazed at the sleeping face of Laura and was overcome with happiness of finding her soulmate. She felt like the luckiest and most blessed person in the world right now, and there was no way or no person that could stop her from loving Laura and claiming the Princess of Hollis.

After their heart felt talk about Viktor, and Laura assuring her that there was no other person that claimed her wife's heart, she was now relieved. Although she did not promise Laura that she would stop getting jealous and possessive, she assured her that she would try not to get jealous to every man that Laura meet or talk too, since she had to learn to accept the fact that her wife was the future queen of Karnstein and will need to meet and talk to many people.

She was suddenly strayed from her thoughts when she remembered the important thing that she
needs to do today. Gently, she removed herself from Laura's warm embrace, kissed Laura's forehead before leaving the bed. She promised her Ma that she would eat lunch with her today. It will give them a chance to talk and catch up with everything that happened in their lives while they were separated.

*****

"Are you sure you'll gonna be alright?" Laura asked for the third time.

Sensing that her wife would not stop worrying until she leaves, she turned to her left and stopped, "Cupcake, I'm just going to the forest, it's just half an hour horse ride," she said and received the pout that Laura always used on her to get what the Princess wants. "And besides, Armitage is coming with me."

"If Armitage can come, why can't I?"

She sighed and rolled her eyes. "I've already explained to you that I can't introduce you to my Ma, for some safety reasons," she reminded the persistent wife of hers.

"Why not asked Alfred to take you to your Ma, then I could ride with you in the carriage and stay there if you don't want me to see your Ma yet," Laura suggested with enthusiasm.

"Don't you ever do that," she warned and received a confused look from her wife. "Never utter a word about my Ma's whereabouts to anyone."

Astonished, Laura inquired "I thought Alfred is one of the castles' trusted servants?"

"He is; that's why I don't want you to tell him, not to LaFontaine either." And she saw the left eyebrows of her wife raised and gave her a narrow look.

"Carm, what's wrong?"

She closed her eyes temporarily and shook her head lightly and rubbed her temples. And the next thing she knew, Laura's arms wrapped around her and she felt those small delicate hands rubbed her back.

"Hey, it's alright. Everything's gonna be alright," was Laura's soothing words. "And I'm sorry if I'm stressing you out, I'm just worried about you."

After that calming touch and comforting words, she released gently from the embrace and gazed at Laura. "All of the servant's in the castle are loyal to my Queen Mother, that's why I don't want you to tell them. The only one I knew who wouldn't say anything to my Queen Mother is Armitage; because he is new and doesn't know anything about my past," she explained and saw those curious brown eyebrows of her Princess contorted. "My King Father had chosen Armitage to be my personal Royal Guard, so he's in a way more loyal to my King Father than my Queen Mother-" she paused when she saw Laura's mouth opened slightly; she nodded to her wife to go on knowing that the little Princess was itching with curiosity.

"You mean to say, Alfred knew?"

She nodded and a scene from the past flashed in her mind. "Alfred was the one who's driving the carriage when my Queen Mother took me back from my Ma. He was also the one who carried me out of the carriage and into the castle, when I was crying, shouting, and trying to get loose, since my Queen Mother can't control me that time." She still recalled vividly that scene and cannot help but to feel hurt again. "When my Queen Mother took me back, it wasn't peaceful and pleasant at all," she
said, her voice morphing into whisper. "I was young and know nothing; I thought they were abducting me and my Ma. There were many guards who grabbed my Ma, while my Queen Mother and Alfred held me and separated me from my Ma. I fought and tried to get away from them; all I want was to run back to my Ma and get out from my Queen Mother's hands, but my Queen Mother ordered the Royal Guards that were holding my Ma to put her inside the other carriage, and I saw how they dragged my Ma and threw her inside, and locked her. And that's the last time I saw her."

"Oh god, Carm, I didn't know…” Laura mumbled, and totally dumbfounded.

She gazed at her wife and she felt this lump forming in her throat. She took a deep breath and thought, Laura deserved to know the truth. "During that time, I thought my Ma is my real mother. I detested my Queen Mother for separating me and my Ma, and for sending my Ma to a faraway land. My relationship with my Queen Mother was never been easy in the beginning," then she chuckled and remembered what she used to call the Queen. "I used to call my Queen Mother the witch-"

"What?!” was Laura's surprised and yet amused reaction.

"It's true; I called my Queen Mother the witch, because I was angry at her for abducting me and taking me away from my Ma."

"You... the most precious son of the Queen of Karnstein, a 'mama's boy', called your mother a witch?!!"

"Hey! I'm not a mama's boy," she corrected and glared at her wife who seemed to be enjoying her 'violent reaction'.

"Oh, yes you are!" Laura retaliated with chin up and crossed arms.

But before she could engage in this friendly bickering with her wife, she saw the tall image of Laura's former personal Royal Guard approaching them.

Kirsch bowed first to her and then to Laura, "Hey little Princess, are you going with me and Prince Hottie?"

"Prince Hottie?!" She and Laura both exclaimed and glared at Kirsch.

"Yeah, I always heard the girls calling Prince Hottie here, 'His Royal Hotness', so I thought Prince Hottie sounded better than 'His Royal Hotness'," was Kirsch proud remark and smiled innocently.

She rolled her eyes after seeing that goofy smile. There was no way that she could convince him or the handmaidens to stop them from calling her 'His Royal Hotness' and 'Prince Hottie'. Then she saw the amused and naughty expression of her wife, and sighed. "Please don't tell me that you're thinking of calling me those names too."

"Nah, I got my own name to call you, and besides, the handmaidens are very attracted to you that's why they like to call you His Hotness," Laura replied and grinned like a naughty child.
Dinner With the Hollis Family

Chapter Summary

Carmilla is going to have dinner for the first time with Laura's family, including the King of Hollis. Laura told her that aside from Prince Spencer, Princess Jordana and Prince Johann, to which the only family of Laura that she already met, Laura's grand aunt, would be joining them too. It was the King of Hollis' idea to host the dinner in honor of the newly-wed couple and to formally welcome Carmilla in the Hollis family. Carmilla was nervous. However, Laura had another plan.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Carmilla

It was almost midnight and the whole castle seemed to be sleeping by now when they arrived at the castle's entrance. Kirsch and Armitage followed her lead, and got off their horses too.

As soon as she dismounted from her horse, her attention caught right away the figure that was approaching her.

"How come my Princess is still awake?" she said without tearing her eyes off from her beautiful wife and smirked. She ran her eyes over the delicate curves of Laura's body under the Princess' silk pink night robe and grew worried right away. "It's chilly out here, you might get sick," she pointed out, but the somewhat sleepy Princess did not listen and she felt Laura's hands wrapped around her neck right away; her hands found Laura's small hips immediately and held it tight.

She smiled at the affection that her Princess showed and she cannot control herself and kissed Laura on the lips even if Kirsch and Armitage were still there.

"I've missed you," Laura mumbled after releasing from the kiss.

She smirked and didn't release her hands on the Princess' hips, as she felt Laura's soft wet lips nipped on her neck before finally nuzzling in the crook under her left ear. She was not expecting that Laura can be clingy and needy; and the thought of her wife missing her like this makes her ecstatic and at the same time aroused. She never thought that there will be a person that will love and want her passionately. When she arrived at the Hollis' Kingdom, she was scared and losing hope of gaining back her wife. But after having that overdue talk and opening up to each other, and not to mention, finally consummating their marriage, their intimacy had deepened. She must admit that consummating their marriage had brought their relationship to the next level and she was thankful that Laura managed to overcome her fear of penis.

She was contemplating if she will tell Laura that she missed her too, or control her emotions since their not alone. But the excitement in her wife's face a while ago tells her that the Princess was definitely waiting for her sweet reply.

"I missed you too Cupcake," she whispered instead and discreetly kissed Laura's neck. Knowing that they were not alone, she gently turned around to face the two Royal Guards that were waiting for her order. "Thank you Armitage, you may go," she said and her personal royal guard bowed to her and
left at once, while Laura still nuzzled under her ear, she carefully looked on the other side to find the royal guard of Hollis giving her a goofy smile. "Kirsch…"

"Yes, Prince Hottie!" was Kirsch excited remark.

She rolled her eyes and she felt Laura giggled after hearing Kirsch. "Remember what we talk about… and not a word to the girls, are we clear?"

"As a member of Hollis Royal Guards and Royal escort of His Royal Hotness, Prince Hottie, I vow not to tell anybody our secret," was Kirsch proud retort.

She sighed and rolled her eyes again. "I told you…"

"Hold it there," Laura said and looked up.

The sound of Laura's voice interrupted her, and she knew that her wife's curiosity was piqued; she glared at the royal guard beside her who looked like an innocent puppy.

"What secret?" Laura queried with furrowed brows.

She knew this will be a long conversation.

"Thank you Kirsch, that will be all for tonight," she ordered and he bowed to both of them.

"Good night little Princess," Kirsch added and gave the Princess a goofy smile too.

"Good night Kirsch," Laura replied and returned the grin.

As soon as Kirsch left, she faced the curious Princess at once and decided to tell the truth knowing that she had nothing to hide anymore. "I've asked Kirsch to check on Ma from time to time, and told him that if there's a problem, he should let me know at once."

"But why not give your Ma a guard instead, so that we can be sure she's always safe?" was Laura's suggestion.

"I've already told that to my Ma," she returned knowing that her very smart wife always comes up with bright ideas. "But she refused to have a guard that will follow her. She said that it'll just draw some attention."

"Why not hire an undercover guard; she wouldn't know that there's someone who's watching her?"

"Cupcake, Ma will find out right away because that's what my father did before," she explained, after finding out from her Ma that the King of Karnstein secretly guarded her and sent royal guards disguised as their neighbors, farmers, shepherds and miners while she lived with her Ma. "And I don't want her to become paranoid and think that a Karnstein guard might be following her."

"So, what did you tell her? You cannot let her live in the forest just by herself," was Laura's concerned remark.

"I've already discussed that with her, and she told me that she feels safer there because there's not a lot of people that she meets in the forest, only her friends who lives nearby her house."

She knew that Laura will not stop until they both knew that her Ma was safe.

"Why not let her stay and work in the castle instead?" Laura suggested.
Her admiration on her wife grew more knowing that Laura was worried about her Ma's safety too. She took Laura's hands and held it, "Cupcake, thank you for offering your castle and for wanting to make sure that my Ma will be safe. But I don't think it will be a good idea to let my Ma stay in the castle since the Hollis and the Karnsteins were already merged as one family. My Queen Mother wouldn't be happy to know that my wife's family is housing an enemy."

"But your Ma isn't an enemy," was Laura's naïve reply.

"I know… but in the eyes of my parents, she's a big threat," was her frustrated honest reply. She saw her wife pouted and knew that Laura was not satisfied with the outcome. "That's why the only solution that I could think of now is to send that puppy friend of yours to check my Ma now and then." Suddenly she felt a breeze swept through them and Laura shivered. She put her right arm immediately and draped her large black thick cape over Laura's shoulder and pulled the little Princess close to her. "Let's go inside, it's getting cold and I'm exhausted, I want to lie on my bed and sleep." After that remark, she got confused when Laura stopped her and she found the Princess' brows contorted.

"Who said you're sleeping in the guest chamber?" Laura commented. "You're sleeping with me, in my bed."

Her frown morphed into smile, "Hmmm… I think I like that very much," she returned and gave her wife a naughty smirk and felt Laura's arm slid and wrapped around her waist as they strolled in the Hollis Castle's surprisingly unguarded hallway. Until now, she still cannot fathom why there's a lack of guards inside, except for the two by the entrance door, and those outside.

"I want to cuddle with my fuzzy warm big cat," Laura retorted.

The affection and love flowing from her wife made her warm and she pulled Laura closer to her.

"Me too… I want to cuddle with my naked wife," was her naughty remark and saw Laura crimsoned and stopped her again from walking.

"Carl Philipp Marcus Karnstein, stop seducing me; you're going to dine with my family tomorrow, so you better save your energy," Laura criticized, as they stood before the grand staircase. This time the confident smirk on her face vanished and stared at her wife.

"My father told me today that he wants to formally welcome you to the Hollis Family, so he decided to host a dinner," Laura explained.

"When you say Hollis Family, you mean your Uncle Spencer, Aunt Jordana and Johann, right?" she asked hopeful, as she tried to keep Laura under her cloak and closer to her, but she felt the Princess suddenly distanced herself after that naughty remark of hers.

"Oh no, this time, you'll meet also my grand aunt," Laura said nonchalantly, before climbing the grand stair case.

She breathed a sigh of relief. She was expecting that Laura will tell her that there were dozens of them that she needs to meet. She beamed a thoughtful smile. She felt Laura released from her hold and out of her cloak.

"I'm looking forward to meet your grand aunt," she returned, confident that she will just meet an old lady; she felt Laura released from her hold and out of her cloak. She let the Princess walked up first and then she followed behind. She was caught off guard when Laura stopped, turned around and faced her. She paused and waited for what her wife will say.
"I forgot to tell you, Grand Aunt Matilda is still upset at my father," was Laura's nonchalant reply. She raised her left brows, wondering why Laura needs to mention it to her, "…And why are you telling this to me?"

"Because my Grand Aunt Matilda hates the Karnsteins for claiming some of our lands in the past," Laura informed. "She said that my father is crazy for marrying me off to the son of our enemy."

"But that was long time ago," she defended. "Didn't you tell your grand aunt that my father and I are not like my great grandparents and forefathers?"

"Umm… no," Laura reproached and grinned. "I thought I'll leave it all to you and your charming ways, to tell and convince my Grand Aunt Matilda that you're not like your great grandparents and forefathers."

And before she could retort, Laura had already turned around and ascended the stairs, leaving her confused and worried at how she will face Laura's Grand Aunt who happened to hate her.

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Her day had been busy with the King of Hollis discussing another proposal to her about the trading relationship of their kingdoms; horseback riding with Laura's uncle and showing her the lands that now belonged to her that had been a part of Laura's dowry; and a short visit to her Ma in the late afternoon. And despite sleeping late last night, she managed to do all these things without complaints. It was a good way too, to relieve herself from the tension and stress of meeting Laura's grand aunt, she thought.

When Laura told her that this grand aunt that she will meet tonight hates her family, she was not able to sleep well. After meeting Laura's father, uncle, aunt and cousin, she never doubted that they were related to her wife since they were like Laura: full of energy, friendly, down to earth and warm. They're a 'family of sunshine', was her initial reaction upon meeting them. It was very easy to get along with them and she felt at home at once. And now she was contemplating how she will convince Laura's grand aunt that she was not like her great grandparents.

"Ahem…"

Her train of thoughts was interrupted by the familiar voice of her Valet. She looked up to LaFontaine's face and raised both her brows, "What?" was her annoyed reply, while they stood in front of her holding two sets of formal tunics in front of them.

"I've been standing here for the last five minutes waiting for you to decide which one you'll wear," LaFontaine retorted. "You're acting weird lately… is there something you want to tell me?"

*Damn it!*

She cursed and had forgotten that aside from her very curious wife, she also had a Valet who knew her very well and can easily read her body language. She hoped that they will not find out about her Ma. Instead of answering their question, "The red and black checkered." She said nonchalantly, and LaFontaine laid the tunic that she had chosen on the bed and put the other one back to the closet.

"The Princess told me that you're about to meet the grand aunt that hates your family," LaFontaine commented. "Is that the reason why you're absent minded lately?"

She glanced at LaFontaine's facial expression, and felt relieved that LaFontaine seemed to be serious about suspecting it was her meeting with Laura's grand aunt that was making her disoriented lately.
"Yes," she plainly said and put on the black trousers that LaFontaine gave her and tied it. "I thought I'll never have to feel nervous meeting all of Laura's family, because they all seemed like a ball of sunshine to me…"

"…but you're wrong." LaFontaine corrected and picked up the long sleeve under tunic from the bed. "You cannot presume that everybody is like your wife."

She just raised her left eyebrow slowly and let her Valet do the talking. After checking the cloth that was binding her chest was secured, she put on smoothly the under tunic that her Valet offered and buttoned it.

"I heard from Perry that Laura and Johann were afraid of this grand aunt when they were young," LaFontaine added.

She glared at them as LaFontaine held the checkered red and black tunic in front of her. "Thanks for the boast of confidence and for making me more stress," was her sarcastic reply and slipped her right arm first on the right sleeve followed by the left.

She caught the naughty smirk on their face. But before she could tell her Valet to 'shut up', their attention was focused on the door as they heard a low knock. Lafontaine walked to the direction of the door right away.

"Who is it?" they asked before opening the door and making sure that it was safe to open it.

"It's Natalie!"

They heard the muffled sound of the dark haired Handmaiden.

She nodded to LaFontaine to open the door as soon as she finished buttoning her tunic. Natalie just stood by the door and handed LaFontaine a small box and left right away.

"What is it?" she asked while LaFontaine walked towards her and handed her a small box with a paper on top of it. Her eyes recognized right away Laura's handwriting, as she read the 'Carl' written on the folded paper. She was about to open it, but her Valet stopped her.

"Hold it, Natalie said that the Princess strictly told her that you should open it after you're finished dressing up and alone in the chamber," LaFontaine informed.

She saw the sarcastic grin on her Valet's face and before she could commnet and tell them to stop mocking her…

"I just remembered that I promised Perry to help with the preparation for dinner," LaFontaine said. "Do you still need anything?"

Seeing that her Valet can't seem to wait to be dismissed, and the fact that her hands were already burning with curiosity on what's inside the box "…just go and do your thing."

After that remark, LaFontaine hurriedly walked towards the door and left her alone in the guest's chamber. She opened first the paper and read the note:

Just to let you know that I am thinking of you while getting ready to dress for tonight. This is how you make me wet…
After reading the last sentence, she felt her shaft grew harder, and she quickly opened the box. Her eyes widened in surprise when she recognized Laura's silky white underwear. She picked it up from the box and felt something wet in her hand, and realized right away the evidence of her wife's arousal as her nose caught the familiar intoxicating smell that was purely Laura. She groaned and felt her erection hard as a rock and her breathing become ragged. There's a few minutes left before the dinner starts and Laura teasing her like this was a pure act of evil. Laura knew that she was nervous and worried about having dinner for the first time together with Laura's immediate family, and not to mention meeting the grand aunt that hates her family. She does not know what had gotten into her wife's brain to do a thing like this, but it was definitely sadistic and yet erotic. Still holding Laura's wet underwear on her left hand; her right hand fumbled frantically at the strings of her trousers, pulled out her raging member from the constraint of her braies and she began to pump her thick shaft up and down. She groaned as her right hand worked on her hardness while her other hand held Laura's wet underwear, brought it in her nose and sniffed it.

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A quarter of minutes later, still semi hard, she now found herself walking to the hallway leading to the dining hall.

She was met by a smirking Laura half way to the dining hall. She tried her best to stay calm and unaffected by Laura's little trick on her. Laura's arm hooked gracefully unto her arm and they walked seriously on the way to the dining hall.

Wearing a white velvet dress that accentuated Laura's feminine form, "You looked beautiful my Princess," she complimented right away her wife. "The color suits you; pure and innocent," she uttered and glanced at her wife who seemed to be grinning naughtily at the comment.

"Thanks," Laura replied. "You looked very handsome in that checkered tunic of yours."

She smirked as she caught her wife leered at her, "I know," was her conceited remark and earned a smile from Laura.

"Did you receive my little gift?" Laura asked nonchalantly while still walking.

She smirked. Now she can tease her wife back. "I did," she said in a casual tone, not giving Laura a slight glance and just looked ahead, pretending that she was unaffected. "As a matter of fact, I have it with me in my pocket," she teased and was waiting for the Princess to react and become ashamed. But she did not receive the reaction that she expected.

"That's good..." Laura returned casually.

She furrowed her brows, not contented at how her smart little Princess reacted. She straightened her back when she saw that they were nearing the dining hall. Then suddenly, Laura paused and leaned into her ear.

"... Because it's my last pair of clean underwear," Laura whispered huskily.

She suddenly felt her now soft member grew harder again and had to cover her growing visible bulge by her long cape and glared at Laura for this predicament that she was in right now.

Laura looked innocently at her and before they enter the grand hall, the Princess kissed her on the
cheek and whispered again:

"You're blushing, my Prince," Laura teased. "Did I make you angry?"

Laura was damn right; she felt her shaft growing 'angry' and she does not know how to tame it. She's blaming Laura for all the naughty teasing. And before she could retaliate, she discovered that they're already inside and Laura leaned closer to her ear again:

"You may have won in our challenge," Laura whispered with a hint of bitterness. "… but I want you to know that I hate losing without getting even."

And then she felt Laura kissed her one more time on the cheek and saw the Princess gave her a sweet innocent smile, before she meets the grand aunt that she wants to please, eat with the Hollis, and try very hard not to explode knowing that Laura was not wearing any underwear beneath that innocent looking white gown.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

I just realized that this is the longest fanfic that I've written so far, as I reached 50 chapters. Thanks for all your support and wonderful comments and kudos :-D
How To Survive Dinner With Your In–Law's

Chapter Summary

The continuation from the dinner with the Hollis family, and how Carmilla managed to let her beast calm down.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Carmilla

She cannot resist it. She can only hope that she can drive it back to its docile form, but Laura had awaken the beast and it's telling her that it's not going back to its timid state. And now, she needs to find a way to tame it before the entire family members of the Hollis arrive.

Just like the Karnstein Castle, the Hollis Castle has its smaller dining room for the Royal family to dine every day. Her eyes were greeted right away by the huge fireplace at the back of the King's chair. The sweet and calming scents of violets and lilacs stole her sense of smell and she felt relaxed at the smell and sight of the flowers decorated in the room. The table that seats for most likely ten people was on the middle. The dining area was small, cozy and more private with the lack of Royal guards surrounding the room. It's made entirely of wooden walls and looked warmer and 'friendlier', compared to the Karnstein's dining room that was made entirely of bricks and was always guarded. On the top of the great brick fireplace hangs a portrait of a woman, she tried to decipher how the woman looked like, but there was not enough light. Her ears caught the crackling sound of the blazing soft low fire from the fireplace and she sighed. She loves fireplace; the beauty of fire dancing in a hypnotic way and the warmth calming effect that it does to her.

"Good evening!"

A male's voice distracted her.

_Bloody Hell!

She exclaimed in her thoughts and she sighed when she saw Laura's cousin passed to their side. She adjusted her cloak and discreetly hid her crotch behind it.

"Hello Johann!" Laura greeted cheerfully, released from the hold and waved to the boy.

"Hello Carl, Laura… Carl? Why are you blushing?" was Johann's instant remark upon seeing them.

"Nice to see you too Johann," she simply said and coaxed a smile. "I'm still not used to your kingdom's weather," she replied to Laura's unsuspicous cousin, thinking of the best reason that first came into her mind. Then she caught the naughty smirk from her wife's face before moving along and walked to the right side.

She followed Laura behind as the Princess led them to where they're supposed to sit, while Johann walked to the opposite side of the table and pulled the third chair from the left side of the King's chair and sat, while Laura stood in front of the second chair to the right of the King's Chair.
She will not give Laura the benefit of seeing her lose her composure; she escorted her wife with perfect poise and gentleness to the table and even pulled the chair for the Princess, making sure to hide her bulge behind the chair. Once she knew that Laura was sitting comfortably, she pulled the next chair to Laura's right.

"You're sitting next to my father," Laura said and eyed the empty chair on the left and the nearest to the King's chair.

"Why am I sitting next to your father's chair, shouldn't your uncle sit there?" she reasoned out, confused.

"No, Uncle Spencer sits on the left side of my father, then my Aunt Jordana and Johann," Laura explained. "That's actually my place," referring at the nearest chair at the right side of the King's chair. "... but this time my father told me that he wants to make you feel at home, and wants his son-in-law to be near him."

She swallowed hard discreetly, felt the room getting warmer and her hands sweating.

"You're lucky, I never get a chance to sit next to my Uncle John," Johann commented and grinned.

"That's because you're the one who's going to sit next to my father's chair," was Laura's retort, "So, stop whining!" and glared at Johann.

She forgot her jitters and smiled as this friendly banter between her wife and cousin-in-law transpired. She was touched at the King's request of putting her near the King's chair. She never thought that Laura's father was fond of her, she almost forget her predicament and was torn back to reality when her eyes noticed the chair to Laura's right.

"And who's sitting beside you?"

"Oh, that's where my grand aunt will seat!" was Johann's cheerful reply. "She likes to sit beside Laura, because she always said that boys are mischievous and playful..."

"...Because you don't behave well and Grand Aunt Matilda hates it when you play with your food," Laura pointed out.

She looked at the grinning naughty wife of hers making face to Johann before locking eyes with her, "Did you plan this?" was her suspicious query.

"I have no idea what you're talking about my Prince," Laura retorted.

She remained silent and did not argue anymore. Still early in their married life, the challenges, adjustments and surprises of discovering each other's traits and habits were to be expected; that's what her father told her. However, she did not expect that her sweet innocent- looking loving wife had this 'other' side.

She leaned closer to her Princess, "I didn't know that you like taking pleasure in my pains and sufferings," she remarked in a low raspy voice, and kissed Laura the same way that she was kissed a while ago: slowly and sweet. She received a naughty lop sided grin after the kiss and she composed herself and showed to her wife that she cannot be intimidated. She gracefully sat on the chair next to Laura, and covered her crotch behind the cloak from Johann's sight. But once her lower body was hidden from the Prince of Hollis' sight, she let her cloak flow down freely and did not bother to hide the big lump in front of her trousers; and thought, this time, she will tease her wife. She caught Laura glanced at her bulge and grinned when their eyes met.

"I can see the evidence of what my underwear and not wearing it did to you," Laura whispered.
And before Laura can sit confidently, she whispered back, "Take a good look at it, because you won't be seeing it tonight when you go to bed." Suddenly, Laura's cocky expression morphed into worry.

"And what do you mean by that?"

"Since you've been misbehaving, I thought of punishing you," she said and gave Laura a wicked smile before whispering, "I'm going to sleep comfortably at the guest chamber tonight and... while you sleep in your own chamber without me, I'll be lying naked on the bed at the guest chamber thinking about you and touching myself while sniffing your little gift."

After that remark, she saw Laura's face crimsoned like never before; totally dumbfounded to reply. She smirked and focused her attention to Johann instead as she take delight at the evidence of her sweet revenge.

"When are we leaving tomorrow?" she asked Laura's cousin.

"After midday meal, since Laura told me that you're not fond of waking up early," Johann teased.

"Don't believe in everything your cousin is saying... I can wake up early if the need arise," she returned and glanced at her wife who seemed to be sulking on her chair. She smirked and looked at Johann again. "Why don't we leave after breakfast?"

"Alright, if that's what you want. I'll let Kirsch know that we're leaving early," Johann returned and looked at Laura. "Why are you pouting? Are you upset because you're not coming with us to the lake? I told you, it's just for the boys!"

"No! I'm not!" Laura hissed.

"Then why are you behaving like a spoiled princess?" Johann nagged.

She looked at Laura and realized that she made her wife upset. Before the Princess can flare up, she put her right hand on Laura's and held it firmly. Laura mellowed at the sudden touch and looked at her with crinkled brows. She found her little Cupcake so adorable with those furrowed brows, narrowed eyes and pouting lips and she tried very hard not to smile and pinch Laura on the cheek.

"Why don't we go to the forest and have a picnic with the girls the day after tomorrow?" she offered, to the sulking Princess. But instead of pacifying her wife, Laura released from the hold and folded both arms.

"You can go with them if you want to," the Princess huffed. "I'm staying in my chamber the whole day."

And before she could tell her sweet adorable sulking wife that she was just kidding, the sounds of footsteps on the wooden floor and voices chatting and laughing filled the air and torn her attention from her wife. She got confused when Johann rose from his chair and walked towards the direction of the door, then Laura followed too; not used to this set up, she rose from her chair too and hesitantly followed her wife. She was surprised when she saw the King of Hollis walking towards them escorting an old lady with white hair neatly tucked under the crown like her Mother's, with an expression that could be compared to her Mother's Lady-in-Waiting, except this old lady was not big like Bertha, but with the same height and built as Laura's.

"Grand Aunt Matilda!" Laura exclaimed and gave the old woman a hug. "I'm so glad that you made it!"
She furrowed her brows and was surprised that Laura and Johann did not bow to anyone, but greeted their Grand Aunt first, Laura's Father, Uncle and Aunt by hugging and kissing each other on the cheeks. She suddenly felt out of place as she stood a good distance from them and witnessed how informal, warm, friendly and loving, and not to mention loud Laura's family. She took time to watch the happy scene in front of her and she thought:

_God! Are they related to Helios?_

She told herself as she saw their faces beaming and radiating with happiness and delight of seeing one another.

"Carl! Come here!" the King of Hollis called.

Suddenly she found herself agitating as her eyes locked with Laura's father; she nodded quietly and gave him a timid smile. She almost forgot to cover her crotch and glanced down to check it. She sighed deeply when she saw her shaft now flaccid. She did not know if the calming effect of the fire in the fireplace, the scent of the lilacs and violets that were lingering in the air, or the fact that Laura's Grand Aunt exuded the same frightening effect like Bertha's on her, that it made her erection disappeared, either way, she was very thankful and walked towards them with an air of confidence. She caught all six pairs of eyes staring at her as she makes her way to meet the Grand Aunt that hated her family. She bowed longer than intended in front of the King and stood with grace and grandeur but she made sure to lower her eyes than the King of Hollis.

"Carl, allow me to introduce my Aunt, Princess Matilda Beatrice Rosalind Eggenberg," King John declared.

She bowed lower and longer than intended in front of the old woman with an expressionless face, "Carl Phillip Marcus von Karnstein, I am your humble servant and I am honored to be with your presence Your Royal Highness," she proclaimed choosing to drop her title, in her deepest lowest voice and then rose. She was pleased when Laura's Grand Aunt held a hand towards her, and she gracefully took it and kissed the back of the old woman's hand. She smirked discreetly while bowing her head knowing that she had successfully tapped on the cold exterior of Laura's Grand Aunt.

After kissing the old woman's hand, Laura's father broke the silence and escorted the Grand Aunt towards the table.

"Shall we go and start the dinner?" King Johann exclaimed.

She sighed and saw Laura's Aunt beaming towards her; and as expected, she was embraced with full of enthusiasm.

"Well done Carl, you managed to make Aunt Matilda raised her hand and allowed you to kiss it," was Laura's Aunt Jordana's excited remark. "Most of Laura's suitors were ignored when we introduced them to her. And sometimes she refused to meet them."

"Thank you for the kind words, Aunt Jordana," was her humble reply after she released from the embrace.

Then she saw Laura's uncle smiling and approaching her. "I'm impressed!" Prince Spencer remarked and they shook hands before embracing.

"Thank you Uncle Spencer, I hope I made a good first impression," she returned.

"Well, you did. And if you want a good advice; try not to argue with her," Prince Spencer suggested before following Princess Jordana and Johann to their respective seats.
She smirked like a naughty cat that caught a mouse. If there's one thing she was good at, it's letting her Queen Mother do all the talking and agreeing with almost anything the Queen was saying. She and her Father share a common trait: never argue with the Queen. Her train of thoughts was cut short when she saw Laura walked passed by her side, and chose to ignore her. She had finally tamed the Grand Aunt, but she can't manage to tame her own wife.

Great! Now she's the one who's mad!

She knew that she had herself to blame for after telling that she will sleep in the guest's chamber and not with her wife. She was just teasing her and wanted to get even, but it seems like she was the one losing. She caught up with Laura and managed to pull the chair for her wife to seat on; she received a forced smile as a thank you after making sure that Laura sat comfortably. She wanted to say sorry, but she knew it's not the right time, and she sat on her own chair. Once everyone was one their proper places, the King rang the small bell beside him and the door to the dining room opened and in came three footmen dressed in white long sleeves under tunic and black vest over it and black trousers, all three carrying a jug that she presumed was wine. The first one, the oldest poured the red liquid from the jar to the King's golden goblet.

"Thank you Max," the King said looking at the man and smiled after pouring the wine.

"It's a pleasure Your Majesty," Max returned and smiled too.

Then she observed the other footman that was pouring wine on the other side, and saw Laura's Uncle and Aunt smiling and thanking the server.

"Thank you Tobias," Princess Jordana said and waited for the server to nod and smile before drinking the wine.

"It's a pleasure Your Highness," Tobias returned.

"Care for some red or white wine, Your Highness?" Tobias asked Laura's Uncle.

"I think I'll have what my wife is having," Prince Spencer said and thanked Tobias after pouring the white wine. Johann motioned for the server to pour some also on his goblet.

When it was her turn, Max asked her first, "How does His Highness likes His wine?"

It was her first time to be invited to a dinner and she was not surprised when the footmen asked her what she preferred. This time she thought of trying something new.

"White wine please," she said politely and saw Max nodded to Tobias, approached them and handed Max a different jug and gave to Tobias the one his carrying. Max poured a little wine first for her to taste. She sniffed first and swirled the liquid in her goblet before sniffing it again and tasting it.

"It's Morillon, Your Highness, its dry crisp, fruity and aromatic. It's one of the exquisite wines in Southern Styria that grows at the Südsteirische Weinstrasse," Max explained with passion.

"It's lovely," she expressed and put down her goblet for Max to fill it up generously.

"I'm delighted Your Highness likes it," Max said and smiled.

Then she quietly watched this 'Max' poured wine to her goblet and once finished, she did the same thing too like Laura's Father. "Thank you Max

She discreetly observed the servants as they interact with Laura's family. They were all friendly and
respectful to each other, and everybody seemed to know the servants names.

"And what would the beautiful Princess like tonight?" she heard Max asked as he moved beside Laura.

"Can I already have my chocolate red wine?" Laura asked in her sweetest tone.

"Laura, you know that you cannot drink that with your meal, it will ruin the taste of the meat," Grand Aunt Matilda interjected. "My granddaughter is having what I'll have, give us some brandy!"

Max motioned for the youngest footmen right away to pour the strong wine on the old woman's goblet, and seeing that the young Princess did not protest, the young server poured brandy on Laura's goblet too.

"Thanks Elias," Laura returned and drinks right away. The young server just nodded and smiled before retreating to his place, behind Laura's Grand Aunt.

She gave her wife a discreet side glance, checking how much Laura had drunk. She had a terrible relationship with brandy and remembered the day she was officially crowned as the Prince of Karnstein and got in trouble with Ell. It was the first time she got drunk and she regretted it and promised her Queen Mother never to do it again.

She was distracted when four other female servers entered the dining room and began serving the first course.

"Carl, I heard that you had finally seen your land, I hope everything is to your satisfaction," King John mentioned.

"I did Your Majesty. And I'm very thankful for the generous dowry that your family had given me," she replied, knowing that the land that was included in Laura's dowry will automatically be transferred to hers and became her property once she and Laura got married. She already owned the one fourth of land in Hollis. She was overwhelmed at the vast land that she saw yesterday while on tour with Laura's Uncle that she considered it unacceptable and unfair for Laura to lost the ownership of her own land. She squirmed slightly on her chair and King John saw her hesitation.

"Do you want to tell me something?" King John asked, and this time his voice sounded serious, and leaned closer. "Carl, if the land is not enough, I can give you also some live stocks and gold."

"Oh no Your Majesty, it's not like that," she corrected right away and realized that she had spoken a bit louder, when she saw everyone all eyes on her and the King.

"Then what do you want?" was the King's worried reply.

"Forgive me for making you worried, Your Majesty," she apologized and looked at Laura's father sincerely in the eyes. "When I saw the land yesterday, it's so beautiful and I knew that Laura likes it too. That's why I decided that I'll give it back to my wife."

"But that's the law. When a princess gets married, she needs to pay her husband and husband's family a dowry," the King stated. "Your father and I agreed that one fourth of the Hollis' land would be a part of Laura's dowry."

"I know your Majesty, and forgive me again for making this confusing," she replied still showing respect for the King by lowering her tone of voice. "But I don't think I need another land. So I want to make a proposal; the land that was included in Laura's dowry will remain in her name and under Hollis' Kingdom's property and I will withdraw my claim and my family's claim to it."
"I don't think your father will agree," was the King's suspicious remark.

"I think my father would understand my wish, Your Majesty," she cleared out.

"But Carl, that land is already yours, I am willing and gladly giving it to you, since I'm under your care and protection now," Laura interrupted. "It is part of my contribution for your family, for taking care of me and making sure that I live my life in your Kingdom the same way that I live my life here, as a princess."

This time she faced her wife and looked at those hazel eyes with full of hope and love.

"Laura, I don't need a land as a security to provide you the best life. I have my own land and my own wealth, I can provide you anything that you desired," then she looked at the King to her right and said, "And forgive me for saying this Your Majesty, but I don't need a land from Hollis' Kingdom to make sure that your daughter would be taking good care of while living under the Karnstein's roof. I love your daughter with all my life and I am offering everything that I own to her, so that she will be happy and satisfied under my care," she explained. "When I become the King of Karnstein, everything that I own and everything that I'll inherit from my father and mother would be Laura's too."

"I admire you for telling that young man," the voice of Laura's Grand Aunt cut through the growing confusion in the room and all eyes were focused on the strict laconic old woman. "I never heard nor had known a man that withdrew his claim on his wife's dowry. Most of them wanted more lands and wealth when women agree to marry them. And most of the noble families gained their wealth and expanded their lands and sovereignties through marrying wealthy noble women."

"If I may interrupt Your Highness," she asked politely.

"Go ahead young man," Laura's Grand Aunt nodded, ready to listen carefully.

"My love for your granddaughter is pure and honest," she explained with utmost sincerity. "I do not wish to put a price on it. There's no amount of gold or land that can measure how valuable Laura is to me. I know that our marriage has its political purpose, and we all knew that this is how marriage works between two kingdoms. But I also want to emphasize that I am not after Laura's dowry and the wealth and lands that I will gain while remaining married to her. I want to show Laura's family that my intention is pure and I love Laura even if she's a penniless peasant," after that heartfelt declaration, she felt a firm hand tapped her shoulder and Laura's father rose from his chair to embrace her. She rose and returned the hug.

"Thank you Carl, for loving my daughter purely," the King of Hollis exclaimed after releasing from the embrace. "I am so happy and I thanked the Creator for giving you to my daughter. You don't know how relieved I felt right now, knowing that my daughter is in good hands and in the arms of an honest man."

"I think I'm the one who should thank you, Your Majesty," she disclosed and smiled as she recalled how her father and Laura crossed paths. "If it isn't to your kindness and generosity of allowing my Father to cross your kingdom and offered him to stay here, he wouldn't have caught eye of the beautiful Princess of Hollis," she proudly said and looked at her wife who was now reddening like a red beet. "I am very thankful that my father secured me a wife from the Hollis clan before leaving your Kingdom, or else, I wouldn't know how generous, kind, warm, fun and loving all of you are… and I wouldn't meet the love of my life."

She received a nod of approval and thanks to all of them and the King and they remained standing.
"Let's raised our goblets and welcome Carl to our family," the King of Hollis declared and they all raised happily their goblets, including Laura's Grand Aunt. "And may the Creator blessed Laura and Carl's marriage, and that they may give us an heir soon, cheers!"

"Cheers!"

And she heard the clinking of the goblets followed by everyone, rising from their chair and gave her a hug, except for the old woman that was sitting beside her wife, who remained calmed and composed. Once the excitement subsided, everybody went back to their chair and resumed eating. After she sat and was putting the table napkin on her lap, Laura's hand covered her left hand, and her wife squeezed her hand gently. She looked and saw the adorable smile of her wife that captivated everyone.

"I love you," Laura mouthed and then released her hand from the hold, before eating.

She felt ecstatic and cannot help but to smile, as she felt the love of her wife's family and for welcoming and accepting her as a part of it. She never met nor knew any relatives from her father's side or mother's side. She was shield from the outside world and she was aware that her secret prompted her family to cut ties and communication with their other relatives. Her Mother once told her that her Grandfather had a sister, but she never met her and they never talked about her again. She only knew that this grand aunt never married and never had a child. And the King of Morgan now was the son of her grandfather's cousin who happened to be not close to her Mother.

She may not have seen or may not have met her other relatives, but it does not matter to her anymore. She remembered when she was young, asking her parents if they have other relatives, and she was curious to meet them. But she never meets any of them, and her parents told her that both the Karnsteins and the Morgans were small families.

Right now, her longing to meet her other relatives had been subdued. She had both her parents who love and protect her; she had a beautiful loving wife that loves her unconditionally; she had her wife's family who welcomed and accepted her openly; and last but not the least, she had found her Ma and knew that her other 'mother' still loves her despite the change in her. She could never ask for more, and she felt so blessed by having these people around her. The only thing that she wishes was to have her own family, and see the fruits of her and Laura's love.

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After dinner, Laura did not let her go after talking and discussing to Laura's Father and Uncle about her withdrawal from Laura's land at Hollstein Kingdom. They all agreed at her proposal and the King suggested that she needs her father's consent and approval before they write a new contract. She felt happy and satisfied also when she asked the King of Hollis if she can buy that piece of land in the middle of the forest. The King was surprised that she asked to buy it, when in fact, she can just claim it since she was after all the King of Hollis' son-in-law! So, not only did Laura have her own land back on her name, but she had secured also a land for her Ma.

She was torn from her happy thoughts when she felt the familiar soft hand of Laura caressing her left jawline as they lay on Laura's bed. She looked to her right and saw her wife gave her a narrow look.

"I hope you're not thinking of another silly idea," Laura commented. "Tell me what's in your mind, so that I can prepare myself for another surprise."

She lay on her side and faced her wife. "If I remember it correctly, your father had specifically asked me to start producing heirs as soon as possible," she replied and received a playful grin from her wife.
"I don't recall it," was Laura's innocent reply. "You must be imagining things."

"You can pretend not to hear it, but I heard it clearly and besides, you left me no choice, Cupcake…" she returned her voice raspier and smoother and inserted her left hand inside Laura's camisole and cupped possessively Laura's left breast. "You've teased me the entire evening. And now you need to be punished."

"Oh, is that so?" Laura commented. "What if I resists?"

She tightened her hand on Laura's left breast and moved closer, "Then you'll be charge for resistance and denying the future King of Karnstein of his right…"

"And which right are we talking about?"

"The right to claim your body and make love to you," she said, pretending to be serious.

"Well, I don't want to deprive His Royal Hotness of his right… so…" Laura uttered and gently released from the hold, sat on the bed before removing the silk camisole. "I'll surrender at once and offer my body to you, Your Highness."

She did not expect that Laura will play along easily, and now she was left dumbfounded and found herself ogling and drooling at the Princess. She felt immediately her shaft tightening and hardening as a rock, as Laura lie down again on the bed, fully naked like an offering and ready for her to devour.

*Let the 'heir making' begins!*

She thought and smirked like a devil.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for your endless support on this fic :-(
Carmilla caught Laura reading the forbidden book. The Queen summoned Carmilla to go back home. And Carmilla and Laura get to try one of the forbidden positions from the book for the first time.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Carmilla

Basking in the aftermath of their love making, Laura reached for the white sheet and covered their naked bodies.

She remained lying on her side and put her right hand around Laura's waist and nuzzled in the warmth of her wife's cleavage, burrowing her face deeper in between those breasts. She loved the smell of Laura.

She purred when Laura's arms wrapped around her face, kissed her head gently and pressed her closer to those round soft breasts; it's her favorite place. She felt secured and loved whenever she was in this position. Her eyelids were getting heavier and sleep was ready to claim her but was snatched from dozing off when she felt Laura began to shake and giggle.

"I bet you're a cat in your past life," Laura claimed.

She furrowed her brows. When she looked up she was surprise to see her wife's amused expression. She grumbled and nuzzled back on Laura's cleavage.

"Don't be grumpy," the Princess quipped. "You're just so cute and fuzzy when you purr…"

She was about to protest and tell Laura that she's a future king and powerful; not cute and fuzzy. But once she felt her wife's hand caressing the spot under her right ear, she can't control herself and she elicited a long purr. She felt ashamed after she realized that Laura had managed to discover her sensitive 'soft spot', she burrowed her face deeper in between her wife's breasts to avoid more humiliation.

"Aha! I knew it!" Laura exclaimed and released from the embrace.

She hid her face on Laura's yellow pillow. Not contented, she snuggled beneath the warm sheet and covered her head. "Go ahead and humiliate me more," she said in a muffled sound. Suddenly she felt Laura's arms gathered her. Laura cupped her face and motioned for her to look up.

"Hey, I'm not humiliating you," Laura whispered.

She then received a tender kiss from her wife and she smiled at the gesture. Showing her emotions and weakness was unacceptable according to her mother; she never realized that Laura could elicit these feelings from her.
"I want you to know that you could be yourself or whatever you want to be when we're alone and in bed," the Princess commented. "And my love for you wouldn't change a bit."

She felt like her heart melting after that remark.

"Thank you Cupcake," she said and can't find the right words at how to express what she feels now. She kissed passionately her wife instead and put all her emotions and love in the kiss.

After Laura released from the kiss, "Well, you may be cute… but you're one hell of a kisser," Laura stated after catching her breath.

She let out a low chuckle and felt her confidence returned.

"So, are you going to take back what you've said?" she asked and received a narrow look from her Cupcake.

"That you're so cute and fuzzy?"

She nodded and smirked as she tried to regain her pride.

"Nope," Laura returned. "In fact, I wish you have a fur and a tail so that I can cuddle with you all the time."

She groaned after hearing that statement, rolled her eyes and burrowed her face back in between Laura's breasts; there's no way that Laura will let her win this argument. She inhaled the sweet scent of her wife and tried to calm herself from being humiliated further.

"Carm?"

Still enclosed in Laura's arms, she gently looked up and caught those beautiful adorable round hazel eyes gazing at her. She lifted her browse as she waited for Laura to resume, while the Princess' right hand caressed her nape.

"What you did at dinner was amazing," Laura started. "I never expected that you'll return the dowry to my family."

"Cupcake, your dowry isn't the most important thing in our relationship…” she replied and saw the confusion in Laura's eyes. "…Nor the alliance or trading partnership this marriage had sealed."

"Then what's the most important?" Laura asked, totally oblivious.

"You." she expressed proudly and smiled at her wife after catching Laura's surprised reaction. She reached out and cupped Laura's face gently. "You, my wife, my love, my Princess and the mother of my heirs is the most important in this relationship; your happiness, your safety and your satisfaction."

"Oh Carm… I… I don't know what to say," was Laura's hesitant and confused remark. "Do you really love me that much?"

"Of course I do…" she confirmed immediately. "Isn't proclaiming to your family that my love for you is pure, and returning your land to your kingdom enough to prove to you that I care and love you so much? And the fact that I travelled for ten hours for the first time, even if it's horrible and made me sick at the entire journey, just to say sorry to you and asked your father formally for your hand in married, and tell him that I will offer my life to protect you, is not enough to convince you that, you, Princess Laura Elizabeth Rosamund Hollis Karnstein is the love of my life and the only woman that I worship?"
"Alright! I believe you now, even if it's still too much for me to accept it," was Laura's overwhelming answer.

"Well, you better believe it and accept it fully, because I have never met a woman who's beautiful inside and outside, and who loves me unconditionally," she explained with all her heart. "You're the one who taught me to love you; it's your quirkiness, compassion, kindness, generosity and exuberance... And the fact that you make the most delicious creampuffs in the entire Styria, had made me fall for you," was her passionate declaration and saw Laura beamed. "Oh, wait... maybe you've put something in those creampuffs and cast a love spell on me."

"What?! I did not," was Laura's irritated reply.

And before she could retort, Laura cupped her face and claimed her lips with full of wanton.

"I love you too Carm," Laura whispered, "...and I'm glad that we've sorted this things out, because I could never live in your castle and be your wife without being intimate with you like this," Laura mentioned, her voice suddenly serious. "I don't want to be just your wife and the mother to your heirs; I also want to be your lover and the only one that you'll make love with."

Laura's last sentence suddenly caught her attention.

"Cupcake, you're the only one in my heart and in my mind," she replied gazing at Laura's worried eyes. She did not expect that Laura can become insecure too. And with that, she received another deep kiss from her wife before she felt Laura's arms enclosed around her head, and she was lulled to sleep at the feeling of Laura's hand caressing her hair and the back of her neck. And she nuzzled back in the warmth of her wife's bosom.

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"Carl! You scared me,"

Laura exclaimed as she walked towards her wife, and saw Laura set aside the book that she was reading.

"You're jumpy..."

"What are you doing here? I thought you and Johann will go fishing," Laura grumbled.

"Your Uncle needs him, so he cancelled," she returned, and noticed her wife's remark sounded like a complaint. "And here I am, wanting to surprise you; thinking that you might be lonely spending your day alone. But it seems you're not happy to see me," she pointed out and noticed that Laura was not paying attention and did not appreciate that she was there. "What are you reading?"

"Umm, what?" Laura remarked innocently.

"The book that you just put beside you, what is it?" she asked again and her curiosity was piqued as she saw Laura acting odd. She sat on the bed beside her wife and tried to snatch the book, but Laura blocked her hand. "Hey! What's that for?" was her surprised reaction.

"It's personal, so I hope you won't force me to tell you what it is," Laura replied.

After that remark, her curiosity grew stronger. "Why is it personal when it's just a book?" she inquired. "...Unless you're hiding something from me."

"I told you it's nothing," was Laura's stubborn reply. "And why would I hide something from you,
"I don't know, you tell me, is there something in that book that you don't want me to see?" she retaliated, and challenged her wife. "And as your husband, I could use my right to demand you to give me that book."

"Well, excuse me Your Royal Highness, in case you've forgotten, you are not in your own castle, and you're in my territory, you cannot use your privilege to me in here," Laura justified.

"Oh, so you're already disobeying me?" was her challenging remark and arched her brows.

"No, I'm just trying to tell my Husband Prince that I don't want him to read my book," Laura replied.

"And why is that Princess Laura Elizabeth Rosamund? What could be in that book that you are so afraid to show me?" she claimed and crossed her arms. She won't give up; she knew Laura was hiding something. "The only book I know, that is so scandalous to read is The Book of Forbidden Positions and its Penance."

After mentioning the name of the book, she saw her wife's face crimsoned as they stared at each other and realized that they were just talking about the same book.

"Laura? Is that the book that you're reading," was her shocking question.

Her wife gave her a blank stare, suddenly speechless.

"Answer me, is it the one you're reading?"

Unable to deny it anymore, she received a sheepish nod from her wife, and she carefully took the book. She was wondering how her wife got the book and why Laura knew about it. Not all women have the permission to read it. It was only men who could read it since the men were the ones who will 'teach' their wives which position were allowed and forbidden.

"How did you get this?" she wondered.

"Well, it doesn't matter how I get it. My question is, how did you know about it?" Laura demanded, trying to defend herself. "Have you read it?"

"I know this book, because my King Father gave me a copy to read it," she reasoned out, and saw the shock on Laura's face. "I am going to become a ruler someday it's just fair that I read it, because it's part of the law. And as the heir to the throne, I need to know every kind of laws in my kingdom, including this one," she explained confidently and saw the pout on her wife's face. "And as your husband, I have the right to know why you possess this book, because no woman should read the content of it."

"I think it's unfair that women are not allowed to read it," Laura suddenly answered in a high pitch. "Women should be given the same right as men. Their husbands shouldn't dictate everything that they should do, including which position they prefer in bed," the little Cupcake burst into complaint. "What if I want you to take me from behind?"

She was taken aback and stared at the upset wife of hers. She was trying to figure out if Laura was telling the truth or not.

"Do you?" was her shocking curious question, and Laura's big round eyes focused at her with the same shock and saw her wife blushed like never before. Suddenly, a crazy idea crossed her mind, and before Laura could answer that embarrassing question. "Cupcake, I have nothing against the
forbidden positions in this book," was her careful response. "I for one think that the people who wrote this book are envious, hypocrite and selfish, because they cannot do what's in this book. That's why they decided that nobody should be happy and satisfied with their sex life."

"Aren't the priests and bishops the ones who wrote that book?" was Laura's doubting remark.

"Precisely!" she replied. "And since they take a vow of celibacy, they decided to punish us too, who are married, to not enjoy sex." Laura's face became even redder after that sentence. "What I'm saying is no one should dictate us what to do in our own chamber. And to hell with that book! What's more important for me is to satisfy your needs Cupcake."

"And what do you mean by that, my Prince?" was Laura's curious query.

She became speechless all of a sudden, and thought that she had been way too open about what she meant. She hoped that Laura won't stamp her as a pervert.

"...That if you want to try some positions in that book, I wouldn't be opposed of doing it," she suddenly found herself babbling.

Laura's right eyebrow raised "Really?"

She received a naughty smile from her little Cupcake and knew Laura was interested too.

"I know this is crazy, but I am open to anything that you like Cupcake. I want to satisfy you in bed and make you happy. And nobody can know that, except us."

"I think what we do in the privacy of our own chamber is nobody's concern," Laura added, growing confident knowing that they're in the same page.

She was about to join and read the book and sit beside her wife, when suddenly she was distracted from the sound of a knock on the door. They both looked at the direction of the door, and Laura quickly put the book under the bed.

"Who is it?"

"It's LaFontaine,"

"Talk about privacy..." She made a side comment and shook her head to Laura. "Tell them to go away," she suggested and did not want any nuisance while she 'discuss and read' the book together with Laura. But as usual, Laura was always nice and friendly.

"Come on, maybe Laf wants something," Laura reasoned out.

And before she could protest, she heard her wife's voice already giving her Valet permission.

"Come in!"

She rolled her eyes and frowned at her wife, while she received an adorable smile from Laura.

"I'm sorry for interrupting..." LaFontaine said after bowing.

"I doubt that you're sorry," she retorted. "You always like to interrupt me. It's your best quality."

"Carl," Laura called firmly. "Laf is your Valet, and they're the ones who always help you, so be good to them," Laura playfully reprimanded. "What can we do for you, Laf?"
"I received a letter from the castle today," LaFontaine stated.  

Suddenly, she was torn from her 'happy go lucky' life and was reminded of the reality that she had another life she need to face.  

"What is it then?"

"Her Majesty wants you to return as soon as possible," LaFontaine informed.  

Before she left for Hollis Kingdom, even if her mother disapproved, her father on the other hand gave her permission to take a vacation as long as she wants, without exceeding a month. And now, her mother was already summoning her.  

"I think my mother had forgotten that my father had given me a month to stay here…"

"Well, it's about His Majesty-"

Her Valet was not even finished talking when suddenly, she was overcome with worries. 

She rose from the bed and faced LaFontaine, "Why?! What happened to my father?!" she demanded and felt right away Laura's hand held her right hand.  

"Calm down, there's nothing wrong with His Majesty," LaFontaine reassured. "It's just that, there are things that His Majesty must take care and he cannot do it without the heir. There are important people who arrived from Wien, Graz and the Duke of Bavaria is coming too. Her Majesty thought the King could use some help from you, since you need to be there to meet them too and create a future alliance with them."

"My father never asks for some assistance regarding this matter" she reasoned out. "Clearly, my Queen Mother made up a reason, so that I will come back sooner," was her irritated comment.  

"Carl, Her Majesty certainly missed you," Laura added. "I think it's time for us to go back home. My father is healed and growing stronger by the day, I'm sure he wouldn't mind that we cut our vacation short."

"Cupcake, this is the first time I ever been on a vacation," she explained her voice full of frustrations. 

"...And the first time I felt really relax and free since I became the Crowned Prince, why can't my mother give me just a full month of relaxation and freedom?" After venting out, her wife rose and hugged her. She calmed down as Laura's warm body met hers and she felt Laura's hands wrapped around the back of her neck. She slid her arms around Laura's waist and hugged her wife back.  

"Carl, we could come back here again some other time," Laura uttered, and looked at her. "I promise, as soon as we arrived home, I'll do anything to make you happy and relax."  

She smiled and her eyes widened upon hearing her wife's suggestion. "Anything?" she asked while Laura's hand's playfully caressed her hair.  

"Anything," was Laura's enthusiastic reply.  

She looked over Laura's shoulder and nodded to her Valet, "Alright, send a message to my mother and tell them that we'll be back the day after tomorrow," she ordered and LaFontaine bowed to her quickly before leaving the chamber.  

Once they were alone, Laura gazed at her and said, "I know that one of the reasons why you still didn't want to leave is your Ma. Carm, don't worry too much, Kirsch promised to check on her every
day."

Still embracing Laura, she forced a smile and she nodded to her wife as a sign that she agreed. She remained silent and rested her head instead on Laura's shoulder, and hid the worry in her eyes; away from Laura's curious sight. It's going to be difficult for her to separate again with her Ma. She hated being apart with her; it brings back old memories and her fear that she might not see her Ma again.

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She was awoken by languid touch of soft lips on her back. Every touch sends a shiver of delight in her crotch. Waking up in the morning with an unnecessary erection had been a nuisance sometimes; but to be roused by soft hot lips of her wife was a delight to be welcomed. She elicited a weak groan when she felt the chilly air hit her warm body and realized that she was out of the sheets, she turned around and was welcomed by the naked sight of her wife on top of her. She loved Laura in the morning; Laura's natural scent, disheveled hair, warm and beautiful body and the innocent smile that captivates anyone.

She smiled and put her hands on Laura's face and brought the Princess' lips on her own. She closed her eyes and kissed her wife with full of wanton and took a deep breath after releasing from the kiss. She slowly opened her eyes and gazed at the lovely creature in front of her.

"God Cupcake, It's so beautiful to wake up in the morning with you; I could just eat you now," she uttered, her voice still deep and raw from sleep, while cupping Laura's face. She received a giggle and a timid smile that melt her heart and woke her shaft fully.

"Carm!" Laura whined and lies on the side after discovering the now visible hard 'sword'; losing confidence, and still panicking from the surprisingly sight of fully erected penis.

She knew that her wife was still not used to her well-endowed equipment, and seeing it grow big still sends Laura in a semi state of panic. But now, she knew exactly how to calm her wife upon the sight of it: she had to distract Laura right away.

"It's your fault Cupcake; you had awoken both us," she said and did not give Laura a chance to 'reprimand' her. She put her lips on Laura's neck and kissed Laura like a hungry beast. Not wanting to deprive herself of her precious need, she claimed next Laura's left nipple and swirled her tongue around it. She received instantly an agonizing moan from her wife, as she lightly bit and sucked hard the sensitive little bud, while her right hand brushed on Laura's core.

"Carm…"

Laura whimpered and she felt her wife twitched beneath her; the sensation of Laura's hands caressing her hair and the back of her neck aroused her more.

"Cupcake, you're already soaking wet," she teased, as she reached down and palmed Laura's mound; and let her hand rests there.

"Carm… please…"

She smirked and didn't want to prolong her wife's agony anymore. She inserted two fingers at once and glided smoothly inside Laura's hotness. She groaned as she felt Laura's cum dripping generously just by the contact of her fingers. Laura certainly reacts wildly at her touch. Suddenly, her sense of smell was tantalized by the scent of purely Laura's. The evidence of the Princess' arousal lingers in the air, taunting her; she then remembered 'the little gift' she received yesterday. Her mind was
suddenly clouded with arousal, she can't help wondering how Laura taste like; Laura's scent was intoxicating, tantalizing and overwhelming it always bring out the animalistic side of her.

She cannot control her craving anymore; it's too intense to ignore; she needs to satiate this thirst within her; without any fuss she planted quick, short kisses on Laura's stomach, not missing the mole under the navel. She kissed her way down to Laura's firm abs, inner thighs and finally, on Laura's pubic area. She felt Laura twitched and nervously touched her hair.

"Carl? What are you doing?" was Laura's worried query. "You can't-"

She sensed the panic in Laura's voice but she ignored it. She looked up and stared at her wife like a hungry animal that was about to devour its prey, "Laura, I want to know how you taste like," she said her voice deeper, raspier and shaking with need. "And you said yourself that we could try some of the positions in the book."

Before Laura could protest, she carefully straddled and spread wide Laura's legs, and kissed again the inner thighs of her wife; loving the smoothness of it on her lips.

Her eyes feasted right away at the fully exposed natural beauty of her wife covered by the thick tuft of brown curly hair. She put her head down towards Laura's groin, and inhaled the familiar scent that was purely Laura's. She ran her tongue slowly on Laura's mound with full of wanton and lapped up the juice dripping from Laura's core. Laura shivered at the mere contact of her tongue, she groaned at the Princess' reaction and the intoxicating and daze-infused sensation of smelling closer and tasting Laura for the first time.

Not satisfied and craving for more of Laura's juice; using her fingers, she pulled gently apart the lips of Laura's mound and licked inside the wall, she heard the Princess moaned; she licked again the other side, testing how Laura's body will react to the touch of her tongue and she was not disappointed when Laura whimpered and became wetter. She lapped up all the hot liquid that oozes from Laura, and purred at the sensation of tasting her wife. She felt overwhelmed at how intimate this way, to pleasure and show her Princess how much she loves her.

She licked higher and felt a little bud nestling on top. Once her tongue touched it, Laura's body responded wildly: the hand that was caressing her hair tightened; and Laura pulled her face closer to that part of the mound and shrieked. She did it again and she received the same wild reaction from Laura and it thrilled her. She matched her phase according to how Laura's body reacted to each lick of her tongue and sucking, and felt Laura's thighs pressing on her face. With her flat tongue, she gave Laura's mound one hard slow licked from bottom to top and sucked lightly the little swollen bud on the top till Laura shuddered, shrieked and shouted 'Carm'. She lapped all the juices from Laura's mound like nectar, as Laura went over the edge.

"Oh god Carm, I… I…" Laura was trying to tell but still can't compose a decent sentence and tried to wait for her breathing to go back to normal.

She felt her shaft aching and tightening, but she knew that she cannot ask Laura to do the same thing; it would shock her wife. So instead, she tried to calm.

"Cat got your tongue, Cupcake?" she teased as she came out for air after sending her wife to maddening daze and crawled beside Laura.

"Yes, my big wild cat!" Laura expressed. "That was amazing!"

Then she felt Laura's hand cupped her face and was about to kiss her, but she averted. She thought that Laura might find it gross kissing her after she licked and kissed Laura's mound. She could still
taste and smell Laura's scent on her mouth and it aroused her more.

"My face is wet-"

"I know and it's because of me, so, why wouldn't I kiss you?" Laura reasoned out. "…and I think something needed my attention."

The next thing she knew Laura's soft lips were claiming hers, tasting her own arousal and she was pushed gently back on the bed and lie on her back.

Laura's hand reached for her aching shaft and instantly sent her to maddening daze.

"Hmmm… the big wild panther is fully awake and hard."

Pre-cum was already oozing from the head of her penis before Laura could even start caressing her. She looked down and groaned at the sight of her wife stroking her very stiff and pulsating shaft.

Watching Laura touching her member and caressing it had always been in her fantasy ever since she learned that her wife was afraid of touching and seeing penis. And now, her fantasy had come to fulfillment and she cannot help but to drown in arousal at the sight and sensation of it.

"God Cupcake, your touch feels so good and amazing," she commented in between ragged breathes.

After complimenting her Princess, Laura kissed her on the lips and began to pump her up and down. She groaned at the sensation and Laura decided to torture her more by taking one of her nipples and sucked it hard while pumping her shaft at the same time. She growled at the mixed pain and pleasure and put her hand on Laura's hair and caressed it, while the other grabbed the sheet. Laura didn't released her nipple and continued pumping up and down her shaft until she began quivering; Her eyes looked back on the Princess' hand bathing in her thick cream, as Laura continued to pump till she was spent and done. She growled and shouted 'Laura' and shot her hot thick loads.

After receiving the best hand job from her wife, they lay silently on bed, both exhausted, but satisfied and knowing that tomorrow they will go back to their life full of duties. The silence was broken when Laura uttered:

"For the record, I didn't say that we could try those forbidden position in the book," Laura claimed.

She smiled and didn't argue. She gathered Laura in her arms, relished this intimate moment with her wife and closed her eyes.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for your comments and Kudos :-

Just thought I could post another chapter before Season 3 begins, since I don't know how I would feel while watching it, and I might end up having a slight writer's block :-P
The Underwear Thief

Chapter Summary

Perry becomes suspicious after finding out that some of Laura's underwear is missing. Betty claims that she always take very good care of Laura's clothes and has never lost a piece of it... until now.

As soon as they arrive at Karnstein Kingdom, Laura felt that she had to share her Prince again with the Queen.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

"Something is missing," Perry disclosed after counting and handing the sets of silk underwear to Betty.

"Maybe the laundry had forgotten it," Betty assumed and put the sets of underwear in the oak chest.

"No, they didn't. I had everything in the closet after I took them from the laundry," Perry returned and started to take the gowns and dresses from the closet. "And this is not the first time it happened."

She rose from the chair beside her study table, and sat on the bed where Perry and Betty had been folding her clothes and packing them in the chest. After eating breakfast together in bed, Carl decided to leave her alone and went to the King's chamber right away to have a last serious talk with his father-in-law.

"Perry, maybe it just got misplaced, I'm pretty sure it will appear again," she broke her silence and glanced at Betty, and saw the wrinkle on her handmaiden friend's forehead. She suddenly felt guilty at having to lie and see Betty miserable.

"I swear Perry, I didn't know where the missing underwear are, I always take good care of Laura's clothes and things when we're travelling," Betty defended.

"Well, they're gone," Perry concluded. "I say, someone might be stealing them."

"Whoa! Hold it there, we should not accuse or assume someone is stealing my clothes," she cleared out the air, as the tension between Perry and Betty grew.

"Well, I think we should call it underwear thief, since the ones that are missing are your underwear," Perry retaliated. "Laura, I swear, there are already two of them that are missing."

Her conscience was tormenting her and she was running out of alibis; a knock on the door saved her from confessing.

"Who is it?!" was Perry's irritated remark.

"It's Natalie!"
"Come in!" Perry replied at once.

The black-haired handmaiden hasn't even bowed yet when Perry's voice reigned in the chamber.

"Natalie, do you happen to see any of the Princess' silk underwear?" Perry's voice was like a guard interrogating a thief.

Panic crawled inside her and she shot a 'shut-up' glare to Natalie, and hoped the handmaiden understood the message.

"Umm… yes," Natalie replied.

She groaned quietly and rolled her eyes. Perry would definitely send her to confession, and the humiliation of confessing to the priest what she had done was already agitating her.

The handmaidens were easily intimidated by Perry. She definitely needs to talk to Natalie about being discreet.

"I saw a big black cat took it," Natalie said nonchalantly.

"You what?!" Perry and Betty exclaimed, and glared at Natalie.

"A big black cat had stolen it," was Natalie's serious reply.

"Why in the world would a cat steal Laura's underwear? And who let this cat in in the princess' chamber?!" was Perry's hyper remark.

"I have no idea, I just saw it ran away with the Princess' silk underwear in his mouth," was Natalie's almost realistic story. "...I think he likes it."

"But why didn't you go after it and took it back?" Betty demanded.

"I tried retrieving the underwear, but it hissed on me," Natalie related. "It's so big and grumpy, I didn't want to get bitten by it, and so I just let it run."

It took her a lot of self-control not to burst out into a fit of laughter as Natalie continued to tell the story. She made a mental note to praise Natalie afterwards and to apologize to her handmaiden friend for putting everybody in an awkward position.

"Enough! I don't want to hear it anymore," Perry exclaimed, fuming. "The next time you see that black cat, throw it right away outside and never let it in again, do you understand?"

"Yes Perry," Natalie nodded seriously.

"And Betty, make sure that you have total control of the Princess' clothes; if you find out that something is missing, tell me at once," Perry ordered.

"I will Perry," Betty answered and nodded.

"Now, let's lock this now and tell Kirsch to pick it up and put it on the carriage," Perry ordered to Betty as they close the chest of clothes. "And Natalie, start helping the Princess to take a bath and change clothes. Remember to dress Laura something warm, we're going to travel for ten hours, and the weather can be unpredictable," Perry commanded.

"I will Perry!" was Natalie's firm reply.
…As soon as Perry and Betty left the chamber…

"That was close!" she blurted out to Natalie and gave her handmaiden friend a hug. "Thanks Natalie, I thought you didn't get my message."

"No worries Princess, I always got your back," Natalie said and winked.

"By the way, the book is under my bed," she said and pointed to which side under the bed she was referring. "Please don't forget to cover it and pack it safely together with my stuffs."

"No problem, I'll hide it in one of your chests," Natalie assured and went down on her knees to retrieve the controversial book under the bed. "...And I'll make sure also to take it out before Betty can unpack your things, and put it into something safe when we arrived at the Karnstein Castle."

She smiled at Natalie and was thankful that she could rely on the dark haired handmaiden when it comes to doing something 'unorthodox'. She remembered when Perry mentioned about the 'Forbidden Book' and informed her that she could borrow it, and afterwards it should be returned to the Hollis Castle's Library since it's the King of Hollis' property. She dismissed Perry's strict order, thinking that her father does not have use for it.

"What do you need this book for if I may ask?" Natalie inquired staring at the large thick leather bound black book.

Natalie's curiosity made her uneasy and she hoped that the handmaiden will not interrogate her further.

"Err… It's for research!" she blurted out nervously. "...It's to help me familiarize with the different ways, I mean… laws! Yes. Different laws and penance of married couples and among others!"

She held her breath and waited for Natalie's reaction; she hoped her voice going one octave higher did not make her sound guiltier.

Natalie just gave her a nod and a naughty smirk.

"Whatever you say, Princess," Natalie retorted.

"Thank you Natalie," she admitted and received a satisfied smile from the dark haired handmaiden. "I didn't know what I would do without your help."

"It's always a pleasure to help a friend in need," Natalie quipped and winked at her, before asking another controversial question. "So… did His Hotness like your special gift?"

She felt all the blood in her body rushed to her face. The thought of Carl's mouth and tongue licking her mound still aroused her and gives her a delightful thrill!

"Let's just say that, he asked for something more intimate after receiving it." And with that, she gave Natalie a naughty smirk and walked towards the bathroom, while Natalie smiled wide upon hearing it and followed her.

She felt lucky to have handmaidens who were also her close and trusted friends.

She sighed with delight as she recalled how she and Carl became more intimate and closer with each other after spending time at her Kingdom. Taking an unplanned 'vacation' and a break from their duties, especially Carl, had given them a chance to spend more time with each other, talking, doing things together and discovering each other's needs… especially in bed.
And now as they go back to their life with full of responsibilities and challenges, she hoped the 'bond' they have established will remain stronger.

*****

"Laf, do we have all the things we need? ... I mean herbs and medicinal stuffs for Carl before we hit the road?" she asked while she and the handmaidens prepare the food that they will need for their long journey.

"I have everything I need Princess," was LaFontaine's confident reply, as they go around the kitchen boiling something in the pot, then adding weird looking ingredients and spices to the pot, before putting it out from the fire.

"Eww, what's that for?" she asked as they fill up five small bottles with strange looking liquid.

"It's the Prince's special brewed tea to calm him while travelling."

She was suddenly curious how her Prince managed to travel that long to their kingdom. She admitted that she was surprised to see him come. When he arrived, her anger and their happy reconciliation; and among other things, that make her blush every time she thinks of it, distracted her from asking LaFontaine. She tried asking Carl how was the travel but the Prince always tells her that it went fine and she should stop with her 'investigation'.

"How did Carl managed to travel this far?" she asked for the last time.

"To be honest, he managed poorly," LaFontaine returned and furrowed their brows.

The Valet's answer suddenly disturbed her, "What do you mean? Was he hurt? Did he pass out? Didn't you have enough guards that escorted you?"

"He was not use to travelling long distance, so he felt dizzy and anxious the entire journey," LaFontaine related in a serious tone. "...he cannot even eat properly because he always throws up."

"Didn't you make him special herbs or drinks like this to cure his dizziness before you left the castle?" was her worried question.

"I did. But the long journey was too much for him to take in," LaFontaine reasoned out. "And not only that, he fainted when we passed in this certain kingdom's village-"

"He what?!" was her hysterical remark and cannot believe what kind of hurdles Carl underwent in order to see her. Then she calmed down when she saw LaFontaine's eyes widened, as if shock at the sudden outburst, and they're waiting for her to finish. She calmed down and nodded to Laf to continue.

"As I was saying we're passing through this kingdom and the village people there started to come near our carriage to beg for coin. When he saw these mass of people approaching us, he panicked and didn't managed to control his angst. He was unconscious for a couple of hours. It's a good thing that the guards had successfully driven away the village people around us and encircled the carriage," LaFontaine finished up.

"My poor Prince, why didn't I think of this before? He must have felt awful, scared and sick the whole time, and I didn't even asked him again how he was, and instead I ignored him first when her arrived," she regretted, her guilty conscience slowly swallowing her.
And to add to her growing guilt, "That's why I kept telling you to talk to him at once, the day he arrived," Perry chimed in. "...Because what he did is chivalrous and unselfish."

But before she could defend herself, their packing of food and drinks and argumentation was interrupted when she saw the handmaidens stopped whatever their doing and curtsied to the person that just entered the servant's dining area. Perry curtsied too upon recognizing the Prince.

"Hello ladies... Perry," was Carl's friendly greeting, but when he saw his Valet, his voice became flat. "...LaFontaine." He said and gave his Valet a dull look. "Laura, can I-

Before Carl could speak, she cannot help it but to kiss him immediately to lessen the guilt inside her. She did not care if there were people around them. Perry, Laf and the handmaidens were aware of her and Carl's new 'attraction for each other'; she was not bothered at all to show her affection for him. After she released him from that long kiss, Carl was crimsoning like the roses in his garden and was speechless. The blush on his cheeks became deeper when he realizes the handmaidens were staring at him and giggling.

Carl glanced at the handmaidens and the girls were quick to hide their amused faces and went back to what they were doing after Perry glared at them.

"Umm... Cupcake... I think-" he said in his deepest calmest voice, as if trying to regain his dominance and composure.

But she already knew what he was thinking.

"I think it's about time that you become use to it," she returned pertaining to her public display of affection. She remembered her first impression of the Karnsteins: cold, aloof and reserved. And she should teach him to show more what he feels and be not ashamed of it. Her left brow raised, as if waiting for him to disagree, but she received a satisfied naughty grin from him instead.

"Well, as long as it's not in front of my parents, the Royal Guards and other important and powerful acquaintances of the kingdom and... your father... I wouldn't be opposed to it," Carl explained with a hint of sarcasm.

She grinned at him and understood very well not to tarnish his image of a 'strong and powerful' heir.
"I understand Your Highness," she teased and saw his brows furrowed. But before he could retaliate she remembered the cold treatment that he gave to his Valet. Sometimes, Carl and LaFontaine act like siblings who always argue and quarrel in everything they do. "And why are you being cold to Laf?" she inquired and glanced at the Valet who has now joined Perry on the other side of the kitchen.

"They insisting that I stay inside the castle till we leave," Carl claimed nonchalantly. "They said I need to eat properly and relax before the journey."

"And why is that so hard to follow?"

"Because you and I are going for a ride," was Carl's excited reply.

And before she could resist, his right hand held hers and they were running towards the door.

"Wait! Where are we going?" was her confused remark, as she let Carl escort her out of the kitchen and on to the hall leading to the side exit.

"You'll see!" was his enthusiastic reply.
It took them almost half an hour to reach their destination, and her eyes glowed in excitement as she caught sight of the little cottage right in the middle of the forest. She slowed down when she saw Carl stopped and dismounted his horse as they got nearer to the small cottage. Sensing that she knew what this was about, her excitement was disrupted when she noticed Kirsch already standing beside her, waiting to help her dismount from her horse.

"Kirsch… is this…" she asked her royal guard friend and received a nod from him.

"Yes, little Princess," Kirsch confirmed and displayed his goofy smile. "This is where Prince Hottie goes every afternoon."

But before he could comment further, Carl was already coming towards her and held his hand for her to take, as Kirsch stepped back. She gladly took it and went down from her horse, while Kirsch took the reins and guided Unicorn to the nearest pine tree, and joined Armitage holding the reins of both his and Carl's horses.

As they took their steps to the paths leading to the cottage, she noticed his silence and the wrinkle on his forehead. She decided not to ask. When they reached the front door, Carl knocked thrice and opened the door without waiting for a reply. Carefully, she followed him, but his steps transformed into strides once he saw a middle age woman came out from a little room. She was surprised when Carl ran towards the woman and embraced her at once like a happy small child.

"Ma! Laura is here!" Carl claimed his voice full of excitement.

And before she could greet the middle aged woman with light hair, Carl's Ma bowed and curtsied to her.

"It's an honor to meet you, Princess Laura."

She panicked a bit, at the formal greeting that she received.

"Please, don't bow to me… I don't deserve it," was her humble opinion and walked towards Ma and helped the thin woman rose from her feet. She immediately hugged Ma, and the woman was surprised for a moment at her reaction. "I should be the one bowing to you since you're the other mother of Carl," she commented and felt at last Ma's hands wrapped around her.

When they finally break the awkwardness of meeting for the first time, she released from the embraced and bowed to Carl's Ma instead.

"It's an honor and a pleasure to meet you-" suddenly she was out of words to say, as she realized that Carl has not mentioned to her Ma's name. She shifted her sight to the left for Carl to fill in.

"I hope you don't mind if I don't give Ma's-" Carl was not even finished yet, but she understood him, and just smiled at him.

She looked again in front of her, as the woman in black ordinary dress waited for them to finish. She gave Ma her signature 'adorable smile' and asked, "Is it alright if I call you Ma too?"

"Certainly my dear," Ma replied at once and smiled. "Why don't we take a seat, and we could talk comfortably while I prepare some tea, sweets and Carl's favorite-"

"…Rye bread with Steirerkas cheese," they both said and earned a delightful smile from Carl and a dazzled look from Ma.
"So, you knew my precious child's favorite cheese," was Ma's impressed remark.

"Because that's the only breakfast he eats, sometimes during midday too, as a side dish at supper, and as a light meal as well… in addition to creampuffs," she babbled.

"At least it's healthier compare to your sweet diet of cakes and chocolates," he retaliated.

She ignored him instead and pouted at him.

Carl smirked at her and held her hand, as he showed the way to the small table in front of the fireplace. "My Ma makes the best Steirerkas cheese. When I was young I used to help Da milk the cows and then Ma and I make the cheese," was his proud words as he pulled the chair for her to sit.

She just gave him a warm smile, as he watched him loosen up and come out temporarily in this composed, authoritative and serious character of his. For the first time she saw his facial expression glowing like an innocent child, mindless of the things that were happening outside. She watched him follow his Ma to the little kitchen at the corner of the room, and cannot believe how Carl and Ma worked harmoniously around, with Carl obeying everything the middle age woman asked him to do, while preparing for their tea and food.

They really looked like a genuine mother and child, as they comfortably work together in the kitchen. She was glad that Carl managed to find her and that they had a chance to be together in a short span of his stay in their kingdom. She was surprised at Carl's and his Ma's quick adjustment of connecting again with each other, as she caught Ma playfully slapped Carl's hand for putting too much tea on the kettle and earned a groan from Carl. They were really enjoying each other's company and she hated to see him being apart with his Ma again.

She was surprised at Carl's and his Ma's quick adjustment of connecting again with each other, as she caught Ma playfully slapped Carl's hand for putting too much tea on the kettle and earned a groan from Carl. They were really enjoying each other's company and she hated to see him being apart with his Ma again. She wished they could do anything about it. Her smile disappeared when she recalled how the Queen forcefully separated them. And then it occurred to her, she never see Carl had a light and happy moment with his real mother. The Queen had always been reserved and strict towards Carl, and now she understood why her Prince loves this woman so much: Ma brings out the light, cheerful and carefree side of Carl.

After hours of non-stop story telling from Carl about his life with his Ma; witnessing how affectionate Carl was to his second mother; Carl receiving a week of supply of his favorite cheese that Ma made especially for him; and Ma giving her a knitted white scarf with her initial 'LK' as a wedding gift, she felt suddenly crying as the dreaded moment arrived...

"I guess this is goodbye," the middle aged woman uttered, her voice shaking, as they all stood by the door.

Carl embraced his Ma at once, "No, you're not saying goodbye to me again," he disagreed and when he released from the embrace, both eyes were glistening with unshed tears and the middle age woman hid her face. Carl held his Ma's hands while struggling to hold her composure. "Ma, look at me," he implored, his voice morphing into whisper.

She almost burst into tears too as this emotional moment between Carl and Ma played before her eyes. She just realized now how Carl loves his Ma like his own mother.

"Ma, I will see you soon," Carl emphasized and the woman nodded, as he gazed at his Ma's face one more time. "And remember… I love you," he uttered and kissed her on the forehead.

Ma smiled and gave Carl a hug, "I love you too, Kitty Cat."

Her ears caught right away the pet name:

"Kitty Cat?!" she exclaimed, in high pitch and gave Carl a wide naughty smile.
"Oh no," Carl reacted right away and turned around. "You didn't hear that," he dictated and furrowed his brows.

She raised her eyebrows, grinned at him again and she playfully touched the spot under his left ear, teasing him further. She was not disappointed when Carl involuntarily purred.

"Cupcake!"

And before they could start with their daily dose of bickering and bantering…

"I thought you told me that you're not hiding anything from your wife," Ma's voice interjected.

The Prince's expression became broody and crossed his arms.

She approached Ma instead and gave his second mother a hug.

"I think we have to go now, before he became broodier," she teased, gave Carl a grin and looked at Ma again. "I am so happy that you agreed to meet me. I know how you mean a lot to Carl; he's very protective of you. I just want to assure you that your secret is safe with me."

"Thank you, Princess Laura-"

"Please… just call me Laura," she corrected.

"Alright… thank you Laura… thank you so much for loving my precious child, and for making him happy," Ma said with high regard. "You are truly the greatest gift that a mother could wished for her child… and I think I could never ask for more knowing that my precious here…" Ma paused and gazed at Carl for a moment. "… Found true love."

"Well, how can I not resist the broody charming beautiful Prince of Karnstein?" was her suave reply. "Although it's not love at first sight, I've learned and discovered that I love him more when I found out what he really is."

There was instant silent after her comment, and before she knew it, Ma embraced her again.

"You truly have a beautiful heart," Ma claimed and was already on the verge of bursting, but Carl held her hand at once and she give way for him as he gave Ma one final hug.

"Ma, it's alright," was Carl's comforting words as he rubbed gently Ma's back while hugging her. Once Ma regained her composure, Carl released her. "Promise me that you'll take care of yourself and ask Kirsch if you need any help. I gave him an order to look after you, so he will always visit you," Carl explained and Ma was about to oppose but he did not let her. "No, don't drive away Kirsch. We have talked about this and he will be here to always check on you."

"Alright, I won't send him away," Ma agreed. "But please tell him that he is also welcome to come inside and have tea, eat or chat with me, if he has time. Because I don't want him to just go around my house, like the royal guards that your father used to send to guard us when you're young."

"I understand. I will tell him," Carl agreed. "And one last thing… this area where your cottage is, and the entire forest is already my property. You don't have to pay tax anymore, since I already own this land. The King of Hollis' was kind enough to give this piece of land to me, and I'm grateful for that."

"Oh, Kitty Cat, thank you," was Ma's grateful reply and hugged Carl.

This time Carl did not even argued about the pet name. They remained embracing each other,
holding tight, until Ma released from the embrace and held Carl's cheeks and gazed at him.

"Go now and be safe, my precious one," Ma uttered.

Suppressing his feelings, Carl remained silent and just nodded. Ma kissed him on the cheek, sensing that he was on the verge of crying.

It was devastating to see her Prince and the woman he considered his other mother be separated again; a tear dropped from her left eye as she watched Carl gave Ma one last gaze. Then he turned around and she felt his hand held her left hand tight, and they crossed the threshold of the door, and strode outside, never looking back.

*****

"What happened to my son?!"

She heard the familiar cold and authoritative voice of the Queen resonating in the great hall after they entered the Karnstein Castle and saw her Mother-in-Law standing on the middle of the grand staircase. She could feel the Queen's cold icy glare on them, as she looked up and caught the Queen's worried and upset expression. The sight of the Queen dressed in long purple slim velvet gown and towering over them gave her the chill.

Carl's left arm was heavily draped over her shoulder while the other arm was resting on LaFontaine's shoulder, Perry was treading behind her in case she needed some help or relieving from supporting a dizzy and half-conscious Carl.

They stopped at the foot of the grand staircase of Karnstein Castle and stared at the Queen, never breaking her eye contact with those dark, sharp eyes. They bowed their head before her Mother-In-Law.

"Good evening Your Majesty," she greeted after giving her respect and saw the Queen descending the grand staircase heading to their direction. She felt like this was going to be unpleasant as she remembered Perry telling her that the Queen did not allow Carl to travel to Hollis kingdom because of his angst. "Carl is just a little sick from the journey, but LaFontaine had already given him some herbal medicine to calm him and for the dizziness."

She explained as the Queen towered in front of them and held Carl's face with the right hand and stroked gently for a moment her son's face like it's the most fragile thing in the world, before releasing carefully from the touch and beckoned the person behind them.

"Alfred, kindly take the Prince to my chamber," the Queen commanded in a firm tone. "LaFontaine, get some clean clothes for the Prince and wash him. And tell Bertha I need her."

She was caught off guard at what she heard and looked at her Mother-in-Law. She was about to protest and tell the Queen that she could take care of her own husband, but Alfred was already beside her and had lifted and carried Carl in his arms. And before she could stop Alfred from stepping to the stairs, the Queen blocked her and gave her the authoritative icy glare that everybody feared.

"Princess Laura, I am sure you are exhausted from that long journey. You can take a rest now," the Queen commented in a firm and cold tone. "…I will take it from here and take care of my son."

TBC
It's good to know that there are first time readers who discovered this crazy little fic and enjoyed it; thank you for letting me know. And to the Creampuffs who are always here to let me know how each chapter made you feel, thank you again. I appreciate all your kudos and comments :-) Good night
The Princess versus the Queen Mother

Chapter Summary

Laura is irritated at her mother-in-law pampering Carl like a child. But does she really understand how a mother worries for her child, the fact that she grew up not having a mother on her side?

The Princess discovered that her Prince could be extra broody, extra grumpy and extra needy when sick.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

And with that, her Mother-in-Law gracefully turned around and ascended the grand staircase, leaving her speechless and brewing with anger. As the Queen's image disappear from their sight, she felt Perry's hand touched her left elbow. It hurts her pride as Carl's wife that the Queen was not ready to surrender yet the responsibility to her of taking care of the Prince.

"Princess Laura, I am sure you are exhausted from that long journey. You can take a rest now,"

"I will take it from here and take care of my son."

The icy authoritative voice of the Queen still resonated in her mind, until Perry's voice tore her out of her irritation, "Laura, let's go, you need some rest too."

But she did not move from where she was standing; she clenched her fists and let out a discreet snarl.

Feeling that she was boiling mad inside, she felt Perry's arm wrapped around her shoulder and slowly led her upstairs.

"Come on sweetie," Perry said as they both ascended the stairs and walked to the opposite wing to the direction of her chamber. "Just sleep it off and tomorrow you can see His Highness. Her Majesty surely missed her son and was worried about the Prince's condition; every mother would feel that way."

She calmed a bit at Perry's comment. She never had the chance of having a mother by her side, and cannot relate on what Perry just said. She knew that Carl and his mother were very close, but she cannot fathom why the Queen needs to take Carl with her.

"But why does she have to put Carl in her chamber and not his?" was her irritated question while they turned to the wing to her chamber.

"I really can't answer that… but maybe it has something to do with His Highness's angst," Perry implied. "… and the fact that she missed her only son and she wants to make sure that nothing bad had happened to His Highness while he was away from her," the Lady in waiting explained calmly. "You should know that too, since you have an over protective father."
"Well, that's different," she disapproved.

Perry sighed, "Laura, parents in general can be doting, overprotective and overzealous to their children. They come in different forms and different degrees of affection and protectiveness. When you have children of your own, you'll understand why."

"I don't think I'll be a controlling overprotective mother," she commented.

"We'll see about that," Perry quipped.

"And what do you mean by that?" was her surprised hushed remark as they arrived in her chamber, smiled at the two royal guards that bowed to her before opening the door.

"That you always want things to happen in your own way and you knew how to accomplish it. Like what's happening with His Highness now," Perry hinted.

Curious and growing frustrated at Perry's remark, "...And what about Carl?"

As soon as the door closed behind them, "Laura, I'm not born yesterday, I knew that you just consummated your marriage at home, and you seemed to gain this kind of confidence..." Perry paused as if searching for the right term. "No... the right word is 'power'. It seemed you gain this power over His Highness, that anything you asked of him, he will do it in a heartbeat."

"What?!... that's not true," was her fervent reply. "I haven't demanded nor asked him to do anything for me."

"Oh little Princess, sometimes I don't know if you're aware of it..." Perry teased, and walked to the closet and pull out a sleeping camisole.

"Aware of what?" was her impatient remark, growing annoyed that her Lady in Waiting was talking in riddles.

"That you can be controlling too and always get what you want," Perry filled in and raised a brow. "Am I not right?"

"No," she mumbled and pouted her lips. She crossed her arms on her chest and sat on her bed. Perry really knew her like a mother knew the scent of her own child. Irritated that it was true, she tried to change the topic, "And how did you find out that we did the deed at home?"

"Because of the blood on the bed... and don't tell me that you got your monthly visitor, because I know when it happens..." Perry confirmed, stood straight; proud at her conclusion. "...And the way Prince Carl looks at you."

She snorted and found Perry's last remark ridiculous and inaccurate, "Why, how does he look at me?" she challenged her Lady in Waiting; gave Perry a lopsided grin and unimpressed look.

Perry smirked like a devil before uttering slowly and clearly:

"...Like a smitten kitten."

And that was all it took for her to shut her mouth, end this argument and follow Perry to the bath room.

That statement perfectly described her big wild cat after they became intimate.

*****
After weeks of sleeping together and getting used to waking up in the morning with Carl nuzzling on her bosom, or Carl's hand possessively resting on one of her breasts or just plainly hugging each other, she never felt so lonely and so cold right now, as she wakes up alone in her big four post bed at her chamber in Karnstein Castle.

Her own bed in their castle might not be as big as her bed right now, but that bed holds a special place in her heart. It's not just her childhood bed but it's also where she gave Carl her virginity and made love to him for the first time.

She groaned and suddenly missed her big wild cat. She never thought that she would long for him this much. Last night was one of the most difficult nights for her. It took her a lot of tossing around in bed just to catch some sleep.

She was sure that the evidence of her lack of sleep would show under her eyes. Suddenly she caught sight of the very open bed of hers and thought that she should start making her bed 'Carm-friendly'. After discovering the reason why the Prince's four post bed was heavily draped, she now have an idea how to make Carl feel safe and comfortable sleeping in her own bed. Suddenly the thrill of sharing her bed together with Carl makes her more frustrated, and she wondered how he was now. She hoped that he feels better and cannot wait to spend her day with him. It would have been wonderful if she could see and kiss him first before she begins her duty on her first day. Without having any second thoughts, she shoved her blanket and get out of her bed.

The sun was already scattered around her chamber signaling that it was late in the morning. She took the white silk robe that was lying on the chair beside her bed and put it on together with her slippers. She knew the Queen always wakes up early to manage the servants and prepare for the day; she was confidently sure that Carl will be alone in the Queen's chamber now and still sleeping.

She was about to grab the door handle, but she was startled and stepped back as the door opened.

"Perry?! What are you doing here?" was her surprised and guilty question, and Perry eyed her from head to toe.

"Well, what are you doing standing by the door wearing your silk robe and slippers?" was the Lady in waiting's intrigued retort. "Shouldn't you be waiting for me first, eat your breakfast, take your bath and dressed appropriately before going out?"

"I thought of surprising Carl-" she was not even finish yet when she saw Perry's head shook and motioned for her to go back before closing the door behind.

"You're not going anywhere wearing that thin silk robe," Perry criticized while putting the service tray filled with sweets, fruits and hot cocoa on the study table.

"But I'll just be quick, and besides-" she insisted but received a 'shh' from Perry and she tried to stand still until Perry had put her breakfast on the table and faced her.

"I talked to LaFontaine earlier and they told me that Her Majesty is still with the Prince in her chamber," Perry explained and took her hands. "Sweetie, His Highness is still not feeling better and sleeping, so I suggest that we wait until he's fine, then you can see him."

She grew worried upon hearing that Carl was not well. "I need to see him Per…” she begged and was growing restless.

"LaFontaine knew that you'll going to react like this, so they told me that Her Majesty is taking good care of the Prince and that you don't have to worry," Perry narrated.
Still not satisfied, "But why can't I see him? I'm his wife, I should be the one to take care of him," she retorted, growing frustrated.

"Laura, it's Her Majesty's order, LaFontaine just relayed the message to me this morning," Perry explained calmly. "They had not even seen His Highness, since they are not allowed to go inside the Queen's chamber."

"But who's helping the Queen?" was her curious remark, knowing that aside from LaFontaine, she only discovered recently that Alfred also knew about Carl's true identity.

"Bertha, Her Majesty's Lady in Waiting is there to help," Perry said. "So, you don't really need to worry too much, because I heard from LaFontaine that Bertha was His Highness's nanny when he was a child. The Queen's Lady in Waiting knew how to take care of His Highness."

She calmed down and grasped at once why Bertha was there. But she was still upset that she cannot visit him.

"And also…" Perry sought her attention. "Her Majesty told LaFontaine that the Queen is taking her day off today to take care of her son, that's why you need to go to the monastery in behalf of her Majesty to discuss about the expansion of the hospital."

She was dying to see her Prince and was now torn between her duty and her feelings.

"You and the Prince could be lovey-dovey as long as you want, but first you have to be a responsible Princess," Perry reminded.

She sighed, and did not argue anymore. She promised her mother-in-law that her responsibility as the Crowned Princess of Karnstein was her priority. The last time she was in the monastery, it did not go well since she let her emotions get in a way of her responsibility. Right now she has a chance to erase that mistake and show the Queen that she could be trusted with the responsibility that was bestowed on her.

Her train of thoughts was interrupted when she heard Perry cough while staring at her.

"Alright, I'm going and you're coming with me," was her firm reply, and received a satisfied smile from Perry.

"Wonderful! I'll prepare your bath now while you eat your breakfast," Perry returned. "And perhaps after visiting the monastery, we could have a quick trip at the market square and buy some chocolates and ingredients for His Highness favorite dessert, so that you can make creampuffs tomorrow."

*****

When she woke up the following morning, Perry was already there with her breakfast. Perhaps her Lady in Waiting was afraid that she might try to sneak to the Queen’s chamber. She received a message at once from Perry that His Majesty has important guests arriving from different places and would stay at the castle. Perry was asked by the Queen to make their ‘exquisite desserts’ to impress their guests and since the Queen did not delegate a task to her, she volunteered to help Perry making the sweets, so as to make herself useful and to distract her from worrying about the Prince. She asked Perry if she heard anything from LaFontaine about the Prince's condition, but her Lady in Waiting did not see the Valet today, and she assumed that LaFontaine might be busy too helping for the preparation.
She was yanked out from her cake baking with Perry as they saw Lafontaine entered the kitchen panting and looking haggard.

"What happened to you?" Was her worried remark as she approached LaFontaine.

"Laf, are you alright?" was Perry's follow-up question.

Perry approached right away the Valet and put a hand on LaFontaine's head. "Would you like some chicken soup?"

"No, thank you, I am alright," LaFontaine answered, their eyes glowing as it caught Perry's worried expression.

"Then how come you looked like you have not slept at all?" She asked, reminding them what they really came for and to stop gazing at her Lady in Waiting.

They shook their head to wake up from Perry's gentle gaze and focus their sight on the other direction.

"Oh yes, about that," The Valet started, and took another deep breath. "The Prince has a fever."

"What?!" She panicked at once. She thought that Carl was just resting and trying to recharge from the exhaustion of their travel, since she did not hear anything from Perry.

"There is no need to worry. He's just being extra broody today, because he found out that Her Majesty needs to attend some important matter, and cannot be with him the whole day," LaFontaine explained quickly, and when they received a puzzled look from Perry... "He's like a child when he's sick… he wants His Queen Mother by his side all the time. They are trying to feed him-"

"They?"

"…Her Majesty and Bertha," LaFontaine was quick to supply the answer. "But he refused to eat anything, because he doesn't want his mother to go. Then he demanded to be transferred to his chamber after Her Majesty informed him that she needs to leave him for a while." LaFontaine disclosed. "I think he is needy and wants some attention…"

"Where's Her Majesty now?" she asked immediately.

"Welcoming His Majesty's very important guests at the throne room," they replied.

"And Carl?"

"At the Prince's Chamber," was LaFontaine's quick retort. "And Princess, forgive me for borrowing your-"

She did not even understand LaFontaine's last remark, upon hearing that Carl was no longer at the Queen's Chamber she did not waste another second. She removed the apron that was on her and walked to the direction of the door.

****

After ten minutes, she was now standing at the Prince's chamber and knocking.

"Go away!"
She heard the grumpy reply. But instead of turning back, "It's me, Laura. I'm coming in," she informed him and then pushed the heavy wooden door open. She walked right away to the direction of the four post bed, and she almost melted at the sight of the Prince lying in bed hugging a yellow pillow that was very familiar to her. She made a mental note to ask him later on how her pillow ended up in his bed. But in the meantime, her Prince looked like a poor child that needed attention and remembered how Laf described him. She walked towards his bed and stood by the left side.

"How are you feeling?" she asked and sat beside him on the bed. Once settled, she lifted his head gently from the yellow pillow and put it on her lap. He was a bit warm.

"What are you doing here, Cupcake?" He grumbled.

He sounded annoyed but she knew that he was just being broody as always. "Well I heard that someone has not eaten yet, and has given the Queen and Bertha a hard time trying to feed him," she stated while she smoothen his hair.

"I am going to hang LaFontaine."

"Hush. LaFontaine is just worried about you," she defended, and kissed his forehead and stroked his hair. She felt him relaxed. "Now, I want you to sit and I'll feed you some soup."

"No." he grumbled and burrowed his face deeper in her stomach. The contact sent a tingle in between her legs but she brushed off the sensation immediately, and ignored it as hard as she can.

"I tell you what, you eat the soup and I'll bring you some cake that Perry baked," she tried to bribe him, knowing that he was stubborn but have a sweet tooth.

"No." he replied, his voice muffled as he still buries his face on her stomach.

She smiled quietly, amused at how the Prince can be so childish when sick. She lowered her head and planted small gentle kisses on his cheek and along his jawline. She got the response that she wanted when he turned his head and faced her, she smiled at the result and got the Prince's attention. She lowered her head again and put her lips gently on his own.

And when she felt him softening from her kiss, "Will the Prince promise to eat soon?" she mumbled in between kisses.

"Maybe."

She heard him answered, still kissing him gently. He deepened the kiss and she felt his hand ran through her hair, and before it could lead to something else, she released from the kiss and earned another grumble from him.

"Hold there, lady killer. We're not yet through. You need to eat first before you can continue kissing me," she reminded him.

"Fine." Was his grumpy reply and sat on the bed and rested his back on the headboard.

She rose from the bed and took the untouched bowl of soup on the side table; luckily the soup was still warm. She sat beside the Prince and started feeding him. He obediently opened his mouth and ate the soup that was offered to him.
After ten minutes, the bowl was empty.

"That wasn't so hard!" She exclaimed and rose again to place the bowl on the service tray and took the goblet with wine, and offered the drink to him, which he gladly consumed to the last drop.

"Thanks." He returned.

"Now, what do you want to do?" she asked, while wiping the Prince's mouth with the table napkin.

"Will you sleep with me?" the Prince uttered.

She was dumbfounded at the request and sheepishly grinned at him. "My Prince, you're already sick and you're still thinking of sex, you're unbelievable."

Then she just received a naughty smirk from him. "Cupcake, I want to sleep while cuddling with you-"

"Oh. Oh!" was her embarrassed reply, "I thought…"

"But if you want to sleep like the naked kind of sleeping together, I wouldn't mind…"

"No! I am not sleeping naked with you," she retorted.

"Alright! But can I have my cuddles now?" was the Prince's frustrated and yet sweet remark.

"Of course, you can," she smiled and lay beside him, as they made themselves comfortable. She enclosed Carl in her arms and she felt him positioned his head on his favorite spot: her bosom. And he wrapped his arm around her waist. She could feel the warmth of his breath touching her breast as he started to relax, while she stroked his hair. And there it was again: she heard him purred.

_He is definitely a cat in his past life!_

She giggled lightly, so as not to wake the Prince while she enjoyed and relaxed too while listening at the steady low purr of his breathing as he succumbed to sleep.

She was thankful that she managed to feed and tame the broody cat, and thought: what the Queen did not manage to accomplish; she accomplished it in a short time.

And this is just the beginning.

She smiled wickedly.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

I received a feedback in another language aside from English, and it's awesome to know that there are readers telling me how they feel about this fic, even if it's not in English. So, if you think that you have something to say but can't tell me in English, feel free to express it in your own language, and hopefully Google translate can help me understand it. As you can tell, English is not my first language so there's no need to be shy that you
might not be understood; because I have gone through this situation, wherein I'm so shy and afraid that the person I'm talking to might not understand me. I'll be happy to know your thoughts and feelings about this fic ;-P

And as always, thank you to the loyal Creampuffs that don't get tired of leaving kudos and giving feedbacks for every chapter, I'm always happy to read what you all like/dislike about the latest update.

Hope everybody's having a nice Sunday :-) It's already my favorite month of the year (and Elise's birthday month :-D ) The trees are colorful. I have the urge to go to the nearest forest or just take a walk on a Sunday morning; but it's chilly and windy, so if it remained like this till the afternoon, I might stay in the warmth of my bed and finish the next chapter… or go out…or not… so, what to do…
LaFerry caught in the act for the first time. Carmilla was still cranky and grumpy and Laura discovered why. Someone is in denial.

Carmilla

She was on the brink of catching her sleep but was rudely snatched back to consciousness when she heard the door to her chamber opened and closed again. She groaned and turned to her left side, where LaFontaine always stands every morning. She waited impatiently for her Valet to call her from behind the heavy drapes that was separating her from the other side of her bed. She was already used to LaFontaine's constant interruption and considered it a part of her daily life. But tonight she does not have the tolerance and cordiality of hearing her Valet's excuse of forgetting something.

She was cranky this morning when she transferred from the Queen's chamber to her chamber since her mother had no time to take care of her today. But when Laura showed up to feed her and napped with her, she was delighted that the Princess was on her side to take care of her, since her mother 'does not have time for her'. But when she woke up late in the afternoon and found herself alone again and no one 'to take care of her', she became irritable. When LaFontaine came to her chamber to give her supper she was ready to send them away and tell them to leave her too since everyone does not have time for her.

Her brooding was interrupted when she noticed suspicious movements around her bed.

She was startled and her eyes darted at once on the right side of the bed, and noticed someone fumbling for the partition of the curtains. Her heart pounded, but she remained calm. LaFontaine never stands on the right side of her bed and nobody was allowed to touch or open the curtains around her. Even Her Queen Mother never touches it. Everyone who lives in the castle considered her bed a 'sacred place', more sacred than the King's chamber; once the heavy drape that was covering the entire four post bed was drawn; nobody was allowed to open it once she was already inside and sleeping. It's one of the strictest rules in the castle and anyone whose serving her obeys it like their lives were at stake if they violate the rule.

"Is there anyone out there?!" was her angry remark and sat on her bed. She was thankful that she was wearing her sleeping tunic and braies since she had been sick. "Answer me?!"

She was about to lose her temper when she did not receive a reply. The most coveted jobs inside the castle were personally serving her family, and she thought of demoting this servant to work in the fields for disobeying the number one rule when serving her and entering her chamber.

But when she was about to rise and confront this servant, she was taken aback when the curtains opened wide and a light startled her.

"Geez! These curtains are so thick and difficult to open!" Laura complained eyes roaming around the
bed and curtains after drawing it to the side, as if announcing her arrival.

She breathed a sigh of relief, and she was reminded of that moment how Laura found out her real identity, and how the Princess invaded her privacy just like now; but this time, she was happy that Laura did. She was about to tell Laura that she will be happy to share her bed, but first, she needs to tell her wife to stop barging into her chamber like this.

But she was distracted and her heart almost melt when she caught sight of the signature adorable smile that makes all the men fall in love with her wife, and sometimes the root of her trouble and jealousy.

"Cupcake, what are you doing here?" she croaked and got distracted again when her eyes caught sight of the darker shade part between Laura's legs through the thin layer of white chemise, and discovered that her wife was not wearing underwear again! She cleared her throat, composed herself, and ignored the sudden twitched of her shaft; she felt like her fever came back.

Laura removed the untied robe and then put the candle first on the bedside table before hopping into bed and drew the curtain again. "I know that you need to rest and recover from your fever, but…I can't sleep without you."

She smirked as she caught those lips pouted. The weak light that was scattered above her bed made it easier for her to still see the Princess' beauty inside her dark bed.

"How are you feeling?" Laura asked sweetly, still sitting at the side of the bed, as if waiting to be invited.

"Well after that soup that you fed me, and follow up soup again at supper with the creampuffs that you made and LaFontaine's weird special brewed tea... I think I'm strong enough to hang my Valet," she narrated and smirked like the devil, as she remembered how she and her Valet bickered and bantered while serving her supper.

"LaFontaine told me that someone was grumpy again and refused to eat his supper..." Laura implied; eyebrow raised. "...Care to explain to me why you gave them a hard time?"

The smirk on her face disappeared. She furrowed her brows, suddenly irritated that her Valet was always reporting to her wife.

"Hey, I told you I ate the soup," was her quick defense.

"... After the dessert." the Princess mentioned. "It's a good thing that I sent some creampuffs too for your supper..."

"Yes, it's a good thing that you sent something edible," she said nonchalantly and saw Laura's lopsided grin. She was still irritated at LaFontaine for insisting that she eats her supper and didn't stop badgering her; so she ate first all the five creampuffs before eating the soup just to annoy them.

Worried, "What happened? You're already in a good mood when I left you," was Laura's oblivious question.

She suddenly bowed her head and looked at her hands, contemplating if she will tell the truth.

"I missed you at supper when you didn't show up to feed me," she mumbled like a child. Laura quickly moved closer and she felt right away Laura's soft hand cupped her cheek.

"Oh, my poor wild cat, I'm sorry I forgot to tell you that we've been busy at dinner. Her Majesty
asked me to help entertain some of the guests," Laura explained, desperate.

As usual, she felt a twinge of jealousy after hearing her wife entertained 'some men' since she knew that most of her father's visitors were usually noblemen.

She looked up and stared at her wife, "I hope you didn't smile too much, and been friendly and nice to them," was her bitter comment, her tone turning suspicious and cold. The Princess shifted back and released the hand on her cheek, and became serious.

"Please don't get jealous," Laura explained calmly. "I need to be acquainted to some of them, and told them about Her Majesty's hospital project and about Hollis Kingdom… and there were people who were curious why I end up marrying a prince from the north since there were many eligible princes in the south."

Her brows furrowed, "Why can't they just mind their own personal lives?" was her irritated remark.

She caught the sheepish look on her wife's face before Laura answered her question.

"Some of them are noblemen from the south, and they knew about my being… 'picky' when I was choosing a husband," was Laura's embarrass reply.

But she was not satisfied.

"And what did you tell them?" she asked, her voice firm and authoritative.

"The truth…" Laura returned.

"…And that is?" her follow up question, her voice deeper and firmer.

"That I want to end this old dispute between the Hollis and Karnstein Kingdom. And bring peace to both our families," Laura declared sincerely not breaking their eye contact. "And I also told them I'm the happiest princess in Styria because the Prince of Karnstein is the most intelligent, caring, loving person, and not to mention the handsomest prince that I met."

After that fervent explanation, she calmed down and sighed but her eyes remained fixated on those round hazel eyes; still doubting. Her love for Laura was intense that it makes her madly jealous if she hears or sees any man talking or looking at her wife.

Laura did not break from the stare. Noticing her silence…

"I hope you understand that it's part of my duty as the Crowned Princess of Karnstein to talk to people," Laura reminded in a calm tone.

She contemplated what Laura said and tried to put in her mind that she should trust her wife and let Laura do her job and responsibility in their kingdom. But her possessiveness was too much to suppress.

She was strayed from her worries when her ears caught the sound of Laura's sweet voice.

"May I join my one and only Prince?"

The wrinkle on her brows cleared and she gave Laura a soft smile, and gazed at her wife. Her love for Laura was overwhelming that even a tiny bit of jealousy can spark a strong emotion in her.

She lifted the bedsheet and Laura slid easily under it; gave her a satisfied grin before lying beside her; wrapped an arm around her waist and gave her a quick kiss.
After she felt Laura's lips on her, and the warmth of her wife's body touched hers, a sense of possessiveness surged inside her. She put her left hand on Laura's neck, claimed Laura's lips with an open mouth while her tongue demanded entry. Laura complied and welcomed her greedy mouth, and tongues duelled. She could feel this wave of emotion growing inside her and found herself craving for Laura's lips, tongue, neck, breasts and body. She had this fervent desire to claim Laura; possess her and remind her wife that she belonged to her.

Lust and possessiveness blinded her sanity and she felt these needs to be appeased.

"You belong to me Laura," she said in a deep firm tone, as if telling her wife not to forget. "Swear to me that you will not show enthusiasm when talking to other men!"

"Ca-Carl, I swear and I never forget that I belong to you," Laura reassured, voice shaking. "I devote myself only to you.

Laura's reassuring remarks were not enough to quell her emotions. She positioned herself on top of Laura and claimed the Princess' mouth and tongue like a greedy animal, afraid that someone might steal Laura from her. Her kisses become harsher. She growled. She wanted more and broke from the kiss. Using both her hands, she slipped her fingers on both thin straps of Laura's chemise and pulled down the chemise with one swift motion.

She heard her wife's loud gasped at her sudden 'wild' behavior, and it did not go unnoticed to her the shock on the Princess face. She stared at Laura's naked form and took a deep breath, reminding herself that this marvelous body was for her eyes only and she could do anything with it. She leaned down to devour her prey. She nipped and bit the Princess' neck and she felt Laura's hands ran desperately through her short locks and nape.

She sucked the Princess' pulse points and the area around the neck, and then kissed roughly her way down from Laura's neck to bosom. Her hungry mouth found Laura's left nipple; she sucked it hard and bit it until she heard Laura cried in pain and pleasure; the hands on her hair tightened then she released Laura's left nipple. Not satisfied, she put her mouth on the other nipple and sucked it with the same intensity like the other one, and her hand groped Laura's left breast.

Laura's loud moans brought out the animalistic nature in her. She did not stop devouring on those hard nipples until her prey cried in pain and struggled.

"Carl…"

She heard Laura whimpered as she continued her rough ministrations on those perky breasts. She felt her shaft thickening and without warning she put two fingers inside Laura's core and slide it in and out faster than she usually do. Laura's core was already dripping wet with arousal due to the pain and pleasure that she inflicted. She continued pumping her fingers inside Laura's mound, and at the same time sucking hard Laura's left nipple until the Princess' moans became louder, shorter and the hands on her hair tightened again.

"Carl, please…” Laura begged.

She heard Laura pleads desperately for the first time but she did not stopped from sucking greedily those little buds of nerves even though she knew it would be sore. She wanted to prolong Laura's agony and switched to the right nipple and sucked it greedily like the other, while squeezing the left breast. It earned another loud and desperate moan from Laura, when she bit and sucked the erected nipple and areola longer.

"Carl…” Laura moaned. "I'm yours…”
She heard Laura's desperate attempt of reassuring her. Even if she tried to shield her possessiveness and jealousy, it always shows in her actions; her love for Laura was too powerful to control.

"Say that again!" she demanded, her voice tainted with anger. She released her fingers from Laura's core and reached for Laura's left breast and rubbed the nipple in between her thumb and index finger, lubricating it with Laura's arousal before claiming it to her mouth again. She felt her shaft throbbing and tightening while she licked hard the essence of her wife on Laura's nipple. There's something in Laura's taste that drives her wild and intoxicated.

The combined taste of her wife and her obsession for Laura's breasts was enough to make her explode. But she controlled it.

The Princess gasped at the greedy tongue licking her nipples.

"I'm-I'm yours Carl," Laura cried in between panting and moaning desperately. "I'm yours…. and only yours."

As soon as she heard the familiar words of Laura, she released from devouring those erected nipples. Her breathing become ragged; she kneeled in front of Laura and her left hand straddled her wife while the other hand fumbled down at her braies to untie it, and freed her raging hardness. It's already thick to the fullest and every vein that runs through her shaft was pulsating; precum already oozes from the tip. But she did not put it inside Laura; her thoughts and emotions were in terrible chaos.

She was struggling between arousal, anger, jealousy and the thought of hurting Laura. She did not want to repeat the last time she had sex with Laura after getting jealous of Viktor. But at the same time there's this lust and rage that was struggling to be released inside her.

Suddenly, her train of confusion was interrupted when she felt Laura's hand on her pulsating shaft and guided it at the entrance of the mound. She got alert and cleared her head. "What the…" was her confused remark and met Laura's gaze.

"Do it Carl," Laura ordered. "Claim me the way you want me and don't hold anything back."

After that comment, she growled and held the base of her stiff raging member and entered Laura in one deep thrust and instantly earned a loud moan from Laura. Once she was inside her wife's tight hot mound, she felt this animalistic side of her waking up again, and put her hands tightly on both sides of Laura's hips and pulled Laura closer to her. She stretched her length fully inside her wife, filling Laura to the fullest. Then she pulled out only to drive her thick hardness again inside and thrusts faster. Laura whimpered under her, both hands holding the sheet for support, and took all every hard thrust. She drove faster and felt Laura's inner muscles tightened around her throbbing member; pulling her and burying her shaft deeper in that hot core; but she pulled out, only to slam inside Laura's again and heard her wife gasped for air. Laura clung to her neck, trembled and cried. Then she felt a gush of hot liquid drenched over her shaft. She did not give Laura a chance to recover from that strong orgasm and did not stop. She felt this spasm inside her growing wild; she pulled Laura closer and thrusts into her, faster, and heard Laura moaning again. It drove her wild and continued to drive her shaft long and hard, stretching her length fully in Laura's hot core.

She pulled out again but this time she lunged inside with one deep long hard thrust. She heard Laura shrieked, as she closed her eyes, threw back her head and growled with pride; her body stiffened as she emptied the contents of her balls and spilled all her seed inside Laura's hot mound. She felt her shaft bathed in their combined cum, and it made her ecstatic. She savored the sensation and took pride in being inside Laura.
When she opened her eyes, she noticed the arms that were clinging on her neck were gone. She was too jealous and obsessed of possessing Laura that she had forgotten to pleasure her wife gently. She worrily sought Laura's gaze and her brows furrowed when she saw her wife spent and those hazel eyes looking at her with slight fear. She pulled right away her shaft and cupped Laura's face gently with her two hands while kneeling in front of the Princess.

"Laura, I'm sorry I didn't mean to..." she was saying but she was hushed by Laura's index finger and she felt Laura's hand crawled into her nape and pulled her down for a tender kiss.

When they released from their kiss, she felt relieved when she saw Laura gave her a weak and yet genuine smile.

"You owe me a cuddle..." the Princess mumbled sweetly. "...you broody bad wild panther," Laura murmured like a child.

She chuckled at her wife's accusation but quickly felt guilty for her wild behavior. "I love you Cupcake and I'm sorry," she uttered softly and she claimed Laura's lips again. Then she saw the Princess' eyelids were getting heavy and found it captivating. Each day that passed or every time they get intimate there's always something in Laura that makes her fall in love more with her wife.

"I love you too, Carm," was the weak and yet sweet reply.

Her heart melts at the endearment as two round adorable sleepy hazel eyes gazed at her, while lazy hands caressed the tip of her short locks and nape. She missed hearing Laura call her that. She knew that she had probably frightened Laura a while ago even if the Princess wouldn't admit it. But hearing Laura calls her 'Carm' makes her warm, happy and reminds her of the unconditional love of her wife.

Then she remembered something...

"So tell me... did you run out of clean underwear again or you just want to make sure that I don't become grumpy and broody anymore?" she asked while looking down at the surprised and bashful little Cupcake in front of her.

Laura looked down and up again under those hooded eyelids, and displayed an adorable naughty grin before saying, in a sheepish voice, "Both."

She just smirked contently, knowing that Laura wants to 'pacify' her. She lied down and gently gathered the little Cupcake in her arms, and she reached out for the warm sheet and covered them. Laura snuggled beside her and the little Princess' head rests on her right shoulder; she put her arms protectively around her wife as she closed her eyes and contemplated of how she end up feeling all these overwhelming emotions.

But she couldn't find a way to calm down and she knew that she won't be able to sleep properly; not without asking first how Laura really felt.

"Laura, I'm sorry for being rough and I know that I hurt you instead of making you feel-" she was confessing but felt a warm hand cupped her cheek, and guided her to look to the side. She found Laura's eyes gazing at her with full of warmth; not the reaction that she was expecting. She furrowed her brows, as her guilt continued to haunt her.

"I told you I'm alright," Laura reassured.

She was not satisfied with the reply.
She hesitated for a moment if she will ask. "When… while I was inside you, what do you feel?" was her curious remark, and saw Laura's brows raised, and the Princess gave her a bashful smile.

"Carm, no matter how gentle or rough our love making is, I always feel the same thing," Laura uttered sincerely.

"And that is…" was her nervous worried reply.

"…That I love you and the sensation of you inside me, filling me with part of you, is the most beautiful moment of our love making," Laura expressed with fondness.

Confused that her roughness and gentleness sparks the same emotion from Laura;

"…But why?" she asked innocently and she felt the hand cupping her cheek tightened but gently.

"Because I know that it will bear the fruit of our love," Laura concluded and smiled lovingly.

And with that, she leaned gently at the palm of Laura's hand that was cupping her face and kissed it tenderly, before claiming her wife's lips.

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"What the…?" she mumbled as her sight caught the naked back of Laura. She furrowed her brows and rubbed the residue of sleep in her eyes to make sure that she was not imagining things. Once she comes to consciousness fully and realized that it was not a dream, she shoved the sheet that was covering her and crawled to the other end of the bed quietly like a cat and kneeled beside Laura.

"Cupcake, what in the world are you-"

"Shhh…"

She was about to ask but Laura's hand gently covered her mouth and motioned for her to hush, and closed the curtain for a second and faced her.

Annoyed that she was being hushed in the perimeter of her chamber, she glared at her wife and furrowed her brows. Laura quickly got the message and released the hand that was covering her mouth.

Slightly irritated, "What the hell?" she exclaimed in a hushed tone and received also a glare from Laura. But instead of reprimanding her further, Laura took her hand and brought her closer to the partition of the thick dark burgundy curtain that's covering her bed. They both peeped through the small split from the curtain and she finally saw what her very curious wife snooping into.

"I'm telling you, they're so having an affair…" Laura accused in hushed and yet hyper tone, eyes still focused like a hawk to the two gingers that was making out.

She silently watched her Valet kissed the Princess' Lady in Waiting at the corner of the large fireplace and smirked.

"Cupcake, you cannot call it an affair when those two aren't even committed to someone," She corrected, and noticed that her wife was fully concentrated on watching the two in the room. She rolled her eyes and thought that hiding behind her heavy draped bed was ridiculous and not so her.

"…And why are we hiding from them? I don't care if their having an affair or cheating with no one
in particular," was her impatient and irritated comment. She was about to make her presence known but was halted by a small hand and she saw Laura glaring at her, after closing the curtain.

"Shh… don't disturb them," Laura reprimanded. "Let's give them some privacy."

She raised her left eyebrows and snorted at the comment, "Give them privacy? Have you gone mad? Cupcake, those two don't even know the meaning of privacy." was her sarcastic retort. "This is my chamber I can-…" she was saying but Laura's hand drag her gently back to where she was kneeling.

"I'll-do-anything-you-want-if-you'll-stay-put-for-a-minute-or-two," was Laura's quick serious desperate retort.

She looked up and saw her wife's resolved face; the face that Laura always uses to her when her wife wants her to 'behave'. She smirked like the devil that had just sealed a pact and won a forsaken soul, "Anything?" she asked in her deepest and firmest voice with a hint of naughtiness.

She saw Laura just timidly nodded, and looked nervous, knowing that the Princess just sold her eternity to her. Her smirk widens and she 'behaved' beside her wife like an angel.

After a few minutes of peeping on the gingers, her wife finally closed the curtain when they saw Perry took LaFontaine's hand and quietly lead them out of the chamber. When Laura tried to move from her spot, she heard a whimper.

"Au,"

The Princess adjusted from kneeling and was about to crawl back to bed, but had to paused and sit for a second.

Worried, she moved beside Laura right away and put her arm around the Princess.

"Cupcake, what's wrong?"

"It's nothing," Laura claimed.

But her eyes followed the Princess' hand. Laura reached down to touch the pubic area, but removed right away, after realizing that she was watching. She heaved a sigh of guilt and furrowed her brows; she definitely had left a mark of her possessiveness and her guilt was slowly killing her again.

"Laura, I'm really sorry for being rough last night… I'm sorry that I can't control it," she expressed and she was surprised to receive a worried look from her Princess.

"Carm, how many times do I have to tell you, it's alright…" was Laura's genuine reply. "I know that you're not good with the feelings thing and expressing yourself or speaking out. That's why I understand that you had to act like that," the Princess explained. "And if I'm in your position and if I saw you flirting with women or with…" Laura hesitated for a while and took a deep breath. "… or with your father's mistress, I'll be angry too and would feel that way."

"But the thing is, even if I didn't see you, 'flirting' and just heard that you're talking to some men, I feel threatened right away," was her honest declaration and she felt Laura's hand cupped her left cheek.

"Carm, after I found out the truth and before marrying you, the Queen asked me if I'm still willing to marry her son, and my firm answer was: yes." Laura narrated, serious. "When I finalize our wedding plan, even if you hated me that time, I know that I'm going to marry not just the loving, caring, thoughtful and protective side of you," the Princess began to explain. "But I'm marrying also the
cold, reserved, stubborn, jealous, possessive, hot tempered, broody side of you. And these traits are the ones that make you ‘you’… and I accept and love all of them.”

After hearing those amazing words, she closed her eyes and gently kissed Laura on the lips. There were no words that can describe how happy and grateful she was.

After releasing from the kiss, she opened her eyes slowly and saw that amazing adorable smile of her Princess that causes her madness. Laura carefully removed the hand on her cheek and grinned.

"To make it short… I can't just marry the warm fuzzy hairy cuddly big cat; I need to marry also the giant broody wild panther." Laura babbled.

She chuckled upon hearing it, and was quick to comment, "I'm not hairy…"

Laura snorted and grinned.

"My sweet Prince, have you forgotten that your face was covered with beard the first time we met?" the Princess narrated elegantly.

Her eyes widened and recalled her naughtiness and desperation of driving away her wife. She contemplated if she was going to tell the truth to Laura or not; but had to discard the idea since she did not want Laura to find out her evil motive before they met.

"Ah yes, I almost forgot," she acknowledged quickly and stroked her chin like she still has her beard. "It's been a long time…" she was saying but suddenly caught her wife staring at her face, and before Laura's curiosity can sniff the truth, she averted Laura's stare and put her arm again on Laura's back and led the curious Cupcake on the other side of the bed. "Come on, try to lie down again. I'll ask LaFontaine for some salve," she said as her eyes caught the evidence of their rough sex on Laura's neck. "… and probably some weird tasting tea for your soreness too." She said as Laura dutifully moved slowly and lied back on the bed.

"Don't bother Laf, I'll just take a hot bath afterwards to relieve the soreness. They probably have lots of things in their mind, and their hands are full nowadays…” Laura suggested.

"Oh yes… they definitely have their hands full… full of your Lady in Waiting," was her sarcastic retort.

"Carm…"

"What? Didn't you see them? Their hands are practically all over Lady Ginger's butt," she quipped.

"Well, I think we should respect their privacy and wait for them to tell us," Laura suggested.

And then Laura took both the lapels of her sleeping tunic and gently tugged her down for a kiss.

"I want morning cuddles with my big wild cat."

The smile on her face can be compared to a happy cat that just been fondled at the back of its ear upon hearing it. But she got distracted when Laura's eyes widened.

"Perry is right!" was Laura's excited reaction. "You do look like a smitten kitten!"

The smile on her face disappeared; she rolled her eyes and displayed her bored and unimpressed expression.

"Cupcake, I think you're becoming obsessed of comparing me to a cat. Is this a way of telling me
that you want a kitten?" she asked, serious.

"Why would I want a cat when I have you," Laura retorted and giggled under the sheet.

"I'm doomed." She gave up and rolled her eyes once again, as Laura snuggled beside her and was adamant about her being a cat in her past life. She stretched her arm beside her and let Laura rest again on her right shoulder. Last night, she discovered that this was Laura's favorite spot, as she woke up this morning with a numbed aching shoulder and found the little Cupcake still snuggled on her shoulder and nuzzling on her neck. She did not complain and found it gratifying to make her wife feel secured and protected in her strong arms.

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That night after dinner, she thought of confronting her Valet.

"Is there something you want to tell me?" she asked looking straight to her Valet's eyes as they stood face to face while LaFontaine unbuttons her tunic.

But the Valet just furrowed their brows. "Why? Have I forgotten something that you need?"

"No, this is not regarding your job," she cleared out as she slid her arm one by one off from the tunic. "It's about what's going on in your life."

"I don't usually mixed my personal life with my work, and I promised Her Majesty that I have total control of my personal life and that it would not get in a way of serving and helping the Prince of Karnstein, and if you think that I lack something or your unsatisfied with my work performance, you're free to criticize and give a-"

"Whoa! Stop!" she put her hand on their mouth. "Don't give me a headache, I already have one," she commented after not having a chance to have some 'morning delights' from her wife this morning, due to Laura's soreness. "I just want to ask if you are seeing anyone lately."

"Oh." LaFontaine realized what it's all about and was quick to add… "No. I'm not seeing anyone," and turned around.

"Fine, try to deny it," she retorted while her Valet retrieved a sleeping tunic and a pair of braies from the large wooden wardrobe. "I don't know what you'll call it, but I saw you kissing Lady Ginger and it looks like things are heating up between the two of you."

"I am not discussing my personal life with you," LaFontaine claimed, acting cool and unaffected.

"Oh, so you get to intrude into my love life and disturb me every time I want to have sex or on the verge of doing it, but I ask you one simple question and you cannot give me a proper answer?" She retaliated, frustrated that they were denying it.

"It's included in my contract as your Valet, that there's no any reason or whatsoever that I'll trouble the Prince of Karnstein and their Majesties with regards to my personal life," LaFontaine explained firmly.

"Fine, the next time I caught you dimwits making out, I will not let Laura stop me from intruding," she claimed and suddenly got her Valet's full attention.

"Princess Laura saw us too?"

"Yes, but she forbid me to interrupt, and said to give you some privacy, which I don't think you two
"Well, I really don't know what you're talking about," LaFontaine finished and turned around to the direction of the bathroom.

"You're an amazing work of denial!" she exclaimed following her Valet.

"Please don't take your frustration out on me," LaFontaine remarked as they arrived inside the bathroom.

Confused, "What are you talking about?"

"I heard that Princess Laura does not feel well today and had to take a total bed rest, because somebody here had been behaving like a horny panther," LaFontaine retaliated.

"What?! Who told you that?!!" she asked, annoyed, as she recalled how Laura was not able to stand and move properly after they left her bed, that she needed to carry Laura to the Princess' chamber so that Perry could give Laura a warm bath to relieve the soreness and pain. But it did not work and Perry strongly suggested that Laura take a rest for the whole day, and sleep 'alone' tonight at the Princess' chamber.

"It does not matter who told me," her Valet returned confidently. "The most important thing now is that the Princess gets to rest properly in her chamber, while I make sure that the horny panther does not sneak in to the Princess' chamber tonight."

"I am so going to hang you one day," she retorted before hopping on the bathtub.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for all your comments and kudos :-P Hope you all enjoyed the long chapter because someone mentioned that the other update was short ;-P
Life Is Good

Chapter Summary

Her life is amazing, or so, that's what Laura thought as she and Carl grew more in love and intimate after they got back from Hollis Kingdom.

Chapter Notes

I know that you're all waiting for this. I don't know if you all prefer a long once or twice a month updates or a short three-four updates a month. I've been lacking inspiration lately and can't seem to finish at once an update like I use to do before; don't know why… maybe due to the weather and the season, or too much work, or a temporary writer's block, or I'm distracted of this new story on my mind that I want to write and other fics that I want to update. I don't know if there's a good reason why I should update this story regularly or not, so, feel free to enlighten me. I hope you'll all still bear with me. Thanks again for the support.

Laura

She was relieved to wake up not feeling groggy and tired this time. Slowly, she adjusted her sight to the flickering light from the fireplace and wrinkled her brows when she noticed something unusual around her: the lack of dainty soft silk curtains hanging around her four poster bed.

But then she smiled when she realized the reason it was replaced by a thicker and yet neutral tone of beige, instead of the old white silhouette satin ones. The thick curtains were tied loosely at the corners creating a soft feminine look, but when drawn, it conceals her entire bed without being seen from the other side.

Finally, she and Carl can have some privacy.

The first time she saw her bed, the thick burgundy drapes like the ones in the Prince's chamber caught her attention right away and she asked Perry to replace it and 'fix' her chamber according to her personal taste. But this time, she needs to make some small adjustments to make her chamber comfortably safe for her Prince.

She let out a satisfied sighed and a naughty grin formed in her mouth as she imagined how it will be to sleep with a naked Carl beside her on her bed. She remembered the Queen telling her that her bed would be the matrimonial bed and Carl shall come to her chamber anytime for the sole purpose of procreation and that she shall not refuse him, because it's her obligation: to produce an heir and for the Karnstein's to continue their reign in northern Styria.

During that time she felt this demand of producing an heir a heavy burden. But after spending time together at their kingdom, she and Carl had grown confident and intimate that she found herself always longing for his presence, his nearness, his touches and his kisses, and she can't get enough of him. The anxiety of having sex with him was now replaced by this ardent desire of devoting herself
fully to him, and she was now looking forward to giving him an heir to show how much she loves him. Every time they made love it thrills her knowing that Carl was now confident being intimate with her.

She knew that they were expected to still sleep in their respective chambers, but after many weeks of being used to sleeping with Carl, the only thing that was on her mind was snuggling with her broody big wild cat. She just cannot let him sleep alone in his chamber again after many days of not feeling his warm body next to hers. They had not talk about their sleeping situation yet and she definitely does not wish to follow the tradition of sleeping in separate chambers like the King and Queen.

And speaking of Carl…

After being deprived of being with her Prince for, god knows how long; she was now aching to see him. She does not know what ever in that special brewed tea that Perry kept on giving her, but she always feel groggy and everything was blurred, and she find herself sleeping the whole time. The last thing she remembered was Perry telling her that she needs to rest and sleep in her bed 'alone' and LaFontaine was there to support Perry's decision; they told her that she needs to get a full rest and recover from the 'ferocity of her and Carl's lovemaking'; she was embarrassed after hearing LaFontaine described their last 'deed'. Sometimes her Lady-in-Waiting can be strict and protective like a mother hen and she appreciates that she has Perry in her life.

A soft knock on the door tore her out of rumination; she looked to the direction of the door and wondered who it could be.

"Come in!" she said and the door opened wide.

Her heart skipped a beat and she found herself excitedly rising from the bed and sat upright, as she watched Carl stepped inside her chamber; the very sight of him delights her.

He walked towards her bed clothed in his thick black tunic, black trousers and black cape; her eyes caught right away the full bouquet of white, pink and yellow roses in his hand. The last time her Prince attempted to give her flowers was when Viktor visited her. She had guessed the flowers were Carl's 'morning after' gift for her after he claimed her virginity, but unfortunately, it ended up on the ground. And now she feels excited to receive a new bouquet from him. She admits that she wants to be pampered from time to time especially from her big wild Cat that refused to admit that he was a softy.

She noticed that he was wearing his black hunting boots and black leather gloves; his hair disheveled and he had these predatory seductive eyes that stared at her like she was his prey; she assumed that he went hunting with his father. He always looked ravishing, wild and dangerous after spending the day in the woods. She can't help but to be drawn to this erotic wild side of Carl, and found herself eliciting a low moan.

Suddenly the serious expression on his face changed …

…Maybe she had moaned a little bit louder than intended!

She felt embarrassed and tried to hide her arousal by closing her legs tightly and grinned sheepishly. Her eyes caught right away the naughty smirk on his face and she knew that he heard her moan. She felt like melting as he stared at her with those predatory seduction eyes. If looks can kill she would have been dead by now.

If only Carl knew how he can evoke such feelings and arousal to her, he probably would have not let her out of his chamber until they have tried every position in the forbidden book.
Carl reminded her of a real panther that was approaching its prey. He was awfully extra quiet and dangerously calm as he approached slowly the bed and it made her heart beat raced madly.

She tried to calm herself as he comes closer to her, but her libido was not cooperating.

Carl leaned on and was about to utter a word, and was on the verge of handing her the flowers; but the combination of the sweet fragrance of the roses, the remnants of the earthy musky scent the forest had left on Carl's body, and her longing to touch him drove her to madness. And she just found herself grabbing him by the neck and pulled him on top of her. She captured his lips and devoured it like a hungry beast that was not fed for days.

Although caught off guard, Carl did not disappoint her when she felt him awkwardly positioned himself on top of her and pinned her down on the bed. He began to ravage her neck and bosom with his hungry lips, before claiming her mouth again. She moaned as she felt his hand knead her left breast, as expected, while their tongues continued to duel.

"Hmm… Someone is happy to see me…"

"Carm…" she uttered. The desperation in her voice was enough to tell Carl what she wants, as she felt his leather gloved hand reached under her chemise, pulled it up until her breasts were fully exposed and ready for him.

"God, Cupcake, I missed you," Carl said in between deep breathes and captured quickly one of those erected nipples in his mouth.

The feeling of his smooth cold leather gloved hand over her warm sensitive skin had awoken all her senses, and she found herself getting wetter. She whimpered and ran her hands on Carl's hair and nape, as his hunger intensified and felt his teeth on her breasts. Now she knew that she was not the only one hankering for some 'touch'. Carl wants her as badly as she wants him and there was no way she will stop him from ravaging her, not even if he was still wearing his hunting clothes and boots on, which she knew will earn a scowl and repulse from Perry for letting someone lay on her bed with their dirty boots and clothes on. But right now, her Lady in Waiting's repulsion for dirt was the least of her worries; Carl on top of her in her bed, looking wild, dark and brutish was a sight to behold; it makes her insanely aroused and out of control. She will go mad if he did not touch her; she just wants him to claim her there and there.

Still feasting on her breasts, she reached for his face and brought it to hers. She saw the confusion in his eyes, after she interrupted him from divulging on her breasts.

"I want you," she begged, her voice deep and thick with desire; she saw those dark orbs fully dilate, followed by a devilish smirk. She involuntarily bucked her hips wanting more body contact. But Carl shifted a bit and she groaned from the lack of body contact.

"Let me just remove my-" Carl was saying and was about to hop off the bed, but a hand stopped him.

"No! Don't remove your clothes or your boots," was her quick shameless remark, as Carl kneels in front of her; she feels helpless and excited as he towered her and caught site of the bulge on his trousers.

"But the sheets would get dirty and it's white and-" he reasoned.

"…To hell with those white sheets!" was her impatient remark.

Carl's smirk broadened and his eyes widened with desire.
And before Carl could utter a sarcastic comment, she eyed at his very visible erection, then looked up and gazed at him before licking her lips in the most sensual way she could muster. The act instantly earned a growl from him, and the next thing she saw were his hands fumbling for the string of his trousers. She reached for the strings too and tried desperately to help him untie it. But before they could free Carl's raging shaft out of his braies, and before her needs can be satiate, their ears caught the sound of a loud gasp followed by…

"…And the wild horny panther strikes back."

LaFontaine's voice snatched them both from the lust-filled haze. She fumbled for the sheet and covered her bosom, while Carl calmly dismounted her bed, glared at the direction of his Valet and stood beside the bed while making a show of retying his trousers in front of LaFontaine, obviously pissed off by the interruption; while Perry hides behind them, so as not to accidentally witness something indecent. She glanced at Carl's crotch and saw his very visible thick bulge; she prayed that he does not make any sarcastic and angry remark after being rudely interrupted. Perry was still standing behind LaFontaine and shielding her sight from anything 'unusual'.

When she saw him adjusted his long cape so as to hide his erection, she sighed with relief.

Once he was decent, Carl let out a low irritated growl while still glaring at LaFontaine after the Valet bowed to him.

"Please tell me you have a logical explanation for interrupting me, because if you don't have, I will-" Carl was saying but was stopped by Perry's surprised appearance in front of him.

"We apologized Your Highness for disturbing y-your… y-your…" Perry stuttered while bowing.

"…visitation," LaFontaine filled in and showed the tray they were carrying. "…we're here to give the Princess her tea, medicine and some soup too."

"Thank you Laf, I think it's not necessary anymore," she chimed in, not wanting Carl to worry. "I feel better now.

Carl's irritated expression softened and he lifted his 'not at all amused' look off his Valet and turned around, "Are you sure?"

She heard Carl's worried comment and he sat beside her on the bed. He scooped her closer to him and wrapped his right arm protectively around her lower back and held her tight, as if afraid to let her go. She put her left hand reassuringly on his thigh, and gazed at those worried eyes; she then reached up and caressed his left jawline and drew him closer to her.

"I wouldn’t drag you down to my bed if I'm not feeling better," she whispered and saw Carl blushed from her remarks and his gaze transformed into his signature seduction eyes. As expected, the hand on her waist tightened; she could feel his frustration through his possessive hold. She let out a frustrated sighed as she too felt this hunger hovering around them that needs to be satiated.

And before she could drag Carl down to bed again, the voice of her Lady in Waiting tore her out from eye sexing with Carl.

Totally forgotten, "Why are these scattered on the floor?" Perry asked and began to pick up the roses and put it on the available vase on the bedside table.

"Oh…Umm… it slipped from my hand," Carl said in a deep calm voice.

"Slipped from your hand, huh?" LaFontaine said, their voice thick with sarcasm, and walked to the
"How long have I been in bed?" she asked as she snuggled around the warmth protective arms of her Prince. While Carl quietly touched her long blonde natural locks with his free hand, whether he was still frustratingly aroused or plainly being possessive again, she finds it amusing to see him clingy.

"Well, you've been resting for more than a day now," Perry informed. "I think it would be better if you eat some dinner now, before you sleep, so that you'll have your energy back in time for tomorrow's banquet."

Confused "what banquet?" she asked and looked at Carl. After all those medicinal herbs and spices that Perry forced her to take, she can't remember what happened for the last two days, except for the reason why she was sentenced by Perry and LaFontaine to a total bed rest.

"Remember the last time you helped my parents entertained some important guests as potential trading partners?" Carl explained; his bored and indifferent expression shows that he was still against his wife engaging in this kind of stuffs. "...Well, my parents are doing it again and this time they invited some princes and princesses, in addition to the regular merchants, dukes and other noblemen. And instead of a small dinner feast, they planned on having a banquet."

"Well, that sounds great!" she remarked, but quickly toned down her excitement when she caught the lack of enthusiasm from her Prince, and suddenly felt worried for him.

Seeing that her Prince became quiet and broody…

"Umm… Princess, you have a bowl of soup waiting for you on the tray, don't let it get cold," Perry carefully interrupted. "LaFontaine and I have… umm… something very important to settle-"

Sensing the urgency from her Lady in Waiting's voice and Carl's sudden silence, she nodded to the two of them and smiled, "Thank you, I think I could manage, you two can take care whatever you need to take care. And thanks Laf." She added.

"You're welcome Princess," LaFontaine returned and they bowed their head in front of them.

"Goodnight Your Highnesses," Perry bowed to them.

And she dispatched her Lady in Waiting and LaFontaine with a nod and smile, while Carl remained silent and just nodded.

As soon as they hear the door shut, she cupped both Carl's cheeks and motioned for him to look at her.

"Hey, what's wrong?" was her worried question as she gazes at her broody Prince. "Are you still worried that I will have to talk and entertain some of male guests, because if you're not comfortable with it, I could always…?"

"No," was his laconic reply.

"Then what is it? What's bothering you?" she mumbled, trying to keep her voice low and gentle so as not to upset more the broody Cat.

"My mother informed me that she invited these people, not just to become potential trading partners, but she also told me that they can be a future political alliance once I become the king," Carl explained, furrowing his eyebrows. "And this time, she's expecting that I gain something from inviting these people and not to repeat the same mistake that I did with that ardent suitor of yours."

study table across the room to put the tray they were carrying.
"Well, I'm pretty sure you can handle them just fine, and I assume that the Berghausen are not on the guest list?" was her confident remark, and removed her hand from his face and instead held both his hands.

"No, and you have to be thankful or else I wouldn't let the bastard get out of here alive," was Carl's serious retort.

She chose not to comment on that and waited for Carl to resume instead.

"I don't know anything about these people. My mother did not give me a chance to prepare," was his worried reply. "She said that she wanted to test my patience and my ability to handle this group of potential alliance… she wants to see if I learned from my past mistake and…"

"Carl…" she called his attention and he focused his sight on her. "The last time you had this kind of responsibility in your hands, it was with Prince Viktor, and you never expected that he would be a…" she paused for a moment, uncertain how to call their first interaction.

"…douchelord, betrothed snatcher, wife-seducer, bloody bastard?"

"Carl!" she reprimanded lightly.

"Don't tell me to stop calling him those things," Carl retorted, his voice deeper and firmer. "Because he is all of the above, and don't you dare defend his inappropriate advances on you."

To make matter less complicated, she remained silent and realized that he was right; she did flirted with Viktor when they were just betrothed and the memory of discovering how temperamental, jealous and territorial her Prince was during that time would always be embedded in her mind.

But she could feel that there was something more that was bothering him, as she caught his hands rubbing his thighs. She remembered the time when she asked him when was the last time he had been out of the castle's walls, and his action was similar to what she sees now.

"Carl, I will always be by your side and will help you in everything you need…” she began carefully. "If… If you're worried about your angst," she suggested, knowing that he does not like to talk about his weakness.

"I haven't been with a lot of people around me lately, so I'm also worried that I might have a panic attack while…” Carl was saying.

But she silenced him with a reassuring kiss on the mouth.

"My Prince, everyone has faith in you, and I am confident that you'll close this deal and gain some alliance," was her encouraging words after kissing him. "And besides, you managed very well at our wedding banquet, so this is not new to you anymore."

"Cupcake there were just around thirty guests that time," Carl reasoned out. "… and most of them were the same people in the King's Court, your family, my parent's close friends and the King's advisers. They were practically the same old faces that I have seen since I became the crowned prince, so their presence does not bother me anymore."

"Well, I think you should try to get used to meeting new faces, because you'll meet a lot of them when you become the king," was her encouraging remark. And she received a groaned from him. Sensing that he was getting upset, she reached for his face and cupped his cheek gently and led his attention to her. "Carl, I think you're amazing and very dedicated in everything that you do. You're very responsible and I had always admired you for taking your duty seriously as the heir."
"As if I have a choice…" he retorted. "…Only child of a very strict perfectionist Queen, remember?"

She just gave him a smile. As much as she dislikes her mother-in-law's meddling in their marriage, she still respects the Queen.

"You may feel that you have a heavy burden on your shoulders, but I want you to know you're not alone anymore in doing that responsibility," she explained sincerely to him. "I am your wife and I am here to help and support you in everything that you do. We will fulfill all these obligations and responsibilities together. All I'm asking is to let me help you. You don't have to take the entire burden by yourself; you may be the future King of Karnstein, but for every great King-"

"…there's a great Queen behind him," Carl finished the sentence with full of enthusiasm.

She was surprised after he said it and she received a naughty curious wide grin. "Who told you that?"

"My King Father," Carl replied.

She grinned at the coincidence, "My Papa told me that too!"

"Well, I guess we both have great fathers that think alike," was his proud answer.

"I guess we do… and I think our fathers were both thinking that we match perfectly together while they were arranging our betrothment," was her amazed comment.

Carl sighed with relief, "And I'm glad they did. Because I wouldn't know what happiness and love is, if I haven't met you."

"Oh, listen to my broody big wild cat getting all softy and nostalgic," she teased and saw Carl's brows furrowed and his facial expression transformed from cheerful to broody.

"I am not a softy," he denied quickly and straightened his back.

He was about to rose from the bed but she caught his hand and stopped him from leaving the bed. "Hey, I'm just kidding," she apologized and her right hand reached to cup the most beautiful features on his face. "I have never felt so happy and in love in my life, until I married you. You make my life so beautiful," she uttered sincerely, as she saw his eyes softened, and he leaned on to her palm and put his hand over her hand that was cupping his jawline.

"You are my life, Laura," Carl returned with utmost sincerity. "… and let's not forget the obvious: my ball of sunshine and happiness. You make my life bearable even if I feel this heavy burden on my shoulders."

"Carm, I will always be here to share your burden and to make your life bearable," she reminded and saw him smiled.

"Thank you Cupcake," he whispered.

And she brought his lips on hers, closed her eyes and kissed him tenderly. When she released from the kiss and opened her eyes, Carl's eyes were still shut, as if still relishing the kiss. She giggled discreetly and her heart pounded at the beautiful and innocent sight in front of her. He looked like an adorable kitten, but she did not dare tell him, knowing that he will become a grumpy cat if she calls him an 'adorable kitten'.

When Carl opened his eyes, he rose from the bed gently. "I have to go," was his urgent comment.
She was suddenly confused and wrinkled her brows, "What do you mean you have to go?" was her
surprised and puzzled remark. She had been dying to spend the night with him, and expects him to
stay. She was growing frustrated and her patience was running out.

"I have to go and bath first before I join you here," Carl returned, a naughty smirk forming on his
mouth. "Don't think that I don't know what you're up to Cupcake."

"Huh?" was her another confused remark and slightly opened her mouth.

"I heard from LaFontaine that you asked Lady Ginger to put these pretty heavy drapes around your
bed, so that you can 'molest' me freely," was his sarcastic retort after checking out the new drapes
around the bed.

"What?! I didn't-" she knew that he was teasing her, but she suddenly felt ashamed of sounding like
a desperate pervert wife.

"Don't deny it, I know that you're so captivated by… what do you call me again?" Carl was
narrating enthusiastically… "Ah, yes… you're Greek god of love."

"You're so conceited!"

"Hey, I'm not the one who invented that term," he retaliated.

She pouted and crossed her arms. "Fine. I won't call you Greek god of love anymore."

"Fine." Carl retorted. "I'm going to take a bath now," he said and turned around a walked away to
the direction of the door.

She uncrossed her arms and she never expected that he would walk out from her like that. They were
just having a friendly banter but she did not know how it ended up the two of them becoming
annoymed at each other. She saw him about to open the door of the chamber and was planning on
calling him back, but she changed her mind and let Carl go after she realized that he did not give her
a last look to apologize. She was expecting that he will turn around to check on her, but he did not.

"Broody grumpy narcissistic mama's boy!" was her angry comment after Carl shut the door hard
behind him. She was suddenly fuming mad. Her ego was hurt. She was hoping that her Prince will
soothe and calm her and say sorry, but she forgot that Carl was not used to that and he could be
stubborn and superior from time to time. It was one of the things she had to accept being married to
an heir to the throne: most of them were superior in nature and narcissistic.

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After eating her very cold soup, and when Perry came back to pick up the tray and help her to
freshen up before returning to bed, she asked her Lady in Waiting to change the sheets, not because
of the dirt but because she could smell a hint of Carl's scent on her pillows and she was too irritated
to be reminded of him.

It's more than two hours had passed since Perry left her, and now she found herself staring blankly at
the heavy drapes around her four poster bed. She was still irritated at how Carl left her that she asked
Perry to draw all the curtains around the bed to cover her. She felt sulking tonight and she does not
want Perry to ask what's wrong, and she was not in the mood to talk.

She had been attempting to sleep for a while but it seemed like she was too angry to catch any sleep.
She closed her eyes one more time and tried to take some breathing exercise, and her nerves seemed to calm.

Once finished, she lied on her side and embraced her yellow pillow. She was thankful that LaFontaine returned her 'security' pillow and now she can snuggle with it to make her feel better.

Snuggling with her yellow pillow had proved to be the best remedy for sleeplessness, as she now found herself slowly dozing off.

She was already on the verge of falling asleep, and thought that she was dreaming when she felt something under her sheet and the next thing she knew, an arm wrapped gently around her waist and she felt a warm body spooning her. Suddenly all her nerves had awoken and the contact of someone's body against hers sent her into frenzy when she recognized her Prince's scent.

"I'm sorry Cupcake,"

She smiled as she heard the soft deep raspy voice of Carl. She turned around to face him quickly, and found herself smiling wide at the site of her beautiful Prince.

"I thought you're not coming," she mumbled like a child and pouted her lips.

"Well, I tried sleeping on my bed," Carl stated. "But the memory of the little ball of sunshine pouting her lips kept me awake."

She giggled at his explanation and her right hand reached for the back of his neck and pulled him gently for a kiss.

"...Me too. I can't sleep without my big wild cat beside me," she admitted after releasing from the kiss and saw the satisfied smile on his face. Then her eyes caught the white long sleeves sleeping tunic of Carl; she wrinkled her brows, not satisfied, she pulled down the sheet and saw that his wearing his braies too.

Carl furrowed his brows, "What? Do you prefer me in my stinky dirty hunting clothes?"

"No. I prefer a naked you," she quipped and saw him blushed even in the dimness.

"So demanding..." Carl returned his voice rasier. He shifted and began to untie his braies and removed it before rising and sat cross legged on the bed. "Would you like to take off my tunic?" he asked.

She heard an offer she will never refuse; hearing Carl's deep silky salacious voice always arouse her and was enough to make her wet.

She found herself nodding, and lose her ability to speak as those dark orbs stared at her with full of desire. She rose, kneeled and sat on the bed and faced him without releasing their eye contact. Slowly, she reached for the hem of his tunic and gently eased it from his head. She unconsciously drew a deep breath as the beautiful sight of Carl's small perky breasts greeted her sight. Her fingers caressed his neck right away and then down to his chest and the side of his breasts, teasing him as she avoid touching his breasts and nipples, she thought of playing with them first. She saw him breath heavily and closed his eyes, relishing the soft torturous touch on his bosom. She purposely passed her fingers lightly on his erected nipples and earned a low groan from him.

"Cupcake, stop teasing me," he whined and opened his eyes.

She gave him a naughty smirk and since she got his attention, she removed her chemise and saw the
satisfied look on his face.

"Hmm… that's better," Carl remarked in a deep tone, his eyes feasting at the beautiful sight in front of him.

She caught him looked down her groin and he smirked naughtily after discovering that she was not wearing any underwear. "I told you, I don't like wearing underwear while sleeping," she said and made him flushed again.

"And I don't oppose to that," he retorted, and raised his left eyebrow. "Shall we take advantage of this moment and enjoy our privacy behind these thick elegant curtains around your bed?"

"…And while everybody is sleeping and no one to interrupt us?" she added and earned a low chuckle from Carl.

"I swear Cupcake, if one of those gingers tries to-" Carl was saying.

But she cannot wait any longer; she silenced him with her hungry lips and fondled his arm with her left hand while her right hand run on his hair, down to his nape; her fingers caressed his collar bone and neck, and this time she decided to go through it and cupped Carl's left breast and fondled it before pinching his nipple, while she nipped at the sensitive area under his earlobe.

"Cupcake…" Carl groaned.

She continued her sweet ministration on his neck and nipped on his jaw line while her left hand shifted from his arm to his right breast and she fondled both Carl's breasts and pinched his erected nipples at the same time.

This time she heard him growled and she felt his hands on her buttocks and drew her closer to him. She lost her contact with his breasts and felt him growing impatient as he pulled her closer to him and straddled her. She complied and put her legs on his sides, and sat on his lap; she was taken aback for a moment when she looked down in between his legs and saw Carl's shaft already standing stiff, oozing with precum, and ready for her. She looked up and saw his eyes fully dilated and waiting anxiously for her to do the next move. The aching and arousal on his eyes was too obvious to ignore; she took a deep breath, held his gaze and carefully sinks on his fully erected member while she wrapped her arms around him, and felt his hands support her back. She moaned at the sensation of being filled fully, as she remained still and adjusted to his thickness.

"Are you alright?" Carl whispered his voice hoarse and gentle.

She gave him a bashful smile and nodded instead. Suddenly she felt vulnerable and slightly shy. She had never been this physically close with Carl while he's inside her. They usually close their eyes when making love. And their love making lately were mostly quick, sometimes frantic and other times rough and wild, due to their raging hormones and uncontrolled libidos. But this position gives them a chance to face each other closely and watch each other's facial expressions while they make love. It was very intimate and at the same time erotic, she thought.

It did not take long for him to find his favorite part of her body; she cried with delight as she felt his hot mouth and his tongue swirled around her nipple before releasing it. She looked down and watched Carl burrowed his face on her bosom, relishing the warmth of it. It's his haven and she will not deprive her Prince of this moment, where he takes his time to kiss, nip, lick her breasts and suck her nipples. She could feel his warm breath against her chest as she wrapped protectively her arms around him and brought his face closer to her bosom. She caressed his hair while he let him worship her breasts.
Suddenly she felt him growing hungry and started suckling her nipples harder. Her hips 
unconsciously bucked up and down to his hardness and she found herself rocking slowly her hips 
back and forth on his stiff shaft. The hands on her hips tightened as she felt Carl's breathing becomes 
ragged and released his mouth from those erected nipples. They continued this slow and yet sensual 
pace of rocking back and forth, while kissing. Her hands remained fondling his hair; when the need 
for air aroused, she released from the kiss and she felt Carl growing thicker and throbbing inside her. 

"Cupcake, look at me," he begged in between ragged breaths, his voice deeper and raspier. 

She opened her eyes and smiled when she found Carl gazing at her with full of love and desire, 
while she remained rocking her hips slowly and felt her core contracting. She held his gaze, exposing 
to him everything that she feels for him, showing her vulnerable side as she trembled and surrendered 
herself fully to him, and let out a cry of pleasure before releasing gush of hot liquid over his member. 
It did not take long for Carl to climax; she squeezed his throbbing thickness deeper inside her and 
made sure that he locked eyes with her as he shoots his loads inside her. It felt intense as she held 
Carl tight and waited for him to empty his cum inside her, as he revealed to her his vulnerable side 
too. Once finished, she gave Carl a quick kiss on the lips instead of a longer and passionate one, 
noticing that he had not recovered yet from his orgasm. She put her left hand on his nape, while he 
nuzzled on the crook of her neck, and then put her right hand around his back and held him closer, 
giving Carl all her warmth and love, while she felt his hands wrapped around her back. 

They both held each other tight and enjoyed this tender moment, as Carl remained sheathed inside 
her, and she revel in the intimacy of the aftermath of their love making. 

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After sneaking to the kitchen to help Perry a bit with the desserts, she rushed to her chamber with still 
her apron on, flour on her hair, chocolate on her cheeks, and sat straight to the bathtub for a quick 
bath, before Betty and Natalie transformed her into this elegant, beautiful and adorable Princess that 
she was. 

And now she found herself stressing and striding through the hall leading to the throne room as 
gracefully as she can. 

"How many very important guests did you say are coming today?" she asked Sarah Jane who was 
walking behind her, and was tasked by Perry to assist her to this important dinner since the Lady in 
Waiting was preoccupied with the desserts. 

"According to the guests list, the Duke of Bavaria and his wife are coming, the Prince and Princess 
of Silas are coming, the Lady Cornwell is coming, the Prince and Princess of -" Sarah Jane narrated but she cannot absorb anything in her mind right now. 

"Stop," she said and they both faced each other and paused. "I don't have time to think and 
remember all their names and titles, just tell me how many they are." 

"They're ten," Sarah Jane simply replied. "But I think you need to-" 

"No buts," she cut off the handmaiden at once. "I have no time to think, as long as I know how 
many guests are coming, and if you just stand behind me and help me remember their names while I 
welcome them, everything is going to be alright and as LaFontaine use to say: peachy!" she 
exclaimed in a high pitch and resumed striding towards the throne room, with a confused and 
frustrated Sarah Jane running behind her.
"But Princess, this is-"

Sarah Jane was desperately trying to tell something but they were both interrupted and had stop arguing when their eyes caught sight of the person that was walking towards them. For a moment she felt like someone put a spell on them, when she caught a glance of Sarah Jane ogling at the person that was approaching them. She turned her gaze too to that direction and joined her handmaiden friend from ogling.

And there he was, dressed in his finest purple tunic, black trousers and long cape, and wearing his crown.

With her sight fixated on him and her mouth slightly opened, she watched Carl walked majestically towards her, oozing with charm and grandeur.

From the combined feminine elegance of the softness of his exquisite features and alabaster like skin, refined manners, and to the masculine confidence and appearance that he possessed, and his undeniably pronounced jaw line, and perfectly clean cut dark hair that was now neatly brushed up under his crown, were all enough to cause an explosion down her nether region. She took a deep breath as his dark melancholic eyes held her gaze. He looked intimidating and cold like the Queen when he was serious. But she always knew how to break that icy cold aura of his. She displayed her signature adorable smile that Carl demanded exclusively for him. And before he comes closer to her, a naughty smirk was already on his face.

"Good evening ladies," Carl said and nodded to Sarah Jane after the handmaiden bowed, before shifting his gaze in front of him. "You looked beautiful," he whispered in his deep raspy voice.

She shivered immediately after he took her hand and bowed to kiss the back of it. She sighed and suppressed her excitement. "Thank you Your Highness, you looked very handsome and charming yourself," she teased in her alluring voice, smiled wide and hooked her hand on his arm. Sarah Jane followed behind keeping a good distance as Carl escorted her.

"I know," was his usual conceited reply.

*He is so full of himself!*

She thought and was expecting that comment. He knew that she was screaming with excitement every time she sees him looking elegant and majestic.

She glanced at him and caught that familiar naughty smirk. Then she felt him leaned gracefully on her ear and whispered:

"And I'm also getting hard because of you,"

Her eyes widened and darted on his crotch as he discreetly lifted his long cape, and she saw the bulge on his trousers. Her confident smile disappeared and she looked up and caught him smirking like the devil. She suddenly felt warm. She glanced back and was thankful that Sarah Jane was treading behind with eyes on the list of guests. Is this a payback from the naughtiness that she had done to him before? She wondered and began to panic. This was her first official assignment together with Carl; she wanted to make a good impression not just to their guests, but to show the Queen and the King she could handle this responsibility without any problem.

"What's the matter Cupcake? You looked like you've seen a beast?"

Carl teased as they sauntered to the hallway, casually glancing at her. She will definitely not give him the pleasure of watching her lose her composure. She will act as the perfect princess and control her
emotions.

When her eyes noticed a familiar dark corner near the tea room her 'I'm in control, I hate to lose' attitude kicked in; it's time to take matters in her own hands.

She turned around and released from Carl's arm and faced a startled Sarah Jane.

"I forgot my handkerchief, kindly fetch one for me and just meet me at the throne room when you have it," she ordered and the handmaiden quickly nodded and bowed to them before turning around and strode back to the direction of the grand stair case.

As soon as Sarah Jane disappeared from their sight, "Why didn't you tell me, I have a hand-" Carl was telling but she took his hand and led him to the dark corner that she spotted. She didn't speak until she have him blocked in that dark corner and she saw the naughty grin on his face as he realized what's on her mind. She threw her arms around his neck and kissed him wantonly.

Carl's breathing became ragged as she probed impatiently her tongue on his mouth, he welcomed it with a growl and his hands roamed on the sides of her breasts.

"Oh Cupcake, I like it when you're provoked," he whispered in a classic 'sarcastic Carl' way, in between kisses.

She could feel him smirking behind her ear; she deepened the kiss and sucked his tongue hard and earned another groan from him, and felt Carl's hands on her buttocks and pulled her closer to his hardness. She moaned once it made contact with her throbbing core, and felt her underwear getting moist. But she did not want to ruin her dress. She quickly released from the kiss and she caught the surprised look on his face. She fumbled for the tie of his trousers and put her right hand inside Carl's braies and freed his erection.

She gasped at the sight of his thick and large member, until now it still made her jump and temporarily shocked; she stared blankly at it wondering what she'll do next.

"Are you just going to stare at it or you'll give me a hand to tame this angry panther?" was Carl's sarcastic remark.

She took a deep breath, clear her head and shot him daggers, slightly annoyed at his comment.

She got less than ten minutes to tame his raging hardness. She had given him a hand job before and he loved it and she saw the outcome on her very wet hand. Regaining her confidence, she started to pump his now stiff member up and down, and watched the head come out fully when she draws down his foreskin; she could see Carl's juice already forming at the tip and she hoped that he will not spurt so much like the last time.

"Cupcake…"

She heard his weak cry and felt his hand caressing the back of her neck while they both watched his thick and rigid penis stand upright and tightened in the mercy of her hands. She could tell that he was enjoying her touch so much by his low groan and heavy lidded eyes. She squeezed his member lightly and earned a growl from him; she loved hearing him growl. She placed her other hand on top of the other and moved both hands up and down simultaneously. Carl growled louder, and she smirked as she discovered another technique that he liked.

She was afraid that Carl will just explode as he continued to growl in pleasure; they need to learn to communicate with each other.

"Tell me if you're coming," she mentioned while her hands constantly pumped up and down simultaneously on his now slippery wet hard shaft. She looked at the long thick vein that runs
through the side of his shaft and it always aroused her to see it throbbing when he's hard and tight.

Suddenly, she gasped as she felt his hand groped her left breast through the smooth velvet gown of hers. She moaned; leaned to his side and licked the inside of his earlobe gently by the tip of her tongue. Carl growled again at the contact and felt his hand tightened on her breast.

"Cupcake, I'm… I'm about to…” Carl was saying.

She distanced herself a bit so as to avoid Carl's cum messing her gown; she could feel her underwear getting moistier as she watched the sight of Carl helpless and under her control.

She moved to his side, "Come for me my Prince," she whispered seductively. And before she could say another word, Carl began to shake and growled, and felt him squeezed her breast tighter; while spilling his hot liquid all over her hands and spurt some in the air. She knew that it was going to happen, and was thankful that he managed to warn her.

Once he was empty, and had recovered from his orgasm, he quickly took off his handkerchief from his pocket and cleaned her hands first.

"Sorry for the mess Cupcake," was his apologetic remark while drying his own cum.

She smiled and found him considerate as he continued to wipe her hands till it was dry. She giggled and kissed him on the lips for a moment to stop him from stressed wiping his mess on her.

"You're so cute…” she said after releasing from the kiss and saw him furrowed his brows, and stopped what he was doing.

"What did you say?" he asked, confused.

"I said you're so cute," she repeated and smiled wide at him, still amused.

This time he glared at her, as if he was insulted. She knew that he misunderstood.

"You just saw my fully erect penis and you're calling it cute?"

She cupped his left cheek to pacify him and kissed him on the lips slowly, before saying, "I mean you're cute and thoughtful for wiping your 'juice' and making it sure that I'm clean," she clarified and received a confident smirk from him. "And yes… you're big cock still scares me." She whispered and used the word 'cock' to make it sound profane and to boost his ego.

And then she felt his lips on hers again.

"I think you made me harder again after that comment," he whispered, his voice laced with naughtiness.

She stepped back a good distance and saw his shaft still standing upright. She glared at him and saw that devilish smirk. "Carl Philipp Marcus, you're insatiable!" she reprimanded and put her hands on her hips. "Please clean yourself and put back your… your wild panther inside your braies and keep it under control until the banquet is over!" was her hyper babble retort.

Carl immediately wiped his still rigid shaft and tried to hide his erection inside his braies, but it was still hard and standing upright, instead, he let it stand and carefully hide it behind the waist line of his braies before carefully tying his trousers.

"Everything is under control my Princess," was his proud retort and offered his arm to escort her.
She rolled her eyes and hooked her hand to his arm. And right on time, they met Sarah Jane along the way.

"Oh, here you go Princess," Sarah Jane offered the white handkerchief as soon as they met.

"Kindly give it to Carl," she ordered a confused Sarah Jane and offered the handkerchief that was on Sarah Jane's hands to the Prince. "He needs it more than I do."

Carl just took it without complain and thanked the handmaiden before tucking it in on his other pocket.

*****

When they arrived by the side entrance of the throne room, there were already a dozen of familiar faces that she saw mingling with one another. These people were also the most trusted advisers and member of the King's Court.

"Are you ready?" she asked Carl.

"Let's do this Cupcake," Carl returned confidently and took a deep breath.

It was their first official assignment as the newly crowned Prince and Princess of Karnstein, and she was looking forward to meet these future and potential alliance and trading partners. She will do her best to help Carl accomplish the Queen's order and show her mother-in-law that she and Carl can be trusted with these responsibilities. They were about to take their place by the entrance of the throne room to welcome the guests. The guards had already opened the door after the King's order and they saw some guests already coming. But the sight of the Valet anxiously approaching them caught their attention.

LaFontaine stood calmly in front and bowed to them.

"Her Majesty requests the Prince to give his respect to the Archbishop first, since he needs to bless you for good luck and spiritual guidance for this important event," the Valet explained monotonously.

She caught Carl rolling his eyes and let out a discreet irritated sigh. The Queen certainly wants to make sure that her son was in his best behavior and good mental state.

"I'm sorry Cupcake, but I need to give my respect to the Archbishop, you know that he won't accept no for an answer, and my Queen Mother asked him to do it," Carl elaborated.

Knowing that the old man had been a part of his life ever since he was young, and always wanted to give his blessing to him, she gave him a reassuring smile and nodded.

"It's alright, don't worry about me, I could handle the welcoming of the guests," was her confident reply, and she reached for Carl's cheek, cupped it gently and gave him a passionate kiss, before he could leave and protest. She loves putting Carl under her spell, and when she released gently from the kiss, she caught him slowly opening his eyes, as if captivated by a spell. "Go now." She naughtily sent him away and received a grimace from him. She giggled discreetly as she watched him go frustrated.

She took a deep breath and tried to compose herself before welcoming the first guests the herald had already announced, and the name she was unable to grasp; because she was too psyched from that sensual kiss with her Prince.
Life was certainly perfect she thought, knowing that she had found her soulmate and Carl was the reason why her life was so wonderful; why she was happy. Nothing can ruin this feeling that she has now, and she was glad to have found real love…

But when she turned around to welcome their first guests, the confident smile on her face vanished.

She almost lost her balance and fumbled discreetly on her side as she reached for Sarah Jane’s arm for support and found herself losing her confidence and feeling vulnerable.

Sarah Jane was quick to hold and support her as the handmaiden saw the reason of her sudden disorientation and discomposure.

TBC
Laura’s heart would be put into test, as she came face to face with her first love. Does her love for Carl enough to withstand her love for Danny? Sometimes she wonders why fate and destiny was mocking her.

All I can say is… buckle up Creampuffs!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Laura

Danny.

Her heart raced.

Just mentioning Danny's name made her heart throbbed fiercely.

She froze as her eyes held Danny's stare, and everything around her ceased to exist as she found herself utterly drawn at those wistful blue orbs. The moment left her daze. It took her back to the day she and Danny first met: her 16th name day. She was captured by Danny's beauty instantly and she knew right from that moment that she really likes girls. And now she found herself still attracted and excited as she gazed at the face that she had loved and adored, and was surprised at the surge of emotions inside her.

It felt familiar.

It felt exhilarating.

It felt warm.

It felt wonderful.

It was captivating.

It was love at first sight…

She never thought that she will feel this way again. These feelings that have been long bottled up; feelings she thought had died out when she learned that Danny had to break their relationship due to the latter's betrothment. But she was shocked when these emotions surprisingly and persistently resurfaced… Was she still in love with Danny? Or was she just disoriented to see again her first love after all these years? Whether it was just disorientation or her love for Danny has never died, Danny’s blue eyes and red hair unsurprisingly still captivated her, as she found herself still admiring them. It never ceased to capture her attention and excite her body.
Danny was her ideal partner; the image of her perfect love; the woman of her dream; the life she yearned for.

She fondly recalled the times she shared with Danny. She was the happiest princess in southern Styria when Danny kissed her hand for the first time and proclaimed her attraction to her. Everything around her was vibrant when she found the love she wished for. Danny made her life brighter and promising.

But when destiny interfered and as their journey and duty as princesses began, she had forgotten all these feelings, and the pain of a lost love. Years have passed and she thought that she was over it; she thought that she had totally overcome the heartache and the pain of loving a dream. But today she was torturously reminded that she might not be over it yet.

She cannot deny it… she missed her.

And before she could drown into these waves of emotions that were slowly swallowing her, Sarah Jane's voice brought her back to reality.

"Princess," the handmaiden whispered to her ear. "…Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Straka."

She cleared her head and stared at them. They both towered her and looked attractive together. A pang of jealousy hit her. Then she gave Danny a questioning look; her thoughts in terrible turmoil.

"Princess Laura, it's a pleasure to see you again," Prince Theodore said.

She forcefully tore her eyes off from Danny and shifted her focused at the Prince of Straka. She gathered her composure and forced a smile, while Danny remained silent and stared at her.

"Your Highness…"

Sarah Jane called her and she glanced at her handmaiden.

"Prince Theodore of Straka together with his wife, Princess Danielle of Straka," Sarah Jane repeated.

She took a deep breath and gathered all her strength as she caught Sarah Jane's glare, and motioned for her to look at the pair in front of them again.

She managed to come back to reality. "Prince Theodore, It's a pleasure to see you and the Princess of Straka." She said, her voice controlled and her posture stiff.

"Allow me to personally introduce my wife, Princess Danielle," the Prince of Straka uttered and presented his wife beside him. "Danielle, are you alright?"

"Umm… yes," Danny replied and looked at the Prince of Straka. "Actually, Princess Laura and I had already met and had been acquaintances for a brief moment."

Theodore gave them a puzzled look. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because it's long time ago," Danny returned.

She saw the sadness in Danny's eyes and she was reminded of the day that she learned that Danny was betrothed to someone already.

"Prince Theodore, I am sure you and Princess Danielle are thirsty, why don't you follow the usher and he would lead both of you to the grand hall for some welcome drinks." She remarked and was
thankful that her very possessive and jealous Prince was not there to witness this encounter between her and Danny.

After they left, she sighed and began to panic. She looked anxiously at Sarah Jane while the next guest has not arrived yet.

"Princess, what can I do for you?" was Sarah Jane's instant remark.

"Can you please get me a drink?" she asked, and felt suddenly choking. The handmaiden nodded and ran at once to fetch it. She was now beginning to worry how she will react around Danny, and how she will hide her anxiety to Carl.

The castle invited only ten potential partners, she was now berating herself for not listening to Sarah Jane when her handmaiden was discussing the guest list earlier.

*****

With almost twenty guests dining and sitting by the long table, it was impossibly hard to talk to all of them. She was thankful that she and Danny were seated on opposite ends of the table on the same side, or else she would have lost her composure. She distracted herself by looking at her handsome Prince all the time, and by chatting with the guests across her, which Carl politely always interrupts when the men became extra chatty and enthusiastic.

Carl watched her like a hawk every time she was engaging in a conversation with a man. Thankfully, he was behaved and lets her chat with others as long as she remained reserved and not smiling too often, which she needs to get used to it. The presence of the Queen and the King surely helped for Carl to control his temper and jealousy.

After finishing her Apple strudel, and when she saw that everybody seemed to be engaged into conversation including Carl, and since she had no one to talk to, she took this moment to get some fresh air. She had been talking with most of them during main course and it looks like Carl was now confident taking over from her to discuss about trading.

Avoiding any eye contact with the people around the table, she gracefully rose from her chair and left the table.

When she knew that she was about to pass behind where Danny sits, she averted her sight and walked straight ahead to the door, not giving anyone a chance to notice her departure. She felt like suffocating and she just have to get out from the room; away from Carl's watchful eyes; away from those old men who were beginning to get drunk and extra chatty; and away from the maddening presence of her ex-lover. She cannot deny that Danny's presence was making her uncomfortable. And she was afraid that Carl might suspect something from the way she was behaving.

It was a beautiful warm night. Once the fresh air touched her face, she felt relieved and calmed. She walked towards the Willow tree and sat on the big stone under it.

She remained sitting there in silence, and cannot help but to reminisce the times she shared with Danny. It was one of the most beautiful moments of her life. She took a chance to love Danny and she did not regret it. She did not regret having Danny in her life, because the Princess of Lawrence showed her what she truly was. Loving Danny was so easy; they became close right away. It was an attraction and love right away.

She closed her eyes and felt a tear dropped, at the thought of her first love and first heartache. Danny was her first love and would always have a special place in her heart.
She sniffed and tried to suppress a cry, as she felt this lump forming in her throat; she hated that she was very emotional right now. It felt like all of her feelings towards Danny were unearthed and it kept flowing out of her heart right now.

"Laura?"

She brushed off the tear on her cheek and composed herself when she heard a voice called her. When she looked up, she was surprised to see Danny standing in front of her. This scene happened before, she thought.

"What are you doing here?" she asked with a slight panic in her voice. She hated that there was one person who could make her vulnerable at once.

"I want to talk to you. Alone."

Was Danny's serious reply, standing a decent meter away from her; and still looking very attractive and beautiful, with those red hair tucked neatly under a tiara.

She does not know how to answer that, so instead, she changed the topic.

"You and Prince Theodore both look attractive and complemented each other."

"You and Prince Carl looked perfect…"

Danny's remark made her speechless.

"T-thanks," she stuttered and suddenly found herself fidgeting.

"May I?" Danny asked, referring to the empty space.

She just nodded and her heart throbbed hard as Danny sat beside her with only a few inches separating them. She focused her sight in front of her and tried to avoid those beautiful blue eyes that she loved to gaze.

"Do you remember the night on your 16th name day?" Danny spoke calmly. "You were bored during dinner and right after dancing with all the princes you sneaked out and went to the garden-"

"And you followed me and asked me what I'm doing outside," she said, finishing the sentence for Danny.

"Actually, you thought first that I was a servant," Danny corrected.

She smiled at her stupidity, "Right, and then when I saw that it was you, I asked why you're outside and then you teased me and told me that, you should be the one asking me that question."

"Yes, that's right." Danny replied and smiled genuinely. "So… what's your reason now?"

Then she realized that Danny's voice became serious and the question was aimed at her sudden absence at dinner. She switched her sight to the right and found Danny staring at her, waiting for a reply. She gazed at Danny unintentionally and cannot help but to be captured by those blue orbs. While Danny remained silent and gazed at her with the same intensity that she was doing.

But before anything could result to something offhand, she heard someone called her name.

"Laura?"
The sound of Carl's deep, cold and raspy voice made her stand up and awoke from that temporary spell.

"Yes!"

She replied in high pitch and found her Prince standing in front of them.

"I'm sorry to interrupt your 'star gazing' I didn't know you're with someone." Was the prince's sarcastic reply.

*Damn it!*

She cursed and she knew that Carl saw them gazing at each other. She was thankful that it was dark or else, he would have caught her blushing.

"No, I am actually with Princess Danielle," she motioned for Danny and calmly rose and curtsied in front of Carl, who was now standing a meter away from them.

"Good evening Prince Carl," Danny remarked.

"Dan- I mean, Princess Danielle is a special friend of mine and it's been so long since we saw each other, and thought that we could talk here and catch up with what's happening in our lives," she babbled badly and saw the calm and cold reaction on her Prince's face.

"How come you never mention her to me?" Carl asked with a hint of suspicion. "I know that your handmaidens are your only friends, but you never told me that you have a friend who is a Princess."

"Laura is a very private person and she doesn't tell everyone our friendship," Danny defended.

"And why is that, my dear wife?" Carl asked, curious. "Why don't you want the others to know that you're friends with Princess Danielle?"

Suddenly she began to worry. Danny's answer roused doubt rather than satisfaction. She does not know what Carl's aiming for but she needs to come up with a reason that will stop her Prince from prying.

"...Because I don't want to give an impression that I'm favoring Prince Gerhard when it comes to choosing a husband," she declared with full of confidence.

"My brother was one of Laura's suitors and good friend too." Danny concluded.

She saw Carl mellowed down but did not remove his stare away from Danny's. She was growing nervous at how her Prince glares at Danny. He never looks at any woman like that. But his giving Danny a look that says, "I don't like you".

She worried and hoped that Carl did not witness how she and Danny exchanged those longing gazes. But before she could panic Carl finally lifted his stare from Danny.

She was relieved when he focused his sight to her instead.

"The ball is going to start soon and I want my first dance with my wife," the Prince informed.

"We'll be right there, I just need to breathe some fresh air," she commented and hoped that he got the message to go ahead.

She was relieved when she saw him nodded calmly. But before he leaves he come close to her and
the next thing she knew she felt his right hand touched her neck and then kissed her hard, while his
left hand wrapped around her waist and pulled her too close to him until she felt his semi hard bulge
on her. She grew worried.

From her experience, Carl does not just gets hard when his aroused but also when his emotions
heightens. After all those rough and aggressive sex with him every time he was angry and feel
threatened, she now knew how Carl's body reacts when he was jealous and behaving like an
aggressive territorial cat.

She felt his kiss possessively claimed her mouth until she pulled away for air. Carl did not release his
hands on her waist and neck and stared at her as if reminding her to whom she belonged. His eyes
were untamed and intimidating. She became nervous at how intense and dangerous he looked like.

"I promise…" she uttered and cannot find the words to pacify him. "I'll follow you soon, my Prince."
After uttering those words, she felt his hands released her and then gave her an intense stare before
turning around and left them.

She sighed when she knew that Carl was already nowhere to be found.

"He was kinda intense," Danny commented. "Are you alright?"

She heard Danny's concerned remark and she knew that Danny had just witnessed the very
possessive and territorial side of the Prince of Karnstein.

"Yes, I'm alright," she said sheepishly and tried to hide her eyes from Danny's.

"Are you sure? Laura, he looked like he does not want anyone to talk or be near you," Danny
accused and sounded worried. "…Does he know?"

"No! Of course not!"

"Then why do I have the feeling that he was trying to send me a message of not to talk or look at
you," Danny retorted.

"What made you say that?" was her curious remark.

"Because while he was kissing you, he was glaring at me," Danny returned. "I swear Laura, there's
something dark at the way he looks at me."

"Danny, you're exaggerating," she replied, not wanting to accept those remarks from her former
lover. "Carl is very special. He is…" she fumbled for words and chose not to tell Danny that she
married a very possessive and jealous prince. "… Carl is like a cat; he doesn't want to share what he
has, and when he sees that you're a threat to him, he would mark his territory at once."

"So, am I?" Danny wondered.

She furrowed her brows and did not get what Danny meant and shrugged her shoulders.

…Totally oblivious "What?"

"…A threat to him?" Danny cleared the question.

She became speechless and tried to analyze the Prince's behavior a while ago. Carl was definitely
acting like a jealous lover. But she did not want to believe that since Carl never knew about Danny
and their relationship. She tried to brush off the idea.
"Danny, you're being paranoid," she replied and gave her ex an adorable smile. "I didn't realize that you still care for me and worries about me."

Then she saw Danny relaxed and smiled. She missed that smile. One thing she likes about Danny was how she smiles easily at her. Their love and relationship was easy and light, they rarely quarrel and Danny always wooed and soothed her.

"I'm sorry Laura, I know that I don't have the right anymore to protect you," Danny responded in an apologetic tone. "But it just comes out naturally, it's like whenever I see you, I want to protect you and take care of you."

She saw Danny blushed and she was glad to still hear her former lover declaring it to her. But she realized that she should stop it. She should not give her the wrong impression.

"Danny, you don't have to feel obligated to protect me anymore, because Carl is already doing a good job of protecting me."

"Yes, he is definitely protecting you up to the extent of showing everybody that you're his and that everybody should get their hands off you," Danny retaliated.

"What can I say? Carl is just really that territorial and possessive," she defended. "But he is the kindest person that I ever met."

After saying those words, she saw Danny nodded and accepted her words. "Alright, I believe you, if you say so. But promise me that if anything happens...if he ever hurt you-"

Danny was not even finished with the sentence, but she corrected her right away. "Carl is not going to hurt me. He never laid a finger on me."

"I'm glad to know," was Danny's unsatisfied response. "But I want you to know that, I am still here in case you need me. Don't forget about that. I am still your friend and I still care for you deeply."

She was overwhelmed at Danny's reply and felt happy to know that her ex-lover was still the same caring loving person like before. And she suddenly got curious.

"Thank you for always thinking about me... and here I am being selfish that I didn't even ask: how are you and Prince Theodore?" She remarked, trying hard to be casual and saw Danny averted her eyes.

"Theo and I are just fulfilling our duties, we are not that intimate," Danny revealed.

Her eyes widened upon hearing Danny's last comment. She suddenly found herself staring at those blue orbs; her heart pounded madly and her mind was in terrible turmoil again.

"Laura, can we talk afterwards?" Danny begged furrowing her brows.

She saw the longing and pain in those blue eyes; she knew that look...she did not hesitate for a moment. "Meet me at the tearoom after the feast." Was her quick nervous retort and was surprised at how her voice sounded desperate. And before she could do something that she would regret, the voice of Sarah Jane calling her name tore them both from their longing stares.

"Forgive me Your Highnesses," the handmaiden said after bowing. "But His Highness, Prince Carl is getting impatient and wants your presence at once at the grand ball."
She glanced at Danny and gave her ex-lover a worried look, "I have to go. I'll see you afterwards." Was all she could say and saw Danny nodded with a discreet smile.

*****

She arrived in time for the first dance and it looked like she and Carl would be the first couple to dance on the grand hall.

Standing at the middle of the hall, looking majestic and exquisitely handsome, with his right hand reaching out, as if commanding her to take it, and staring at her seriously with his melancholic eyes, she smiled and gracefully took the offered hand of her Prince. She was immediately under his spell when the music began, she felt his hand wrapped around her waist, and Carl whisked her gracefully to the center of the dance hall.

*****

When Carl told her that she was relieved of her duty and that she no longer need to be with him, as he and the King would take care of entertaining their guests, she interpret it as a way to tell her that he was not happy that these noblemen will be talking, smiling and might flirt with her. She took this chance also to tell Sarah Jane to escort Danny to the tearoom and that she would see her afterwards, when she got to say goodnight to all.

"Theodore and I are not intimate,"

That sentence kept on replying in her head in the entire duration of the night. She thought that she could manage to not be affected after Carl's appearance at the garden. But it turns out that Danny's presence was still making her disoriented.

Her heart throbbed fiercely as she approached the door of the tearoom and saw Sarah Jane standing outside by the door.

"Princess Danielle is already waiting for you inside," Sarah Jane informed at once. "Is there anything I could do for you Princess?"

"Nothing more, thanks Sarah Jane, you may go," she replied cordially and the handmaiden vowed to her before leaving.

When she walked in the tea room, she noticed immediately the fire shining brightly from the large fireplace across the room, even if the candelabras were not lit. She would have preferred to have more light, instead of the cozy fire, but it was too late to ask for Sarah Jane to do it. She closed the door behind to block the cold air from entering the room. Her eyes caught right away Danny rising from the sofa upon seeing her.

"Please take a seat," she said as she approached and sat beside her former lover, with only a foot separating them. She could feel Danny's mood changed and was now replaced with a serious, and if she was not mistaking, remorse expression.

"You don't know how happy I am to see you again," Danny uttered, not wasting a minute to express what she feels.

She smiled genuinely and felt warm. She admits that talking privately made them relax and calmer, compare to the moment they were talking at the garden.
"I'm happy to see you too, Dan," she mumbled and did not stop herself from calling Danny her pet name to her.

"Laura, I know that I hurt you so much," Danny began with a faltering voice. "… but I want you to know that I was more hurt knowing that I left you alone without explaining my sudden betrothment and cutting all communications with you."

"I've already forgiven you Danny," she returned, feeling the pain coming back on the day that she heard from Perry that Danny was getting married. "What more do you want?"

"I want you to listen to what I have to say," Danny replied.

She grunted, "Isn't it too late to explain now?" was her disappointed answer.

"I think you deserve to know the truth," Danny started. "You may know the origin of the story, but you did not know the reason behind the story."

She was about to interrupt but when she caught those melancholic blue eyes, begging for her attention, she did not spoke a word and nodded.

"I know that you hate me for leaving like that and for not writing and replying to your letters," Danny related with a hint of regret. "But my father threatened to kill someone you cared for, if I refused to marry Theo and if I tried to communicate or go to Hollis Kingdom again."

Suddenly she found herself panicking. Did the King of Lawrence discovered their relationship? She wrinkled her brows and stared at Danny. But Danny's explanation confuses her.

"What do you mean your father threatened to kill someone that I care for? Did he found out about-" she was telling and saw her former lover shook her head. She felt relieved. "Then why did he suddenly marry you off to Prince Theodore?"

"Because my father thought that I was having an illicit relationship with a commoner," Danny explained. "My father thought that I and Kirsch were together, since someone informed him that the reason why I always come with Gerhard to your kingdom, it's because I'm having an affair with a royal guard."

"But that's crazy!" was her upset remark. "We both know that you and Kirsch were like cats and dogs and the only reason that your brother was always visiting me was to talk and see Kirsch, and to make it look like he was courting me, and… wait a minute," she stopped from hyper babbling and realized something. "Did… did Gerhard and Kirsch…" she asked and sought Danny's gaze for the truth, and when Danny nodded, "Holy hufflepuff!" she was shocked and her mouth remained half opened.

"Yes, my brother was having a secret rendezvous with Kirsch, I didn't question nor meddled with his affair," the red-haired princess elaborated. "We're both gaining something from his pretending to visit and court you, so I didn't stop him. And besides, who am I to judge what he likes, when I myself was doing the same thing."

"Kirsch and Gerhard?!" she still cannot believe what she just heard. "I don't have anything against them, but I am upset because Kirsch did not tell me about this…"

"Please don't get angry at Kirsch," Danny begged. "I want to protect my brother and Kirsch, that's why I asked him not to tell you."

"But why did it end up with your father thinking that it was you and Kirsch instead?" was her
"Because Gerhard was planning on telling my father that he will abdicate the throne and would live instead, in a house at the forest with a commoner," Danny explained. "And I feel that he was about to tell his relationship with Kirsch and tried to warn him that he'll be punish, but he wouldn't listen to me. So I decided to sacrifice my relationship, in order to save my brother and Kirsch. Because Gerhard was too in love and blinded, that he doesn't care about discretion anymore."

Overcome with guilt, "Oh god, Danny, I didn't know... I didn't... I'm sorry that I was too selfish thinking only of myself," she returned, feeling ashamed at her selfishness and insensitiveness. "But how didn't I notice it?"

"Because I don't want you to worry, so I tried to hide it from you and asked Gerhard to be discreet around you," Danny explained.

She recalled during that time, her attention was mostly focused on Danny's and their relationship. Danny was always pampering her and shielding her from whatever negative things that may happen that would lead to hurting her, due to the uniqueness of their relationship.

And right now, she felt sorry for what Danny had to go through just to protect them all. It was a noble and brave thing to do. It's typical Danny! Then she was reminded what other traits that made her fell in love with Danny: her will to protect everyone that she loves. Danny was certainly a knight in shining armor and she was amazed at how she sacrificed her love and happiness just to save others. Overwhelmed at Danny's unselfishness and chivalry, she instinctively reached up and cupped Danny's cheeks with her two hands and claimed those thin lips to show her appreciation to her. She felt Danny hesitated for a moment, but eventually surrendered all her inhibitions as she kissed her passionately. For a moment, she got lost in this long overdue farewell and 'thank you' kiss, as the overwhelming sensation of kissing Danny again brought back sweet memories and old familiar feelings into surface. She was too oblivious at her surrounding but when a cold air passed inside and touched her skin, she suddenly woke up from this temporary enchantment and released from the kiss. And when she opened her eyes, she gasped when she caught sight of the image of someone standing by the door.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for all your encouraging feedbacks and for your continued support on this fic and for letting me know how you loved it. I guess there are a lot who would be disappointed if I discontinue this story, so I will try to (hopefully) update an average of three times a month. I realized also that this crazy fic is going to turn one year on the 18th of November :-( I didn't expect that it will last this long!
Chapter Summary

What Laura realized after kissing Danny.

Chapter Notes

First of all, I just want to let you all know that I understand all your doubts, frustrations and disappointments from the previous chapter. I have thought about it too, and I was having second thoughts of (not) writing the part where Laura kissed Danny, but then I realized that, it happens in real life and I think I can justify it that it can happen with Laura too. Danny came first in Laura's life, and whether we like it or not, there would always be a special place in Laura's heart for Danny. They had been together longer; they had a history. And there was no proper closure. I think Laura was prompted to do that because she was also curious, about how she feels for Danny.

Secondly, I want to thank you all for your patience and for taking this roller coaster ride of emotions with me and still sticking to this fic. Thanks for your love and support too. Today is officially the first year anniversary of this fic; never thought it would last this long. I'm always happy to read all of your feedbacks and comments at how you (dis) like this story and for all your kudos. It always makes me smile to read how this story makes your day. So, here's a little treat in a form of update. And let's hope that I could still entertain you with another year of crazy story telling :-D

Laura

Oh God!

Her heart raced. She felt like someone threw a bucket of cold water in her face and woke her up from this temporary madness. What the hell was she doing?! Then she darted her eyes on her former lover and wrinkled her brows while shaking her head, as it dawned on her that kissing Danny for the last time was a huge mistake.

"I'm sorry Danny…" was all she could utter as she rose at once at the sofa and left a bewildered Danny; never giving her first love a chance to speak.

She removed her shoes, grabbed the rosette trimmed hemline of her gown on both sides and pulled it up, before rushing out of the door. She ran through the hall desperately; not caring at the cold and rough stones that were scraping her feet. She felt her heart throbbing all the way to her hands, feet, toes and fingers; she was sure she was going to black out due to anxiety that she feels now.

She was furious at herself.

How can she let herself be carried away by her admiration for Danny? How can she let herself be caught in the moment? Danny was the past; she should put that in her mind and tell it to her heart!
She hated that she was so affectionate, warm and loving by nature that sometimes she forgets that she needs to distance herself to particular people and one of them was her ex-lover.

_Oh god, please!_

She deliriously mutters as she ran frantically through the hallways and back to the dining hall.

When she arrived at the entrance the royal guards were surprised by her hasty ‘unprincessly’ behavior but managed to open the door for her at once to let her in. Once she was inside, her eyes desperately searched among the crowds of people that were gathered in the table and some were now standing and talking in groups. She saw first the King, chatting with some men on the table while drinking and laughing boisterously. She grew worried when she cannot see the Queen and Carl among the crowd that were standing and chatting.

She scanned anxiously the group of men and women mingling across the hall and her heart almost stopped when she met the calm sharp icy stare of the Queen. For a moment, she was left frozen scare and she did not know if she will avert the Queen's eyes, or she will challenge it and stare back to show her mother-in-law that she was not hiding anything. But when she noticed a familiar shade of purple tunic beside the Queen she shifted her sight to the right and found Carl standing beside his mother, her heart throbbed fiercely as she held his stare and found him looking at her with the same calm sharp icy stare like his mother's. His glare was so intense that she felt her heart pounding like never before and she felt a knot of fear growing inside the pit of her stomach. She furrowed her brows and tried to compose herself as she feels this lump on her throat forming. Suddenly the air in the room seemed to be dwindling and it was getting hotter. Her lips were trembling. She was on the verge of panicking when she saw Carl turned his back on her.

"No no no…” she muttered desperately, still focusing her sight to Carl. She was about to take a step forward and walk towards them, but a firm hand held her tight and in place. She got irritated and glared at her left and tried to get lose from the person's hold and was about to reprimand whoever it was.

"Laura, come with me,” Perry ordered in a low but firm tone.

Perry glared at her like she was a child again that was about to be reprimanded, and she knew that her Lady-in-waiting was in one of her strict motherly modus. Then her eyes darted to the Valet that was standing behind Perry and caught LaFontaine's worried look. But she shook her head and stubbornly tried to get lose from Perry's firm hold.

"Perry I need to talk to…” she begged profoundly, and was already in tears but Perry did not let go, and the next thing she knew, her head felt foggy, and unsteady; the room was spinning and whirling. And then there was total darkness.

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When she opened her eyes, she was greeted by a throbbing pain in her head.

"Crap…” she groaned and closed her eyes again for a moment and inhaled deeply. When she opened her eyes again Perry was already standing beside her bed.

"Perry…” she let out a low groan as she adjusted her sight around her and to the light that was coming from the window.

"Good morning Laura, how are you feeling?” the Lady-in-waiting asked with full of worries and sat on the side of the bed.
She heard the serious voice of her Lady-in-waiting, and felt a hand on her forehead.

Perry sighed with relief.

She slowly rose and sat on her bed.

As soon as she was comfortably sitting with her back resting on the head board, Perry sat closer and held her hands. When her sight adjusted, she wrinkled her brows and narrowed her eyes as she saw the worried look on Perry's face.

"Princess Danielle told me what happened right after you stormed out of the tearoom," was Perry's calm remark.

Her eyes widened and her heart throbbed faster as she was reminded of her unfinished deed.

"Oh god! I need to talk to Carl," she was growing hysteric and was about to leave the bed, but Perry halted her. "Perry let me go, please; I need to tell him that I didn't mean to kiss Danny. I got carried away and I was tempted to kiss Danny, because I found out the truth why we broke up and how she protected Kirsch, me and her brother… and I temporarily lost my mind and was overwhelmed that I'm with Danny again that all I could think about was to kiss her!" she was hyper babbling and then sighed deeply as she resumed. "But it turns out I don't feel anything after I kissed her…" suddenly her voice faltered as she realized something. "I-I don't feel any longer the excitement of kissing her… I… I don't feel any butterflies in my stomach anymore while kissing her… it's like-

"Laura, you need to calm down," the Lady-in-waiting ordered.

"But Perry, what if Carl decides to dissolve our marriage?" she said, growing worried and desperate. "What if he detests me and tells me to leave his castle and never come back?" her voice becoming high pitch. "Perry I love him, I never thought I could say this, but the thought of losing Carl is like losing myself. Perry I have never felt this way before and I can honestly tell you that I love Carl more than he or anybody else could ever know. He is my life!" she claimed nearly choking before bursting out in frustration and she bawled like never before into Perry's arms.

"Shhh… don't worry," Perry returned consolingly. "I'm sure Prince Carl will come to his senses and will forgive you. You just have to be honest to him."

"But what if he was disgusted because I kissed and loved a woman before him?" was her muffled worried reply.

"Princess, if he really loves you, he will accept you and will not judge you of your past," was Perry's encouraging remark.

And before she could doubt Carl's love for her and think of another pessimistic reason for Carl to break with her, the sound of the door opening and closing caught both their attention.

"Forgive me, I didn't know that you're already awake, Princess," Sarah Jane said after bowing and focused her sight on Perry. "I'm sorry for forgetting to knock…but it's… I mean…"

"What is it?" was Perry's impatient question and rose from the bed to face the fidgeting handmaid.

"LaFontaine needs you at the rose garden right away," Sarah Jane explained.

She narrowed her eyes and her curiosity was piqued. Aside from Carl, she was the only one who always spends her time at the rose garden. That garden was very precious to her Prince and only Carl was allowed to take care of the roses and he forbids the others to go there except when it's necessary.
"Why? What happened?" she asked, turning her stare to Sarah Jane. She knew that her friend would not lie to her.

"Oh, I'm pretty sure it's just some birds, deer, or rabbits searching something to eat," Perry suggested nervously. "We need to scare those animals away from His Highness' garden."

"Perry, what's wrong?"

She saw Perry's shoulder stiffened after that question; she held her breath.

"Please tell me," she begged, knowing that her Lady in Waiting was trying to cover something unpleasant to the eyes.

"Something happened at the rose garden but it does not concern you," was Perry's serious reply, then looked at the handmaiden. "Go run along now! I'll follow you as soon as possible," the Lady-in-waiting tried to send away Sarah Jane.

"Stop!" she ordered Sarah Jane.

She saw Perry crossed her arms on her chest and her lips closed tightly, as sign that she could no longer nag her for more.

"Sarah Jane?" she shifted again to the handmaiden's direction and waited for her friend to confess.

Knowing that all eyes were glaring on her, Sarah Jane took a deep breath and sheepishly said, "The wild cat…"

After that vague remark, she did not waste any second, she jumped out of her bed and put her silk robe on, and ran towards the door.

"Laura! Wait!"

She ignored Perry's pleas and ran as fast as her feet can.

When she reached the exit leading to the paths to the rose garden, she was startled when it opened and the sudden gush of chilly morning air greeted her body. She shivered instantly; she bowed her head, closed her eyes and hugged her body. She will definitely freeze if she goes outside just in her chemise, silk robe and slippers. But she needs to find out what happened in the rose garden. So, she took a deep breath, braced herself for the cold, but when she opened her eyes and was about to go out a body blocked her.

"What the?" was her confused and irritated remark and looked up.

"Princess, it's freezing outside, may I suggest that you go back and…" was LaFontaine's careful worried comment.

"No. Let me pass," she ordered in her authoritative tone that she seldom uses.

"But Princess…"

"I said let me pass, don't disobey me!" she remarked in an upset tone and LaFontaine vowed before clearing the way for her. Once she gathered her composure, she ran outside ignoring the icy grass on her feet and the chilly air that gripped her body.

Oh god, please don't let anything bad happen to him!
She prayed as she ran anxiously and felt cold sweat running down her face.

When her sight focused on the rose garden, she almost collapsed and blamed herself.

It's all her fault.

Carl loves this rose garden, it was here he finds peace and uses his pastime to relax. He works in this garden with care that each rose blooms exquisitely due to his delicate and loving hands. It was also the place where they had their first picnic and she found herself growing attracted to him. This place was also where he proposed personally and gave him her sweet 'yes' and swore to him to be the mother of his children. This rose garden holds a very special place in both their hearts, because it's where they meet, flirts, talks, sits, eats and above all it's where they fall in love.

And now, the beautiful memory of their 'courtship' was gone and her heart bleeds as she looked at the once majestic garden of roses brutally ruined. Her eyes painfully ran into every bush that was slashed, hacked and ripped. …Shreds of different colors of rose petals, leaves and twigs where scattered on the ground, not a single rose where left standing or hanging; it looked like a savage warrior had gone berserk and wrecked this garden in search for his long lost enemy.

She remained frozen on her feet as the image of a furious Carl played in her mind.

She was startled when she felt something behind her and sighed with relief when she discovered Perry putting a fur coat on her shoulder. She gladly put it on and gave Perry a thankful nod, and the next thing she knew, her Lady in Waiting's hand encloses on her arms and guides her back to the castle. She silently let Perry take her in.

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That afternoon, after taking a rest and after everybody had been pacified, and after hearing Perry and the handmaidens would help LaFontaine restore the garden, she volunteered too to help before anyone could ask why it was ruined; and now she thought it was time to face her own problem: it's time to confess and pacify her own Prince and bravely accept her punishment.

She went to the Prince's chamber with her heart hammering fiercely knowing that it would take her to either the end of this relationship, or if she would be lucky, Carl might still accept her as his Queen and to mother his heirs, but never to love her again.

She felt a tear escaped her left eye at the thought of Carl not loving her anymore, and staying in a loveless marriage.

When she arrived at the wing leading to Carl's chamber, her nervousness lessened when she saw the warmth expression on the Valet's face, as she caught them just leaving the chamber and closing the door behind them. They bowed to her at once and gave her a decent smile. Then she remembered how she treated them this morning.

"Laf, I'm sorry for being arrogant and mean towards you this morning," she apologized, as they stood face to face by the door to the Prince's chamber. "I didn't mean to-
"

"It's alright, you have nothing to apologize for," was LaFontaine's reassurance. "I understand why you're like that. And besides, I'm already used to wild temperamental broody impatient 'people', you're burst of tantrum is nothing to me."

She sighed with relief, and was thankful for their kindness and understanding and gave them a warm
hug. After releasing from the embrace, she saw a genuine smile on their face, but turned into worry afterwards.

"Princess, I know that you're here to talk to him," LaFontaine started and cleared their throat. "But I don't know if it's a good idea..."

"I understand what you mean Laf," she said, knowing that they were worried for her as they watched them furrowed their brows, and gave her a concerned look, as if begging her not to push through with her plan. "But I need to tell him sooner or later, and if I'll postpone later, we'll both suffer and everybody around us would be affected. And I don't want all of you to be dragged into my mess. This is my problem and I will face it alone and accept whatever consequence that I'll receive." Then she saw LaFontaine nodded and this time, they're the ones who gave her a hug.

"Good luck, Frosh," they said after the hug and smiled.

She gave them a relieved smile after hearing those words from them. She does not know why they said 'frosh', and just thought that, perhaps, they use this word together with 'good luck', or it was like calling a friend, but it made her feel better.

"Thank you Laf," she replied and smiled at them before they walked away.

She gathered her composure and took a deep breath as her hand trembled while opening the door to Carl's chamber.

TBC
Facing the Storm

Chapter Summary

Laura will finally girl the hell up and confesses to her prince that she was once in love with a princess. She will also discover how sacred and precious are love, loyalty and commitment to Carl.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

When she stepped inside the chamber she felt all the hair in her body stood; it was dim, and the only sound her ears caught were the crackling sound of fire from the only source of light: the large fireplace across the chamber. It looked majestic and the flame was radiant, blazing, hot and beautiful, just like her Prince; she cannot help but to compare them. She closed the heavy wooden door beside her and was startled when it gave a loud bang when it shut. Then she turned around and carefully walked inside the chamber. She never noticed how terrifyingly vast it was until now.

Her heart jolted uncomfortably as she caught sight of Carl's image standing by the large fireplace, his back facing her. He was standing straight and quiet, and looked intimidating despite wearing his purple robe and slippers while staring blankly at the fire. His ice cold composure reminded her when they had their first serious quarrel at the library; a disagreement that she confidently defended herself, knowing that she had done nothing wrong.

When her eyes caught his hands clasped on his back, her heart raced. Was he contemplating on how to break up their marriage?

"Carl?" she called out carefully in a low tone. But he did not move a bit to acknowledge her presence, causing her to agitate more.

As she walks towards him, she felt every bit of confidence in her body disappearing when it flashed in her mind the painful expression of Carl after he caught her kissing Danny.

When she was about two meters closer to him, she stopped and stood anxiously, waiting for him to respond. After witnessing the horrible sight at the rose garden, she knew by now not to provoke, nor aggravate, nor come closer and touch him. What happened in the garden was just the initial outburst of rage; she was not sure anymore what was going on inside Carl's mind. She closed her eyes and inhaled deeply and exhaled, as her heart hammered wildly while she patiently waits.

"When my mother suggested that I can have my own mistress in addition to having a wife, I refused. I told my mother it isn't necessary. Because for me… your devotion, your affection, and your body are enough to satiate all my needs," Carl explained out of the blue.

The sound of Carl's voice roused her. She swallowed hard; she had never felt so ashamed and guilty in her life. She slowly opened her eyes to face him and take all his blame, but was surprised and relieved at the same time, when she saw him still staring at the fire in front of him. She remained silent and listened to him, knowing that he does not like to be interrupted.
"I think once you're in love with someone, that person is enough…” Carl resumed in a calm and deep tone.

She watched Carl quietly and was distracted when he unclasped his hands, rested them on his sides and caught his fists balled. Her brows wrinkled and she felt anxious.

After a prolonged pause, Carl ran his hand through his hair and slightly bowed his head and tilted to the left, "…Tell me Laura; am I not enough for you?” he uttered, his voice morphed into firm cold whisper, still facing the fireplace and holding his cold composure.

She took a deep breathe. Carl's words struck her straight through the heart. Her guilt was slowly and torturously tearing her apart. For the first time, she was lost for words and don't know how to begin and explain why she did it.

"When I was a child I was very happy and satisfied that I have a loving mother that was always by my side who takes care and loves me with all her heart… until I found out that she was not my real mother and I was forcefully separated from her; I was devastated for a long time." Carl continued his voice now loud, firmer but still calm. "…And while growing up, the man that I thought was my father told me that the changes in my body was normal and that everyone experiences this 'changes' during puberty state," Carl resumed, his voice calmer and deep.

She remained silent. She was confused why suddenly he was confessing these things about his childhood.

"When I arrived in the castle and discovered that my real parents are the King and Queen of Karnstein, I was shocked and felt lost. I didn't know who and what to believe." Carl narrated in a still calm deep tone. "Imagine living a happy simple carefree life as a child, and was suddenly snatched from the life that you thought was yours, and then be placed in this huge castle with full of strangers and people that dictated you what to do and how to live your life. Wouldn't that make you madly confused?"

She inhaled deeply and was becoming anxious, and yet she remained silent and listened to him. She never knew how he really felt after being taken back to the castle and she was thankful in a way that he was revealing these things to her.

"As I grew up and was molded into a prince, I thought everything around me was how it was supposed to be; including me, having a penis and hiding my breasts," Carl stated while staring blankly at the blazing fire. "...Until I discovered that I was different, and I got furious and confronted my parents and my valet for not telling me the truth about how the human body really looks like…"

Carl's revelation was slowly getting into her. He never mentioned some of these: his frustrations and disappointments. And she slowly realized why he was telling her these things… these painful things about his life.

"And when I told my mother that I wish not to marry because of my uniqueness, she didn't quite accept it at the beginning, but eventually gave up after many attempts of bringing potential brides in the castle for me to choose. I thought that was the end of it and thought that my parents accepted my decision," Carl explained with hint of sarcasm. "But then my father came bearing some good news and informed me that he found a sweet princess for his son! Imagine how frustrated and angry I was being deceived again!"

She was startled when he turned around and she witnessed again his calm icy sharp eyes staring at her.
"I was determined to destroy our betrothment, because I didn't know how you'll take in my being special... but you managed to make me fall in love with you, because of your unconditional love. And I was grateful and relieved, that finally, I've found my happiness." Carl said, his voice growing deeper and firmer; his eyebrows furrowed and his eyes melancholic. "You see... all throughout my life, I was surrounded by deceit. I have experienced the people around me, constantly lying to me since I was young. They said they just wanted to protect me; but my heart has been broken many times due to these lies. And the most painful part of that was, its people whom I trust people who are close to me, people who claimed they love me, it was them who lie to me," he said, his voice burning with frustration and disappointment. "I thought the lies will end when I met you and fell in love with you... I thought no one, who's very close to me would ever deceive or lie to me again... I was finally confident and satisfied that I won't feel betrayed anymore when you came to my life. I feel secured knowing that it's only me who owns your love, and that I'm the only one who had touched you intimately. And I even thought my very own wife is not capable of lying. But I guess I was wrong," was his disappointed remark.

Carl's painful revelation made her want to rip her heart out. How could she be so greedy and callous? Her guilt and shame was slowly and torturously eating her up. Her conscience was nagging her, she felt like she was the cruelest person on earth right now.

"Perhaps I was cursed... because the people who claim they love me were the ones who always break my heart," he chuckled bitterly. "And I should have expected that you're going to do the same thing too," he sarcastically added. "I was so naïve... I was a fool to believe that you really love me and only me."

"But I do love you-" she reasoned out and finally broke her silence, but Carl warned her to shut up by pointing his index finger on her. Carl's calm expression shifted and she caught those dark sharp cold orbs glaring at her.

"I am not finished yet! You don't get a chance to explain until I say so!" Carl reprimanded his voice fierce and deeper. "I have opened my heart to you and love you sincerely, and that's how you'll going to return my devotion to you? ... By kissing someone like the way you kiss me? Someone that I never knew existed in your life?"

The last remark hit her hard and she found herself drowning in guilt.

"Carl I'm sorry."

"How could you do this to me? Of all people, you're the one that I love and trust so much, how could you lie to me? How could you make me believe that I'm the love of your life and the only one who occupies your heart?" Carl accused his voice firmer and fiercer. "Who is she Laura? Who is she that you kissed so intimately, and touched lovingly with your hands?"

Every word that comes out of Carl's mouth was like a dagger that pierced to her heart; it was sharp, bitter and painful. She could see the veins on his neck throbbing as he tried to control this rage from exploding. She swallowed hard and found herself trembling with fear, she had never seen Carl like this, but she tried to calm herself and bravely stood there and faced all his accusations and anger. It was all her fault and she cannot undo her mistake.

She does not want to prolong their agony anymore, she told herself. And with that, she took a deep breath and with a brave face, she looked at those dark cold angry eyes that were glaring at her.

"Danny was my first love." She said firmly, hiding her anxiety as much as she can as she stood still and displayed her 'in control' attitude; she paused to watch his reaction.
She was disappointed when he remained calm and silent but still glaring at her, a trait of Carl that she dislikes when he hides his emotions. She would rather have this wild outburst of tantrums from him instead of silence. Then she grew worried when she caught sight of his balled fists; she decided to distract him.

"When I came of age and my father invited young princes to the castle, I was never interested with them; I was never interested becoming a wife and a property of a man. In fact, I told Perry that I want a woman and that I imagined myself marrying a woman and living happily with her for the rest of my life," she explained genuinely without breaking her eye contact with Carl. She was expecting him to be shocked at her revelation but he remained silent, but his glare was like the scorching flame from the fireplace behind him. She took a deep breath and resumed her story. "I was young and naïve and did not know that it was forbidden and punishable to love a person with the same gender like me. I got frustrated when Perry told me that. But I never reverted to liking boys and tried to avoid being betrothed to any of the princes that offered their love and castle to me. So when Gerhard arrived with his sister, everything changed and I began to see a hope for me when Danny confessed that she likes me too..." After those last words, Carl walked closer to her, and she found herself face to face with him.

His presence intimidated her like never before, her heart throbbed fiercely, her palms were sweating and she felt a cramp in her stomach. But she remained composed and bravely stared back; she wanted to put her hands on his face and caressed his cheeks to pacify him, but this time she did not dare. She could feel his warm breath as he filled the gap between them and could see the veins in his neck throbbing as Carl tried to suppress his emotions; she was ready to face whatever he would do to her. They had been in this kind of situation before and knowing Carl, he just needs to release all this rage in his mind and body, and everything would be calm and better. She waited for his outburst of emotion. But she was surprised when he remained calm and just stood there and that sharp icy glare morphed into soft innocent vulnerable dark orbs. She almost lost her composure, as she saw for the first time this sight of Carl: like the sight of a disheartened innocent child.

"Tell me..." Carl's voice mellowed down into a deep caressing tone. "Were you in love and intimate with her?"

She gazed at his soulful innocent eyes and had wished that he could have just grabbed her and pushed her to the wall and possessively claim her like he used to do, instead of asking her that question. She had wished that Carl could just slap her in the face so that he could get rid of the rage inside him. She had wished that he could just shouted at her and accused her of being mean, egoistic, sweet little liar, hypocrite naïve looking princess. But when she did not receive any violent reaction from him; when she saw his innocent expression waiting anxiously for her reply, she was devastated. It would hurt him deeply to tell the truth and she had no intention of lying to him again just to protect his feelings. Without having any second thoughts, and hoping to come clean and show to him that she was honest, she inhaled deeply and breathed out a weak, "Yes."

She confidently watched his reaction, at how she was honest at him. But all her hopes vanished when she noticed him slowly steps back away from her. She panicked and was about to hold his arm, but he averted her hand. She caught him shaking his head lightly and saw his eyes shimmering with unshed tears, his brows furrowed in pain, he looked like an innocent hurt child, not the wild temperamental prince that she often see. He looked devastated.

"Carl, please, look at me," she begged and stepped forward carefully, not wanting to scare him off, while he stepped back again and looked at her, his eyes smoldering in pain. She needs to think fast and give him assurance, she used to kiss him, but she cannot do that right now. "Carl... I love you.
I'm in love with you, not with Danny. Please believe me…"

"You lied to me. You told me that I'm the only one," he reasoned out, his voice low and broken.

"I'm sorry that I didn't tell you about her," she explained quickly, and realized now how Carl takes her words seriously; how he trusted her unconditionally. "… Because I'm scared that you will hate… or worst, be disgusted with me for being with a woman before-"

"How can you think that I'll be disgusted with you after being with a woman, when in fact, I'm half like her," Carl returned, frustrated. "Don't you trust me?"

"I do, with all my heart," she replied sincerely. "But I didn't trust myself, I was not confident that you'll accept me that's why I hid my past. Carl, please… please forgive me, I didn't mean to hide my past and I didn't mean to kiss her. I got carried away and I was caught in the moment after not seeing her for the pass years. We didn't get a chance to have a proper closure and I didn't know what really happened to her after we broke up and the reason why she was married off to Prince Theodore, that's why when I saw her again, these old feelings resurfaced and I got confused."

"Confused? Is that your excuse from kissing your ex-lover? You're confused?!" Carl claimed and shook his head, unconvinced. "I don't think you're confused… You still want her. You still love her!"

Carl accused and she panicked as he became jealous and doubtful. "No. I don't want her and I don't love her anymore. It's over. I'm over her! Danny was my past, but you are my present, you are my future," she defended desperately, and was growing worried that she cannot pacify him.

"I don't believe you. You've already lied about loving her and you kissed her even if you knew that you're already married to me!" was Carl's doubting remarks.

She could see that he was already consumed by doubt and jealousy, and there was no amount of explanation that will clear his mind and pacify him. So she resorted to the only way that could appease him: she stepped forward and was about to put her arms around him and embrace him. But Carl pushed her at once. She was instantly hurt of the rejection and felt a tear escaped her left eye, and caught him glaring at her.

"Don't you dare touch me!" he warned. "The image of you kissing her and caressing her face is still fresh in my mind… You've hurt me Laura."

She cannot control anymore the tears that were threatening to burst out after that comment from Carl.

"I don't want to see you here in my chamber anymore," Carl ordered, his voice was cold as his heart. "You're relieved of your duties and obligations to me as my wife. You're going to sleep in your own chamber and I will remain here. You don't have a right to ask for my affection and attention, and you will respect my decision."

Desperate and scared, "Carl, please… don't do this to me. You're being unfair. Let's talk about it and fix this," she begged and sniffled woefully, hoping that he would change his mind. "I need you."

"Unfair? How dare you accuse me of being unfair when you're the one who lied to me and cheated on me!" He retaliated, his voice harsh and his temper was slowly showing. "You have no right to tell me what to do in my life. I am the heir to the throne and I will do whatever it pleases me and you cannot stop me!"

She was about to oppose to his demands; she usually does not give up easily, but she knew that this time, she was not in the position to defend herself and complain. Carl was hurting and not thinking
clearly, if she would provoke him more, he would definitely explode and make things more complicated. So instead of persistently defending herself and nagging him more to forgive her, she would give him some space and respect his decisions, for now, even if it hurts her.

She wiped her tears with the back of her hand, and when she finally calmed down, she looked at him with full of remorse.

"Alright, I accept all your demands and your decision. Because I love you and I respect you," she stated in a low voice and saw him suddenly calmed down and was surprised at her reply. She knew that he was expecting a long argument from her. "And I know that I hurt you deeply and I cannot undo that anymore, and I sincerely apologize for acting like a fool and forgetting that I'm married already. I'm not perfect. I make mistakes, and commits sins. I hate myself for cheating on you, and I don't know when and how I could forgive myself," she confessed, with utmost sincerity and caught Carl's undivided attention, as he listened to her intently. "...But I hope that one day you can find it in your heart to forgive me. I don't know how long I could bear seeing you and knowing that you're near me, and yet, I cannot touch you nor kiss you. You may stop caring for me, but I won't," she added and tried to compose herself as she felt this lump in her throat forming, and these tears threatening to burst out again. "Carl…before I go… I want you to know that I will never give up loving you; even if you don't acknowledge it… even if I have to love you silently from a distance," she declared her voice low and weak; then bowed her head and curtsied to him like a true princess, showing him that she agreed and respects his demands, before finally saying, "Good night Your Highness." She uttered and rose, and turned around without looking at him and not waiting for her Prince to reply and strode towards the door. She walked out of his chamber with her heart broken. If this was her punishment she will bravely accept it, she told herself.

TBC
Laura starts to experience the consequences of her impulsive behavior. She also discovered that having friends makes her life easier when her Prince had lost faith on her. Being optimistic by nature, she began to think of ways how to win back her Prince.

First of all, I'm happy that we already reached 60 chapters of crazy roller coaster ride of emotions :-D Secondly, I'm sorry for that heavy angst. I know that most of you were broken hearted by the previous chapter, I felt exhausted too after writing chapter 59, and needed some time to 'calm' my mind before writing this chapter. Thanks again for your generous kudos and honest feedbacks; and for staying and having faith in this fic even if it makes you madly frustrated. Have a nice Sunday and enjoy (or not) reading the update with a cup of hot choco, while still on bed under the warmth of your comforters/duvets :-P

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Laura

When she closed the door of Carl's chamber behind her, she was already on the verge of bursting into tears, but she was caught off guard when she saw Perry and LaFontaine standing outside the chamber, as if waiting. She was about to ask them what they were doing outside Carl's chamber, but when she saw her Lady in Waiting walked towards her and felt the arms of her second mother wrapped around her protectively, she lost her ability to speak and just surrendered and poured out her heartaches in the warmth of Perry's arms. She cried like a child and felt Perry's hand rubbing her back consolingly. She remained in Perry's protective arms for a moment and let her Lady in Waiting do what she was best at: consoling her. But they were shortly interrupted when they heard a loud noise from the prince's chamber. Worried, she released from the embrace and was about to go back to Carl's chamber, but Perry held her tight and LaFontaine halted her gently.

"Laf, what's going on?" was her worried remark as the Valet walks towards the door, and stood in front of it, blocking the entrance, took a deep breath and said:

"He's like that since last night."

"What do you mean? And what's that loud noise?" she queried anxiously.

"He needs to release the rage inside him, so he throws whatever he can see in his room," LaFontaine explained calmly.

"Oh no, Laura, I think it's not safe for you to go back there," was Perry's worried comment.

"But Perry, I need to check if he's alright?" she disagreed; worried that Carl might hurt himself. "I
need to see him."

"Don't worry Princess, he would be alright," LaFontaine assured them. "Try to get some rest now and I'll go check on him and make sure that he does not hurt himself."

"Are you sure you don't need my help?" she offered, worried.

"No offense Princess, but I think he would be more upset if he sees you," was LaFontaine's honest reply.

She slouched her shoulders, and accepted the Valet's remark, "I guess you're right. But please let me know how he is as soon as possible," was her sad remark.

"I'll let you know after breakfast tomorrow. In the meantime try to get some rest, while I try to tame your wild angry cat," LaFontaine said and smiled upon the mention of 'wild angry cat', attempting to lessen the tension.

She managed to smile a bit after hearing 'while I tame your wild angry cat' and recalled the first time she told LaFontaine that phrase when Carl got angry to all of the servants for not knowing that she went to the village. She nodded to them in agreement and knew that she needs to trust them.

"Thank you so much Laf. I think you're the best Valet and friend that Carl can have," she praised and then hugged them.

"Goodnight Princess," they said after releasing from the hug and bowed, and then, set their gaze to the Lady in Waiting who was giving them a worried look. "Goodnight Per."

"Goodnight LaFontaine, please take care of yourself while in there," was the Lady in Waiting's anxious remark.

"I will," was the Valet's sweet reply before opening the door and walked inside the Prince's chamber. *****

"Carl?" she uttered, as the shocking realization of being caught by her Prince sunk in.

"Carl!" she called out, but he turned around as soon as their eyes met, enough to let her know that he did caught her in the act before disappearing in her sight.

Oh God!

Her heart raced. She felt like someone threw a bucket of cold water in her face and woke her up from this temporary madness. What the hell was she doing?! Then she darted her eyes on her former lover and wrinkled her brows while shaking her head, as it dawned on her that kissing Danny for the last time was a huge mistake.

"I'm sorry Danny..."

"Princess! Wake up!"

She gasped, opened her eyes and sat bolt right up on the bed. She was panting and she felt cold sweat running down her spine.

"Princess, it's just a dream," Sarah Jane said and sat beside the bed.
She glanced at her handmaiden friend and wrinkled her brows, as she recovered from that awful dream. How she wished that it was just all a dream… a dream that never happened. She shut her eyes and tried to forget her misdemeanor, but Carl's painful reaction remained haunting her.

She opened her eyes to a worried Sarah Jane in front of her, and the next thing she knew, her handmaiden was holding her hands. She felt better and held those rough hands tight.

"Thanks Sarah Jane," she mumbled after they released from the hold and was thankful for the moral support.

"I'm sorry Princess," the handmaid related in an apologetic tone. "You're probably dreaming about what happened yesterday. If only I could turn back the time and warn you-"

"Hey, it's not your fault, so stop apologizing," she interrupted. She does not want everyone to feel guilty, due to her selfish mistake.

"Actually, I have something to confess."

Suddenly, her eyes widened and stared at her handmaiden friend. "What do you mean?" was her worried curious remark.

"After I left you in the tearoom together with Princess Danielle, I met Prince Carl on the way back to the dining hall," Sarah Jane explains with a heavy heart. "He asked me where you were and I told him that you're in the tearoom… but I didn't realize that you're going to…"

"…Kiss my former lover," she filled in, disappointed at that stupid mistake, and motioned for Sarah Jane to resume.

Sarah Jane just nodded sadly, "I waited for him to come out of the tearoom, because I suddenly felt something was wrong," the handmaiden related, with wrinkled brows. "And when I saw Prince Carl came out striding towards the hall and looked furious, I knew at once that my hunch was right. So, I ran to the kitchen and told Perry."

She sighed and felt guiltier, knowing the people around her were always trying to protect her.

"Perry strictly ordered not to leave you alone during the feast," Sarah Jane added, her voice full of regrets. "She told me that I shouldn't let you out of my sight nor left your side…maybe she knew that something like that was going to happen, since she knew that Princess Danielle was on the guest list. But I didn't obey her order and I told myself that I trust you… I trust that our Princess loves His Royal Hotness and that there's no way that you're going to do something foolish; even if Princess Danielle was there."

Sarah Jane's honest revelation and trust on her was the second painful thing after hurting Carl. She was already drowning in guilt while listening.

"For the first time in my life, I hated myself for being honest," the handmaiden's disappointed remark. "I should have lied to His Royal Hotness and told him that you weren't in the tearoom, and that I should have distracted him as soon as I felt something bad was about to happen."

"No! Please don't blame and hate yourself," she corrected at once and held Sarah Jane's hands. "I am proud and thankful that I have a friend who is very honest, trust worthy and caring." She felt Sarah Jane calmed down after that remark. "There's no one to blame here, except me; you shouldn't bother yourself with my problem."

"When I see my friend suffering, I suffer too," the handmaiden replied sincerely. "I want you to
know that we are here for you through thick and thin, Betty, Nat and I are here to help you."

"Thank you so much Sarah Jane," she replied and gave the handmaiden a warm hug. "I don't know how I could cope with this heartache, without Perry and you girls around me. You've all been a good friend to me even if I let all of you down."

"Don't say that," Sarah Jane corrected at once. "You're only human, you make mistakes, but what I like in you, is your perseverance to correct that mistake and recover from them. You have a kind, loving heart and I know that you wouldn't want that mistake to affect yours and others life in a bad way. And I know that you love Prince Carl very much and that you'll do anything to win him back."

"Thanks for having faith on me," she uttered, grateful that there were still people who trust her, after her Prince had lost his faith on her. "I honestly don't know how or what to do now; he's very angry and doesn't want to see me. And I feel like I'm not in control of my life anymore."

"You're still confused, hurt and upset. You'll recover soon and then you can think of how to gain back his trust. In the meantime, how about starting your day by distracting yourself; you could spend the day with us," was the handmaiden's optimistic suggestion. "It's Saturday, and Her Majesty had given most of the servants the rest of the day off after the stressful feast. I heard from Perry that His Majesty had gone to the village together with the Archbishop and won't be back until late in the evening, so the Queen decided not to eat lunch and dinner in the family hall. I think Her Majesty was exhausted too and just stayed in her chamber after eating breakfast with His Majesty. And I heard from LaFontaine that His Royal Hotness was still sleeping."

Speaking of Carl, she was suddenly reminded of what happened last night and was eager to hear from the Valet how did it went after she left his chamber last night. "What time is it?" she asked and found herself fidgeting.

"It's almost noon, Princess," the handmaiden answered. "Perry didn't wake you up because she would rather let you sleep further and recover from last night's stress. But I brought your lunch now, you can eat it and then I..." Sarah Jane was saying but they were distracted when they heard a loud knock on the door.

"It's open!" she shouted right away, wishing and hoping that it was Carl. She slouch her shoulders when she saw Natalie and Betty came in. But then she quickly straightened her back and gave them a genuine smile instead; she sighed when they smiled back at her. And she reminded herself that she was lucky having them in her life. Then she wondered… did Carl ever have any friends aside from his Valet?

*****

That night she sent all the girls to rest early after an exhausting gardening. Even if Perry strongly suggested her not to return to the rose garden, knowing that it will remind her again of Carl's jealous rage, she did not heed her Lady in Waiting's order. She told Perry that she needed to face all the consequences of her selfish mistake, and she should start fixing it as soon as possible; and the only thing she could think of now was to fix first Carl's rose garden, since her Prince was still furious and consumed by jealousy and doubt.

LaFontaine suggested throwing away the rose bushes that were severely damaged and check if they can find something in the village on Monday to replace some of them. Her heart broke at the absence of those colorful exquisite roses and while they salvaged some of the bushes that were mildly damaged. She hoped to find a replacement soon, before the Queen or the King noticed it.

They did not stop cleaning and repairing the garden until LaFontaine was summoned by Carl before
sunset and she heard from the maid that the Prince just woke up.

And now she was contemplating what her Prince was up to as she relaxed in her chamber. Although LaFontaine assured her earlier they stayed with the Prince last night and Carl was alright; she still can't help worrying of what he thinks and will do next.

"Laura, did you hear what I've said?"

The voice of her Lady in Waiting tore her out of pondering. Confused, she looked at the reflection of Perry on the mirror.

"I'm sorry Per, I didn't catch what you've said," she replied and saw Perry stopped combing those golden long locks.

"I said how did His Highness react when you told him about Princess Danielle?" Perry stated. "... Was he shocked that you had been with a woman, instead of a man?"

"Actually he was not shock… the only thing that made him furious was I didn't tell him at once," she said and locked gaze with Perry. She hoped that her Lady in Waiting wouldn't be extra curious about the Prince easily accepting her preference of loving a woman. "I think he was more hurt that I have loved someone aside from him."

"Well, I think he genuinely cares for you, because he didn't judge you or despise you after learning that your former lover was a woman," was Perry's hopeful comment.

"He despises and detests me because I lied and cheated on him," she concluded bitterly.

"Don't talk like that, I'm sure His Highness would come to his senses and everything would go back to normal," Perry reassured, and continued combing those long blonde natural locks. "Just give him some space and time to heal. I know that you can be extra persistent on wanting to see him, but I think you should lay low and let him miss you."

"Oh Perry, I really hope that he's going to miss me soon and realize that I want him instead of Danny," she returned, desperate. "Because I don't know how I am going to survive living in this castle knowing that my own husband hates me."

"Don't fret, everything would be alright in due time, you just need to distract yourself and try to be patient," Perry said with full of confidence. "And speaking of distraction, Her Majesty is going to the monastery and she wanted you to come with her on Tuesday."

She just nodded silently and hoped that her very controlling, strict, overzealous mother-in-law will not suspect anything. She had witnessed how over protective the Queen was when it comes to her only precious son and remembered the Queen warning her not to hurt Carl.

*****

The following morning, despite not having enough sleep, she forced herself to wake up early and informed Perry last night that she will attend the Sunday mass. They usually attend mass together at the castle's chapel with the King and the Queen, and today could be her chance to see Carl since their confrontation. Even if Perry told her to give Carl a space, she still cannot do it; she longed for him.

Her rumination was cut off, when she heard a light tap on the door and hoped that it was her Prince.

"Who is it?" she asked, crossing her fingers.
"It's Lafontaine!"

She groaned, and was disappointed again. Perhaps Carl was really serious of relieving her of her obligations as his wife, and she suddenly worried. But before she could become paranoid, she shook her head lightly and disregards the thought.

"Come in!" she said and saw the door opened, and caught at once the enthusiastic expression of the Valet.

"Good morning, Princess," LaFontaine greeted and bowed, before placing the service tray on the study table.

"Good morning Laf, thanks for bringing my breakfast, but you don't have to do it, Perry or the girls usually brings my breakfast," she remarked, knowing that Lafontaine's job was one of the hardest one in the castle, being the only person who helps Carl aside from the maid that brings the Prince's food.

"He's still sleeping, so I thought I could help Perry instead," the Valet informed. "Do you want to eat your breakfast there?"

"Yes please, thank you," she nodded and sat on her bed properly and waited for LaFontaine to put the service tray in front of her. She smiled when LaFontaine poured at once the hot cocoa on her cup and offered to her. "Thanks," she said and her eyes feasted at the extra chocolate cupcakes beside the bowl of grapes. Perry usually gives her only one chocolate cupcake, but today her lady in Waiting had sent three instead, knowing that she does not feel well.

"What did he do last night?" she asked after sipping from her cup, but suddenly found her favorite drink too bitter and put the cup back on the tray. When she looked up, she caught the Valet's worried expression, and knew that something was wrong. "Laf, will you please join me, I think I can't eat all of these." She ordered the Valet, to make sure they stay.

LaFontaine nodded and carefully sat on the bed across her, and she handed them a cupcake, while she looked at them and waited patiently for the Valet to reply.

"He asked for wine as soon as he woke up and refused to eat," was LaFontaine's worried remark. "I suggested that we go out and catch some fresh air, but he got angry and told me to shut up and don't tell him what to do. So, I stayed there and tried to control his wine intake because he has low wine tolerance. But he drank too much and got intoxicated at once."

"Oh god Laf, is he alright? I want to see him," she asked and displayed to the Valet her puppy sad eyes.

"I'm sorry Princess, I think it would be safer for both of you not to see each other yet," was LaFontaine's honest opinion, still holding the cupcake. "He's still hurt and angry."

She was suddenly silent. There was no way she could explain further why she had done it. She made a bloody mistake and had hurt him deeply.

"It's not that I'm siding with him, but you’re his first and the one and only woman that he loves and worships," LaFontaine related, and put down the cupcake back on the plate. "He may be possessive and jealous, but he cares for you deeply. His love for you is so intense and pure; he would do anything for you, just like when he decided to follow you in Hollis Kingdom even if he knew that he will suffer during the travel and make him sick."

She just stared at them and silently listened how her Prince utterly loves her, while she slowly dies
with guilt.

"The Prince is not use to sharing," the Valet remarked and took a deep breath. "He grew up having all the love and attention from the two people that he thought were his mother and father. And when he came to the castle, Her Majesty and His Majesty focused all their attention and poured all their love to him too. The Queen pampered him so much and is over protective of him. He was brought up with the notion that he was the future king and everything around him is his, and only his," LaFontaine explained earnestly. "...These are my mere assumptions why your Prince is possessive and jealous all the time... or he could simply have inherited it from the King, since I heard that His Majesty is the jealous type too," LaFontaine concluded. "So when he found out that you kissed someone else aside from him, he felt threatened and betrayed. Because he never expected that there was someone who shared your love aside from him."

Well, who wants to share their partner's love? She thought, ashamed of her impulsive behavior and sees clearly now, how Carl's upbringing might have contributed to her Prince's possessiveness and constant jealousy. She had been jealous too when she caught Carl talking to the King's mistress and accused him of flirting with another woman. And now, she felt horrible for being the one who cheated on him.

"...A word of advice... when he loves and trusts someone, he is like a child; he loves and trusts you purely and honestly. He is very loyal and he expects the same thing too from the people around him," LaFontaine stated passionately.

She was strayed from her thoughts and nodded, grateful for those honest and frank remarks from them. The last words that LaFontaine mentioned were true; after Carl opened up to her about his disappointments and heart aches of living with people that lies to him constantly.

Then her curiosity was suddenly piqued. "Thank you... the things that you told me now gives me more knowledge how to understand him; how to handle his temper; how to love him more," was her genuine reply. "And I'm grateful that you told me these things. But may I ask how you knew all these? Did the Queen tell you?"

"Her Majesty did not directly tell me, I just listened to all the information and analyzed it. So that I could understand how he is as a person and how I can help him, not just with his needs, but with his problems too," LaFontaine commented, as if explaining some experiment. "When my father asked me if I want to have this job, he told me that it will be challenging and complicated. I am here not just to serve the Prince of Karnstein, but to be his guide and friend as he tackles all the challenges and demands of being the heir to the throne, and at the same time, the complicated and painful process of accepting his true self."

She was amazed at how LaFontaine passionately devoted their talent and service to Carl. She thought Perry was the only Lady in Waiting that exists in this world that gives their full service, love, care and loyalty to her; but she was wrong. LaFontaine's role in Carl's life was equally important and significant as Perry's. And she realized that she and Carl were very lucky to have them both in their lives, and thought:

Perry and LaFontaine were perfect for each other.

As if on cue, her rumination was halted when her attention darted to the door and saw her Lady in Waiting walking towards them.

"Good morning! Are you finished eating your breakfast and ready to dress for Sunday mass?" Perry asked at once and then glanced at the Valet. "LaFontaine had been sweet enough to help me since the girls were still in bed and complaining about back pains and leg pains. I think they're not use to
gardening, so I told them they can still sleep for another three hours."

She narrowed her eyes and gave her Lady in Waiting a confused look.

"Don't you need any help for the preparation of the lunch?" she asked, knowing that on Sundays, they eat lunch together after attending the Sunday mass, since the King does not entertain any guests or complaints from the town's people.

"Apparently, His Majesty still has hangover from last night, and is not well to attend the mass and Her Majesty is taking care of the King now, and ordered the kitchen to serve lunch at the King's chamber instead," Perry informed. "So, it's just you who'll attend the Sunday mass and eat lunch."

"What about Carl, isn't he going to mass and eat lunch afterwards?" was her hopeful query, and saw Perry's lips pointed to the Valet.

"He's still sleeping and I don't think he's in the mood to hear mass today," LaFontaine said, and looked at them. "…Unless you want a broody, 'grumpy like cat from hell' prince with a hangover, disturbing the archbishop during consecration."

*****

That night after spending the day distracting herself by hearing the Sunday mass alone; baking as many cream puffs as she can till the kitchen ran out of sugar; helping the servants stress clean in the kitchen until Perry stopped her with the aggressive brushing on the entire kitchen tops and tables; and hyper actively working in the garden with LaFontaine until they halted her from planting back on the soil the cut and ripped roses, she now feels the ten hour hyper-anxious-stress-distraction errands of the day harassing her in a form of aching stiff shoulders and throbbing pain of the wounds in her hands from the thorns of the roses.

"Laura dear, are you sure you don't want anything for the pain? I could ask LaFontaine for some salve or some specially brewed tea to ease the pain," Perry asked for the tenth times before opening the door to the Princess' chamber.

"No, thanks Perry; I'm good," she assured her Lady in Waiting at once. "Please don't worry, I feel dozing off soon, so you may take a rest too and I'll see you tomorrow."

"Alright, but if you ever need me in the middle of the night, don't hesitate to call me," was Perry's worried unsatisfied reply.

"I think it's not necessary, but thanks anyway. Goodnight," she returned and nodded to let Perry know that the Lady in Waiting can finally leave her.

"Goodnight Princess," Perry said with a forced smile, before opening the door and hesitantly left the chamber.

When everything around her calmed down and the only sound she can hear was the distinctive crackling sound of the fire from the fireplace, her thoughts strayed and she was reminded again of the moment when Carl caught her in the act after kissing Danny. She closed her eyes and tried to erase it in her memory. How long would this haunt her? How long would she have to feel guilty? How long does she have to suffer the consequences?

She tried to show a brave face to everyone so the people around her will not worry; but as she was left alone in silence and lying on her empty bed, she began to feel abandoned and dejected. She never felt so alone, since she arrived in this castle. She never expected that Carl's presence would bring happiness and satisfaction in her life. She realized now that she doesn't just love him; she needs
him; she needs his love; she needs his affection; she needs his touches; she needs his body! And she can honestly tell herself that she had fallen deeply in love with him; a feeling that she thought she will never experience; a feeling that she thought she could only find from a woman. But love has a very bizarre way of happening. She thought she could never find love once she stepped in this castle. But this broody possessive wild prince had surprisingly captured her heart and soul, and there was no turning back. Carl had already claimed her figuratively and literally.

She took a deep and heavy sighed and cannot help to think of a way how she can reclaim his love and trust back; she does not care how difficult and how long it will take her but she will definitely not give up.

She closed her eyes and prayed that he may be enlightened. After learning Carl's painful and complicated childhood and his disappointments on the people that claimed loves him, she knew it will not be easy to appease and win back his trust. But she was always optimistic that when she wants something, she always gets it, just like Perry use to say. And tomorrow, she will show to him how patient and dedicated she was to win him back. She took a deep breath, cleared her mind, and let sleep claimed her.

*****

When she woke up that morning, only one thing was on her mind: to woo her Prince.

And now, after waking up early and eating her breakfast together with the handmaids and servants in the kitchen, she dismissed the maid that serves Carl's food and she took the liberty to bring Carl's breakfast to his chamber; she made sure that she had put plenty of creampuffs, together with his favorite Steirerkas cheese, which she hates so much, rye bread and a cup of tea on the service tray.

As she approached the prince's chamber, her enthusiasm was contained; her hold on the service tray tightened; her heart suddenly throbbed; and she grew anxious as her sight caught the image of this person standing by the door to Carl's chamber.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Love it? Hate It? Frustrated? Brokenhearted? Angry? Or simply loves LaFontaine? All your feedbacks are always appreciated ;-P
Fluster

Chapter Notes

Just wanna let you all know how glad I am to read your feedbacks and how some of you appreciate this story, and are still here supporting this fic despite all the frustrations and heart aches that you've been through reading this. When I wrote this story I know that there are people who would not be accepting about Carmilla and Laura's character in this fic. I am not perfect. I just write what I feel and imagine. I am not gaining anything from this fic except the contentment of making some people happy, which I appreciate deeply, every time they acknowledge my time and effort of writing this long fic and updating it regularly as I can. I respect all your views and feedbacks and I understand why some of you are frustrated about my Hollstein characterization. But I just want to let you know, that I wrote this fic because I saw something that is lacking in the Hollstein fanfics: diversity. You may agree with me or not, but we all have something we want: to read and enjoy a good Hollstein story that we can relate to (or not). I've done my part, which is writing; I am not perfect, English isn't even my first language, but my third; and the fact that this is unbeta'ed and I'm doing all the writing and the editing is really confusing. It's up to you how you would imagine Hollstein being in this story. If you think that my Laura is not your Laura, and Carl/Carn is not your Carmilla, I can't do anything about that. But I will continue to write this because I know that there are some readers who appreciate my effort and time, and still want to read this fic. Thanks for your understanding and patience.

Laura

As she approached the prince's chamber, her enthusiasm was contained; her hold on the service tray tightened; her heart suddenly throbbed; and she grew anxious as her sight caught the image of this person standing by the door to Carl's chamber.

They had never met face to face before and she only sees this person from a distance. The presence of this woman surely made her want to go back to the kitchen and avoid this meeting; but it was already too late. The cold stern eyes caught her sigh and she found herself exchanging looks with her. She cringed at the sight of this woman; over towering her at more than six foot tall, pale skin, dark brown hair tied neatly in a bundle, a hard stony stare, hard pronounced cheekbones, closed mouth, a built that can be compared to Kirsch's and a deadpan humor: the Queen's Lady in waiting and Carl's former nanny definitely gave her the creeps. The woman never smiled and was always silent. She once heard Betty commented that the woman suited well as a lady guard in a madhouse instead of a Lady in Waiting.

She suddenly felt sorry for Carl for growing up in the company of one of the strictest and scary looking woman she had ever met; she now believed LaFontaine when they told her that the Prince was still scared of Bertha from time to time.

She had no idea what the Queen's Lady in waiting doing outside of Carl's chamber, but she needs to bring his breakfast and start this day wooing her Prince. She took a deep breath and composed herself and slowly approached Bertha.
"Good morning Your Highness,"

The Queen's Lady in waiting bowed to her after greeting in a serious tone.

"I'm here to bring the prince's breakfast, will you open the door for me, please," she said in a firm but modest tone.

"I'll have to check first if it's alright Your Highness…"

The lady in waiting was not even finished explaining, and yet she felt like her authority does not affect this person at all.

"Why? What's happening? I'm allowed to go in there," was her defensive remark, thinking that Carl might have asked the Queen's lady in waiting to drive her away from entering the chamber, knowing that LaFontaine would easily slip her in… or worst… maybe the Queen have brought some women for Carl to select as his royal mistress, and they were inside giving Carl a good glimpse of what they can offer. "Please let me in," she ordered growing paranoid.

"Your Highness, her Majesty had strictly ordered not to let anyone in until the Prince agreed …"

Bertha was still talking but she cannot bear to hear those words anymore, her emotions heightened and she does not care if Bertha was glaring at her and does not give a damn about the Queen's order. She would not allow it; she would not share Carl to any woman; if Carl was after someone who could satisfy and pleasure him in bed like what most mistresses do, she would do it; even if her Prince wouldn't return the favor and affection to her. She was ready to show Carl that she will do anything for him; in the name of love.

"I will take full responsibility and tell Her Majesty that I insisted to go in," she expressed firmly and stepped closer to the door. She was satisfied when Bertha nodded, but displayed a stony expression.

When the door to the chamber opened, she almost dropped the tray when she saw LaFontaine meet her at once by the door.

"Princess Laura, I think it's not a good time to have breakfast in bed with the Prince," LaFontaine mumbled. "Her Majesty is reprimanding the Prince…"

She was relieved that it was not what she suspected, but she suddenly worried and the first thing that came into her mind was the half ruined rose garden. Perhaps the Queen had already discovered the result of Carl's jealous rage and the Queen was reprimanding her Prince for not controlling his emotions.

"Why?!!" she asked, worried and impatient.

Without thinking twice, she ignored the Valet's plea, and sneaked inside the Prince's chamber, ready to defend her Prince and take the blame. Her eyes caught sight of the Queen and the Prince standing at the middle of the chamber, face to face, and it looked like she had interrupted a very sensitive and intense conversation. When she caught their attention, they both stopped from arguing and stared at her. She grew uncomfortable when she met those dark orbs. Her Prince definitely inherited from the Queen those icy ferocious look, she noticed, after she saw them both reddening with anger and displaying the same icy stare. She bowed and took a deep breath, before greeting them.

"Good morning Your Majesty… Your Highness," she said and bowed to Carl too. She saw the surprised and yet irritated look on his face upon finding out what she was carrying. "I apologize for interrupting but I brought His Highness' breakfast and-" she was not even finished explaining when the Queen walked closer to her and faced her. Her heart pounded as she waited to be reprimanded
and confronted too by her mother in law. But when her sight caught the Queen took a deep breath and saw her expression softened, she sighed.

"Princess Laura, it's good that you're here, perhaps you can convince my son to stop this nonsense and tell him to listen to his mother's-" the Queen was saying but Carl cut in at once.

"My Queen Mother, I have sought the permission of my King Father and he agreed to this mission," Carl explained, irritated. "As the future king I need to train and experience the hardship of being out in the woods and learn the skills of survival in the forest."

Her eyes widened and her eyebrows raised; then she noticed Carl wearing his hunting clothes and boots, and saw his sword on the bed together with a rucksack.

"As the future king, you don't have to do everything by yourself; you can command anyone to do anything you desire, including fighting in the battlefield," the Queen retorted in a firm voice, facing the Prince again. "And besides, what if something bad happened to you? You're not used to sleeping in the woods and staying in an open space; you might panic and passed out."

"I'll just be gone for a week and I'm taking with me my Valet, my personal guard, and the thirty best knights and royal guards, you have nothing to worry about, my Queen Mother," Carl explained desperately, yearning to gain his mother's approval. "They will protect me."

Suddenly, she realized why the Queen was upset. She grew worried too and just like her mother in law, she was afraid of Carl's well-being and what might happen to him in the wilds. And a week was far too long for him to stay in the wild. She would not let him camp out in the woods in his situation, especially when she was not with him.

"With all due respect Your Highness, I think Her Majesty has a point," she politely said and looked at Carl as if pleading him not to push through. "For your safety, I think it will be better that you stay in the castle's courtyard and train in the nearby forest." She saw at once Carl's brows contorted and glared at her.

"You have no right to tell me what to do, I am the future king and I can do whatever I want!" Carl reprimanded in his authoritative and cold voice, before looking to his mother. "My Queen Mother, I am going whether you allow me or not," he said, and with that he bowed to the Queen, took his sword and rucksack, and left the chamber at once, not giving the women around him a chance to argue or stop him.

She watched him leave with a heavy heart, with LaFontaine trailing behind her Prince. She suspected that Carl was doing this to avoid her. Not a minute had passed, and the Queen strode towards the door, silently fuming inside. She found herself alone, feeling helpless and useless, and madly frustrated for failing to convince Carl not to leave.

Carl was hurting and as Perry told her, her Prince needed some time to heal. She hoped and prayed the healing process will soon be over. She cannot bear seeing the cold, aloof, extremely broody and quick-tempered Carl again; it hurts more compared the last time he was like this. It hurts more this time because they were already married and she had already grown dependent on him; on his presence; on his attention and affection.

Her father was right; once you had given a person the right to love you, you had given him also the right to hurt you immensely.

A tear suddenly escaped her left eye and she felt this lump on her throat forming. Then she realized that she was still standing in the middle of Carl's cold empty chamber, all by herself, still holding the
stupid tray of food that she was supposed to serve him. She was usually strong and optimistic when dealing with this kind of problems, but right now, she felt discouraged and scared that her relationship with Carl will not be the same again. She put down the service tray on the floor, before she could drop it, and sat on the floor as this overwhelming emotion possessed her and let out the cry that she was suppressing.

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After a moment of crying out her frustration and pain, while pathetically smelling Carl's used sleeping tunic, she took a deep breath and composed herself before entering the kitchen. Still carrying the untouched tray of food, she confidently entered the kitchen and walked towards Perry, who was now finished with her chores and sitting by the large table, sipping a drink. She approached her Lady in Waiting; put the tray of food on the same table, before taking a seat beside Perry. She felt exhausted all of a sudden and she does not know if this was due to her crying lately or the fact that she still wants to sleep longer this morning, but she stubbornly rose early since she wants to prepare and serve Carl's breakfast today; or she simply missed her Prince…

The untouched tray of food caught Perry's attention at once and studied it carefully before looking up, "Did he refuse to eat it?"

"Actually, I didn't get a chance to give it to him because he can't wait to leave and avoid me," she retorted and saw the worried lines on Perry's forehead.

"Oh, don't fret, I'm sure His Highness is going to be asking for food when he returned, then you can serve his midday meal instead," was Perry's optimistic reply and then paused. "Have you been crying again?"

She ignored the last question and replied at once. "I don't think Carl will be asking for it soon; he and Laf left an hour ago to train and camp in the forest for a week," she commented bitterly, her voice full of worry.

"What? But LaFontaine never mention something like that to me," was Perry's surprised retort.

"I think no one knows, because Her Majesty was in Carl's chamber when I arrived there, and she was arguing with Carl and ordering him to cancel his training. Her Majesty was probably surprised too when she learned about Carl's plan," she explained and did not mention any more how Carl berated her in front of the Queen, after requesting him to stay. "I'm worried that he might have a panic attack in the middle of nowhere and I'm not there to take care of him."

"Oh sweetie, I'm sure LaFontaine brought all the necessary medicines and herbs for His Highness' angst," Perry reassured. "... And who knows, maybe the fresh air and the solitude of the mountains can clear your Prince's mind and softened his heart."

She sighed deeply, "I do hope so."

She said and absent mindedly picked one of the creampuffs coated with chocolate from the tray of food in front her. After she took a bite of Carl's favorite dessert, she spit it out quickly and flinched. "Per, have you changed the recipe?" she asked, worried that her taste might be affected too due to what she feels lately. She caught the confused expression of her Lady in Waiting, as if telling her not to judge the delicacies of a Konditor. "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to spit it out, but I tastes different... it tastes bitter," she clarified so as not to hurt her Lady in Waiting's feelings. She rarely complains on the desserts that Perry makes, but after tasting the chocolate from the creampuff, she suddenly felt like her tongue burned due to its 'extra bitter taste'.

"Laura, I never change my recipe, I'm still using the finest chocolate in Styria…” was Perry's proud serious remark. "… and chocolates taste bitter normally. Maybe you're not used to eating porridge in the morning, and are always eating sweets for breakfast that's why your taste suddenly changed," the Lady in Waiting retorted, recalling the breakfast they all have eaten together earlier this morning. "I am going to prepare your bath now, are you coming with me?"

"No, just go ahead, I'm craving for something but I don't know yet what," she mentioned and rose together with Perry from the chair and walked around the kitchen inspecting which food she desired.

"Well, make sure that you're in your chamber in half an hour," Perry suggested walking towards the door. "I don't want your bath to get cold."

She smiled and nodded to Perry, "I will Per," and inspected every cupboard, pots, jugs, jars and basins she could find in the kitchen for something edible. She walked further to the baking area to check if Perry had baked something new; something that was not chocolate. But she was frustrated when she saw that it were creampuffs with chocolate coating, her chocolate cupcakes, some fruit tarts and chocolate tarts. She felt a sudden repulse at the sight of too much chocolate in front of her and quickly turned around and walked away to find a drink.

But when she was about to fetch a drink from one of the jugs on the servant's dining table, her eyes caught the sight of someone unfamiliar wearing a very distracting clothes tip toing around the kitchen, discreetly searching and taking some food.

She did not expect to meet a very lovely, well poised, and seductive woman roaming around the kitchen. She scanned the woman's slim body covered with thin silky red robe and the long brown natural disheveled hair flowing wildly through the woman's waist; and then her eyes ran down to the woman's bare feet, and found it provocative. She remained standing and patiently waited for the woman to finish putting and filling fruits and drinks on the service tray that was on the table, surely this woman was not one of the servants here since she does not looked familiar to her. But when the woman turned around to her direction, and when their eyes finally met, her jaws suddenly tightened and her back stiffened. She suddenly felt this unwanted rage arising deep inside her and her eyes narrowed and stared at the woman's face down to her bare feet, before slowly glaring back at the pretty exterior of this woman.

She remained calm and held her composure and looked up, as she waited to be recognized.

"Forgive me Your Royal Highness, I didn't know the Princess of Karnstein comes in the kitchen," the King's Mistress said in a calm alluring voice, curtsied and looked up.

She remained silent and held the Mistress' stare for a moment, enough for someone to feel awkward or self-conscious. And to her surprise, the Mistress held her stare, which could be considered bold and disrespectful; she felt like being challenged and she have every desire of showing this woman that she was superior than her and the Mistress should remained bowing and should not look at her directly. Her emotions heightened and she felt this boldness inside her struggling to come out. She does not care if the King would be angry, or if her naive and hurt Prince, who does not have the slightest idea of what she was about to do, would discover her unlady-like behavior; right now, she just wants to confront the Mistress!

She raised her left eyebrow and took a deep breath; fully prepared to let the Mistress know that she does not like sharing the Prince of Karnstein to anyone and nobody should touch the Prince except her. Her heart pounded as her conscience wrestled with the thought of confronting and warning the Mistress or not.

Will she finally tell the Mistress to stay away from Carl and mark her territory?
TBC
A Not So Happy Name Day

Chapter Summary

Laura meets Ell face to face for the first time. Will she confront the Mistress?

While at the village market, Laura met Greta's best friend and received a very important advice.

Due to her unsolved problem with Carl, Laura had almost forgotten something...

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the wonderful feedbacks and generous kudos! I am so stoked and overwhelmed at the support and love that you're giving to this very crazy story of mine. Thanks for sharing your unique experiences reading this story; you make me happy and more inspired with all your feedbacks! I know that you experience all kinds of emotions reading this Hollstein story, and I can't blame you if some of you can't handle it. But to those who have patiently and 'daringly' faced every angst, every crazy and every frustrating updates, I salute you all for being 'brave'.

You thought I'm just going to leave you all hanging till 2017? Nope… this update is originally consists of three chapters; I know that the past chapters have been very 'hard' and 'painful' to read, so I thought of not prolonging your 'agony' anymore… and since it's Christmas, please accept this humble gift of mine in the form of long update.

I haven't edited this that much, since I want to post this chapter before I get stuck in the Christmas eve whirl and hysteria, and make sure that you Creampuffs had something to 'distract' you from those 'awkward family gatherings' (or not…but feel free to let me know if it helped :-P).

I wish you all Creampuffs a safe and pleasant Holiday!

Warning: I know that you're all used to it, but I'll just give a warning… this chapter is a very long roller coaster ride of emotions.

*****

Laura

"Who are you?" she questioned, her voice firm and formal; she never uses this kind of tone to other servants, but she felt like using it now.

"I am Elleanor, one of His Majesty's Royal Mistresses," the woman answered with pride.

She was taken aback, but still remained composed at the mention of 'one of His Majesty's Royal Mistresses'.

The King has more than one mistress?!

She cannot fathom why the kind and gentle King of Karnstein have mistresses. Just the thought of her Prince taking a mistress made her already furious and jealous, what more if Carl decided one day to follow his father's footstep and take a mistress or two or even more? The Queen was really a strong woman to allow her husband being pleased by another woman in bed, was her dumbfounded reaction.

Even though Carl assured her that he will never take a mistress, her Prince had the freedom to do that whether she allowed him or not. And now she was worrying that Carl might change his mind after their recent fight.

Suddenly, she was overcome by jealousy and remembered the time she caught Carl and this woman talking like they were lovers under the willow tree. She wanted to confront this Elleanor and tell her to never touch her Prince again.

But despite the rage and jealousy that was battling to burst out inside her, she remained civil and controlled her emotions.

She would not stoop down to this woman's level.

"Is there anything you still need from the kitchen?" she asked instead and distracted herself by looking at the service tray full of fruits, sweets and jug of wine.

She hated that this woman was very calm and demure even if they both knew that there was a certain tension brewing between them.

"I have all I need, Your Highness," the woman replied in a serious tone and took the service tray and curtsied, before leaving quietly.

She hated to admit it, but the King's Mistress was beautiful and well mannered, and this woman seemed decent and intelligent too. It would be easy for any man to fall for this woman's charm.

Once she was alone, she sighed and decided to distract herself. To release her anger and jealousy, she took a piece of cloth, basin and soap. She filled the basin with water and dipped the cloth, and started to wash the table where this Elleanor had put the service tray full of food, and began to scrub the table hard and violently. She heard the door opened again but she did not care who it was. She just needs to release these different kinds of emotions that she feels now, or else she will explode.

"Laura? What are you doing?" Perry queried and snatched the cloth from behind.

"Give me that!" she demanded, her voice high pitched.

"Are you angry?" Perry asked, confused.

"No!"

"Well then, who or what made you upset?" the Lady in Waiting asked, disoriented. "And why are you washing the table like a mad woman?"

"Nobody made me upset! That table is very dirty and I need to wash it!" She returned and put the basin of water with force on the sink and made a loud clung. "And what are you doing here?" she asked, irritated while she swept away the strands of loose hair from her face.

"I'm wondering what's taking you so long." Perry replied, totally confused and worried. "Your bath
is ready. And it's almost noon, we need to leave before it gets crowded in the village market."

She saw the worried and confused look on her Lady in Waiting's face, but she was not in the mood to talk about it. Without saying a word, she stormed out of the kitchen, followed by a very confused Perry behind.

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Few hours later, she found herself staring blankly at the cheeses in front of her.

"Laura? Are you alright?"

The familiar voice of Greta tore her from contemplation.

She looked up and saw her friend's worried expression.

"Sweetie, what's wrong? Did you and Marcus have a fight again?" was Greta's concerned remark.

She shook her head; she was not in the mood to chat.

She was thankful that Perry was busy shopping and looking for some roses to replace the broken ones in the garden. And they agreed to meet her at Greta's stall at the end of the day, since Perry knew that she was not in the mood to stroll around the market village.

"What do you know about Royal Mistresses?" she blurted out of the blue to the dark haired woman in front of her. "I know the kings, princes and nobleman's have these mistresses, but what exactly they can do that the wives can't? And why do the husbands have them, are their wives not enough?"

Greta silently stared at her and after digesting the facts, took a deep breath and leaned closer and mumbled, "I heard these mistresses are the expert when it comes to pleasuring men in bed, that's why sometimes, the men are closer and loved them more than their wives."

This time she cannot control her temper anymore. "How can the men do that when they're already married!?"

"Shhh… Laura not so loud. Let's take a break and go to my place so you can relax," Greta suggested and asked the neighboring stall to take a look at her cheese stall.

"I don't get it, why the need to have another woman in bed, when a man is already bedding his own wife," was her upset reaction while they walk on the way to Greta's house. "Can't they figure out what they really want in bed, so that there's no need to have a mistress?"

"Laura, tone down your voice, we don't want others to hear what we're talking about," Greta warned. But they were suddenly halted by a woman and stood in front of them; purposely blocking them from walking further. Greta looked up and smiled immediately upon recognizing who it was. "Elsie! It's still early, what are you doing outside?"

Still consumed of jealousy and anger, she just glanced at the woman in front of them, as if she lose interest in people and did not even smiled at the woman.

"So, who's this beautiful snob?"

"Oh, Laura I want you to meet my best friend, Elsie," Greta proudly said.
Her attention was suddenly caught upon mentioning the word 'best friend'. She looked up and saw a tall, confident, calm, naughty looking blonde in front of her, smirking and appraising her. She was slightly irritated as she caught the blonde looking at her from head to toe. And before she could tell that it was rude to do that:

"You looked pretty delicious," the blonde nonchalantly remarked.

She almost lost her composure upon hearing the comment.

What the-?

Was this woman trying to hit on her?

"Oh Elsie, please stop teasing her," Greta ordered and playfully slapped the blonde behind.

She managed to smile when she caught this unusual bantering between these women, and saw the blonde smirked at her. She relaxed and offered her hand like a decent human being.

"I'm Laura, it's nice to meet you Elsie," she said, smiled genuinely, and then furrowed her brows while still holding the woman's hand. "You looked familiar..."

"I'd definitely remember if you've been one of the few women I've bedded," the blonde quipped and then earned another slap in the arm from Greta. "...unfortunately, your face is not one of them."

She felt her blood rushed to her face and felt abashed at the blonde's bold remark.

"Laura, my best friend likes to tease all the people she meets, so don't take all her comments seriously," was Greta's apologetic remark.

She smiled at them and released her hand gently from Elsie's hold. "It's alright, I know that she was bluffing," she said.

"I am not," Elsie returned nonchalantly. "I have bedded a number of noble women too."

She was astonished at that remark.

So, she and Danny were not alone.

She suddenly felt ignorant and naïve.

How come she never heard of these things before?

And before her curiosity could kick in...

"Laura is upset and needs to vent." Greta chimed in.

"I am not..." she defended right away and her eyes caught Greta's unconvinced expression. "Alright I am... but I don't want to drag you ladies into my grievances, especially Elsie, since I just met you."

"That's where you're wrong," Elsie quipped. "I am the best listener and I could advise you anything under the sun when it comes to petty grievances or big problems. That's why men always preferred my company," the blonde said with full of confidence.

Then she remembered the nature of work that Elsie has.

"Why don't we go to the tavern down the road and we could talk about your problem over a jug of
ale," Elsie suggested and was about to show them the way. But she hesitated and looked at Greta. "Are women allowed to go in there?"

"Women are allowed to go there sweetie," Greta informed. "But you can only find women like us-"

"What do you mean like us?" was her confused query.

"Women like us… whose commoner," the dark haired woman clarified.

"What Greta means is, you cannot find the Queen of Karnstein or the Princess of Karnstein or the daughter or wife of the baron meddling and socializing with the commoners in the tavern," was Elsie's witty remark.

"Oh." Was all she could say and she was quickly ushered on the way to the tavern. She caught right away Alfred's alert eyes and motioned discreetly for Bastian and the five royal guards in ordinary clothes to walk ahead to the tavern, while the other five of them including Alfred remained surrounding her discreetly.

A few minutes later, they arrived inside the tavern, her eyes caught right away Bastian and the other five royal guards scattered in the tavern; some of them sitting on the table, the others on the bar, while Bastian remained standing in a dark corner.

"Welcome ladies! It's a pleasure to have you here," a tall thin bald man with a finely trimmed moustache wearing an apron ushered them to the farthest corner table.

"Thank you Fabio," Elsie exclaimed right away. "How is Maria doing?"

"…Always a pleasure to see you here and Greta; Maria is already fine and working behind the bar now," the man said smiling and stood in front of them. "Well, to what do I owe the pleasure of having a very beautiful lady visiting my tavern?"

"Fabio, this Laura, she's our friend and she's just moved in from Hollis' Kingdom," Greta relayed and motioned for her to step in front. "Laura, this is Fabio, the owner of this tavern and a good friend of ours."

"It's nice to meet you Fabio," she returned displaying her adorable smile that captivates anyone. She suddenly remembered her promise to Carl not to smile too much when meeting men, since her Prince told her that it make men captivated and attracted to her; she lessened her smile and offered her hand. Fabio took it right away and instead of shaking it, he kissed the back of her hand carefully.

"It's lovely to meet you Laura," the man said and smiled back, and then glanced on the side. "Your husband is a very lucky man to have a beautiful and such adorable lady like you."

She suddenly felt all of the blood in her body went up in her face. "Thank you. How did you know that I'm already married?"

"Isn't that a wedding band you're wearing?" he asked.

She suddenly remembered it and brought her hand in front of her. "Oh, umm yes, it is," was her embarrass reply and put it out right away.

"Laura just got married this summer, so she's not used to it yet," Greta commented and smirked.

"Well, you're lucky to have a rich husband," Elsie chimed in after catching a glance of the rings.
"Oh no, I'm not married to a rich man," she corrected right away, realizing that the blonde recognized how precious her rings were, and at the same time she felt bad at lying. "The rings were gift to me and to my husband by a kind benefactor and master." She said and was relieved when she received a satisfied nod from Elsie and no further questions from the others.

"Shall I show you to your table ladies?" Fabio offered and he led them to the farthest corner table in the tavern. "I think this would be better for your convenience since midday meal is about to start and many people will start coming in to eat or drink later on."

"Thank you," they said and Fabio nodded before leaving the table and they all took a seat at the long bench.

She sat on the side nearest to the wall facing the entrance, so she could communicate discreetly with Alfred and the other royal guards that were already occupying some of the tables and drinking ales; while Alfred sat on the bar and perused the whole tavern for any suspicious looking people. Then she glanced to the right and saw Bastian standing nearest to her, but not enough to hear if they would talk. When she knew that everybody were on their proper places, she smiled and gave her attention to the two ladies who were sitting in front of her.

"So Laura, what do you do and where did you come from?"

Elsie asked her at once and she was surprised that Greta did not say anything to Elsie. Greta was definitely discreet and can be trusted, she thought.

"I'm originally from Hollis Kingdom," she said beaming with pride. "But I decided to try my luck and work here, and found it fruitful and satisfying; so I decided to stay. And then I met Marcus, got married," was her short boring story. "My life isn't really exciting," she mentioned, hoping that Elsie will not ask more questions about her.

As if on cue…

"Laura wants to know about the Royal Mistresses and why some of them can be considered powerful," was Greta's straight to the point comment.

Elsie raised her left eye brow and was not even surprised at the comment.

"The Mistresses can be more influential to the kings and princes sometimes," Elsie related.

She was suddenly alerted at that remark. "What do you mean they can be more influential, when they're just a mistress?"

"Laura, don't be too naïve," Greta said and leaned closer. "The mistresses were so good in pleasing the kings and princes in bed; they use their abilities and charms to make the men fall for them and give them whatever they desire. As long as the men are sexually satisfied and pleasured in bed."

"I'm telling you… men are so superficial that you can control most of them and make them begging for you when you discovered what they desired in bed," Elsie divulged.

Curious, "And what does men desire in bed?" she asked and waited with interest burning in her eyes.

"With the nature of my work I discovered that men have different needs and different fantasies," Elsie explained with genuine seriousness.
She furrowed her brows and hesitated for a while. She did not know if she was ready to hear what this woman was about to say. But she was also dying to know how she could keep Carl in her bed only for herself and not be tempted by taking a mistress.

"You see, most of the noble and upper class women have been taught to remain graceful and reserve," Elsie said and looked at them. "These women are married off to other noble and powerful men for the purpose of prolonging their dynasty and becoming richer."

"How did you know that?" she asked, surprised that Elsie knew how the upper class marriage works.

"Because I've also have some noblemen to warm my bed and pleasure them with what their wives cannot do," was Elsie's proud answer.

"And who might be these noblemen that sought your service?" Greta asked.

Suddenly her heart pounded. What if it's Carl?!

"I'm sorry my friend... the number one rule in my work is being discreet," Elsie declared and received a groan of complaints. "I respect my customer's privacy and don't want to jeopardize their marriage even if I knew that some of them are unhappy with their wives."

But she was not satisfied. She was dying to know if Elsie had a customer from the castle.

"Alright, I do understand your concern about the privacy of your work, and not exposing theirs names," she said and looked at Elsie right into the eyes. "But can you tell us what kind of noblemen are they?" she asked, persistent.

This time, Elsie might have noticed her special interest and paused then stared at her.

"And why are you interested to know?" was Elsie's suspicious reply.

"Elsie, Laura's just curious, and I assure you she wouldn't tell a single soul," Greta clarified.

"I don't know... what if she's a spy sent by one of the wife's of the men that I pleasured?" Elsie retorted.

"I assure you, I'm not a spy and I don't usually spread rumors about the upper class since I work in the castle and had taken an oath of discreet," she related and saw the surprised look from Elsie's face.

"You work in the castle? Why didn't you tell me?" Elsie retorted.

"Why? Is there anyone from the Royal family that had been in your bed?" was her careful and curious reply, hoping that Elsie would take her bait.

"No," the blonde's firm reply. "None of the royal family had been in my bed," Elsie returned with an evil chuckle. "And in case you did not know, the kings and princes do not need our service, since they have their own mistresses to pleasure them in bed. Except if they go to the brothel."

She sighed discreetly, after successfully coaxing Elsie to tell her what she had been dying to know. But her curiosity was piqued when she caught Elsie's surprised expression after learning that she 'works' in the castle.

"Why are you surprised when I said that I work in the castle?" She demanded, in a daring tone.

Elsie surprisingly became silent and her confidence vanished. Then she caught the exchange look
between Elsie and Greta, and she got confused when Elsie nodded to Greta, and then the dark haired woman held Elsie's hand while looking at her.

"Elsie's coworker, and friend, is in the dungeon of the castle," Greta spoke as low as possible. "She was wrongly accused and sent to rot in the castle's dungeon for hitting a nobleman in the face, because she refused to let him whipped her further while she's pleasuring him in bed."

"What?!" was her shocking reaction and cannot believe what her ears heard. She almost created a scene in the tavern when some of the customer's including all of the royal guard's stared at their table and they become alerted. She quickly looked at Alfred and shook her head to tell him that everything was alright. Then she focused her attention at Elsie and made sure to lower her voice. "Tell me what exactly happened," she asked carefully and a pang of anger grew inside her. "What did this nobleman did to your friend and why is he whipping her when you said that he's just there to be pleasured in bed," was her innocent confused remark.

This time Elsie stared at her. "You don't understand… our work is not just to pleasure men in bed, but to fulfill their wildest fantasies too," Elsie said and tried to compose herself. "You see, not all men are nice, gentle or can be satisfied with just putting their penis in our mouth, and asking us to take it as far as we can and suck it until we choke and gasp for air…" Elsie related her voice weak. "There are also men who get aroused when they hurt a woman while having sex with her. And that's what happened to my friend. She cannot take his whipping anymore and asked him to stop it, but he just went on and on. And at the end, she hit him in the face to stop him and wake him from his madness."

She gasped at everything she heard and was shocked at what she discovered. It sounded barbaric and sick. Right now she was fuming deep inside and wanted to know right away who this sadistic bastard.

"What's the name of this man? I'm going to make sure that he pay for his crime and ask for forgiveness from your friend?" she demanded in a firm and authoritative tone that earned a surprised look from Greta and Elsie.

"In case you've forgotten, he's a nobleman, we cannot make him pay for the crime he committed, because nobody's going to believe us, since we're commoners and works in the brothel," Elsie said with a hint of sadness.

"That's insane!" she retaliated and she felt more provoked after hearing the last comment. "I don't care if he's a nobleman; he committed a crime therefore he must be punished," she stated. But was startled when Greta held her hand and she calmed down at the contact.

"Laura, I know that you have a big heart and you always want to help everyone," Greta said in a calm and low tone. "But we have to face the fact that a mere commoner cannot send a nobleman to prison since they all have the money and connection to the highest ranking people in the kingdom."

"I refused to acknowledge what you've said," she claimed and received another shocked reaction from the two women in front. She realized that she was beginning to sound like her true self and toned down and relaxed. "Alright, I get it we have no chance of sending him to prison. But tell me his name."

"Alright, since you're very adamant to know," Elsie said as if challenging her. "His name is Baron Vordenberg."

The name does not ring a bell and she just stared blankly at the two. "Who is he?"

"You don't know him?" was Elsie's surprised reaction.
Then Greta realized why. "Laura, I know that you just moved in in our kingdom and you might not know some of the powerful family in Karnstein Kingdom." Greta was saying but she interrupted her.

"Excuse me Greta, I think the only powerful family in this Kingdom are the Karnsteins, and I happen to work for them," she explained.

"Yes, I am aware of that," Greta replied growing frustrated. "But Baron Vordenberg has direct access to the King of Karnstein since he's in charge of collecting taxes from the people, and the Baron is given a right by the King to manage the lands here in the village markets. Baron Vordenberg is like the little king here in the village."

"Oh, that could be a little complicated," she admitted after hearing all the information about this baron.

"See, I told you. Baron Vordenberg is untouchable," Greta added. "So I suggest that you calm down and don't let your emotions get into you. And we don't want to get in trouble either, because if anyone hears us accusing Vordenberg of doing something evil, he will send his people to us and he might hurt us."

She was about to tell Greta that she was powerful than this Baron, but she suddenly came to her senses and realized that she would blow off her disguise if she continued to be persistent about fighting Vordenberg. She needed to plan this carefully before she accused a trusted man of the King.

"You're right, we can't do anything about Vordenberg," she said, trying to sound like she conceded. "But I'll see what I can do about your friend," she said and looked at Elsie, and instantly saw the blonde's expression lightened.

"Thank you Laura, I hope the King or the Queen pardons my friend," was Elsie's hopeful remark.

"Elsie, please don't expect too much, Laura's working in the kitchen and she rarely sees the King and the Queen. There's a slim chance that they will listen to what Laura has to say," Greta warned.

"I know," Elsie replied knowing that it was impossible to happen. "But I am always hopeful and wouldn't give up telling the people that I meet that can have a connection to the Karnstein Castle about my friend's situation. And who knows, maybe someday it might reach the King or the Queen the news and they might release my friend."

"You're absolutely right about that," she agreed and smiled at Elsie. "I admired your perseverance. Always think positive and never give up."

"And who knows, I might become friends with the Princess or Prince of Karnstein someday," was Elsie's confident cool remark.

"Ahem!" Greta shook lightly her friend. "I think you should wake up from daydreaming. You've already gone too far," she accused. "You're crazy to wish that will happen, remember, nobody has ever seen the Prince and Princess of Karnstein yet, except for those noblemen who are acquainted with them…" Greta explained.

Elsie suddenly became curious. "Yes Laura, why haven't the Prince and Princess of Karnstein visiting us yet?"

"Err…"

Sensing her uncomfortableness, Greta spoke in behalf of her.
"Elsie, Laura is not in a position to answer that question," Greta explained. "I tried asking her too why… well it's actually Marcus I've asked, about the absence of the Prince and the Princess. But they are bound by an oath from the castle and they cannot say or comment anything about the Royal Family, or else they would be punished."

After hearing that comment Elsie seemed appeased.

"I understand…" Elsie nodded. "Your job is similar to mine when it comes to being discreet and private. We need to protect the welfare and privacy of our masters in order to continue working for them."

"Speaking of Marcus, where is he? How come he's not with you?" Greta asked, and sounded disappointed. "He's already married, he should reserve some of his time for you, especially when you come here, since you two can spend some alone time and enjoy strolling around the village market, or eating in a tavern like this for a change, or just simply meet us and have some fun, instead of always being stuck in your work at the castle."

She just gave Greta a disappointed look too and shrugged.

"I married a workaholic and I don't know how to get his attention fully," she sighed and sounded like she had given up.

"I think I can help you with that," Elsie interjected, and smirked. "Getting a man's attention is my forte."

"What do you mean?"

"Elsie, please don't shock her with all your 'how to pleasure a man in bed advise'," Greta warned. "Laura just got married and grew up from a very strict and over protective father. It might be too much for her if you'll tell her some of the stuffs that you do."

"Oh no, it's alright. I think I'm old enough to know all the shocking things in this world," she claimed. "In fact, I want to know those things that they don't teach and write in the book." After telling that remark, she received again a surprised look from Greta and Elsie. "What?"

"You can read?" Greta asked, dumbfounded.

She paused and gathered her thoughts. Sometimes her being talkative was going to blow up her cover. She totally forgotten that most of the commoners cannot read; and if they do so, they read slowly.

"A little,"

"So, who taught you?" was Greta's curious question.

"The Princess' Lady-in-Waiting," she answered, knowing that it's partly true since she hated lying. "Whenever the servants are finished eating their meals and would gather to relax before going back to work, she make it a point to teach me how to read the book that she lent me."

"Well, do you want to learn the real thing or not?" Elsie changed the subject; the conversation about reading a book does not interest the blonde.

She turned her attention to Elsie, and Greta gave her friend the full attention too, knowing that it will be very interesting, if not, shocking.
"I'm going to tell you how to please your... what's the name of your better half again?" Elsie asked before resuming.

"Car- Marcus," she pronounced sweetly and she suddenly felt excited.

"Alright, Marcus... I'll tell you how to make Marcus happy and I guarantee you, he will not look another woman again," was Elsie's confident remark.

"I hope so, because I feel like I'm an ignorant virgin," she commented and earned a fit of laughter from the two women in front of her. She did not know why she felt comfortable in the presence of these people and enjoyed their company so much.

She suddenly felt better and realized many things: first, that one should not judge a person by his or her status in life; and second, never to lose hope and keep on fighting. She will do anything to win back her Prince, just like Elsie fighting for her friend who was wrongly accused.

There was no way that she will let Ell or other potential mistresses snatch Carl from her; even if it meant getting some advice from a brothel worker!

*****

She woke up feeling the warmth of the morning sun touching her face but feeling more tired than ever. Her body felt heavy and she does not have any intention of getting up. Ever since Carl had refused to sleep in her chamber, she never closes the curtains of the four poster bed anymore. Now, she regretted drawing the curtains of her bed last night, as the strong sunlight spread throughout her chamber. She groaned and covered her face with her blanket to salvage any remaining sleep. But the sound of the door opening halted her from dozing off again.

"It's almost noon, why aren't you up yet?" Perry asked walking towards the four poster bed.

"Because it's Saturday, and I deserve a break after those exhausting days," she grumbled and hid under the sheets again. But Perry sat beside her bed and drew the sheets down from her face.

"Sweetie, the only thing that's making you tired lately is the crying at night before sleeping," Perry retorted. "I told you to stop it."

She pouted at her Lady in Waiting upon hearing the truth. It had been six days now since Carl left the castle, and every time she sleeps and wakes up all she can think about was her Prince. She was sad, worried and frustrated of waiting for him and not knowing if he was alright or if he had come to a decision of what to do with their relationship, or how they could solve their problem.

"Laura, I just received a message from Her Majesty..."

Once her ears caught the serious tone of voice of Perry she rose quickly and faced her Lady in Waiting; "Did something happen to Carl?" was her worried upset remark, knowing that he could have a panic attack anytime.

"No, sweetie, His Highness is alright," was Perry's reassuring reply. "Her Majesty received a message from him, extending their stay in the woods until Wednesday."

"But why? He said that it's just a week?" was her frustrated comment. She was already looking forward seeing him on Monday.

"I'm sorry, Her Majesty did not elaborate more," was Perry's sad remark. "And she was asking what your plans are for Tuesday? Because she needs to inform the kitchen how many guests are coming?"
She stared confusedly at Perry and does not have the slightest idea of what they were talking about.
Perry raised her brows and glared. "Have you forgotten your name day?"

*****

She gazed at the stars from the window of her chamber, reflecting on the events of this day… she felt like crying but at the same time she learned to appreciate more the people around her.

Her first name day at the Karnstein Castle felt like the saddest name day in her life, next to being away from her father and not celebrating it together with him for the first time. She was looking forward celebrating her special day with her special someone, but life was not always a bed of roses, she reminded herself. But she was very thankful that her in-laws were with her when they ate dinner together and celebrated her name day a few hours ago.

When she told the Queen that she was not having a feast and would rather accompany her mother-in-law at the monastery to check their hospital project, the Queen did not question her anymore. She appreciated that her mother-in-law respected her decision.

After spending almost the entire day at the monastery, she can feel now the fatigue of helping the nuns sewing, cooking and planting. She was planning on going straight to bed upon arriving in the castle, but once she saw the King waiting for them and excitedly told her that he and the Queen had a gift for her and should be opened after they have eaten dinner, she decided to dine with them.

And now, she was feeling emotional at the thoughtfulness of her in-laws and wondered if their feeling sorry for her since their son was not present at her name day, or they were simply generous and thoughtful people, especially her father-in-law, who even noticed why she did not eat her chocolate cake.

Her train of thoughts was interrupted when she heard a coded knock on the door, and knew that it was Natalie.

"Come in!" she shouted at once, thinking that her handmaiden friend was about to greet her, since she missed seeing them today before leaving for the monastery. She beamed at once when she saw the three of them entering her chamber and smiled at them.

"Happy name day Princess!" All three shouted.

She was almost in tears when she heard it and saw them run towards her and they all hug her tight.

After the group hug, she felt better and faced them.

"Thanks Betty, Nat and Sarah Jane, I thought you girls had forgotten it," was her emotional remark.

"Of course not!" Betty retorted at once. "We've been waiting for you the whole day and we just waited till Perry was finished helping you."

Perry just left an hour ago and gave her a set of new underwear as a gift, since her Lady in Waiting cannot accept that she lost two underwear.

She wrinkled her brows and suspected that the girls were up to something naughty again. She looked at Sarah Jane for confirmation.

"We know that you're very sad right now since His Hotness isn't here…” Sarah Jane was saying but was interrupted by Natalie.
"...And since His Majesty, King John isn't here to tell you that you might catch some disease, or get a scratch on your face..." Natalie was telling and then motioned for Betty to continue.

"... and since your 'big wild cat' is not here to cheer you up," Betty resumed, grinned and showed the sack that she was holding behind; opened it carefully and took out the content. "...we thought that Snow here can cheer you up tonight."

She opened her mouth wide, totally awestruck and cannot believe what she was seeing now.

"Oh my god, it's so adorable!" she exclaimed and took right away the white cat that Betty was holding in front of her. The cat meowed once she touched it and she gazed at it, totally mesmerized and fascinated. She always wanted to have a cat, but her over protective father was afraid that she might catch some deadly disease from having a cat, so, she was never allowed to have one.

"Snow is our cook's cat," Natalie said excitedly. "Sarah Jane asked her if we could borrow it to cheer up our Princess. And she told us that it'll be a pleasure to lend him."

She was touched at her friend's thoughtfulness. They surely knew how to cheer her up.

"Thank you! I think this is the best thing that happened today," she said her voice faltering; she felt a lump on her throat forming, and suddenly found herself speechless. She gave them a hug one by one, while carefully holding the cat.

"You can hold him while sleeping tonight so you won't feel alone," Sarah Jane suggested. "And we told Perry that she does not need to wake up early tomorrow to prepare your breakfast and help you dressing up. We told her that we'll help you instead."

She managed to let out a demure laugh, knowing that her Lady in waiting would be shocked if Perry finds out that a cat was on her bed, sleeping beside her.

"After helping you dress up tomorrow, Nat will take back Snow and return it before Perry wakes up," Betty explained and grinned. "Sarah Jane had alerted the guards on your door to warn you or us in case Perry changes her mind."

It sounded diabolical listening to the handmaidens' plan of how they will sneak back the cat without being caught by the Lady in Waiting. She felt like a child again as she recalled all the naughty things that they have done together since they were young.

"But in the meantime, he's all yours for the rest of the night," Natalie commented while petting the top of the cat's head, and it purred at Natalie's touch.

She was suddenly reminded of someone and sadly recalled how Carl purrs when she was caressing a certain area under his ears.

Noticing her sudden change of mood...

"Hey, are you alright?" Sarah Jane asked.

"Wha-?" she mumbled and saw all three pairs of eyes looking at her, felt Sarah Jane's hand on her arm and she realized that she made them worried. She forced a smile, "I'm fine," she returned and hugged the cat that she was holding, and heard it meowed.

"Take a rest now and we'll see you tomorrow," Betty said reassuringly.

"Snow likes to cuddle, so you won't be disappointed," Natalie added and winked.
They all gave her a hug again before leaving.

"Goodnight and we hope that Snow can make you feel better," was Sarah Jane's hopeful remark.

She gave them a genuine smile, "He already did. Goodnight girls and thank you," she said, grateful for this act of kindness, and watched them left her chamber with a smile on her face.

Her Prince might have forgotten or have chosen to ignore her name day, but the kindness and thoughtfulness of the people around her had made her name day brighter.

"Alright, fuzzy woozy furry kitty, time to go to bed," she said, excited and took the white furry creature with her. She blew all the candles in her chamber and just let the fire from the fireplace lit the room.

Once they were comfortably tucked inside her blanket, she felt right away the white furry creature snuggled on her chest, then to her neck. She held him tight and she felt secured and calm as she hears him purred while she touches his soft fur and scratched gently under his ears. She sighed, cleared her thoughts and let the steady low sound of purring and the warmth of the cat soothed her to sleep.

*****

She groaned and forcefully tried to remain asleep, but the sound of knocking rudely snatched her to consciousness.

She slowly opened her eyes and forced herself to wake, her eyes caught right away the furry creature that was snuggled beside her and carefully turned on the other side and let the cat stay under the warmth of the sheet. The fire on the fireplace where still blazing and she thought that she might have just slept for a few minutes. Then her attention caught the sound of the door opening; wondering who could it be, she rose from the bed, and adjusted her sight to the direction of the door.

She felt the cold air hit her skin at once and she shivered. She furrowed her brows as she tried to decipher who it was, when she saw the image stood by the opened door.

"May I come in?"

The familiar deep sultry voice of Carl caressed her ears and she suddenly found herself fully awake. Her heart pounded madly and she tried to gather herself.

She did not expect this.

"Yes you may, Your Highness," she returned and croaked.

Her eyes focused on Carl and she felt intimidated as he walked slowly and silently towards the four poster bed; their bed, she bitterly recalled, and he stood by the left side, where she was, with a decent distance between them. He was still wearing his hunting clothes and boots, and looked haggard, definitely from the exhaustion of late journey, she guessed.

He still has this air of superiority, aloofness and coldness that he displayed before he left the castle.

She calmly sat on the bed and rested her back on the headboard, while Carl remained standing on the side.

His silence started to make her uncomfortable.

She could feel the tension between them and the suspense was killing her as stillness prevailed across the chamber.

She avoided eye contact.
"Look at me," he ordered, his voice husky, firm and controlled; just like his mother.

She obeyed and reluctantly met his icy cold stare. She could still see the trace of anger in those dark melancholic eyes and she began to feel anxious at the sight of her cold, aloof and angry Prince.

Perry was wrong; the fresh air of the mountain and the solitude did nothing to calm her Prince.

She took a deep breath and tried to control her emotions, but it felt like she does not have control anymore of her feelings as she realized the truth:

He's still angry.

She felt the unshed tears threatening to fall and she wiped quickly her left eye. And she felt like choking as she frustratingly fought the pain and anxiety inside her.

Then Carl's voice distracted her...

"Did you miss me?" he asked his voice low and almost faltering.

She gazed at him woefully, "Like someone cut a hole in me," she returned and wrung her hands, as she fought this overwhelming emotion and swallowed hard.

The sight of him not reacting to her reply and remained standing aloof in front of her hurts.

She hated this side of Carl; when he was devoid of emotions. She knew that it will come to this.

She felt a pain in her chest as she tried to suppress the tears that were threatening to burst out.

And then she saw him took a deep breath but still remained calm and stony. She knew that not showing his emotions was a part of his upbringing, since his mother always tells him that it was a sign of weakness. And right now she hated the Queen for teaching him this dreadful trait of his.

"While I was away, I thought about a lot of things… especially what happened recently…"

Finally, he spoke.

She remained calm and not breaking her eye contact with him.

"Getting away from you and sword fighting with a bunch of knights and guards everyday did help released this rage inside me," Carl said with all honesty.

She fidgeted on her bed, but still held his stare. Then she found herself breathing heavily and sniffling.

"When I left the castle, I was determined to focus on being the best king and told myself that I will dedicate my heart, my mind and my body on training to become the best. I told myself I will never show my emotions again to anybody…" Carl related in a firm calm tone. "…especially to you."

After that revelation, she grabbed the sheets tightly till her knuckles turned white as she tried to fight these overwhelming emotions inside her.

"On the first days that I was away from you, I tried to forget you by nurturing my anger; but I can't do it. That's why I decided to extend; because I want to come back here, strong and independent from your love, and devoid of my feelings for you. I told myself that I won't come back here until I'm fully prepared and strong enough to face you," he said firmly.
Her shoulders began to shake.

She cannot control it anymore.

She finally released the tears that she was suppressing, silently cried and bowed her head.

"Look at me when I'm talking to you," Carl ordered firmly.

She flinched at the sudden change of his tone.

Upset, she looked up as tears ran down those smooth cheeks of hers.

She cannot take this anymore…

"Why don't you just tell me that you don't want me!" She exclaimed in between tears. "I can't stand anymore listening how you want to forget me… how you hated me!" she retorted. "If you're trying to punish me by telling me all these things; you've already succeeded, because I've never felt so ashamed and so guilty in my entire life. I've already apologized and regretted hurting you, and if you think that this isn't enough to punish me then tell me to go away. Because I can't bear living each day watching you hate me!" and with that, she covered her face with both her hands and let the pain and tears break out.

She does not know where all these emotions were coming from. Usually, she was strong and can endure Carl's indifference, but right now, she felt weak, helpless and easily hurt. She hated that she cannot control her emotions anymore. Perhaps love has made her weak.

While she bawled and let out all the emotions inside her, she was suddenly startled when she felt strong arms wrapped around her waist tightly.

What the-?

Disconcerted, she removed her hands from her face and saw black hair on her lap and found Carl's head burrowed on her lap, while he enclosed his arms around her waist.

She cried hard when she realized Carl kneeling beside her bed and hugging her tight.

Her Prince was back!

When her sobbing subsided she carefully touched his head and caressed those dark short locks. Gently, she gathered Carl on her arms and held him tight too. They remained holding each other for a moment, as they both relish each other's touch.

She reluctantly released her arms around him, when she felt Carl moved and sought her gaze. Her heart melted at the sight of those dark melancholic eyes as she saw tears. She cupped his face gently, brushed those tears away and gazed at him lovingly.

"Laura, I could never hate you, my love for you is too strong to quell," he said with utmost sincerity while sobbing. "You're my sun and my life. I think I'll die if I stop loving you…” he added as he catches his breath.

After that overwhelming confession, she cannot take it anymore and interrupted him by claiming those soft thin lips of his and kissed him passionately.

God! She missed him so much!

Carl reciprocated the kiss with the same intensity until they need to breathe.
She released from the kiss and cupped his face again; she missed touching his jawline.

"I love you so much Carm. And I'm sorry again," she mumbled, while sniffling. "I think I'll die too without your love. Please, don't get mad like that again. You scared me."

Carl furrowed his brows, "I love you too Cupcake," he breathed out and rose on his knees and sat on the bed. "And I'm sorry, that I've been hard on you."

He gathered her in his arms, and she felt secured right away and rested her head on his shoulder.

"I won't scare you again," he said and kissed her forehead.

She wrapped her arms around him and held him tight, while Carl stroked her hair. They remained hugging for some moments, as they both comforted each other. Now she can tell that their love was stronger and she was thankful that they had surpassed a difficult trial.

Suddenly, she felt something hard on his pocket and she reluctantly released from his embrace and saw the confused look on his face.

"What?" he asked confused. "Do I have to kneel again and beg for your love?" was his sarcastic comment.

"No, you silly broody cat," she retorted and pointed to his trousers. "I felt something hard and pointy…"

She received a side leer at once from Carl and a naughty smirk, and felt his fingers run slowly on her upper arm.

"Hmm, Cupcake, we just make up minutes ago and you already want to make out?" he returned in his most sultry voice, raising his left eyebrows.

Shocked, "Wha-?! No!" she defended and slapped him lightly on the upper arm.

"Ouch! Is that how you welcome me back?" Carl retaliated, but smiled and fumbled on the right pocket of his trousers and took out something. "Is this the hard and pointy one that you felt?" he asked as he showed an unpolished and imperfect piece of wood carving. "Happy name day, Cupcake," he said and proudly presented the rough rose wood carving.

Her eyes widened and at the same time she felt like crying again knowing that he did not forget her name day. She was astounded and suddenly speechless; and just took the gift.

"Carm, you made this?" was her hyper curious remark. "It's beautiful!"

"I did… since I don't have anything to give you when I return, and I kinda destroyed all the roses in the-" he was interrupted again by a pair of soft sweet lips.

"Thanks! I love it!" she returned giggling. "But what's this stain?" she asked, suddenly worried after carefully looking at the rose wood carving.

"Umm… it's my first ever wood carving so I…" he related.

And she quickly glanced at his hands and noticed his left thumb wrapped in a cloth.

"Noooo, are you hurt?" she asked, worried and pouted. She gently took his left hand and worriedly stared at it.
"Cupcake, it's just a small cut," Carl remarked and put away gently his left hand.

Then she felt him lightly pinched her cheek. She sat facing him and still pouted showing that she was not convinced. And instead of arguing with her, she felt him nuzzled on her neck and began to plant small kisses around her neck and under her ears. She closed her eyes and began to feel dizzy at the sensation of Carl's soft wet lips on her sensitive skin. Her left hand ran gently through those short locks and found herself moaning when Carl sucked on her pulse point. She was about to put her arms around his neck and pull him to bed with hers, but she was disappointed when he stopped kissing her; she opened her eyes, and the next thing she heard was a loud sniffing around her neck.

"Cupcake, you smell different," Carl commented, and sounded suspicious.

She narrowed her eyes and furrowed her brows. "Don't tell me I smelled, I just took a bath before going to bed," she defended while she watched him wrinkled his nose then rubbed it irritatingly.

"Had anyone touch or kiss you on your neck aside from me?" he begrudgingly accused.

She caught him glaring at her, and the smile on his face disappeared.

"Wha-?! No. No one had touched or kissed me," she suddenly felt guilty as she recalled kissing Danny. "… and I promise myself not to kiss anyone else, except you," she defended at once but she could still see the wrinkles on his forehead. "What made you think that I've kissed someone?"

"Because I could smell it," was Carl's serious confident remark.

She widened her eyes and was growing frustrated at his sudden accusation.

"What the hell are you talking about?" was her confused remark.

"Laura, I know how you smell, and right now, there's a different smell on your skin that isn't mine," was Carl's serious firm answer.

She rolled her eyes and sighed. She was amazed that he knew her smell and had perhaps 'marked' her after recognizing a different smell on her. Suddenly her eyes darted on the other side of the bed; she smiled when she recalled the little creature that had been the only source of her happiness lately. Then she looked back at her brooding prince, who seemed to be not happy about his discovery.

"I think I know the smell that you're talking about…" she commented and carefully leaned on the other side of the bed and gently took out under the sheet the white furry creature that had been keeping her company. She held it towards her Prince.

The look on Carl's face suddenly changed, and she witnessed the shocked and yet furious expression of the Prince of Karnstein.

"What's that filthy creature doing in our bed?" Carl asked, shooting daggers at the white furry ball, and rose from the bed, as if he saw a rival.

"This is Snow, the girls lend this to me," she said in a cheerful tone, as the cat stretch on her hands sleepily; she ignored the annoyed comment of Carl, and held the white cat in front of him again.

"The girls told me that, since my 'big wild cat' is not around to cheer me up on my name day, they decided to get me something that could make me happy."

Carl glared at the white furry creature that was now awoke and seemed to be glaring back at him. "Well, your big wild cat has returned; so give it back to them," the Prince said, annoyed.
"But Carm, Snow-" she was about to tell him to give the cat a chance to get to know him, and maybe they could become friends too…

"What is it going to be… me or that filthy creature…" was Carl's serious remark but paused, and…”Ah-Choo!"

"Carl? Are you alright?" she asked and put away the cat back to bed, as Carl cannot stop sneezing. Then she saw his eyes watering and reddening and suddenly had a runny nose.

"Cupcake, get that horrible creature out of here, it's making my nose irritated," he said and began to scratch his face.

"Oh god, Carm I'm sorry, didn't know that you're reacting badly to cats," she apologized and wiped her hands on her side before rising from the bed and took the satin robe beside the bed and put it on. "Come on, let's go to your chamber and I will help you wash up," she suggested and gave the poor little white furry creature a one last look before walking out of her chamber. "Sorry Snow, I have to leave you for now," she mumbled apologetically.

"Cupcake, what are you doing?" Carl asked annoyed and impatient, as he realized that he was about to leave the chamber alone. "Leave that filthy creature!"

"I'm coming! I'm just saying goodbye to Snow, he looks lonely and…” she was babbling but once she caught the broody Prince waiting impatiently by the door, she tore her sight out of the furry ball creature and left him with a heavy heart. Right now she had her own big wild cat to take care of and pacify, and assure that he was the only 'cat' in her life.

TBC
Love Remains

Chapter Summary

Hollstein Reunion.

Carmilla suspected that Laura is still reading the Forbidden Book…

Chapter Notes

I know it's late but I still want to greet you all a Happy New Year! I bet you all have a long list of New Year's Resolution :-D I always try to make a list and always end up fulfilling two or three. So, I stopped writing it. But I told myself that I will try to be more appreciative of all the small simple things and people around me, and compliment them more of their good qualities. How about you?

I bet you're all wondering why it took me so long to update… I've had a little injury and the pain made it difficult for me to concentrate and do anything. But I'm better now and is back to start the year with a 'Hollstein smut' *grins nervously*. It's one of the reasons too why it took me a month to update. I'm not a smut writer, I'm more of an 'angst writer' so please excuse me again for my lame attempt of writing a smut. Let me know how you think, especially the guys out there (if there are any of you out there who reads this, let me know). Because I plan on not writing smut in this story again if you think I suck writing it, I'll just be a disgrace to the "G!P/smut writers" if I can't write a decent smut.

And lastly, thank you for all your wonderful feedbacks and kudos. And to those who had been constantly and regularly leaving feedbacks (and kudos) since the start of this fic, I really appreciate your generosity, honesty and humbleness of admitting that you like and enjoy this story despite my imperfect English grammar…

Warning: Fellatio

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Carmilla

She sauntered through the hall while sullenly listening to Laura's hyper babble at why that filthy cat was 'adorable', and made the Princess happy… she snorted.

She now officially hates it.

She cannot accept that something had caught her wife's attention and affection; something that was not her. If it had not been to that white furry ball, she could be snuggling now with her wife, she bitterly thought.
Suddenly her perfect eyesight caught a glimpse of Laura's back under the faint light of the torches that hang along the hall. The red silk robe hugged the princess' curves exquisitely and the graceful swaying of her wife's hips caused her heart to race, licked her lips and felt the bulge inside her trousers growing harder.

After days of not being with Laura, she felt the frustration inside her had grown stronger and she will go mad if she cannot touch her wife… she cannot take it anymore.

She moved closer and was about to reach for Laura's face, and kiss her wife, but was surprised when Laura avoided her.

"Don't touch me!" Laura warned.

Shocked, she furrowed her brows, stopped from walking and sought Laura's gaze.

She grew more confused when she saw Laura giving her a timid smile instead.

"I mean… don't touch me, because I might have some remaining cat fur on me; I don't want you to get irritated or sneeze again," Laura's voice trailed off in a sheepish tone.

"Seriously, Cupcake?" was her unbelievable retort and tried to reach Laura's face again but the Princess stepped back a meter away from her.

"I'm serious! I don't want you to get sick because of me," Laura reasoned out and pouted. "And I don't want Her Majesty to worry again, just like when we arrived at the castle after that long journey from my kingdom."

"What are you talking about?" was her confused reply and caught the Princess' serious expression. She honestly does not remember what happened that time; she was groggy the entire duration of their travel.

"The Queen was so worried when she saw you unconscious… I told her that I'll take care of you, but she refused my offer and asked Alfred to take you in her chamber," Laura explained and looked down. "I think your mother doesn't trust me when it comes to taking care of you," the princess finished with a pout.

"Hey... that's not true, of course she trusts you," she mumbled and attempted to touch Laura's face again, but her wife was so adamant about not touching her. She rolled her eyes and just stood still, and held her distance. "Cupcake…" she tried again and Laura dodged it.

"I told you not to touch me!" Laura reproached.

Annoyed, "Fine!" she exclaimed, turned around and resumed walking, the thump and the clacking sound of her leather hunting boots echoing throughout the hall.

_Bloody dimwit cat!_

The walk on the way to her chamber was quick; sensing that her mood changed, Laura treader behind her quietly.

When they arrived at the wing leading to her chamber, she strode along the hall, while the Princess tried to catch up with her.

"Carl, wait for me," Laura called out, after they passed the guards and approached the Prince's chamber.
She ignored the call, opened the door wide and crossed the threshold without turning around. Once inside, she felt a hand on her left arm, and she reluctantly turned around.

"Hey, what's wrong?" was Laura's confused remark after closing the door behind.

She avoided eye contact and pretended she did not hear the question.

"Have I done something to upset you?" Laura asked totally oblivious.

She inhaled deeply, looked down and touched the bridge of her nose with the right hand. She was debating on revealing her feelings. But when she saw the wrinkles on Laura's forehead...

"I hate it that you're talking about how sweet and adorable, and how that filthy creature made your day happy! Aren't you happy that I'm here?" she blurted out; serious. "I've been in the woods for days, exhausted, hungry, bruised and freezing. I need some cuddles and fondling too, but instead you're snuggling with something else; and you're too worried for leaving that filthy creature in your-" she paused and got even irritated when she realized, "…No… actually it's our bed… you're worried that you left it in our bed, and still thinking about it. Next time don't ever let that filthy cat sleep in our bed again!" she grumbled. "And now, I can't touch you because of that damn cat!"

She waited for a moment, expecting an apology, but instead she heard something else.

What the holy hell-?

She heard giggling…

…After confessing to her wife how 'hurt' she was and felt unappreciated… Laura was giggling.

Then she caught Laura suppressing a laugh and grinned at her.

"Fine! Make fun of my feelings!"

Insulted and pissed off, she turned around and strode across the room while Laura treaded behind. She caught sight of her Valet coming from the bathroom and received a confused look.

LaFontaine was about to utter a word but she waved a finger to silence them and walked further to the bathroom with the Valet following behind her.

"I'm sorry… I…" Laura uttered but can't seem to form a proper sentence and can't stop giggling. "Please don't tell me that you're-"

She listened to her wife's frustrated attempt to talk, but she knew that she would be ignored further when her Valet realized that the Princess was in the chamber too and stopped following her.

"Princess Laura! It's so nice to see you again," LaFontaine exclaimed, after turning around to greet the princess. "Happy name day!"

"Laf! It's good to see you too!"

She glanced back and saw her wife embracing her Valet; they seemed to be enjoying and have missed more each other's company. She rolled her eyes, strode further to the bathroom and slammed the door behind her.

She irritatingly took off all her clothes and threw them everywhere before hopping in the bath tub.

Half an hour later, she emerged from the bathroom refreshed and clean; her hair still wet.
She tightened the knots of her thick wool purple robe, not used to wearing it outside of the bathroom with nothing underneath it.

She furrowed her brows when she saw her wife still immersed in a conversation with her Valet, sitting on the white wool sheepskin rug by the large fireplace, next to the arm chair.

She was growing impatient. First the filthy cat, and now her Valet, when will she ever get a chance with Laura!

She walked towards them and when she got closer, she was disappointed when they did not look at her.

Feeling ignored, she moved and stood behind LaFontaine and cleared her throat.

This time, they noticed her, and rose; Laura remained sitting on the white sheepskin rug, like a mermaid sitting on the rock, fondling the soft wool and flashed a timid smile that made her member twitched. She held her wife's naughty gaze and unconsciously bit her lower lip. The sight of her Princess stroking slowly the soft fluffy luxurious fur looked sensual; she wondered if Laura was thinking the same thing. She cringed at the sinful thoughts that invaded her mind, and was interrupted in no time by her Valet clearing their throat; reminding her to stop eye sexing her wife.

"Do you need anything else? Have you seen the clean pair of braies and your sleeping tunic in the bathroom? Is the bath warm enough?" LaFontaine asked randomly.

She reluctantly tore her gaze off from Laura and looked at Laf. "No thanks, I'm done," she replied. The suspicious look on her Valet hindered her from admiring further the sight of her beautiful innocent looking Princess. "And yes, I've seen them, but I'll lend the tunic to my wife. Kindly assist her-" she was saying but Laura looked at LaFontaine at once.

"It's alright Laf, you can rest now," Laura chimed in and smiled.

"Are you sure? Because if you're uncomfortable with me helping you, I could call Perry," Laf suggested sincerely.

"No, it's not that. And thank you for the offer. But I've already taken a bath," Laura returned politely and rose. "I just need to wash up and change my clothes because I've touched a cat."

"You have a cat?" LaFontaine asked eyes widened with fascination.

Before she could hear another story about how adorable that white filthy cat, she shot daggers to her Valet, and furrowed her brows… "It's late; I'm already exhausted and want to go to bed," was her grumpy remark.

She was already in heat and aching to touch Laura.

After days of sleeping in the woods alone in a cold tent with no human heat to warm her, and after that passionate reconciliation and sweet kisses from Laura, and the fact that she had been thinking about Laura's breasts and having sex with her wife all the time while she was away, she cannot wait any longer to claim what she had been fantasizing in the woods.

"Good night Princess," LaFontaine said and bowed to the suppressed looking cupcake.

"Good night Laf, we'll talk tomorrow and I'll tell you everything about –" Laura was saying.

But she got impatient and irritated. "Princess, I've saved some clean hot water for you in a basin, I
suggest you go to the bathroom now before it gets cold."

Laura acknowledged and gave Laf a smile before retreating to the bathroom.

When she knew that her wife was not in sight…

"I don't want to hear anything about that filthy cat again," was her serious order and glared at her Valet. When she saw LaFontaine was about to retort, "Not a word," she warned and waved her index finger to them. "…Leave now."

LaFontaine glared back and was about to turn around and walk towards the door, but remained still and said, "What's the matter? Is the big wild horny panther jealous of the little white cat?"

And before she could bicker with LaFontaine, they displayed a naughty smirk and strode towards the door.

"I will put an apple on your head tomorrow and practice with my bow and arrow!" she retaliated and was irritated that LaFontaine did not look back.

Annoyed, she sat on the chair across the fire place, slouching with her legs spread wide, rests her arms on the chair's arms, and watched the blazing fire dance in front of her and let the crackling sound of the wood burning hypnotizes her. If her mother catches her sitting like this she would definitely be reprimanded for not sitting like a refined prince.

Suddenly, she recalled the time she argued with her mother before going to the woods and reminded herself to make peace with her.

Her attention was suddenly diverted to the rug under her foot. Recalling how Laura touched it, she got curious, removed her shoes and put her bare feet on the wool sheepskin. She sighed immediately as her skin felt the soft wool beneath her feet and understood why Laura enjoyed touching it. She leaned on the right arm of the chair and relaxed; she remembered the night she spent in the woods, as they gathered every night around the fire eating their dinner and relaxing afterwards till they become sleepy.

For days, she fought her anger, hatred, angst and managed to control it thru the help of LaFontaine and Armitage. Her Valet had been her greatest supporter and adviser, and Armitage had proved to be her best protector and trainer when it comes to fighting and survival. She was very thankful that her parents have chosen only the best people to help her.

The days she spent in the woods did not just clear her mind and help her realized how strong her love for Laura was, but it also gave her the chance to miss and appreciate how valuable her wife in her life.

She bitterly recalled the time before she left for the woods, when she was furious and her mind and heart was clouded by anger…

Wallowing in pain in the darkness of her chamber, she ignored LaFontaine's call and covered her ear with a pillow to muffle the irritating voice of her Valet. She was thankful that yesterday, nobody bothered her and she woke up and left her bed before sunset. But today, she felt like her life was back into this overwhelming endless duties and obligations, and she does not have a heart to do or fulfill those duties; not when she was hurting and furious.

"Leave me alone!" she shouted and there was a moment of silence, followed by a sound of the door
shut. She sighed when she knew that her Valet had finally left her chamber and threw the pillow at the end of the bed.

It was only second day since she and Laura had a fight, but her body and mind were already exhausted from what happened.

She cannot take the pain anymore. She needed to do something to ease her suffering, and she cannot just ignore Laura forever. It's either she forgives and reconciles with Laura or tell Laura to go away and leave her, so that she would not be reminded anymore of the pain of her wife's 'infidelity'. And right now she had every desire of choosing the last option.

But her heart still intervened and she resolved on giving herself a chance to decide wisely as she sought the advice of someone...

She must have doze off for some minutes, as she was roused into consciousness and felt a hand on her knee, followed by the low soft soothing voice of her wife calling her.

"Carm? Come on, let's go to bed now," Laura mumbled.

When she had fully woken and focused clearly her eyes down and saw her wife kneeling in front of her, with the princess' hands on her knees, she almost gasped when she saw her wife wearing her tunic. Laura must have forgotten to tie it, and now she enjoys the sight of her wife's round breasts beautifully peeking from the tunic's front. Suddenly, she felt her shaft twitched. Then a sense of possessiveness consumed her knowing that those breasts and that body was hers to devour.

She reached for Laura's face and caressed the Princess' jawline before putting her hand on the nape and brought Laura closer to her. She inhaled before claiming those soft wet lips, and kissed Laura with an open mouth.

"Are you really mine and only mine?" her voice deep and raspy, and recalled her wife kissing the Princess of Straka. A tinge of jealousy and anger possessed her while she devoured on Laura's neck, and selfishly bit and sucked the Princess' pulse points.

She was caught off guard when Laura pushed her back to the chair and released from the kiss and from her possessive touches. Shocked at Laura's reaction, she glared at her wife, who was still kneeling in front of her and saw the Princess giving her the same intense stare.

"I am yours and only yours Carm. I will never give you any reason to doubt anymore," was Laura's passionate reply.

And the next thing she saw was Laura's hands spreading her legs wider and kneeled closer to her. She gasped and held her breath and her hands tightened on both arms of the chair, while she watched Laura slowly untied the knots of her robe.

"Cupcake…" she breathed out after Laura managed to untie her robe and slowly spread it open, unravelling her naked form in front of her wife's hungry eyes.

"You're beautiful…" Laura whispered.

She caught those fully dilated hazel eyes revels her nakedness; her breasts heaved and her penis hardened, as she unravels in front of Laura. She remained still, surrendering herself freely to her wife. The touch of her wife's hands on her knees and feeling the cold air on her exposed front was enough to make her hard.
Her wife gasped, upon seeing her semi hard shaft stretching upwards. She thought that Laura was going to panic but was surprised when she saw her grinned.

"Someone is excited…"

She heard the Princess whispered and moved closer, but careful not to touch her stiff member, Laura gave her a peck on the lips then started to kiss her pulse points and the lines of her jawbone. She groaned when Laura nipped on her ear and bit her on the shoulder, languidly kissing her way down to her chest, before capturing one of her erected nipple and sucked it hard.

"Cupcake…" she closed her eyes, arched her back and moaned frustratingly as she felt Laura's hot tongue swirling around her sensitive buds, giving each of them the same torturous attention. Realizing her lack of skin contact, she put a hand on Laura's hair and caress it but only to be put back again to the arm rest of the chair.

"Don't touch me… not yet," Laura uttered in between sucking of nipples and look up. "And don't look away."

She groaned at the command as the features of her innocent looking wife turned naughty, and she saw Laura bit her own lower lip, before coming down to kiss the under sides of her breasts, her stomach, avoiding her fully erected penis. She held her breath and her eyes grew wide as Laura kissed closer to her crotch, on the dark curls above her member and planted small kisses on her inner thighs. She felt all the blood in her body flowing on her crotch at the sight of it and she ached to be touched.

"Cupcake…" she moaned frustratingly as she spread her legs wider, hoping that Laura will end her agony and stroke her throbbing shaft. Beads of cum were already oozing at the tip of her penis as Laura kissed her way up again to her crotch, kissing her dark curls again except her raging hardness. Her stomach tightened and her heart raced. The anticipation, the teasing and the sight were pure torture. "You're killing me Cupcake…"

Suddenly, Laura paused and stared at her, she groaned at the lack of contact.

"Just relax and enjoy the sight," Laura teased voice deep and coated with lust. "…And don't interrupt me."

She was about to retaliate but was caught off guard; she jerked her hips unconsciously and almost exploded when Laura took the base of her sensitive shaft, then kissed the length of her penis and licked slowly the underside of her fully erected shaft from bottom to top, as if savoring it. She let out a shameless groan at the sensation of Laura's tongue trailing along the length of her hardness and teasingly licked the underside below the head. She felt all the veins in her shaft pulsing as Laura trailed her hot tongue along the prominent bulging veins on the side of her shaft, and around the head licking lightly under

"I know what I'm doing…" Laura claimed.

She was dumbfounded of this new confidence of her wife; it aroused her more to hear the dominant side of Laura. She tried to stay still and not explode quickly as she watched Laura's small hand stroked the length of her penis, pumping up and down, and then licked the cum that oozes at the tip of the head. She watched and growled at the sensation of Laura kissing the most intimate part of her body; it was very sensual. She felt all the veins in her shaft pulsing as Laura trailed her hot tongue along the prominent bulging veins on the side of her shaft, and around the head licking lightly under
"Laura…" she groaned and curled her toes, feeling the wave of climax approaching. She was becoming dizzy. With Laura still holding the base of her penis, she swallowed hard when Laura's lips closed around the head of her penis and took her inside her mouth. She watched in dazed Laura bobbed her head, each time taking more of her. The sight of her thick member sliding half of it in and out of Laura's hot mouth and glistening with their combined arousal and saliva was the most erotic thing she had ever seen in her life.

She was deliriously happy and feels that she will explode soon. She growled when she felt the head of her penis hit Laura's throat and suddenly worried as her wife tried to take more of her thickness. She pulled out and released Laura's mouth and earned a frustrated groan from the Princess.

"I don't want to hurt you," she whispered and caressed Laura's jawline; brought gently Laura's mouth to hers and kissed the Princess passionately, tasting her own juice in Laura's lips. When she released from the kiss, the fire in those hazel eyes were still burning.

She rose from the chair and pinned Laura on the floor under the soft rug. And without a warning, she tore the tunic of her wife and dipped her head quickly on Laura's breast and sucked hard Laura's left nipple and earned a whimper from her wife. She inserted two fingers inside Laura and grinned after discovering the Princess dripping wet and ready for her.

"Cupcake, your big wild panther wants you badly," she teased and purred on Laura's ears, her voice raspier and deeper. Laura pushed her gently, and found herself sitting and then received a naughty grin from the Princess.

In a blink of an eye, Laura rose and removed the unwanted clothes. Her eyes widened and her mouth opened as she stared up at Laura standing naked in front of her. The Princess reached down and cupped her jawline with both hands and whispered:

"I guess I have to stand on my knees and hands then…” Laura returned, grinning.

And with that, the Princess turned around gracefully, stood on hands and knees then bends the upper body down and closed her own legs.

She was surprised to find Laura's position suited for this moment and wondered: maybe her wife had been reading the book of Forbidden Book while she was gone.

Still wearing her robe, she spread her own legs around Laura's owns and kneeled behind her. She growled at the sight of Laura's naked back; she can't control her urging and grabbed one of Laura's butts and squeezed it. Excited, she held Laura's hips and took her rigid shaft, in one swift motion she entered Laura's wet core and earned a gasped from Laura.

"Are you alright?" was her worried remark, after temporarily losing her mind due to this lust filled haze. She remained still, always giving Laura a moment to adjust to her length and not to hurt her wife. She still feels terrible about their last sex.

Laura nodded and she held Laura's hips firmly and began a slow deep thrust, savoring the feeling of her shaft sheathed inside Laura's tight hot core, filling Laura to the fullest. She heard Laura moaning in pleasure and she can't help but to be aroused at the sound of her wife's moans filling the entire chamber. Her heart pounded and she growled; she always feels this intense pride possessing her every time she was inside Laura, claiming what was purely hers, and marking Laura as her own. The desire of being inside, filling the Princess with her 'seeds' and making Laura pregnant with her child had always played in her mind. Just the thought of it always drives her wild and aroused; she now found herself thrusting faster, shorter and deeper as this animalistic desire consumed her. She growled and embraced Laura's waist, while still thrusting she heard Laura whimpering with each
deep fast thrust. And the next thing she felt was Laura's mound tightening.

"Carm! Faster!" Laura demanded.

She did as she asked; she held Laura's waist firmly against her while her head rests on Laura's shoulder, as she thrusts deeper; her nipples hardening while it rubbed against Laura's sweaty back. She remained thrusting; her throbbing shaft buried in Laura's tight core. She could feel her penis stretching hard and her balls tightening, but she needs Laura to come first. With her other hand, she reached down and massaged Laura's clit before firmly pressing her finger on it and squeezed it lightly. The Princess shrieked and cried her name while she bit Laura's shoulder and thrusted deep upward. She felt Laura tightened around her, and trembled beneath her as Laura rode the last wave of her release; her shaft bathed in Laura's warm juice. Her urgency mounted and with one deep long thrust she tightened behind Laura and shot her hot seeds and filled inside Laura. She convulsed at the intensity of her hard release and shouted Laura's name in a guttural animalistic roar and closed her eyes.

Breathless, they tumbled together on the fluffy rug, holding Laura in her arms; while still hard and sheathed inside her wife's hot wet core, they lay on their sides. She gathered her exhausted wife closer towards her, and wrapped the little Princess around her robe, relishing the feeling of being connected and close to Laura again; savoring the warmth of her wife's body against hers, and thankful that she was now beside the love of her life. She kissed Laura's shoulder before hugging her wife tight and felt Laura squeezed around her member. She gazed at the fireplace in front of her and smiled at the warmth that it gives off and the coziness that it emits in the chamber. There were nights when she would sit by the fireplace and wished that she had someone to cuddle with while wrapped around a blanket together and savoring the warmth and cozy feeling of relaxing by the fire. And now, she felt this overwhelming happiness inside her as her wish became a reality and thought… she was finally home.

Minutes after they have recovered from their intense love making, and after waiting for her erection to subside, she pulled out carefully from Laura, and released gently from the embrace.

"Carm?"

She heard the low faint sleepy voice of her wife, and she felt terrible of waking her.

"It's alright, go back to sleep, I'm just going to take you to bed," was her soothing words, and carefully lifted Laura and carried her wife to bed, while the Princess remained limped in her arms. She laid the Princess gently on the bed and tucked her inside the sheet before climbing to the bed, lied beside Laura and spooned her wife.

"I love you Cupcake," she whispered into Laura's ear before nuzzling her face at the back of Laura's neck.

Laura's arm reached behind and cupped her face, before turning, gave her a weak kiss on the lips and mumbled sweetly, "I love you Carm," before succumbing to sleep.

She smiled as she nuzzled back in the crook of the Princess' neck and inhaled the essence of Laura's; she loved the smell of her wife after making love with her, it makes her intoxicated and enthralled.

She felt calm and satisfied that she can only smell the combined scent of their bodies and nothing else.

If only she could make her wife pregnant, then she would be appeased knowing that Laura was carrying her child, and that would seal her claim to the Princess. Then nothing or no one could steal
Laura away from her.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Need more?
Carmilla was still haunted by Laura's past.

Thank you for all the wonderful feedbacks and kudos, you're all amazing and generous :-D It's so nice reading your comments and I felt happy, and at the same time terrible for making some of you come late to work because of this fic. And to make it up from the trouble that it cause (if there's any) and from my long hiatus, here's another long update :-(

*****

Carmilla

"Laura, don't leave me!"

She implored as she caught the Princess of Straka running ahead, holding Laura's hand and leading her Princess to the door. Her heart pounded, her thoughts were in terrible turmoil and rage was consuming her as she ran after them. They were quick and the door slammed behind her. She struggled to open it and discovered it was locked; she growled "Open this damn door!" she demanded. Reaching the point of hysteria, she banged on the wooden door so hard until she bled and felt numb. "Laura!" she screamed and felt her breathing becoming shorter and her air passage closing.

"No!" she cried, opened her eyes, and gasped. She felt cold sweat running down her spine, her heart hammering and her hands trembling. She blinked many times and stared at the burgundy drape in front of her.

She lay still…

…And sighed.

She reached to her right side to wrap her hands around her wife, but when she felt nothing and saw an empty space beside her, she became anxious.

"Laura?" she called, and felt her heart racing again. She sat bolt right up, reached for her robe and put it on before opening the drapes of her bed and hopped out of it. "Laura?!" she frantically searched around her chamber and did not see any sign of the princess. She ran to the bathroom but when she found it empty, she turned around quickly, grabbed her black woolen cloak with fur from the closet and put it on before running towards the door.

When she reached the entry to the wing leading to her chamber, the attention of the group of royal
guards that was guarding it noticed her presence at once and bowed to her.

"Have anyone of you seen the Princess?!" she asked as she passed by them and paused.

"The Princess went downstairs, Your Highness," one of them replied after bowing to her.

She furrowed her brows and suddenly recalled the scene in her dream. She glared to all the Royal guards that were now standing straight and waiting for any orders from her.

"You," she pointed to the two nearest Royal guard to the right across her. "Fetch my Valet, you fetch Lady Perry..." and then she referred to the Royal guard on her left, "...you, come with me, and the rest of you search the whole castle and the courtyard for the Princess!" she ordered and all of them bowed to her before dispersing in front of her.

She tried to calm down and hold her composure while she descends the grand staircase, with one of the royal guards treading behind her.

Once they arrived at the grand hall, she went to the nearest chamber and looked at the royal guard behind her.

"Run along to the library and check if the Princess is there," was her impatient command.

And before she could reach the entrance to the library she saw the royal guard running back towards her.

"The Princess is not there, Your Highness," the royal guard informed.

"Damn it!" she exclaimed and ran her hand nervously through her hair. She was growing upset and irascible. She turned around and headed to the throne room. "Check the throne room!" she demanded, her voice growing louder and harsher.

The air around her became colder as she approached the vast hall leading to the throne room, but she ignored the cold. She became more irritated when she saw the royal guard running back towards her, shaking his head.

"The Princess isn't there either, Your Highness," the royal guard said while catching his breath.

She was about to order him to go and tell the other royal guards around the castle to search for the princess as fast as they can, before she lose her temper and wake the whole castle. But the sight of another royal guard running towards them caught her attention.

"Your Highness, I found the Princess," the other royal guard declared after bowing.

"Lead the way!" she ordered and strode beside him, while the other trailed behind her.

After a few moments, they entered an unknown passageway to her. While growing up her curiosity of roaming and checking all the halls and chambers of the castle was restrained as part of her discipline. And now as an adult, it had been rooted in her mind and knew by instinct that there were chambers and hallways that she was not allowed to go to… and this one was one of them.

She furrowed her brows and felt a sense of familiarity as she walked along the vast hall; a naughty grin crept up the corner of her mouth while she remembered hiding numerous times from Bertha when she was a child. This might be one of the places where she had hidden to escape the wrath of her nursemaid. And this was one of the forbidden halls.
Her train of thoughts was interrupted when they reached the end of the hall and the royal guard opened the large wooden door.

She felt the warm air hit her skin and her nose caught immediately the pungent smell of garlic, onions and leeks; the salty smell of dried fish, the fresh aroma of lemon, the wonderful scents of apples and strawberries and piney refreshing sweet fragrances of rosemary, thyme, basil, parsley and many more that her nose can't recognize …

*What the holy hell?*

She was dumbfounded as her eyes wondered at the sight in front of her.

For the first time in her adult life she finally saw the kitchen of Karnstein Castle.

She had once gotten lost playing and hiding here when she was a child. She remembered very well that day when her mother discovered that she was in the kitchen and was reprimanded. And since then, she was forbidden to go to the kitchen and shall be punished if she was caught coming here again.

Her mouth slightly opened and her eyes marveled at the sight of the strings of garlic hanging on the left side together with sausages, dried fish, shanks of meat, dead partridges and chickens, onions, and all the different herbs that she had smelt. On the other side, she was stunned to see baskets of different fruits and vegetables lining on the floor, and was overwhelmed at how much food the castle consumes to feed everybody, and how in the world can her mother control all the work here. And right across the other corner she caught sight of number of barrels, and quickly thought of ale and wine; and sacks that she presumed were grains and flour. She was about to peruse the different sections of the kitchen but the sound of one of the royal guard's voice distracted her.

"The Princess is over there Your Highness," the royal guard in front of her informed and pointed to the other side of the kitchen where the long oak table was nestled in the corner, next to the large blazing fireplace and oven. The little Princess was huddled at the farthest right side of the table wrapped in a blanket with her back facing them; Laura did not seem to notice their arrival.

"Thank you, you may leave and tell the others to go back to their posts," she ordered in a low tone and they bowed to her before leaving. She then carefully took another step inside the kitchen and felt like she was committing a sin as she walked across the room, while thinking of one of the strict rules that her Queen Mother imposed on her.

She approached the Princess' direction and walked like a cat. When she was close enough, she furrowed her brows as she caught a glimpse of what her wife was doing, and then smirked when she saw Laura turned around and noticed her presence.

Laura yelped mouth still full of food. "Carl! You scared me! Don't ever sneak behind me like that! And what are you doing here??"

She was suddenly surprised at Laura's outburst and did not know if she will laugh or pretend being serious since her wife looked upset. She was about to tell her that she had just ordered a bunch of royal guards to search for her. But the sight of Laura's mouth filled with food and angry after being caught eating like a thief was priceless. She just cannot control the laugh that she was suppressing.

"Go ahead! Make fun of me!" the Princess exclaimed and put down the creampuff and piece of pickle on the plate with the rest of the food, before crossing her arms.

"That bunched up little face you make when you're angry is hilarious, buttercup," she teased and
when she realized that Laura was not laughing, she stopped and controlled her laughter. "Cupcake, please don't get mad, It's just that… you're so adorable," she said and sat beside her wife and put an arm around the little Princess. "Hey, I'm sorry," she mumbled and moved closer until their foreheads meet. Then she smelled something strange and carefully detached from Laura but her arms remained around her wife. "Did you just eat my favorite cheese?" she asked and caught the guilty expression from the Princess, when Laura glanced at the plate in front them and eyed at the Steirerkas cheese together with other food. Confused, "I thought you hate that cheese?" was her baffled remark.

"It's your fault… you made me tired and I got suddenly hungry," Laura retorted and presented the plate.

She cringed at the sight of it when she saw the half eaten creampuff with caramel on top, three more slices of pickles and a half, a small portion of her favorite cheese and a weird looking condiment beside the cheese that she cannot recognize. Sensing that her wife was watching her, "what's that yellow brownish thing?"

"That thing is called mustard, haven't you eaten that before?" the Princess asked.

"No, and just by the look of it, I'd say it taste horrible," she claimed and push carefully away the plate from her.

"What are you doing here, by the way?" Laura asked and took a pickle and dipped it into the mustard before eating it. "And how did you find me?"

She watched her wife munched on the pickle with satisfying delight, and cannot fathom how Laura could eat that. She shook her head and focused on the question instead, before she throw-up from watching these bizarre combination of food that her wife seemed to enjoy.

"When my wife, the Crown Princess of Karnstein suddenly disappears in the middle of the night without any reason-"  

"It's almost dawn, the rooster had already crowed," Laura chimed in, while munching. She pretended glaring at the little princess for interrupting her and raised her left eye brow.

"Well, for me it's still the middle of the night," she retaliated and gave her wife a naughty smirk. "As I was saying… when I found out that my wife is not beside me in the middle of the night… when we're supposed to be sleeping, I can't help but to worry and panic; so I sent all the royal guards that are guarding my chamber and told them to search the whole castle, because the Princess is missing," was her serious declaration.

"You sent a dozen royal guards to look for me?!" was Laura's surprise unbelievable remark. "But you don't have to… I'm just here… eating. There's no need to have a search party to look for me."

"Well, how am I supposed to know that you're having a midnight snack, and not abducted, or sleep walking in your sleep?" was her instant excuse. "I have to alert the guards for your own safety."

Suddenly she received a timid smile and the next thing she knew; Laura was embracing her and put her head on her shoulder.

"Thank you, I didn't know that you're so worried," Laura whispered. "I'm sorry I didn't tell you."

She was about to capture her wife's pouting lips, but Laura suddenly pulled out, and darted her sight on the side.

"Perr? LaF? What are you two doing here?" Laura asked, surprised.
She sighed nonchalantly and was not surprise anymore of the increasing interruptions from these two.

She pretended to stay calm as they bowed in front of them.

"Well, a Royal Guard knocked at my chamber and woke me up informing me that the Prince needs me," was LaFontaine's dazed reply.

"Everything is alright now," she supplied at once. "I just panicked when I woke up, and found out that, Cupcake here wasn't beside me and didn't tell me that she was taking a trip here."

"Hey! I wake up with a rumbling stomach and if I wake you, you'll be a grumpy cat and would hiss at me," Laura retorted.

She was about to retort but stopped as she saw the Lady in Waiting approached her smiling.

"So, it worked out!" Perry exclaimed, stoked and received a confused and surprised look from LaFontaine and Laura.

"Yes Perry, thank you for the advise," she said and grinned naughtily.

"What advise?!" Laura and LaFontaine both asked in unison.

"Well, I have to keep some of my secrets..." she said, taunting Laura. "Otherwise I'll lose my air of mystery, won't I?"

"Oh no, you don't!" the Princess retorted. "There'll be no secrets anymore between you and me, Your Highness!"

"Alright, I'll tell you all about it later on," she conceded after that high pitch comment from her wife, knowing that she won't get away easily from her very notorious curious wife. She displayed her seduction eyes, smiled and asked the Princess in her deep sultry voice, "...In the meantime, why don't we go back to bed so we could... umm... discuss also something I've... umm... reflected on while I was in the forest." She saw her wife's expression softened and received the Princess' signature adorable smile that melts all the heart of men... and women too, she thought bitterly.

Growing excited, she grinned while waiting at Laura's sweet 'yes' and felt a bulge forming underneath her robe and cloak. She glanced down, and remembered that she did not have her braies on. Laura must have caught her growing erection when her cloak slid to the side while sitting, and crimsoned beside her.

"I think it would be better if I take a bath now and prepare for my duties today," Laura commented sheepishly.

Not receiving the reply she was expecting "What?!" was her high pitch irritated reaction. "It's still dark and the entire castle is sleeping! Even my Queen mother is not yet up to give orders to the servants!" Her whining was interrupted when she heard her Valet cleared their throat.

"With all due respect, Your Highness, I've seen already the Queen's Lady in Waiting on the way to the Queen's chamber to help Her Majesty," LaFontaine said. "...the sun will rise soon and in a few moments the servants are going to arrive in the kitchen."

"...And before any of them recognize you, I suggest that you go back to your chamber and Laf can show you the way out," Laura retaliated. "You don't want Her Majesty to find out that you're in the kitchen, do you?" the Princess finished in a sweet tone.
"This is insane! I won't accept it! It's too early for you to start working and I don't care if someone sees me, I'm an adult now and I can decide on my own. If I want to come here, nobody can forbid me!" she replied and shot daggers at her Valet for interrupting again and ruining her plan of luring back her wife to bed.

Suddenly, she calmed down when she felt Laura cupped her face and kissed her on the cheek, then whispered to her ear...

"If you behave, I'll do that thing again while you're sitting on your chair in front of the fireplace," Laura uttered in her most sultry voice.

She gasped discreetly, felt her shaft twitched and became harder, as she imagined the sight of Laura kneeling in front her and kissing her down there. She swallowed hard, inhaled and looked at her wife's direction. She stared at her wife for a moment, searching for confirmation and was surprised when she saw fully dilated hazel eyes gazing back at her. She bowed her head slightly and said, "LaFontaine, kindly usher me back to my chamber, I'd like to sleep again and don't want to disturb the Princess from her duties," and rose from the bench, as Laura gave her a satisfied smile and nod, not breaking their eye contact. She does not recall when was the last time she had asked her Valet politely like a civil human being, and caught the surprise and naughty reaction from them when she focused her sight to them while the Lady in Waiting remained calm and silent.

"Can I get a hug from my big wild cat?" Laura teased and rose from the chair.

She stood up, glared at the Princess for a moment like the broody cat that she was after her temper was subdued. She then wrapped her left hand around the Princess' waist and brought Laura closer to her, up to the extent of bringing her raging hardness to her wife's attention, then kissed Laura on the pulse point and whispered, "Do you feel how frustrated I am now? I hope you'll make it up to me tonight," she finished her sentence with a naughty grin, before releasing from the embrace, while Laura became speechless and blushed in front of her. "Good luck on your duties my Princess."

And with that, she gave Perry a nod and received a bow before sauntering towards the kitchen's door whistling, with LaFontaine trailing behind her.

*****

She glanced at the window and saw the sun already at its peak and wished that she could still lounged in her bed till the sun sets. But she missed her wife badly and wanted to see Laura. "Do you know when my wife is coming back?" she asked after making herself comfortable in her chair while LaFontaine put the service tray filled with her breakfast.

After returning to her chamber hours ago, and with some quick morning ritual before going back to sleep, she now found herself still yawning from waking up too early after panicking at the thought of her wife escaping with the Princess of Straka. She admitted that she had been paranoid early this morning due to her nightmare.

"You know, you sounded like a parrot," LaFontaine commented, and placed a scroll beside the service tray. "I told you before you went back to bed, Perry and Princess Laura are going to the village today and they would be back latest, before dinner time."

She eyed at the folded scroll that was tied up and recognized the wax seal of her father. She raised her left eyebrow and took a heavy sigh. She still does not feel like resuming her duties and obligations, but she knew that she was already behind with her responsibilities after being distracted and unfocused due to her problem with Laura. Instead of opening it, she decided to eat her very late breakfast and continued to whine about the absence of her wife.
"What's taking them so long?" was her impatient remark and took a sip of tea. "The market usually closes before sun down."

"I think you better asked the Princess when she arrives, because I asked Perry too what they'll going to do aside from buying their stuffs, and she told me that Princess Laura had some important thing to do..." Lafontaine related. "And for your information, it's just noon."

"And what could be that important thing? And why didn't I know anything about it?" was her suspicious reply before putting her favorite cheese on a piece of rye bread, and took a bite.

"I'm not sure if I heard it right, but Perry mentioned about helping some women find a work for them," Lafontaine returned as they go about the room and put things in order. Then their attention was caught when they saw the Prince's sleeping tunic on the floor, and shook their head after discovering that it was torn off and picked it up. "Did'n't the sleeping tunic fit Princess Laura?"

After hearing the question, her eyes discreetly glanced at her Valet's direction and then focused her sight on the scroll in front of her and decided to open it. "I don't know what you're talking about," was her nonchalant response, and put the scroll of paper in front of her to cover her face by pretending to read it.

"You surely didn't waste time last night," LaFontaine returned.

She put down the scroll of paper and was about to retaliate, but her Valet was quick and went already to the bathroom. She snorted; and thought that one day she will get them and invade their sex life too. She sighed again and looked out the window, seeing that the weather was beautiful, and she wished that she was with her Princess having a picnic in her rose garden. Suddenly, her happy thoughts vanished and she recalled how she went berserk and ruined her rose garden. She had already made up with her wife, and now she knew the next thing that she should fix. She decided to distract herself and took the scroll and started to read it. As she read through the content, her eyes caught something that made her blood seethed, "Damn it!" she exclaimed and threw the scroll on the floor. Suddenly, she felt all her rage coming back.

*****

She furrowed her brows as she felt the gentle evening breeze on the back of her neck; she paused, gazed at the sky and sighed. The sun has drowned into horizon and the clouds have faded as the cluster of yellow, orange and red rays painted the sky. Already dressed in her fine red and black checkered tunic, with half an hour remaining before dinner time, and a Princess that was still nowhere to be found, she resumed walking to and fro by the entrance of their castle holding her hands behind her.

Growing impatient, "You said they'll be here before dinner time..." she expressed her voice hoarse and bitter. She furrowed her brows and glanced at the Valet who was standing quietly by the side of the door, with the same calm expression that they were wearing moments ago.

"There's still half an hour left, Your Highness," they replied in calm formal tone. "And if my calculation is right, they would be arriving any minute from now, so Your Highness does not need to worry," was their confident remark.

She got distracted by that last remark and thought that her Valet was teasing her. She walked towards them and faced them. "Really, you had calculated the exact time of their arrival," her reply was more of a statement. "...how brilliant and imaginative you are," she added, her voice thick with sarcasm.

"Thank you Your Highness," LaFontaine retaliated, still composed and straightened more their back
proudly. "And if His Highness' still doubts my ability, you may turn around now and greet Her Highness."

Before she can retaliate and mock them, the sound of a carriage approaching and horses running closer to them interrupted her, "I'll be damned! How did you know…” was her unbelievable reply, and received a bored look from them.

"Never underestimate a red headed Valet," LaFontaine retorted, with a cocky grin.

"Alright, you're not going to be hanged today," she returned using her authoritative tone before turning around to receive her Princess.

They played along and bowed, "Thank you Your Highness, that's so compassionate of you."

As the carriage stopped, Fritz and Sebastian climbed down from the back and bowed to her first before opening the door. Then her eyes caught sight of Alfred approaching her after climbing down from the driver's seat.

"Your Highness," Alfred greeted and bowed. "Her Highness does not feel well and cannot walk properly…"

"What?" she panicked and walked closer to the door of the carriage as Fritz and Sebastian put down the ladder and opened the door.

"I could carry the Princess to her chamber if you wish, Your Highness," Alfred offered.

"It's alright Alfred, I could carry her, thank you," she said grateful and gave him a nod and smile.

Then she saw Perry supporting a pale looking semi-conscious Princess by the waist as they tried to get down; Fritz and Sebastian were ready to assist the ladies but she suddenly worried at the thought of some men's hands touching her Princess' aside from the hand. "I'll take it from here," she told the two Royal guards and took Laura's hand while the Princess slowly stepped down with the help of Perry. LaFontaine was immediately behind to help too.

"Carl…” was all the Princess could utter.

She quickly lifted Laura like a bride and carried her wife towards the door, while the Princess wrapped her arms around her neck.

"LaFontaine, kindly tell my Queen Mother and King Father that we cannot join them for dinner, and after that I want you to check on Laura," she ordered before going up the stairs followed by Perry, Fritz and Sebastian.

*****

After three hours of waiting for her Princess to wake up, she rose quickly from the chair beside the Princess' bed when she noticed Laura moved and groaned weakly.

"Hey Cupcake, how are you feeling?" she mumbled, her voice low and huskier, she stood by the bed and waited for her wife to fully wake.

"Hey…” Laura uttered and reached out.

She sat carefully beside her wife, felt right away Laura's hand cupped her jawline and pulled her down gently for a kiss. She closed her eyes and gave her wife a short passionate kiss, and reluctantly
let go of her wife's lips, for fear that Laura might have hard time breathing.

Laura groaned, and murmured, "I want more."

She obliged and felt Laura's hand on her nape pulling her more, and the Princess' tongue sliding in her mouth; she grinned and welcomed it with full wanton and caressed Laura's tongue with her own. When the need for oxygen arises, they reluctantly released from the kiss.

"How are you feeling? Perry told me that you suddenly collapsed," was her worried remark. "What happened?"

"I think it's the heat and there were a lot of people today, that's why I got dizzy and fainted," Laura explained. "It's a good thing that you weren't there, because it's overcrowded, or else you might feel terrible and panic and I'll worry too much and…"

She put her index finger gently on Laura's mouth and stopped her wife's babbling, "You're so unbelievable. You're the one who collapsed and you're worrying about me. Let me worry first about you," she commented and received a timid smile for her adorable Princess. "I actually feel bad of not being with you today." She said and put her hand gently on Laura's head and stroked those thick blonde locks.

"Well, don't feel bad, because today wasn't just an ordinary day, it's full out there, like the time when the village celebrated your name day," the Princess related. "There were many traders and merchants that have returned from their journeys and they have brought a lot of stuffs to trade and sell to the village. And I asked Perry if we could check all of those stuffs and bought some of them."

"Oh, so that explains why all of the twenty horses of your royal guards were carrying two sacks each," was her sarcastic retort and received a pout from the Princess.

"Those were not for me, it's for the girls and servants in the kitchen," Laura defended, and grinned. "And I bought something for you too."

"Really? What is it?" was her curious reply and arched her left eyebrow.

"It's a surprise," the Princess grinned naughtily. "How's your day?"

"Same as always," was her laconic response and rose from the bed. "Perry left some soup here for you," she changed the topic and retrieved the bowl from the side table, and sat again by Laura's side. "I'm not hungry."

"You missed dinner, you have to eat something," she replied and remained holding the bowl and spoon. Laura shook her head like a child. "Cupcake, how will you recover when you're not eating?"

"I told you I feel fine and I'm not sick," Laura reasoned out stubbornly. "And Perry and I had tasted and sampled all the goodies in the village, that's why I'm not that hungry," the Princess explained while grinning like a naughty little girl who always have an excuse in everything. "Oh, and I ate also some Steirerkas cheese while we're at Grete's and I bought more for you and me, since I'm already eating more of your favorite cheese…"

"Cupcake, I'll gladly share everything with you, you know that I'm generous," she chimed in and rose to put back the bowl on the side table. "The only thing I'm not willing to share is you." Suddenly her wife's cheery mood turned into confusion.

"What do you mean-"
She just grinned and did not elaborate more. Then she walked on the other side of the four poster bed and began to close the curtains; when she reached the right side of the bed, she took off her purple robe and joined her wife to bed.

"Hmm… I'm surprise that you're wearing your braies and sleeping tunic tonight," Laura teased.

"Cupcake, don't think that I'm not aroused, I haven't forgotten our agreement early this morning," she mentioned and the Princess' cheeks reddened. "But don't worry, we'll just cuddle tonight."

She received a grin and a 'who are you kidding?' look, before gathering Laura in her arms; the Princess snuggled closer to her and she felt an arm wrapped around her waist. Then she fumbled under the sheet and her hand automatically crept inside her wife's chemise and rested on Laura's right bosom; she was instantly aroused at the contact and kneaded it. She groaned at the sensation of Laura's soft round breast on her possessive hand and squeezed it tighter.

"Carm…" Laura exhaled.

She felt Laura adjusted from her touch and looked down, "Cupcake? Did I hurt you?" she asked after catching her wife winced, and felt bad for being too excited. "I'm sorry," she released her hold from the breast, but Laura held her hand and put it back on.

"It's alright, I just feel a bit sore," Laura said. "You can still touch it but don't squeeze it like you always do."

"No, I won't and if it's making you uncomfortable, I won't touch them tonight," she expressed, since Laura knew that she always likes to caress those breasts even if they were just snuggling, like now, and cannot sleep without putting her hand on the Princess' bosom. She tried to take away her hand again, but Laura stopped it.

"I told you, don't remove your hand," the Princess scolded and glared.

"I told you I'll be fine not touching it tonight," was her persistent reply and does not want to ruin Laura's sleep just to appease her obsession over her wife's breasts.

"Carm, stop being stubborn and just obey me," was Laura's impatient answer. "I'm already used to having your hand on my breasts every night and I can't sleep well if your hand is not there," the Princess confessed, "So stop arguing with me and don't you ever remove your hand on my breast again!"

Totally dumbfounded… "Oh." Was all she could utter and thought that she was the only one who had a crazy obsession.

TBC
Little Ball of Sunshine + Broody Big Wild Cat = tiny broody sweet kitten?

Chapter Summary

His Royal Hotness joins the handmaidens and Perry for some unexpected pastime.

After Laura's constant complains of feeling tired and having stomach ache, LaFontaine decided to ask the help of their father.

Carmilla received a special gift from Da… and another surprise.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Carmilla

She sighed with relief, smiled and began to roll the end of her sleeves up to her elbow, and did the same with the other one, as she strode along the narrow hall towards the back exit of the castle.

At last! She was done for the day and cannot wait to get her hands dirty!

Her excitement cannot be contained when she received a message from her father, cancelling their hunting in the afternoon and giving her the rest of the day for leisure. And with Laura and her mother gone and still in the convent till late at night; she has now the luxury of doing whatever she wants with no one to interrupt or distract her!

She reached for the back of her neck and shoulder, and rubbed the area to loosen the tight muscle, before unclasping her cape and let it fall to the ground. A week had passed since she came back from the forest, but she still has not recovered yet from the pending works she left behind. Day and night, she worked extra hard to show to her parents that she was capable of taking her role as the heir seriously. And after those exhausting days and nights too, these extra time and solitude was a perfect way to do the things she loves, and relaxed at one of her favorite place in the castle.

But then it hit her…

…And the image of Laura kissing the Princess of Straka flashed in her mind and nagged her sanity again. She could have killed anyone standing in front of her that night when she retrieved the Sword of Hastur before running to the rose garden. She was thankful that everyone was busy that night and no one was in sight, except for a couple of royal guards who was guarding the entrance to the garden and witnessed her jealous rage.

Her heart pounded and she balled her right fist, as she struggled to erase the horrible scene in her head.

Ever since she was young she was pampered with love and affection; and when she moved in the castle, she became the center of her parents' love and attention. Despite their different affection towards her, she knew her Ma loves only her and no one else, and she was confident that her mother loves her more than her father.

The love of the women in her life was something she cherishes and treasures the most and would
rather not share it, except for the Queen's love, which she knew her father has the first right. And
when Laura became her wife and the thought of finally having someone that belongs to her, she
cannot help but to become greedier, as she fell in love and experienced how to be loved
unconditionally.

And when her own wife made a mistake of giving someone a piece of that affection what she knew
was solely for her, for the first time in her life, she felt someone had robbed her of something
valuable and exclusively hers.

She ran her fingers through her hair and clenched her jaw. She and Laura may have reconciled but
there was still a part of her that cannot be appeased.

The memory of Laura kissing the Princess of Straka was still embedded in her mind.

Before opening the door leading to the most secluded part of the castle's courtyard, she paused,
closed her eyes, and felt her heart still throbbing. On the other side of this door was the reminder of
her jealous rage and Laura's unfaithfulness…

… Was she ready to face it?

She took a deep breath, gathered herself for a moment and slowly, she opened the door.

She was immediately met by the strong rays of sunlight and shielded her sight using her hand; once
she crossed the threshold she inhaled deeply, and was surprised as the breeze wafted the fresh
fragrance of roses that was still lingering in the air, knowing that she had destroyed most of the
flowers.

But her curiosity was cut when she heard the high pitch voice of Laura's Lady in Waiting, her Valet's
annoying voice shouting and, some girls' voices that she cannot recognize.

"What the hell is going on here?" she mumbled as she walked further and when she came out to the
opening, her eyes widened and her brows arched in surprise as her eyes caught, the two gingers
together with Laura's three handmaiden friends planting, digging, watering and cutting unwanted
branches.

She was totally dumbfounded to see her garden intact and without a trace of her outrage.

She walked closer and cannot help but to grin as she witnessed LaFontaine carrying a bucket of
water and watering every plant they see, while the handmaidens were each scattered in every corner,
on their knees, and planting more bushes. Perry had been walking and surveying around, checking
the works of the girls.

"What the-!?" and before she could cursed again after witnessing this wonder, her astonishment was
interrupted when she locked gaze with Betty.

"His Royal Hotness is here!" Betty's excited outburst and bowed.

Everyone gathered immediately in front of her and bowed, while her Valet stood behind the ladies,
still holding the wooden bucket, flashed a smug smile to her.

"Your Highness," Perry greeted, voice shaking in surprise and rose. "We did not expect you will
come here… what can we do for you?"

"I am thinking of taking some time out and…" she commented and realized how she will explain that
she wants to do some gardening, but suddenly remembered that it was ravaged by a feral panther.
Sensing her uncomfortableness, LaFontaine approached her and bowed. But before they can talk…

"Your Highness, I know that you're thinking why we are here…" the Lady in waiting chimed in. "I and the Princess' handmaidens have been greatly affected too of what happened, and we love our Princess very much despite her flaw. Her Highness had been restoring and replanting roses since you were gone, and we've been helping the Princess to bring back the garden as a way of apologizing."

She was suddenly dumbfounded.

When she opened the door leading to the garden, her mind was settled and determined to restore back the once beautiful garden that she loves; just like when she claimed back her love and forgave her wife. She was planning on surprising Laura, but instead, she was the one who was stunned. Her wife surely wanted to appease her…

"The Princess is looking forward having picnic soon in the garden with His Hot-Highness," the dark haired handmaiden blurted out.

"She wanted to surprise His Hotness!" Betty exclaimed.

She was snatched from her rumination and looked at the handmaidens. An excited grin was forming at the corner of her mouth, but was suppressed when she heard the voice of the Lady in Waiting.

"Girls!" Perry hissed and glared at the two excited handmaidens. "I apologize for their unlady like behavior and for tactlessness, and for calling you the wrong title. It won't happen again…"

"It's alright Perry, the girls can talk to me since we're the only ones here," she suggested and looked back again at the very enthusiastic tall handmaiden, and then to the dark haired one. "And Natalie, you don't need to hide anymore from Perry the secret name that you use to call me."

"What secret name?" was Perry's worried and strict reaction, and stared at the quiet handmaiden standing on the far left side for an answer.

"We girl's use to call His Highness… umm… His Royal Hotness," was Sarah Jane's sheepish remark, and earned a shock and uptight look from the Lady in Waiting.

And before Perry can have a heart attack and reprimand the handmaidens…

"And I'm pretty sure that it's alright with the Prince to be called His Hotness by the girls…" LaFontaine commented and grinned.

"… As long as my Queen Mother is not around to hear it," she reassured and gave the girls a naughty grin. "It looks like you're all been working hard… my garden looks more beautiful now than before," she praised sincerely and put her hands on her hips while surveying her surroundings. "And you all seemed to be enjoying it," she added as her eyes caught the dirt on everybody's face, except Perry, and the mud on their clothes and shoes. "Well, I don't want to miss the fun," she said and looked at the very excited tall handmaiden. "Betty, will you hand me the spade?"

*****

After almost two hours of bathing and bickering with LaFontaine for leaving dirt everywhere; for not removing her signet ring and wedding band before digging the dirt; and leaving her cape along the hall; she still recalled the scene with her Valet ordering the maid to find the precious missing cape, muttering in complaint while they remove the dirt on her rings, and reprimanding her, in behalf of Perry, by embracing and kissing excitedly Laura upon seeing her wife, without thinking of smearing dirt all over the Princess' white dress and face.
And now she found herself entering the door of the Princess’ chamber, fresh and clean from head to
 toe and quietly walked across the room. When her sight caught Laura sitting on their matrimonial bed
 and reading a book, she smiled immediately. She missed her Cupcake so much that even a few hours
 of being separated with her were like eternity of suffering. Ever since their reconciliation, her love
 and lust for Laura have been immense and overwhelming.

She checked once again her fingers in case she forgot to remove any dirt residue, and was satisfied to
 see them clean and smooth; but she furrowed her brows when she caught the sight of her ring finger
 on the left; she was not use to see her hand without her wedding band. Then she lifted her arms and
 sniffed her underarms checking if she smelled good enough to face her Princess. For the first time,
 she asked LaFontaine to add rose oil on her bath, to impress her wife. Laura had complained of
 being nauseous of her ’earthy smell’, after sweating five hours in the garden and then embracing her
 wife.

After making sure that she was very clean and caught the fragrance of roses in her clothes and body.
 She confidently approached the bed, and carefully sat beside Laura. She waited for her wife to notice
 her presence but Laura remained absorbed in reading.

Lately she noticed that her little ball of sunshine was not that sunny and cheerful; she discovered that
 the Princess becomes easily irritated with no apparent reason.

She brushed off all these negative thoughts and leaned to kiss her wife, but she was surprised when
 Laura averted her kiss and glared at her as if she was a stranger.

"Hey, can't I get a kiss from my wife? I've already taken a bath and clean from head to toe," she
 claimed, and made a scene of sniffing her underarms. "…and smell good enough for my Princess."

But then she saw those forehead wrinkled and knew that her wife was not in the mood for some
 teasing.

"You smelled awful!" Laura complained. "Are you sure you've taken a bath and didn't just dip your
 face on a bowl of soap water?"

For a second, she thought that Laura was teasing her, and paused to watch the Princess’ reaction. But
 when she realized that Laura was serious, she was slightly offended; but did not take it personally
 after hearing Laura's criticism. It was the first time Laura had complained seriously about her smell
 and she definitely does not want to have any problem with regards to her wife's desires, especially
 about her own body and smell.

"Cupcake, I soaked my whole body for almost an hour in a bath tub full of soap water, rose oil and I
 even asked LaFontaine to put some rose petals too in my bath, to make sure that I'm clean and
 smelled like a human being, and not like a wild cat," she reasoned out, rolled her eyes and cannot
 believe that she was defending her cleanliness and smell.

"What more do you want?"

"Well, I don't know how you bath but I don't like your smell," Laura retorted. "I'm sorry Carm, but
 you reek and my nose can't stand it," was the Princess' apologetic reply. "I feel nauseous."

After hearing that remark, she groaned, rolled her eyes again and rose from the bed. "Fine! I'm gonna
 take a bath again and make sure that my smell meets your nose's liking," and with that she turned
 around and strode towards the door, irritated and insulted.

Few minutes later, she arrived at her chamber and caught LaFontaine ogling at Laura's Lady in
 Waiting, while both sitting by the study table. She passed at them without saying anything. The Lady
 in Waiting stood straight right away and bowed awkwardly.
"Your Highness, what can we do for you!" was Perry's high pitch worried reaction.

"What are you doing back here?" was LaFontaine's casual and curious remark, and hesitantly left the Lady in Waiting.

She ignored the question and went straight to the bathroom, with LaFontaine trailing behind her. When they closed the door of the bathroom behind them, she faced her Valet and began to irritantly remove her clothes.

"Apparently, I am not clean enough for my wife and…" she claimed, fully annoyed she threw her purple robe on the floor, while LaFontaine stood frozen in front, and calmly waited for her to finish with her outburst. Then she untied her white sleeping tunic, removed it and threw it on the floor too…"she claimed that I smelled!"

After that annoyed remark, her Valet picked up the tunic and sniffed at the cloth in their hand.

"This is clean and fresh from the laundry," LaFontaine informed and put the piece of cloth on the dressing table, and then picked up the braies, and binders that fell on the ground.

Once she was naked, she hopped into her bath tub again, and growled when she realized that the water became cold. Frustrated and irritated, she put on her purple robe and faced her very confused Valet again.

"Tell the maids that I want to bath again, and this time don't put any oil or perfume on the water!" she ordered and saw her Valet bowed. "I'll show to her my natural smell… And get me some clean clothes!"

"As you wished," LaFontaine replied.

Almost an hour later, she was back at the Princess' chamber, she was about to announce that she had taken a bath as what Laura requested and changed all her clothes. But she suddenly stopped when she saw her wife lying on bed and clutching the stomach. "Cupcake?" she uttered but Laura did not look up and seemed to be in pain. She ran towards her and gathered Laura in her arms. "What's wrong? Are you hurt?" she asked her voice full of worries.

"I'm just having this stomach ache again… I think I'll have my monthly visitor soon," Laura mumbled. "Don't worry, it'll go away soon."

"But you've been having them often lately," she retorted and was growing scared of Laura's condition. "Guards!" she shouted and the two guards entered the chamber at once and bowed to her. "Fetch LaFontaine and Perry!" in a split seconds, the royal guards left and she stroked Laura's hair to make her wife feel better. "Hang in there, LaFontaine is coming with some tea or something for the pain. They will make it go away, I promise." She whispered consolingly and kissed Laura's forehead. She hated seeing Laura suffering. If only she could take away Laura's pain and put it in her body instead, so that Laura wouldn't feel horrible, she would do it in a heartbeat. She tried to calm down as much as she can so as not to send any sign of how scared she was, knowing that Laura would worry that she was frightened. Usually, Laura would argue with her and would tell her that she worries too much, but right now she was anxious as her wife remained silent.

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As soon as the rooster crowed, she was up already and went to her Valet's chamber at once to check if LaFontaine was ready and have everything they need for their journey today. She even asked them to join her for breakfast to make sure that they have strength to travel.
"Are you sure you don't need anything before I go?" LaFontaine asked for the third time before mounting their horse.

"You'll just be gone for the day, I think I'll survive," she said and grinned at them, as she stood by the main door of the castle in the wee hour of the day. She insisted on sending them off even if she still feels lethargic.

"I asked Perry if she can help you, and she said yes," they said, held the reins and mounted the horse. "Just don't give her a headache…"

Her grin widened and she raised her left eyebrow, "Nah, I think Lady Ginger is too formal and conservative for me, I'll just ask Bertha if I need something."

"Suit yourself," the Valet returned and rolled their eyes.

And it did not go unnoticed to her, "What's that for?" she asked suspicious, and hold the horse to keep it still.

"Nothing," they said and held firmly the reins after comfortably sitting on the saddle. "You would rather ask your former stern nursemaid, instead of asking your wife's lovely Lady in Waiting for help?"

"I missed terrorizing my mother's Lady in Waiting," she quipped and grinned at them. "And besides, I think your lady love cannot handle assisting me. I don't want to be the cause of her insanity."

LaFontaine chuckled instantly; they certainly agree.

"Give my regards to Da and tell him I missed him," she said sincerely and smiled at the thought of hearing again from her other father.

"I will… and don't throw your clothes everywhere," LaFontaine returned before gently kicking the horse with their heels.

She watched them until their image disappeared among the trees. She prayed and hoped that they can find the book or an answer to why her wife had been having stomach aches, and always feeling exhausted lately. She had missed that sunny bright attitude of her Cupcake and was worried that Laura might be sick and hence the mood swings.

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"What are you smiling about? And what have you got in there?" was Laura's curious remark, before moving on the other side of the bed and lifted the sheet.

She gently get in the sheet and sat on the bed, before taking out the thing behind her "This…” she said while both her hands wrapped around the grip of the small wooden sword right in front of hers and Laura's eyes, and admired it like it was the Sword of Hastur. "…was my first sword," she declared proudly and looked at the surprised Princess beside her.

"Really?! Where did you get it?" Laura asked, eyeing the nearly worn-out sword with fascination and sat on the bed.

"LaFontaine just gave it to me after returning from their home; they said that Da told them it's time to give it back to me… I wonder what he meant by that?"

"It was so nice of LaFontaine's father to keep it after all these years," Laura remarked smiling. "I
wish I have kept also one or two of my old toys as a keepsake, but I gave all of them to the children in the village."

After hearing that comment, she looked at Laura and felt a bit sorry for her wife's generosity. "Oh, Cupcake, if I could just bring back some of your old toys, and trade them with new ones, I would have done it."

"It's alright, because I know that I made some children happy," was Laura's contented reply and smiled back.

She kissed the top of her wife's head and felt this overwhelming pride of being married to the most generous and kindest person she ever met. "You're amazing." She expressed and kissed Laura's lips before focusing her attention again on her sword. "Da gave this to me on my 7th name day and he taught me how to use it," she said and recalled how she and Da pretended to fight with his bigger wooden sword. "I remembered asking Ma for my blanket and used it as my cape and told her that I am a king and I have to fight Da, who's pretending to be the bad man. Then the next time Da came, he brought me a crown made of paper and told me that I need to wear it because a king should have a crown." She related, smiling and felt nostalgic about it.

"So, you really enjoyed playing with sword and acting like a king, even as a child," Laura commented

"I guess it runs in my blood," she quipped and grinned proudly.

"Well, my handsome king, as much as I enjoy watching you admire your first sword," Laura spoke and lay on the bed. "I want to sleep and snuggle with my broody cat."

She smiled and put the sword carefully on the side table, before closing the curtain on her side. She gathered Laura in her arms protectively and made sure that the sheet was covering the Princess' entire body.

"What are you doing?" Laura asked and glanced at the sheet covering almost her entire body.

"I just wanna make sure that you're warm," she said and felt Laura's head rests on the crook of her neck, while an arm draped around her waist.

Laura looked up, and said, "Well, you're hot enough to warm me."

She smiled with relief after hearing her wife in a playful mood. She had been worried lately by the absence of her wife's chirpiness, bubbliness and enthusiasm.

"You look broody… what's wrong?"

"Nothing…" she denied. Instead, she gazed intensely at those round hazel orbs and cannot help but to fall in love again and again at those beautiful lively bright eyes. Her love for Laura was overwhelmingly intense, she feels like drowning from all the emotions that Laura had uncorked. "If you only knew how much I love you… you might ran away from me and thought me insane," she remarked before claiming those soft lips, kissed Laura passionately, and closed her eyes. Laura kissed her with the same intensity, and hunger while lovingly caressed her jawline.

"I've already seen the evidence," Laura mumbled in between kisses. "And I think… there's no amount of emotions or outrage from you that can drive me away."

"I'm glad to hear that…" she mumbled in her deepest, raspiest voice between kisses as Laura continued to caress her jaw and teasingly nipped her lips. "…Because you married a raging mad wild
panther," she added, before sucking Laura's tongue and earned a soft moan from her wife. "Just promise me that you will not leave me, because..." she said, her voice morphing into deep serious tone; Laura released reluctantly from their kiss to gaze at her. She held her wife's intense stare, and cupped Laura's face gently.

"Because what…?" Laura whispered.

"...Because I couldn't bear living without you. I am scared to lose you," was her honest response.

"But I'm not going anywhere... I vowed to love you and honor you till I-

She hushed Laura with her finger, not wanting to hear the words 'die and dying', "I told you, I hate to hear those words!" was her upset remark, and the next thing she knew, Laura held her finger and lifted it away from the lips, and took her hand instead and started kissing the palm of her hand tenderly.

"Carm, I love you and I adore. I will obey and respect you, as my King and as my partner in life," Laura mumbled in between kisses. "You're the only one that's in my heart, and you're the only one that will own it. No one and nothing can take me away from you."

Laura's confession had made her more emotional, and the thought of her wife being sick was driving her insane.

"I promise, I will take good care of you until you recover from your illness," was her worried reply.

Suddenly, the lips that were kissing her hand ceased, and Laura flashed a confused look.

"What are you talking about?" was the Princess' puzzled remark.

She saw Laura's eyes narrowed and those brown eyebrows contorted.

"You've been feeling ill lately... always exhausted and have pain on different parts of your body," she reasoned out and received a shocked reaction from Laura. "LaFontaine suspected that you are suffering from some unknown illness, that's why I sent them to Da to do some research and find out how to cure you."

"But I am not sick," Laura claimed and sighed frustratingly. "I think I'm just a bit stressed from what happened lately, and with my new project at the village; the hospital at the convent, and not to mention, my daily chores in the castle, restoring your rose garden, meeting the wives of the noblemen, and teaching the servants in the kitchen how to read…"

"Whoa! Hold it Your Highness..." she remarked and cannot believe that her wife had been doing extra things that she knows nothing of. "What do you mean 'new project in the village'? And why are you meeting the wives of the noblemen? It's my Queen Mother's duty to do that. And you're teaching the servants to read? They don't need it! From now on, I'm taking over my rose garden; you and the girl's don't need to do gardening anymore."

"I'll tell you about my project in the village some other time," Laura replied, impatient. "As the future queen of Karnstein, her Majesty had asked me to accompany her when meeting the wives of the noblemen. And as for the servants, I know that they don't need to learn how to read. But if they learn to read, they can teach their children, and who knows, it might help them to have a better life and get a better job," was the Princess' passionate defense. "And as for the gardening, I am not stopping till I replanted and filled the whole garden with roses."

"No. It's my garden, I've ruined it, so it's my responsibility," she argued. "And you'll take a break
from your project in the village, until you feel better."

"Fine! You can have your garden back… but I am not going to stop teaching the servants how to read," Laura stubbornly disagree, sat on the bed and crossed her arms on her chest. "And I don't need to take a break from my project in the village, since I already feel better."

"Fine! You can still teach the servants to read," she retorted, and sat on the bed to face Laura. She cannot believe that she was negotiating with someone, when in fact she could just order anyone to obey her since she was the heir; but with the exception of her parents. "But you are not going back to the village until I say so!" she declared firmly and clenched her jaw. She was on the verge of losing her temper and Laura's stubbornness was driving her insane.

"No, you don't get to decide when I will go to the village," Laura's challenging remark. "It's my project and the people are relying on me to continue it."

She was trying to hold on to the last thread of her sanity, and took a deep breath to control her temper. Her wife was certainly not going to give up easily.

"So, what happened to the 'Carm, I will obey you and respect you'?” was her sarcastic reply. She was growing impatient and will soon snap if Laura kept on disagreeing with her. She watched her wife glared at her. She was expecting retaliation, and can see the anger in those sharp eyes, but instead, Laura irritiously turned her back on her and lay on the bed.

She was pacified and decided to go to sleep too and lay on the bed on her back. But as soon as she was beginning to calm down, knowing that Laura did not retaliate, she saw Laura turned around to her direction.

"You cannot dictate me what to do. I'll go to the village whether you permit me or not," She was taken aback by that comment, balled her fists and knew that she was about to explode. And before that happens, she shoved the sheet, turned her back to Laura and rose from the bed. She hated that Laura had been stubbornly challenging her authority, pushing her patience to the limit and triggering her temper. As she was about to stand up and walk towards the door, she felt two strong arms wrapped firmly around her torso, and felt Laura's lips kissed her pulse point.

She felt like melting in her wife's arms, as Laura held her tightly, and all the anger inside her disappeared.

"Don't go. I'm sorry…” Laura whispered sheepishly.

With her heart still pounding, she slowly turned around, and felt Laura reluctantly released from the embrace. She took a deep breath and cupped Laura's face with both her hands and motioned for the Princess to look at her. "Do you know why I don't want you to go to the village?" she asked, this time her voice was calm and low.

Laura shook her head and pouted.

"...Because I don't want you to get sick again," she uttered with full of worries. "Remember the last time you were there?" she asked, as if she was talking to a child, and received a sheepish nod from her dear Cupcake. "So, am I wrong to worry and protect you?" she continued in a slow sweet deep tone, and saw the Princess' lips pouted more and shook her head. "I'm sorry too for being over protective… you are very precious to me; all I'm asking is for you to take a break, until we know for sure that you are healthy and fine. I'm not telling you to stop doing the things you like, because I know that you love helping people and taking care of them. But sometimes, someone needs to take
care of you; and remind you to take care of yourself too, and it's my responsibility as your partner in life to make sure that you have balance in what you're doing."

After that heartfelt and intense explanation, she felt Laura's arms wrapped around her neck and embraced her tight. She put her arms around the Princess' waist and guided them back to the bed, and they both lay down still hugging each other.

"I love you Carm… and thank you."

"I love you too Cupcake."

*****

"Good morning sunshine!"

She groaned at the high pitch voice of the Lady in Waiting and nuzzled her face deeper on Laura's bosom.

"Wake-y, wake-y sleepy cat!"

She growled and held her wife's body tighter and closer to her, as if Laura was her capture and will not let her wife go.

"I brought some creampuffs and muffins!" Perry exclaimed.

"Carm… are you awake?"

She heard Laura sleepily whispered in her ear and caressed her hair.

"No!" was her muffled grumpy reply and nuzzled more in the warmth of Laura's cleavage.

"They're calling us, and I told Perry to wake me early because I don't want to be late to mass," Laura said in a calm low voice. "And I want my grumpy cat to come with me and hear mass too."

"Why don't you tell the priest to cancel the mass because your grumpy cat still needs to sleep," was her annoyed reply and tightened her embrace, showing Laura that she had no plan of getting up.

"I brought some Steirerkas cheese!" LaFontaine blurted out.

"Oh! Steirerkas! Carm! We need to get up, I'm hungry!" the Princess exclaimed.

She felt Laura fidgeted in excitement and tried to loosen from her arms, "Arrgh, I am going to hang them together with your Lady in waiting," she grumbled and released her wife gently and Laura sat on the bed at once. "Seriously Cupcake, you're choosing a cheese over me?" was her frustrated and irritated comment. And before she can complain again, a pair of soft lips claimed her own and she was under her wife's spell immediately as Laura kissed her passionately while caressing the back of her neck. Once she calmed down, Laura let her go and handed her sleeping tunic to her, while the Princess quickly put on a chemise. Laura flashed her signature adorable smile that was exclusively for her and she was immediately captivated.

"Don't complain… it's your fault why we lack sleep," the Princess' reminded. "Will my grumpy cat put on the tunic now?" Laura requested in her sweetest tone. "…and don't forget your robe."

She gave the Princess one last glare and released a deep resounding groan, before putting on her sleeping tunic.
"Are you decent underneath?" Laura asked before rising from the bed. "... I don't want Perry to faint.

"Yes..." was her broody reply and received a peck on the cheek from the Princess, before putting on her robe.

"Good morning Perry, good morning Laf!" Laura chirped, while opening the drapes and the Lady in Waiting continued to draw the curtains on the sides.

"Good morning Princess!" Perry returned in the same cheerful tone. "Good morning Your Highness, shall I open the curtains on your side?" the Lady in waiting asked after bowing.

"Yes you may Perry, thanks," Laura interjected and sat on the bed with her back on the headboard.

And right on time, LaFontaine was already approaching with the service tray, and placed it gently on the Princess' lap.

"Yay!" Laura cheered and clapped at the sight of the Steirerkas cheese, grapes, rye bread, chocolate muffins, blueberry muffins, creampuffs, a cup of hot cocoa, a cup of warm tea and two red shiny apples.

The Princess immediately took a spoon full of the lumpy-crumbly, zesty tangy sour milk cheese and eats it.

"Ohhhh, wow, that's heavenly!"

She darted her eyes on her side after hearing the sound that the Princess had elicited, that could be compared to a moan, and then her eyes widened and watched with her mouth slightly opened, as Laura emptied the bowl of cheese.

"Thanks Laf! I love it!" the Princess exclaimed, beaming with satisfaction.

LaFontaine returned the same smile and their eyebrows shoot up with delight, "I'm so glad that you love it. Just let me know what else you like to eat, and I'll fix it for you at once."

"Would you like to drink your hot cocoa now?" she asked and offered quickly the cup to her wife, but she got confused when Laura grimaced.

"Umm, no thanks, you can have it," the Princess returned and then lifted the cup of tea. "I think I'll have your drink instead."

Sensing her confusion, "Princess, I just baked all of them this morning, would you like to taste some of your favorite chocolate cupcakes?" Perry commented pointing to the bake goods on the tray.

"Thanks Perry, but I think I'll eat them later," Laura returned and hug the cup of tea with both hands.

She slowly lifted her gaze on her wife, looked absent mindedly in front of her and knitted her brows...

...Laura had never refused anything with chocolates.

She was snatched from her worrying when she felt something soft and warm touched her lips, and looked down.

"What the..." she uttered, and was interrupted by a chocolate cupcake gently being pushed in her mouth. She opened her mouth wide to welcome the offered goodies, and realized that her wife was feeding her.
“You should eat your breakfast now before it gets cold,” Laura commented.

She just looked at her wife and nodded, and felt embarrassed of being fed in front of other people. She glanced at LaFontaine and caught them suppressing a laugh, as Laura continued to feed her and wipe the remnants of food on the sides of her mouth. Then she heard a satisfied sighed and focused her attention to the Lady in Waiting that was gazing at their direction.

“I am so happy to see you both sweet and lovey-dovey,” Perry said, smiling wide and sighed again. She rolled her eyes and wished that the earth will swallow her now, as the Lady in Waiting continued to watch them.

And before she could drown in humiliation, she got distracted when her Valet pulled a chair, placed it near the side of her bed, took out a book and opened it.

"Don't tell me that you're going to read some love poems to us, because I swear, I am going to…” she was about to tell them that she would hang them again, but the soft hand of her wife cupped her face and guided her to look on the other direction.

"Hey, I told you to be kind to them,” Laura warned. "…because they always take the best care of you."

And before she could protest, she heard her Valet cleared their throat and they all looked at their direction.

"I have here some questions that I like you to answer Princess,” LaFontaine said and grinned at everyone, as if making sure that everyone was comfortable. "…so that we may know, why you're feeling exhausted lately and why you're having a stomach ache often."

Suddenly, the cheery mood in the room vanished and everyone kept quiet. She wrapped her arm protectively around Laura, and her other hand held the Princess' hand. She felt Laura's palm cold and sweating, and held it tighter, as they suddenly became silent and waited for LaFontaine to start their question.

Perry's cheerful expression suddenly morphed into worry and sat on the bed beside the Princess and held Laura's other hand.

"Have you been feeling exhausted and would just want to sleep all the time?"

"Yes," was Laura's firm reply.

"Have you experienced having cramps or stomach ache, similar to what you feel when you're about to have your monthly visitor?"

"Umm… Yes…” Laura said in a low tone and looked at her Lady in Waiting.

"When was the last time you bled heavily?” LaFontaine interrupted.

"Umm… while I was at my kingdom, before you two came," the Princess replied and received a confused look from Perry. "So, it's over a month now."

Perry gasped, but remained silent.

Worried… "Why? Is that a bad thing?” she asked, and saw LaFontaine shake their head.
"Have you been feeling depress or felt suddenly crying even without any reason?" they asked.

"Well… I've been depressed and cried a lot when-" Laura suddenly had a hard time expressing herself.

"… When His Highness left the castle and went to the woods," Perry boldly quipped and avoided eye contact with anyone.

As much as she was hurt after witnessing her wife kissing someone else, she does not want to be the cause of Laura's heartache.

"Cupcake, I'm sorry…" she mumbled and felt Laura's hand held hers firmly.

"It's the past, let's forget about it… and besides, it's actually my fault," the Princess commented and motioned for them to continue.

"Have you been craving for some foods that you don't usually eat?

"Apart from eating Carl's favorite cheese-"

"-that you hated before," she pointed out and remembered Laura's visit to the kitchen, while she worried as hell. "She also ate some of that nasty slimy green thing with-

"Hey! Pickles are not nasty! If you'll give it a try, it's good also with creampuffs and mustard," Laura declared passionately, and received a groan of disgust from everybody.

Amused, she smirked and watched Laura. Her heart swells every time she sees her wife grumpy.

"Alright, let's continue, before I throw up listening to your newfound appetite for exotic food," she teased and as expected, Laura pouted and crossed her own arms on the chest.

"Since we're in the subject of throwing up," LaFontaine chimed in... "Have you been feeling sick or vomited every time you wake up in the morning?"

"No, nothing that I can recall," Laura replied. "…but I've been feeling lazy in the morning and always want to stay longer in bed."

"Cupcake, all you have to do is ask me," she interrupted as she saw Laura's eyes narrowed with worry, and then darted towards her. "… If you want to have some morning delights, I would be happy to do it. No need to make these excuses of feeling lazy and wanting to stay longer in bed."

"Hey, I am not thinking about that morning delights!" the Princess defended. "… and besides, even if I want it, you sleep like a giant cat in hibernation… and you're grumpy in the morning."

After that precise description of herself, she decided not to taunt Laura further, seeing that the Princess was suddenly upset.

LaFontaine cleared their throat and they all focused their attention to them.

"Have you noticed any changes in your taste and sense of smell?"

"She had complained about my chocolate goodies and argued that I've been using a different kind of chocolates, which I'm not, and thought that chocolate desserts are not delicious anymore," Perry babbled.

Laura turned to her right and stared at her Lady in Waiting, "Per, I said I just thought that it tastes different. But I didn't said that it's not delicious," was the Princess apologetic remark and leaned her
head on Perry's shoulder, and wrapped the other arm around her Lady in Waiting. "You're desserts are still the best in the world."

"Alright, so have you noticed any offending smell or something that your nose can't handle, and been nauseous?" LaFontaine resumed.

"Yes. Carl."

"What?! I don't smell!" was her violent reaction.

"Yes you do! The other day, when you took a bath and told me that you used rose oil in your bath," Laura reasoned out and released Perry from her arms. "I think it's not fragrant at all."

"Cupcake, you're overreacting that day; I think you should let LaFontaine check your nose," she claimed and still cannot believe that her wife complained about her smell.

"Well I think you may have over exaggerated it by using rose oil, rose petals in addition to your regular soap," the Valet sympathized with Laura.

"I can't believe you're siding with her! You're my Valet for heaven's sake; you should be defending my smell and my image!" She bursted out selfishly.

"If the Princess doesn't like your smell, you should listen, because she's the one that you have to please, not us," was LaFontaine's witty remark. "You don't want to be banned on your matrimonial bed, do you?"

She growled in discontent and gave her Valet a lingering glare before looking at Laura. If looks can kill, her Valet would have been rotting by now.

"You may continue Laf and thank you for your honest and fair remark," Laura said and smiled at them.

They cleared their throat rather loudly and everyone focused their attention to them.

"Have you experience soreness on your breasts?" they asked next.

"Yes," were her quick reply and all three pairs of eyes focused on her. "What?" she asked innocently and saw her Valet rolled their eyes, while Laura glared at her and Perry just looked around avoiding eye contact.

"I'm the one who should answer that question..." was Laura's sheepish reply, and blushed.

"I wonder why I'm not surprise," was LaFontaine's side comment. "I wouldn't ask anymore why you knew it..."

"...Some discretion and privacy please?"

She heard Laura's request and furrowed her brows, "Discretion and privacy? Cupcake, these two practically know when and where we're having sex. They're always invading our privacy," she reasoned out and glared at the two gingers that have been spoiling her sex life. "I bet Lady Ginger here knew also the first time we did it..." was her challenging comment and when she looked at Perry, the latter blushed. "I'll be damned! You really knew when we first did it?" she asked dumbfounded. She was just being sarcastic and wanted to tease the gingers, but she was the one who was surprised instead. "Cupcake? Did you tell her?"
"No! …Of course not!" Laura reproached.

"Then how come she knew when we consummated our marriage?" she demanded.

"Because of the blood on the sheet," Perry returned. "In case you forgot, I'm the one who has access to all of the Princess' things and clothes. And the way you look at the princess, Your Highness."

"Why? How do I look at my wife?" was her irritated reply.

"Like a smitten kitten…" Laura filled in. "I told you about it, but you kept on denying it."

"It's confirmed… the Princess has most of the symptoms that Her Majesty had twenty years ago," LaFontaine disclosed and put the book on their lap.

She wrinkled her brows, and wondered why all of a sudden her mother was mentioned in the conversation. They were trying to find out what was wrong with Laura, but the thought of her mother being sick too was too overwhelming. Upset and worried, she shoved the blanket and rose from the bed and approached LaFontaine.

"What do you mean my mother had the same symptoms?" she demanded, her temper getting out of control. "…And what about my wife? Is she sick or what?!?" and before she could flare out, she saw her Valet's alert eyes and held their hands towards her to calm her.

"There's no need to panic…" LaFontaine warned. "What I mean is… Princess Laura is showing the same symptoms that Her Majesty experienced when she was pregnant with you," they explained quickly. "… and if my calculation is right, your wife is about 3-4 weeks with a child."

"She's what?"

She did not quite catch what they said. Bewildered, she snatched the book their holding. And while she tried to read the content, she heard Laura's gentle voice behind her:

"Carl… Laf's trying to say that…" Laura whispered. "…we're having a baby…"

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all for your feedbacks and kudos! I haven't done much editing on this chapter because it's already late here and I'm sleepy and had a headache from revising and editing this. But I want to give you something to enjoy your Sunday afternoon or evening, so I decided to post this now. And if there are people out there who are kind enough to point out any mistakes or grammatical error, you can leave it on the comment box and I would gladly edit that sentence when i have time. I wish you all a nice Sunday and let me know how you feel about this chapter, because I'm sure almost everyone have been waiting fot this. Goodnight from me! :D
“We're having a baby...”

She replayed the sentence in her thoughts as silence fell over the room.

When she fully grasped the meaning of every word… her eyes widened and she felt a lump formed in her throat. She handed back absent mindedly the book to LaFontaine, as she felt her heart throbbed and this overwhelming emotion possessed her. The next thing she knew, tears were forming in the corner of her eyes and threatening to fall; but before it happen…

She slowly turned around and caught sight of Laura gazing at her; wearing the most beautiful smile that she had ever seen. That confirmed her suspicion and her heartbeat quicken again until its thumping became tumultuous.

Still doubting, "We-We're having a baby?" she whispered, and received a nod from her wife, whose eyes were already shimmering with tears and twinkling with pride.

She gasped, and beamed with ecstatic happiness…

Laura's carrying their child… her heir!

She strode towards Laura and embraced her wife tightly, and burrowed her face at the crook of Laura's neck. She released the tears of joy that she was suppressing while Laura held her tight. She was too dumfounded and stoked at the news and did not care if she was showing too much emotion in the presence of Perry and LaFontaine. She would worry later on how humiliating and weak she looked like. But right now she just wants to burst out with gladness.

She had never imagined finding real love, let alone having a child with someone. But to have the fruit of their love, and Laura pregnant with her child was the most wonderful thing that she could think of. Everything in her life now was amazing and she could not ask for more.

She reluctantly let go of her wife, then took Laura's hands, bowed her head and planted a kiss on each knuckles. Then she kissed Laura's belly and whispered, "We love you." After that, Laura cupped her face and brought her for another passionate kiss while still sobbing.

After recovering from the ecstasy of discovering Laura pregnant with her child, she held her wife's face and gently wiped those tears with her thumb. Laura did the same thing to her, and she got self-conscious and brushed her face on her tunic instead.

"Cupcake, I love you…” she uttered as soon as she recovered from crying, and brushed the strands
of golden hair that fell on her wife's face.

"I love you more," Laura replied.

Laura and her both took a deep breath and kissed one more time.

They temporarily forgotten that they were not alone, as they grudgingly separated upon hearing someone cleared its throat. She turned around and shot daggers at her Valet at once, knowing that it's LaFontaine. She remained glaring at them while Laura remained holding her hand, as if stopping her from 'attacking' LaFontaine after disturbing them.

"In case you two had forgotten that we're here," LaFontaine quipped and smirked.

"Oops, sorry Laf,"

"Sweetie congratulations!" Perry cannot contain her excitement and made a beeline towards Laura.

She was caught off guard, and awkwardly made room for the Lady in waiting as Laura rose and stepped forward at once to embrace Perry. Seconds later, LaFontaine followed and they embrace the excited Princess too. She rolled her eyes after she was brushed off to the side, as the two gingers swarmed her wife.

After a moment of being ignored, "Can I have my wife back?"

"Aww, papa broody cat wants a hug too," Laura commented.

The two gingers sheepishly released from the embrace and stood on both sides of Laura.

She furrowed her brows and playfully glared at her wife for teasing her, and saw Laura spread both arms beckoning her to come. She flashed a modest smile and stepped in to Laura's personal space, and wrapped her hands around the Princess' hips, while Laura's arms rested around her neck.

While savoring the warmth and affection of her wife, she was caught off guard and her back stiffened when she felt something wrapped around her...

What the hell?

She almost panicked when she realized that the two gingers were embracing her too!

Not used to physical contact aside from Laura and her parents, she remained standing straight and held Laura's waist firmly, and prayed that she does not hurt her wife. She took a deep breath and steadied herself as much as she can. Luckily, she did not have to hold her breath longer; she exhaled a sigh of relief when she felt those arms released from her body. She reluctantly released Laura to give her wife a moment to relax too after embracing Laura tightly.

Worried, "Cupcake, Are you alright?" she asked, her voice deep and hoarse. Laura nodded. She let out a satisfied sigh when the Princess flashed that adorable smile that was purely for her. Suddenly, the thought of her wife being pregnant and fulfilling Laura's every desire crossed her mind. "By the way, do you need anything? Do you want to rest and go back to bed? How about some more cheese?" she anxiously asked. "How about some creampuffs…I could ask LaFontaine to get some pickles and mustard…I know you like that."

Instead of a reply, Laura reached out and cupped her left cheek, and caressed it.

"Carl, calm down, I'm alright and I don't need anything," was Laura's reassuring reply. "And I've
slept well."

"Are you sure? Because you just had a little sleep and I feel bad of keeping you awake till the middle of the ni-" she was babbling anxiously, and was stopped when Laura put a finger gently on her lips.

"Shhh…" Laura expressed and looked at the gingers sheepishly. "I think you should stop sharing too much information…"

"Aww, don't worry, we're already used to it; with the shouting, growling and banging…" was Perry's casual reply.

"You can hear us?!" Laura was shocked.

"Sweetie, we're sleeping just a wall away from you, so don't be surprised," the Lady in Waiting nonchalantly returned. "And besides you said yourself, that Laf and I practically knew when and where you two are having sex, so don't act naïve."

"But it's Carl who said that… and he's just teasing," Laura reasoned out, blushing with embarrassment.

"Oh no, I'm not teasing them," she corrected and gave them a bored look.

"You mean to tell me that you knew that they knew?" Laura asked, flabbergasted.

"Princess, let me just remind you that it's not good for you to be worried," Lafontaine chimed in.

Suddenly, her attention was caught and put her hands on Laura's upper arms and rubbed them gently, "Hey, don't worry about it. Why don't you sit on the bed and try to relax." She said in a low gentle tone and assisted the little Cupcake back to bed. She sat beside Laura and rested her back on the head board, and wrapped her right hand protectively around Laura's hips; she felt right away the Princess' left hand on her thigh, and she let out a low groan at the sudden contact. Laura's touch always sends a delightful shiver in her body that most of the times she cannot control herself, and just wants to claim the little princess in her own carnal way. She reminded herself that she needs to behave right now and listen to what Lafontaine had to tell.

Once they all recovered from the chaos of learning that Laura's pregnant and the fact that Laura just discovered that the gingers knew indeed when and where they were having sex, she focused her attention to them and was about to ask LaFontaine what to do, now that her wife was pregnant. But her eyes caught sight of the book that was on their hands and her curiosity was piqued.

"What's exactly that book?"

"This…" they stated and raised the large leather bound book in front of them. "… Was actually a book and a journal about pregnancy. But it's not just any journal. It's a record of all things with regards to pregnancy and birth of the Karnsteins' heirs."

"Shouldn't that be private?" was her worried query.

As if reading her mind, they nodded in agreement and held the book towards their heart.

"Yes. And only me and my father had the access to this book now," LaFontaine declared, their voice firm and clear. "We protect this book like our life. The midwives and chirurgeons that had served the Karnsteins for many generations had written in this book all the things that happened on every child birth and the entire queen's pregnancy period. In this way, it will help the next generation from making all the Karnstein queens' childbearing as easy and as safe as possible."
"You mean to say, you're the one who's going to help me when I give birth?" was Laura's enthusiastic question.

She lifted her left eye brow and looked at her wife. "Cupcake, my Valet isn't a midwife-" she was telling but heard them cleared their throat again, and unwillingly looked at them.

"Technically, I'm not. But…" they replied and they stood up proudly. "I've been studying about childbirth, and had been assisting some of the midwives in the castle when there is child birth among the servants. And my father told me that he's going to assist me when the time comes, that an heir is to be born."

"Wait, so you're telling me that a man is going to be there while the Princess gives birth? Aren't there any other midwives that can help the Princess?" Perry asked, worried and walked towards them.

Suddenly, she found herself fidgeting and remembered what happened to her Ma and the reason that her Ma was banish from the kingdom.

"Per, I think there will be other midwives too when the time comes," Laura's reassuring remark. "And besides, I trusts Laf."

"Actually, there will be no other midwife except for me and my father," LaFontaine informed. "There's a new law that all child births of the Karnsteins will now be assisted by my family, and the King's chosen person or people in case we need help."

Suddenly, she felt bad of being the reason of all these changes in laws and that Laura had to go through with it.

"But men had never given birth, how can they know how to deliver a baby? We need wives who have experienced childbirths," Was Perry's worried reply, walked on the other side of the bed and stood by the side where Laura was, "And men are not allowed during child birth."

She decided to take over in order not to upset Laura. "According to my mother, LaFontaine's father was present during my birth and his knowledge had helped me to survived, since I was born with complications," she explained and saw Perry calmed down, after giving the Lady in Waiting her signature broody stare. "So, without LaFontaine's father, I would have not survived." She concluded, even though she knew that Da came after they found out that something was wrong with her. She did not feel guilty of telling the last part, since Da had taken good care of her after she was born. But she knew that without her Ma's milk, she would have died.

"And I think we shouldn't worry about that since it's going to be long before it happens," LaFontaine suggested and focused their attention to the Princess. "Right now we need to make sure that all your needs is met and that you do not exhaust yourself too much, like doing some strenuous work…"

"You heard that Cupcake? It means no gallivanting in the village," she chimed in, reminding her wife about their argument.

"I am not gallivanting! I told you I have a project!" was Laura's upset reply and pouted.

"And we should not upset the Princess too…" LaFontaine added. "Because everything she feels now, the baby feels it too."

She received a glare from her Valet, but she dismissed it with a self-important sigh and stared back at them. And before she could bicker with LaFontaine… she felt Laura's hand gently cupped her face and motioned for her to look at her wife's direction.
"It's alright Laf, my big wild cat is just being extra protective again," Laura expressed and grinned. "He doesn't want me to go to the village because he's worried that I'll get sick again like the last time."

"Well, actually, you can still do some light work and short travelling," the Valet explained. "But if you ever feel something painful, you need to let me know, and you need to tell me if there's something that's bothering you."

"So… I can still go to the village and go to the monastery with Her Highness?"

"Yes, as long as you feel alright and don't do any lifting and hard work," LaFontaine answered with a smile. "You're free to do whatever you want, but there would be some changes that will happen to your body as the baby grows inside, and there are things that you don't usually feel before, but might feel now that you're pregnant…"

"Things like?" was the Princess' curious remark.

"…Things like, frequent urination, feeling emotional, lightheadedness, constipation. With a growing belly, you'll also have a visible blue veins in your belly, breasts and legs…"

Laura pouted, "Oh crap that sounded awful…"

"Hey, you'll always be the most beautiful woman in my eyes," she assured immediately and kissed Laura's shoulder before claiming the Princess' lips. When she released from the kiss, she gave her wife a satisfied smile, "Cupcake I will always love you and be attracted to you even if you grow bigger."

"Aww…Really?"

"Of course I am, and I will be proud and forever grateful that you have chosen to bear my child," she uttered with utmost sincerity and received an adorable smile from her wife.

"I'm honored that you chose me," Laura said.

And this time, the princess reached for her jaw and kissed her tenderly.

They were rudely interrupted, when she heard her Valet cleared their throat again, and they hesitantly released from the kiss, and shot daggers at the direction of her Valet.

"I just thought you might want to hear another changes in your wife's body that will surely make you more happy…” was LaFontaine's taunting comment.

"My wife's body is already perfect and beautiful, and I'm extremely satisfied with it," she returned proudly, and was a bit offended by her Valet's teasing. "What else is there to make me happier?"

The Valet grinned like the devil and said: "When a woman is pregnant, her breasts will grow bigger and fuller, the areolas and the nipples will grow larger too and her nipples will stick out more."

Her eyebrows shot up and her eyes widened.

Laura's breasts…

Fuller…

Rounder…
Bigger…

And larger nipples…

She can't help but to get excited at the thought of it!

She imagined those round bigger breasts in the palm of her hands, and drowning at the fullness of it while she sucks Laura's fully erected nipples… it was heavenly and dizzying.

She felt her shaft twitched and let out an unrestrained groan; it was deep and desperate.

"Thank you Laf for enlightening us!"

She was yanked off from her lustful musing as the high pitch voice of Laura resonated in her head…

Her brows contorted in confusion when she caught the naughty suppressed grin of LaFontaine, Perry looking at the floor crossing her arms tightly on the chest, and Laura's face turned crimson…

"Laf, Perry, thank you for the lovely breakfast and for the good news!"

She heard the hyper Princess blurted out… the next thing she knew, Laura rose from the bed and discreetly grabbed a pillow and gently placed it on her crotch, her eyes widened as she caught a glimpse of her stiff arousal and discreetly covered it. No wonder Laura was giving her the 'please behave' look.

She did not mean to embarrass them.

And then she came to her senses and realized that LaFontaine's last comment caused an unwanted erection…

Damn it!

She hated that just a slight thought of Laura's breasts was enough to rouse her member, embarrass her or worst, cause her trouble. She was thankful that it's just LaFontaine and Perry, who's in the room, but still, Laura's lips narrowing, and glare tells her that her wife was not pleased by her display of 'happiness'.

To hide her embarrassment, she cleared her throat before saying, "Don't tell anyone yet about my wife's pregnancy, I would like to tell my Queen Mother and King Father first," she declared, her voice deeper and firmer. "You two may leave, I want to be alone with my wife."

LaFontaine rose from their seat and bowed, while Perry sought the Princess' eyes.

"I'll call you when I need you Per," Laura said in a low serious tone and the Lady in Waiting bowed to both of them, looking a bit rattled before leaving with LaFontaine.

As soon as the door of the chamber shut, she rose from the bed, walked towards Laura and embraced her wife. She nuzzled her face in the crook of the Princess' neck and remained there, savoring the scent of her wife.

"Then she realized her misconduct.

"I'm sorry, I didn't know that it's… chirpy and standing," she mumbled sheepishly at the crook of Laura's neck, and felt her wife released from the embrace. She got worried and looked down instead
of meeting Laura's stare. But she was surprised when she felt those soft small hands cupped her face and motioned for her to look up.

"Chirpy and standing?"

She heard Laura's playful voice and furrowed her brows.

"My beautiful Prince, it's fully erected and naughty... I think you've scared Perry..." Laura teased.

"I said I'm sorry," was her sheepish reply and bowed her head again. But she felt Laura held her face and instead, brought her for a sweet kiss.

"You're so cute when you're embarrassed and guilty," Laura giggled.

"Cupcake!"

She hated when Laura calls her cute.

"How am I supposed to know that my Valet is going to talk about your breasts growing bigger?" was her irritated retort.

Instead of stopping, the Princess remained giggling. She got embarrassed and turned around, but the hands cupping her face remained, then she felt two soft lips claimed her own. She softened, put her hands on Laura's hips, shut her eyes and let herself get lost at the sensation of Laura's lips, and tongue conquering her mouth.

It was intense and possessive.

When the need for air arose, she slowly opened her eyes and gazed at those round beautiful hazel orbs. She cannot stop being sentimental at the thought of this woman loving her and bearing her child.

"I feel like the most blessed person in the world right now," she whispered and received the adorable smile that always drives her crazy. "Laura, you make my life so beautiful that I don't know how I can return the favor." Suddenly, the dorky adorable smile on her wife's face morphed into a serious genuine smile.

"Carm, just being yourself..." Laura whispered. "... loving me... pampering me... protecting me... and making love to me in your own broody, sweet, wild, possessive, passionate way, is already enough to make my life beautiful. I love everything about you... you make me happy and satisfied."

"Do you really mean that?"

She still cannot believe that someone had fallen in love with her despite her many flaws.

"Yes my broody Prince, I sincerely love you and cherished you," Laura declared. "I don't want you to doubt again my love for you... and there's no way for you to get rid off me anymore, whether you like it or not, I'm a part of your life, now and forever. I'm not only your wife; I'm also carrying your heir..." Laura's voice was playful and serious, "... our child," and morphed into whisper, "We're going to be a family soon."

She beamed at the thought of it and felt a fierce sense of possessive pride.

At last, Laura truly belongs to her, nothing and no one could take that away from her, and she had her child to thank for securing it for her.
Chapter End Notes

Thank you for always taking time to leave kudos and feedbacks, really appreciate some of you taking time to tell me how you feel. And sorry for this late update, I was supposed to post it before the end of February, but had a temporary block and I can't seem to finish the last part. Hope you enjoyed the update!
Chapter Summary

After being warned by LaFontaine of Laura's mood shifts and fulfilling whatever Laura desires, Carmilla had now experienced one of the crazy urge of a pregnant Laura.

This chapter is the continuation of the previous one.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Carmilla

Totally immersed and ecstatic at the thought of Laura belonging to her forever, she was taken aback when two meticulous hands swiftly untied her robe, slid off from her shoulder and the next thing she knew…the purple cloth fell on the floor.

She arched her left brow and looked up to see what her naughty wife was up to.

"You won't need it…" Laura grinned.

A smirk formed in the corner of her mouth and she felt a spasm inside her braies.

Laura's demure but naughty smile always drives her crazy.

"Come back to bed…"

The Princess whispered, then nibbled at the underside of her ear, and caressed the other one, which resulted in involuntary purr from her.

Laura giggled, "Is that a 'happy yes'?"

Embarrassed, she ignored the remark. As time goes by, her wife becomes more and more familiar with how her body reacts; even a single touch on her hand never fails to arouse her.

Two arms wrapped around her waist and Laura rested her head on the crook of her neck.

She loved it when her wife was clingy and needy, it felt wonderful that someone wants her; needs her.

She enveloped her Cupcake in a hug and savored this connection they have, not just physically but emotionally and sighed with delight.

Everything around her seemed suddenly beautiful…

…The sun's rays peeking through the window painted a captivating golden sheen in the room that cheered her eyes; the bird's chirping that use to annoy her sounded now like sweet chants of love in her ears, and the lilac that Laura uses on her hair smelt sweeter and enticing.

She cannot deny it…
Laura makes her world beautiful...

Laura makes her life worth living...

Laura makes her whole.

"I still can't believe that I have a tiny living thing inside me," the Princess mumbled.

A cocky grin formed across her mouth after hearing her wife's remark… relishing her moment of glory.

She was too damn proud of her accomplishment!

But she can never tell her the real reason why.

She hugged Laura closer to her and drew small circles on her wife's back.

"I still can't believe that I made you pregnant," she returned and felt Laura shifted beneath her; then freed from her embrace.

The Princess' eyes narrowed.

Damn it!

It was too late before she realized her mistake.

She was about to utter an explanation...

"With all due respect, Your Royal Highness, are you telling me that you're in doubt and questioning my fidelity?" the Princess' words matched her stabbing look. "You're the sire of this child and the only one who impregnated me. Do you want me to help you recall the first time you've claimed my innocence and how many times you've made love to me?" Laura argued and put her hands on her hips… "…and which of those were sweet and demure, and which ones were wild and intense, that you like so much?!

Noticing her wife's mood shift…

"Whoa! Cupcake, tone down, before anyone hears us…" she warned and Laura rested both arms on the side. "I'm not questioning your fidelity and I don't deny that I'm the father of your child," she defended her voice firm and deep; but the pout on the little princess' mouth remained. "I just couldn't believe that I can do it… you know…" her voice wavered, "…me being-"

"…Carmilla," Laura concluded.

The sound of her old name still sends a shiver of delight inside her, especially when Laura utters it.

She nodded, too daze to reply.

She caught Laura gazing at her and it did not take too long before Laura's hands cupped her jawline, and soft delicate lips touched her own.

"Well you did it… and I trust you can do it again."

Laura's firm voice and resolved face brought back her confidence. She loved how strong willed and trustful this woman was.
"Thank you for believing in me, when I doubt my capability," she admitted, and felt relieved that she just did not fulfill one of her most important duties, but she was also appeased that Laura was carrying her child; as a security, for Laura not to leave her in case the Princess had a change of heart.

"What if I cannot bear you an heir? Will you still love me? …And stay with me?"

Her troubled mind was interrupted and she sought Laura's gaze.

But the Princess looked down.

It pains her to see Laura vulnerable.

"Cupcake, with or without an heir, I will always love you and be with you," she uttered with utmost sincerity, her voice deeper and raspier. "How could you ask me that when I'm the one who is broken, and you're the one who made me whole…" she said and reached up to tuck behind Laura's ear the loose strand of golden hair that blocked her wife's beautiful face. "You're my life and my sun, remember? I can't live without you," she mumbled and lifted the Princess' chin with one finger and claimed Laura's lips.

After that fervent kiss, she gave her wife a satisfied smirk as Laura displayed that adorable smile that makes her crazy.

"I have to ask…" the Princess uttered, "Because you…” and walked to the bed and sat on the edge, before telling "…drive me crazy."

The satisfied smirk on her face transformed into naughty one, as she stared at the beautiful princess.

"Is it the 'I drive you crazy, because of my savage temperament, or the 'I drive you crazy because I make 'hot wild' love with you?" she claimed and caught Laura crimsoning.

Her wife might have read her mind, and she saw those round brown eyes gazed at her under those long droopy eyelashes and fluttered.

"Both." Laura's voice deepened and bit her lower lip

And that broke her self-control.

In a split second, Laura was lying on her back and she was on top of her wife, fumbling for the hem of Laura's chemise. She removed the offending cloth in one quick motion and ravaged those soft round breasts with her tongue.

"Cupcake…” she breathed deeply in between licking and sucking. She could feel the need in her wife's firm hands while caressing her hair and the back of her neck, "…You're the one who drives me crazy," she mentioned before she awkwardly pulled down Laura's underwear. Laura reached for her sleeping tunic, but she gently stopped her. "Leave it… in case someone barge in," she ordered and received an unsatisfied nod. The Princess pulled her for a quick kiss; before she devoured again on Laura's breasts and kneads both of them, and watched with pleasure her hands possessively cupped and squeezed them. She felt something inside her braies uncoiling at the sight of it and groaned, "Ahhh… imagine these beauties growing larger, filled with milk, and tasting the sweetness of it," she can't control her excitement and managed to slip.

"Oh. So you like that," Laura realized.

She suddenly woke from her fantasy and saw two round hazel orbs staring at her and eyebrows raised with curiosity. "I… Umm… I didn't mean to…” and before she could die of embarrassment,
the Princess pulled her down for one torrid kiss, and then her mouth was dragged back to Laura's left
nipple.

Seeing that her wife did not cringe from discovering one of her fantasies, she took the offered nipple
into her mouth and swirled her tongue around the areola, and then to the rosy bud till it erected.

"Carm…" Laura moaned weakly. "Show me how you like them…"

Her brows raised and she felt her member growing thicker and tighter upon hearing Laura's request.
Without hesitating, she gripped Laura's right breasts and then licked the left nipple before claiming it
in her mouth like a hungry beast and suckles it hard.

It earned a loud moan instantly from Laura and her wife's hands run through her hair in a desperate
motion. She was becoming dizzy and felt her braies getting wet with her precum, as she suckles on
the other nipple.

With Laura's right nipple still pulled deep inside her mouth, she groaned when she felt Laura stroked
the erection through her braies in a slow torturous pace.

She slowed down and matched the cadence of Laura's hands stroking her raging hardness and the
suckling on Laura's nipple.

It's driving her madly insane and she felt dying from arousal as this slow torturous pace transcribed.
"Carm…” Laura uttered in between soft moans, still stroking the large bulge through the now wet
braies.

She closed her eyes and remained suckling Laura's erected nipple while trying not to burst from the
touch of Laura's merciful skilled hand. It's overwhelming, pleasurable and cruel at the same time. She
does not know how long Laura could take in her suckling, and she does not have any intention of
stopping; she switched to the other nipple and suckled it with the same slow pace.

In between suckling, she was surprised to discover how this calms her while it arouses her at the
same time. Her wife must have really loved her so much to let her do this.

She was about to close her eyes again and savor the sensation, but she suddenly jerked and almost
explodes when Laura squeezed her rigid shaft… and that was her cue to stop.

She released Laura's nipple with a wet sucking plop and gazed at her.

"Don't you think you had enough?" Laura commented and displayed a lop-sided grin.

Her hunch was right; and blamed herself for getting carried away. One day, they need to talk about
this 'fantasy' of hers; she has trepidation talking about it since she does not know how far Laura will
allow her to do the things she craves, or not allow her at all.

Abashed, she smiled sheepishly and received a combined charming and naughty smirk, that only her
wife can execute and evoke lust in her. Laura shifted beneath her and reached down with the other
hand.

Her eyes widened as she watched her wife's fingers slid inside her core, and then slowly brought it
up and showed the wet fingers in front of her. Her nose quickly picked up the musky scent of
Laura's arousal and she gladly opened her mouth and sucked Laura's wet digits. It earned a desperate
moan from Laura and a growl from her at the intoxicating taste of purely Laura's; then she felt
something throbs downwards.
Before she could take off her braies, Laura's hands were already there fumbling for the strings and she awkwardly pulled down her braies and freed her rigid shaft. She heard Laura's gasp and it always boosts her ego. She kneeled in front of Laura and straddled gently her wife's legs.

She kissed Laura on the lips, letting her tastes her own lust and piqued Laura's arousal as she felt the Princess sucked her tongue. Their tongues dueled and when the need for air arose, she pulled out from the kiss gently and put her lips on Laura's shoulder before kneeling back and held the base of her member.

Laura's arms reached up and wrapped around her neck, and she found herself gazing at those fully dilated hazel orbs.

"Make love to me slowly, Carm," Laura whispered with full of needs in her voice. "You're the only one I desire and I'm so happy carrying your child inside me."

Her heart swelled upon hearing it. Even if she always doubts Laura's love, her wife's sweet, loving, reassuring words whenever they make love always appeased her.

"Cupcake, you don't know how ecstatic I am that you're the mother of my heirs," she retorted. She gave Laura one passionate kiss and eased the head of her member slowly and gently inside like it was their first time. Laura drew a deep breath and tried to calm down. She furrowed her brows and paused; she always makes sure to be gentle when entering Laura and often gives her a moment to adjust to her length. But when she caught the slight flinch from her wife, she worried at once. She reached for Laura's face and cupped the Princess' cheek.

"Is everything good?" her voice full of concern and gentle; ready to pull out.

"Yes..." Laura breathed out and nodded. "I just got excited and tensed."

Unconvinced after Laura faltered; "Is something bothering you Cupcake?"

"No, nothing's bothering me," Laura reassured.

Laura touched her jawline, then traced the wrinkles on her forehead and smoothed it, before pulling her for a passionate kiss. She closed her eyes and relished their closeness. She could never get enough of Laura, whether she was kissing her or inside her. Then she felt Laura gently released her lips, and she slowly opened her eyes and her sight was met by a pair of brown tantalizing round eyes. She returned with a satisfied smirked.

She took a deep sigh, slowly moved inside and filled Laura fully with her hardness. Her breath quickened as she felt Laura's warm wet core around her throbbing shaft. It always feels good to be buried inside the warmness of her wife's mound, and be connected with Laura in body and soul. She pumped slowly inside her wife, relishing the sensation of feeling Laura stretched fully to accommodate her length. She felt her shaft bathing in their combined cum as she slides smoothly and tried not to explode at once. She will take it slow and tender, as Laura requested even if her wife's moans were getting louder.

"Carm..." Laura uttered. "Faster..."

"What happened to slow love making?" was her confused remarked, as she found herself gradually increasing her thrusts.

"I changed my mind. I want my big wild panther!" Laura exclaimed, sliding a hand under the tunic and pinched a nipple.
She growled due to the unexpected physical contact and pain on her throbbing nipple, and felt Laura's other hand slid under her tunic, cupped her other breast, and then pinched the neglected nipple, "You sneaky little Cupcake!" she growled as she felt Laura's fingers put more pressure on both her nipples and made her thrusts faster and deeper inside, causing the animalistic side of her to awake.

"You think you're the only one who could play with nipples?" was Laura's devilish remark, and rubbedfirmer the hard nipples in between her thumbs and forefingers.

She felt that her penis was not the only one that was fully erected but her nipples too and she can't stop growling in pain and pleasure at this sadistic ministration from her sweet little wife. Laura's moans were getting shorter and sharper as she pushed farther and deeper. Her body was already trembling in this state of sharp pain and elation and wants Laura to come first, as always. She mustered all the energy she had and thrust deeper, faster and shorter until she felt Laura released her nipples, and two arms grabbed and wrapped around her neck. She could feel Laura approaching climax as her wife tightened around her. Her buttocks were tightening too and her balls were filled with her juice and aching for release soon.

"Carm… I'm…" Laura whimpered.

Laura was not even finish talking when she took a deep long plunge and thrust upwards followed by Laura's crying in pleasure. She felt Laura gripped her as her wife arched her back and rode the waves of orgasms and trembled beneath her. She continued to thrust in and out of Laura's tightness and felt her member thickening. She released a satisfying grunt as her penis swelled and shoots loads and loads of her juice inside Laura's.

Laura gave herself over to her again and she can't help but feel proud and elated every time the Princess surrenders herself to her. Laura's love was like the sea; it overwhelms, and drowns her and leaves her breathless.

After recovering from their peak, still catching her breath, and sweating, she felt Laura pulled her closer, kissed her temple, as she rested on top of her wife, and nuzzled at the crook of Laura's neck as she waits for her erection to subside.

She sighed when she felt Laura caressed her short locks and back. They both love this quiet intimate moment after having sex and just relishing the feeling of being connected in silence.

She loves staying inside Laura. Nothing had felt as wonderful and as good as being sheathed by the warmth and tight core of Laura.

Sensing her shaft turning flaccid, she pulled out gently from Laura and felt the strong surge of their combined cum.

"What the heck was that, Cupcake? I didn't realize that you'll be in for some torture and pain induced love making?" she exclaimed, after landing on the right side of Laura and lay on her back.

"As long as it involves torturing you, I'll be alright with it," Laura teased, turned on her right side and grinned like a naughty innocent child.

"Seriously Cupcake, I still can't feel anything around my nipples except pain," she claimed after stroking lightly one of them through her tunic.

"Oh god, I'm so sorry Carm," Laura's concerned remark, reached for the neckline of the tunic and peaked inside. "If you want I could lick them so that it'll feel better."
"Thanks but no thanks; I think my nipples had enough traumas for the day," she retaliated, feeling them throbbing in pain.

"I said I'm sorry," Laura's sheepish comment and pouted her lips. "I didn't mean it, I'm sorry. I think it's the hormones."

"What hormones?" she asked furrowing her brows while rubbing gently her other nipple through her tunic.

"My emotions rapidly shifts and I can't control them since I've been pregnant," Laura explained. "It's like I've got this inconceivable urge to pinch or touch someone..."

"...And the first thing that came into your mind was to pinch my nipples."

"Well-" Laura fumbled for words, ashamed.

"Well what?" she taunted, and tried to refrain from bursting into laughter how adorable her wife when criticized.

"You're on top of me, and the first thing that my eyes saw when the urge kicked in were your nipples," was the Princess' smart retort. "Be thankful that it's not your penis, or else..."

"Whoa! Hold it there you naughty princess, I told you, don't crush it; we still need to produce two more heirs," she warned and caught Laura's mouth opened wide, then closed it and glared at her.

"Well, I'll remember that, and when I'm finished giving birth to your third heir, I'm gonna deal with your 'wild panther'," was Laura's challenging reply.

Her eyes widened, and she consciously covered her crotch with her right hand, "Alright, we're going to blame it on your hormones; enough of that," she said and discarded that evil thought of her wife then smiled at the Princess. "Come here and give me a hug."

Laura displayed her exquisite adorable smile and crawled under the sheets.

Once they were both tucked inside the blanket, Laura pulled the sheet over them to cover their whole body.

"What the-" she got confused.

"Shhh..." Laura uttered.

And the next thing she felt was a small hand pulling the hem of her tunic up till her chin, and Laura's tongue gently licking one of her sore nipples. She groaned at the warm soft wet sensation of Laura's tongue swirling around the throbbing nipple, hoping to relieve the pain. And before she knew it, Laura's hand was already stroking her semi hard shaft and rousing it again in its full glory.

"Oh, god..."

"I promise, I'll be gentle this time," Laura whispered.

She just closed her eyes and surrendered fully to whatever her naughty wife plans on doing to her. Laura was not usually the horny one... If this was due to Laura's hormones and the so-called 'inconceivable urge', she has no right to complain...

TBC
Thanks for leaving kudos and for your lovely comments/feedbacks :-}
Good News, Duties, Laws and Traditions

Chapter Summary

As Carmilla tells her King Father and Queen Mother the good news of Laura's pregnancy and having an heir soon, she learned also some things about her parents.

Chapter Notes

I always wanted to treat my readers with an update whenever there's a special occasion, I might be late celebrating natvanlis' birthday, but anyway, here's a little treat in a form of update. Love it? Like it? Hate it? Let me know how you feel. And thanks again for your continued support on this fic by leaving kudos and comments :-) 

Carmilla

On her way to the king's chamber, she still cannot contain herself from the excitement of having her child with the most beautiful and coveted princess in south Styria.

Laura's pregnancy still lingers in her thoughts like a dream, causing her to float in ecstasy and brings hope to her doubtful mind; it calms her raging pride and assures her jealous heart.

She was anxious for this… Anxious for Laura to have a reason to remain by her side

Then there was the heavy burden and nagging of her mother and father.

Her parents have long agonized for her to get married and produce an heir to secure the Karnsteins powerful reign continues in the north.

The whole kingdom was aching for this.

When the crown Princess of Karnstein gives birth to her first child, the throne has already been secured whether it was a girl or a boy, by the law that her father declared after her birth.

And now, the people of Karnstein can finally rejoice for this…

… And she could breathe a sigh of relief.

The combined bloodline of Karnstein and Hollis will produce not just beautiful offspring, but the most powerful bloodline in Styria originating from both strong and wealthy family from the north and south.

She imagined how proud her father would be of the fruit, of her and Laura's union after they had broken the lengthy war between their forefathers, and merged their family into one to form a strong alliance and powerful family.

But nothing feels more amazing and secured at the thought of Laura mothering her children and
breeding an exceptional bloodline of Karnstein-Hollis heirs with the beautiful princess and love of her life.

It gives her eternal hope and confidence that Laura would be hers forever.

*Forever...*

A thrilled cocky grin formed in the corner of her mouth as she walked closer to the King's chamber. The royal guards stood straight and bowed as she stands by the door. She composed herself and paused from gloating with devilish gratification over her accomplishment.

She knocked carefully at the King’s chamber and when the king’s voice said 'come in', one of the guards opened the door for her.

She collected herself before crossing the threshold and walked inside.

"Good evening my King Father," she greeted the King and bowed in front of him.

She cannot hide her excitement as she strode towards her father with a genuine smile. Her parents were out of the castle the whole day, while she and Laura celebrated their success of finally producing an heir by locking themselves in the Princess' chamber all day.

"I was wondering if you have some minutes to spare for me." She hesitated, looking at the king seated on his study table with a bunch of scrolls and books in front of him.

"I will always have time for you, my child," the King returned with a smile and motioned for her to sit on the chair beside him. "What can I do for you?"

Her father's warm smile and friendly nature always evoke kindness and serenity. She felt more comfortable talking anything with him.

She took this opportunity to have a little chat with her father.

"Can I ask you something?" she said, weighing her words. "Not as a king but as a father?"

This time, the King leaned closer to her, as if ready to listen.

"You can ask me anything you like."

His deep gruff calm voice made her smile.

"How did you keep your marriage this long?" she asked not sure if it falls into a category of prying or wondering. "Laura and I just made up."

This time the King arched his left eyebrows, "Why? Did you and Laura have a misunderstanding?"

Unsure if she was going, to tell the truth... "You can say that."

"We do not want that to happen." The King returned with a repressed grin. "I am the King, but I always obey what your mother says. And when you become the king, you should listen and obey what Laura says to you; that my child is the secret to a successful marriage. If there is one thing I learned from living with your mother is-"

"…Never argue with the Queen." They both said it out loud and laughed at their submissiveness to the Queen.

"Do you love my Queen Mother?" She asked, and this time the mood around them changed and she found her father staring at her.
"I have loved your mother from the first moment that I saw her, and I will love her till the end," was her father's passionate declaration. "We're arranged to be married, like you and Laura, your grandfather were the one who found your mother for me. I was a rebel like you and I wished not to take the throne, so I refused to marry. But when I saw your mother, everything changed."

She was fascinated and surprised at how her parents met and discovered how similar she was to her father.

"If you love my mother, how come you have mistresses?" she disclosed the ultimate question that she was dying to ask.

The King was suddenly taken aback by the question but managed to reply immediately. "It's your mother's choice, not mine. I think the duties of being the Queen and your birth made her chose to give me mistresses."

This time, it was her who was taken aback.

"Forgive me for being a disappointment to you and to my Queen Mother." She murmured, realizing that the Queen might be afraid to have another 'defective' child.

"No, it was not your fault and it has nothing to do with you!" The King argued and corrected her, his voice worried. "Carmilla, whatever happened, you are still my child and I love you for what you are."

Her eyebrows shot up, her eyes widened, her ears tingled with delight and a wide grin spread on her face at the sound of her old name. She had never heard it ever since that night when she first saw him!

But before she could indulge at hearing her father calls her Carmilla, she felt a strong arm embraced her and she was overcome with happiness.

"Thank you my King Father," she said and released from the embrace, suppressing a cry. "…And thank you for still remembering my real name."

"Of course I still remember. I am the one who gave you that name." the King responded with pride.

Her eyes widened again.

She did not know that.

All along, she thought her Ma gave her that name.

Shocked, "You named me Carmilla?"

"Yes," the King answered with a proud smile that morphed into a worried grin, and whispered, "…But do not tell your mother that I called you Carmilla she would be furious."

She chuckled and realized how 'whipped' her father was. Now she knew it runs in the blood as she discovered herself obeying Laura's every order.

"It would be our secret," she nodded, then flashed him with a devilish smirk and winked.

"Apart from asking my relationship with your mother, you're always welcome to ask me anything that bothers you..." the King reminded. "Laura seemed very dainty and demure, are you careful and treating your wife well? You have to remember that women should be treated delicately."
She was not surprised anymore about talking 'bed matters' with her father. But she felt the heat crawled into her face as she recalled all the forbidden positions that she and Laura did, and the rest of it that they were planning on 'trying' next time.

If only her parents knew how not so dainty and demure her wife was…

"All is fine, my King Father," she croaked.

Unconvinced… "Are you sure? Because if you want more… there's always the option of getting a mistress to fulfill all your needs; you are after all the heir to the throne. You can have anything you desire," was the King's mischievous remark.

"No, I don't want a mistress. Laura will kill me!" was her instant retort.

The King glared at her with furrowed brows, she discovered they both have similar gestures and mannerism; she thought he was going to reprimand her for being 'submissive' to her wife, but then she was startled when he bursts into laughter, and she joined him too.

"I thought I'm the only one who is afraid of my wife," the King commented. "It turns out, you inherited that trait too," he said as they both realized how 'whipped' they both were.

As their laughter subsided, she managed to compose herself and faced the King. "I would like to thank you," she said, her voice deep and sincere.

"For what…?" The King asked, confused after recovering from laughing.

"…For choosing the perfect wife for me."

"I knew from the moment that I saw Laura, that she's the one…" The King claimed and tapped her shoulder. "…who could love you unconditionally…" was the King's serious remark. "… and tame you."

And they both laughed again after the last words from her father and they hugged each other.

"I totally had forgotten why I'm here…" was her excited interruption.

"What is it my child?" the King asked curiously.

"I think I might have an heir on the way…" was her careful remark. "LaFontaine examined my wife and told us that Laura is pregnant."

"Good work, my child! I'm happy for you and Laura and I am so proud of you!" the King said and they embraced each other. "You're the greatest gift that I and your mother ever received, and I want you to know that we are very grateful for you. Have you told your Queen Mother the good news?"

"Not yet… I want you to be the first because I know that you've been waiting for this," she returned hinting that pressure that had been put on her from the moment she was crowned as the Prince of Karnstein and heir to the throne, till she and Laura got married.

"I am not denying that I am anxiously waiting for you to produce an heir, since…” the King hesitated.

"Since what?"

"Since we all knew that the Karnstein's lineage is in danger of vanishing…” the King paused and sighed heavily. "Please forgive me for telling you this, but it's in your hands to secure that this
kingdom would be under Karnstein rule and no one else."

She nodded and understood fully her role in life.

The King walked towards her and put an arm around her shoulder…

"Well… now that you're going to become a father, I expect that you will take extra good care of your wife," the King explained. "You need to be more patient, loving and understanding with your wife's needs and never give her heartache."

"I will, my King Father," she returned with a firm, raspy and deeper voice.

"I remember when your Queen Mother was pregnant with you…"

The remark suddenly caused her back to stiffen.

Anything that had something to do with her childbirth and her mother's pregnancy was like a curse and sensitive to her ears.

"I had to ask the servants to buy all the cauliflower they can find in the village and the neighboring kingdom because your Queen Mother loves it," the King related, with a smile on his face.

A sudden delight seized her. She never heard anything about her mother's pregnancy that does not involve hysteria or any confidential matters.

"And you know what's the craziest part?"

Her train of thoughts was interrupted by her father's cheery voice; she stared at him, holding her breath.

"Your Queen Mother eats the cauliflowers together with blood sausages and freshly grated horseradish!" the king exclaimed and flinched. "Imagine how revolting it looked like when the white vegetable was mixed with a very dark sausage… and a seasoning that burns to the tongue!"

"Well, that explained how I evolved to be like this."

*****

"Come in!"

She heard the cold and controlled voice of her mother as the guards opened the door to the Queen's chamber and she walked inside. After talking to her father, she proceeded immediately to her mother's chamber to finish her task of relaying the news to her parents.

Since she arrived from her retreat at the forest, her mother never summoned her to the Queen's chamber nor had talked to her about her trip.

"Leave us."

The Queen ordered as she approached the Queen's bed and her mother's four handmaidens vowed to the Queen then to her before leaving quietly.

"Good evening my Queen Mother," she greeted, and stood beside the bed, keeping her distance; unsure if her mother was still upset with her for disobeying her order.

"I'm surprised that the heir to the throne has time to visit me," the Queen commented, with a hint of
bitterness. "Did you accomplish anything in the woods aside from freezing in your tent and being idle?"

She heard the authoritative tone that her mother uses to everyone and received the Queen's signature deadpan expression.

She felt instantly this invisible barrier between them.

"I did my Queen Mother," she replied proudly not tearing her eyes off from that icy stare. She took a deep breath and stepped closer to the bed. "And I want to apologize for not-" she was not even finished when the Queen's piercing glare shot at her.

"What have I told you?" the Queen's voice became lower and firmer. "You are the heir to the throne, you shall never apologize."

"I forgot my Queen Mother, it will never happen again," was her excuse. Ever since Laura came into her life, the Princess' friendliness and down to earth nature had influenced her. She gathered herself and cleared her throat. She composed the words that her mother wants to hear. "I have come to tell you, I was stubborn and that I regret disobeying you."

She remained quiet as her mother's silence and scrutinizing eyes made her uncomfortable.

Lately, she had been rebellious and disregards most of her mother's orders, and felt that her mother must be very disappointed with her.

But when she saw her mother's lips pursed into a controlled grin, she knew that she succeeded.

A discreet cocky smirk formed at the side of her mouth.

She patiently waited for the Queen's next move.

And she felt proud of herself for softening the Queen's heart when her eyes caught sight of her mother's arm raised towards her.

She took the offered hand and kissed gently the back of her mother's palm. Then she felt it cupped her face and she was motioned to come closer and sat on the bed, across the Queen.

"I am happy that you came," the queen's voice modulated. "You've been disobedient lately and I feel my words are not important to you anymore."

The guilt still nags her.

Perry's advice had been the best decision that she made. If she had not given herself a break to contemplate, she would have lost Laura due to her rage, jealousy, and pride.

Her musing was interrupted when she felt her mother's delicate fingers ran carefully through her short hair and then stroked the side of her face with the back of the queen's palm.

"My Queen Mother, I know that I upset you with my decision. But the experience helped me overcome a lot of things including my anxiety."

"It would be nice to know if you have got rid of your angst. Otherwise, you just wasted your time," the Queen said.

Her mother's comment sounded like a mock.
She slightly shifted and the delicate hand that strokes her cheek was removed.

"No, I haven't. But I learned some helpful ways controlling it."

"I see... so nothing's change."

She knew it was coming.

She detests 'the 'I told you so' attitude of her mother. Whenever she hears it, it reminded her that she could never be perfect in the eyes of the Queen unless she obeys everything that her mother dictated her.

Instead of arguing, "Are you disappointed?" she challenged her mother.

"Of course not... you're still my precious one," the Queen returned with mocking delight. "...Even if you've been neglecting me by spending too much time with your wife; and never comes to my chamber anymore, you're still the love of my life."

She grinned discreetly after receiving the response that she hoped; listening to the Queen's unsatisfied remarks infuriates her but the petty complaints about her absence and her mother's demand for her presence made her heart and pride swell.

"Thank you my Queen Mother," she returned, grateful. She gently rested her head on her mother's lap ignoring her mother's criticism and distracted the Queen from complaining further.

She was rewarded right away by this rare display of affection and felt the touch of the Queen's delicate hand caress her hair and face.

She closed her eyes and sighed; and felt this familiar calmness overcomes her.

They both like this bonding time and reminds her of the days when she was young and dependent on her mother's love and attention.

There was something in the Queen's touch that makes her yearn for it; perhaps due to her mother's condescending and reserved nature; it thrilled her to be the recipient of this special kind of treatment from the Queen.

Witnessing this very cold, strict, aloof and powerful woman transforms into an affectionate mother for her, always flatters and pacifies her. She always indulges at the knowledge of being the Queen's precious one.

She looked up and sought the Queen's eyes. The hand that was caressing her hair ceased to move. "My Queen Mother, please excuse me for forgetting, I never realize that being married and at the same time doing my duties takes a lot of my time."

The Queen forced a smile and resumed caressing her hair.

"Is your wife demanding too much of your time?"

She felt the heat spread in her face.

There was no way she will admit to her mother that she was too infatuated with Laura.

No way will she admit that she was obsessed with the Princess of Hollis.

And no way that she will admit she was head over heels in love with her ball of sunshine.
"No, I…"

"Then why can't you come to my chamber before you retire to bed?" the Queen demanded.

She was caught off guard and suddenly realized that she had been neglecting her duty of spending time with her mother.

When she asked the Queen to stop dropping by at her chamber every night, she made a deal with her mother that she would instead come to the Queen's chamber every night, so as not to cut their mother-son bonding.

She knew that her mother likes praising her in private and telling her all the things she needs to learn to become powerful and successful king. But as she grew up and rebelled against their will, that duty and bonding were forgotten, until she needed her mother's protective care again when Laura discovered her identity.

"I promise, I will visit you my Queen Mother," she retorted and saw the Queen arched her left eyebrow, a habit that she inherited both from her and her father.

"Don't make promises that you can't fulfill," her Queen Mother returned.

And she remembered…

The word 'promise' was very sacred to her mother.

"I will try my best to spend time with you, my Queen Mother," she said and gave her mother a reassuring smile.

"I do hope so because I feel like you have been disregarding me and the things that I've been telling you since you became married," the Queen accused, her voice thick with disappointment and jealousy. "Remember who had given life to you. Blood is thicker than water. Whatever happens, I will never abandon nor stop loving you, my precious son."

She was partly guilty of not spending more time with her mother lately like they used to do before. But she never wants her to know how Laura changed her life.

She may be in love with Laura, but she knew that without her mother and father, she will never be here and never meet Laura.

She felt obligated to obey her mother's and father's wishes. She felt trapped in this endless gratitude and obligations of being born an heir. But at the same time, she was thankful that God gave Laura to her. And that was all that matters. Then she could face all the challenges in her life with a strong heart.

"I never forget that I'm alive because of you and my King Father, and I'm doing the best I can to obey all of your wishes," she retaliated, her voice firm and deep. "But I also have an obligation to my wife, and I'm still trying to adjust my time to accommodate my duty as an heir, as a son and as a husband. And now that Laura is pregnant, I will spend more time taking care of her."

The queen removed the hand that caresses her hair.

"The Princess is pregnant?" the Queen's surprised remark.

Nervous that she did not tell at once, knowing that her mother hates going around the bush and secrets, "I just found out today. That's the other reason why I'm here…"
She lifted her head from the Queen's lap and sat on the bed, prepared for any confrontation.

"Finally, I'm worried why nothing is happening," the Queen commented. "Are you sure that it's yours?"

She was taken aback and cannot fathom why her mother would question her capability.

Sensing her discomfort…

"It's not that I don't trust your wife," the Queen reasoned out. "But it seems like it took her time to become pregnant."

"My Queen Mother, I can assure you and my King Father that no one had touched my wife, except me. I am the father of the child that Laura is carrying," she retaliated and saw the tinge of doubt on her mother's face disappear. "You may doubt my ability to make my wife pregnant…"

But before she can finish her sentence, she felt the Queen's delicate hands cupped her face and then planted a lingering reassuring kiss on her left cheek. She closed her eyes and rested her cheek on her mother's hand.

She was hurt by the Queen's lack of faith in her.

"Carl, I never doubt your ability. You are the Prince of Karnstein. You are strong and powerful," the Queen declared passionately. "You can do anything. I believe and have faith in you. But I just can't help worrying… since your wife went to the Hollis Kingdom and was away from you for days."

This time, she was the one who got worried. She opened her eyes, felt her mother removed the hands that were on her face and she was met with an icy stare.

How can she tell?

That was the time they had consummated their marriage and that precisely explains why Laura just became pregnant lately.

Instead of worrying for the real reason, she thought of one thing that her mother would be glad to hear…

"I had one of my wife's handmaidens guarded her all the time… so there was no way that the Princess could do something undesirable," she delivered in absolute certainty. This spur of the moment excuse gave her suddenly an idea that can be useful. Then she flashed her mother a confident smile and defied her. "Instead of doubting, shouldn't my Queen Mother be proud that I made the 'pride and joy' of Hollis Kingdom pregnant? Who would have thought that the son of their archenemy would steal their precious princess' heart and virginity?" she finished with a wicked smirk plastered on her face after that 'diabolical retort'.

She hated saying those words, but she knew that it was like music to her mother's ears.

"Forgive me, my son, you truly deserve to be praised. Congratulations Carl, I'm so proud of you for fulfilling one of your most important duties," the Queen beamed with pride. "And I am glad that my hard works of transforming you into the prince that you ought to be, don't disappoint us. Have you told your King Father of your achievement?"

"Yes my Queen Mother," she returned smiling, after receiving another peck from her mother. She knew that both her parents were ecstatic about producing her own heir. "Shall we announce to the kingdom the good news?"
The excited smile on her face vanished when she saw her mother's expression became serious.

"Not yet…" was the Queen's firm remark.

She shifted on her mother's bed, furrowed her brows, "Why? Isn't this what everybody's waiting for?"

"It is… but-"

She sat closer to face her mother, "…But what?" she asked, frustrated and confused. She thought that after getting Laura pregnant, she could proudly tell to the world and share her excitement. She swallowed hard, clenched her jaws and her brows contorted deeper.

What could be the reason to not announce her wife's pregnancy?

Then it dawned her.

But before she can confront her mother, she felt two soft delicate hands reached for her jawline and her face was brought to the Queen's chest.

She felt one side of her face touched the softness of her mother's bosom and a graceful hand caressed her hair while the other wrapped around her tightly, holding her like a child, as if to stop her from resisting.

She calmed immediately in the warmth of her mother's breast. The Queen rarely embraces her like this, unless she had an outburst or when she was anxious and upset like the time when Laura discovered her real identity. Nevertheless, it never fails to soothe her. She likes how the Queen touches her; it felt powerful and controlling, but at the same time delicate and tender... and most importantly, she felt safe.

"Carl, I think we need to formally introduce you first to the whole kingdom before we announce about your heir," the Queen insisted. "I think it's time for the people of Karnstein Kingdom to see my precious prince."

Her mother's comment caused her heart to race and she found herself having hard time breathing.

The thought of meeting all those people, as she recalled the folk swarming towards her like the time she was in the village during her name day makes her anxious.

Their 'gallivanting' to the village had been comfortable and safe for her since they were in disguise and nobody pays attention to her.

She admits that she enjoyed blending with the commoners, and had not been to her wife; she would remain a royal snob and would not know how genuine and nice the village people were. She can boast of being 'friends' with some of them, but she still restricts herself from meeting other people for fear that she might become overwhelmed. She envied Laura at how natural the princess mingles and talks to the people in the village and wished she had that ability too.

She tried to fight her angst by going to the village as often as she can, and even takes the chance, that in case she had an attack, Laura and Lafontaine can discreetly take care of her and nobody will know what happened to her…

…But what about the Prince of Karnstein? What if the Prince of Karnstein suddenly had an attack while mingling with the people? What message would it send?
The thought of going to the village, as the heir to the throne of Karnstein; and everyone staring at her, already makes her stomach lurch with fear.

Perhaps sensing her uneasiness, she felt the Queen held her tight and a delicate finger tilted her chin up and she found herself staring at her mother's calm loving dark orbs.

"Don't worry, I won't let anyone come near you or touch you," the Queen comforted.

Not wanting to expose her secret trip to the village, she nodded and forced a smile to appease her mother.

"Can I at least decide and prepare myself when to go to the village?"

The Queen smiled before releasing her from that tight embrace, "Of course, I don't want you to feel that you're being forced to meet the people of our kingdom, but it's your obligation as the future king to let them know you exist, before telling them about your heir. I want them to meet my precious son first. I want them to see the handsome prince that they all been waiting for. I want to hear them talk how you look very much like your father, and how intelligent you are like your mother. I want them to admire and worship you."

The tightness in her stomach slowly disappeared and she felt this overwhelming pride of being the beloved child of the Queen and King of Karnstein. Her mother surely knows how to revere her and make her proud to be a Karnstein.

"And now that your wife is pregnant, perhaps she can choose someone who will relieve her of one of her duties as a wife…"

Her mother's remark baffled her and her brows wrinkled.

What could that possibly mean?

Sensing her confusion… she felt her mother's delicate hand touched the back of her neck and held it tight. She had no choice but to stare back at those dark gentle orbs that morphed into cold ones.

"The Church states that a woman is forbidden to have intercourse while pregnant…" the Queen explained.

Her eyes widened.

How could she forget that law?!

Too dumbfounded to reply, her mother released her from that firm hold and resumed talking.

"When I was pregnant with you I gave your King Father two of my handmaidens…" The Queen related in a casual tone. "…How about the brunette handmaiden of your wife? I'm sure Princess Laura would not mind since she would be heavy with child."

TBC
Catnip

Chapter Summary

A continuation from the previous chapter right after Carm had received a 'no sex during pregnancy' order from the Queen. Carm and her father had spent more time doing something she likes: gardening. A look at how Carm and Laura react after the bishop had given them a word of advice.

Chapter Notes

I know you're all been waiting for this, sorry it took me so long to update. I've been lacking motivation lately and spring is making me irritated and sick.

I just want to apologize in advance in case I'll offend some Catholics here. The things that I wrote in this chapter were not aimed to offend the Church. I myself am a Catholic and grew up in a religious family. I'm just using some fabrication about the Catholic Church for my story and I don't intend to promote hate.

Again, thanks for all your wonderful feedbacks; it's always nice to read your thoughts and how you feel. And to all of you who keep leaving kudos, thanks for your generosity.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Carmilla

"Carm?"

The sweet tone of Laura's sleepy voice combined with the sound of her name which Laura exclusively calls her was music to her ears; it soothes and intensifies her soul and makes her warm. Nothing and no one has ever spawned this kind of emotion except her wife, and she had her greedy ancestors and the incessant nagging of her father to take a wife to thank for. If it had not been for the King's intervention and insistence she would not have known what love was, and how beautiful her life can be.

She was absolutely captivated by Laura's charm and no spell can release her from this enchantment. Just a mere call of her name was enough to bring a smile to her face and wake every nerve in her body.

"Yes Cupcake, it's me,"

The sudden warmth in her chest and the itch in her crotch cannot hide what she feels at this moment as her voice sounded raspier than ever before.

She got in the sheet and wrapped her arms around Laura's waist. Her left hand slid right away inside the Princess' chemise and groped Laura's breast. A soft satisfying sigh escaped her throat, while
Laura let out a weak gasp.

A devilish smirk formed in her mouth after her wife reacted to her possessive touch. She just couldn't resist touching Laura's breasts every time she was alone with her.

She laid closer and nuzzled her face into the Princess' hair, taking a moment to inhale the sweet scent of purely Laura's and lilac, that caused her to grin like a mad cat.

Laura was like catnip for her; it triggers a sense of euphoria in her brain.

She became lightheaded and closed her eyes when she felt the heaving of her wife's chest on her greedy hand. Laura's breast never ceases to arouse her. She then recalled Laf telling them that her wife's bosom would soon become larger and filled with milk.

…The thought of fondling and devouring those plump breasts for her own pleasure and gratification had her craving like a mad beast.

She looks forward to that time to come.

But then her enthusiasm was suddenly curbed when her mother's words played in her thoughts. She suddenly opened her eyes and waked from her lustful nightly ritual as she snuggled up in bed with Laura.

She removed the hand that was inside Laura's chemise and balled it into a fist then put it on her side. Then she took a deep breath and distanced herself a bit from Laura.

This was going to be hard.

She let out a feeble groan when she felt her shaft ached and semi stiff. This was not a good time to have a hard on.

As much as she tried to restrain herself and focus on snuggling, she always ends up horny whenever she was in bed with Laura.

Just the thought of having a beautiful wife with an alluring body lying beside her and solely for her to touch, to kiss, and to claim in her own carnal way was enough to make her madly aroused. Laura was a provocative, sensual and voluptuous being which makes all her senses vibrates.

Her train of thoughts was interrupted and she was surprised when Laura fumbled for the hand that she removed and slid it back inside the chemise.

"I told you, I can't sleep well without your hand on my breast," Laura grumbled and then turned around.

She removed again the hand that was on Laura's breast and put it on her wife's waist, as she faced a groggy Cupcake.

"Where have you been? I've been waiting for you for hours…" the Princess mumbled.

"I'm sorry Cupcake, my Queen Mother and I had a chat," she chose not to elaborate more so as not to upset her wife. Laura nuzzled closer to the crook of her neck and she gathered her Princess in her arms.

"She was worried too when you left… when you disobeyed her," Laura commented. "You shouldn't make your mother upset."
"I know… but I've already settled that and reconciled with her too," she replied and felt Laura's hand caress her cheek.

"I'm glad to hear that," Laura's honest remark.

Her wife gave her a peck on the lips and gazed at her. She smiled in return, as Laura's fingers toyed with the tip of her hair and nape. She loved how Laura's hands caress her hair and the back of her neck.

"By the way, my Queen Mother and King Father send their good wishes; they're very pleased and happy to hear the good news."

Laura gave her a lop-sided grin, "I bet they are…"

"And my Queen Mother is offering a thanksgiving mass tomorrow and we'll have dinner with Bishop Klaus," she related and evaded Laura's eyes.

"It's just appropriate, don't you think so?"

"What? That my Queen Mother is offering a thanksgiving because she could finally breathe with relief that her son's purpose in life has come to fruition?" she related, in her usual sardonic way. "… or it's appropriate because we skipped Sunday's mass and Bishop Klaus will tell us to go to confession since we're not being a good Christian lately by having sex on a Sunday?"

Laura's eyebrows crinkled.

"Of course it's the first one," Laura corrected at once. "I don't give a damn about the Church's law of when and how to have sex. It's my life and my body, my decision. And we are not obliged to tell anyone what we do in the privacy of our chamber. We have talked about this." Was the princess' firm reply.

"I know…" was her feeble answer, as she was now torn between Laura's and her mother's opinion about the Church and the law. She agreed with Laura about defying the Church's law. But after her mother warned her of the possibility of having a baby with complications or defects due to sexual intercourse during pregnancy, she suddenly had trepidation.

"We all have to give thanks that we're blessed with a child. I have prayed very hard that I may be given a chance to bear you an heir, and it's answered. It's the one thing I prayed to God to grant me so that I can make you happy, and fulfill my obligation to you." Laura explained.

Her worries were disrupted and stared at those brown tantalizing eyes.

"Cupcake…" she breathed out and her eyes widened. She always finds a reason to love this woman more and more.

She was surprised by Laura's intention and desire to have a child with her.

Noticing her astonished reaction, Laura shifted and gently released from the embrace to face her; then she received a narrow look from the Princess.

"What? Are you not fully convinced yet that I really want to be the mother of your children?"

"I just don't expect that you prayed so hard to be pregnant just to make me happy…" she murmured and took Laura's hands and kissed each of Laura's palms before placing both on her cheeks.

"Cupcake, you alone, makes me happy. I could never ask anything else in the world, as long as I
have you." She uttered with utmost sincerity and finished with a kiss on Laura's lips.

"I'm so glad to hear that," the Princess mumbled in between kisses. "...Because I'm afraid that you might seek another woman's affection and reject me in case you get angry at me again."

"And why will I get angry at you again?" she raised her left eyebrow and narrowed her eyes. "Unless there's something else I don't know... perhaps, another person that you like, aside from the bastard of Berghausen and the amazon princess of Straka that you foolishly loves?" Laura carefully released the hands on her face after the last sentence. "Are you still hiding something from me?"

"It's loved," Laura corrected at once. "And no, I'm not hiding anything. I've already told you my deepest darkest secret and I..."

Laura's hesitation made her hold her breath.

"What?" she asked, her voice turned cold and deeper.

"I... I still don't know how you really feel about me having a relationship with Danny," Laura's voice morphed into a whisper.

The name of her wife's former lover stung like venom in her heart; it poisoned her mood immediately.

She furrowed her brows and stared at Laura. "Don't mention her name again, especially when you're in bed with me," she ordered her voice thick with jealousy and bitterness.

Laura looked down and embraced herself. "I'm sorry..."

She took a deep breath and tried to calm her nerves. Just mentioning her rival's name can easily upset her. Until now, she still cannot bear to hear Laura saying the Princess of Straka's name in her presence. It sounded profane to her ears.

She tried to curb the anger that brews inside her; instead of wallowing in resentment...

"I'm tired..." she said, her voice suddenly flat and laid on her back and rested her left arm on her forehead, as she pretended to be casual, but comes out indifferent anyway.

She was expecting Laura would turn her back on her and avoid physical contact, but she was surprised when her little ball of sunshine quietly rested her head on her chest and wrapped an arm around her waist. She almost burst out from the mixture of jealousy, anger and Laura's sweet unselfish gesture.

And that was all it took for her to softened and kiss the top of Laura's head before wrapping her right arm protectively around her wife, as silent understanding passed between them. She was surprised to find herself softening and melting in Laura's touch at once.

A comfortable silence occurred between them, replacing the tension a while ago.

How in the world could Laura evoke this sudden shift in her moods?

She feels bewildered.

She knew that to understand something, she had to open herself up to new understanding and releases old ones. She was used to getting an answer to a question. She was intelligent and confident that she always knew the answer. But right now, everything that she had learned, everything that she
had read and everything that she was taught of seemed worthless.

She closed her eyes and let sleep caress her disconcerted mind. As long as Laura was in her arms, she does not care if she cannot find the right answer.

*****

When she woke up a few hours ago, the sun was already at its peak and Laura was already gone and left a note reminding her that it was the Princess' and Queen's regular visit to the convent today.

Before she bid the King good night yesterday, her father told her that they should spend more time together. And since the King was available in the afternoon, she invited him to do her favorite past time.

And now she found herself in her Rose Garden together with her father, armed with shovels, rakes, and knives.

"Umm… my King Father don't you think we are over dress to do gardening?" she asked as she and her father were still clothed in their refined tunics, trousers, and capes, and crowns on their heads. She had asked her father if they could change into more comfortable clothes since they would do some gardening in the afternoon. But the King seemed excited to get his hands dirty at once, so they went straight to the Rose garden after eating their midday meal together.

"Nonsense! Come on, let us start planting," the King suggested as they found the spot and put out all the gardening tools that she had in her pouch and laid it on the ground.

"May I know if you had done gardening before?" She asked after catching her father furrowing his brows and staring at all the tools in front of them.

"No, I have not," was the Kings' honest reply. "Will you teach me?"

"It will be an honor, My King Father."

She gave him a reassuring smile and was happy to know that her father, 'the King' was asking her to teach him gardening.

"Alright, since we did not have a chance to change our clothes, we need to fold our tunics' sleeves up above the elbow. It would get messy as we dig the soil so it is better that we avoid having a lot of dirt in our clothes."

And she began to show her father to fold her long sleeve shirt, and the King followed her. Then she removed her cape and her father mimicked her action and removed his cape too then just tossed it on the ground, mindless of the dirt. She did the same thing too and tossed her cape on the ground beside her father's cape. "Shall we begin?" The excitement in her voice cannot hide her happiness. This was the first time that they would do something together that she likes, that does not involve about the welfare of the kingdom, and it makes her heart swell.

"Lead on," the King returned and she began to explain to him the names of the tools and their uses.

She had also explained the procedures of planting and growing roses and the King was instantly impressed at her knowledge.

Half an hour had already passed, and she was happy that they managed to plant half of the rose
bushes that they intend to plant. They remained kneeling on the soil side by side enjoying the company of each other. Suddenly, her father absent-mindedly scratched his beard and realized something.

"Ha! I think I managed to scrub more dirt on my face compared to you," the King claimed and scratched his beard again, and forgot the soil on his hand. Now he has soil all over his beard.

She did not want to be outdone, so she scratched her smooth jawline and slathered some dirt on her face too. But she was not satisfied with the amount of dirt on her face and thought of challenging her father. She picked up more soil and spread more on her jawline, creating a beard of dirt.

"Now who had the most dirt on the face?" she asked the King as she proudly showed her face.

They laugh at their foolishness and did not notice the tall figure that towered behind them.

"What is the meaning of this?"

She heard the angry authoritative voice of her mother behind them and met her father's guilty gaze before turning around to see the Queen's angry expression.

"My Queen! It's so nice that you can join us," the King uttered at once, still kneeling on the ground.

"Good afternoon my Queen Mother," she said carefully and bowed her head, remaining on the same spot as the King while they look up at the Queen, who was towering over them with both hands on the hips.

"What in the world are the King and Prince of Karnstein doing here?" The Queen exclaimed.
"Bishop Klaus is coming and the two of you are digging soil and have filth all over your faces and clothes. What will the bishop say if he catches the King looking like this?!"

"Calm down my Queen," the King tried to pacify the Queen. "We are just having some father-child bonding, and we promise to be clean before dinner, so we can entertain our guest."

"You two better finish this nonsense at once," the Queen demanded. "I do not want anyone to see the King and the Prince on their knees digging dirt on the ground."

She was about to stand up and apologize to her mother, but her father signaled for her to remain where she was and let her father do the talking instead.

"Lilita, your child and I are still having a good time, let us finish our gardening and we promise to get clean and dressed up for dinner tonight," was the King's humble reply.

The Queen mellowed and stepped back, and put her hands on her sides. "Carl, you better stop this hobby of yours, it's repulsive and lowly," the Queen claimed. "And look at that dirt! It's all over your hair and your face. What if you get irritated and become sick?" Was the Queen's worried and frustrated remark.

"Calm down my Queen, your child's face is fine. He's still handsome like his father," The King reproached, "It's just dirt; it's nothing harmful," and returned with a wicked smirk. "Let him continue his hobby. There's nothing wrong with it."

Upon hearing the King's cocky remark, she tried hard to control the laughter that was threatening to come out but did not manage to hold it when she saw the King winked at her. The King let out a chuckle and they both laugh into their heart's content. She did not dare look at her mother for fear of being reprimanded. Then their attention shifted back to the Queen when she heard her mother called
one of the guards.

"Bring some wet and dry towels!"

She saw the guard ran quickly inside of the palace. But she was delighted at once and smiled when her eyes caught sight of Laura approaching their direction. She remained calm and prayed that Laura would not react like the way her mother did.

"Oh, Princess Laura, I'm glad you came. Tell the Prince here to stop whatever nonsense he's doing." The Queen related voice still firm but irritated.

After hearing that exaggerated remark from her mother, she turned her head and sought Laura's face. "It's lovely to see you, my Princess," she exclaimed, smirking at Laura, she sounded like her father as she greeted her wife.

She saw Laura curtsied to the Queen and was not aware yet of the presence of the King since her mother was blocking her father; until the King turned around.

"Laura! It's so lovely to see you!" The King greeted.

She caught the look of surprise on Laura's face and her wife quickly curtsied to the King.

"Your Majesty, I did not know that you're here too. Forgive me." Laura said after recovering from that quick but graceful curtsy.

"It's alright Princess, I don't expect you to find me here on my knees digging soil and getting dirty with Carl."

"Give me the wet towel, quick!" The Queen ordered, as soon as the guard came out to the garden. "And tell the maids to draw a bath for the King and the Prince."

As soon as the guard bowed and left, she felt her mother walked towards her and the next thing she knew, her mother was wiping her face.

"You will get sick with that filth on your face…" her mother scolded her like a child. Her initial reaction was to ask her mother to stop wiping her face and stop treating her like a child in front of her wife. Usually, she likes being pampered by her mother, but right now, she suddenly feels embarrassed. But she knew there was no point in arguing with the Queen, so she just swallowed her pride and let the humiliation transpired.

"I could take over, your Majesty."

Finally, she heard Laura asked the Queen to give her wife the towel, and the Queen hesitated for a moment before handing Laura the towel.

"Here. Make sure you removed all the dirt from Carl's face and mouth, I do not want my son to catch any disease."

But before Laura could wipe the dirt on her face, she felt her mother's delicate forefinger tilts her chin. She looked up to the Queen's direction and caught the icy stare of her mother.

"I don't want this to happen again," was the Queen's strict order. "You can continue this filthy hobby of yours, but don't play with dirt. Have I made myself clear?"

She nodded quickly, "Yes my Queen Mother."
And then the Queen released her and diverted the attention to the King instead, after Laura sneaked gracefully in front of her, and wipes her face.

"My King, I command you to get up at once and wash," the Queen demanded. "...Now."

She heard the authoritative firm voice of her mother, and she knew her father could not refuse. She saw the King put down the rake and brushed the dirt off his hands, and turned to her. "Well, I had fun doing this with you Carl. Unfortunately, your Queen Mother's attention is more important than this, so I would leave it to you to continue planting the rest." He relayed before rising on his knees and wiped his hands with the offered towel from the Queen.

She stood up as the King offered his hand; she shook it and heard the King, "We did a great job!"

"Yes indeed, my King Father," she returned, smiling and proud. "Thank you for allotting some time for me it's a pleasure to be with the King like this." She told him and motioned on their dirty clothes and faces.

The King smiled proudly. "The pleasure is mine," he returned, before shifting his gaze on the Queen. "Shall we go my Queen?"

She saw the impatient look on her mother's face and nodded. She and Laura bowed to her parents before the King and Queen walked out of the garden. She was now left with a Princess who was standing in front of her with arms crossed and pouting.

"Cupcake, don't tell me that you're upset too?" was her sweet innocent remark, as she leans on the Princess and tried to kiss Laura; but was shoved gently by the Princess.

"Ugh, get your filthy hands off me," Laura demanded, then turned around and walked to the direction of the castle.

"Oh, come on Cupcake, I thought you like playing dirty!" was her sarcastic remark, as she ran after the little Princess.

"Do not touch me until you're clean and don't smell!" Laura retorted.

*****

"What was that all about?" The Princess asked.

She gave Laura a questioning look, as she settled inside the sheet and joined her wife in bed.

While having dinner with her parents and the bishop, it did not go unnoticed to her when Laura suddenly remained quiet after the dessert.

She was not surprised when she found the Princess still awake when she came to Laura's chamber.

Though she tried to stay another half hour in her mother's chamber before going to hers to bath and change to her sleeping tunic, just to avoid a potential confrontation with her curious wife, she knew that she cannot avoid it further.

"What are you talking about?" she pretended that she does not know a thing behind Laura's comment, and lied on her back, her sight found the thick drapes covering the four post bed suddenly fascinating. Then she felt Laura shifted to the side and face her direction.
"…The bishop telling me that it's forbidden to have intercourse while pregnant?" Laura said her voice firmer than usual.

"Umm, haven't you read that in the book?"

"Umm, hello… of course, I've read it; along with the other silly and crazy rules those pervert clergies have written," Laura retorted frustrated and sat on the bed. "You don't expect me to follow that rule too, do you?"

She swallowed hard, struggling for words on how to explain to her wife her opinion about the matter.

"Carm…" Laura's voice became firmer and louder. "Look at me."

With a calm demeanor, she locked gaze with those hazel orbs and found it glaring at her.

"Cupcake, do you know why a pregnant woman is forbidden to have intercourse?" she asked, her voice calm and deep, careful not to upset further her pregnant wife. She hoped Laura would understand the reason behind this damn law.

"No. But I'm absolutely sure it's full of nonsense," the cupcake claimed and crossed both arms.

She grew worried.

The royal wicked pout was on display.

'Thou shall not upset your Cupcake' warning was raised.

She meticulously composed her words in her thoughts and sat on the bed to prepare herself for any violent reaction.

"Cupcake, you know that I love you and adore you. You drive me crazy whenever we make love…" she started, her voice calmer and raspier. She put her left hand on Laura's thigh and stroked it. "But they said that engaging in sexual intercourse while you're pregnant might harm the child in your womb, and result for the baby to have a defect or complications."

"Wha-?! That's ridiculous! And who are these people who told you this nonsense?! The priests? The bishops? The Pope?!" Laura snapped, uncrossed her arms and balled her hands into fist. "They don't even have a vagina! How can they know what's inside a woman's body and how we feel when all they care about are fucking the altar boys!"

"Laura!"

"What?! Don't tell me you don't know about their pastime," the Princess taunted, still fuming with all the absurdity and hypocrisy of the Church. "They're not that holy, you know!"

She was shocked at what she heard. Ever since she was a child, she was educated and trained to be a good Catholic and bishop Klaus himself was the one who taught her theology, to prepare her to be a 'god-fearing' ruler, according to her mother.

"That's a complete fiction and fabrication," she claimed with certainty. "Stop listening to those nonsenses. These people who spread rumors against the Church have a political propaganda perpetuated by some political leaders that want to rebel against the Church," she explained and saw the surprised look on her wife's face.
"Carm, I think you spend too much time with those priests and bishops," Laura retorted.

"Cupcake, I know what you mean," she returned as calm as possible. She does not want to have any argument about religion; she knew it was hopeless. But as a future king, the bishop will be one of her advisers and she did not want her wife to have a bitter relationship with him. "What you heard might be true or lies, but I want you to know that not all of them are like that," suddenly, Laura mellowed and then sneered.

"How can you be sure?"

"Well, I am not completely sure, but bishop Klaus had been like a father to me too. He's a good man," she explained with a genuine smile. "He's the one who baptized me and one of the people who knew my true identity and helped me understands the meaning and my purpose in life."

"And what did he taught you?" Laura reproach, still unconvinced. "That all non-Christians are going to hell?"

"No. He taught me that all is equal in the eyes of God," she related passionately. "And that it's not what's outside that matters, but the one inside."

"Alright, I believe you," Laura said with a resigned sigh. "But don't tell me that we'll abstain from sex just because of that silly belief."

She swallowed hard and gave her wife a resolved stare.

"Are you serious?!" Laura burst.

She held her composure as she imagined a steam of anger emitting from the Princess sides. She reached out to cup Laura's face, but the angry Cupcake avoided her touch.

"I guess there's no need for you to sleep here anymore," the Princess declared. "You can go back to your chamber, and when you realized how ludicrous that damn law is, you can come back to my bed."

"Cupcake… you're being unfair," she protested and tried to embrace Laura, but her Princess evaded her arms.

"I mean it, Carl. Go back to your chamber," was Laura's firm retort. "I'm tired and want to sleep."

The Princess turned her back on her and lay on the bed. She decided not to provoke her angry pregnant wife anymore. With a heavy heart and fuming inside, she shoved the sheet and leaves the warmth of her wife's side and walked towards the door.

She slammed the door hard behind her, after being deprived of her 'catnip'.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

So, how do you feel? Any violent reaction? Feel free to vent on the comment box below. I love reading your feedbacks. I always pick some ideas from your comments and uses them for future chapters. So, if you want me to have more crazy ideas for this
story, feel free to share. And if I'm crazy enough, I might take your bait :-D
Carmilla experiences the difficulty of sleeping alone in bed.

Since her reconciliation with her wife, there was never a night that she and Laura were not sleeping in the same bed together.

The mere scent of Laura sends tingling in her blood and the Princess' bosom and loving arms always make her feel secured, loved and safe.

Laura's presence brings serenity in her agitated mind. It lessens the burden and stress of being heir to the throne. But most importantly, lying next to the woman she loves, and snuggling with Laura was the most amazing feeling.

To wake up in the morning with Laura curled up in her arms was the best way to start her day. It revitalizes her mind and body from the previous day's stress.

She used to hate being roused from sleep, especially if it was earlier than noon. But lately, she does not mind waking a bit early when the birds began to tweet outside or when her Valet comes to wake her.

She wakes up smiling.

Gazing at the sight of an adorable sleeping princess cuddling beside her takes her to eternal bliss where she discovers that life was beautiful and worth living.

She grumbled and shifted to her right.

Her hand reached for the familiar body but found nothing.

She then turned to her left...but was met by a cold empty space.

Growing desperate, her hand fumbled again for the warmth of her wife's body, seeking for comfort and physical contact.

But found nothing.

Worried, she forcefully opened her heavy eyelids to check where her wife.

"Cupcake?" she mumbled and scanned her surroundings.

"What the hell?"

It took her a moment to realize that she was sleeping in her own bed when she noticed the darker
shades of navy blue drapes surrounding her and how large the bed was.

Then the incident last night finally sunk in…

"Damn it."

She reached for the blanket and put it over her head, and tried to go back to sleep.

But after a few minutes, she opened her eyes again and tossed sleeplessly to and fro on the bed.

Irritated, she shoved the blanket, took the pillow beside her and embraced it before closing her eyes again.

She groaned and lay on her back.

It does not smell like her wife.

It was not Laura.

She clenched her jawline, threw the pillow at the end of the bed and ran her hand through her short locks.

How long can she manage to sleep alone?

When she came to live in their castle she had been sleeping alone since then…

How long can her patience tolerate it?

Nine months. It won't be long…

How long can she suppress her libido and survive the cold wintry nights without the body of her wife to warm her?

Damn it.

Now that she tasted heaven… she will be dead by autumn.

*****

"I'm so sorry for the delay. I thought you're in Princess Laura's chamber," LaFontaine explained as they walked across the room carrying the service tray.

Standing beside the study table, she stared nonchalantly at her breakfast after LaFontaine placed the tray on the table and scanned the contents: a plate of Steirerkas cheese, rye bread and figs, silver teapot and cup.

She raised her left eye brow when she discovered something was missing.

"Where's my creampuff?" she questioned, and gave her Valet a suspicious look.

"Sorry, we ran out of it..." was their apologetic remark. "Perry just baked ten pieces today and Princess Laura ate them all gladly with pickles and mustard!"

She heard them exclaimed, like it was the most fascinating and delicious thing in the world.

She recalled the time she caught Laura eating them; she almost threw up at the sight of it.
A discreet smile formed at the corner of her mouth knowing that her pregnant wife's cravings were satiated despite being deprived of her daily dose of creampuff.

"By the way, what are you doing here?" was the Valet's innocent comment.

The weak smile on her face quickly disappeared and she glared at them like she was about to send them to the dungeons.

"This is my chamber. I will sleep here whenever it pleases me," she retorted, her voice full and proud. "Don't ever ask me that question again," she ordered and saw them shrugged their shoulders.

"Whatever you say, Your Highness," was LaFontaine's sarcastic reply.

She shot daggers at them and hoped that they will not investigate further.

"By the way, is my wife still in bed?" she asked, as she pulled the chair beside her and took a seat.

"If my calculation is right, the Princess and Perry are probably in the kitchen by now," they said and poured the simmering liquid into the silver cup, and put it back gracefully on the farthest side of the tray. "The Princess was still craving for some creampuff when I left her chamber and she told Perry that she'll help with the baking."

Suddenly, a naughty thought crossed her mind.

"Tell the guards to clear the entire kitchen of servants. Be discreet. I don't want my mother to find out that I'm going to the kitchen, and I don't want my wife and her Lady in Waiting be disturbed," she ordered, while meticulously tears a piece of rye bread and put some cheese on it, before putting it in her mouth and chewed slowly.

LaFontaine furrowed their brows and displayed a lop-sided grin, and stood still, "What are you up to now?" was their suspicious remark.

"I'm curious. I want to see how they make my favorite dessert," she reasoned out, evading Laf's eyes, and lifted the cup of tea with both hands and took a sip.

"...But why suddenly now?" LaFontaine quipped.

"Because I don't feel like doing it tomorrow," she retaliated after setting the cup down and glared at the very suspicious Valet. "And don't you dare ask me another childish question; go now and tell the guards. I want to drop by in the kitchen before meeting my King Father."

After that strict remark, they rolled their eyes first before turning around and walk towards the door.

*****

After a moment of bickering with her Valet and putting on the checkered black and red tunic that Laura likes on her, she now found herself walking like a cat in the empty kitchen of their castle. Her sight caught at once the figure of Laura and Perry facing their backs on her and working at the kitchen counter of the baking area of the castle's kitchen. She smiled when she saw her wife's hair tied up in a messy bun, showing the creaminess of Laura's nape, working on the dough with a rolling pin, while the Lady in Waiting kneads dough.

She approached them from behind like they were their prey, her presence unnoticeable from the two women chatting while working. Laura was almost an arm's grasp away from her, but Perry's guarding eyes met hers before she could reach Laura. She almost lost her composure but quickly
managed to silence Perry by putting her index finger on her lips, and received a quick nod from Perry.

"Umm, Princess, I need some more butter, I'll go grab some… just continue what you're doing," was the Lady in Waiting's quick remark, and after the Princess nodded in reply, Perry quickly left the room.

She mouthed 'thank you' as Perry discreetly bowed to her and left. Her excitement of putting her lips on the back of the Princess' neck cannot be suppressed. She strode towards Laura and wrapped her arms immediately around the waist of her wife, before placing feathery kisses on the creaminess of Laura's nape.

"Hey!" Laura snarled, turned around while struggling to get loose from the hold, holding the rolling pin on the right hand.

"Whoa! Cupcake! It's me!" she exclaimed and held both Laura's arms; thankful that she has a quick reflex, or else, the rolling pin had already hit her head.

"Carm- Carl! What in the name of the holy cakes are you doing here?!!" Laura demanded after being caught off guard. "And why are you sneaking behind my back? I could have hit you!"

"I just want to surprise you," she retorted and released her hands from Laura's arms, and moved one step backward.

"Well, you surprised and scared me. I thought there's a maniac who sneaked in the kitchen," was the Princess upset remark. "Why not wait for me to finish my work here and meet me in the tearoom instead? You know that you're not allowed in here since Her Majesty forbids you… and someone might tell her when they see you."

"Well, no one is here, so it's safe," she reasoned out and gave Laura a naughty grin. Then she caught the curiosity in her wife's eyes, as Laura looked around her and finally noticed that the usual busy kitchen of Karnstein Castle can now be compared to the convent of the nuns that she used to visit.

"What happened here? Where's everyone? It's lunch soon…" Laura worried. "What have you done?"

"I told LaFontaine to tell the servants to take an hour break together," was her smug reply. "Because I want to be with my Princess," she expressed in her most sultry voice and attempted to put her arms around Laura, but the Princess pointed the heavy wooden rolling pin towards her, a clear warning that her pregnant wife was not pleased.

"Your Royal Highness, are you aware that you put the entire kitchen staff in trouble when you asked them to take a break just to see me?" Laura reproached. "It's nearly noon and the entire castle and the workers in the fields are coming soon to eat their midday meal. If the kitchen does not have any food prepared within an hour, Her Majesty will not be pleased, and the kitchen staffs will be criticized for the delay, and they will be faced by angry hungry mobs. So, if Your Royal Highness does not have any important thing to do, I request that you tell Laf to tell the servants that break time is over."

"Alright!" was her irritated retort. Laura had not even noticed she was wearing her checkered tunic, and now, her plan of spending some quality sweet time with her wife became a disaster instead. She grew more irritated when her eyes caught sight of the rolling pin full of flour that was still pointing to her chest. "Can you put down that filthy thing, so that I can kiss you?" she demanded.

"No. Because if you kiss me, it will take more time for the workers to come back," the Princess
answered firmly.

Growing annoyed, "I'm your husband and I demand affection from you," she claimed, her arrogance slowly showing. "You're mine to touch and to kiss whenever I want to. You cannot refuse me of my needs. According to the apostle Paul, the wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband."

"Really! You're citing a verse from the Bible?" Laura snorted and did not put down the rolling pin. "You think you're the only one who reads books?" the Princess taunted, feeling underestimated. "Well, you forgot the continuation of that verse: the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife," Laura recited proudly. "So I demand that you make love with me tonight. If you do that, then you can kiss and touch me as much as you like."

The comment rendered her immobile and gave her wife a resigned and annoyed look.

"No sex… no touching and no kissing," Laura concluded.

She grumbled and glared at the Princess, who seemed to be reveling at the outcome of their argument.

Recovering her dignity, she straightened her back, showing more of her chest and crotch.

She smirked when she caught the look of desire from Laura. And with grace and confidence that she learned as a prince, she turned around quickly, causing her long cape to billow out behind and walked towards the door as majestic as she can muster.

When she was finally out of the kitchen and far from the sight of her wife, she balled her right hand and strode along the hallway.

She was not even half way to the throne room when she caught sight of the redhead that she least wants to see.

Lafontaine would definitely tease her. She needs to come up with something to divert the Valet's curiosity and stop from prying on her private life.

"Send twenty guards to the kitchen at once," she commanded as soon as LaFontaine approached her.

The Valet's eyebrows furrowed deeply and were about to utter a possible witticism that will surely insult her.

"Tell the guards to help the kitchen servants with the midday meal and they need to work fast and serve the food on time, or else I would put them to the dungeons," she ordered, mimicking the authoritative tone of her mother. "And send back at once to work the kitchen servants… tea break is over."

LaFontaine did not comment further and bowed before leaving.

She strode further towards the throne room, murmuring complaints and controlling her temper after being rejected by her wife.

*****

"Carl? Did you hear what I've said?"

She was suddenly strayed from her thoughts, and she felt someone stepped on her left foot and
caught Laura glaring at her.

"Are you listening to what I'm saying?" the Queen's voice sounded irritated.

She composed herself and tore her eyes off from the Princess' bosom and discovered that all three pairs of eyes around the dining table were focused on her.

As soon as she cleared her mind of the image of Laura's breasts growing larger and fuller of milk and regaining her confidence…

"I didn't quite catch the last part, my Queen Mother," she said in a deep firm tone.

"I said, we can formally introduce you to the people of our kingdom on the Harvest Festival, since the bishop usually hosts a feast to the nobles and each year, either your King Father or I represent the kingdom" the Queen related.

"I think it will be a good start for you and Laura to be introduced to all the noble families and the people of our kingdom," the King added with enthusiasm. "Isn't it right Princess?"

But before Laura could reply…

"My King, I think it's best that we present the heir to the Karnstein throne first since Carl had never been formally introduced and seen before by the people," the Queen interrupted. "I want this day to be my son's debut as the heir to the Karnstein Kingdom."

"With all due respect Your Majesty, I think her Majesty is right," Laura chimed in. "Carl needs to be introduced first and-"

"Laura, you're my wife and the Crown Princess of Karnstein, you're equally important as I am, I want you to be there beside me," she suggested with eagerness and longing in her voice.

"I know, but Her Majesty has a point," Laura reasoned out. "You never go out and they never see you in any events or celebrations, except the people inside the castle. This is your moment and I don't want to steal the attention from you. We can be introduced formally as a couple some other times, but for now, they have to focus on seeing their future king first," Laura explained. "Please obey your Queen Mother's suggestion, because that's what I want too."

There was silence after Laura's unselfish and passionate explanation.

"I think that's settled," was the Queen's satisfied remark.

"Lilita, perhaps we need to ask first our son if he is ready for this," the King commented.

Between hearing her father's doubtful remark, seeing the enthusiasm in her mother's face and Laura's worried feature, she was suddenly left disoriented.

She does not want to disappoint her mother.

She does not want Laura to worry.

She knew that her father understands whatever decision she makes.

The throne was already hers.

She will be the next king.
The only thing that was hindering her was her anxiety.

What could have gone wrong?

Her thoughts reverted to the time of her coronation as the Prince of Karnstein, her first semi-public appearance. LaFontaine was there and they helped her get through. Then there was the incident in the village when she collapsed and had a panic attack during her name day. LaFontaine and Laura were there to take care of her. And the most challenging and brutal experience that she had undergone: when she followed Laura to the Hollis Kingdom, it was far more her most accomplished trial. Thankfully, LaFontaine was there too.

Everything would be alright as long as she had LaFontaine beside her. They always make everything possible and alright.

If Laura cannot join her, she will take her Valet instead.

She looked at her mother, then her father and finally Laura, as all three wait in bated breath for her reply.

"I will do it. I am ready," was her firm declaration.

*****

After dinner and the headache of discussing her debut to the kingdom, she decided to go straight to her chamber and did not drop by at her mother's chamber just like she used to do.

She does not want her mother adding more anxiety to her restless mind. She was in need of cuddles and soothing from her wife, but she knew that she will never get it after the incident in the kitchen. And when she saw Perry waiting by the door of the dining hall for Laura, she knew at once that her wife does not want her anymore to walk her to the Princess' chamber.

She walked to and fro across her room, fidgeting and growing impatient. LaFontaine had never been this late when it was time for her to get ready for bed.

Her attention was caught when the door opened and her Valet walked in casually, taking their time and smiling.

"What took you so long?" was her irritated remark. "I've been here for half an hour now," she claimed, even if it was just a quarter. She turned her back to her Valet, and LaFontaine began taking off her cape.

"Why are you so grouchy? I always come the same time, and waits for you an hour or two," LaFontaine defended and hanged the cape in the closet. "You didn't tell me to come early tonight. And speaking of early, why are you here? Aren't you supposed to go to the Queen's chamber after dinner? Are you sleeping tonight at Princess Laura's chamber?"

She was reminded again of how Laura shut her out.

There was no way she will talk about it with her Valet.

"Don't turn the table on me, you're the one who is always missing and late," she accused out of nowhere. "Is there something you want to tell me?" she asked looking straight to her Valet's eyes as they stood face to face while LaFontaine unbuttons her tunic.
But the Valet just raised their brows. "Why, have I forgotten something that you need?"

"No, this is not regarding your job," she cleared out as she slid her arm one by one off from the tunic. "It's about what's going on in your life."

"I don't usually mix my personal life with my work, and I promised Her Majesty that I have total control of my personal life and that it would not get in a way of serving and helping the Prince of Karnstein, and if you think that I lack something or your unsatisfied with my work performance, you're free to criticize and give a-"

"Stop!" she put her hand on their mouth. "Don't give me more headaches. I just want to know if you are in a relationship with Lady ginger."

"Oh." LaFontaine realized what it's all about and was quick to add... "No." and turned around.

"Fine, try to deny it," she retorted while her Valet retrieved a crisp clean sleeping tunic. "But I saw you once, kissing lady ginger and it looked like things were heating up between the two of you."

"I am not discussing my personal life with you," LaFontaine claimed, acting cool and unaffected.

"Oh, so you get to intrude into my love life and disturb me every time I want to have sex or in the verge of doing it, but I ask you a simple question and you cannot give me a proper answer?" She retaliated, frustrated that they were so discreet.

"It's included in my contract as your Valet, that there's no reason or whatsoever that I'll trouble the Prince of Karnstein and their Majesties with regards to my personal life," LaFontaine explained firmly.

"Fine, the next time I catch you two making out, I will not let Laura stop me," she claimed and suddenly got her Valet's full attention.

"Princess Laura saw us?"

"Yes, but she forbid me to interrupt you two gingers, and said to give you some privacy, which I don't think you two deserve because you never knew the meaning of privacy," she commented.

"Well, I really don't know what you're talking about," LaFontaine finished and turned around to the direction of the bathroom.

"You're unbelievable!" she exclaimed following her Valet. "By the way, I want you to sneak in the Princess' chamber and bring to me the yellow pillow that's in my wife's bed. I need it as soon as possible. And don't tell anyone about it."

The Valet turned around before entering the bathroom, "You want me to steal Princess Laura's pillow?"

"I didn't say steal. I said bring it to me," she clarified.

"Well, you said not to tell anyone and I have to sneak in; it definitely sounded like stealing," LaFontaine reasoned out.

"Fine! We're borrowing it, satisfied?" she conceded, growing irritated of her Valet's philosophical remarks.

"It sounded less scandalous, so, yeah, I'll do it," LaFontaine finally agreed.
And she let out a sigh of relief. One more argument and her head was going to explode soon.

"But don't you dare tell Laura."

The Valet ignored the last remark and walked around the bathroom whistling while pouring the lavender oil into the bath tub.

"I'm doomed," she murmured.

*****

It had been a tough day.

It had been a stressful day.

As time goes by, her task becomes more and more demanding and exasperating.

She always welcomes any challenge but dislikes it when it has something to do with the love of her life.

When her father gave her the official list of their new alliances, she cannot deny that she was not pleased with it.

If only she can tell her father a reason why they cannot accept the kingdom of Straka as a partner, everything will be alright.

But it was too late.

They will soon meet again.

And right now she feels like exploding in frustration and irritated that she cannot do something about it.

She will do almost anything in her power to protect her marriage and keep Laura from those people who desire her wife.

Laura belongs to her.

She forced a smile as the thought of being married to a beautiful and sweet Princess crossed her mind.

The only thing that makes all these things bearable was her wife's devotion and promise that she was the only one that Laura loves now and carrying her child.

Suddenly, she missed cuddling with Laura.

She missed her wife pampering her with kisses and touches.

She thanked God for giving her a wife that takes care of her and showers her with all the love and affection that she can ask for.

She hoped that Laura will let her sleep soon in their matrimonial bed again even if they cannot have sex yet.

Her contemplation was halted when she reached the top of the stairs.
She and her father paused before going to their separate wings leading to their chambers.

"Good night my King Father, I wish you a pleasant evening," she said and gave the King a hug.

"You're amazing today. Thank you for helping me again," the King returned after releasing from the embrace. "Are you sure you don't want to eat something? I could join you in the dining room."

"Thanks for the offer, unfortunately, I have to decline," was her apologetic remark. "I'm exhausted. But if you want to eat and needs some company I can join you at the dining hall." She offered knowing that her father had not eaten a decent meal too, except for the sweets that she requested as their refreshment.

"It's alright my child, you can rest now," the King returned and smiled. "Elleanor is waiting in my chamber and had prepared some food for me."

"Ell?" she whispered.

It's been so long since she saw her.

It's been so long since she talked to her.

She almost forgot that Ell was staying every now and then in their castle.

"Carl? Did you say something?" the King asked.

She looked up and saw her father's confused reaction.

She shook her head and smiled.

"No, my King Father, it's nothing," she returned, still flashing a smile. "Goodnight my King Father."

"Good night my child," the King replied, before turning around and walked towards the left wing.

She remained standing for a while and watched the figure of her father walked along the narrow hallway until it disappeared from her sight.

She imagined the scene that would meet her father's sight upon opening the door of his chamber.

Suddenly, she felt alone.

She shrugged off the unwanted thought and looked at the direction leading to her chamber.

But before she can take a step forward, she remembered that she had not said goodnight yet to her mother.

She was about to walk straight ahead when suddenly her ears caught the sound of giggling.

"What the?" she wondered, and before she can decipher where the sound was coming from…

"Good evening Your Royal Highness."

"Good evening Your Royal Hotness."

"Good evening Prince Hottie."

The three handmaidens of her wife walked towards her and bowed to her. She was suddenly speechless after hearing the names they call her.
She swallowed hard and composed herself.

"Good evening ladies," she returned in her deepest calmest voice and gave each of them a nod as the girls beamed at her.

She noticed they look extra cheerful tonight and in good mood.

A wicked thought suddenly arose in her mind.

She stared at them and then focused her sight to one of them, as she debated on whether or not she will ask this particular girl to do a favor for her or she will go to her mother's chamber for some 'mother and son' bonding.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Any thoughts? Feelings? Feel free to express it …

Thanks again for your wonderful comments and kudos.

I apologized for all the mistakes, it's already late and I don't have the patience to edit this. But I don't want to let this Sunday passed by without giving a treat to all of you, so I decided to post it.

Goodnight
Fencing Time and the Cause of Laura's Temporary Madness

Chapter Summary

Carmilla had been practicing fencing with Laf. While Laura and Perry watch them for the first time. Laura learned something new from Perry while watching Carm and Laf trained with their swords.

Chapter Notes

Thanks for your kudos, feedbacks and comments, it always makes my day reading everything you feel about this story. I may not reply to your feedbacks individually from time to time, but it doesn't mean that I don't appreciate it. So I hope you'll still find time to leave a comment below if you like the update :-) 

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Laura

She let out a sigh of relief as soon as the horse-drawn carriage drove off behind her. Her eyes wandered instantly at the captivating sight that met hers while walking towards the side entrance of the castle.

Alongside the trail leading to the entrance, a series of neatly clipped hedges and different perennials of carnations, hyacinths, lavenders, catmint, penstemons and forget me nots bordered the pathway to the door. The plants and flowers were concentrated around rocks and steps coursing to the side entrance; hidden on the other side behind the tall hedge lies the rose garden, the most precious garden that witnessed some of the fiery moments of her relationship with the very possessive, over jealous, hot-tempered and passionate love of her life. And thankfully, it had been restored to its original beauty.

She admired the dedication of the servants and gardeners in the Karnstein Castle and how they diligently maintain the exquisite garden and courtyard. If compared to her former kingdom, the Hollis' castle was a royal farm and large barn, where the madness of running into a bunch of chickens, dogs, cats, goats, sheep, cows, pigs and horses will greet you instantly upon arrival. Large bushes of raspberry surrounded the perimeters of the castle's courtyard, and apple trees sprouted like mushrooms, bordered the outer moat.

One time, a royal visitor teased her father and commented if they were afraid of getting hungry, noticing the abundance of fruit trees, vegetables and livestock around him. Her father simply said they like to party.

Her former kingdom might look zany and inelegant, and not tranquil and beautiful as the Karnstein Castle, but it was cozy, homey and friendly. It was warm, welcoming and every mealtime inside the castle was like a feast.

And speaking of home… she smiled when she noticed the familiar figure of her Lady in Waiting
waving at her.

Perry was already standing by the door ready to receive her.

Bastian probably informed her Lady in Waiting after relaying the message to Berta that the Queen will stay longer at the convent for some unavoidable incident that needs to be resolved, and she, on the other hand, would arrive early than expected.

"Are you hungry?"

She gave Perry a grin.

Embarrassed at how her appetite was insatiable lately, "How did you know?" she asked, her voice low and timid after they crossed the threshold. She slowed down her steps while her sight adjusted to the dimness of the hallway.

"Because Bastian mentioned that you're raving about cheese and creampuffs the entire day," Perry retaliated and smirked. "Come on, I brought some snacks. You can eat and relax before you change. There's no cheese yet since the boy I asked to buy it hasn't returned yet from the village. But I've plenty of sweets for you at the training room."

"Training room?" was her confused remark while Perry's hand hooked in her arm and led her to the mistaken site of her relaxation. "You mean the tearoom."

"No. We're going to the training room," the Lady in Waiting reiterated.

"As much as I miss sword fighting, I think training and eating afterward are a bad combination," she replied and furrowed her brows when they passed the tea room. "And in case you have forgotten, I have a tiny wild kitten that might be broody like its father, growing inside me and might not be into sword fighting."

"Oh Princess, of course, I haven't forgotten…" Perry was quick to defend. "And why are you saying that it's broody when half of him or her will come from you."

"Well, broody or cheery, I think my baby will not appreciate the training and…” and before she can complain further, the door to the training room was opened by the two guards standing beside it. Her eyes were greeted at once of the sight of her dashing Prince and LaFontaine in action. She grew excited when her ears caught the sounds of the clink, clank, tink, and swoosh.

Perry led them to the little table beside a bench that can probably sit five people, and on the other side of the table stood a mahogany chair that has simple rose carvings on the frame and a red pillow to sit on.

"I thought you could use some entertainment while eating," was Perry's smooth reply while standing beside the table where a large tray filled with chocolate and caramel coated creampuffs, blueberry and chocolate cupcakes, kirschkuppels, apfelstrudels, a bowl of walnuts and almonds and strawberries, a jug of wine, a teapot and a pot filled with warm cacao awaits on the table.

The Lady in Waiting motioned for her to take the wooden chair on the other side and she comfortably sat on the pillow and appreciated the softness of it on her bum, after having a thirty-minute bumpy ride from the convent. Perry sat on the bench on the other opposite side of the small roundtable.

After making herself comfortable, she rested her arms on the armrest and focused her attention on the sword fight that was happening a few meters in front of her.
It was her first time to see Carm in fencing uniform. She cannot help but let out a discreet moan when she saw her Prince's attire, and how he gracefully held the sword and fight with poise and vigor.

She took a deep breath and felt her heart hammering with excitement.

"Do you know this is one of the favorite past times of some princesses who are seeking for a future husband?"

Perry's casual tone of voice tore her out of her lascivious thoughts. She looked to her right and accepted the simmering cup of tea from Perry.

"Thanks," she said and took a small sip before placing the porcelain teacup on its saucer, and then onto the table while she focused her sight in front of her. "What do you mean this is a pastime?" she asked not catching very well what Perry meant.

"In some kingdoms, there are princesses who enjoy watching princes' sword fight when choosing their future husband," was Perry's serious reply and poured some tea also on a cup.

"Maybe they are attracted at the thought of a knight in shining armor type of prince," she presumed, hearing many stories from her handmaiden friends how heroic and appealing it was to find a husband who was not only handsome but will defend and save them from any harm. "As for me, I find it totally cliché. There are princesses who can also fight with swords better than other princes," she said, recalling how Danny beat Kirsch, Johann and some of the best knights in the Hollis' Kingdom. She even witnessed Danny beat her brother in a sword fight while she was on a visit at the Lawrence Castle.

She owed to Danny her ability to use the sword like a warrior and be good at sword fighting. She remembered asking Danny to teach her since her father was overprotective and does not want her to get involved in any kinds of combat. Belonging to the Summer Society, a special secret group of noblewomen who were skilled fighters, Danny was not the only Lawrence who had been a member of this secret society, but all the women in the Lawrence family. When she heard the story from Danny how women can be equally strong as men and fight with weapons, she became interested in using the sword and the bow and arrow. Though she gave up learning the latter, after accidentally shooting an arrow at Kirsch' butt.

"You're right…"

Perry's voice diverted her thoughts from further reminiscing the past. She flashed her signature adorable smile that gets her out of trouble, or masks any mischief she has committed or when she wants something.

"…most princesses are attracted to princes that are handsome, rich, strong, intelligent and skilled in sword fight," Perry continued and leaned closer to the left. "But do you know the real reason why these princesses are so keen in watching them combat with swords like this?" the Lady in Waiting added motioning at the two who were combating in front of them.

"They want to know if their potential husband knows how to use his sword?" was her silly guess, thinking that these princesses were superficial. But she gave Perry a narrow look when her Lady in Waiting lightly shook the head and displayed a lop-sided grin.

"The thing about nobility is…" Perry started in a low hush tone. "The huge amount of dowry and power a woman can offer to her future husband gives her more advantage to choosing the best in the flock of princes that are out and looking for a bride. The whole point of watching these princes clad
in very tight hose while pointing their swords to their opponents is not to see who's a better swordsman. But it allows the future wives to see what they are buying."

Her mouth slightly opened at how naïve she was about this whole spectacle and absurdity of finding a spouse among the royal and noble families.

"And I know that you're not one of them…" Perry was quick to point out. "But I think you'll be the envy of other princesses and noblewomen if they happen to watch this sword fight right now and see how you acquired the best cock from a flock," was Perry's naughty remark, and punctuated the sentence with a wink.

She felt suddenly warm as if all her blood rushed to her face after realizing what Perry meant and focused her sight one more time to the Prince in action. This time she noticed it.

Instead of the usual long black tunic that hides most of the trousers in view, he was donning a long sleeve fitted black fencing doublet with padded shoulder, V-shaped hem and high collar that perfectly suited his torso.

The burgundy kid-glove tight hose paired with black leather knee boots were causing her heart to palpitate and her body temperature to rise.

And then her eyes fell down on the impressive bulge in between the Prince of Karnstein's legs.

Carm's fencing uniform obviously shows how well-endowed he was.

The groin-hugging hose leaves nothing to the imagination and one can easily be distracted, or if not, be envious at how the heir to the throne of Karnstein Kingdom was well-equipped and blessed by nature in this department.

"I don't even know how he looked like when my father gave away my hand in marriage to his father," she quipped, abashed at how to respond to Perry's comment.

"I know sweetie, that's why I admire you for being unselfish, good-hearted and obedient daughter. You are not like the other princesses. You fulfilled your royal duty with a brave heart," Perry explained, with a reassuring smile. "You obeyed your father's wish and faced your destiny without knowing what's in store for you. Let's admit it; there is an absence of love in most royal marriages. But you and His Highness have been both lucky finding out what each of you loves from each other, turning aversion to love. And that my dear is rare."

She silently nodded and breathed a sigh of content and grateful for what she has. Perry was right. She and Carm were both lucky to have outgrown their dislike for one another, and transformed it to love without being aware of it.

Then she suddenly realized something and she grew worried.

She made a quick scan around the room and sighed when she knew they were alone.

She usually does not get paranoid, and she always feels confident about herself, but right now, she feels like she needs to do something silly.

She needs to tell the guards by the door to never let any woman watch her Prince while training from now on.

Then a sense of greediness possessed her.
He's mine.

No woman should be allowed to gaze at those pair of tight hose that fits perfectly and tightly on Carm's groin and thighs.

Who would have thought that a thin hose hugging her Prince's lower body was such a distraction, both to the female audience and the opponent that might envy the Prince's 'sword'.

No woman should be allowed to appreciate the combined gallantness and sexiness of her Prince in action.

She realized now how turned on she was while watching Carm. Tight hose plus sword fight plus the Prince of Karnstein was equal to erotic sport and unavoidable wetness.

No woman should be allowed to enjoy the sight of her pretty handsome Prince sweating.

The Prince of Karnstein looked always unspoiled. Carm seldom sweats except when they make love. For her, to see her Prince sweating and smell his own natural scent was an intimate affair that only she can witness. Even hearing Carm farts was intimate for her.

She will kill if she catches any women lay eyes on her Prince or entering this room while his training.

She won't even be merciful to her handmaidens in case she catches one of them watching her Prince.

And above all, she was willing to go to hell in case she caught the King's Mistress taking a glimpse of her precious Prince.

No other woman can touch or look at her Prince.

Except for…

Perry, whose gaze was only focused on a certain redhead and should be there when the need for Carm's sweet addiction arose…,

The Queen, for an obvious reason that a mother's admiration and affection for her child was always pure and available…,

And perhaps Berta, knowing that the sight of the Prince's former nanny still scares him from time to time, and was one of the few people who can discipline the broody Prince of Karnstein when he have a fit.

She was totally immersed in her wicked thoughts and consumed of jealousy and possessiveness that she did not even notice what Perry was saying until she felt a hand shook her lightly on the arm.

"Did you hear what I've said?" Perry asked and sounded a bit annoyed.

"I'm sorry Per, what was that again?" was her apologetic reply and gave her Lady in Waiting her undivided attention.

"LaFontaine mentioned that His Highness is being grumpy and broody again," Perry said, voice morphing into worry. "And he's been training longer than usual and is more aggressive like he's frustrated about something. When Laf asked him what's the problem, he just ignores them and hisses at them."

She looked down and averted Perry's suspecting eyes.
She knew perfectly well the reason behind why his royal broodiness and grumpiness was back. But she will not tell Perry that his abstaining from sex; she will definitely become furious talking about it. He was the one who initiated it, so he should suffer too, like her. The only problem was, some of the people around them were worried.

"Haaa," Perry let out a longing sigh and gazed at the redhead who was retreating and retreating, as the aggressive attack of the Prince persisted, until they missed their sword again, and picked it up upon the order of their fiery opponent. "If only Laf can beat His Highness, even just once, then perhaps, His Highness will stop being too aggressive, or might stop asking Laf from training with him."

"There are many soldiers and skillful knights in the castle, why not ask one of them to train with Carl, instead of Laf?" she wondered and furrowed her brows.

"Because most of them are afraid to train with His Highness," the Lady in Waiting replied. "Prince Carl is the best in the castle next to His Majesty when it comes to sword fighting. LaFontaine told me that he had beaten all of the knights and soldiers that challenged him. Even the King's best knight, who had trained His Highness when he was young, was beaten twice. Most of them want to maintain their pride by avoiding fighting with the best swordsman and losing again. Others are afraid for their life since they've experienced almost being killed by His Highness when he is in a bad mood."

"And the only brave person that's left to fight with is LaFontaine?" was her puzzled remark. She cannot fathom how the other soldiers and knights can refuse to train with her ill-tempered prince while his poor Valet was left with no choice.

"Because His Majesty had given them permission to refuse, after His Highness almost killed some of them while angry and used his sword to release his fury," Perry related in a serious tone and paused when she caught LaFontaine cringed.

And when the Lady in Waiting was confident that they were safe, she resumed the conversation.

"So, you're telling me that His Majesty had spared the life of these soldiers and knights, but not LaFontaine?" was her unbelievable question and rolled her eyes at the unfair treatment that LaFontaine had received.

"It's not like that. And I know what you're thinking," Perry noticed the slight annoyance and worry. "LaFontaine is not spared because everyone is confident and knew that His Highness wouldn't harm or kill Laf in case he gets aggressive and furious."

"How sure are you or His Majesty or Her Majesty on that?" she asked, uncertain that Carm's temper can be contained by the Valet. "I've seen how Carl got jealous and furious. He's like a wild angry territorial cat."

"Because His Highness and LaFontaine are like siblings," was Perry's confident answer. "They both argue and fight all the time. And they never fail to irritate each other. But they never admitted that they care for each other deeply."

She smiled after hearing those words. Perry was absolutely right.

Totally immersed from their conversation, they did not notice that the clanging of swords stopped, and the next thing she noticed, Carm and LaFontaine were walking towards them.

Perry rose at once and handed the Prince a goblet filled with red wine and a cup of cocoa to
She remained seated and took a caramel coated creampuff from the tray, put it in her mouth and acted casual while munching the favorite dessert of her Prince; it would have been better if there was mustard to go on with it.

It had been days since they really had a decent talk, there were evenings when they do not see or eat dinner together. She does not know if Carm was avoiding her, or just plainly very busy due to the new partnership and the upcoming Harvest Festival.

Her eyes suddenly grew bigger when her sight caught a glimpse of Carm's groin. She quickly averted and snapped her eyes back to the creampuffs.

She thought no one had noticed. But when she looked up and saw the cocky smirk plastered on the Prince's mouth, she felt warm with embarrassment. As much as she tried hard avoiding it, she just cannot control what her body wants: her gaze drifted again on the impressive bulge of her Prince.

This time she could see clearly the perfect trace of his penis' head and its entire length through the tight hose. Obviously, her naughty Prince did not wear any underwear and his phallus was majestically resting horizontally on his left thigh.

She thought of criticizing him for not wearing his braies, but the naughty look on his face made her more abashed and knowing him, he was definitely thinking something dirty and wicked before she could say anything.

And before she could choke from the sight of his royal bulge and the creampuff that she was chewing, she heard Perry and LaFontaine said goodbye. She rose from her seat and walked towards the Valet and gave them a quick hug, much to the surprise of the redhead.

"I think you've been great, receiving all the aggressive attacks and angry blows, but never surrendered and complained," she complimented the exhausted Valet.

"Thanks Princess, it's so nice to hear that somebody appreciates my effort," LaFontaine smiled back but the grin on their face quickly vanished when a grumpy prince shot daggers on their way. They ignored him, while he quietly sat on the mahogany chair and pretended not to hear their complaint.

"Princess, LaFontaine and I will take a break before helping you and His Majesty prepare for dinner. Do you need something before we go?" Perry asked while giving LaFontaine few quick worried glances.

Sensing that her Lady in Waiting cannot wait any longer to take care of them, "It's alright Perry. I want to take a rest too before dinner, maybe I'll nap afterward. You two can go ahead," she said and saw LaFontaine was about to ask the Prince if he needs them. But before the broody prince can talk… "I'm pretty sure that Carl doesn't need anything anymore, he's already won the combat and eating creampuffs, he's already contented."

Instead of a retort, they all received his deadly glare. Perry bowed to him quickly and LaFontaine casually bowed and followed Perry heading towards the door, while Carm did not even acknowledge the bow and remained slouching on the chair, putting more creampuffs into his mouth and drinks wine.

Sensing a royal brooding coming on, she walked closer to him. She could still see beads of sweat on his face and his hair was wet too due to the intense workout. She took out the handkerchief that was nestling inside her bosom, kneeled in front of the brooding Prince and began to wipe his face with
the handkerchief. The contact startled Carm, and put his goblet on the table at once and stared down at her, totally surprised, before swallowing hard the creampuff that got stuck in his throat.

"Hey, relax… I'm just going to dry your face," she said, her voice low and tender.

The confused look on his face vanished, and his cheeks crimsoned. He remained silent and let her dry off his face and the back of his neck, while he watches with his curious gaze. She felt her heart pounding at the nearness of him. She was just inches away from him and could feel his breathing on her face, she could sense his eyes on hers too and the tension between them builds up every second. She leaned closer to his left ear, took a deep breath and inhaled the natural scent of Carm then closed her eyes for a moment. It's been so long since she smelt him. She relished this simple intimate moment that she has with him. There's no denying that she missed him so much. Even his sweat smelt like a sweet scent of wild flowers in her nose.

"Cupcake…"

The smooth velvety raspy voice of her Prince tore her out of her reverie, she almost moaned at the sound of the seductive tone. She opened her eyes and gracefully removed the hand that was on his face and she sat on her knees and faced him.

"Thank you," Carm uttered, and he almost croaked but remained seated. Then he crinkled his brows, shook his head and realized something. "What in a world are you doing sitting there?"

He was about to rise and give her the seat, but she quickly placed her hand on his left thigh to stop him from standing.

"Stay," she demanded and stared at him.

She saw fire on those dark orbs as she held his gaze.

Suddenly, she felt his breathing growing rapid. Maybe the touch of her hand on his thigh astonished him. After all, she warned him not to kiss nor touch her.

Slowly, she felt him take a seat but her eyes caught his hands gripping onto the armrest of the chair. She looked up again and noticed he was breathing heavily. Her brows furrowed and followed where his gaze at. She gasped and almost lost her composure when she saw her hand that was on his thigh, resting a centimeter away from his obvious bulge.

Suddenly, she noticed the temperature inside the room rising and she felt this intense heat growing from her core and spreading to her entire body like wildfire. She had been long denied of this and had been yearning for his touch. Now was her chance. No way she would let this passed by. She was aware that her Prince was well endowed. But to see the trace of the perfectly shaped long penis resting on the width of his thigh through the tight hose makes it more intimidating and arousing to look at. And it might sound stupid, but his 'cock' never fails to shock her even until now.

She bit her lower lip and met his gaze. She could feel her underwear getting wetter. Carefully she placed her hand on his bulge. Carm was tensed, and she knew that his entire body was sensitive to any touch. Without tearing her stare off him, she carefully stroked the bulge on his thigh. As soon as her hand caressed the length of his shaft, he groaned, and she found herself breathing heavily. She had barely started touching him, but Carm was already semi hard as she continued palming his impressive bulge. It didn’t take long till she felt his shaft grows thicker and longer, hard as a rock, and raging like a wild panther. It's aching and begging to be freed from the tight constraint of his hose.

"Carm…” she uttered, her voice husky and desperate. She was reluctant on doing the next step.
Understanding quickly what she meant, he reached down, freed his large erection and let it sprang out and stood in its full glory in front of her as if seeking full attention. The foreskin was stretched fully, exposing the head of his penis, and glistening with generous amount of precum that was oozing from the tip of the head. She carefully took him in her hand, wraps her small delicate fingers around his thick shaft and slowly pumped him through her tight fist. Her hand stroked him in a slow torturous pace.

"Cupcake…" Carm groaned with an agonizing ache and closed his eyes as if savoring every touch and sensation on his penis.

She grinned after hearing him, knowing that he was enjoying it.

Giving him a hand job delights him.

Letting him watch her do wonders on his 'wild panther' makes him begs for more and can easily send him over the edge.

But giving him a blow job would definitely drive him into madness and ecstasy.

"Carm, look at me," she demanded and he dutifully opened his eyes and watched under those heavy-lidded eyes. She knew that he was already drowning in arousal, as she pumped him steady and languid till his balls fill with his juice. "Do you want me to go faster?" she whispered and just received a nod, too aroused to use his tongue. She grinned at the sight of him dying in arousal. She sped up the pumping and she found her hand suddenly bathing in his generous precum. Using her free hand, she took his balls carefully and stroked them too, she felt them tightened and grew.

She knew that he was ready to come as he hears him growls continuously.

"Cupcake… I'm about to…" Carm was begging.

She just needs to speed up pumping him and perhaps… if she finds the courage again… she will suck him, and then he'll be satisfied and happy as a cat that got its milk.

But then suddenly, something inside her clicked into place and she came to her senses. Without any warning, she released her hands on his balls and shaft, casually rose from her feet and stood in front of the very frustrated, shocked and bewildered Prince of hers.

"Did you like it?" she asked with a hint of sarcasm. "That's how I've been feeling lately."

And with that, she gracefully turned around and walked out from the Prince of Karnstein, never bothering to hear or see his reaction.

She doesn't care if he was dying now from frustrations and from being deprived of coming.

She doesn't care if he would have a massive headache afterward.

She doesn't care if he would be broodier and grumpier for the next days to come.

She simply wanted to have sex with him, was that too much to ask?

That should teach him a lesson not to mess with a Hollis... especially a horny pregnant Hollis.

TBC
Is it bad of Laura for leaving Carm hanging like that? Or Carm definitely deserved it? :-D
Mother's Little Darling

Chapter Summary

A look at what happened after Laura's cruel stunt of reminding Carm how she feels about the law of prohibiting pregnant women from copulating.

Continuation from the last chapter…

Chapter Notes

I'm glad to see new (old) readers finding your way to this little crazy fic. I'm always happy to know that it's not just creampuffs who are here. Feel free to share whatever you feel. Thanks again for your support, wonderful comments and kudos. Have a nice weekend ahead :-D

Laura

"Good evening Your Majesty, Your Highness,"

Their conversation was interrupted and all eyes focused to the Valet approaching and then bowed to them.

"LaFontaine, what can we do for you?" was the Queen's casual remark.

Her ears were not used to hear the Queen's voice calm and friendly, unless her mother-in-law talks to her son. But the special treatment was not exclusively for Carm since the Queen seemed fond of LaFontaine too.

"I am here to deliver a message from His Highness."

LaFontaine was not even finished when the Queen's calm expression vanished and the thin eyebrows knitted in concern. And yet, Her Majesty remained patient and waited for LaFontaine to resume. But both she and LaFontaine knew that the Queen looks not pleased on what they were about to tell. They have been waiting for the Prince to come so they can start supper since the King was not in the castle and Carm was the only one that was causing the delay of their supper.

"His Highness sends his regrets for not coming to supper tonight," LaFontaine delivered with confidence. "The Prince does not feel well and he wishes all of you a pleasant evening, especially Her Highness."

She swallowed hard and shifted in her seat, knowing well what Carm's message pertains to.

"Why? What happened to Carl?"

The worried lines on Her Majesty's forehead were visible and LaFontaine had to pause and swallowed hard before answering.
She glanced at them and hoped the Valet had not discovered her little crime.

"His Highness claims that he has acute lower abdominal pain and cannot move well," the Valet stated.

"Have you examined him and give him some medicine?" the Queen asked. The usual calm and controlled voice were now agitated.

The worried tone of the Queen did not go unnoticed to all of them.

"His Highness refused to be checked and assured me that he would be alright," was LaFontaine's apologetic remark and slightly bowed their head, knowing what was to come.

"Go back and tell my son that I'm ordering you to examine him so that you can give him the proper treatment," the Queen demanded in an authoritative tone. "He shall not ignore any pain and shall be treated right away."

But instead of leaving and obeying the Queen's order.

"With all due respect Your Majesty, His Highness is not in the mood. He warned me not to let anyone come into his chamber and specifically told me not to disturb him," the Valet returned.

"What kind of foolishness is he up to?" was the Queen's impatient reply and rose from the chair. "If he does not want you to see him, then I will."

She was quick on her feet and moved closer to where LaFontaine was standing after hearing the Queen's last comment, "Your Majesty, I can take care of it. I'll go to Carl and make sure that he agrees to let LaFontaine examine him. I insist." She emphasized and retained her composure after the Queen was caught off guard and glared at her.

For a moment, they exchanged deadly glares and knew that it was bold of her to do it. But she was desperate to hide the naughtiness that she did.

After an awkward silence and seeing neither one of them were moving…

"Very well, you can go," the Queen replied after regaining poise, giving a side glance before looking at the Valet. "And LaFontaine, let me know how my son's condition as soon as possible."

"I will, Your Majesty," they responded quickly and bowed.

"Good night Your Majesty," she said and gave her respect to the Queen as gracefully and quickly as she can.

She and LaFontaine both leave the dining room with her heart pounding after that daring move she did.

Once the door behind them shut, she let out a deep sigh of relief.

"That's ballsy Princess Laura," Lafontaine was quick to point out as they rest for a while to catch both their breaths.

"I know," she admitted and gave Laf a nervous smile before hooking her arm on the Valet's. "Come on… let's check on him before her Majesty change her mind."

The Valet nodded in agreement and they both hastened towards the grand hall.
"Err… how is Carl doing? How bad is it? I mean… the pain," she asked as they ascend the grand stairs, and glanced at them.

"He's weird actually," LaFontaine started their voice a mixture of worry and curiosity. "When he arrived at his chamber, he's covering his lower body with a shield and walking funny, and wincing. When I asked him what happened he hissed on me and told me to leave him. He looked totally pissed," they related. "Then he went straight to the bathroom and I just heard him shouting."

Oh god.

She took a deep breath and pretended to be in deep thoughts.

"If I didn't know that he's in pain, I would think that he's-" LaFontaine was saying but stopped midways as they realized something.

"He's what?" their comment distracted her and she kept her focus on them while walking.

"I'm sorry Princess, it's nothing," LaFontaine replied as they tried to outpace her.

But she will not let them get away easily.

"Laf, what do you think he's doing?" she nagged them as she walked behind them. "Don't try to hide it from me."

But before she can receive the answer she was seeking. She did not realize that they were already at the Prince's chamber, and LaFontaine knocked lightly at the wooden door.

"Go away!"

They heard the angry voice of the Prince behind the door.

"It's me, LaFontaine! Her Majesty strictly ordered that I examine you!" they replied standing by the door.

"Leave me alone! Or I will feed you to the lions!"

Hoping that she can tame the furious Panther inside the chamber…

"Carl? It's me, Laura. May we come in?" she asked her voice firm but calm and waited for his reply.

But there was just silence.

They both exchange glances and shrugged their shoulders.

"Do you think he heard you?" LaFontaine asked and put their ear on the door to listen. "It's quiet… maybe he didn't hear you. Try again."

"Carl? May we come in?" she said and this time her voice was louder but not aggressive.

"I don't want to see you!"

Her Prince's outburst did not surprise her; he was definitely not happy about what she did. Although she hoped he would be pacified upon hearing her voice, seeing that she visits him, but she underestimated his sulking. She grew flustered when she saw Laf raised their eyebrows and caught them staring at her with inquisitive eyes.
She suddenly lost her confidence and felt the heat spreads across her cheeks. The image of leaving her Prince's undying strong erection begging for her mercy was still nagging her thoughts.

She just wants him to feel her frustration and reminds him that she has needs too, and Carm should not take her needs for granted.

Gathering back her confidence, she looked the Valet straight in the eyes, as if challenging them not to confront her, before focusing on the wooden door. She girl the hell up and pushed the heavy door opened and walked with a confidence of a warrior.

If Carm wants confrontation, she was up to it and already in a fight mode.

But her heart melted when her eyes focused on the uncovered four post bed. Her poor Prince was tucked in bed, lying on his side and hugging a very familiar yellow pillow. He did not even stir when he saw her come in and approached him.

She walked slowly to the right side of the bed, where Carm was facing and staring absent-mindedly the wall next to the huge fireplace.

Before she could reach the side of the bed, she got distracted by LaFontaine, who was approaching on the other side of the bed, ready to examine the 'patient'. She signaled Laf to wait before they do anything that could upset the brooding prince; she sighed discreetly when they nod. Her gaze shifted to her Prince. She can easily tell by the tight wavy lines on his forehead that he has not got over with what happened earlier. Carefully, she moved closer, weighing his mood and stood a meter away from him.

Carm had been silent, lost in a brooding sulk.

She was suddenly lost for words.

Will she soothe her broody angry panther, or will she stand for her belief and remind him again not to mess up with her libido?

She cleared her throat hoping that he will look at her, but he remained ignoring her.

Her feelings were slowly taking over and she was now itching to tell Carm she was sorry, but the rational side of her was grappling with the idea.

Struggling what to do, "Hey…" was the only word that came out of her mouth.

The cheery, loquacious and passionate princess that never runs out of what to say suddenly became laconic and shy.

*Stupid brain!*

She internally berated herself.

How come when it comes to her feelings, it always paralyzes her brain and sends stupid messages to her body?

Carm's focus shifted to her and she almost smiled when she got the attention of her broody Prince. But her shoulders slouched when she received that nonchalant stare from him.

She expects him to flare up, hiss, as what he use to do to Laf, or just have an endless argument with her, which they both like doing, but no. He was giving her that apathetic look that she hated. She
straightened her back and tried to compose herself even if his stare was making her uncomfortable and annoyed.

"Umm… I heard that you have some pain… on the…" she fumbled for words while glancing at Laf, unsure how to say where 'the pain'. "Are you alright?" she decided instead to get to the point.

"Why all of a sudden you care?" was his sarcastic retort.

His answer irritated her.

_Calm down._

She feels that Carm's old habit of getting into her nerves was making a comeback and she does not have the patience to deal with it at the moment.

Her eyes narrowed and she stepped closer to the bed.

"I'll always care for you, what kind of question is that?" was her irritated reply.

"Oh yeah? Then why did you trick me with those loving touches of yours, when in fact you just want to mock me," was Carm's razor-sharp reply and sat upright on the bed.

"I did not!" was her hyper reply and almost lost her cool. But she managed to stay calm when she caught Laf's worried expression. "I didn't plan to mock or trick you," this time her voice was low and controlled.

"So, what do you call it this time …" Carm retaliated, left eyebrow raised "…inconceivable sadistic urge?"

The last sentence irked her after recognizing the sarcastic undertone of his voice. How dare he use that term? She felt this anger seething inside her and found herself clenching her teeth. But she tried once again to control her emotions.

"And in case you're wondering, I took care of it to relieved me from the cruel pain," was the Prince's bitter reply before tucking himself back to bed and turned his back on her.

She was on the verge of exploding and wants to remind him that she has no control of her body and urges, but they were all startled when the door opened wide, and the Queen stepped inside and walked across the room. LaFontaine quickly moved on the side, to let the Queen pass and bowed as Her Majesty approached the four post bed's left side.

"What's taking you so long?" was the impatient remark of the Queen.

She was about to tell an excuse to save LaFontaine and her from trouble, but the Queen did not seem interested to hear their answer anymore and quickly sat on the bed. Carm was equally surprised as them and sat upright again on the bed to greet the Queen.

"Carl, how are you?" the Queen asked, worried and stroke the Prince's cheek with the back of her palm. "Are you still in pain? LaFontaine, have you examined my son?"

"My Queen Mother, I'm fine," was Carm's quick reassuring reply.

"Are you sure?" the Queen doubted and cupped the face of her son with the right hand and studied the Prince's features. "You look pale. You haven't eaten yet." the Queen was quick to conclude.

"How are you going to get better when you're not eating anything? Lafontaine, can you fetch the
Prince's supper at once."

Carm was about to protest but her Majesty glared at her son and put a finger on Carm's lips to stop him. "You know very well that I hate being disappointed. Calm down Carl, I'm here now and I'm going to take care of you," was the Queen's affectionate reply, and stroked the Prince's short dark locks.

"Your Majesty, I could take care of Carl and feed him afterward, so that you can take a rest," she offered her voice sincere and hopeful.

The Queen slowly shifted the focus on her and removed the hands caressing the Prince's face and hair.

"It's so nice of you to offer, but when it comes to taking care of my sick son, I think his mother knows best," was Her Majesty's proud reply. "Don't you agree, Carl?" the Queen asked and resumed stroking the Prince's hair.

She looked at Carm and waited for him to dispose of his mother. The last time she took care of the grumpy sick Prince of hers, he enjoyed her company and he behaved like an angel and ate the food that she fed him without a hassle.

Her Prince seemed to be taking a time to tell his mother to go, as she watched him softened at each soothing stroke of the Queen's hand on his hair and face. She was aware that Carm was close to his mother, but right now, it makes her uncomfortable watching the Queen treats her son like a child in front of her. And not only that, her Prince seemed to be enjoying being pampered by his mother.

Feeling ignored, "Ahem…” she forced a cough and the Queen stopped caressing Carm's face but remained holding her son's jawline, as Carm reluctantly looked at her direction. She knew that she had done another bold thing again in front of the Queen, but she was impatient and irritated, and she had skipped her supper and feels hungry. She flashed him an adorable playful grin and fluttered a little bit her eyelashes, telling her Prince that he should quickly tell his mother to go and let them be alone.

"You may go, and rest now," Carm said nonchalantly.

The confident grin on her face vanished and her mouth slightly opened after hearing his reply, too dumbfounded and disappointed that he chose his mother instead. She masked her annoyance and smiled wide towards him and nodded.

"If that pleases Your Highness," was her sarcastic answer, and caught the 'victorious smile' on her mother-in-law's face.

"I think Carl is right, you have to take a rest now. It's not good for you to stay up late and without eating your supper," the Queen commented.

She then caught the worried look on Carm's face but she locked her stare with the Queen.

"You haven't eaten yet?" the Prince asked his deep voice cannot hide his concern.

Not to be outdone, "We both haven't eaten yet because when your Valet delivered your message, we got worried and we decided to check on you. And since I can't help worrying about you," the Queen emphasized 'you' and cupped her son's cheek with both hands. "I lose my appetite and come here instead."

Suddenly, Carm's attention and sympathy were divided. "My Queen Mother, you don't have to do
"that," he said after shifting his gaze to his mother. "That's why I sent LaFontaine to tell you and Laura that I cannot join you both for supper and that you can eat without me."

The sound of the door opening got all their attention, and in came the Valet carrying the service tray containing the supper that the Queen ordered and walked towards the four post bed.

LaFontaine carefully put the service tray on the bed right across Carm.

"Thank you, LaFontaine," Her Majesty smiled the one that does not reach the eyes. "Your timing was perfect," and started stirring the bowl of soup with a spoon.

Feeling suddenly unwanted, since the Queen was ready to feed Carm, she decided to say goodbye; but when her eyes locked gaze with her Prince, she saw a trace of worry in his melancholic eyes.

"Laura, you can join. There's plenty of food for all of us," was the Prince's innocent suggestion.

She noticed the change in his voice; there were consideration and concern.

But she does not want to join him together with his mother.

She wants to be alone with him!

She did not let her feelings get in a way.

"Thank you for the offer, but I'm not hungry," was her calm and firm reply. "Your Majesty, I wish you a pleasant evening, and I hope that His Highness gets well soon," she said and received a nod from the Queen, before glancing at her Prince.

"Thank you Princess Laura and goodnight," Her Majesty returned.

Carm's concerned eyes followed her, as she walked around and bowed to them before leaving. She had not even left the chamber yet, and the Queen had already begun to feed Carm.

Then she saw LaFontaine's worried features as she turned around and they bowed to her. They walked behind her immediately towards the door.

"It's alright Laf, you don't have to…I can manage," she said and reached for their hand and squeezed it. Then she caught LaFontaine sought the Prince's attention and then nodded to him. "Goodnight," she murmured and walked towards the door.

"I'm sorry but I can't disobey His Highness' order," LaFontaine claimed while walking behind.

She paused and was about to protest, but when the Valet gave her that adorable silly pout of them, she just rolled her eyes and let them escort her.

She can still feel those pair of dark melancholic eyes watching her as she reached the door. She debated on giving Carm one last look, to assure him that she was fine, but when she remembered that he preferred his mother from her; she opened the door quickly and crossed the threshold never looking back.

*****

When she arrived at her chamber, a worried Perry greeted her right away.

"Sweetie, are you alright? You look upset? Are you craving for some cheese?"
She heard her Lady in Waiting asked, as she walked inside her chamber followed by the Valet. She just shook her head and sat on the edge of her bed and stared at the floor.

"Princess Laura hasn't eaten her supper yet," LaFontaine remarked quickly and looked at Perry. "Shall I fetch some food?" they asked Perry's permission.

"No, I'm not hungry," she whined and rose from the bed.

"But you need to eat because the baby needs some nourishments," Perry insisted and walked closer as if examining something. "Hmmm... did you and His Highness fight again?"

"Wha-?! Who told you that?" was her defensive reply and gave the Valet a narrow look.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" LaFontaine warned.

"Did Carl tell you what I did?" was her upset query and groaned.

"No, he's actually quiet these past days and always brooding," LaFontaine replied and then smirked. "Should I be worried for my life the next time he asks me to practice with him?"

"And what exactly did you do?" Perry's skill for smelling trouble was always infallible.

"Nothing," she said focusing her attention to LaFontaine instead. "Forget about what I've said and please don't mention anything to Carl." She begged and displayed her adorable smile to them, which worked again, as she saw them smirk.

"I will not. But on one condition," they challenged and walked closer.

"And what's that?"

"I'm going to fetch some food for you and I want you to eat it," they demanded.

"Deal!" was her satisfied reply and received a wide grin from the redhead.

"Alright, I'll leave you first with Perry so that you can change now to your sleeping wear. And then I'll come back later with your food," they said and gave Perry a smile before walking to the door.

Once the door closed, she sat on the edge of the bed and started removing her shoes. When she looked up, Perry was standing in front of her, handing her something.

"Betty just gave that to me before you came," Perry explained and stood still.

When she took it and read 'Laura' on the paper, her heart began to race as she recognized the handwriting of her former lover.

What could Danny possibly want from her?

TBC
Strong Cravings

Chapter Summary

Carmilla will do anything to satiate Laura's craving, even if she had to wake up the whole kingdom, just to get what Laura wants.

Chapter Notes

Thank you for your feedbacks and generous kudos. I'm always happy to read all your thoughts... your comments always make my day :-) 

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Carmilla

It had been four days now since she and her father dined with her mother and Laura at supper. The preparation for the harvest festival had been keeping her and her father too busy lately, in addition to dealing with the new trading partners and their regular obligations at the kingdom. She was thankful that her father has not asked her yet to be with him when it comes to dealing with the problems of the villagers. Or else she might have a panic attack due to meeting too many people. She was glad that her father trusts her more with the paper works and understands her situation. She does not know if it was a good thing that she and Laura do not see each other lately, but her little Cupcake seemed still upset with their set up. And she still has not forgotten what Laura did to her. But she was glad to see her Princess the night she had suffered that excruciating pain when her balls swelled and were left unattended. Whether she admits it or not, she preferred Laura staying with her that night, even if she was a bit angry for what her wife did to her. But when her mother came into the scene, she had no choice but to say yes to her mother. She hoped that her little Cupcake had mellowed and was not upset with her for sending her out of her chamber; she just does not want her pregnant wife staying late at night and not eating on time. When LaFontaine informed her that Laura ate supper that night, she was relieved. She let out a deep sigh and was thankful when she and LaFontaine reached the top of the stairs. Watching her father dealt with a group of knights, were one of the challenging part of being a king, not only were they drunk while in the middle of the talk but some of them begins to grope and kiss the girl servants that serve the wine and food while in the meeting. The only one who was well-behaved and not drunk was Armitage.

"Remind me tomorrow to tell my father to replace the girl servants with boys when my father meets the Knights again," she told the Valet beside her and received a nod at once.

Just as they were about to turn to the wing leading to her chamber, the controlled sound of Perry's voice caught their attention.

"What's going on?" her curiosity was piqued as she saw Perry and Betty coming from the opposite hall carrying each a service tray and the other a basin. It was almost midnight and way passed
Laura's bedtime.

"Pardon us, Your Highness," Perry apologized and bowed together with the handmaiden that was behind her.

"Is my wife all right?" was her initial reaction seeing that the Lady in Waiting looked upset while Betty's facial expression says it all: worried, ashamed, reprimanded and sorry.

"The Princess is craving for Steirerkas cheese but we have run out of it," Perry related in a low but stressed tone.

"Why not send someone to buy in the village?" she questioned in an almost irritated tone. "If my wife wants to eat something you have to provide her that, whatever it takes."

"Your Highness, I've already sent Natalie and Sarah Jane thrice this afternoon in the village," the Lady in Waiting related in a nervous tone. "But the Princess is still not satisfied."

"Didn't they buy enough?"

Perry nodded repeatedly, "They did. She's been eating it since midday meal and after supper, and then before going to bed. Then she woke up moments ago to ask for some more, so we took the last one and feed her. But the Princess wants more."

"Then what are you waiting for? Send someone to buy more in the village," she raised her eye brows and stared at the fidgeting Lady in Waiting. She cannot fathom why it was so difficult to get that cheese.

Perry sighed and gathered her courage, "With all due respect, Your Highness, it's already the middle of the night. The shops are closed and the entire village is asleep."

"I don't care if the entire kingdom is sleeping, if my wife wants a cheese you will all get her that cheese!" she disapproved and saw the Lady in Waiting and the tall handmaiden cringed and bowed their heads at her outburst. "LaFontaine, gather thirty soldiers to escort your lady love here. If they need to ransack every house and shop in the village, then by all means, they have my permission, as long as they come back here with that damn cheese!"

"The Karnstein's old reputation of being the Vikings of North Styria was long over," LaFontaine commented. "Such action will cause panic and fear in the village. His Majesty, King Philipp had worked hard to earn his people's trust and to erase that image that your forefathers have. You don't want to ruin that trust just for a cheese, do you?"

"I don't care if they will think that my family is barbaric! The Karnsteins own everything in this kingdom; if I want something from them they have to give it to me," she reasoned out, her voice echoing along the hall. She was losing her patience and becoming aggressive. She glared at LaFontaine and clenched her jaws, trying to control her temper, she put her left hand over the Valet's right shoulder tightly and said, "Bring Laura that cheese or the three of you will end up sleeping in the dungeon."

LaFontaine cleared their throat and straightened their back and bravely meets this raging temper with a deep sigh and still managed to grin.

"Very well, if that's what His Highness wants, we will bring it to completion," was the Valet's swift confident reply. "But His Highness would have to explain to Her Majesty the reason why the whole village has been raided and seized of Steirerkas cheese. I am absolutely sure it will not only cause panic, fear, and anger, but the whole village will be curious to why we are robbing them of a certain
cheese."

"What are you talking about?" was her irritated reply.

"The people in the village like to gossip. Taking all the Steirerkas cheese in the middle of the night will lead to curiosity, questions, and guesses from the village people," LaFontaine explained meticulously. "The castle has not announced yet the princess' pregnancy. But there are definitely some wives and matrons that will take a hint that a royal family member might be in desperate need of that, which will lead to speculations about a royal heir on the way."

Thinking that her Valet's concocting an excuse… "Where the hell do you get these ideas? You know that deception is punishable-"

"LaFontaine is right Your Highness, the people might get suspicious," Perry chimed in nervously. "Some of them are quick to jump into conclusion that sometimes they even spread rumors that a woman is pregnant even if she isn't."

"Oh, and they also spread rumors of who's sleeping with who," Betty added with a smile, but was quickly silenced by Perry's glare.

"Her Majesty wishes to formally introduce first the Prince of Karnstein to the entire kingdom. Before announcing the Princess' pregnancy," LaFontaine added. "You would not want to ruin your Queen Mother's plan, just for a cheese, do you?"

"Are you trying to scare me?" she croaked.

"No, I'm not. I am just trying to tell Your Highness that there is another way to get the cheese without raiding the entire village," was the Valet's smooth reply and received a questioning look from Perry and Betty.

She managed to calm down and cleared her mind. Having no choice, "Alright, tell me what this brilliant plan of yours?"

"Instead of me, Perry and Betty, I suggest that we two go instead," Lafontaine said.

Containing her frustration and anger, "May I just remind you who's the heir to the throne here?"

"Let me explain it to Your Highness clearly," LaFontaine said carefully and glanced at the tall handmaiden who was nervously standing beside the curious Lady in Waiting. "Perry, Betty, can you please tell Alfred that we need him to take us to the village."

Betty bowed at once and seemed happy to have escaped from them. But Perry gave them a suspicious look before bowing and left.

Once they were alone, "We're going to Greta, and you will buy the cheese from her. She will wonder why you're there in the middle of the night, but it doesn't matter if she finds out that Princess Laura is pregnant. Because she only knew that the Princess is a servant in the castle. After all, she knew that you two are married and it's just normal to find out that Laura the servant is pregnant. You can disguise as Marcus and go to Greta to buy the cheese that Princess Laura craves for, while I wait for you in the-"

"Why do I need to go as Marcus when you or Perry can go to Greta and buy from her the cheese?" was her irritated reply and rolled her eyes. She was growing impatient, frustrated and annoyed at all the stupidity that she hears. But she will not sleep until Laura's cravings were curb.
"Because if I go alone and ask Greta she will wonder why I'm doing it for Laura, the castle servant, and besides, she knew that I'm your Valet and my position is higher than Laura and Perry the servants..." LaFontaine related. "And if Perry does it, Greta will think that Marcus is an irresponsible husband because he lets a woman does this thing that, a husband should do for his pregnant wife."

And that was all it takes for her to realize that LaFontaine has a point. She may have been raised as the heir to the throne and everything she desires were granted, but she was also raised to be a courteous and honorable prince.

"How do you propose to dress me as Marcus? It's been so long since I went to the village and use my-" she was not even finished when her Valet displayed a wide grin.

"I have everything you need," was the Valet's proud answer. "I kept all your things that you use as Marcus because I know that one day, you will still go to the village. Just wait for me in your chamber while I get your things from my chamber."

*****

Half an hour later, and a never ending bickering with LaFontaine; and a short argument with Alfred after discovering the latter asked Armitage to come with them, she now found herself walking side by side with her Valet, and Armitage tagging behind. She felt like a spy on a mission as they walk through the quiet village as discreetly as they can, dressed in a black cloak and hiding their faces under the thick hood.

Once she recognized Greta's house…

"You two can wait here, I don't want to scare Greta further if she sees there are men in cloaks surrounding her house," she ordered and Armitage positioned himself right away at the nearest side of the door, while LaFontaine hid behind the tree in front of the small cottage. Once she knew the two were out of sight, she carefully walked towards the door and knock as carefully as she can.

It took almost a dozen knocks before she heard movements inside and rattling on the door.

When the door opened a bit, her sight was met right away by the faint light that illuminated from a candle as Greta raised the candlestick to check who it was. After confirming it was Greta who was standing behind the door…

"Greta, it's Marcus… Laura's husband," she mumbled and showed her face near the light but did not pull down her hood yet, knowing that Armitage might get a glimpse of her face. The shocked look on Greta's face was replaced by surprise. The woman let her in right away and closed the door behind them.

"Marcus, what's wrong? Are you hurt? Is someone following you? Are you in danger?" was Greta's hushed and yet hyper remarks.

"No no no, I'm not hurt and I'm not in danger either," she replied and motioned for Greta to calm down.

Confused… "Then why are you here in the middle of the night?"

"It's actually Laura-"

"Oh my god, what happened to her?" Greta gasped and covered her mouth with the left hand. "No wonder she's not been here lately. I'm already worrying why she and Perry haven't been in the village for some time. Is she sick?"
"Shhh, calm down, we don't want to wake the sleeping creampuff," she whispered and glanced at Emma sleeping on the small bed beside the small fireplace. To make her look less intimidating and to help calm Greta, she drew back her dark hood to show her face. She smiled at Greta and saw right away the expression of the black haired woman softened. "Laura is fine," she began once she saw Greta relaxed. "My wife is pregnant-" she was not even finished yet when she saw Greta's mouth formed a big 'o' shape and the eyelids were raised forming crescent shapes. She was afraid that Greta might scream with gladness so she put her index finger on her own mouth to tell Greta to keep silent.

Luckily, Greta managed to restrain her gladness, "Congratulations Marcus, tell Laura I'm happy for her."

"Thank you, I'll let her know," she felt proud and daring at the same time, for telling a commoner, that her wife was pregnant. Although Greta did not know their real identity, it felt good and exciting to share the good news that she and Laura were having a baby to the people they know and care for them. She honestly felt happier to share to Greta the good news, compared to the time she told her parents. Because she knew her parents not only want a grandchild from her but mostly because they need an heir.

"What can I do for you or Laura?"

Her wondering thoughts were halted by Greta's voice. She shook lightly her head and grinned at the excited woman across her.

"I am very sorry to trouble you at this ungodly hour of the night," she said sincerely. "But my wife is craving for some Steirerkas cheese and you're the only one I knew I can buy that cheese from and-"

She does not need to explain further.

Greta nodded at once and walked towards the cupboard and retrieved the cheese. Two handfuls of Steirerkas cheese wrapped in a cloth were handed to her right away without any question.

"Here you go, that's all the Steirerkas cheese that I have," Greta said, unsatisfied. "I hope it's enough. If Laura still wants more, don't hesitate to come. I'll make more."

She smirked like a satisfied cat that got its milk, knowing that Laura will be happy when she gives her wife what she craves for. She balanced the cheese on her hand and fumbled in her pocket to pay Greta.

"Damn it, I forgot my pouch," It was already too late when she realized that she never carry her pouch of gold coins since it was LaFontaine who carries it all the time for her. "I'm sorry Greta, but I don't have my coins with me. I forgot it while trying to figure out where to go and get the cheese that Laura is craving for.

"Who said that I'm going to accept your coin?" was Greta's pleasant remark. "Consider it as a gift from me. You two got married and I didn't even have a gift to both of you, and now that my friend is pregnant, that's the least thing that I can give to her."

"Bless you, Greta, you're very kind," she was totally surprised at the rare kindness that this person was showing to them. She never expected that a mere peasant would whole heartedly give her what she needs in exchange for nothing. "I promise, I'm going to pay everything I owe you and for disturbing you in the-

"Marcus, I said it's a gift, so don't you dare pay me back," Greta returned smiling sincerely. "I know
how it felt to be pregnant and to crave for something that you will almost kill just to eat that food."

A naughty smirk was plastered on her face after hearing Greta's comment.

"You don't know what kind of crazy things came to my head, on how I will get the cheese when I found out that Laura woke up in the middle of the night craving for it," she said and was thankful for the patience and genius planning of her Valet.

"She is very lucky to have a caring husband that will do anything for her," Greta sincerely said.

Suddenly, she felt her blood rushing to her face and slightly bowed her head.

"Actually, I'm not that supportive to her lately, I always ask the people around me to do things for me," it was already too late before she realized what she had said when Greta gave her a puzzled look. "I mean... I'm always working and I ask Perry all the time to help Laura what she needs."

"At least, you're still thinking about Laura's welfare. But it will be better if you'll find more time to be with her, especially now that she is pregnant and more sensitive and emotional."

Greta's comment hit her hard. But how can she explain to everyone that she was trying to avoid Laura because she does not know if she can control herself once Laura touches and kisses her? She does not want to risk hurting the baby just so she can satiate her lust.

She took a deep breath and shove off the guilt inside her.

"Thanks for everything Greta, I will never forget this. Can you just not mention this with anyone?" she said and received a nod right away from Greta.

"Your secret is safe. And if Laura suddenly had cravings in the middle of the night, you know where to get that cheese," Greta gladly offered and winked.

She smiled wide and bowed to Greta to show her sincerity and gratefulness. She never bows to any peasant, except to her Ma. But she was touched by this commoner's goodwill and truthfulness.

"Marcus, I'm not Her Royal Highness, you don't need to bow to me," Greta criticized playfully, not used to be treated like a lady.

"I know, but you remind me of Her Royal Highness," she retorted. "She's also kind hearted and generous like you." And before Greta can react she covered her face immediately with the dark hood of her cloak, before Armitage can have a glimpse of her face and carefully opened the door and left Greta's house smiling and satisfied.

*****

"Isn't that better than raiding the entire village?" the Valet asked while climbing the stairs and carrying the two pouches of cheese in their arms.

"Nah, I think I prefer ransacking every house in the village than raiding just one," she retorted as they reached the top of the grand staircase. "And besides, I haven't experienced that adrenaline kick and the thrill of attacking a village and plundering every house and conquering a land. My forefathers had definitely much fun and excitement in the old days."

"You don't need to plunder and conquer more lands because your ancestors had already done it for you," was the Valet's almost serious nonchalant sarcastic reply. "And besides, Her Majesty might not agree to send you into battle or any sort of violent mission."
She contorted her brows and glared at them while walking along the hall.

"And what do you mean by that?" was her suspicious reply.

"We all know that Her Majesty is very protective of you," LaFontaine teased and grinned.

And before she could react violently at her Valet's wicked teasing, they already found themselves walking towards the Princess' chamber.

"Give to Laura all the cheese she wants and don't tell anybody what happened tonight," she said and was about to turn around and walk to the opposite direction when she heard LaFontaine's voice.

"Wait, aren't you going to give it to her personally?" was LaFontaine's confused comment. "I'm pretty sure Princess Laura would be pleased to know that you've brought her the cheese that she's dying to eat."

She snorted. How can she explain to her very nosy Valet that Laura had banned her from coming to the princess' chamber unless she changed her mind about that damn law? She absent-mindedly stroked her jaw and felt the facial hair on her jawline.

She found her alibi.

"Tell me how I'm going to explain to Laura why I suddenly grew a beard in a span of four days, and then I'll be delighted to bring her that cheese," was her sarcastic answer and smirked. She saw right away the disappointment on LaFontaine's face after realizing she was right. "...Unless you want to put me in a very difficult position of explaining to my suspicious and always curious wife, that I used to have this beard too during our first meeting in order to sabotage our engagement; then, by all means, give that cheese to me."

"Alright, point taken," LaFontaine responded with a slight irritation.

"Go now," she shooed away the Valet and before she turned around, "Don't stay long, I need your help to remove this, before going to bed," she pointed to her face that was still covered with the hood of her cloak.

She just received a nonchalant look from the Valet and turned their back on her at once, as if defying her order.

Sometimes her Valet can be too much to handle, but she was very thankful that this redhead that was always invading her privacy was also the one who always saves her from trouble.

She walked away with a satisfied smile on her face knowing that Laura would be pleased with the cheese; and that she did not have to ransack the whole village; and the secret of Laura's pregnancy was secured.

She was already feeling the outcome of staying too late when she felt her eyelids becoming heavy.

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She groaned and desperately tried to salvage the remnants of her vaguely erotic dream as she became trapped in a semi-conscious state; she fumbled around her and found the piece of cloth that could bring her back to heaven and sniffed it.

Laura.
Her desire was becoming intolerable. Laura's scent always sends her to frenzy.

She reached down under the sheet and removed her braise in one swift motion. She touched herself and realized that she was already semi hard. She began to stroke her aching member as she imagined Laura's meticulous hand pumping her up and down with gentle ease. Not satisfied, she slipped her left hand under her tunic and began stroking her right breast before pinching her nipple between her thumb and index fingers. She moaned at the sudden delight and pain as her nipple hardened under the sadistic pinching of her fingers. Not to be outdone, her shaft was now hard and aching for a release. She imagined Laura's fist pumping her thick shaft harder and faster and groaned at the thought of it.

"Laura!" she whimpered.

Her hand kept pumping and increased her speed, till her balls tightened and swelled with her milk and ready to erupt. Her breathing quickened. She squeezed her nipple harder making her growled and she felt warmth spurted across her stomach, sending her to peak. She came in short, fast jerks and pumped out all her juices from her shaft until she was completely and utterly spent, and shouted her wife's name. "Laura!"

_Carl…_

Still trapped in this lust filled haze…

"Cupcake…" she whimpered as she imagined her wife calling her name and gathering her around the warm bosom of her wife.

_Carl?_

She opened her eyes wide, after recovering from that very erotic dream. She was aware that she had touched herself, but Laura's voice seemed very real as she imagined Laura beside her and bringing her to the peak.

"Carl? Are you awake?"

Laura's voice startled her and she sat bolt upright, "Cupcake?" she uttered, and when she finally came to her senses, she snatched the piece of cloth beside her and put it under her pillow.

"Can you hear me? I'm here standing beside your bed."

"Umm, just give me a sec…" she replied as she desperately put on her braise while still under the sheet. "I'm coming out," she shouted back as she hurriedly shoves the sheet to the side and drew the curtains on her bed's right side. She cringed when her feet touched the cold marble floor. Her slippers were always placed on the left side of the bed, but she tried to tolerate the coldness. She smiled once her eyes focused on her beautiful wife standing a meter across her.

"Cupcake, I'm so glad to see you-" the excitement in her voice faded when she saw Laura's eyes narrowed and sneered at her from bottom to top. "What's the matter?" she worried and looked down, and what else was standing upright and happy to see her wife? "Oh. I'm sorry, it's the morning…" she apologized for her indecency and tried to put down her still stiff shaft, but it was stubborn and refused to be soft. The last thing she wants to do was to mock her wife while they were abstaining from sex. She grabbed the sheet on her bed and wrapped it around her waist. Once her happy 'panther' was covered with the thick blanket, she tried smiling back and talking to her wife. But the frown on Laura's face remained. She shrugged her shoulders, contorted her brows and waited instead for Laura to talk. She grew worried when she caught that disappointed grin on her wife's face.
"You don't need to hide your erection from me," Laura said in a serious tone. "I know when and how many times you're hard, from the moment you sleep, until you wake up in the morning."

She felt her cheeks warmed after Laura mentioned it. She definitely has nothing to hide anymore from her wife. She gave her a timid smirk, but Laura still looked upset.

"Well, you're really serious about this damn law…" was the Princess firm remark. "That you grew it back just to drive me away.

Confused, "What are you talking about?"

"Please don't play innocent with me," Laura retorted and crossed both arms. "I know that you're back to your old ways; just like the first time we meet. But only this time, you're avoiding sleeping with me, that's why you're being like this again."

Growing frustrated, "I honestly don't know what you're talking about..." she tried reaching for Laura's hand but the Princess evaded her touch. "Cupcake…"

"Don't you dare Cupcake me!" Laura warned, waving her index finger. "I came here to ask if you want to have a picnic with me. I haven't seen you lately and I missed eating supper with you. Now I know why you're avoiding me!" and with that, the Princess turned around and strode towards the door.

"Laura, wait!" she called out and surprisingly, Laura listened and turned around. "At least tell me what's making you upset?"

"You're really insensitive… Why don't you look in the mirror and find out!" and with that, Laura opened the door and slammed hard behind her.

Puzzled and irritated, she ran towards the full-length mirror on the other side of the room, her brows furrowed.

When she saw her reflection, she understood quickly what made her wife angry.

"LaFontaine!"

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Any thoughts? Feels?
Picnic

Chapter Summary

Carmilla slowly realizes that her duty in life shouldn't just focus on being the heir to the throne, but as Laura's partner also and taking care of her pregnant wife.

Takes place right after Laura walked out of Carm's chamber, fuming, after discovering that His Broody Highness has a beard... again.

Chapter Notes

Forgot to put a warning: A very aroused and intoxicated big wild cat lapping milk at the end ;-P

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Carmilla

"LaFontaine!"

It took her five attempts calling the culprit before she heard the door opened and saw her Valet entered the chamber.

"Why did you let me sleep with this thing on my face?" she demanded pointing on her cheek the cause of her and Laura's misunderstanding.

LaFontaine just gave her a questioning look and put the service tray on the study table. They were irritatingly calm and decided to arrange first the plate of cupcakes, apple, and a piece of a loaf on the tray. And once they were satisfied with the arrangement of the foods and drinks…

"You were already snoring on your bed when I came," the Valet related and stood straight. "When I took off your boots and outer clothes you hissed and hit me while you're half asleep. If I've tried taking off your beard, which we both know would be very painful, I'm sure this isn't the only scratch that I will get." They explained then pointed to their left cheek.

The anger inside her subsided as she focused her sight on her Valet's face and found a still fresh one-inch reddish scratch.

"I don't remember doing it," she claimed and crossed her arms over her chest.

"Because you're half awake and grumpy," they informed.

She was too exhausted last night. She waited too long for her Valet to come until she can no longer open her eyes and her body gave up and she just lied on her bed without changing or washing. "I told you not to stay long, but you still made me wait last night."

"I have no choice, Princess Laura doesn't want to wake Perry or the girls, so I waited for her to finish
eating the cheese," LaFontaine reasoned out. "Which by the way, she happily ate."

"...And while you're waiting for her to finish, you two decided to chat all night until the wee hour of the morning, forgetting that there's somebody waiting for you and needed your help," she babbled and glared at them.

"How did you know?" they asked, amused.

She sighed and glared at them. Someday, she would really put them in the dungeon so that they will fear her.

"You should be thankful I didn't take off your beard and let you sleep. I could have tied your hands so that you can't hit me while you're half awake and removing your beard. But I'm sure you'll wake up because of the pain, and be furious that I disturbed your sleep," They admonished, confident that they were right. "And why are you so grumpy today? You've scared the guards again at the end of the hall. Armitage told me that you've been shouting since you woke up," they asked, completely clueless.

"Well, thanks to you and for forgetting to take off my beard, my wife now thinks that I'm trying to drive her away because of this beard!" She complained. "She's here a while ago and woke me."

LaFontaine just gave her a puzzled look and wrinkled their eyebrows.

She does not like that look.

She knew that they can sniff something, being the second nosiest redhead in the castle next to the Lady in Waiting.

"Why would the princess think that? She used to like you with a beard before," they commented and rubbed their chin with their right hand. "Hmmm... unless..."

And before her smart Valet can come up with something...

"Stop speculating and remove this beard!" she ordered her voice impatient and deep. She walked towards the bathroom with LaFontaine trailing behind and sat on the chair in front of the dressing table.

They began to remove it while she cringed and hissed at the pain.

"Didn't she notice?" LaFontaine asked out of the blue.

"Noticed what? Au!"

"Sorry..." they apologized and resumed. "...That you suddenly have a beard?"

"I told you, we haven't seen each other for four days," she replied and rubbed gently the area where her mustache used to be. "I bet she didn't know how long it takes to grow a beard since she grew up in a castle with just clean shaven men. The only men that are close to her who have a beard are my father and me. My father maintains his beard and never shaves it off, so Laura cannot compare or see the difference," was her smart presumption. "We'll just say my facial hair grows faster than normal if she suddenly wondered."

"Don't include me in your diabolical ideas..." LaFontaine quipped. "I don't want to add more sins to my growing list."
She shot daggers at them. "Whether you like it or not you're already a part of it," was her wicked reply. "By the way, what did you and my wife talked about last night?" was her suspicious remark. "Did she mention anything about me?"

"No." was the quick reply.

She was both disappointed and relieved.

…Disappointed, because Laura does not seem to miss her.

…Relieved, because their 'no sex during pregnancy' has not been discovered yet by the nosy gingers.

Although she had a hunch that LaFontaine suspected already the 'cold war' between her and Laura.

"We talked about the baby."

She raised her left eyebrow. "…The baby?"

Until now, it still sounded strange that she and Laura were having a baby soon.

"Yeah… how she feels that she does not have control of what she's eating," LaFontaine explained as they took off the last patch of beard. "…She also thinks that she doesn't have control over her emotions… that she feels happy, and then suddenly sad and all of a sudden mad. And the changes that's happening now in her body… she said that she's getting fatter, heavier and felt ugly. I told her, not to worry because she's doing it for the baby's sake. She can go back to her original size after the baby is born."

She became worried of what Laura really feels at the moment.

Maybe her wife regrets becoming pregnant?

How come LaFontaine knew everything that Laura feels but not her?

Why Laura opens up with her Valet about these things?

Was her wife uncomfortable of talking to her about the baby… about the pregnancy?

Greta's words suddenly emerged in her thoughts.

'It will be better if you'll find more time to be with her, especially now that she is pregnant and more sensitive and emotional.'

And then it hit her… she had been too preoccupied with the harvest festival, helping her father court new trading partners and obeying every order from her mother and father that she almost forgot that she has a pregnant wife that needs pampering and soothing. If it had not for LaFontaine and Greta, she could have forgotten her duty to her wife.

"Do you know where she is?" she asked her voice calm and raspy.

"I just saw her and the girls packing some food and drinks in the kitchen, I heard they're going on a picnic."

She stared at them and then smirked.

"Cancel all my activities and meetings today tell them I have a headache," she ordered and rose from the chair.
"But you have a meeting with His Excellency today at the church," LaFontaine whined. "And it's your confession day."

"Apologize to Bishop Klaus for me. Tell him that I'll kneel beside my bed tonight and pray ten Our Fathers and fifty Ave Marias for missing my confession," she reasoned out and displayed a naughty smirk.

"And what excuse am I going to tell His Majesty?" was the Valet's hopeless remark. "King Philipp has already heard hundreds and hundreds of excuses from me just to cover for your absences. I will not be surprised if one day he'll order to cut my tongue."

"Tell him the truth…" was her confident reply. "…That I'm going to have a picnic with my pregnant wife," and winked after LaFontaine groaned in frustration. "Don't worry, my King Father would be happier to hear that," she assured them. "…so you still get to keep your tongue this time."

Before leaving her irritated Valet, she smirked at them like the naughty Prince that she was when she was still young and have not accepted fully her role as the heir, and would escape her responsibility and hide everywhere in the castle. She still recalled that time when LaFontaine searched frantically for her the whole day for fear that her King Father would behead them, only to find out in the end that she hid in their chamber. She considered it an adult version of 'hide and seek' between her and LaFontaine.

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A few moments later, she was sauntering around the newly revived rose garden of hers. She and LaFontaine planted more tall bushes around it to have more privacy once inside.

She was satisfied with the hard work that was invested just in fixing the garden. And she had vowed never to destroy it again.

She took a short cut that only she knows and walked like a cat towards the main garden. She smiled when she caught sight of her beautiful princess sitting on the blanket that was laid on the neatly trimmed rich grass, with back facing her, surrounded by fruits, sweets, jugs of wine and teapot, goblets, the picnic basket together with the three handmaidens who seemed to be enjoying their wine and cakes.

Wanting to surprise her wife, she plucked a full blown long stem red rose and hid it behind her. When she knew the handmaidens would notice her arrival, she made a quick eye contact to all of them and signaled to keep quiet and leave. All three discreetly nodded to her while the Princess' attention was focused on the book that was on her lap, unaware of what was happening in her surroundings. That book must be good.

"Umm Nat, I remembered, I need to ask your help with something."

She overheard Sarah Jane and gestured to Natalie to stand up, which the black haired handmaiden did at once.

When Betty's eyes met hers again to confirm that they will leave soon, she waited a bit for all the handmaidens to leave.

"Princess, we're sorry but I remembered that Perry needs something and I can't do it alone without the help of Nat and Sarah Jane," Betty claimed and already rose.

This time, Laura put down the book on the side, "But we just started, you girls haven't even finished the wine."
"We'll come back afterward; we just have this… thing…” Sarah Jane said and suddenly got speechless.

"I think we better go now before Perry gets mad," Natalie suggested and took Sarah Jane’s arm and pulled her up.

Knowing Sarah Jane to be the most honest handmaiden of Laura, and the one that cannot keep a lie, she was relieved when Natalie suggested leaving at once before Sarah Jane reveals that she was there.

She smiled at them and nodded in thanks before the three left the very confused and disappointed princess all alone.

Laura took a deep breath before taking a big bite of cupcake on the plate in front of her, and then picked up the book and resumed reading.

Once the coast was clear, she walked closer to her wife like a panther targeting its prey and stood behind Laura.

Her nose caught right away Laura's sweet scent mixed with lavender soap that the Princess uses.

It had been a while since she embraced her wife.

It felt like it had been forever since she was this close to Laura that it made her heartbeat raced.

She delighted at Laura's long thick golden hair pulled up and tied in a messy bun, revealing the pale smooth neck and nape of the Princess and exposing the flesh that she so loves to kiss, suck, bite and lick.

Damn it!

She felt a tingle right away inside her braies.

Now she had this sudden urge to put her lips on that delicious neck and devour it.

How she wished she could do that now.

But she does not want to startle her pregnant wife.

It felt like an ambush if she goes behind Laura and just kisses the Princess.

And besides, she does not even know how the Princess will react…

Will Laura like it?

...Or hate it?

Her wife was still upset with her, she reminded herself.

But she was aching to kiss her!

…Perhaps just a peck.

Worst come to worst, Laura will probably hit her with the book.

…Or not.
"May I join you?" she asked her voice raspy and smoldering with desire while offering the red rose to her wife from behind.

She kneeled behind Laura, waited for her wife to look behind and acknowledge her presence.

But she was disappointed when Laura did not stir and remained reading the book.

Her Cupcake was still upset.

She put the long stem rose down beside Laura.

Without having second thoughts, she wrapped her arms around the small Princess and felt Laura struggled a bit from the unexpected embrace and put the book down.

She rested her mouth near Laura's left ear instead and whispered, "I'm sorry..." and then kissed Laura's pulse point gently.

The Princess' hand reached up and she felt Laura's left hand immediately on her jawline and remained touching it for a moment as if feeling her cheek and her jaw. She remained still and let her wife touch her face like a curious child.

Laura slowly turned her head to face her and smiled as soon as their eyes met.

"You've shaved," Laura mumbled in wonder, all smile.

She felt relieved and happy.

She gave Laura a warm smile; she was almost teary eyed from lying about her beard and for making Laura smile because she 'shaved'. She had mixed emotions of guilt, happiness, regret, and longing.

"I don't want you to think that I'm driving you away," she whispered back and suddenly received a kiss from her Princess. She closed her eyes and reciprocated the kiss with passion and hunger.

It felt like ages since the last time she kissed Laura and it drives her insane.

When the need for air arose, she hesitantly released from the kiss and furrowed her brows when she saw the royal pout on display.

"I missed you," Laura mumbled in a childish voice.

Relieved, she managed to smile, "I missed you too Cupcake," she returned with another kiss and held Laura's hips tightly and devoured the princess' lips.

She could tell by the way Laura fondled her face, jawline, and neck while kissing her, that the Cupcake was too happy to see her 'clean shaven'. Her left hand began to explore the sides of Laura's breast and she instinctively cupped the princess' left bosom through the dress. Her wife moaned instantly at the possessive touch of her hand, and she felt her shaft pulsed. But before she could get carried away, she removed her hand and put it back on Laura's waist.

"I miss your touch," Laura expressed after they both released from that heated kiss.

She felt the dainty small fingers of Laura played on the tip of her hair and nape. She loved how affectionate and touchy Laura was whenever they were close and holding each other. She wanted to tell her wife the feeling was mutual and she was longing to put her mouth on those lovely breasts.
But then, the rational side of her prevailed.

Instead, she remained silent and just savored holding Laura tight in her arms, resting her chin on Laura's neck, while Laura continued stroking her face, jawline, and her neck. She remained hugging her in comfortable silence until Laura turned and planted a quick but sweet kiss on her lips.

She released the Princess from the embrace as Laura turned around to face her.

Laura's hands reached up and cupped her jawline and stroked it.

"I'm sorry I freaked out when I saw you with a beard," the Princess said in a calm and low tone. "I… I was caught off guard. I felt like you're provoking me since we both know that I preferred the 'clean-shaven' Carm to the 'bearded' Carl."

She contorted her brows and stared at those hazel orbs with full of worries, contemplating on what to say. She felt guilty at lying about her beard, and at the same time, she felt bad for putting Laura in that awful situation. She never intended to upset Laura with her beard.

"No need to say sorry," she corrected. "It's my fault, I shouldn't have let it grew back without asking you first," she explained like she really meant it. If only she could tell the real reason why. But things will become more complicated if she does. Then she saw the sheepish look on Laura's face and realized that she needs to convince her wife that she did not plan on 'provoking' her. She hated it but she needs to lie further, in order to cover up the real reason why she had her beard again. "I've been too busy lately with my duties that I skipped my shaving time."

"But you don't need my permission," Laura insisted and pause from stroking the smooth jawline that she loves too much. "If you want to grow it back, I will not be opposed to it. I just realized afterwards that I've been shallow and selfish. Remember what I told you?"

She raised her left eyebrows and shook her head lightly, while Laura's soft hands still cup her face.

"…That no beard will stop me from kissing you. I managed to like you with a beard and learned to love you with it because it's part of you," was the Princess' proud reply. "I've just overreacted earlier when I saw you. I haven't seen you with a beard for a while, so my old repulsion came back and my initial reaction when I saw you were to hate it. Then I became suddenly paranoid that you don't want me anymore that's why-"

"But I do want you! Always!" she claimed immediately and put her hands on the hands that were on her cheeks, and kissed gently the palm of Laura's hands; taking her time to feel the softness of it on her face while she kisses them; smelling the scent of Laura's skin and relishing the warmth that emits from her wife's body.

Laura took a deep breath.

She gazed at those heavy-lidded eyes of her wife and knew that Laura was becoming aroused by the touch of her lips on the Princess' palms. She smiled, closed her eyes and ran her tongue slowly along Laura's left palm, hitting every sensitive nerve there; before gently kissing her way down to the pulse point, pressed gently her lips there and took the moment to inhale it. She did the same thing to the other and heard her Princess groaned. Once she finished making love with Laura's hands, her wife brought her closer and claimed those soft lips. They kissed like it was the first time; passionate and demanding.

"Carm…"

She heard Laura's controlled whimper and she felt Laura’s hands caresses the back of her nape and
her short locks, encouraging her for more. But she just took her time and enjoyed the sensation of Laura's tongue caressing hers. She felt her shaft growing hard, but she ignored it and let this slow sensual dueling of their tongue transcribed. Her hands held tightly Laura's hips for control.

Once they realized they lack oxygen and cannot hold it anymore, she slowly but gently released from the kiss and earned a whimper immediately from her wife. She opened her eyes, rested her forehead on Laura's and they remained close as they can.

"I love you Cupcake," she whispered and received the most adorable smile from her Princess followed by a sweet peck.

"I love you too Carm," Laura whispered back and displayed that adorable smile.

*****

Carrying Laura like a bride in her arms, she hurriedly walked towards the Princess' four post bed and carefully laid Laura on their 'matrimonial bed'.

"I'm sorry to ruin our supper," Laura apologized as soon as she put down the Princess on the edge of the bed, and sat to face her.

"Stop apologizing," she retorted and kneeled down in front of the sitting Princess and began taking off Laura's shoes. "Let me check your foot," she said and gracefully removed the stockings one by one, while Laura drew up the hem of the burgundy velvet satin dress of hers. She took Laura's left foot first and began to massage from the toes, calf, and then up to the muscles. She looked up and saw the Princess closed her eyes as if relieved, "Better?" she asked and smirked when Laura opened her eyes and gave her a satisfied smile. She continued massaging Laura's entire leg and then switched to the other one.

"I didn't know that you're good in massaging," Laura commented while sitting comfortably on the edge of the bed and drew the dress further upwards to give way to more massage on the thigh.

"Oh, trust me Cupcake, these hands are expert on everything 'touch' related," she replied in her most seductive and husky voice and slowed down massaging Laura's calf and the leg muscle.

"Well, I do hope those expert hands are only for my legs," Laura teased and gazed back, eyebrows raised in silent question.

"I never kneel in front of any woman just to give her a foot massage," She retorted and gazed back with the same intensity and desire. "...except if she's a cute princess with an adorable smile like the rays of the sun." She added and replied also with a raised eyebrow.

Displaying a naughty grin, "Will you show me more where your hands are good in massaging?" Laura teased and bit her lower lip.

She gave her wife a cocky smirk. Just to hear that 'innocent' request was enough to wake her sleeping 'panther'. She kneeled closer and concentrated on massaging slowly Laura's left thigh with both hands. First, she started the area from the knee and slowly massages her way up. Once she reached Laura's upper inner thigh, she felt the Princess' adjusted and straddled to give her more access.

Her heart pounded and she felt the room growing warmer. She never tore her sight out of Laura's gaze while she concentrated on massaging her Princess' inner thigh. But she grew curious when her nose caught a familiar scent lingering in the air. She inhaled deeply to confirm her hunch, while still
massaging and staring at her pretty innocent wife.

As if Laura read her expression…

"Smelled something you like?" the Princess asked in a deep crisp tone.

And before she could realize what it was, she felt Laura took one of her hand and shoved it inside the Princess’ groin. She gasped and felt her shaft sprang to life when her hand made contact with Laura's wet mound.

She saw immediately a naughty grin plastered on Laura's mouth as she came into realization. She looked down and discovered that Laura was not wearing any underwear.

"Did you plan this?" was her shock and yet excited remark.

"Maybe…" Laura teased and drew the hem of her dress up till her waist, to reveal the nakedness of her lower body.

The smirk on her mouth became wider. She looked up and gazed at the pretty little devil, biting the lower lip again, as if tempting her.

"And here I am, worrying as hell about your feet, only to be deceived by something diabolical, wonderful and intriguing," was her elegant retort. "You should be thankful that I haven't gone to confession yet."

"My feet do hurt," Laura just grinned naughtily, "You should be thankful that I'm a generous person. I always share what I have to those who are hungry," the Princess replied. "I know that you haven't got the chance to finish your veal… may I entice you with something exotic and velvety?" the naughty Cupcake asked and straddled wider, offering herself.

"I thought you'd never asked," she returned with a huge naughty smirk on her face. "But let me have the first course, before eating the main course," she said and reached for the sleeve of Laura's dress and pulled it down gently to reveal the Princess' soft round breast.

She smirked like a cat that was about to drink its milk and involuntarily groaned. Not wasting a second, she put her mouth on Laura's breast, took as much flesh around the areola in her hungry mouth and sucked hard, and flicked Laura’s nipple with her tongue. It earned a high pitch cry from the Princess instantly and she continued devouring Laura's breast, while the Princess caresses her hair. She can't get enough of it, and elicited a greedy growl and brazed her teeth on the flesh around the areola. She felt like a hungry beast that was starved for so long and did not want to share its meat. Her hand cupped possessively the Princess' breast that was in her mouth; she squeezed it eagerly while drawing strong hard suction in the nipple. She was content suckling from Laura like this, but the shameless sound that Laura makes adds to her lust for the 'main course'.

"Carm…"

She heard the weak whimper of Laura, and felt the hand caressing her scalp pulls her down, and she realized Laura's pelvic bucking involuntarily.

She reluctantly released Laura’s nipple with a loud plop. Laura's frantic hands grabbed her face and gave her a hard kiss and said…

"It's time for the main course my wild cat," Laura ordered in a husky voice.

And before diving down, she gave her wife a wicked grin and push Laura gently to lie on the bed.
The Princess' legs opened wider of their own accord and raised them on the bed. Still kneeling she positioned herself comfortably in front of the bed before bringing her face closer to Laura's crotch. Like a cat, she sniffed first her meal and kissed the glistening unkempt tuft of blonde hair that was covering Laura's center. She groaned; her heart pounded. The delight that Laura's natural scent brings to her senses was like ecstasy. It makes her delirious, madly excited and wild. She carefully spread those outer lips and licks the juices around Laura's core. She growled at the first taste of Laura on her tongue. Going down on her wife, tasting and licking Laura was the most intimate and powerful thing.

Too intoxicated with the smell and taste of Laura in her mouth, she quickly felt her shaft hardened as a rock, and struggling to come out inside the constraint of her trousers. She began to sample Laura, from bottom to top; avoiding the little pearl that she knew was sensitive.

"Carm…” Laura moaned.

She felt her Princess' hands on her head pushing her face closer to her core. She imagined her face buried on Laura's thick tuft and get to taste and smell the pure essence of Laura.

She complied.

Eyes closed, she inhaled and ravished at the intoxicating scent of purely Laura's. She growled with delight and buried her face deeper on Laura's mound, her nose, her mouth and her tongue touching every sensitive nerve on Laura's center. She licked hard around, sucked and sipped and gathered all the sweetness in her mouth before swallowing down, and coming up for air. She growled again. She loves the powerful taste of Laura. She loves the provocative smell of Laura. She loves the feeling of Laura's wetness on her face. It's so intimate and intoxicating. She dived again and explored Laura's depths, her exquisite nose bumping against the bud of nerves, as her tongue continuously lashed deeper.

Laura moans louder and shorter, and the hands on her scalp gripped harder on her hair, she felt Laura's thighs squeezed on her face as her tongue flicked carefully the swollen bud on the top and sucked it lightly in between her lips. Laura quivered beneath her lips and flooded her mouth with her juices. She continued licking until the Princess shouted her name and came. She lapped the gushing juices from the Princess', not wasting every drop of Laura's essence and swallowed down like a greedy cat. She can't get enough of it. It was intoxicating and addicting.

"Carm,"

She heard Laura's soft call and felt a hand caresses her hair. But she continued lapping the hot folds of Laura's and felt the ache on her crotch. Realizing that Laura was too spent and there's no way that she will put her shaft inside her wife, she pulled her raging thickness out of her braies; she was about to pump herself and relieved on her own. But the smashing sound of porcelain and metal clattering on the floor distracted her.

She felt Laura's hands flew around her neck instantly and held on her tight, rendering her immobile and remained kneeling on the ground; her face on Laura's half-naked bosom, as Laura nervously clung to her. With her left hand around Laura's waist, and her right hand, trapped downwards, holding her thick shaft, she didn't mind at all being in this awkward position as she turned slightly to the direction where the sound came from.... and guessed exactly who was the intruder...

"Is this your idea of praying Our Father and Ave Maria before going to bed?” LaFontaine asked.
I think you have to thank sminkle aka the smut devil, for 'whispering' naughty thoughts in my head on the previous chapter. The last part of this update was inspired by her/his/their naughty comment. I don't know if it should be interpreted figuratively or literally, but I chose the latter to compensate for all the heartaches and frustrations lately.

A belated Happy 150th National Day to all Canadians out there and Happy 4th of July to the Americans!

Thanks again for your comments and kudos!

Any thoughts? Feels? You're always welcome to express how you feel ;-)
To Tame A Broody Prince

Chapter Summary

Continuation from the previous chapter.

A look at how Hollstein reacted at the endless interruption in their life, as they were disturbed not just by the gingers.

While Laura was faced with a dilemma of 'will she or will she not tell' someone about Danny's letter.

*****

Laura

The loud crash smashing on the floor sent her into temporary panic and disorientation. She threw her arms immediately around Carm's neck, squeezed him tight and burrowed her face in the crook of his neck. She felt totally vulnerable, like they have been attacked. But as soon as the protective arms of her Prince wrapped around her, the fear vanished and she felt safe instantly in his strong hold.

While her heartbeat hammered against her chest, her Prince seemed to be not startled at all and remained calm.

"Is this your idea of praying our father and Ave Maria before going to bed?"

As soon as she recognized the calm and casual voice of the Valet, she looked, turned to the direction of the sound and loosened her grip around her Prince's neck.

"LaFontaine?!" was her dumbfounded remark. She caught the Valet standing, then avoided eye contact and suddenly found the ceiling fascinating. She crinkled her eyebrows and wondered what made them averted her eyes. Then she noticed the familiar figure kneeling, gathering the broken pieces of porcelain, glass, silverwares, and food on the floor. "Perry?"

LaFontaine scrambled down on their knees and helped Perry picks the things that dropped on the floor.

Both totally caught off guard, she glanced at her Prince and saw him shooting daggers to the Valet.

The usual dark expressive melancholic eyes now looked like a pair of fireballs…

His exquisite eyebrows were drawn down tight…

His jaw was rigid and his top lip curling into a snarl...

Oh, God…

She worried for the Valet's and Perry's safety.
"Carl…" she mumbled as calm as she can muster, afraid to anger him more.

The Prince's eyebrows furrowed deeper, eyes glared at her, the veins on his neck visible and pulsating; his frown warned her that he was on the verge of a violent outburst.

She was growing anxious.

She needs to think fast before he acts like a furious wild cat again.

Still holding him, she held his glare and did not let go, even if she heard his low growl of disapproval.

Thank god he was kneeling, or else, she could not restrain him in her arms like this.

"Carl… calm down," she begged him, but…

After picking up the mess on the floor, LaFontaine rose and bowed their head, "Your Highness, we apologized for the-

Carm threw a deadly hissed on the Valet in a flash.

She held him tighter and gently put her hand on his left cheek, "Hey, look at me," she whispered and soothed his cheek while cupping it. His features softened instantly on the contact. The Prince complied, but his eyes focused down.

"Laura…" he grumbled his voice deep and serious as he eyed the exposed breast.

"Oh!" she frantically released from the hold to cover her indecency.

After pulling the sleeve of her dress up, she realized that Carm had tricked her, so he could release from her hold when her eyes caught him rose and stood in front of her. "Oh God…" She worried when she saw the frown on his face returned. But she panicked when she realized what else was angry and gasped, "Oh God!" she exclaimed when her eyes met his shaft jutting out, thick and erect, right in front of her eyes.

No wonder he looked like he was about to kill after being interrupted.

Her reaction did not bother him.

In fact, the Prince looked irritated when he saw his neglected erection.

"Carl… y-your… umm… it's…o-out," she stuttered, eyes wide at the sight of his royal hugeness. Until now she still tensed whenever she sees it.

She gave him a nervous glance knowing how totally pissed off and frustrated he was at this moment. He flashed an annoyed look at her.

"What? You expect me not to get a hard on after tasting you like that?"

She felt the heat rushed into her face after realizing what he meant. She quickly rose and stood in front of him, just centimeters away from his angry 'panther', and put her hands on his upper arms and held him.

"Carl… could you please…" she had a hard time talking and kept glancing nervously between LaFontaine, Perry and the stiff angry 'panther' in front of her while controlling her Prince from turning around and going after the people who interrupted him.
"No. Let them see the evidence of what they just disturbed!" was his grumpy retort and glanced at his Valet, and probably gave them the 'I will hang you' death stare.

"Perry would be shocked, please cover yourself," she managed to tell, displaying her puppy sad eye. "Please? Do it for me?"

Still frowning, he growled and took a deep irritated sighed before tucking his large erection inside his braies and then pulled up carefully the trousers.

She checked it, but her eyes widened after discovering the very obvious and impressive bulge. He did not put it behind the waistline of his braies like he used to do, she presumed.

She looked up, batted her rich eye lashes on him and displayed a nervous grin, begging him to hide it thoroughly.

"I'm not touching it again! Unless I get to come in my hand right now," Carm said, dead serious. "It's aching, throbbing and 'disturbing' it would make me more frustrated and angry!" he warned eyes fiery.

She knew he was right.

"Arrgggh…" she groaned, knowing that he wouldn't obey her. She held him tight and close to her to prevent him from turning around. Good thing his cape can hide the indecency that she witnessed now. She felt right away his hard bulge poking on her and gasped. She composed herself, even if her body was reacting wildly at the stiff rod of her Prince. She tilted her head over his shoulder and held him tight. "Everybody, please leave us!" was her desperate plea to the two gingers that stands in the corner and waiting for her to calm the big angry wild cat.

The Lady in Waiting and Valet nodded and quietly walked towards the door.

As soon as she heard the door slammed… she grabbed Carm's face and started kissing him.

The Prince did not react; still mad at the situation he was in.

Noticing that he was not reciprocating her kisses, she paused and looked at him.

Broody eyebrows…

Cold stare…

What to give a brooding frustrated hungry horny Prince?

Slowly, she put her lips on his thin ones and kissed it gently. She smiled when his lips opened. She gazed at him and saw those wild dark orbs softening. She put her hands on his nape and caressed it.

"May I touch my Prince?" she whispered and received a slight nod. She put her lips again on his and kissed him slowly; he reciprocated with the same slow sensual gentle kisses.

Her Prince wants some pampering, she thought and continued this slow torturous kisses, while she stroked the back of his neck and ran her other hand on his rich dark locks. She moaned when she felt his hands on her hips and elicited a short gasped when he rubbed his erection on her groin.

"Carm…" her heart was pounding and her body was in heat. She could tell that he was raging hard when she slipped her hand in between them and palmed his huge bulge through his trousers. Carm growled at the touch, and she felt his mouth on her neck biting her, she closed her eyes and
surrendered to the sensation of being claimed by her broody wild prince, while she stroked his erection, feeling the stiff length of him straining against her palm. She moaned and felt her knees weakening from lust. She needs to lie down before she collapsed from this lust filled haze.

But before she can tell him to bring her to bed… her eyes opened wide when she heard a knock on the door and saw it opened.

"You really want to die, eh!" was the Prince angry outburst after being disturbed again, not even bothering to look who entered the chamber.

"Forgive me, Your Royal Highness, I didn't mean to interrupt," Sarah Jane pleaded and kneeled at once out of fear.

"Oh! Sarah Jane, what are you doing here?" she asked while embracing the growling Prince and attempting to calm his nerves.

"Armitage asked me if I could relay a message to His Highness… His Majesty requests your presence at the library at once." Sarah Jane relayed, still trembling on her knees. "…And I am sorry." The handmaiden added.

She cupped Carm's jawline at once, feeling that he was already fuming and dying of frustration.

"Arrggh! Why can't I get some privacy here!"

"Carl… try to calm down," she said while holding him by the nape and made him look at her. "It's His Majesty's order; he needs you at the library. We could continue this afterwards, but right now, you need to go… do you understand?" she asked, afraid that his anger clouds his reasoning. "And don't shout at the servants because it's not their fault."

"Ha! Easy for you to say that when you're not the one who's going to face the King with an erection and a headache!" Carl snarled.

And before he could throw another complaint, she cupped his jawline gently and brought him for a kiss. She caressed his lips as gently and slowly as she can. The grumpy Prince's eyes closed at once and she caressed the side under his ear, the one that she knew that elicits a purr from him. Not a second has passed, and she heard him purred while still giving him a slow sweet kiss. When she felt him softened on her touch, she carefully pulled out from the kiss and rested her forehead on his, while her hand remained caressing the back of his nape.

"I swear, I will make it worth your while next time," she whispered and saw him smirk like the devil.

After that promise had been made, the grumpy Prince reluctantly released from the hold, composed himself, and even adjusted his cape to cover his bulge.

She gave him a satisfied smile and kissed him on the cheek one last time, "Good night my Prince, and thank you," she mumbled in her sweetest voice while he just glares at her.

"You better be prepared when I come to collect," he warned before he turned around and walked to the door.

*****

"Have you told His Highness that we're going to the village?" Perry asked after sitting inside the carriage.
Although, it was a rough night yesterday, she felt revitalized when she woke up early this morning. The sound of reins and Alfred's voice commanding the horses made her excited. It had been a while since she went to the village.

"No. LaFontaine told me that he's going to be busy with the preparation of the coming of the guests," she reasoned out, bit her lower lip and looked out to the window. "Umm, they told me that His Majesty had added an additional guest on the list last night, that's why he summoned Carl," her heart pounded immensely after mentioning the additional guest and hoped that it was not what she thinks. She stared blankly at the river running through the side of the road and she suddenly had the urge to take a dip in the water to calm her nerves. This meeting with the new partners and alliances was making her anxious. "... It's better not to distract him."

"Do you know who are coming?" Perry asked, voice a bit high pitch.

She took a deep breath and stared blankly outside, "I don't know. We haven't talked about it."

"Laura, the guests are going to arrive in two days and you're still not briefed of what you should do?" Perry reacted in a hush hyper tone. "I've already received my list of what to do and how many cream puffs to make from Her Majesty!"

She turned to face her Lady in Waiting and put her hand on Perry's fidgety ones, "Calm down, Her Majesty had already told me about it, but there's no official guest yet," she related and looked at Perry. "I'm sorry I forgot to mention."

"Well, you should be, because you need to inform me too so that I know what activities you are into," was the Lady in Waiting's upset reply. "What will they say if I can't dress you up properly if ever there is a grand ball? What if I can't fix your hair nicely? Or what if Betty lost one of your finest shoes again... Oh my, I think I have to check your gowns when we get home. Maybe Betty had forgotten to send the red one to washing."

She smiled at her mother figure and hugged her tight, "Per, you don't need to worry about it, because you've done that many times, and you're already expert on that, so whether it's planned or last minute, you always dress me up in the most fabulous way," she felt the Lady in Waiting relaxed in her arms. "And besides, Her Majesty told me there isn't a grand feast because the purpose of this invitation is to show these new partners what the Karnstein Kingdom has to offer to them, in short, it's all about duties and responsibilities."

"And what will be your duty?" Perry asked, eyebrow arching. "I hope it's not exhausting."

"Since I'm pregnant, the Queen assigned me to help her entertain the female guests because the men would be busy with meetings and hunting," she informed, and released her arms from Perry and grinned. "It's not too much; I just need to make sure that our female guests will not get bored."

"Well, I hoped those female high borns will not give you a hard time welcoming them," Perry snorted. "They can be too demanding most of the time... and all they ever want is to drink, eat, gossip and dressed up."

While her Lady in Waiting was grumbling about how most of the royalties can be a pain in the ass to the servants, she had her own dilemma to worry.

And she felt that she cannot hide it anymore...

"Per... I had a feeling that Danny is going to come," she dropped the news to a very shocked Perry.

"What did you say?" the Lady in Waiting asked, eyes wide and mouth slightly opened. "Laura, is
this what the letter is all about? Oh my god, Laura, you know that there's no guarantee that she will be alive when His Highness sees her. Have you gone mad? Why invite her?!" Perry panicked babble in a hush but high pitch tone and made the sign of the cross. "You better write back and tell her not to come if she still values her life."

"I didn't invite her… the Strakas is one of our new alliances," she explained frustrated seeing her Lady in Waiting panicking after hearing the news. "Danny told me in the letter."

"What?!" Perry croaked for a moment, then took out her handkerchief and began wiping the edges of the carriage's window on her side.

She took Perry's hand to stop the lady in Waiting from panic cleaning the carriage. "Perry, calm down," she begged and received a glare from her anxious Lady in Waiting.

"Does His Highness know?" Perry's worried question.

"I am not sure… maybe… he's not telling me anything," was her equally worried reply.

"Why don't you know anything, you're the Crown Princess of Karnstein!" was Perry's upset remark.

"His Majesty and Carl are the ones who deal with this kind of things," was her frustrated remark. "And Her Majesty told me that my main duty is to take care of myself and be sure that the baby is fine… maybe that's why I didn't receive too many assignments and-
"But still… they should have told you who are the new alliances of the Karnstein Kingdom," Perry retorted and crossed her arms on her chest. "Sometimes I have the feeling that they don't trust us yet."

"Perry, don't think like that… of course they trust us, they just have their own ways here, and I will eventually meet the new alliances," she explained. She knew that Perry was right, but there was no sense of agreeing and complaining about the Karnsteins since they were her new family now and she should not slander about them. "All I know is Prince Theo had convinced his father to be our alliance. So, he's definitely coming… and when Danny heard that, she told me in her letter that she will ask Prince Theo to take her with him."

"And you agreed to that?" Perry accused in as suspicious manner that can make any innocent soul guilty.

Caught off guard, "Wha-? No! I did not!"

"Then why did she wrote you a letter?" Perry murmured, growing suspicious. "Laura, you know that it's going to be worse than the long battle between your forefathers and the old Karnsteins when Danny and His Highness meet again. You should have warned her and told her to leave you alone since nothing good would come out if you would meet her again. And stop dreaming about Da-err it! Just be the normal sweet princess to your wild prin- cat," Perry disapproved in a hushed controlled voice and looked around her, and suddenly realized that they were not alone.

Frustrated and overwhelmed after that reprimanding from the mother figure, "She wrote an apology letter and there's nothing wrong with it," she breathed out, suppressing herself from talking loud. "And just so you know, I replied to her letter and accepted her apology and told her that it would be better that she does not show up in Karnstein Castle again."

"And what did she said?"

"Nothing… She didn't reply, that's why I'm worried," she said and stared at Perry. "And knowing Danny, she could be a little persistent."
"Why does His Highness doesn't mention anything about the new alliances, and from which kingdom they came from? I'm sure Prince Carl has an idea since he's always with His Majesty, don't you think so?" Perry questioned, and raised an eyebrow. "…Unless His Highness is hiding something from you."

She got distracted and confused by Perry's suspicious skeptic remark.

Why didn't she think of that?

Perry could be right. But Carm cannot hide that from her since she will eventually discover the truth whether he likes it or not.

Naturally born curious, a temptation came to her mind. Should she confront him?

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That night while the handmaidens help her get ready for bed, the desire to confront Carm was still nagging in her thoughts that as soon as she stepped down from the carriage and touched the ground of the Karnstein Castle she was already burning to interrogate him, and to know if he knows that Danny will come or not. Unfortunately, the Prince and His Majesty were out inspecting the farms and lands that will be shown to the new alliances when they come, that she missed him too at dinner.

"Princess, do you still need anything before I go?"

The restless voice of Betty tore her out her rumination. Still sitting in front of her dressing table, she looked to the side and narrowed her eyes at the tall handmaiden that was standing and fidgeting with the pile of dirty clothes that she used from the trip to the village.

"Betty, what's wrong?" she asked, worried.

Betty usually does not stress this much, unless Perry discovered that something from her wardrobe was missing again or her tall handmaiden friend was assigned to dress her for a banquet in the absence of Perry.

"Umm… Nothing. Why? Is there something wrong?" Betty stammered.

Confused at why the handmaiden suddenly sounded not herself, "You tell me," she said and narrowed her eyes again on the tall handmaiden.

"I'm… I'm sorry Princess… I… it's just a long day and I still have lots of things to do," Betty reasoned out and almost dropped the basket of dirty clothes on her hands.

Worried, "If you think that you have too much work, you can ask Natalie or Sarah Jane to help you, right girls?" she looked at the dark haired handmaiden through the mirror that was brushing her hair, and the dirty blonde handmaiden that was moisturizing her foot nodded quietly.

"I already told her that, but she won't let me help her, she said-" Natalie commented.

"I told you, I'm fine!" Betty cut off.

Betty's outburst surprised them and they all focused at the tall handmaiden. "Betty, what's the matter?" she rose from the chair and was about to come to Betty, but the tall handmaiden stepped back and then bowed.

"Forgive me, Princess, I just need some rest, don't worry about me," was Betty's upset response and looked up. "May I go now?"
Not wanting to upset Betty further, she reluctantly nodded, "Yes, you may. Thank you," as soon as she gave her permission, the tall handmaiden rushed to the door at once.

"Girls, what's happening to Betty?" she inquired and looked at both Natalie and Sarah Jane.

Natalie just took a deep sigh, "I don't actually know. I told her if she had too much to do, we could help her. But she doesn't want me to touch your dresses because I-"

"You what?" she got suspicious after the dark haired handmaiden paused.

"Forgive me, Princess," Natalie resumed and looked down, while her hand fidgeted with her hair. "But I accidentally burned one of your dresses while ironing it, and from that day, Betty never trusted me again to help her."

She smiled and took Natalie's hand, "Hey, it's just a dress, don't worry about it."

"Princess, I think something is burdening Betty," Sarah Jane interrupted and all eyes were on her.

"What do you mean?" she asked her heart hammering. The handmaidens were not just her friends; she considered them as her family too. She caught the exchange look between Natalie and Sarah Jane. They were definitely hiding something. "You all know that I trust all of you and love you, and if one of you has a problem, you know that I'm here to help." Natalie looked down and she realized she cannot coax anything from the black haired handmaiden. There was only one way to find out. "Natalie, you may go, thank you,"

"Good night Princess," Natalie quietly bowed and walked towards the door, with the head still looking on the ground.

As soon as the door closed, "Tell me what's wrong with Betty," she demanded, facing Sarah Jane.

"I'm not really sure what's bothering her," Sarah Jane related looking straight to the eyes. "But we noticed lately that whenever we're done helping you dressed up, she always tells us to go ahead and we don't know where she goes. And when we asked her where she goes she tells us that she has some errands to do."

"And what kind of errands?" she inquired, her nose twitched and her forehead wrinkled.

"That's what we're wondering too," the handmaiden returned and sighed. "We've tried following her, but she was quick and we always end up losing her."

"Where did you follow her?" was her curious remark. Perhaps Betty has a secret admirer that she meets every night. "Did she ever go out of the castle?"

"I'm not sure..." was Sarah Jane's baffled reply and scratched her head. "The times we followed her, she just went around the castle until we lost sight of her. Maybe she's using a secret passage or something..."

"That's weird..." she grew suspicious and took a mental note to ask LaFontaine tomorrow if there were any secret passages in the castle.

"I'm sorry Princess, that's the only thing I can tell you," Sarah Jane commented and tried to fight a yawn.

"Thank you, that's alright, you may rest now," she suggested and rubbed the back of the handmaiden lightly. "If there's anything you discovered about Betty, let me know right away. Maybe she has a
problem or something and is afraid to share with anyone."

"I will Princess, good night," the handmaiden nodded and headed towards the door.

"Oh, Sarah Jane!" she called before the handmaiden can step outside. "Do you know if His Majesty and the Prince had already returned?"

"Yes Princess, we saw His Hotness on his way to his chamber together with LaFontaine while on our way here."

She smiled and nodded to the handmaiden. "Thanks!"

As soon as she saw Sarah Jane closed the door behind her, she excitedly removed the fresh underwear that she just put on after taking a bath and put it back to the wide oak chest of drawers where her nightgowns, underwear, and chemise were kept.

She can't help but grin naughtily as she put on her silk robe and tied it around her waist. She grabbed a white veil and put it over her head, to cover her face. She had promised Carm that she will make it worth his while, and thought that her broody Prince deserved to be pampered tonight, after a long tiring day outside and have been frustrated and interrupted so many times.

Moments later, she found herself prowling the hall leading to Carl's chamber. Although the guards that were standing by the entrée of the passageway saw her, they remained standing silently. Then she remembered the veil covering her head.

As she comes closer to the door, her lust grew stronger and already felt tingling down her nether realms as she imagined how she will undress her Prince and kneel in front of him. She only hoped that Laf has already left since she cannot hide her arousal anymore. She still remembered one of Elsie's advice and suddenly remembered that she promised to help her.

Suddenly, she heard the door to the Prince's chamber opened. Thinking that it was the Valet, she hid in one of the dark corners; she was thankful that she can navigate this hall without a problem even if it's poorly lit. She waited impatiently for the Valet to come out and leave. But her eyes narrowed and she grew confused when she saw Carm opened the door and then looked carefully on both sides of the halls as if checking that it was safe outside. The next thing she saw, her Prince stepped back and she gasped when her eyes caught the image of Betty emerging from the chamber, looking anxious and strode quietly towards the end of the hall like a thief.

She does not remember sending Betty a message for Carl.

What was her friend doing inside her Prince's chamber?

Suddenly she was overcome with jealousy as she remembered the last time she and Carl had really made love… and the last time he was sexually satisfied and fulfilled.

After all the interruptions… the stupid 'no-sex while pregnant' law…

Could it be that her Prince cannot control any longer his ravenous sexual appetite?

TBC
Night Errand

Chapter Summary

Continuation from the previous chapter, from Carm's POV.

What kind of 'errand' Betty did for His Royal Hotness before Laura saw her leave the prince's bedchamber?

Chapter Notes

I'm happy that this crazy fic had reached 100k hits! Thank you for trusting on my writing and for patiently going through the crazy feelings that this story invokes. Thanks for all the love and support, especially to those who keep on leaving comments and kudos, thanks for being with me through thick and thin. You're all amazing and generous! I may not say it all the time, but your feedbacks keep me happy and inspired.

I've been working on this chapter for two weeks now, and it might not be that 'well-written' (as if my writing is well-written :-P) so excuse me for all the redundancy and lazy composition of sentences. But I don't have the patience anymore to go through those mistakes and revise it again. I have a trip to plan and I want this to get off my mind. So I decided to post it now so that you'll have something to read on this sunny/rainy Sunday. I don't have a beta reader and I'm lazy to do that email exchange thing again between me and a beta reader. So if you have the urge to correct me on the spot, please don't hesitate to comment below. I'm always open to suggestions and criticism and would be thankful that you take the time to point out my mistakes.

Lastly, please excuse me again for the crazy attempt of smut writing. You all know that I'm not a confident smut writer, so if you think I should stop writing this kind of crazy smut, feel free to stop me.

Oh, and just a little warning, smut ahead

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

*****

Carmilla

She paced to and fro across the room, her mind tormented since last night.

Everything was fine when she learned that Prince Theodore will come alone. Even if she disapproved of her father's decision, she set her mind that Prince Theodore Straka was an important ally to her since the Strakas was the largest and most powerful kingdom in western Styria. And not to forget her mother's order of not ruining this potential partnership again, she was compelled to accept this alliance whether she liked it or not.
But the moment her father informed her last night of the last additional guest …

Her anxiety level reached its peak… although Laura promised that she was the only one in her heart, she still can't help worrying. She had to admit… she felt threatened.

Her hand ran nervously through her wet hair; just the thought of it makes her restless and mad.

Honestly, the idea of the Strakas being part of their new alliance infuriates her.

She tried convincing herself many times that it was the king or the crown prince of Straka she would deal with, not the Amazon princess. But she underestimated the fact that her wife's former lover was the crown Princess of Straka, and like Laura, Princess Danielle can help Prince Theodore with his duties too.

As if fate was mocking her, the King approved Prince Theodore's request of taking his wife with him at the last minute.

And now that Princess Danielle was coming to their castle, it was already too late to hinder Laura from seeing her ex-lover. She needs to come up with something to show this Amazon princess that Laura belonged to her.

She missed Laura so much today but did not dare see nor visit her wife in the Princess' chamber. Luckily, she and her father were out in the castle the whole day, and she successfully managed to avoid Laura to hide her restlessness.

In the beginning, she thought of asking her father to decline the Straka's alliance. She weighed her reasons and how she will convince her father not to have a tie up with the Kingdom of Straka.

But then she realized she had no better excuse to reject the Strakas and would create more suspicions if she insisted. And the risk of her parents discovering the truth behind the relationship between her wife and the Princess of Straka might come up.

So instead, she thought of applying one of her mother's advice: keep your enemies closer.

She will just have to be extra territorial like a cat when the Amazon princess arrives, she reminded herself.

Speaking of Laura, until now, her little Cupcake does not have any idea of who's coming. Was it a good idea not to tell Laura? Probably not; but it still felt better to pretend the Princess of Straka was not coming so that Laura 'will not look forward' for their reunion. Who knows, the Amazon princess might fell ill and cancel her visit.

She crossed her fingers and closed her eyes.

She begged her mother not to give her wife too much work and cited stress would do no good to her pregnant wife as a reason. But her mother told her that Laura should learn how to handle and tolerate everything duty related even when pregnant. Eventually, they agreed not to include Laura in any outdoor activities like visiting the places around the kingdom, horseback riding and instead the queen had chosen the princess to entertain the female guests as a host during afternoon teas and luncheons, which led to her dismay.

The thought of disagreeing with her mother about Laura's assignment crossed her mind, but only a fool will object with the Queen of Karnstein. She will not give her mother the slight suspicion why she does not want Laura to entertain these noble women.
Just like her father, she agreed with her mother's suggestions. Never argue with the Queen, her father reminded her.

Surprisingly, she behaved well this evening while LaFontaine helped her prepare before going to bed since she has this 'needs' that needed to be taken care of immediately, and dismissed her Valet as early as possible. It helped also that she was grumpy all day and LaFontaine did not try to talk to her much. Perhaps they still feel guilty about interrupting her and Laura.

Talk about being interrupted…

"Damn it! What's taking her so long?!” she grumbled and stopped pacing. She stared at the large fireplace in front of her and fidgeted with the signet ring on her pinky.

Then she noticed the Valet's official journal on her desk, where LaFontaine writes all her activities for the day and the next days to come. Perhaps they can't wait to leave her alone as quickly as possible while she brooded too much and they forgot it.

LaFontaine just left and she was already aching for something that only the tall handmaiden can provide.

Her hand ran through her short locks again, controlling her irritation. As the minutes went by, her patience wore thin.

She thought of summoning back LaFontaine, go to the training room, grab the blade of Hastur to release all the stress inside her or… let go this unwanted feeling by doing one of her favorite pastimes aside from reading.

She chose the latter.

Everyone was sleeping, including Laura, there was no way in hell this would go wrong and be interrupted. She was inside her chamber, for heaven's sake, nobody was allowed to disturb her again!

She was irritated due to sex deprivation and interruption… so, what else could be the best remedy for her frustration other than fulfilling one's need?

Tonight she will indulge herself.

But aside from sex deprivation, she knew that it was not the main reason why she was grumpier today and why she felt like a nervous threatened wild cat.

Her contemplation was halted when her ears caught the sound of a light tap on the door.

"Who is it?"

"It's Betty Your Highness."

The voice replied.

"Finally…"

She strode towards the door and quickly unlocked it.

As soon as the door opened, the handmaiden smiled and bowed in front of her before entering.

"Are you sure nobody sees you come here?" she asked, worried. And let the girl come in.
"I'm pretty sure, Your Highness," the tall handmaiden replied after catching her breath.

"Do you have it?" she asked and ran her hand through her short dark locks like a nervous wreck.

"It's here Your Highness," Betty handed a silk white scarf. "I have to wrap it so the others won't notice it."

"Perfect," she gave Betty a nervous smirk and took the offered scarf. "Thank you, Betty. You may go." She ordered quickly. "I'll let you know when I need you again."

"Good night Your Hotness," Betty returned with a mischievous grin and bowed before leaving.

"Wait! Let me check first, LaFontaine had forgotten something and they might return," she suggested and walked ahead of Betty and opened the door slightly. She looked at both sides of the hall and after confirming that it was safe, she stepped aside and nodded to Betty to go out.

She shut the door behind her and strode towards the large fireplace. As soon as the warmth reached her body, she stood in front of the fire, while she fumbled for the scarf and untied it with restless hands. She wanted to smell Laura since she woke up this morning with a hard on, but got disappointed when she cannot find any of Laura's underwear.

She cannot contain her excitement and felt her shaft already semi hard and twitching. She dropped the scarf on the floor, and brought the silk white underwear to her nose and sniffed it.

With eyes closed, she savored the natural scent of Laura like it was the most delectable thing in the world, and let out a satisfied groan. Laura's scent always sends her into a maddening daze.

Her left hand untied her robe, pulled down her braies and found her penis long and thick. She stared at it, put her hand gently on her aching member and ran her hand through her length. She groaned at the heavenly sensation. She was itching to touch it since she took her bath but refrained from doing so since LaFontaine will definitely hear her. And she decided not to prolong her bath time knowing that Betty will come tonight to deliver her 'parcel'.

She started relieving herself of her tension and stroked her hardness with the right hand while the other held Laura's undies towards her nose. "Damn it!" she expressed and irritatively kicked the offending braies on her feet and got off from it. She wished to be free.

A sense of boldness suddenly possessed her.

Wanting to release her wild side, and let her cock out in the open, she took off her robe too but kept her tunic on. It was her bedchamber, after all, she could do what she desired. And right now, it felt amazing and liberating to stand in front of the large fireplace, half exposed and masturbating in front of the crackling fire while she watched her penis swelled and grew sturdier as she imagined being touched by Laura.

Standing with full of confidence and boldness, her hand ran through the length of her raging member and stroked her shaft till it sprang fully to life and the head glistened with her precum. "Ahhh..." she moaned and sniffed the moist part of Laura's underwear, and imagined herself lapping on Laura's sweetness; the intoxicating smell and the powerful taste of her wife in her mouth. It's all too much and making her delirious and hungry! She pumped hard at her erection, growling at the sight of her equipment tightening and thickening. It's insane how Laura's scent does to her body.

She felt like a true king as she confidently stood there in all her glory watching her slippery hand worked on her full length, pumping it faster and spilling pre cum in her fingers. She could feel all the blood in her body traveling to her pubic area and groaned.
Her balls tightened in no time as the waves of her lust coursed through her shaft. She bit her lower lip, tilted her head upward and shut her eyes. A guttural growl escaped her mouth, and she jerked her hip, as she shot spurt after spurt of hot thick sperm in the air. "Laura!" she called her wife's name, while she squeezed the last spurt left in her still stiff member. It felt marvelous and liberating to release like this after all the interruptions and sex deprivations that she had gone through the past days.

As soon as she came down from the waves of her peak, her other senses gradually awaken.

Slowly she opened her eyes and sensed that she was not alone.

She held carefully the end of her tunic to cover herself before grabbing the black iron log poker from the side of the fireplace and turned around.

The sharp end of the log poker was just inches away from the person's throat, as she accurately aimed it towards the intruder, "How dare you enter my chamber without..." she shouted but dropped the iron bar at once. "Cupcake?!" was her shocked remark, after discovering her wife standing in front of her, giving her those narrowed eyes look of doubt; she worried when she saw the royal pout on display. "How long have you been standing there?"

And before she could ask what the hell was Laura doing sneaking behind her back in the middle of the night, while she masturbates in front of the fire half naked...

"I saw Betty came out of your chamber minutes ago..." Laura commented, voice deep and serious. "Why was she here?"

She furrowed her brows and stared back at the cold pair of hazel eyes that were glaring back at her. That stare doesn't look good.

Laura's hormones were probably soaring crazy again.

Then she recalled what LaFontaine told her:

Laura's crazy mood swings were caused by the hormonal shift inside her wife's body as the baby developed inside Laura's womb...their baby. Her heir... Her seed... Her fault... and before she could ask her wife what's wrong...

"Is that my underwear you're holding?" Laura asked flashed a curious look downwards.

Her sight followed where those eyes focused and realized that she forgot to hide the underwear. She rolled her eyes and slouched in defeat.

She took a deep sighed, "Please don't scold Betty. I asked her to bring one to me. I missed smelling you and being with you at night, so when-" she was explaining but was surprisingly cut off by a kiss.

She grew even more confused when Laura embraced her tight.

"Is that really the reason why Betty was here?" was the Princess' doubtful remark after releasing from the embrace, and stood stiffly.

Disoriented and don't have the slightest idea of what Laura was talking about, she gave her a questioning stare and furrowed her brows, "What else would she-"

"Thank god!" The Princess expressed with relief.
Laura hugged her tighter, "Cupcake? Is not that I'm complaining about you kissing and hugging me out of nowhere, because who wouldn't want to be surprised by a beautiful princess hovering behind me like a creep while I masturbate and sniffed your underwear, but what the hell is going on?" she asked confused, as she struggled to hold Laura's used undies on her right hand while the other tried to put down and hide her still hard member under her tunic… "I'm really lost here. And what's with the sneaking in my chamber and watching me touch myself? Is that your fetish?" she added and Laura finally released her from the tight hold and a light slap hit her arm.

"Aw! What's that for?" she expressed and pretended to be hurt by rubbing the spot where Laura hit her.

"I don't have a fetish," Laura disapproved and pouted. "And I didn't watch you while you removed your braies and robe, and stand there half naked like a giant horny wild cat growling my name."

She gazed at her innocent looking wife, arched her left eyebrow and displayed a cocky smirk, "Oh yes, you definitely did not see that."

She had never seen her Cupcake blushed that bad and displayed a sheepish grin.

This crazy mood swings made her crazier and her wife's crimsoned face was adorable.

"Err… I'm… umm," Laura fumbled for words and then grinned… "Why don't we take this conversation to your bed?"

Her smirk could never be wider and she did not ask further. She dropped the garment that was on her hand, grabbed her wife and lifted Laura like a bride. The Princess squealed and she carried her towards the enormous four post bed, while Laura giggled in her arms.

Once she had gently laid Laura on it, she hopped on the bed too and made sure to draw the thick drape and covered her bed from any intrusion.

When she turned around and adjusted her sight to the dimness, she found the Princess already sitting on the far right side of the bed, wearing only the thin silky chemise; the robe was tossed on the end of the bed.

She licked her lips. Laura eyed her like a helpless prey, ready for her to devour. As if reading what was on her mind, she watched Laura undress in front of her, as the Princess teasingly pulled down the tip of the knot and untied the front, revealing white smooth bosom, then pulled slowly each sleeve of the white garment, and wiggled her way out of the smooth silky sleepwear until it dropped down the waist.

Her eyes marveled at once at Laura's beautifully toned torso and fine rounded breasts. Until now, she could never believe this beautiful creature belonged to her and only hers to touch and to covet. Sometimes she questions her sanity and thought that this was all a dream. But every time she wakes in the morning and sees Laura, she thanked God for her blessing.

Her eyes darted at those luscious breasts; a sight to behold. A cocky smile formed at the corner of her mouth, knowing that she would be indulging in them soon. She already felt her shaft coming to life just by gazing at those breasts.

"Didn't someone tell you that it's bad to stare?"

Laura's voice halted her from salivating further. She looked up and smirked at her wife.

"Didn't someone tell you that the Prince of Karnstein can stare as long as he like on beautiful breasts," she retorted and arched her left eyebrow. She crawled like a cat towards her waiting wife.
and stared at those innocent eyes like a predator. Laura's hands wrapped around the back of her neck as she came closer, she smiled instantly at the contact and pressed her forehead on Laura's own, while she remained standing on her knees and hands.

"I hope you only have eyes on my breasts…” Laura whispered.

"I only worship yours, Cupcake," she whispered back her voice huskier than normal and licked Laura's lower lip. It earned a moan immediately from the Princess and she felt Laura licked her lips too.

"Then what are you waiting for?" Laura mumbled and lied back on the bed, making herself comfortable by shedding entirely the chemise resting on her waist.

The satisfied smirk on her face cannot be controlled when she caught sight of the Princess' groin sans underwear. "Forgot your underwear again Cupcake?" she teased.

"I don't have anything to wear since somebody had been stealing it," the Cupcake retaliated. "Are you just going to tease me all night…?" the Princess taunted and took another pillow and added it under her head, and lied to her side and fluttered those thick eyelashes, before saying, "...because I planned on pampering my wild prince tonight," Laura mumbled in a deep tone and reached for her left breast and started touching her own nipple.

Her jaw dropped as she gawked at the sight of her wife touching herself in front of her.

Bloody hell!

Laura definitely knew how to tease her. Her eyes followed how Laura's hand teased and caressed each breast. It was making her delirious. She was now hard as a rock just by watching at her wife masturbates in front of her.

She licked her lips; her heart pounded madly. How long can she watch Laura without bursting soon?

She swallowed hard when Laura gave her a come-hither look, curled a seductive finger and beckoned her to come forward. She smirked and moved closer. Laura reached for her nape at once and motioned for her to lie down with her face angled closer to the Princess' bosom. Once she was comfortably positioned, she gasped and almost drowned in arousal as she felt those soft round breasts rubbed on her face. She growled and grabbed one of Laura's breasts immediately, kneaded it and sucked the other one, too excited to get her mouth on those erected nipples.

Laura moaned at the sudden contact, "Slow down tiger, we have all night," the Princess suggested, running her hands through those dark locks.

"I'm a panther, not a tiger!" she hissed back, in between sucking and earned a chuckle from the Princess. Laura's hand snaked in between them. She groaned at the loss contact of her mouth from the nipple and shifted as the Princess pulled the tunic over her head in one smooth motion and tossed it together with the chemise at the end of the bed.

"Alright… my beautiful wild panther," Laura corrected, and moaned at the feeling of their naked bodies touching.

Her mouth found anew those erected nipples and her hand reclaimed one of Laura's breasts. She felt warm hands caressed her hair and nape, inducing her to calm down; she relaxed at the touch quickly. She fondled Laura's right breast with the same slow phase and closed her eyes while she takes her
moment suckling the left nipple and let herself get lost in the wonder of Laura's breast; she could just stay like this forever.

Just as she was relaxing, her hips jerked and she groaned when she felt Laura's hand took her stiff member and started stroking her in a slow torturous way.

The combined soothing and arousing feeling she was undergoing right now made her head spin. Her body was confused at how to respond to these heavenly assaults, as she savored the sensation of her wife's caresses, and indulged on suckling Laura's nipple, while her shaft throbbed due to Laura's expert ministration. She felt both her heads exploding soon.

"Cupcake…" she groaned, as heat pooled in her stomach, trickled lower; her blood pumping wild down her groin. She squeezed her wife's breast while Laura's hand stroked her tight balls and pumped her shaft faster until she cannot hold on any longer and spurt thick hot milk on the bed and over Laura's hand. "Laura!" she growled and bit hard around the nipple on her mouth, as she reached her climax and quivered beneath Laura's expert loving hands.

She had not even recovered yet from that quick ejaculation…

"Carm, suck them hard," Laura commanded while panting.

She looked up and her eyes widened as she realized what the Princess meant when the nipple was shoved back into her mouth deeper. She took a deep breath and sucked hard Laura's nipple till she heard her wife moaned with pleasure.

Laura whimpered as she switched and sucked on the neglected nipple. She slipped her hand downwards and felt Laura bucked her hips while she ran her fingers along Laura's slick sex. Her wife was so wet but she did not dare insert her finger, instead she thumbed the Princess' swollen clit.

"Carm," Laura moaned.

She continued to caress the engorged clit in soft feather-like touches, at the same time, her mouth closed over one of Laura's hardened nipple, grazing it with her teeth.

"Oh God!" Laura cried out and began to squirm.

Frantic with lust, she drew the nipple into her mouth with hard suctions and merciless hunger, her finger pressed firmly on the clit, stroked and pinched it. She felt the hand in her hair tightened and held her closer.

From the greedy mouth on her nipple and possessive finger on her nub, "Carm!" a shriek broke from Laura's throat, as heat coursed through her breast and nub, and spread like wild fire in her body.

She felt Laura shuddered beside her, as the Princess rode the waves of her intense climax. Once Laura calmed down, she licked the sored nipples of the Princess before gathering the spent wife of hers in her arms. "I love you Cupcake," she whispered on Laura's left ear, while she smoothed away the hair in front of Laura's face and kissed her forehead.

"Love you Carm," the Princess murmured, her voice almost inaudible.

She felt Laura nuzzled in the crook of her neck and draped an arm around her waist. "Sleep now," she mumbled her tone full of concern, as she wrapped her arms protectively around the Cupcake.

Laura's silence explained clearly her exhaustion from that strong orgasm.
A proud smirk crept into the corner of her mouth, realizing what her mouth and lips can do to Laura's body. She closed her eyes and let go all of her worries, as she felt the warmth eliminating from both their bodies and her ears were caressed by the low rumble of Laura's cute snore. It was just adorable.

*****

"Not again!"

The voice of the Valet grumbling awoke her.

Ignoring it, she burrowed her face deeper to the warmth of Laura's cleavage. She held the Princess' waist tighter and tried to salvage her sleep, and hoped Laura did not notice the noise.

But then she felt Laura shifted and a soft warm hand was placed on her cheek.

"Carm…" Laura uttered groggly. "Is that Laf?"

"No, you're just having a nightmare," she replied, her voice muffled with sleep. She hoped the Valet won't make another noise, or else, she will really send them to the dungeons. "Go back to sleep."

But then she heard another irritated grunt.

"How many times do I have to tell you, not to leave clothes everywhere?" was the Valet's irritated remark. "…and you managed to steal one again!"

Suddenly, she felt her wife's hand tilted her face towards her direction, and she forcefully opened her eyes and was met by a glare.

"Carm, what are they talking about?" Laura demanded in a hushed controlled voice.

"I told you, it's just a bad dream, let's go back to sleep," she suggested nonchalantly, but deep inside, she concocted already which torture to give to the redhead.

She was about to nuzzle back to her wife's breasts, but Laura's hand held her face in place and saw her wife's left eyebrow raised in a questioning silence.

"You should be thankful that I always return them in no time, or else Betty would be in deep trouble…" LaFontaine's irritated voice resounded over the room.

"Oh, so that's why I can't find the others," was her calm reaction.

Laura gave her a narrow look and the royal pout after they both heard clearly their remark.

She pretended that it was nothing and shrugged her shoulders.

"Carm! How many times did you ask Betty to bring you my undies?" was Laura's hushed and upset question.

"I don't recall," was her calm reply. "Why don't we forget about it and let me taste you again," she said in her deepest and enticing voice.

"Don't you dare change the topic," the Princess replied and sat upright on the bed, and hauled the sheet to cover her breasts.

"Oh, come on Cupcake, have some mercy to your poor cat," she tried to distract Laura by giving her that melancholic gaze, as she supported herself on her elbows. Laura looked gorgeous even when
upset and pouting. Seeing that Laura was adamant to find out the truth, "Alright, I've asked Betty many times to steal your used underwear to help me get through the nights when I feel lonely and horny. There. That's the answer. And yes, I'm a pervert who wants to smell you every night."

The shade of red on Laura's face grew deeper after that confession. Laura looked at her sheepishly, timid smile forming on the corner of her mouth.

"Are you sure you just want my undies from Betty and nothing else?" was the Princess suspicious reply.

She widened her eyes and this time, she rose and sat across her wife. "Cupcake… what else would I ask Betty, aside from stealing your dirty underwear?"

"Carm!

She arched her left eyebrow and smirked at the Cupcake, "Tell me what's in that curious and suspicious mind of yours?"

Still pouting, "I don't know…maybe you can't control your needs anymore and had thought of asking Betty to be your mistress," Laura murmured and looked down.

"What? Cupcake, you're insane!" was her shocked reaction.

"Well, don't blame me for being insane and paranoid," Laura retorted and glared. "You're the one who put this crazy rule on our sex life. Who knows how long you could keep that big panther of yours inside your trousers."

"Well, this big panther of mine is doing just fine," was her naughty comment. "…as long as I get to taste you and smell your underwear while I pet it at night," she smirked, then touched her growing bulge and stroked it through the sheets. "You wanna try petting it? It's already half awake."

A loud and prolonged cough broke through the silence in her chamber.

They both got startled and totally forgotten that they were not alone.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

How's the feels?

Got any constructive criticism? Let me know below and I'll revise it ;-}
The New Allies

Chapter Summary

Was regaining their intimacy enough to appease Carm when Danny shows up again? These were few of the many things that bothered Laura, and the fact that the Strakas was now a newly sworn ally of the Karnsteins was enough to blow her mind away. She was now contemplating if this alliance was a success or a disaster.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

After kissing goodbye a very disappointed and horny Carm, and greeting a very enthusiastic and relieved LaFontaine outside the four post bed, she left the Prince’s chamber this morning with a smile on her face and a calm mind.

Thank God she confronted Carm first before talking to Betty. It would have been awkward accusing her childhood friend of something the tall handmaiden was not guilty of.

But the thought of the Prince of Karnstein taking a mistress had been plaguing her ever since.

She heard that King Philipp has three and Queen Lilita, a very strong and authoritarian woman, was compelled to accept these mistresses of the king. How could she stop this from happening with Carm, when she was not even half as strong and half powerful as her mother-in-law?

Carm had assured her many times that he will not take a mistress, and their situation right now had been a challenge to both of them. Thankfully, she managed to keep their sex life active.

She was delighted that they managed to find ways to be intimate again, even with that ridiculous 'no sex while pregnant' law. This mood swings and cravings for food and sex heightened each day; she always felt hungry and horny. And it made her crazy and cranky if she doesn’t get what she desires, and 'snuggling' with Carm was one of them.

Although her broody Prince still refuses to have sexual intercourse or even insert a finger inside her for fear of 'hurting the baby', she was satisfied, for now, of her needs being satiated in other ways. Thanks to the Forbidden Book's 'forbidden positions' and advice from an expert from the brothel, she can still enjoy being naked, naughty and horny with Carm even while pregnant. Imagine how Perry will react if the latter finds out all the sinful positions that she and Carm had tried.

But what will happen when the baby was born and she cannot spend more time with Carm? Will he be patient and understanding that her time and attention would be divided between him and the baby, knowing that her Prince was the possessive type and always wanted her by his side?

Fulfilling the duty of carrying the heirs to the throne and mothering Carm's children had never been a worry to her. She knew from the very beginning that her role was to serve the people of Karnstein Kingdom and to bear heirs and mold them into future kings and queens. It had never bothered her before… not until now.
Now, that she realized the time and attention she was giving to Carm would be lessened with all of her future duties…

Now, that they would be both become parents and the baby certainly would need her full attention and care…

How can she divide all her duties to everyone without leaving a strain in her relationship?

She still remembered what Perry told her about mistresses. Why there was a need to have them…

She sighed and tried to relax and enjoy her warm bath. She needed to stop worrying, she reminded herself. Then her eyes caught sight of the teeth marks around her areola; she shook her head lightly and grinned like a mad woman.

She loved seeing the evidence of their love making. It just showed that her Prince cannot get enough of her and she relished every moment she sees Carm lost himself in lust filled haze.

Suddenly, she was reminded of something throbbing on her chest. Her nipples were sore again; especially the left one and recalled Carm’s sharp teeth grazed around it. She looked around her bosom and found another love mark over her right breast, on the side, another one above her left and another. Her giant horny wild cat got carried away again last night. She rolled her eyes and gave up searching for more.

Carm definitely loves breasts and marking his territory and it roused her that her beautiful Prince was very possessive and passionate. She had never experienced this kind of fervor in her first relationship.

Danny was more of a protector and the controlling type. She always felt like a fragile human being that needed tender loving care and protection while they were intimate. She remembered they were always careful not to get carried away so as not to break each other's maidenhood.

But there were times she wanted Danny to just claim her and she does not care if she ended up not being pure anymore; she was very determined she will never marry nor love anyone else, except Danny.

Before, her life revolved around Danny.

She was her everything.

Danny was the portrait of her ideal partner: strong, righteous, confident, intelligent and above all beautiful.

Danny was the perfect love… and she thought nobody can replace Danny in her heart.

But her heart had reasons that she never fathoms until now when she fell in love with the broody, possessive, temperamental love of her life.

Loving Carm was intense.

It felt overwhelming, powerful, passionate, and thrilling.

"Laura, I sent Natalie to bed she's feeling-"

The voice of Perry yanked her out from reminiscing and met the Lady in Waiting's surprised stare while approaching with a robe.
"What?" was her innocent reply as she rose from the bath tub filled with lavender and faced Perry so her Lady in Waiting can put it on. She now wondered how long she was lying there musing over her love life.

"Laura, are you and His Highness still copulating?" Perry questioned in a motherly tone and focused her stare on each bite marks. "You know that it's forbidden for a woman to have intercourse during pregnancy."

She took a deep sigh after hearing it again. "I am aware of it… Why does everybody keep on telling me that?" she returned, slightly irritated as she stepped out of the bath tub and put on the offered robe and tied it around her waist.

"I'm just reminding you, in case you have forgotten," the Lady in Waiting retorted with a raised eyebrow. "With His Highness'… umm… well-endowed umm… you don't want to hurt the baby inside you."

"Relax Perry, we're not doing it," she returned, displaying a lop-sided grin and let Perry towel dry her hair.

"Well then, why you're full of bite marks?" was Perry's suspicious remark. "The last time I saw these, you and His Highness had one of those crazy wild—"

And before her Lady in Waiting can say another word, she held Perry's arms and looked at her straight in the eyes, "Carl is actually afraid of hurting the baby too and he had never been inside me ever since Laf told us that I'm with a child." Perry gave her the 'I'm not 100% convinced' look, and she knew that it had something to do with Carm's bite marks. "And if you're not convinced that I'm telling the truth, you can ask Carl."

The Lady in Waiting glared at her, and crossed both arms over the chest, "Well, how come you're not in bed when I came this morning?"

"I've actually slept at Carl's chamber last night," was her sheepish reply. "And before you can think of anything suspicious, we just embraced, kissed, snuggled and Carl got excited because I surprised him by coming to his chamber, so he bit me. Other than that, we just cuddled… and made out." She heard a long resigned sigh.

"Alright, I believe you, even if my intuition doesn't," Perry conceded and took out a fresh clean chemise from the closet.

"By the way, where are the girls?" she asked and looked around her chamber. The handmaidens were usually the ones who helped her before going to bed. "Shouldn't you be preparing for tomorrow's banquet?"

"As I've mentioned earlier, I sent Natalie early to bed," Perry said while warming the chemise near the fireplace. "Betty is preparing all the dresses that you'll wear for the occasion and I sent Sarah Jane to Berta for some short briefing… and I already received the official guests' list for tomorrow."

"And…" her voice grew high pitch as Perry slipped on the chemise on her and tied the knots in front of her.

"…And what sweetie?" Perry looked up and smirked casually.

"Is Danny's name on the list?" she asked, her voice dropping to normal pitch. Perry looked at her for a moment, prolonging her agony.
"You're with His Highness last night, didn't he told you who's coming?"

"No," was her quick retort and rubbed her upper left arm consolingly. "I didn't ask him because I
don't want him to suspect that I knew something. What if Danny changed her mind and decided not
to come at all?" she reasoned out. "Besides, I didn't want to sound too eager about this meeting."

"Well… do you?"

She narrowed her eyes and looked at Perry, "Do what?"

Perry stared, "Eager for tomorrow's meeting?"

"Of course not!" was her defensive remark, and gave Perry a pout before walking towards her bed
and sat on the edge. "I just want to make sure if Danny's really coming so I could prepare myself for
whatever Carl would feel in case he sees me and Danny talking again."

"I think, if Prince Carl knew that the Strakas accepted the alliance, he should accept also the fact that
you and Danny could meet again," Perry related and sat on the bed too. "So far, I haven't heard from
LaFontaine any 'violent' reaction from his Highness with regards to this new alliance. Maybe he's
starting to realize that Danny isn't a threat anymore."

"I really do hope so," was her still worried reply.

"The only thing you have to worry is telling His Highness about Danny's letter, which I have a
feeling that you haven't told him yet."

Perry's last remark sent a shiver in her spine.

How could she have forgotten about it?

She promised Carm that she will be honest about anything when it comes to their relationship. And
now she does not know how she would tell him about Danny's apology letter, without sounding like
a liar or a cheater.

"Oh god Perry, I forgot about it. I was afraid how I should approach him about the letter," was her
honest answer and looked at her Lady in Waiting's direction. "Should I go and tell him now?"

"Have you gone mad?" Perry's shocking remark. "You know that His Highness is the jealous type,"
was the Lady in Waiting's hush remark.

"What happened to the 'Maybe he's starting to realize that Danny isn't a threat anymore'?" she
retorted, and grimaced at Perry's contradicting opinions.

"Well, all I'm saying is don't add more problems to the growing tension between him and Danny,"
Perry tried to calm down. "…not on the evening before the official meeting."

"So, it's confirmed, Danny is coming tomorrow," she stated and receive a nod from Perry and let out
a heavy sigh upon learning the truth.

She and Carm did not get a chance to talk much or spend more time with each other today since
everybody was busy preparing for the event for tomorrow. When she kissed Carm after lunch today,
her Prince was in good mood and there was no sign of worries from him or whatsoever that she
deemed 'troubling'.

"Why don't you try to sleep now, since we have a big day ahead of us," Perry suggested and rose
from the bed. "Stop worrying about the letter. You can tell him about it when this event is over. In the meantime, just focus on your responsibility and I ordered Sarah Jane and Natalie not to leave you alone for the whole duration of your duties."

The last sentence caught her attention and she flashed the royal pout on her Lady In Waiting.

Was Perry doing this to avoid any accidental or unintentional kissing again between her and Danny?

As if reading her mind, "I don't want you to stress too much. It's not good for the baby."

The pout on her mouth melted into a grin as her eyes met the concerned look from her 'second mother'. She obediently nodded and get in the sheet. "Goodnight Per… And thanks."

"Goodnight sweetie," the Lady In Waiting returned with a smile, before drawing the curtains around the four post bed.

*****

After eating her breakfast, the handmaidens worked their magic and transformed her again to this beautiful elegant princess that she was. And now she found herself descending the grand stairs with mixed emotions. The presence of Natalie and Sarah Jane walking beside her made her calm and secured, while the thought of Danny and Carm meeting again frightened her.

But once they approached the base of the stairs, her heart began hammering wildly against her chest as her eyes met those pair of dark melancholic orbs.

Standing at the end of the grand staircase, dressed in the finest lavender tunic, long velvet burgundy cape, ebony trouser and wearing the second most powerful crown in the kingdom, Carm never ceased to mesmerize her of his elegant beauty, princely charm and brooding looks that conveyed a lot of his traits: possessive, passionate, jealous, temperamental and intelligent.

Surprisingly, she loved all these qualities of him.

She smiled wide and held his gaze as she resumed going down the stairs.

But the wrinkle on his forehead and broody stare caught her attention. Something tells her that something was brewing inside him… something that does not feel good.

She composed herself and inhaled deeply.

Carm was not this broody yesterday.

Could it be that he was anxious being surrounded by many people again?

But Perry informed her that it would be just a small group of important people and the familiar faces of the king's advisors. It will be a small affair.

And then she realized…

This had nothing to do with Carm's angst of meeting many people and being surrounded by them.

It had something to do with only one person.

When she reached the last three steps, she paused and curtsied in front of the very quiet Prince across
her; the handmaidens bowed lower with her too.

To lighten up his mood, "My Prince looks handsome and stunning as always," she complimented after bowing and displayed her adorable smile that she only reserved for him. But instead of a reply, Carm gently took her right hand, bowed his head and kissed the back of her palm.

"It is you, who's stunning my beautiful wife," Carm finally spoke in a serious and raspy voice. "And I am glad that you belong to me," he added in a deeper tone.

She felt her cheeks warmed at the comment and how her Prince quietly stared at her.

There was something about his gaze and remark that made her flinch and worried at the same time.

Carm can be intimidating when he becomes possessive and jealous.

"T-thank you, my Prince," she returned and cursed herself from stuttering in front of him.

She took the last steps and hooked her hand on his arm as they walked towards the hall to the throne room.

She can't help it and stole a side glance at him.

Carm's aura right now was like of his mother.

Her heartbeat raced.

The walk to the throne room felt like forever as none of them speak and only the sounds of their shoes and Carl's boots clacking on the marble floor can be heard throughout the time they sauntered through the hall.

Carm's continued silence and cold demeanor made her more nervous.

She cannot take it anymore.

She stopped and Carm flashed a surprised stare, and before he could ask why, she turned to the handmaidens behind them while still holding onto his arm.

"Girls, can you please go ahead, I just like a word with His Highness," she asked and the handmaidens bowed and quickly walked ahead.

Once she knew that they were alone, she faced Carm and put her hands on his jawline and gazed at those dark fiery orbs, "Do you want to tell me why you're so quiet?"

Carm stared at her for a while...

Her heart pounded madly as she waited for him to reply.

"I guess you know why," the Prince said in a deep full voice. "Your Lady In Waiting must have told you already who are coming today."

She swallowed hard as she felt her throat becoming dry. She hoped not to screw this up.

"Y-yes..." she mumbled and was beginning to panic inside. She needed to say something soon to assure him that there was nothing to worry about. As she tried to compose which words to say, Carm's stare was becoming fiercer and suspicious. But before it can lead to doubt, she leaned closer, held his cheeks and kissed him. "I'm in love with you," she whispered and gazed at him, before finally releasing her hands on his face.
She saw Carm forced a smile and she felt his hands held her waist and drew her closer to him, "Tell me I'm the only one," he ordered his voice deeper, fuller but anxious.

Sensing that his possessiveness was showing, she looked at him straight in the eyes, "You're the only one. There'll be no one else but you," she reassured him. But he looked not contented and remained to stare at her with furrowed brows. Before she could say another word, she felt his hand pulled down gently the left sleeve of her dress. The next thing she knew a pair of soft warm lips were kissing her throat… her shoulder… and going deeper to her cleavage. Suddenly she felt a pang of pain as she discovered Carm biting the upper part of her left breast. "Oh god…" she exclaimed in her thoughts as she realized that her possessive Prince was 'marking' her. The marks before had not even disappeared yet, and yet he was putting more again. "Carl…" she whimpered as he sucked on the bite mark. She put her hand gently on the back of his neck and caressed it.

Thank god he responded to her calming touch and he finally released the flesh and kissed gently the throbbing spot, before carefully putting back the sleeve of the dress on her shoulder. She was still panting, as she met his fiery stare.

"Promise me you will not look at her like the way you look at me," Carm demanded.

"I- I promise," she uttered, overwhelmed and intimidated by his behavior, as his hands cupped her face and brought her closer to him. She could see the fear in his eyes as he remained to stare at her with those fully dilated melancholic eyes and touched her face like it's the most precious and fragile thing in the world.

"And don't ever touch her," Carm warned, his voice growing raspier. "I don't want her smell on you."

"I won't," she reassured him, and this time, she put her hands back on his face and she caressed it and the part under the back of his ear that always earned a purr from him. She felt him calmed immediately at her touch and kissed him passionately. "I love you Carm," she whispered in his ear, putting emphasis on his name that only she can utter after they released from that intense kiss. When their eyes met, she saw the calming effect on him, as the lines on his forehead disappeared. "We should go they're probably waiting for us now."

But before she could walk further, he held her arm and she paused to look at him again.

"Laura, you belong to me…" Carm's firm voice sounded like a warning. "…and you're pregnant with my child."

Carm's voice had never sounded so dark and possessive until now. He was not only territorial but very protective too of their unborn child. Reminding her that she had his child sounded so intimate and at the same time intimidating.

"I'll never forget," she whispered and cupped his jawline before giving him a peck and closed her eyes. "… and it's our baby." And then she kissed him on the lips.

He reciprocated with a long kiss and she felt him bit lightly her lower lip. She moaned at his gesture and he released her lip. When she opened her eyes, fully dilated dark orbs were gazing back at her, telling her how he wanted her badly. He was breathing faster and she felt him moved closer to her, she let out a low gasped after she felt something hard brushed on her groin. She looked down and saw a bulge formed inside his trousers. But before this could lead to something else, her sanity prevailed. "We're going to be late. Her Majesty wouldn't be happy if she noticed that we're not there before she and His Majesty arrive."
Carm groaned.

She let out a discreet sigh when he unwillingly stepped back.

But the sight of her Prince worried and frustrated still made her uncomfortable.

She composed herself, took his left hand and brought it to her mouth and kissed his knuckle, then his wedding band on the ring finger. "I'm yours and only yours," she whispered while looking at him. The gesture surprised him and he mellowed at the sudden contact of soft lips on his hand and finger.

Finally, he gave her a controlled but genuine smirk, and she felt relieved immediately.

They walked holding hands towards the door to the throne room. She glanced at Carm and saw his expression lightened. Contented, she smiled and prayed that she could continue to appease him once they come face to face with the Strakas.

She noticed that his hand that was holding hers became tighter as they walk closer to the throne room.

*****

As per tradition in the Karnstein Castle, she and Carm were assigned to welcome their guests of honor upon entering the throne room. Standing still and all smile, she greeted them like the true princess that she was, friendly, adorable and hospitable, while Carm stood on her right and shook hands with the noblemen, while she curtsied in front of them and their companions. Some of them did not manage to control themselves and took her hand and kissed it, which earned a frown instantly from Carm. Thankfully nobody noticed the brooding prince because most of their guests were chatting with her, and Carm managed to behave well. But her worries never end there…

After welcoming most of the new allies, her heart raced madly as she caught sight of Prince Theodore walking towards them, with Danny walking beside him.

Until now, Danny's presence still made her disoriented. As the agonizing moment of welcoming the Strakas approached, Carm's arm possessively wrapped around her waist pulled her closer to him and he rested his left arm tightly around her waist. She stole a glance at him, and his eyes darted directly to her curious ones, staring at her, in full broodiness, as if warning her. They gazed at each other for a moment, communicating through their intense glare, she, telling Carm that he doesn't have to worry anything, while those melancholic dark eyes remained fixated on her.

"Prince Carl, Princess Laura, pleasure to meet both of you again," Prince Theodore exclaimed, smiling.

Carl slowly lifted his gaze off her and looked towards Prince Theodore, "The pleasure is ours. Thank you for coming," he said, his voice deeper and firmer while they shook hands. He did not return the smile after he found himself finally face to face with the Princess of Straka.

Once their gaze met, Danny simply curtsied in front of them and gave her a smile. At the same time, she felt the hand on her waist held her tighter. "Welcome back Prince Theodore and Princess Danielle," she said breaking the tension immediately and smiled at them, not too wide. Carm's hand on her waist never relaxes, not until the Strakas passed by at them and they heard the herald announced the next incoming guests.

*****

Standing in the middle of the throne room around the King and Queen of Karnstein was the castle's
advisors and new allies. She chose to observe first their guests from a distance after she suggested to Carm to go ahead without her since his mother gestured for him immediately to come and mingle with the new allies.

Her eyes scanned the people who were chatting with His Majesty and Her Majesty as she tried to recall the names and titles of their guests that were introduced to her earlier.

The one thing she hated about entertaining royal guests was remembering their titles aside from their long names. She needed to come up with a method of remembering the names without making a fool of herself by calling someone with a wrong name and title.

The Duke of Bavaria, a middle age balding man with a knack for saying the right words to all the women that he meets, praising them with flowery words. He seemed to be the type to take as many wives and mistresses he desires. Thought he looked ten years older and seemed two times heavier than King Philipp, the Duke of Bavaria's friendly features and charming personality compensated for the lack of his hair. His recent wife looked the same age as hers and shows her wife to everyone like a precious possession that he owns.

The crown Prince of Graz, pale, slim, flawless complexion and average in height like Carm, he reminded her of Gerhard by his short untamed curly ginger hair and the way he wears his clothes: very meticulous and stylish. He was the only one who came without a companion. While they were being introduced, she caught him sneaked a glance at Carm's crotch which caused her to raise an eyebrow.

The Count of Silas, she thought he fitted the description of typical noblemen from northern Styria, he and his wife possessed the same aura like the Karnsteins, when she first arrived in their castle. They were tall, lean, reserved, aloof and cold. They don't talk much and the Countess seemed to be a good acquaintance of Her Majesty after she saw them greeted each other with a kiss on both cheeks. Her mother-in-law normally doesn't greet others like that, not even her.

And last but not the least, the crown Prince of Straka, the typical arrogant heir to the throne. He still looked the same the first time they met each other at her name day; beautifully tanned, handsome, confident, cocky and well-built. Only this time, his body had more muscles, she hoped it did not add bulkiness to his arrogance too. This type of prince was probably one of the most popular amongst the other princesses when choosing a husband: tall, dark and handsome… but not for her. Because when her eyes shifted to the person beside him, it made her smile instantly as she gazed at the sight of her former lover. Danny was still as beautiful and amazing as before. Her presence always made her giddy and excited during the first time of their courtship.

Danny was radiant and awesome, especially when she was with her at the Lawrence Kingdom and would watch Danny train with the Summer Society, a special group of women that engage in combat. Danny was the best and most of them admired her, but it never bothered her since she knew that the awesome princess only has eyes for her.

Suddenly, her curiosity was piqued and she wondered who the best in combat: Danny or Carm?

But she quickly dismissed the thought. There was no way she would want to watch Carm and Danny sword fight. They were both hot headed and passionate fighter; they might end up killing each other. She shook her head to clear her thoughts again, looked down and grinned at herself for thinking about it. That was stupid.

When she looked up to check what her former lover was doing, she was caught off guard when her eyes met a cold glare from her Prince instead. She held his stare and never break it; breaking it would mean she was guilty of something. So, she composed herself and fought the Prince's covetous,
melancholic eyes and gave him the adorable smile that was only for him. But he did not acknowledge it and his stoic demeanor remained until she saw the King pat his shoulder and he unwillingly focused his attention to his father.

"Princess Laura? Are you alright?"

The worried voice of Sarah Jane tore her out of her rumination. She forcefully broke her stare from her Prince and flashed her adorable smile at the two handmaidens in front of her.

"Dinner will start soon, do you wish to freshen up before you proceed to the grand dining hall?" Natalie asked.

She glanced at the group of people that were busy chatting with each other, the King seemed to be excited to discuss business already as he was surrounded by their new allies and king's advisors. She saw the Queen was nowhere to be found and had thought that her mother-in-law might have slipped back to her chamber. But when Her Majesty emerged again from the side entrance to the throne room, she knew that she had no time to go to her own chamber, after she heard the herald announcing that dinner was ready to serve and led their guests to the grand dining room.

She turned around and faced her two handmaidens.

"It's alright, I better go to the dining hall now," she suggested and looked at Natalie. "I'm craving for something good… can you please tell the kitchen that I like to have some mustard to go with my creampuffs?" she ended with a satisfied grin that earned a look of disgust from the dark haired handmaiden. "Thanks."

Natalie returned the smile and nodded before bowing to her and left them.

"Should I escort you to the dining hall Princess?" Sarah Jane asked.

"That wouldn't be necessary."

Carm's deep raspy voice made them turned around and found the Prince standing behind them. Sarah Jane bowed at once.

"Thank you, Sarah Jane, you may go," Carm said, looking at the handmaiden then shifted his gaze to the side. "Shall we go?" he asked, offering his arm.

She smiled and hooked her hand gently to his offered arm, and they walked in silence towards the grand dining hall. She was unsure if he had caught her staring at Danny, and expects any moment now a confrontation from him. But she was surprised when he remained calm and walked quietly with her.

When they arrived inside the dining area and was shown to where they will be sitting, Carm frowned immediately when the servant guided her to sit in between Danny and the young wife of Duke of Bavaria. Almost everyone was chatting and sitting on their respective seats, except King Philipp who had just entered the dining hall together with the Duke of Bavaria. And Danny was engaged in a conversation with the Countess of Weiz and did not notice her yet.

She glanced to her side of the long table and saw all women were seated on her side, while the men were seated on the opposite side across them. Perry told her that it was a small affair and she felt relieved for Carm as she made a quick scan and discovered there were perhaps only twenty guests in attendance.

She sought Carm's eyes while the servant pulled the chair for her. When she saw him nodded, she
smiled at him. She thought he will object to the sitting arrangement.

But before taking her seat, she felt Carm grab her right hand; she paused to see why her Prince stopped her. And before she knew it, Carm's other hand was on the back of her neck and brought her for a heated kiss, and felt his possessive lips on her mouth.

Carm was usually uncomfortable showing his affection to her in public, especially in front of his parents. But right now, she knew where this display of fondness where coming from.

He did not let her go until she felt all eyes were staring at them, and she hesitantly broke from the kiss and saw instantly his disappointment by the contorted lines on his forehead and clenched jaw. "His Majesty is already here," was her excuse after catching an eye at the direction of the king, taking his seat.

To her surprise, King Philipp looked amused after his son's display of possessiveness, while the others stared silently at their direction. And when her eyes darted to Danny, her former lover seemed to be not pleased with what she witnessed and avoided her eyes. Her glance darted back quickly to Carm and cupped his face, while her thumbed stroke his smooth chin, attempting to soothe his mood. He closed his eyes as if relishing the touch and then she gave him a quick peck on the chin before whispering, "I'm yours."

When he opened his eyes, Carm gave her one last agonizing gaze and raised his left eyebrow, before stepping back and walked to the other side of the table, never smiling.

Heart still throbbing anxiously, she hoped and prayed that appeased him.

She was thankful when she saw that he was not placed exactly across her but was two seats away from across her, not too far, but enough to see anything that will transpire between her and Danny. She smiled when she made eye contact with the Count of Silas sitting across her before resuming his conversation with Prince Theo and the Archbishop.

When everyone was comfortably seated in their assigned places, the servants began pouring the wine. It looked like everybody was eager to talk with one another, as she observed each person in their seats; even her broody Prince had finally calmed down and began chatting with the Prince of Graz. The latter seemed to be enjoying talking to the Prince of Karsntein and caught him staring at Carm for a long duration than accepted for a casual conversation.

She made a mental note to ask Carm what they have talked about.

She discreetly glanced to her right side and noticed Danny still emerged in a conversation with the Countess of Weiz. Thankfully, she does not have to start her conversation with her former lover, or else, it would earn a jealous glare from her broody Prince across them. Instead, she shifted to her left and saw a very silent young Duchess of Bavaria beside her. Was this young woman naturally shy or nobody wanted to talk to her?

She was about to get her attention, but the sound of a familiar voice caught hers instead.

"Hi," Danny mumbled and wet her lips after taking a sip from the goblet.

"Hi," she returned, and can't help but to feel anxious as Danny gazed at her, while they both try to start up a conversation. Not wanting to look awkward around the other guests, "I'm glad the Kingdom of Straka had sworn their alliance with us." She commented in a casual tone before drinking from her goblet.

"I told Theo to convince his father…" Danny returned in a full deep low voice.
She swallowed hard and took another sip of her wine. There was something in the way her former lover said those words that caused her to squirm in her chair. As if knowing what she feels, she instinctively looked at Carm and caught her Prince shooting daggers at her former lover across the table. Danny accepted the challenge and shot back a deadly stare.

*Oh boy.*

Luckily, the servants began to serve the soup and Carm and Danny's 'glaring war' was interrupted when Queen Lilita made a little announcement while eating the first course.

While her mother-in-law expressed their appreciation and the accomplishment of this alliance, she and Carm exchanged some stolen glances. Carm's broody eyebrows were enough to get her attention. Her jealous prince was watching her like a hawk.

After Her Majesty's speech, the servants began serving the second course; she decided to strike a conversation with the very quiet duchess beside her instead.

"The poached salmon and melted butter with cream and parsley is one of my favorite dishes," she said and got the full attention of the shy young woman instantly.

After eating the fourth course and engaging in a friendly conversation with the Duchess of Bavaria and Danny, and receiving an occasional jealous glare from Carm, when Danny tries to talk to her alone, she can't wait to taste all the sweets that Perry had made in order to calm her nerves. Although she made sure that whenever she will talk to Danny, she made it a point to include the Duchess in their conversation to avoid any awkward or personal talk between her and Danny. But that didn't stop her Prince from glaring at Danny too.

Her worrying was interrupted when she saw a small plate filled with three small creampuffs with dark chocolate on top was placed in front of her. She grinned at the sight of it but contorted her brows when she noticed something was lacking. She looked up, turned to her left and was about to ask the servant for the missing condiment that would go perfectly with her creampuffs, and raised her hand to call the servant's attention. But she was surprised when her hand bumped into a small bowl that the servant was about to put beside her goblet.

And the next thing she knew, the mustard fell on her lap and the bowl dropped to the ground.

*Oh crap!*

She hated herself for being clumsy sometimes.

"Your Highness, forgive me," the male servant apologized and knelted beside her chair and bowed. He knew very well not to give her a helping hand for fear of being scolded or worst, losing his head.

"It's alright, it's my fault," she tried to assure him as he remained kneeling and bowing. She reached for the white napkin on the table and was about to wipe the mustard on her dress, her eyes opened wide when she saw a hand already on her lap with a napkin and wiping the awful mess.

"I got it," Danny uttered with a smile and quickly cleaned every spot that was covered with mustard in one wiping.

"Thanks," she returned sheepishly and squeezed lightly Danny's hand that was still on her lap to show her gratitude. She does not even recover yet from that embarrassing act when her ears caught the sound of something heavy dropped on the floor.

"Don't touch her!" Carm burst out suddenly.
Chapter End Notes

As always, thanks for your kudos and comments, and helping with the corrections (Sminkle).

Got any constructive criticism? Let me know below and I'll revise it… or else feel free to express what you feel ;-)
Confrontation

Chapter Summary

A look at what happened after Carm's outburst.

A conversation between Laura and Danny.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Laura

"Don't touch her!" Carm burst out suddenly.

She darted her gaze towards Carm and saw him standing, the glare he was giving Danny was even fiercer than before. His look was penetrating; his eyebrows furrowed deeply and his jaw clenched.

Everything stopped and all eyes were now focused on the Prince as he stood there with both palms down on the table. One can almost hear a needle dropping on the floor as everybody waited with bated breath on what was happening.

Oh god.

Was all she could utter as her mind remained paralyzed from fear and anxiety.

She knew this was bound to happen.

Her Prince had all the reasons to still feel threatened and over jealous.

Carm had never fully got over from that kiss.

If only she had controlled her emotions and did not kiss Danny, maybe things would not be this difficult for all of them. And maybe Carm would trust her more.

Distressed, her quick eyes glanced at the faces of the people around the table.

But only one thing troubled her.

Forget about how she will explain to the rest of them why the Prince of Karnstein suddenly had this outburst.

Forget about the cold and intimidating stare of the Queen.

Forget about the disappointed look on the King's face.

Forget about the confused and shocked facial expression of the Prince of Straka.

Forget about the heavy stressful breathing coming from Danny, a sign she knew when Danny was about to engage in a combat when training with the Summer Society.
What mattered most was how she could appease her Prince?

How can she avoid Carm going in a fit of jealous rage?

She saw how Carm almost killed Victor from trying to steal a kiss from her.

She saw how a beautiful garden was ruined after she kissed Danny.

There was no way she will let these things happen again.

Her mind was in terrible turmoil and she felt every muscle in her body tensed as she struggled what to do or say to Carm.

There were no words she could think of right now to calm him instantly.

If only she could come close to him in a jiffy without upsetting him further, and just put her arms around him, maybe it will work and he will melt in her embrace. But that won't work when there were plenty of people around them.

She needed to say something before Carm erupted.

She needed to say the right words that can appease him.

And before she could form a word into her mouth…

"I hope you could all forgive my son's overprotectiveness," Queen Lilita's calm and firm voice cut like a dagger through the awkward silence, and the attention was darted to Her Majesty. "Princess Laura is carrying our Prince's heir… he doesn't like anyone touching his wife's belly, not even I or the King," The Queen explained meticulously, "Princess Laura had a difficulty of getting pregnant and now that she's finally with a child, our Prince had been very caring and protective of his wife and unborn child. That's why my son is overwhelmingly sensitive. We haven't announced yet the good news, so we hope that you could keep the matter between us until the official announcement is made."

She was caught off guard by the Queen's remark.

...A difficulty of getting pregnant?

That annoyed her.

Nevertheless, she felt relieved for the lie.

Her eyes darted back to her Prince and she saw his shoulders relaxed and looked at the Queen's direction.

Carm was really afraid of his mother.

"Carl, I think you owe Princess Danielle an apology," was the calm command of the Queen.

Silent and confused, everybody's attention was suddenly focused to Danny.

"Please forgive me for my terrible behavior," Carm's short and precise apology, then stared at the Princess of Straka.

But instead of a reply, there was silence.
She felt the tension in the room grew as everyone waited for the Princess of Straka's response.

Was Danny challenging Carm?

She hoped not.

Her heart began to race. She gave Danny a quick side glance and caught the Princess glaring at Carm and she does not like the look of it. It reminded her of Danny's mood when she was training for combat with the Summer Society members.

*Oh god, please don't let this become a war!*

Each second that passed was a step forward to a potential battle between the Kingdom of Karnstein and the Kingdom of Straka, as Danny dragged the moment.

If only her ex-lover knew how her Prince swallowed his pride now and barely controlled his rage, Danny should be thankful that she was still alive.

But she cannot take this any longer.

She was getting impatient.

Danny was inviting trouble.

Her inner pacifist kicked in, she needed to intervene whether Queen Lilita will get mad at her.

She will not let Danny put Carm into the spotlight this long, or else, it will result to something more dreadful, in a form of a raging jealous Prince.

"Danny…" she mumbled and gazed at her ex-lover, but the Princess of Straka was still staring at Carm.

She held her breath and waited in agony for Danny to acknowledge her plea.

"There's nothing to apologize at all Prince Carl," Danny finally said and displayed a mocking smile. "I fully understand how one can be so protective when you have a beautiful and lovely wife like Princess Laura. I would also react like the way you did if someone touched the love of my life." She emphasized fully on the 'love of my life'.

She darted her gaze towards Carm and caught him balled his fists.

Her heartbeat raced.

She hoped her Prince can control further his temper, or there will be no alliance at all and her past might come to surface, and everything will be ruined.

Before Carm can retaliate, she needed to get the attention of their guests first. With her condition in the open, she had thought of faking a faint to get Carm's attention and distract the people around her.

Just as she was about to rise from her chair…

"Thank you, Princess Danielle, for being kind and understanding," King Philipp chimed in and raised his hand to call the butler. "Pour more wine! Bring all the sweets and send the troubadours and jongleurs! We need entertainment!"

After that remarkable comment, she released the breath that she was holding and felt the room
relaxed when she heard their guests resumed chatting.

The cumulative sound of cutleries clinking and tinkling on the plate and wine being poured out into goblets can be heard in the background.

This dinner was the most intense one she had ever been to.

With all this tension and stress, thank god she was still in the early stage of her pregnancy, or else she would have given birth by now.

She glanced at Carm's direction and saw a servant put back the Prince's chair in its place. That explained the noise that she heard falling on the ground a while ago. He hesitated for a while but when he met his mother's stare, he took his seat again. She smiled when their eyes met but her Prince ignored her, and focused instead his sight on the goblet in front of him and drank.

All their attention was caught when a servant placed in the middle of the table a huge silver tray of a meter high small creampuff balls piled into a cone and bound with threads of caramel; she recognized it at once. It's the Hollis' favorite sweets during special events. Then followed by two large trays of Perry's creampuff with chocolate ganache on top, vanilla, strawberry and blackberry tartlets, and last but not the least, the small cakes shaped into a cup that Carm named after comparing her to the delicious dessert. Perry's lovely chocolate cupcakes sprinkled with flakes of dark chocolate on top and blueberry cupcakes with lemon cream earned praise instantly among the ladies. While the carrot cupcakes with crushed walnuts, cinnamon, and vanilla cream cheese sprinkled with dried coconut piqued their guests' curiosity but they were cautious tasting it, probably because most of the ingredients from the latter were considered foreign to others.

And to top of it all, the servants began serving chocolate hazelnut pudding with hot chocolate sauce, whipped cream, and fresh strawberries on a silver plate to every guest.

Not a minute had passed, and the jongleurs entered and began dancing around the huge dining hall, and the troubadours came in serenading them.

Thank god for her father-in-law's perfect timing! Perry's sweets and music saved this alliance and dinner from being a complete disaster.

She relaxed on her chair and took her goblet and gulped down the remaining wine. She and Carm still have something to resolve, but at this moment, she was thankful for the distractions.

She took her dessert fork and smiled wide.

Now it was time to indulge.

She gazed at the mouthwatering desserts in front of her; she had been waiting to eat all of Perry’s sugary goodness in order to calm her nerves. The only food she was craving since she woke up was the exquisite baked goods and desserts that Perry made.

But suddenly her stomach lurched and she felt all the wine she consumed coming out in her mouth. *Damn it!*

She lost her appetite.

She put the fork back on the table and paused, trying to figure out if she felt dizzy or she wanted to throw up. She suddenly felt hot and suffocated.
"Laura? Are you alright?" Danny asked in a low tone.

Not wanting to create another scene again and to avoid any jealousy from Carm, "I'm fine," was her quick reply, not meeting Danny's eyes. She searched among the crowd of servants standing around the dining hall, and when her eyes caught the familiar sight of Sarah Jane, her handmaiden friend gave her a nod at once and walked towards her.

While the others were too distracted by the music and enthralled by Perry's delectable desserts, she chose this moment to sneak out as soon as Sarah Jane stood behind her and pulled the chair.

"Where are you going?" was Danny's worried remark.

"I'm just going for some fresh air, don't worry about me," she said in a hushed tone and stole a glance across the table and thankfully, Carm was talking to the Duke of Bavaria and her Prince did not notice her talking to Danny. But her ex-lover seemed worried and was about to rise, but she discreetly looked at Danny. "Stay. Please," she begged and before Danny can utter another word, Sarah Jane already took her arm and quickly led her out.

*****

"Nat, can you please relay a message to Her Majesty that I'm not feeling well and will just join them tomorrow for lunch?" she said as soon as she came out of the bathroom of her chamber. She was supposed to go to the garden to clear her mind and calm her nerves but decided at the last minute to just go directly to her chamber.

"Should I tell Prince Carl too?" Natalie asked before leaving the room.

She debated for a while on telling him, since she does not want him to worry, but she knew Carm would wonder where she was and that might upset him further. She silently nodded and the black haired handmaiden bowed quickly before walking towards the door.

"Do you want me to ask LaFontaine for some of their tea to make you feel better?" Sarah Jane asked after taking off the crown and put it inside the jewelry cabinet.

"No, thanks, I'll be fine," she replied as she helped Sarah Jane untangled her braided hair. "Let's not bother them. They're very busy and I asked Perry to tell Laf not to leave Carl's side." Sarah Jane silently nodded and began removing her clothes.

She suddenly felt exhausted and all she could think about was to get in bed and sleep.

"The hot water in the basin is ready," Sarah Jane informed. "I'll warm your chemise now…"

She just nodded and walked slowly to the bathroom. The incident downstairs took a lot of her energy and she paused for a moment to regain her strength.

"Princess, are you alright?"

She heard the worried remark of Sarah Jane and the next thing she knew, her friend was already beside her.

"Come on. I'll help you wash so you could rest immediately," the handmaiden uttered.

She was about to protest, but she felt Sarah Jane's arm wrapped around her back and guided her towards the bathroom.
After a few minutes, she was thankful to be finally in bed.

"Are you sure you don't want anything for the stomach ache?" Sarah Jane asked while sitting on the side of the bed.

"It's alright, I feel better now, thanks," she returned with a wide smile, too grateful for her friend's care.

"I'll see you tomorrow then. Goodnight," the handmaiden rose from the bed and drew the curtains around the bed.

Just as Sarah Jane was about to draw the drape on the left side of the bed, their attention was caught when the wooden door flung open and in came Carm striding towards the four post bed, followed by LaFontaine. Sarah Jane moved to the side and bowed as the Prince approached her.

Carm sat right away on the side of the bed, "Are you alright?" he asked his voice sounded worried but firm, but his eyes were full of concern. He seemed to be controlling his emotions and still upset about what happened at dinner.

"I feel much better now," she mumbled and gazed at him.

She was waiting for Carm to touch her.

Waiting for Carm to caress her cheeks…

Waiting for Carm to kiss her…

She knew that her very possessive Prince could not let a minute pass by without touching her… especially when she was sick.

Her eyes darted on his red thin lips… the lips that conquered every part of her body. She was dying to feel them again on hers. But she controlled herself, unsure of Carm's mood. She gazed back at those dark melancholic eyes and wondered what was on his mind right now. She was about to reach for his face but Carm realized at once what was in her mind and he rose from the bed.

Her heart ached with disappointment.

"LaFontaine, can you please check my wife?" Carm ordered giving way to the Valet to sit on the bed, while he stood on the side.

"Hey frosh, can you tell me what happened?"

LaFontaine's friendly remark put a smile on her face and she calmed at once. She sat on the bed and let them check her pulse, eyes and put their hand on her forehead.

"It's nothing… I just feel something ache in my stomach. Then it became suddenly hot in the dining hall, and I felt dizzy," she related, trying to make not a big fuss about her condition while Laf continued to check up on her. "Perhaps I had too much wine and…"

"I think it's stress," LaFontaine cut in. "The event today had been too much for you. I'll make some special tea to calm your nerves, that's why you had a stomach ache. If you drink it before sleeping, you'll feel better tomorrow and can go back to your duties."

"Shouldn't she be staying in bed for at least a day instead of doing her duties?" Carm interrupted, furrowing his brows and stared at the Valet. "My wife is pregnant… she should take a rest."
"Well, it's up to Princess Laura and how she feels tomorrow," LaFontaine replied.

"Thanks, Laf, I'll be happy to drink that tea of yours before I go to sleep. I'm sure it'll help me regain my energy back," she said and gave them an appreciative smile, before shifting her gaze to the grumpy Prince. "Carl, I promised Her Majesty that I'll join them for lunch tomorrow, I don't want to disappoint her."

"Then I'll tell my mother that you're not feeling well," was his determined answer.

She frowned after hearing his remark. She hated when Carm was deciding for her.

"I feel better now and Laf's tea always worked," she reasoned out and saw him glaring at her for defying his order. But she won't let him dictate her what to do. "And after a good night sleep, I'll be ready to resume my duties. And besides, I'll just sit there, eat and talk. So it won't be too hard."

"Are you sure you don't want to disappoint my mother? Or you're just dying to see her again?" Carm retaliated, with a hint of bitterness and suspicions.

She was caught off guard by that comment and glared back at Carm. She does not expect that her Prince will accuse her of wanting to see Danny again. All she was thinking was to show her mother-in-law that she was capable of doing her duties and responsibilities as the crown princess of Karnstein. It does not even slip in her mind that she will have a chance to see Danny again.

"First of all, I don't want Her Majesty to think that I'm not capable of performing my duties in this castle," she explained, the tone of her voice matching Carm's firmness and aggressiveness. "Secondly, it's my body so I get to decide if I want to rest or not; and don't worry, I won't put our baby at risk," she caught him clenched his jaw and knew that Carm was brewing mad inside. "And lastly, no, I'm not dying to see her again, since I already have my eyes set on you."

"Then why did you touched her?!"

She flinched at Carm's sudden outburst, while LaFontaine freeze beside her, and Sarah Jane moved further back to a corner. She knew that this will happen; he will remind her of that small innocent mistake. But this time she knew that she had done nothing wrong and was determined to face him.

"I didn't intend to touch her. She helped me and it's in my nature to touch back someone when saying thank you," she retorted and looked Carm straight in the eyes, to show him that she has nothing to hide and that touch does not mean anything. "When are you going to fully trust me?" she asked, her voice softened and narrowed her eyes. This time she saw him fidgeted and caught LaFontaine already standing from the bed. She seized their hand right away and caught their attention. "No Laf, I want you to stay..." she ordered and glanced at her handmaiden who was still standing silently in the corner. "And you too, Sarah Jane," she mentioned and then darted back her stare to Carm. "I want you two to hear that I don't feel anything for Danny anymore, and the only thing that is binding me and Danny is our past and our friendship. I feel nothing deeper and meaningful for her anymore. And I hope to gain your trust fully because I wish nothing in this world except you. You're the one that I want Carl," she said with utmost sincerity and caught him controlling his emotions, as he remained staring at her in his usual stoic demeanor.

As she waited for him to react, the tension in the room intensified but she remained calm and patient.

She hated this cold Carl.

But before her broody Prince can talk, a knock on the door followed by Perry entering the chamber broke the tension.
The Lady in Waiting walked towards them in her calm and reserved manner and bowed to them.

"Forgive me for interrupting, but Her Majesty wishes to have a word with His Highness at the Queen's chamber, immediately," Perry announced in a semi-formal way.

Carm gave her one last glare before turning around and strode towards the door.

"I'm sorry, did I just..." was Perry's confused comment after realizing that she just walked in and disturbed something intense.

"No Perry, it's alright," she assured her Lady in Waiting and squeezed Laf's hand. "Thanks, Laf, I think I'll have that tea now."

The Valet gave her a smile and nodded before leaving the room.

"Do you still need anything Princess?" Sarah Jane asked after approaching the four post bed.

"No, that'll be all. Thanks for staying, I'll see you tomorrow," she returned and gave her a quick hug before Sarah Jane can leave.

"Anytime Princess," the handmaiden replied and returned the smile.

Perry gave her a moment to relax and once they were alone, the Lady in Waiting carefully sat on the side of the bed.

"How are you sweetie?" was Perry's worried question. "I've heard everything that happened."

She bowed her head and pouted her lips.

"I'm overwhelmed."

The next thing she knew, her second mother was hugging her and rubbing her back.

"You're strong... you can do this," was Perry's encouraging words. "You just have to continue fighting for the truth and what you feel. His Highness had been hurt and it will take time before he could fully trust to you. What's important is to be patient while you earn his trust again. Don't accused Prince Carl of being too jealous, because he has a reason to be jealous. And he's still going to have his doubts. Don't fight with him; instead, continue to reassure your love for him."

"Isn't that what I'm doing now?" was her sarcastic remark.

"You tend to be stubborn sometimes and gets impatient easily... and you argued a lot with His Highness lately," Perry reminded. "Try to put yourself in his situation. He's paranoid and overzealous jealous because someone that you kissed and loved before is here again. Wouldn't that make you go mad?"

Perry had a point.

She took a deep breath and released from the embrace. Having Perry by her side always made her life easier and bearable.

"What will I do without you?" was her grateful comment.

Perry forced a smile and looked down.

She knew there was something else.
"What is it, Perry?"

The Lady in Waiting took out a piece of paper from her bosom and handed it to her. She stared blankly at the folded paper and then looked up and met Perry's worried stare.

"I've contemplated if I'll give that to you or not," Perry revealed, voice serious. "But it will be unfair for you if I didn't. And besides, I think it's time that you and Danny talk and clear things out."

She fumbled and opened the paper nervously.

Her eyes widened while she read the content:

'Can we talk? Tomorrow? After the men leave to hunt. I'll be waiting in the garden under the willow tree.'

*****

She just finished helping the cook and Perry with the menu for lunch and will soon meet the other noblewomen and Her Majesty before eating lunch. And while the men were out hunting and horseback riding around the kingdom, she took this chance to meet her ex-lover.

Her heart throbbed fiercely as she made her way through the garden. If Carm found out that she will meet Danny alone, he will definitely go berserk. Thankfully, the handmaidens and LaFontaine surrounded the area and made sure that nobody gets in or out of the garden without them noticing.

Perry volunteered to come with her and stay with her in case Carm suddenly arrived and discovered that she was talking to Danny in the garden. At least Perry can vouch to her Prince that she was not alone with her ex-lover.

Once they arrived on the site, Perry chose to stand and wait with a good distance from where Danny was sitting. Not too far, but just enough to give them space to talk privately.

She carefully approached the same bench stone that they sat on the last time Danny visited.

"Is it true?" Danny did not leave any chance for pleasantries, her voice a mixture of frustration and irritation.

She flashed a confused look and went to the side of the stone bench, and sat beside Danny, "What are you talking about?"

"That you're pregnant with his child?" Danny returned, with a hint of bitterness at the mention of the word 'pregnant'.

She swallowed hard and stared at her former lover.

This was going to be difficult.

The painful news of carrying Carm's child was marred on Danny's face.

"I am."

"Damn it!" Danny exclaimed and rose, and then kicked some dirt on the side before pacing to and fro.
Seeing her former lover upset always hurt her. "Dan-" she stood up and was about to reach for Danny, but the latter averted her touch. "We both know that it would come to this, please try to be reasonable. I'm married to Carl and this is bound to happen."

"I know that…" Danny retorted and glared. "But I didn't expect you'd give in quickly to him. Laura, do you know that since I married Theo I've only slept with him twice?" was her frustrated remark. "I cannot move on and I still think of you. I cannot bear being close and intimate with someone I don't love, because deep inside it's still you I want."

"But we both know that we can't be together," was her equally frustrated reply, and felt this ache coming back in her heart. "Danny… I'm sorry that you can't move on. I'm sorry that you can't feel anything for Theo. But don't expect me not to feel something for Carl, because I can assure you, I have feelings for him," she said and was considering if she would tell the truth without hurting Danny more. "I care for Carl," she mumbled and caught the pain in Danny's eyes. "Whether we like it or not, this is the life that we chose, we have to live in it. And please don't expect me to treat Carl, like the way you're treating Theo."

"I'm not asking you anything," Danny retorted in almost high pitch and then mellowed down upon realizing that she almost had an outburst. "I'm just surprised that you like someone who is totally the opposite of all the things that you hate in a person."

She took a deep breath. Danny caught her there.

Danny shut her eyes and clenched both her fists, let out a deep sigh and opened her eyes again. "You're right. I should stop dwelling on the past," the Princess of Straka commented but her voice carried the stain of bitterness. "And I'm sorry that I still care for you. Because unlike you, I still cherish all the things that we've done together and I still love you."

She wrinkled her brow and took a deep breath. How can she explain to Danny that they can never be together again without hurting her?

"Danny…" she called out her ex-lover looked disoriented and frustrated.

"Laura, tell me you just got carried away and forced to like him," was the Princess of Straka's desperate plea. "I know that our royal obligations are the most important thing in our lives, and I understand if you have to bear him an heir right away. But it doesn't mean that we can't see each other and do the things we like. We can still be together even if we're married to someone else. That's why I asked Theo to sworn our alliance to this kingdom… to be near you again."

She got tongue-tied.

What the hell does Danny want?

She cannot imagine that it would go this far and that her ex-lover would still want a connection with her especially an intimate one.

"Are you telling me to have an affair with you and to cheat on Carl?" was her confused retort and narrowed her eyes while she waited for Danny's reply. She knew Danny to be honorable and will not resort to this kind of things.

"Laura, getting married to these princes is merely for political sake," Danny elaborated. "There are royal couples who remain married but have mistresses or lovers. I'm sure Prince Carl has mistresses that you don't know of… Theo has two and I don't mind."

"Danny! Stop it." Was her upset remark. "I am not going to cheat on Carl and I know that he doesn't
have a mistress because he told me that he will not take one."

Danny paused for a while and gave her a sarcastic grin.

"Laura, stop being naïve," Danny said, challenging the truth. "Every prince, king, and nobleman have a mistress or two, don't be fooled by your divine prince. Because you can't give him what he needs and wants in bed."

And that was where her former lover was wrong.

She can give Carm what he wanted and needed in bed, and she will make sure that Carm will never seek Ell again…

And right now she needed her former lover to stop with this delusion.

"Danny, what I and Carl do in the four corners of our room is our own concern," she explained and looked straight in Danny's eyes. "I am not taking any lover and nor is Carl taking any mistress. We're perfectly contented with our marriage and respect each other," she claimed and caught the shock in her ex-lover's eyes. "What you're suggesting is never going to happen."

"And why is that?" was Danny's unconvinced reply. "I still love you and we'll be seeing each other often because of the alliance. We can sneak out like we used to do before. How can that be impossible?"

"Because I fell in love with Carl," was her confident proud reply and displayed a satisfied grin.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for your wonderful feedbacks and kudos!

Got any constructive criticism or grammar correction? Let me know below and I'll revise it… or else feel free to express what you feel, I'm always open for any reaction ;-)
Rattled

Chapter Summary

A look at what happened after Carm frustratingly left Laura's chamber and was summoned by the Queen.

LaFontaine revealed something to Carm, which Da would never tell the King.

Chapter Notes

I know, it's been over a month and sorry to keep you all waiting. I got distracted by another fanfic/ t.v. series and can't concentrate on my writing. I stopped reading for a while because I got frustrated with the lack of kissing and smut :-P So I decided to come back here. But I'm back, and I hope you will all still bear with me and my twisted writing. Thanks again for your wonderful comments and kudos, that's what keeps me going :-)
She complied and met her mother's icy glare. The thought of apologizing for her unpleasant behavior crossed her mind but remembered what her mother taught her:

'You're the heir to the throne, you never apologize.'

Instead, she remained silent and accepted her mother's admonition.

"I don't know why and how you were suddenly enraged by the Princess of Straka's kind gesture…" the Queen's words were tinged of curiosity. "Is there something I need to know?"

Her heart pounded and she felt beads of cold sweat formed on her forehead. The Queen's curious glare remained and she tried her best not to blink while those wicked eyes continued to challenge her. The last thing she wanted to do was to out her wife's dark past. She composed herself and gathered her thoughts.

"There's nothing to tell My Queen Mother," she said with absolute certainty, her voice deeper and firmer. "I thought the servant is going to touch my wife, but the Princess of Straka was quick to react that I didn't get a chance to stop before she touched my wife."

Silence enveloped them, as she waited with bated breath of her mother's reaction.

Will her Queen Mother accept her lie?

She let out a discreet sigh when she saw her mother's eyes blinked.

The Queen nodded and walked closer. "Very well, I believed you. But I'm beginning to worry about you," the voice softened. "You looked stressed lately and more irritable. It is not good for your mental being. How can you perform completely the task of the heir when you're not thinking well? Have you thought about what I've said to you before?"

She frowned and raised her left eyebrow in questioning silence and before she knew it, her mother's hand was caressing her left cheek.

"Carl, if you can't find any mistress that you think can appease you, I will ask your father to give Eleanor to you," the Queen explained. "I am sure he would not mind since he still has two other mistresses."

She got totally dumbfounded.

Why all of a sudden her mother was offering Ell to her?

She felt like the air around her diminished and something stirred inside her. Ever since she met Ell, her mother warned her never to get close with Ell. What made her mother reconsider?

"The last thing I want to do is to trouble my King Father," she returned after contemplating for the right answer. "I know how fond he is of Eleanor." She reasoned and the hand that was caressing her face was removed.

"And I've seen how you like Eleanor, that's why I'm giving you the chance that you never had before with your father's mistress," was the Queen's straightforward reply.

"Thank you my Queen Mother for the generous offer, and for considering my needs," she said and moved closer to the Queen. "But I think it will be better than I lay my hands off from King Father's mistress, since I promised you, my Queen Mother…" she paused, gracefully took the delicate hand of her mother into her hands and looked at her straight into the eyes, before kissing the back of the
Queen's hand. "...that I will not get involved with my father's mistress. I want to respect that promise."

"Very well, if that's what you wished," was the Queen's satisfied reply and smiled back. "...And thank you for still considering how I feel."

"My Queen Mother's feelings would always be my priority," she returned and displayed a cocky smirk once she saw her mother's features softened, and she felt the Queen's delicate lips on her right cheek.

*****

The remnants of last night's tension at dinner still irked her. Hearing Laura's reassuring words did help a little to quell her anger and possessiveness. She barely slept and the scene of Laura's former lover touching her wife kept flashing in her mind. But when she woke up today, she set aside her worries and focused on her duty. Her father had never said a word about the incident last night, and she was fully aware that he was angry too.

Today she had fulfilled her duty of being the ideal host and behaved like the perfect prince the Queen expected her to be. Last night's conversation with her mother did not surprise her at all. She knew she would be in for some reprimanding due to her behavior, but she was surprised when her mother offered Ell to her. What could be the reason behind her mother's change of heart?

She shook her head and cleared her thoughts... this was not the time to contemplate. The King was disappointed on what happened last night and she was bound to show him that she can save and preserve this alliance.

She took pride in showing the visitors how beautiful and rich their land was and the entire day went out smoothly. But in between horse riding, chatting and helping the King with the tour, she still cannot stop worrying about what she left behind in the castle.

After treating their guests to a generous and impressive luncheon outside, at one of the King's manor retreat in the heart of the forest, they started to head towards home before the sunset.

She can't wait to come home and eased her anxiety.

*****

"Where's my wife?" she asked, as soon as she dismounted her horse. Followed by His Majesty and the other guests, they were met right away by the castle's servants and led inside the castle.

"The Princess is in the rose garden, Your Highness," LaFontaine replied after bowing.

She was burning to see Laura.

She knew the Princess was assigned to entertain the guests during lunch, but it was nearly sundown, what was Laura doing in the rose garden?

She clenched her jaw as she recalled the time she caught Laura and Princess Danielle talking in the garden last time. She strode towards her own garden, rage prickling on her skin while LaFontaine received the guests and was left behind. They were about to say something but she ignored them.

Her eyes caught right away the sight of Laura and the Princess of Straka chatting, consumed with jealousy, the first thing that came into her mind was to drag Laura out of there…
"Ah, my son, it's nice of you to join us…"

The pleasant but firm voice of her mother snatched her out from the verge of an outburst and looked at the direction where the voice came. Surprised, she slowed down her steps and controlled her emotions when she saw her Queen Mother and two older noble women on the other side, standing among the bushes of white roses. Confused, she stole a glance to her left and noticed the Duchess of Bavaria was standing also beside Laura. She was too blinded by her jealousy and did not notice the young lady earlier. She darted her gaze again to her mother and straightened her back before bowing.

Retaining her composure and coming up with an excuse to avoid embarrassing herself, "Please forgive me for interrupting my Queen Mother, ladies…” she said while nodding to each of them, before looking again to the suspicious mother of hers. "I want to let you all know that we have arrived and are looking forward to joining supper with you."

"Carl, why not send the servants to bring the message?” was the Queen's curious remark. "You could have rested instead of taking the trouble of coming here."

"It's not a bother at all my Queen Mother," was her quick reply.

"It's a lovely garden you have here, Your Highness," the Countess of Silas commented, standing beside the Queen and smiling, as she admired the full-blown flowers around them despite summer being over. "Her Majesty was just telling us that you personally take care of this garden, what a surprise. I never heard a royal blood that likes getting his hands dirty."

She nodded politely and gave the countess a brief smile, "My Queen Mother is generous and kind to let me do one of the things I love. Gardening had been a hobby of mine since I was young; it makes me happy and relaxed."

"I understand what you mean… with the heavy responsibility of being the crown prince, you need to do something you love aside from serving your people," was the countess' honest answer. "I wonder how many roses Her Highness receives every day?"

This time the attention was focused on Laura, who was now red as a beet and displayed a timid smile.

"I'm afraid I'm not that romantic to give my wife roses every day," she returned and caught the bored facial expression of Laura's ex-lover. A cocky smile began to form at the corner of her mouth. "But in this garden, Princess Laura and I shared our first picnic together. It is also here I proposed to her and asked her if she would do the honor of being the mother of my heirs."

The last sentence elicited a discreet 'ohs' and 'ahs' among the ladies and an irritated look from the Princess of Straka.

"Forgive me for asking Your Highness…” the Countess of Silas seemed to be not lacking any discreet. She wondered if it was due to the countess' being a good acquaintance of the Queen. "But were you not betrothed to the crown princess before she came here? Why proposed to her again?"

"I was. Just like any other royal marriage, my father and the King of Hollis arranged our betrothal," was her firm reply and darted her gaze to Laura, who seemed to be blushing even more. She does not know if her wife's reason for being flushed was embarrassment or annoyance. But she enjoyed watching the irritated expression of her rival. "I want to know how the Princess of Hollis really felt about me. I gave her the choice to still decide for herself even if our families have already agreed. I don't want to force her to marry me if she does not feel the same way like I do…” she paused, waiting for Laura's reaction, as the Princess remained quiet and found the ground fascinating.
"And how do you feel that time?" The countess asked, burning with curiosity.

"I felt anxious and thought that… I will die if she said no because I knew in my heart that she's the one…" she confessed as all eyes were on her, except Laura's and Princess Danielle. "I'm very lucky that she said yes…"

"Thank you for sharing your beautiful story with us Your Highness," was the satisfied comment from the Countess of Silas. "It's rare to hear this kind of story among the royals and nobles."

"With my son inheriting his intelligence from his mother and handsome features from his father, how Princess Laura can say no?" the Queen quipped, with an air of a mother's pride and looked at Laura. "Don't you agree, Princess Laura?"

"I couldn't agree more, Your Majesty," Laura returned and earned a discreet giggle among the ladies, except the one on her right side.

"I think we better get inside and prepare for dinner before the men complain of waiting," the Queen suggested and led the way out of the garden.

She bowed her head and offered her arm to escort her mother. Her eyes followed Laura's direction and gave the princess a nonchalant look while they passed by at her.

*****

"Have you seen her?"

LaFontaine asked as soon as she arrived at her chamber and they removed at once her black hunting cape.

"Yes."

"And…" they added as they hang the heavy cape into the hook.

"And, what?" she shrugged and sat down on her chair as LaFontaine kneeled in front to help her removed her boots.

"Did you talk to her?"

"No," she said nonchalantly. After removing her socks, she rose from the chair and unbuttoned her outer black tunic.

"Didn't you ask her how she's doing?" was the Valet's persistent question.

"She looks pretty fine to me since she was still there entertaining our guests even after lunch, until sundown," was her broody sarcastic retort and handed the outer tunic to her Valet, and then began to untie her trousers."

Not satisfied with the replies they were getting, "Spit it out," LaFontaine demanded.

She gave them an irritated glare, as they remained standing in front of her. "You know… you're annoying," she stated and removed her trousers and let it fall on the floor. She stepped out from it but did not bother picking it up. She knew it will irritate them.

"I know," they retorted, not moving from their spot. "…And you are too," they returned and snatched the trousers lying on the floor. "So, care to tell me what's making you broodier aside from the regular broodiness that we see every day?"
She rolled her eyes and groaned. She knew they will not let it go. "Fine! I'm irritated because I saw her talking to the Amazon princess in my garden."

"Why? Were they alone?" was the Valet's curious and worried remark.

"No, my Queen Mother and the others were there too," she returned and crossed her arms.

"Then why are you irritated?" was the impatient answer.

"Arrgh… just leave me alone!" she was about to walk towards the bathroom, but their hand seized her elbow.

"You know, it's not advisable to attend a very important dinner when you're grumpy as a bear," they stated and crossed their arms on their chest. "Tell me what's bothering you."

"I think you know very well what's bothering me," was her irritated reply and ran her hands impatiently through her hair.

"Didn't I tell you to trust your wife?"

"You did, but don't blame me for still being paranoid…" she retaliated and glared at them. "I still haven't forgotten how my wife kissed her… it's still in here," she claimed and pointed to her head, before balling her hand into a fist.

"I do understand how you feel, but I hope your jealousy won't cloud your sanity," they claimed and raised their eyebrows. "You'll gonna be a father soon and your wife will need all the love, understanding and care from you. I hope you'll be more aware of your behavior and tame your temper. It's not good for the mother and child."

She took a deep breath and relaxed her fist.

They were right.

Again.

She suddenly felt ashamed and realized how badly she behaved around Laura.

She swallowed hard and lost her ability to speak.

An awkward silence occurred and she found herself looking at her feet.

"And why are you so grumpy? You just got laid a few nights ago!" LaFontaine proclaimed without any fuss. "You're lucky that Princess Laura is letting you—"

She put her hand quickly on the Valet's mouth and looked around her like a guilty thief, afraid that someone might hear them.

"What are you talking about?" was her irritated reply and released her hand that was on LaFontaine's mouth.

"Don't deny it, I know that you and Princess Laura did it when she slept here the other night," LaFontaine stated with full of certainty.

Still denying, "We just slept and cuddled."

"You?! Sleep and cuddle? Ha! Who are you kidding…?" was the Valet's reply and burst out
laughing. "…horny panther."

Vexed at the last remark, she glared at them but it did not bother them a bit. Reclaiming her innocence… "But it's true! Since you told us that Laura is pregnant I never…"

"Never what?"

"We never have intercourse!" she defended, knowing that her Valet would reprimand her if they found out that they were not following the Church's law. "I even avoid sleeping with Laura because I don't know if I could control myself," she claimed like an innocent child and caught the wrinkle on the Valet's forehead. "I know what you're going to tell me. My Queen Mother reminded me too, and I'm aware of the law. You don't have to tell me again."

Confused, "What are you talking about?" LaFontaine furrowed their brows. 

"Before you scold me, I'm telling you now the truth," was her confident remark. "I and Laura did not have sex, so you can drop your plan of sending me to confession. I didn't commit any sin."

But instead of criticizing her, she was surprised when LaFontaine burst into laughter again.

"What the-?" was her confused reaction, as she watched them cried due to excessive laughing. "What's so funny?!" she demanded, annoyed.

When their laughter subsided, and as they managed to calm and dried their tears, "I didn't realize that you'll gonna believe and obey that law…" they said and can't help but to laugh again.

Growing more annoyed and embarrassed, "It's the law. My Queen Mother told me too," she claimed.

"You can't be serious?!"

"Wha-?" suddenly she felt ignorant around them. Her main concern was not to hurt the baby and not to make Laura uncomfortable, that was the reason she refused to have intercourse with Laura. "Do you want to stay overnight in the dungeons?" she threatened if they don't stop ridiculing her and their facial expression became serious.

"That's one of the stupid laws of the Church," LaFontaine finally revealed.

"But it's in the book," she insisted. "And besides, I don't want to hurt the baby," she finished and saw LaFontaine shook their head.

"No, you dimwit, you'll not hurt the baby," they said and turned more serious. "The baby is protected by some kind of bag inside the mother's womb."

She furrowed her brows upon hearing that and flashed them a questioning look, before nodding to them to resume.

"This sac protects the baby from germs," they explained with passion. "And inside there's a fluid that keeps the baby cool and protected from pressure outside the womb."

"You mean the baby is floating and swimming inside the womb?" was her dumb question.

Suppressing a laugh, "Umm, yes, in a way," they said and spoke further. "Mother and child are linked by a placenta which provides food and oxygen and protects the baby against bacteria. A woman's womb is exceptionally strong; the muscle is designed like that to provide the baby with a safe environment in which to grow… that's why I highly doubt that the baby would be hurt in case
you put your well en-

And before they can say it, "I get it," she quipped and rubbed her chin. "So, where did you get all these information?" she got curious and wondered why the Church was against it.

"I read it from one of the few books that were confiscated by the Church," LaFontaine replied with a slight hesitation. "Please don't tell anyone about it. That book is very important to me."

"So where did you get it?" was her curious remark, sensing the Valet's discomfort.

"My father owns one and he let me read it so that I could learn more about the human body," was their honest answer. "Most of the things I learned are from that book."

"If Da owns one, how come he never tells my Queen Mother or King Father the truth?" she wondered and never thought Da would keep any secret from her father since they were good friends.

"Because my father does not want to create any trouble between His Majesty and the Archbishop," LaFontaine related. "Back in the old days, he told me that His Majesty relied too much on the Church's support and help, with regards to your true identity."

LaFontaine did not elaborate more when she nodded. She took a deep sigh and smirked at them. "Well, I'm glad you told me the truth."

"Because I trust you… and I know that you're not that compliant with regards to the Church's law," was their cocky reply and grinned like a devil.

"Hey! I do obey the laws of the Church," she claimed and shot daggers at them.

"When was the last time you attend the mass?"

"I was busy last Sunday with my King Father," she reasoned out.

"How about the week before?" they nagged.

"I'm not feeling well, that's when Laura-" she hesitated, as she remembered how Laura cruelly left her balls swelling and painful. "Oh… Never mind!" she finished becoming grumpy and changed the topic. "Did you remember the thing that I asked you to do?"

They just grinned and nodded. "Everything is going to be fine at dinner."

She gave them a satisfied smirk and proceeded to the bathroom to relieve herself of all the tension of the day.

A good warm bath would be nice and refreshing.

*****

That night, during supper, sitting across her princess, she cannot help but to stare at Laura and think of all the 'inappropriate' things she wanted to do with her beautiful wife when she goes back and sleeps on Laura's bed tonight.

She thought of surprising her wife.

They had never spoken since she visited Laura in the Princess chamber and her wife was very aware that she was upset with the incident. But after having a conversation with LaFontaine, something in her heart lightened up. She took a sip from her goblet while exchanging casual glances between
Laura. She tried to control the amused smirk that was threatening to show, as she watched her wife who was now seated between her mother and the Duchess of Bavaria. She reminded herself to commend her Valet of putting Laura's disappointed ex-lover at the farthest end of the table. After taking a deep satisfied sigh, she sipped her wine again, while something diabolical played in her thoughts.

She had been deprived so long and tricked of that stupid law, she had thought of taking 'revenge' against the Church. Before going to Laura's chamber, she thought of browsing first the forbidden book.

She can't wait until this dinner was over.

*****

After having a cordial and satisfactory dinner with their new allies, and ending the night with some music and friendly chat with their guests in the music room, she sighed with relief after saying goodnight and bowing to her parents.

She tried avoiding Laura and thought of teasing her wife, until the Princess was piqued by curiosity on why she just kept on giving her stolen glances, but never smiled nor speaks to her.

Her plan seemed to work when she saw Laura approaching her.

"My Prince, may I have a word with you afterwards?" Laura expressed as the last guest left the music room.

Her eyes searched around the room and saw Sarah Jane, Natalie and LaFontaine waiting for them. She thought of talking to Laura now instead of later, so as not to ruin her plan for tonight.

She can barely control the twitching inside her braise.

The excitement of having to wait, and pretending she was still upset was making her frustratingly horny.

She tried hard to curb her libido and displayed her stoic demeanor.

"I want some alone moment with the Princess," she said, looking at the handmaidens and her Valet. The three quickly bowed their heads and left the music room, and closed the door behind them.

She remained calm and stared at Laura. The Princess seemed to be fidgeting, was her wife still nervous about what happened last night? How she wished, she could hold her hands and tell her that everything was alright. But she still held her composure. She wanted to surprise Laura tonight.

"Carl…" Laura began and swallowed hard, wringing her fingers. "I have something to tell you and I hope you'll understand-"

"Get to the point," she demanded her voice firm and grew suspicious. She could sense Laura's discomfort and she felt something unpleasant was about to happen. Her heart began to race as she waited impatiently. She furrowed her brows when she saw Laura took out a folded paper and showed it to her. "What's this?"

"I want you to read it…" Laura requested, hands slightly shaking.

She took the offered paper carefully, opened it and read. When her sight landed on the last part, she clenched her jaw and before she could say anything.
"I'm sorry that I didn't tell you earlier…" was the Princess worried remark.

Disappointed, "I thought there will be no secrets between us anymore?" she crumpled the paper in her hand and lost her composure.

"I'm aware of that, but I forgot about the letter and before I realized it, Danny was invited-" Laura's frustrated comment.

"So, you knew all along that she is coming, but you never mention anything to me," she accused her temper showing. "You made me look like a fool!" Suddenly, she became paranoid, "Tell me… did she have anything to do with swearing their alliance with us?"

Laura looked down, "Yes…"

She did not give Laura a chance to explain and threw the paper on the floor, before turning around. But Laura caught her hand and halted her.

"Carl, it's finished. I told her there's nothing more left for her here," Laura stated, and put her own hand to her heart.

She continued glaring at her, and realized that Laura had talked to the Princess of Straka without her knowledge, "When did you tell her?"

Caught off guard, Laura released her hand.

A deadening silence occurred and the tension around them thickened.

Jealousy slowly possessed her, "When did you talk to her?!" she demanded.

Laura displayed a brave face and took a deep breath, "This morning. She asked if we can talk. I didn't tell you because you were angry last night," the Princess explained firmly. "I took Perry with me and met Danny before lunch. Laf was there too, so I was not alone. I told Danny that we're already finished and she should move on because I already did. And I told her that I love you and you're the only one that I want, and no one else."

After that exasperating quick answer, the tension in her body still cannot be appeased.

The thought of Laura sneaking behind her back and meeting her rival was unacceptable.

Laura not telling her about the letter while they become intimate again after so many misunderstandings wounded her pride.

Her thoughts were in chaos.

Her emotions rattled.

She wanted to tell Laura that she was so in love with her that it hurt so much with just a slight dishonesty.

Growing frustrated and not wanting to hurt Laura further while she struggled with her emotions, she turned around and strode towards the door.

"Carl!" Laura pleaded.

She ignored her call. When she opened the door, she was met by three pairs of worried eyes. Realizing they were caught eavesdropping, the two handmaidens bowed their heads, while
LaFontaine trailed behind her.

"What happened?" was the Valet's worried question.

She ignored them and when she reached the grand hall and was about to climb the grand staircase, her steps became faster and passed by Laura's confused Lady in Waiting by the end of the staircase. She did not give Perry a chance to speak after bowing to her and resumed climbing the stairs, ignoring her too.

Once they arrived in her chamber, her mind was already made up.

LaFontaine was about to utter a word, but she flashed them a deadly glare and they frowned at her, while they help her removed her crown and began their regular ritual of removing her clothes and getting ready for bed.

When she was already in her braise and inner tunic, the tension in the chamber broke when they heard a knock on the door.

"Check who it is," she ordered and LaFontaine went to the door to answer it but did not let the intruder in before asking her permission first.

She heard the door closed. She noticed the worried expression on her Valet as they slowly approached her and knew right away what they were going to say.

"She wants to talk to you," was the hopeful remark.

She silently stared at them and watched them held their breath in anticipation for her reply.

She wanted them to wait, including the person on the other side of the door.

She wanted both of them to feel the tension of waiting.

Despite being her Valet, she knew LaFontaine's sympathy will always be with Laura. But today, she felt they all deserved to feel the anxiety that she felt when Laura confessed to her what happened today.

She wondered how long Laura will last and thought of testing her wife's patience.

After sensing that they were already growing uncomfortable and perhaps a quarter an hour had already passed, she cleared her throat and broke her silence…

"I will change now, you don't need to stay," she said and received a nod. "And put out all the candles before you leave." She noticed her Valet's eagerness to receive her reply with regards to the person behind the door. "Tell Armitage not to let anyone come in my chamber when you see him."

"How about Princess Laura?" LaFontaine asked, worried.

She pretended not to hear them and walked towards the bathroom but before opening the door, she turned her head towards the disappointed Valet.

"Let her in and shut the door behind you," she ordered before entering the bathroom.

TBC
Got any constructive criticism or grammar correction, let me know below. I really appreciate it. Thanks!
You Are Mine

Chapter Summary

A look at what happened after Laura revealed the truth to Carm at the music room and what happened afterwards.

Chapter Notes

Please check additional tags.

Thanks again for your wonderful comments and generous kudos; I appreciate them very much, especially reading your feedbacks that my fic makes you happy and excited. I'm glad to know that an update can make your day better (even if it's angsty). So, I tried my best to give you all what you want in this update. If there's one thing I've learned from the fics that I'm reading, is to give the readers some compensation in a form of smut, after too many angst and frustrations. So, here you go…

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

WARNING: Rough Possessive Sex; if you cannot take it/tolerate Carm NOT treating Laura gently, and Carm losing her control due to anger and jealousy, then don't read.

*****

Laura

"What happened?"

Perry demanded while she met her Lady in waiting by the grand staircase. She dried the unshed tears threatening to fall and kept her head low as she ran upstairs.

"Princess, what's wrong?" Perry asked, trailing behind. "Did His Highness-

"Perry… I think it's better to ask her later," Sarah Jane suggested, catching up.

"Princess-" Natalie called, lagging behind them.

"Not now, Nat," Sarah Jane chided softly.

Once they arrived in her chamber, she was caught off guard when Natalie approached her quickly and handed a crumpled paper. Her breath caught as she realized what it was, and released a sigh of relief.

"Thank you, Natalie," she said and threw the paper at once into the fireplace.

"What was that?" Perry asked, eyeing worriedly the paper that was burning.
"It's nothing," she returned. "I want to change now," She ordered a baffled Perry, while she caught the anxious gaze that Sarah Jane and Natalie were giving her. She did not want them to worry. "I'm tired. You two may leave," she gestured to Natalie and Sarah Jane. The handmaidens bowed their heads and headed to the door, while her Lady in Waiting remained staring at her.

"Laura, what happened?" Perry demanded in a strict motherly tone.

"I showed him Danny's letter," she said and caught the shock reaction of her Lady in Waiting. Tears began to form at the edge of her eyes as she recalled how Carm reacted.

The serious look on Perry's face melted into concern, "Oh, sweetie...

Recalling her stupidity of not telling Carm immediately about the letter, she grew upset and started taking off her clothes. She suddenly felt choking at the thick gown that was hugging her body.

She almost ripped her gown as she tried to free herself from the constraint of her dress.

Figuring out her irritation and impatience, Perry approached without uttering a word and in few swift motions, removed the unwanted garments.

Relieved, she took a deep breath and tried to calm herself. That was the fastest clothe changing they ever done, she thought.

The next thing she knew, Perry was putting the chemise over her head. "Thanks, Perry," she murmured absentmindedly, as she put on the silk sleepwear, and felt her body ready to retire to bed. She just wanted to forget all the commotion in the last two days.

But can she sleep in this state of chaos?

There were many instances she and Carm had a fight and go to sleep in their respective chamber without resolving the problem or saying sorry.

It had to stop.

And this was not just a petty quarrel that she can ignore and let it go.

"Laura? Where are you going?"

The confused remark of Perry tore her out from pondering. Lost in her thoughts, she did not realize she was about to open the door. She looked at her and saw the worried features of her Lady in Waiting.

Distressed, "I need to talk to him," she said, hoping Perry would not stop her. "I can't take this anymore. I can't go to bed while he's still mad at me."

Attempting to console her, "At least put this on, before you go out," Perry said, referring to the silk robe on her hands.

She let out a weak smile and dutifully put on the offered robe, before heading out and leaving a worried Perry.

Despite her determination of fixing the problem, she cannot deny that she was half afraid of facing the temperamental and broody Prince. She had seen the worst of his temper and she would bravely face his wrath again if needed, just to make this relationship worked.

Heart pounding against her chest and feeling the beads of sweat forming on her forehead, she strode
towards the prince's chamber with a resolved face.

Still catching her breath, she wiped her forehead with the sleeve of her robe as she stood by the door of Carm's chamber. She knocked at once before she changed her mind.

After a few moments, she almost jumped when the door opened slightly, and she felt relieved upon seeing the friendly face of the Valet.

"Laf, I have to talk to him," she said, precise and firm. LaFontaine gave her a nod. She worried when she caught sight of their brows furrowed. The Valet looked extremely silent and wary, a sign that the Prince was definitely seething with rage.

She nodded in return, understanding the need to ask permission first before letting her in. They closed the door carefully while bowing their head to her.

She remained still and tried to listen to what was going on behind the door. Unfortunately, it was too quiet.

She became more worried. Anticipating that it was the calm before the storm, her breathing became heavier and she felt like throwing up.

*God, I hope he's not that mad…*

She instinctively touched her womb and looked at it.

*I hope your Papa forgives me.*

She swallowed hard, struggling to fight the tears that were threatening to fall again. It was the first time she 'talked' to her unborn child and it felt unexpectedly comforting to share what she was undergoing right now. She forced a smile, feeling silly asking her baby for some 'intervention'.

*I'm sorry I've dragged you into trouble. I promise… I will only love your Papa.*

Her eyes focused again on her stomach and stroked it.

While she tried to appease the tiny 'kitten' inside her, her thoughts diverted to the 'big wild cat' behind the door.

She crinkled her brows and grew worried. "What's taking them too long?" she mumbled to herself after realizing she had been standing there for quite a while. She took a deep breath and pace to and fro by the door.

The silence from the chamber was killing her.

Perhaps LaFontaine was ordered to ignore her and Carm decided not to let his Valet out knowing she was waiting outside?

Whatever Carm's thinking, she will not let this night passed by without talking to him. She will wait until the door to his chamber opens, even if she had to sleep in front of it.

She gazed at the door one more time for any sign.

…Still nothing.

Realizing that Carm was being stubborn and attempting to dismiss her, she decided to play by his rules.
She sat by the door and blocked it, ignoring the coldness on her butt. Even if she fell asleep of waiting, she would be awaked quickly if someone opens the door.

She pulled her legs towards her chest, and hugged her knees tightly, fighting not to cry. Then she rubbed her eyes, clearing her vision. Lose strands of her hair fell on the sides and she tucked them behind her ear irritatingly, realizing her braided hair was still intact but perhaps looked disheveled.

It was almost painful trying to keep herself awake, and she was becoming dizzy from exhaustion and at the same time from stressed of meeting her prince's wrath.

And yet, she remained hopeful and determined… but anxious.

What will happen this time?

Will Carm shut her off again?

Will Carm ever trusts her again and forgives her?

Will Carm ignore her and run off again to the forest until he cools down?

Or will Carm finally tell her to leave and never come back?

The thought sent a shiver down her spine.

Suddenly, the last tinge of hope in her heart faded.

…Recalling her mistakes.

She had hurt him.

…Again.

How can Carm trust her again, when she kept on hurting him? She knew she made the ultimate mistake of not telling him right away about the letter and meeting Danny.

But before she could drown in her misery, she was taken aback when the door slightly opened and she saw once again the worried Valet.

Thankful that she did not have to wait a little longer, she rose immediately and gave Laf a weak smile and a pleading look.

"Princess, you may enter…"

LaFontaine had not even finished their sentence, when she threw her arms around them and hugged them tight, thankful for whatever they said to Carm for giving her a chance to talk to him. "Thanks Laf," she said and crossed the threshold at once, not wasting a precious moment, afraid that Carm might change his mind and dismiss her.

She heard the door closed behind her once she entered the prince's chamber.

She gasped and felt all the hair in her body stood as she fumbled in the darkness that met her and walked slowly further.

The room felt heavy with Carm's rage.

It was dangerously quiet and dark, apart from the sound of the fire's loud crackling and buzzing from
the huge fireplace. The curtains were all drawn and there was no sign of cold air coming from the 
window.

She searched for any sign of the Prince but found nothing. 

She looked at the chair at the study table, she sighed when she saw it empty. She darted her gaze at 
the huge four post bed and saw the heavy drapes were drawn and covering the entire bed. 

Perhaps he was already in bed…

She carefully tiptoed towards the side where he usually lies. 

She guessed right when her eyes caught sight of his robe hanging neatly on the chair beside the bed, 
and his slippers on the floor at the side of the bed. 

"Carl?" she called; her voice barely audible.

She stood beside the chair and waited for a reply, but received none. 

Thinking that he didn't hear her, she called again. 

And yet no reply. 

Worried, she walked closer to the bed and was about to touch the drape and draw them to the side, 
but something jolted her from behind. She gasped when she was shoved into the curtained wall near 
the bed. And before her mind can process what was happening, she heard a loud rip; her clothes 
were slit into half and fell on the floor, followed by her underwear tugged down to her feet. Then her 
hands were held on her back. 

"What the-?!" 

Almost panicking, she struggled to turn around but was restrained when a warm body pressed 
against her back, then sharp teeth bit her neck. She cried in pain. Then a pair of wet soft lips pressed 
to her ear, and she smelled a familiar dangerous scent. 

"You are mine, Laura." 

She caught her breath and recognized the deep raspy angry voice of Carm and her eyes opened wide 
when she felt his body pressed against her skin and she realized how nude he was when she felt his 
hard cock rubbed against her back. 

Her fear vanished and was replaced by a different kind of dread. 

Disoriented and heart pounding, "C-carm?" she tried to turn around but her hands were raised and 
laid flat on the wall and the right side of her face rested against the thick velvet drapes. She felt 
suddenly helpless.

She was answered by a tongue licking down below her earlobe and neck. She moaned when she felt 
Carm's arms slipped through her side and palmed her breasts before kneading each of them 
possessively and pinching those nipples cruelly.

"Ahhh," was all she could utter as Carm's left hand traveled downwards and palmed roughly her 
groin, while the other held her tight. He inserted a finger without warning and pumped inside her in a 
manner that she does not anticipate. "Carm," she whimpered as every thrust became faster and 
rougher, and her body began to wake from the pleasurable pain. He added more fingers and her
body instantly responded to Carm’s rough ministrations. Her breathing became shorter and tighter, she felt right away her arousal trickling down her thighs. "Carm, I’m-" but before she could climax, he withdrew his fingers, leaving her on the edge of exploding. She groaned, extremely frustrated. Carm ignored her and his hands returned to her breasts, kneading it.

Dizziness from pleasure slowly clouded her head. She came to talk to him, but it looked like he was channeling his rage into something else….something more physical and carnal.

She bit her lower lip and felt his erection, hot and heavy against her back, fully aware that he was stiff as a rod every time he was furious and wanted to possess her. She tried to stifle a moan but failed.

"Do you know how difficult for me to watch you with her?" Carm growled.

She can only shake her head, growing dizzier at the sensation of his palms possessing every part of her body, rubbing her neck, her breasts, and all the way to her stomach, before going back to her erected nubs. Then he tugged the nipples roughly. "Carm!" She cried and her head falls back against Carm’s right shoulder, light-headed at these torturous ministrations.

"Do you know how I felt when she touched you?!!" he exclaimed furiously.

And before she could utter a reply, she felt him pulled her. "Carl!" she cried out when Carm rammed his fully hard cock inside her from behind without a warning. She gasped as she felt his throbbing thickness stretching and filling her generously. Invading every part of her core.

*Oh god!*

She muttered a silent prayer while she gripped the curtains and opened her mouth slightly. This was not the 'talk' she expected. She must admit… she preferred this since her body was long denied this kind of attention. Her body was already shouting for him… she felt hot, aroused and ready to be claimed and possessed by her raging jealous Prince.

She gripped tighter unto the curtain when Carm began thrusting roughly, wildly. No restraint. Completely dominating her… like a beast claiming his mate. Carm’s hard rock erection thrust in her like there was no tomorrow. She was quickly dripping in her arousal and her legs trembled in anticipation, she did not know how long she could hold in this chaotic wave of pleasure, pain, and fear. Carm growled in her ear and he put his hands over hers, taking control of her. She then felt his teeth sunk into her neck and possessed her with his bite.

*Oh god!*

She loved it whenever he does it. Carm was angry marking her and at the same time shoving his iron-hard penis inside her like a wild feline in heat until she was breathing in little gasps and can’t move. She felt the heat of excitement and fear rushing her into climax, and pleasure became agonizing. Carm’s cock pulsed inside her, triggering him with her spasms. She moaned and surrendered herself to him. Carm held her steady with his mouth on her shoulder, biting her hard before letting out a guttural growl and quivered behind her, shooting his hot seeds inside her, emptying everything he had before pulling out swiftly his still hard cock.

Her legs gave in, and Carm caught her immediately, drew the curtain open and put her on the bed. She landed on the soft mattress face down, she had not even got the chance to catch her breath and compose herself, when she felt him climbed behind her and pulled her hips up until she stood on all fours upon his order.
Carm plunged again inside her, so fast and hard that she cried out in pain. She did not dare look at him, whatever was on his mind she knew the anger inside him had not died out yet. It hurt as he pushed inside her in his fullness, thrusting harder, deeper and faster.

Lost to anything but the sensation of Carm's hard rock penis slamming inside her in such a wild ferocity, she pushed back against him, matching his savage rhythm, taking his raging hardness and every slam with dignity and wanton until she felt the tension rising up again. If this was kind of punishment, she will accept it bravely.

"Carm!" she cried, already coming the second time when she felt his cock swelled. She clenched hard inside around him. Carm's hands on her hips tightened, he moved up inside her, right to her very core. And with a fierce thrust, he exploded inside her, shooting his heavy loads deep into her, his iron-hard shaft pumping her, load after load of his seed into sharp jerks, filling her, overflowing until she felt their combined arousal trickling down her legs.

Overwhelmed, Carm growled with pride.

She loved how he claimed her this way: so feral and fiery.

Feeling his savageness took all the energy in her, she collapsed and her vision faded to black before she could turn around and look at him.

*****

"Laura?"

She groaned as she tried to hold back into her sleep. Her body felt heavy and drained of strength.

"Laura?"

She furrowed her brows, as the voice penetrated into her consciousness and she was roused from her slumber. She forcefully opened her eyes, but a sudden jolt of pain struck her when she tried to move.

"Oww…" she shut her eyes again, recognizing the pain in between her legs and her whole body aching.

"Laura, thank God you're awake,"

She recognized the concerned voice of her Lady in Waiting, and she tried to open her eyes again. But they were hurt once it met a strong beam eliminating from the window, she shielded her sight with her hand and avoided the fierce sunlight.

As her eyes adjusted to the sight and realized that she was not in her own bed, she got confused. "Perry?" she called and was about to get up, but gentle hands stopped her.

"Sweetie, try to rest for a while," the Lady in waiting suggested, and rose from the chair she was sitting on.

"Wha-What happened?" she asked as her memory tried to recall the last time she was conscious, and wondered why she ended up in Carm's bed with an aching body and soreness in between her legs.

"Oh, hey frosh! You're awake!" was LaFontaine's excited remark, standing behind Perry. "How are you feeling?"

…And before she could reply, her Lady in Waiting made way for LaFontaine, as they started
examining her, feeling her forehead, pulse and staring at her face.

"I'll go downstairs and fetch your breakfast," Perry spoke with eagerness and started heading out to the door.

Once the door shut, "Frosh are you hurt?" was the Valet's serious and worried inquiry.

She narrowed her eyes, trying to figure out why they were asking her such a thing? Then it slowly dawned on her what had happened, before she blacked out.

"Where's Carl?" she asked, worried and almost panicking, while she attempted to get up for the second time, but failed when LaFontaine held her down gently back to bed. She winced when she felt her hips and back aching.

"He is helping Their Majesties sending off the guests," they replied and stared at her.

She recalled that she too was assigned to bid their guests goodbye and wish them a safe trip back home. But with her condition, she definitely cannot fulfill her duty. She worried about what her mother-in-law might think of her absence.

Sensing her anxiety…

"Don't worry, he told Her Majesty that you have morning sickness," LaFontaine filled her thoughts, and said, "Care to tell me how you ended up unconscious?"

Suddenly, she wished the earth could swallow her.

Sensing her hesitation, "I am your doctor and I cannot cure you if you lie to me," LaFontaine chided. "Don't forget, you have a tiny human being inside you that might need help too."

Her hand went to her womb quickly and touched her belly as if consoling the tiny kitten inside and felt guilty that she just had the wildest sex with its father last night. Then she remembered the stupid law.

"Laf, I… well… I mean… We…" she fumbled for words, too ashamed for her action.

"Is that 'we' involve an angry big wildcat?" LaFontaine asked, understanding the predicament.

Feeling that it's easier to tell them indirectly, "Umm… the big wild cat and the cupcake had a make-up sex… although I don't know, if the big wild cat had already forgiven the cupcake since he was too horny and angry to talk to the cupcake, I still don't know if it counted as a make-up sex, or it's a revenge/punished sex? Oh, and yeah, the cupcake collapsed after the second wild sex, because it's so intense and remembered nothing," she babbled in the most innocent way and grinned at them.

"Oh."

LaFontaine stared at her for a moment.

As their shock subsided… they cleared their throat and composed themselves.

"Alright," they took a deep breath and exhaled, then shook their head, as if clearing any unwanted scenario playing in their thoughts. "Can the cupcake tell me if there's something that hurt?"

She looked at them sheepishly, and when they smiled, her heart warmed at their concern, and her self-consciousness vanished. "The cupcake's body is aching everywhere and her inside felt swollen and sore. The cupcake is also worried about the tiny little kitty inside her."
They gave her a reassuring smile, and said, "The tiny little kitty inside would be alright, there's nothing to fear if the horny wild panther will have sex with the cupcake again. It's protected inside the womb by a sac. That's a secret that I told the horny panther too, and then to the cupcake. I hope they keep quiet and not tell everyone, or else, I'll be beheaded." They explained and ended it with a naughty wink.

She can't help but giggle at them but was relieved to hear all the good news. "The cupcake is thankful and appreciates your help," she said with appreciation.

"It's my pleasure to serve you," they said and bowed. "I will make some tea that can lessen the pain, and relaxed your nerves. I will tell Perry to give you a warm bath to ease the soreness, I'll fetch some herbs to mix in your bath and I'll give it to Perry later."

She reached for them and gave them a hug. The sound of the door opening interrupted them, and they released from the hug and saw Perry carrying a service tray full of delectable.

Her eyes widened when she saw, a plate full of creampuffs, a carrot cupcake, some grapes, Steirerkas, bowl of pickles and mustard beside it. A teapot and a small cup were placed in the farthest part of the tray too.

"Eat now, so you can regain your strength, and so that the baby won't be hungry too," Perry ordered in a motherly tone.

She silently obeyed and started with the creampuff and dipped it on the mustard, suddenly she felt hungry and can't stop munching, that she put another creampuff in her mouth, followed by the cheese, and then the carrot cupcake dipping everything in mustard.

Perry and LaFontaine watched her with their mouths opened.

*****

She felt totally relieved after that herbal infused bath that Perry gave her. And now, she found herself dozing off in her own bed and hugging her yellow pillow. She had not seen Carm since this morning and was told that he joined his father horse-back riding after having lunch with the Prince of Graz, before sending him off home. She got curious why the Prince of Graz did not go home earlier with the rest of the guests. And speaking of guests, she wondered what happened to Danny? Did she and Carm speak again? They did not have a chance to talk again since they last met at the music room, which she recalled; she was heavily guarded by her handmaidens and LaFontaine.

She sighed as she looked at the window and darkness had fallen. It was already sundown, and yet, her Prince had not returned yet. Was he avoiding her? She cannot recall how many times she asked Laf and Perry if Carm had left a message for her, or if he had asked how she was, but there was just silence from him. But she did receive a message from Danny through Perry, telling her to take care of herself and wished her luck with the baby before leaving the castle. If that was the entire message, or Perry might have withheld back any further information from Danny, she did not mind at all. Surprisingly, Her Majesty relayed a message through LaFontaine that she was relieved from any castle duties for the next two days and to take it easy. She was thankful for her mother-in-law's concern.

But she still cannot be appeased. She hated that she passed out during sex, instead of talking to him and asking his forgiveness. She hoped her Prince was not mad anymore. He surely made an impact on her with that rough sex they had and showed her how angry he was with those angry bite marks that he left on her. If there was another way to ask for his forgiveness, she would definitely do whatever it was just to regain Carm's trust and love again.
She sniffed and did not realize that she had shed a tear and was upset that she had not seen him yet. It was not just her body that was aching, but her mind and especially her heart too. She needed to heal.

She closed her eyes, and let sleep claimed her, she hugged her yellow pillow tight, seeking some comfort.

Perhaps tomorrow, she could think of a better way to show Carm that he was the only one in her heart.

*****

"Laura?"

She groaned as she tried to grasp back her sleep. Her body still felt lethargic.

"Laura?"

She furrowed her brows, as the voice penetrated into her consciousness, slowly rousing her from slumber.

Not again.

Was it morning already and time to get up?

Can't she just get some decent rest?

Her body was aching and her heart was broken, when will she ever have a peace of mind?

"Laura?"

She forcefully opened her eyes, when she tried to move a sudden jolt of pain struck her again. And before she knew it, she was totally awoken by the pain and winced.

"Cupcake, are you alright?"

Disoriented, she opened her eyes slowly and she saw at once the worried face of Carm beaming at her. She smiled weakly and gazed at those dark melancholic orbs that she adored so much.

Was she dreaming?

Was Carm beside her on her bed?

"Laura, I'm so sorry…” Carm whispered.

She felt him took her hand and brought it up to his lips and kissed her knuckle, before putting her palm on his face and she understood at once what he wanted. She cupped his cheek and brought him for a sweet long kiss.

Her heart rejoiced! He was real and he was here!

Partly confused, since Carm was the only one who could tell her how she lost consciousness, "What really happened?” she asked, after releasing from the kiss. She can vaguely recall how it transpired. He laid beside her and supported himself on his elbow, while his other hand wrapped around her waist possessively.
"You've passed out," Carm mumbled, his brows furrowed in the usual manner.

Her eyebrows arched in a questioning look. She wanted to hear from him.

Carm looked down, "We're having sex and I…" he paused, looking like a tamed kitten. "I was very angry and…"

Recalling what had happened, "… and you're like the big wild territorial panther possessing and claiming his mate."

"Cupcake, I'm so sorry," Carm uttered his voice tainted with shame. "I didn't mean it. I wasn't able to control myself… I… I don't know what came over me. I only knew that I can't control my feelings when you're involved," he confessed. "I tried waking you up, but you're not responding. When I checked your pulse, I was relieved that it's normal. But I got scared and worried that I've done something that hurt you, so I called LaFontaine. But I didn't tell them the real reason why you're unconscious because I was mad at myself for hurting you. I hope you'll still bear with me and my savage behavior…"

She gazed at him with full of hope and love. Then it occurred to her that they still have an unresolved misunderstanding. Now was the chance…

"I didn't get to tell you I'm sorry, and to ask your forgiveness about the letter," she said, her voice low and careful, weighing his mood and reaction. "I'm sorry Carm." When she saw him smirked, she felt a thorn released from her heart.

"I was hurt when you didn't tell me everything, and I knew that you have your reasons," Carm explained. "Laura, I'm so in love with you that my possessiveness and jealousy consumes me every time someone goes near you or touch you, especially those people that I knew are interested in you. That's why I couldn't stop myself from getting angry."

She caressed his jawline, wanting to comfort him. Carm leaned to her touch and she was glad for the response. She knew that he was trying to learn to control his emotions and temper. But they both knew the process will take time.

"I understand…" she returned, giving him a reassuring smile. "I understand why you have to act that way because that's just how you are. And you have every reason to get jealous and mad. The only thing I'm worried about is when you try to avoid me or shut me off when you're angry. I hope if we ever have this kind of misunderstanding again, you will let me talk to you and listen to me."

Carm nodded silently.

She was not totally convinced if he would do it. But she chose to respect his reaction.

Not wanting to ruin this sweet reunion, she put both her hands on his face and motioned for him to look at her. "I think I kinda like the savage version of you in bed."

Not expecting that kind of response, Carm's mouth opened wide and he stared at her for a moment, shocked was written all over his face.

She felt suddenly warm and fluttered her thick long eyelashes to him before giving him an innocent but naughty grin, and released her hands from his face. Now she was the one who felt ashamed of admitting one of her strange quirks.

Shielding her naughtiness, "Does this mean you're not angry at me anymore?"
"Well Cupcake, if I had not known better, you like driving me angry and wild, so that we could engage in that kind of 'making up,'" Carm teased in a deep alluring tone.

"Well, if I had not known better, you like scaring people who are close to me, so that you could just have me for yourself, you selfish broody cat," she retorted and touched the tip of Carm's nose lightly.

"Only those who I deemed a threat," Carm returned arching his left brow. "Karnsteins never share their most precious possessions."

She raised her brows at the sound of his claim. "Oh, so I'm your possession?" she taunted and watched him climbed on top of her, and caught his naughty smirk. Her eyes widened while she watched him take off his tunic, she bit her lower lip and realized he was naked underneath the sheet that was covering them a while ago. She felt a tingle at her sore core and ignored it. The sight of Carm naked in front of her was enough to distract the pain away.

"Yes, you are my precious possession, and I think it's time I remind you," he rasped and his mouth dove at those full lips.

She let out a low moan as Carm's tongue prodded on her lips; she let him in and their tongues dueled and their lips battled in a heated war of possession. Her hands ran through his thick short untamed locks and caressed the back of his neck, while he pulled her chemise over her head. Carm smirked upon discovering she was not wearing underwear again. He nuzzled his nose into her neck, inhaling her natural scent before going down and his mouth claimed his favorite part of her body. She whimpered as she felt him sucked lightly her left nipple, running his tongue along the areola before sucking the nipple again till it hardened. His hands cupped both her breasts and caressed it with full of wanton.

Carm groaned in between sucking those little-erected buds. He took time nibbling at them as if feasting at those exquisite teats. "Mine!" he growled, like a possessive wild cat marking his ownership.

Carm's possessive remark aroused her more and she found herself growing wetter; her fingers unconsciously scratched his back. "Yours and only yours!" she replied with the same intensity, as she felt his hands became possessive on her breasts and his mouth grew hungry on her nipples. She squeezed tightly her legs while Carm feasted on her breasts.

Inside the dimness of her curtained bed, she could feel his insatiable desire for her when his hard erection brushed against her thigh.

"Carm…" she called, almost in agonizing tone, as she felt the need to be claimed again. She distracted him from devouring further her breasts and brought his face towards her, closed her eyes and kissed him passionately. He reciprocated the kiss with the same intensity and shut his eyes. A shiver struck down her spine when she felt his hands ran through her bare legs and all over her body, but avoiding the part where she needed him most. "Your Highness, stop torturing me and just claim me," she whispered to his ear, while one of her hands caressing his nape slid down in between them and she caught his now thick hard erection in her hand. She saw the surprised look on his face, as he stared at her with fully dilated eyes while panting. His eyes searched her own for confirmation, perhaps thinking her own comfort.

"Aren't you still sore?" Carm asked, worried while breathing heavily.

She released the hand on his shaft and cupped his cheeks with both hands, melting at the sight of the worried lines on his face and gentle gaze. "I am… but the pain of feeling inside you will be worth it," she said.
"But I don't want to hurt you more," Carm retorted.

"You're not. Just go slow and gentle," she insisted, and when she knew that he will refuse, she gave him a come hither look and brought his lips back to hers and kissed him tenderly. "I'll let you know if it hurts."

And with just displaying her most adorable smile, he finally gave in when she felt the tip of his penis rubbed gently on her core, before putting half of his shaft inside her. She stifled a whimper and winced upon feeling his thickness inside her. She caught the panic in his eyes and knew that he was about to pull out. But she wrapped her legs around his hips immediately, urging him to continue. She reached up for Carm's face and caressed his jawline, making him at ease. "I love you," she whispered, and she saw Carm smiled and felt him started to thrust slowly and gently inside her. In contrast to their previous sex, Carm was very gentle, careful, and gazing at her with full of admiration in his eyes as he thrust inside.

While caressing his nape with both her hands, she held his gaze, revealing to him all her love and desires in front of him, as his throbbing member grew thicker and stretched her fully by each thrust. She moaned and she held tight unto him as she felt his member thickening, and yet still pumping slow, while she felt a savage pressure building up and heat pooling around their bellies. She dissolved into pleasure and surrendered herself fully to him, before glorifying his name. Carm released in one smooth jerk and shot his heavy loads inside her, as she savored the sensation of his hot cum spilling inside her, filling her with his own juice and planting all his seeds inside her.

"I love you Cupcake,"

Carm whispered, before collapsing beside her and gathered her in his arms.

She listened with a satisfied smile.

She closed her eyes and relished the comforting warmth of his body, while she touched her womb and smiled.

*You'll be alright... We'll be alright.*

Now she can sleep peacefully.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Constructive criticisms are always welcome. Grammar errors, please let me know below... Thanks.

Hope you enjoyed the update :*)
Chapter Summary

More than three weeks have passed after those stressful days of entertaining the new allies; dealing with Danny's audacious suggestion; and Carm's raging jealousy over her ex-lover. Laura was now satisfied with how her broody Prince had calmed and became sweeter after patching up things. She was glad to be back in their regular duties at the castle, and she can focus now at some of her plans.

It's time to go to the village market, and after arguing with her Prince for not giving her permission to go out, Laura decided to go after all. How will she deal with Carm's disappointment/anger after he caught her?

Chapter Notes

Thank you for your wonderful feedbacks and kudos! I'm always happy reading your thoughts and feelings about this story. Well, I just realized this story turned two years old already, I never thought I could still go on with this story, and still write a lot of crazy stuff. Some are wondering what will be the next plot/storyline that I will pursue, after those previous crazy chapters with Hollstein and Danny. There are still many ideas I have planned for this fic. But right now, I want to concentrate on Laura's pregnancy. And if you have any suggestions, you can always tell me and I'll give it a try.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

*****

Laura

Being the Princess of Hollis and the only daughter of an overprotective king was not easy.

Since she was young, she was put under the protection of a dozen royal guards wherever she goes until she complained of having less privacy and freedom, she threatened her father that she would run away if he would not stop being paranoid, then he decided to grant her request and gave her instead a personal royal guard. She thought it was the best deal… little did she knew, that one Kirsch was like the equivalent of a dozen royal guards when it comes to persistently guarding her. It was annoying to have a personal guard tailing behind like a puppy from sunrise to sunset, but that did not stop her from escaping their castle and taking a tour of the nearby village.

It was romantic at the beginning when Danny stayed by her side all the time when they became lovers. But sometimes she felt like a helpless damsel in distress whenever Danny insisted that she would accompany her wherever she goes.

Exploring things on her own had been a part of her. It thrilled her. It satisfied her. It gave her more meaning in life. So when she discovered that life beyond the walls of the castle was very different from the life that she knew, she vowed to reach out and help in any way she can to those who were
deprived.

So when her betrothed forbade her going to the village market for fear that she might be abducted by those 'savages', she protested. She put an end to it at once even if she knew they will argue and quarrel about it.

It took her a lot of explaining and patience convincing the very broody, isolated, possessive and jealous Prince of hers, to let her explore the market village of Karnstein and reassured him that the people in the village were not savages.

She thought she could confidently go on and enjoy her freedom…

"What?! I thought we already agreed you'll never forbid me anymore?" she argued while she and Carm stood at the hall leading to the side entrance of the castle. He was on his way to his hunting trip with the King and she knew he will return late, so she decided to seek his permission again, in person, after Perry informed her that Carm did not grant her request to go out tomorrow.

"Well, that was before, Cupcake…" Carm ignored the plea and walked towards the opened door where a black stallion that Armitage was holding on the reins was waiting for him. "…When nobody knows you're pregnant."

She clenched her teeth together, controlling her anger, "They might think I'm abandoning them if I don't see them soon," she demanded, trailing behind him.

"Why not send Perry on your behalf?" Was Carm's impatient reply, before putting on his black leather riding gloves. "I'm pretty sure, someone here is willing to accompany Lady Ginger," he glanced at the Valet standing beside Armitage once they crossed the threshold.

"But Perry isn't the one who initiated this project, it is I…. they're relying on me!" she explained desperately. "Carl, please… just let me visit them, and then…"

"I said no," Carm stated, receiving his sword from LaFontaine and sheathed it. "I can't be there to look after you."

His voice sounded firm but his facial expression was soft and had a hint of tenderness in his eyes, not the usual icy glare that he displayed whenever he was angry.

She saw this opportunity and sensed her Prince could be persuaded.

And she knew exactly what to do.

She used her body to block him from walking further, standing fuller as if emphasizing her chest in front of him, Carm was suddenly distracted by the breasts in front of him and eyed it like it was the best thing in the world, "Well, I don't need my handsome royal guard to accompany me all the time," her voice flirty and put her hands on the back of his neck, and caressed his nape, toying the wisps of his rich dark short hair before giving him a peck on the cheek.

Carm looked at her, "If you think that kissing me could change my mind-;",

She interrupted him by putting her lips on his own, and then closed her eyes and kissed him tenderly.

When she pulled from the kiss and gazed at him, a naughty smirk greeted her back.

*Did it work?*
"You were saying?" she teased, anticipating that he was enthralled by the kiss.

"I love how you kiss me…” Carm uttered his voice deep and raw; flirting back with his seduction eyes. "But it's still a no." And with that, he walked passed her and mounted his horse.

"That's unfair!" She burst out.

She usually waves goodbye to him when he leaves but she was too upset and disappointed, she stomped her feet on the opposite direction and walked inside, leaving a confused and worried LaFontaine by the door. She was too irritated by Carm's order and ignored his Valet too.

*****

After eating her midday meal and finishing all her tasks in the castle, she was relieved that Her Majesty gave her permission to take the rest of the day off. She was glad Bishop Klaus came to discuss something with the Queen. Now she can sneak out to the village while Carm was gone and go back before he returned.

She was supposed to go tomorrow, but since she was not allowed again to go out to the village, she might as well take the trip now. It would be harder to leave tomorrow when Carm was around she thought. And if ever Carm discovered she went to the village today, he would be too exhausted to argue with her tonight after that hunting trip with his father.

"Laura, are you sure you don't want to tell His Highness that we're going to the village?" Perry asked, worried. "You know that he would be mad if he found out that you went to the village even if…"

"Per, I've already informed him and I don't need his approval," she replied a bit irritated that her Lady in Waiting reminded her, while they strode towards the hall leading to the back entrance. "And besides, I'm still angry that he just left me without considering my feelings."

"You mean, you're angry because even after kissing him, he still said no," the Lady in Waiting returned, looking suspicious.

She flashed Perry an irritated glare and felt her blood boiling after hearing the comment.

"Wha-?! Who told you-?" she caught her Lady in Waiting giving her the motherly look, whenever Perry found out that she had done something naughty. She suddenly calmed down.

"It doesn't matter who told me. You know that it's wrong to lure someone, and use your charm in order to gain something from the person," Perry stated firmly.

"I didn't lure anyone," she retorted, growing annoyed. "I tried convincing someone to let me go to the village, is that an offense?" she reasoned out, feeling that her Lady in Waiting was being unfair. "And I will never use my charm or beauty just to convince someone, except if it's important and only with Carl. My husband," she emphasized.

"Alright, calm down," Perry paused before opening the door to the back entrance. "I do understand your situation. But I know you, little princess… sometimes you just flash that adorable smile on anyone, and you instantly get what you desire. I just want to tell you that, you can be stubborn sometimes, especially if you don't get what you want."

She crossed her arms over her chest and tried not to flare up. Her Lady in Waiting had a point and she was partly guilty of seducing Carm just to get his permission. But she and Carm had already agreed that she can go to the village as long as she wanted.
"You might be right on that," she tried to calm down and think straight. She doesn't want to have this kind of discussion with Perry when their time was short and limited. "But I'm angry because I promised some women in the village that I will help them as soon as I can. Then suddenly Carl wouldn't permit me to go because I'm pregnant?" She explained, growing frustrated with these overprotective people around her. "I don't think pregnancy should stop me from helping people. As long as I'm capable of moving around and doing my duties, I will not stop."

Understanding her point, Perry just nodded and gave her a reassuring smile. "I know sweetie, and that's why Prince Carl is scared," the Lady in Waiting explained. "Because you care too much that sometimes you don't think about yourself or what might happen to you or the consequences that might bring you by helping others. And I'm proud of you for being so brave and strong. Just don't forget that you also have to take care of yourself and the little one inside you."

She got emotional after Perry's remark and gave her Lady in Waiting a hug.

"I promise, I'll take care of myself and my baby," she said after pulling from the embrace and smiled. "You don't have to worry about me being impulsive and stubborn all the time."

"I'm glad to hear that," Perry returned with a satisfied grin. "Shall we go now before anyone finds out that we're gone?" the Lady in Waiting suggested and opened the door.

She chuckled and put on the hood of their cloaks before stepping out. Bastian and Fritz were already waiting for them outside, as they were escorted to their waiting carriage behind the willow trees.

They were too discreet and cautious being caught that she did not even have the chance to greet Alfred or see how many royal guards were with them. She worried someone might notice their absence if Alfred took with him the usual royal guards, so he told him to take just half of them.

"Did you tell Laf that we're going to the village?" she asked, worried that they might tell Carm.

"No, I didn't have the chance to talk to them;" Perry said and furrowed her eyebrows. "They suddenly disappeared and did not eat their midday meal. I hope they've eaten now."

"Don't worry, I'm pretty sure they have eaten their meal and relaxing today," she commented and felt relieved that LaFontaine doesn't know about her 'gallivanting' as Carm used to say, she did not want to involve more people in her little crime. "Carl is out in the woods the whole day, so they can take it slow with their chores."

Perry let out a deep sigh. "I really hope that's what they'll do. But they will rather spend their time in their workshop… doing god knows, what kind of experiments this time, rather than relaxing."

"I think that's how they relax and find satisfaction in their busy schedule," she said and saw Perry rolled her eyes in agreement.

She took a deep breath and tried to relax too.

Partly worried and satisfied, she dismissed any negative thoughts and reminded herself that this trip to the village had been delayed for so long.

She cannot wait to tell the women Elsie had gathered, that the brothel was not the only place they can earn a living from.

"We're here sweetie,"

Perry's voice snatched her out from pondering. She has too many plans for this kind of women in the
village that she did not notice they have already arrived.

"Did you remember to bring some creampuffs for Emma?" she put her hand on Perry's arm before opening the door. They always bring creampuffs with them knowing how the little girl loved it very much.

"No, I forgot, I was too stressed when you told me that we're going out today,"

She gave Perry a reassuring smile, "It's alright… and I'm sorry that I've stressed you."

"Sweetie, don't ever apologized for stressing me out," Perry corrected. "I'll be more than happy to join you anywhere you go than be left behind in the castle worrying where you might have gone."

"Thanks, Per!" she returned, relieved.

The Lady in waiting winked and smiled back before opening the door of the carriage and stepped out. She followed her and put her hand on the offered gloved hand that was waiting for her to assist her; it was either Fritz or Bastian.

But once her foot landed on the ground, she noticed the hand that was holding her did not release her.

Confused, she looked at the person's direction and she was surprised to see a royal guard in uniform complete with a helmet on instead of Fritz or Bastian. She was about to thank him and order him to release her hand but a familiar voice startled her.

"I knew you'll not going to obey me,"

"C-Carl?" was her nervous reply, as she came face to face with the royal guard. Although she could not see his face, she was certain that it was his voice. And before he released her hand, she felt him leaned closer to her ear and whispered:

"We'll talk about this when we get home."

The coldness of his voice was enough to let her know how very disappointed he was. She slowly nodded her head in agreement, not daring to look back at him. He released her hand afterwards and walked ahead of her, with Armitage walking behind him. She paused for a while after that brief shock.

After regaining her composure, she discovered that he brought more guards with him when she saw around two dozens of royal guards in uniform, mounted on their horses passed before her and rode towards the market village, ahead of them while a dozen familiar faces in their ordinary clothes walked around her. She searched for Alfred for an answer, but the old man seemed dazed also as she approached him, standing beside the carriage.

"Are you aware that Prince Carl is coming with us?" she whispered, motioning to Alfred the royal guard walking ahead of Armitage towards the market village.

"No Princess, I have no idea that His Highness will join us," Alfred replied as discreet as she asked him. "I just realized it when I saw him waiting here with a group of other royal guards."

"I see," she returned still confused how Carm managed to find out her plan. Then she grew curious, at how Alfred recognized Carl even in disguise. Alfred must be very familiar with the Karnstein family to decipher the Prince's body language. "How did you know that it's the Prince?"
"Because of the Blade of Hastur, Princess," was the middle-aged man's confident remark. "The precious sword belonged to the late king of Morgan. My father was the personal royal guard of King Marcus and the caretaker of the sword."

"Oh." She realized where Alfred's loyalty laid, and she remembered that Carm warned her not to tell Alfred about his Ma's whereabouts. Now she understood.

"And how he walked..." Alfred added.

She looked at him and narrowed her eyes, "Why? How does Carl walk?" she was suddenly curious. She never saw anything special about how Carm walked.

"Like His Majesty, Princess," Alfred ended with a smile. "Shall we proceed?"

She smiled back and nodded, as they began to walk towards the village, with her own guards following behind like ordinary village people who were carrying baskets, sacks, and some even brought donkeys with them to load the things they will buy in the market.

"What's the matter?" Perry asked as soon as they joined and walked together towards the market. "What did the royal guard tell you and why are you talking to Alfred? Is there a problem?"

She flashed her Lady in Waiting a sheepish look while she hooked her hand on Perry's elbow and walked a little faster so that nobody can hear their conversation.

"Carl is here," she mumbled.

"What? Where?" was Perry's nervous reaction. She was about to turn around and look.

"Don't," she forbade, halting Perry to look down. "Nobody knows except Alfred and the other royal guards in uniform... and maybe Fritz and Bastian. He went ahead to the village together with his personal guard and the others in uniform."

"Oh, my." Perry uttered. "You better make this trip as worthy as possible, because it might be your last one..."

"Please don't say that," she retaliated, worries brewing inside her.

Her heart hammerd fiercely as the thought of not coming any more to the village and not experiencing being a commoner tore her heart. She loved going to the village. She loved talking to the people. And she loved helping them. But if the consequence of coming here will ruin her relationship with Carm, she will sacrifice it in favor of keeping peace and harmony in their marriage.

She knew that she could be stubborn and persistent sometimes, and her passion to do something good and help others always gets her in trouble. But right now, she reminded herself not to get impulsive and think of other ways to help those who were in need. Perhaps when she had given birth to their baby, she can find a way to come here again. But in the meantime, she must prioritize her family.

She touched her womb and gently rubbed it as if reassuring the little kitten inside her that she will be cautious.

Too worried about what her Prince would say when they got home; she did not notice they have already arrived in the village proper until her thoughts were snatched by a familiar redhead walking towards them.
"Laf!" was her excited remark, as they discreetly bowed to her before stealing a glance at Perry, then back to her.

"Hi Frosh, hi Perry," their voice restrained and they looked pale.

"Is it you who told His Highness?" Perry accused them in a controlled hushed tone.

"Sorry Frosh, I have to…" was their sheepish reply and looked at the ground. "I hope you'll forgive me."

She took a deep breath after finally catching the culprit. But she knew they were just thinking of her safety.

"It's alright, I'm not mad," she reassured immediately and flashed them a genuine smile. "I know you're just concern just like the others. At least he still gave me a chance to go to the market and didn't send me back to the castle." She then hooked her other hand to their elbow, as the three of them strolled together in the village market. "Let's just enjoy this moment, do the things that we have to do, and buy whatever we need, because we might not be able to do this again," was her bittersweet comment and glanced at Perry, recalling what her Lady in waiting just told her earlier.

"Can we eat and drink at the tavern afterwards?" they asked, after regaining their confidence and learning that they were off the hook.

"Sure! We'll even invite Carl and the others to eat with us," was her excited reply. But deep inside her, she worried where her Prince might have wandered off. She knew that Armitage and the rest can protect Carm but she cannot help worrying if ever Carm suddenly had a panic attack. Even if the market was not crowded, it might still be better for someone to watch over Carm who knew his angst. So before she can drown in worries, she beckoned for Alfred to come to them.

"Laf, I know that he ordered you to go with me, but I'm not going to be at ease if something happened to him," she said to them and they nodded at once, understanding what she meant. "Take Alfred with you and find Carl. Don't leave his side even if he insists that you leave him," she gave them the strict order while Perry perused their surroundings. "I and Perry can take care of ourselves, Fritz and Bastian and the others are always with us. So, it's enough to protect us."

"Alright, but when are we meeting at the tavern?" LaFontaine asked, before going.

"I'll send one of the guards to tell you when we're done with our task. Then we could all eat a meal before we head home."

They gave them a warm smile before they separated.

She looked up and shielded her eyes with her hand from the strong rays of the sun. Midday was almost over and the crowd became lesser and lesser as they strolled around the market square.

They continued walking through the long lines of stalls, inspecting new things that came from some merchants that arrived late. The sight of the royal guards in uniform scattered around caught some villagers' attention but eventually ignored them. Some even mingled with a bunch of sellers and merchants, while the other guards remained patrolling around the village, not too obvious, but just enough for the villagers to notice their presence among them. She hoped they don't draw too much attention and create suspicion, or else, her life living among the commoners will definitely end.

"Shall we go to Greta's first so we can talk to Elsie and the others about the project?" she told her Lady in Waiting. She felt they cannot concentrate on what they will buy until they have done what they really came here for.
"I think it'll be better," Perry agreed and put back the bottle of herbs she was looking at one of the stalls. ". . .so that we can already give them some suggestions about what they can do once they decided to leave the brothel."

She nodded and they both headed towards Greta's stall.

They have not even come close to the cheese stall when her eyes caught sight of a royal guard in uniform, standing beside the stall and carrying Emma over his shoulder. Her eyes widened when she glanced at the sword of the guard and confirmed her hint.

"It's good to see all of you again," was Greta's happy remark.

"It's good to see you too!" she said and walked towards her friend and gave Greta a hug, followed by Perry. The tension she felt a while ago disappeared as soon as she saw Carm already there waiting for them. She glanced at him and saw only Alfred behind him.

_Where could Laf be?

She wondered but was distracted right away by Emma's eager voice.

"Laura! Perry!" Emma called out, with full of excitement. "Marcus and I just watched the cows!"

She smiled wide upon hearing the child's hyper remark she cannot take her eyes off them, totally amused at how her Prince remained standing still, holding Emma's lower legs to keep the girl from falling while sitting on his shoulders. She just hoped the child does not play again with Carm's helmet because that will definitely blow their cover.

So for their safety, she approached them even if she knew that Carm was mad and disappointed.

"Hey! Can I have a hug?" she asked and Emma complied right away and opened her arms wide to welcome her. Carm carefully put the girl down and she kneeled to hug the excited dark haired girl. "I missed you."

"I missed you too! And Marcus, and Perry, and La- Lafo-" Emma paused for a while, having a hard time pronouncing the last person's name.

"It's LaFontaine," she supplied at once, rose to her feet and carried the child in her arms while they approached Greta, who stood behind the stall and smiled back at them. She stole a glance of Carm and noticed he was still broody even behind the helmet, and remained standing where he was. "But you can call them Laf so that it'll be easier for you."

"Laf… I like it better," Emma added and smiled wide once she met Perry. "I missed you too, Perry!"

"Oh, I missed you too sweetie," the Lady in Waiting replied and held Emma's hand. "And I'm sorry I forgot to bring you some creampuffs, we're in a hurry."

"It's alright..." was Emma's consoling remark. "Marcus told me that he brought some. Laf is getting them now. He said he forgot to take it out from the satchel on his horse."

"Oh, did he?" was Perry's intriguing remark.

"Laura, your husband is one of the kindest men I know," Greta commented.

She was suddenly touched by Carm's thoughtfulness and looked at his direction. How she wished she could kiss him now for his gesture, but it seemed like he ignored their remarks and pretended not
to hear their conversation, while he stood on the side like a statue.

Before the others could notice the cold treatment that he was giving her, their attention darted to Carm's Valet walking towards them.

"Hey Emma, I got your creampuffs!" was LaFontaine's excited remark and handed the brown pouch at once to the very eager girl.

"Thank you!" Emma returned with a big smile. "Laura, can we go to Marcus, I want to thank him."

"Sure," she walked towards him, still carrying Emma in her arms. She chose not to put Emma down to avoid Emma from accidentally taking off the close helmet. Once they were face to face with him, she grew tensed, sensing his eyes on her behind the metal helmet.

"Thank you, Marcus," Emma said and hugged him.

To her surprise, he leaned closer so Emma can put her arms around him, but he did not touch her. After Emma pulled from the embrace, she held her tight and she gave him a longing gaze before walking back to the group.

"Laura, why is Marcus suddenly quiet?" Emma asked innocently while opening the pouch of goodies.

She hated lying, but she did not want the child to get involved in their brewing quarrel.

"Marcus is wearing his uniform, it means he's working," she stated, walking slowly towards the ladies and LaFontaine. "He needs to be quiet and concentrate while checking out the surroundings if it's safe or not."

"Aren't he supposed to guard the Prince?" was Emma's curious query. This time, they all stared at the little girl for her accurate observation.

"Oh, I noticed there are a lot of royal guards today, is the Prince in the village?"

Greta's question added more tension in her, as they all stared at her and waited for an answer.

"No, the Prince isn't here," LaFontaine chimed in. "His Highness asked us to purchase things for the Princess, and he sends some of his royal guards to help us bring the goods to the castle."

"And the castle's kitchen staffs do not have time to buy everything they need, so they asked me and Laura to buy some supplies for them," Perry added.

And before their noses grew longer, she decided to divert the conversation to more important matter.

"By the way, do you know if we could speak with Elsie and the others?" she asked, while LaFontaine takes Emma from her arms. The girl did not even notice it, too absorbed from enjoying the sweets in her hands. "I already have a proposition for them."

"Yes, I'll just get Elsie and we could talk in my house," Greta suggested, "They've been asking for you," but then hesitated when she saw Emma.

"Don't worry about her," she reassured the dark-haired woman right away. "Laf can look after her."

"Alright, thanks," Greta returned with a smile and then asked her neighboring stall to check on her own stall while they were gone.
While waiting for Greta, she went to where Carm was standing and slowly approached him. He did not even stir a bit when she stood face to face with him but respecting his personal space.

"Umm... we're going to Greta's house to discuss about my plan," she explained, a bit frustrated with his lack of response. "Would you like to come with us?" was her careful suggestion.

She leveled her eyes at him and waited for his reaction, but received none. His silence answered her question and she slowly turned around. Slightly hurt by Carm's silent treatment, she caught LaFontaine giving her a worried look, as she passed by at them; she averted their eyes before she could break down. She composed herself and get on with her plan of helping people, and when it was done, she could worry and deal with Carm afterwards.

By the time they stepped out of Greta's little cabin, the sun already cast slanting shadows on the ground.

After waving goodbye to Elsie and her companions, she let Perry went ahead to inform the others that they will meet at the tavern.

Before leaving, she turned around and gave her friend a warm hug to bid her goodbye.

"Thank you, Laura, for giving them hope and another chance in life," Greta said after pulling from the embrace. "I understand if you can't come and visit us here like you used to, but rest assured that our plan will work out."

"I'm thankful you agreed to lead the women in my absence," she almost choked of not able to tell the real reason why she cannot visit them anymore. Stating being chosen as one of the new handmaidens of the Princess of Karnstein cleared the matter at once. "We will keep in touch and Perry will help you with everything you need, just tell her and we will find a way to provide the best we can."

"You don't have to worry too much. Just do what you have to do first, and that is to serve the Princess."

Greta's comforting words calmed her nerves. "I'm glad to have you as a friend," she remarked as they walked further.

"It's sad that you can't come to Emma's name day," the dark-haired woman's humor changed. "She had been looking forward to seeing all of you there, especially Marcus."

"Oh, I feel bad that I can't come," she lowered her shoulders; the excitement she had a while ago died out. "But tell her that Perry and LaFontaine will definitely come. And Perry and I will bake as many creampuffs as we can and give it to her."

"Laura, you don't have to do that, you're spoiling her with those sweets," Greta commented in a motherly tone. "I told her that she's very lucky to eat like a royal."

They laugh together and gave the taller woman a reassuring smile, "It's nothing. Sometimes we have to share what we have," the words came out of her mouth too quickly and she caught Greta's inquisitive stare. "I mean... the royal family likes to share their food with the castle servants too." But before Greta could utter a comment, which she knew could be about the royal family, a boy came running towards them; still catching his breath, he whispered into Greta's ear.

"Why? What's wrong?" her eyes widened and her heart pounding.

"Someone needs my help," was Greta's anxious reply and turned to the boy first. "Go and tell them that I'm coming, I'll just fetch Emma and drop her to your mother's house." The boy nodded at once
and ran off. "I'm sorry Laura, but I have to go."

"Why? Where?" despite being confused and anxious too, she still offered her service. "I can help; just tell me what the problem is." But this time, Greta held her hands and tried to calm her.

"Thank you for offering, but I can do this on my own," Greta explained.

Stubborn as she can be, she held Greta's hands tighter and insisted. "No, let me help, I want to help. I'll go with you."

"Laura, someone is about to give birth, and a friend of mine who helps with childbirth is already there," Greta explained as fast as she can, growing frantic. "It won't be good for you to see the woman giving birth, while your about to give birth soon."

Suddenly, they both found themselves staring at each other, after the last remark.

Glaring at her friend that might already know her real identity... "What? How did you know that I'm-" was her shocking question, as she held Greta's hands tighter.

The look of regret on Greta's face hurt her as she began to question this woman's trust. Was she too naïve to figure out that this person really knew who she was?

"Oh god, now I broke my promise," Greta let out a frustrated groan realizing her mistake. "Now he will be mad at me."

Who could possibly the man Greta was referring to?

Was Greta working for someone?

Heat ran up her neck.

"Explain to me how you knew and who is this man you are afraid of?" her voice firm and high pitch, she seldom uses this tone, not even to the servants, but right now she felt threatened and disappointed.

"Laura, please forgive me for not telling you," Greta confessed, her expression a mix of disappointment and regret, more troubled, but there was an absence of guilt. "But Marcus dropped by in the house many weeks ago in the middle of the night. He said he needed some Steirerkas and he was sorry that he had to wake me. But he said it was urgent because you were craving for it, and he doesn't know where else to go, since he can't find any of it in the castle, and the market was closed. He said he just wanted to please you and satisfy your cravings. Then he told me that you're pregnant but asked me not to tell anyone yet, and not to mention to anyone that he was here to get your cheese."

By the time Greta finished explaining, her eyes were already filled with tears. Whether it was from the relief of preserving her disguise or confirming that Greta was truly an honest and kind person, or Carm doing something she doesn't expect he will do, she was just glad and stoked of what she discovered.

Her love for Carm grew more after finding out that her Prince had been very mindful and thoughtful of her needs without her knowledge.

Too overwhelmed, she hugged Greta again to reassure the dark-haired woman that everything was fine.
"It's alright Greta, and I'm sorry that I raised my voice to you," she apologized sincerely after withdrawing from the embrace. She brushed off the happy tears on her face and took out a handkerchief to dry it. "I honestly don't know what to say… I mean… I thought Ca- I mean, I thought Marcus will never take my cravings seriously…"

"Well, not too many men will knock on the door in the middle of the night, just to get what their wife is craving for," Greta quipped and smiled wide. "Marcus is a kind man, and I can see that he loves you very much."

"I know," she agreed.

"Laura I'm sorry but I really need to go, and I hope I could see you soon," the sad look on Greta's face cannot be denied. "Take care of yourself and if you ever need my help, I'm here," she gave her one last look before hurrying up towards where the boy ran.

"Goodbye Greta and thank you!" was all she could say as a lump in her throat began to form again.

*****

Later that night, while she sat on the chair in front of her dressing table, and wondered if her broody Prince was coming to her chamber or not, she realized that she cannot have her ways all the time. She could be demanding and persistent and she always got what she wanted; they could argue about almost anything, she could refuse to obey him if she doesn't agree with him, but now she realized that sometimes, she needed to lower her pride and give way. Although she could be stubborn most of the time and interpret his overprotectiveness with possessiveness, she realized that Carm only wanted the best for her.

"Sweetie, are you alright?"

Perry's worried tone broke her from contemplating. She looked their reflection in the mirror and nodded while the Lady in Waiting continued brushing her hair.

"By the way, where are the girls?" she noticed that not one of them came to her chamber tonight to help her prepare to go to bed, except her Lady in waiting.

"Well, I didn't realize that you bought so many things for them and the other servants, that's why I asked them to take care of the distribution and keep everything in order," was Perry's overwhelmed response. "And besides, I think you could use my company tonight after what happened today… Do you want to talk about it?"

She took a deep sigh and lowered her gaze as she recalled how Carm avoided her at the market. He did not join them at the tavern and instead chose to stay outside with Alfred and Armitage; he did not even eat the food that she sent for him.

"Do you know if he had eaten his supper?" she looked again to Perry, worried. It was already late when they arrived at the castle; Carm just walked ahead of them inside and did not speak to her. She was waiting for him to confront her and have that talk, and be over it once and for all. But the anticipation of waiting what he was going to say, being reprimanded by him, and the thought of him, skipping his dinner at the tavern kept her restless and worried at the same time.

"I'm sorry sweetie, I never got the chance to talk to Laf after His Highness and them set foot at the castle," Perry returned and crinkled her brows. "The kitchen servants have already retired to their chambers when we arrived. I don't know if-"

Their conversation was suddenly interrupted when they heard the door opened and saw Carm
entered the chamber and walked straight ahead to where she was.

Her heart raced.

Carm looked serious… the kind of 'broody serious, leave me alone, I don't want to talk to anyone type'.

But at least his eyes were not those icy ones like his mothers.

She hoped he had eaten. He was already dressed in his purple robe and probably ready to sleep, but of course, he had to come to her first and finished that talk.

Was he about to give her an ultimatum?

Perry put down the hairbrush on the dressing table and tapped her arm lightly. Before leaving… "Laura, Remember… communication." The Lady in Waiting whispered then bowed to the Prince on her way out and left the chamber quickly and quietly.

She rose from the chair and walked closer to the foot of the bed, where Carm was standing.

Her heart beat rapidly with anticipation while he remained silent and stared at her. It made her more anxious.

"Do you want to have that talk now," she broke the silence, to lessen her tension. She was waiting for him to burst out anytime now. But when she did not receive a reply at once, "I'm sorry for disobeying you," was her honest remark and bowed her head slightly while wringing her fingers. "I know that you're mad and I understand if you will forbid me to go to the village, and seeing the people there."

"Who said that I'll forbid you?"

The smoothness of his deep voice made her looked up; she narrowed her eyes when she saw his calm but still serious feature.

Baffled, "Aren't you mad and disappointed at me for disobeying you?"

"Mad? No. Disappointed? Yes. Because you did not obey me, and you snuck out," He cleared out and walked closer.

Drowning in confusion, she crinkled her eyebrows and waited for him to explain. She was growing frustrated and did not know how to approach the situation anymore. She looked him straight in the eyes and searched for answers.

Carm remained staring at her.

She felt appeased when she caught a smirk forming at the corner of his mouth, the next thing she knew he was holding her hands and stepped into her personal space.

Carm reached out and tucked a strand of gold locks behind her left ear.

"Laura, I told you not to go because I can't be with you…"

His voice was so calm, soft, deep and sweet. She could just feel all the hair in her body rising from how caring and worried he sounded like.
She was about to interrupt him, but his index finger touched her lips gently.

When she remained still, he removed his hand and put it back on her hair.

"I have a meeting with my mother and the clergies tomorrow," Carm slowly ran his fingers through long strands of soft golden hair. "And you know how they are… and my mother…" he let out a sarcastic chuckle. "So, I have no idea how long it will be. I want to be with you to the village and I thought of asking you to postpone it some other day, so I can fix my schedule. But you…" he then pinched lightly her cheek. "… Were so persistent and stubborn and not to mention very impatient that I decided to say no."

She suddenly felt ashamed of how she behaved earlier. "So, you mean to say, you're gonna actually say yes, but…" she received a slow nod at once. "I'm sorry… I didn't realize that you'd still let me go to the village. When Perry told me that you said no, I got annoyed. I thought you're going to forbid me again to go. You didn't tell me that you want to be with me instead."

"I'm sorry too Cupcake, I was so stressed today and didn't explain clearly to LaFontaine what I mean, when they relayed the message to Perry."

"Why are you stressed?" she grew worried when she saw the lines on his forehead. "Is it about the alliance?"

"No, it's about my first public appearance at the village…" was his frustrated reply. "They want to do it on the feast day of harvest. But let's not talk about it now because I'm already exhausted."

She wrinkled her brows, "Have you eaten your supper?" she asked, remembering her question to Perry. "Perry mentioned that the kitchen was already closed when we arrived. Did Laf managed to get some food?"

Carm shook his head, and began removing his robe, he tossed it at the chair beside the bed, "Let's just go to bed and you can feed me there instead." He held her hand and pulled her towards the bed and displayed a naughty smirk.

Narrowing her eyes, "What do you mean feed you? I don't have any food here…" She said and followed him to the bed.

Once they were tucked inside the sheets, she felt Carm's hand untied the strings in front of her chemise and slipped his hand to expose her left breast, before cupping it in his possessive hand.

"Who said about eating food?" Carm drawled; he swooped down and captured a pink nipple between his lips, using his tongue he flicked it back and forth and earned a low moan.

"Carm…" she gasped for breath, as she watched him licked and sucked her now erected nipple harder, before letting it go with a loud pop. Carm moved upward and kissed her. She put her right hand on his nape and caressed it. She groaned when he pulled from the kiss and looked at him. Fully dilated eyes gaze back at her and then darted to her breast.

"LaFontaine is right… your breasts are getting bigger," Carm drawled, biting his lower lip.

"Look who's happy…" she teased.

"Cupcake…" Carm uttered his voice needy and raspier. "Will it be alright for you if I feed first before the baby comes?"

TBC
Chapter End Notes

Hollstein ANR? Any thoughts?
Nightmare Pacifier

Chapter Summary

Continuation from the previous chapter with regards to what Laura felt about Carm's question. Hollstein is exploring another kind of intimacy in their relationship and Carm was particularly looking forward to know what Laura's reaction.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Warning: I'll be introducing Adult Nursing Relationship to Hollstein, just want to warn you if that's not your cup of tea. If you have any suggestions/reactions about it, you all knew that I'm open to them. Feel free to comment.

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Laura

"Cupcake…" Carm uttered his voice needy and raspier. "Will it be alright for you if I feed first before the baby comes?"

The question had her blinking.

"Umm… that if you're to breastfeed our baby," Carm mumbled and looked down. "But if you wish to take a wet nurse then it's alright… or whatever you wish… if you don't want to do it with me, its fine too."

What on earth did he just asked?

His comments swirled in her thoughts.

Still deciphering what she just heard, her eyes remained fixated on him.

But before she realized what he meant…

"You know what? Just ignore it… I'm sorry to demand like that," Carm's voice lost its luster and avoided eye contact.

She became alarmed.

No, she was not going to let him sleep without telling what was in his heart. The urgency in his voice told her that it's something he craved.

"Let's go to sleep you might be exhausted too," Carm suggested with a halfhearted smile. "I'm sorry to make you uncomfortable, Cupcake."

He kissed her forehead and was about to lay on his back on the bed, but she stopped him and held the back of his neck tighter. She caught the look of confusion and embarrassment in his eyes as she
gestured him to look into her eyes, and pleaded him to talk.

The look of confidence in his face faded and was replaced by agitation, but Carm still complied.
"Umm... Remember the other night? When I was having a nightmare? And shouting?" He asked slightly shy and fumbling for words. "You... You're..."

Lost for words, she narrowed her eyes and tried to recall the incident while she held on to Carm's neck.

"Carm," she said, and shook him gently, but he remained groaning.

"No! I want to go home! Let me out of here!"

Carm shouted and struggled.

Seeing that he was not responding to her gentle call..."Carl!" she called and held him, as she tried to struggle with his hands. "Wake up! It's just a dream!"

When Carm opened his eyes, she saw for the first time genuine fear in those dark orbs, it was painful to see him so vulnerable and scared like that, she stroked his face and her other hand held him to control him from struggling.

But he did not recognize her.

"You're not my mother!" he shouted to nothing, in particular, his voice tainted with anger and frustration.

"Ssshhh, it's me, Laura," she tried to soothe him but he remained scared. "You're dreaming, I'm here, don't be afraid." She said and tried to kiss his forehead, but he dodged it. He rose and sat on the bed instead, brought his knees to his chest and embraced it.

When she saw him scared like a child, she touched his knee carefully and called his attention.

"Carm, it's just a dream," she whispered, careful not to scare him. When she felt him calmed down on her touch, she slowly moved closer and cradled him. "I'm here, and I'm not going to leave you." She motioned for him to lay back while her arms wrapped protectively around him.

She let out a deep sigh when he obeyed and laid still. But he still whimpered.

Frustration slowly possessed her for failing to calm him fully.

She needed to find a way to show Carm her love.

Growing worried and desperate, she did what her instinct told her. She fumbled for the strings at the front of her nightgown and pulled open the top of her chemise to expose her left breast. She guided Carm to her bosom and put her left nipple in his mouth. Once Carm's mouth enclosed the tiny bud, she felt right away the strong surge of his suckling and her nipple rapidly erected.

Carm surprisingly calmed down.

She let him suckle her breast while cooing sweet words and soothed his hair until he fell asleep.

It was unexplainable and overwhelming discovering this method to appease him and show him how deeply she cared.

As the intimate moment they shared together that night faded in her thoughts, she felt all the blood in
her body rushed to her cheeks at the realization of Carm's request.

She exhaled and closed her eyes recalling how deep and fulfilling she felt that night.

"Cupcake, will you be alright and open to do regularly that thing you did that night?"

She heard Carm's sweet and hesitant query.

When the question became clearer, she opened her eyes and held his face.

Her body suddenly felt warmer and her heart pounded at the idea of such bonding. She would like to explore this kind of intimacy with Carm. It felt more intimate and emotional.

Wanting to make sure they were on the same page, "What do you mean open to doing regularly?" Carm just responded with a timid smile and tried averting eye contact again to hide the embarrassment in his eyes. "Hey, look at me." She sweetly ordered him, after catching him blushed and held his face gently towards her. "What does my Prince desire?" she whispered.

Carm took a deep breath before meeting her gaze, looking uncertain.

"I know you did that because I was having a terrible nightmare and you want me to calm down immediately…it worked… and I appreciated it very much…" Carm stated sheepishly, his voice uncertain but hopeful. "But I don't want it to end," he let out a deep sigh. "It felt amazing and wonderful to be so near to you like that… and I wish we could do that more often because I can't stop thinking about it."

She was totally dumbfounded after that unexpected request from him. She knew that nursing an infant was the greatest gift of life, but she never thought about nursing an adult even with the absence of milk; it just came to her by instinct when she cannot appease Carm quickly.

Interpreting her contemplation as a rejection…

"I know it's foolish. Let's, forget about it," was his low sheepish reply.

Carm was about to release from her hold, but she held him still.

"Hey, I didn't say anything yet," she explained and gazed at him, her right hand reached up and smoothed the lines on his forehead, before running her fingers on his perfectly chiseled jawline and cupped it. "When I saw you calmed down after offering my breast to you, I felt wonderful too to have pacified and soothed you. Carm, I will not deprive you of your needs. If you think that it sooth you, I will gladly give you what mother nature has provided me. And if it meant nurturing you and satisfying your needs like that, then I will not be opposed to it."

After giving that heartfelt explanation, she saw his brows furrowed and his expression became serious.

"You would really do that for me? Whenever I like?" was his doubtful surprised remark, "…during mornings, in the middle of the day and bedtimes too, and maybe more?"

"Anything for you, my love… I'll do it anytime," she mumbled and received a wide smile from him that reached his eyes; she cupped both his cheeks gently and then kissed him. The looked of relief and excitement on Carm's face was priceless and she was happy that she can fulfill his needs.

"...But how about you?" Carm's excitement faded, his eyebrows furrowed in its usual melancholic demeanor. "Are you comfortable about it?" he asked worriedly. "Cupcake, I wouldn't do it if you
think it's uncomfortable. I admit... I love your breasts... they're so amazingly beautiful," was his bashful comment. "But if you think it'll be too much to handle my request, I will be perfectly fine without the extra..." he searched for the right word but became more embarrassed to admit his new fixation. "You know..."

She let out a low chuckle seeing how worried and bashfully adorable he looked like. Carm's thoughtfulness always made her heart swell.

"Well, it's already too late my Prince," she said and cupped both his cheeks and tilted his head to look at her. "You already made me want to do it when you suckled my breast that night," her lips claimed his own and kissed Carm tenderly to appease him. "And besides, it felt wonderful holding you so close to me and being connected with you that way, without the sexual part." her explanation was halted when he backed out and pretended to be shocked.

"Cupcake... I just want to clear to you that the sexual part is still the most important part," Carm purred and flashed a smoldering look. "We can bond like we did that night, but I can't promise you that I'll always behave properly," he glanced at his crotch and then looked up again displaying a naughty smirk.

"You're unbelievable," she gave him a lop-sided grin, noticing a bulge forming in between his legs and then rolled her eyes.

"All I'm saying is, we can calmly bond together," Carm reasoned out and raised his left eyebrows. "Or... do both at the same time... you know..." he rasped and began to kiss her.

She reciprocated his kisses with the same intensity that he was showing and caressed his tongue with her own.

When the need for air arises, "I think I can grant your wish," she purred back and smiled before kissing him again and closed her eyes. And before things heated up, she released him from the kiss. Carm whined and she saw two dark orbs gazing at her with full of desire. "But you need to give way when the baby arrived," she added.

"Of course I will..." he replied immediately then gave her a devilish smirk, "...how about me and the baby sharing?"

"Carm!" she scolded him playfully. "Feeding our baby is the main priority when the time comes."

"Alright, the baby could borrow it," was Carm's possessive remark and eyed the two mounds in front of him. "But it's mine and if you had fed enough our baby, I would like to have my share afterwards." He said in a playful tone. She was about to disapprove. "And don't worry... I will make sure our baby gets enough milk first before I feed from you."

She just rolled her eyes and did not comment more. She knew that Carm was so obsessed with her breasts and it looked like he would not give up his claim and possession on that certain part of her body easily.

Realizing that he was in a good humor, she took advantage of the situation to ask him again what his nightmare was all about.

"Would you like to tell me what you dreamt that night?" she asked the same question, just like the past days when she tried to coax him to talk about his nightmare. When they slept together in the same bed, she occasionally witnessed Carm having a nightmare and shouting in his sleep. But that night was the worst.
"It's nothing," Carm responded nonchalantly.

She remained silent and did not pressure him further. The last time she forced him to tell her, they ended up arguing and not talking the whole day. She did not want to ruin their moment. So she thought of starting this newfound intimacy with him.

"Do you wish to feed now?" she asked in a low tone and saw his brows arched then gave her a naughty smirk. His expression was like a happy cat that was offered milk.

"Is that what we're calling it?" Carm asked, in a deep sultry tone.

She felt a tingle down there as he gave her those dark predatory seductive look and gave him a naughty smirk. He really liked to make her blush and they both knew this new bonding was exciting for both of them.

When she recovered her poise...

"I think it's more discreet; especially if we're in the company of other people, don't you think so?" she asked and felt like she was burning with desire for his mouth to suckle her nipple soon.

"I think feeding sounds perfect," he agreed and smiled. "And yes please, I need my wife to feed."

She giggled and she felt thrilled and at the same time intimidated by this desire of his. As she watched his eyes smoldered with lust. It would also mean complete submission from her and surrender herself to both pleasure and pain of her nipples being suckled regularly and often. But the thought of pacifying him easily this way was the most important reason she agreed. She loved Carm and she did not want him to experience those dreadful nightmares, and she thought that she could help him lessen those nightmares by bonding peacefully and pleasurably with him like this before they sleep.

She put her head on two pillows and beckoned Carm to come closer to her. Her Prince obliged; excitement written all over his face. He lowered his head and lay beside her. She lay on her left side and took her left breast and offered her nipple to Carm's waiting mouth. He glanced up and looked into her eyes, asking permission. When she nodded...

"I love you Cupcake," he whispered.

Carm kissed her nipple first before enclosing his lips around it. It sent a tingle right away downwards and she moaned when he closed his mouth around her nipple and areola, and he began suckling her gently in a steady rhythm. She wrapped her arms protectively around him and stroked his hair. It was arousing to feel him suckling steadily but amazingly calming too. Compared with the suckling the other night, he looked calmer and more relaxed now as she watched him closed his eyes and suckled on her left breast, while his hand caressed the other breast. This new bonding seemed to pacify him, and she never felt more intimate with him than ever. She felt peaceful too at the thought of nurturing him like this and at the same time aroused.

After seemed like a quarter of an hour, she felt Carm released her nipple.

"Is everything alright?" she whispered, her voice full of tenderness, not wanting to break this peaceful bonding between her and him while she stroked his bangs.

Carm opened his eyes slowly and gazed at her sheepishly.

"May I feed on the other one too?" Carm whispered back with the same tenderness in his voice.
She gave him a smile and mumbled, "Of course you may; they're yours…" She said in a low soft tone and Carm returned with a bashful smile, he shifted on the other side of the bed, and she turned around to face him. She cradled him and he waited for her to offer her nipple to him. He kissed it again before putting his lips around the nipple.

The act was so intimate. She cannot explain how wonderful she felt giving her breast to Carm to suckle so that he would be appeased.

When she saw Carm suckled gently and closed his eyes, she held him tight and closed her eyes too, and savored the feeling of being deeply connected with him. Nothing can compare this feeling of intimacy and peacefulness they were experiencing right now. She felt like their body, mind, and soul were united together by this bond they discovered; and she was thankful that Carm asked her to do it again. The feeling of nurturing him and at the same time bonding with him surprisingly gave her satisfaction and fulfillment.

Carm suckled longer on the last breast.

After almost like half an hour, she felt him released from her nipple and she loosened her arms around him.

"Are you finished?" she whispered lovingly and saw his peaceful expression.

"Yes, and thank you," he whispered back and kissed lightly the left nipple.

"It's a pleasure,"

She did not release him yet and enjoyed holding him in her arms.

"How do you feel?" she asked him and felt his hand wrapped around her hips.

He took a deep breath and uttered: "I felt wonderful…intense but in a calm intense kind of way," he whispered, his eyelids getting heavier but he still managed to look up and gazed at her. "The feeling of your hand stroking my hair and the warmth of your bosom near me is amazing. I don't know how to explain more, Cupcake, except that I like it very much and I would definitely want more." He concluded his tone deeper and raspier.

"You can have them as long as you like," she whispered sweetly before Carm smiled and closed his eyes. She gathered him closer to her, while he wrapped his arms around her waist and nuzzled deeply into her bosom. She smiled as she savored this deeper kind of intimacy between them, that only she and Carm can understand.

They both fell into the calming effect of their newfound bonding and surrendered to sleep.

TBC
know that not everyone is looking forward to Holidays' Celebration, but I still wish the best for all of you.

Thanks for your feedbacks and kudos!

Grammar mistakes, constructive criticism; Please let me know below, would really appreciate you took time to tell me.

Enjoy the rest of the Holidays! Be safe and take care :-)
The Princess’ cravings are getting crazier. Thankfully, Carm is always there to provide whatever she needs. Laura noticed also the beneficial result of their new bonding.

Laura

When Carm resumed sleeping in her bed, she noticed something had changed: the Prince sleeps deeper and calmer now. She felt relieved the nightmares and waking up in the middle of the night were lessened.

Except for that one particular night where he had a terrible dream.

That made her worried.

Thankfully, it was resolved by the new bonding they share, and Carm had been sleeping like a log.

Unless, of course, she wakes up in the middle of the night needy and horny, then Carm wakes up gladly and offers a ‘helping hand’. Other than that, it felt there was a hibernating panther lying beside her every morning.

Perhaps it was a sign also that he was not worried anymore about their relationship…

Or their newfound bonding made them calmer and more trustful to each other...

Or he was plainly exhausted every night because she always felt horny since she became pregnant.

But she can't help it… her hormones always get wild whenever she sees and feels Carm closer to her. She was kind of embarrassed; she had never been this horny and needy. Thank God, her Prince was always willing to help and satiate her every need, whether in bed or food cravings.

And speaking of food, one of her needs must be quenched soon or she will go mad.

_How can he sleep like this?_

She gazed at Carm, who sleeps like a child on top of her. She loved the sight of his face nuzzled calmly on her bosom.

A satisfied smile crept on the corner of her mouth, recalling how Carm liked to burrow his face all the time on her breasts or under the crook of her arms. He always laid so close to her and rarely sleeps on his side alone.

Though most of the time she was the little spoon, and fond of sleeping on Carm's shoulder, she discovered the broody Prince was very clingy. He never released her or never let go of her touch while asleep. Carm always liked to feel her close to him, and she loved it even if it resulted from numb arms sometimes.

Right now, as much as she enjoyed the warmth eliminating from his body, she was itching to get out
of bed and eat something.

She let out a discreet groan as she watched their position.

The possibility of leaving their bed was small.

Carm was pinning her down.

How long can she control her cravings?

She kissed his forehead to distract herself and instead, reveled the beauty in front of her. Her fingers traced gently the smoothness and sharpness of his jawline; she suddenly had the urge to kiss him there. Carm's exquisite jawline was one of her weaknesses; whether it's shaved or covered with facial hair, she loved kissing it. She hoped one of their children inherits the Karnstein's jawline; it would be such a waste not to produce an eye-catching beautiful baby with an exquisite sharp jawline like Carm's.

*Oh, my.*

She took a deep sigh, growing impatient and undeniably horny.

This was crazy, she thought.

Just the mere thought of kissing Carm's jawline was already making her wet.

What the hell was happening in her body?

Was this the result of pregnancy hormones...?

Or she was simply horny ever since she fell in love with Carm?

It was funny... she never experienced this kind of lust with Danny. Perhaps Carm asked LaFontaine to give her some kind of love potion, and put it in the tea that she always drinks whenever she feels unwell... amused, she smiled at the thought.

Her ruminating was halted when she was reminded of her yearning.

Growing frustrated, she took a deep breath one more time; trying to ease her cravings.

She did not know anymore if she wanted a creampuff with mustard or Carm.

Her eyes glanced at the prince on her bosom and considered her options. But when she felt the steady warmth of his breathing on her chest...

No... she couldn't disturb him. Carm looked like a happy cat; he seemed to be in the land of unicorns and creampuffs with the low purr he was making.

She reached for the curtain on her side, careful not to rouse the sleeping prince on her bosom. Slowly, she drew slightly the drapes covering the four post bed; her sleepy eyes were instantly hit by the strong rays of the sun, and she quickly closed the curtains.

"Damn it."

Although it was Saturday and they can stay in bed as long as they want, she did not have any desire to lounge on her bed until she got a taste of pickle and creampuff with mustard.
She hoped Perry will come soon barging in with the breakfast tray full of goodies. How she loved eating those sweets every morning without her Lady in Waiting lifting an eyebrow and reminding her to eat more healthy foods. She grinned… being pregnant surely has many benefits.

But desperate groan escaped from her mouth when reality hit her...

How she wished Perry could still come to her chamber early on Saturday mornings bearing sweet treats for her. Unfortunately, those Saturdays were over.

After their reconciliation, and Carm returning to his chamber, her Prince banned anyone entering the Princess's chamber on Saturday mornings. Carm was already tired of people interrupting them all the time. He claimed it was the only day they could stay on the bed as long as they want without worrying someone disturbing them. And the only day her Prince hardly have any duty to carry out, thus any servants were forbidden to come unless they need them.

From that day on Carm declared that Saturday mornings will be ‘no interruption and a relaxation day’ for them. Her handmaidens happily accepted it, as well as Lafontaine.

Everybody openly accepted Carm's order except one…

She still cannot forget the look on Perry's disappointed face when her Lady in Waiting heard the Prince's order. She knew Perry was about to disagree, but she recalled a touch from Lafontaine on the Lady in Waiting's elbow followed by a naughty winked from them coaxing Perry to comply. She sensed LaFontaine had their own agenda also about the ban after witnessing the exchanged look from both of them and not hearing Carm's Valet complain at all. Surely, they were up to something.

And speaking of the Valet and Lady in Waiting… She was slightly frustrated Perry hadn't confirmed nor denies her relationship with LaFontaine. She thought they were perfect for each other, with both being the most trusted people she and Carm have, and like a family too, in addition to being the best royal households of the Karnsteins. But until now, the two redheads were still both discreet about their fondness for each other. Even though she and Carm had already caught them a lot of times making out. Someday, she will definitely confront them if she caught them in the act.

Her train of thoughts was interrupted when she heard the undeniable growl in her stomach.

She gazed at Carm again and ran her fingers delicately through his short locks, and caressed the softness of it.

How can she get up without waking him?

She took a deep breath and smiled at the attractive sight in front of her eyes and took time to revel in it for a moment.

It was beautiful to see Carm first thing in the morning like this: sleeping calmly, his face like a portrait of a satisfied and innocent child with no trace of worry, no trace of heavy obligations, no trace of feeling threatened from her former lover and suitors; just plainly contentment, serenity, and beauty.

She preferred to watch him like this, instead of the usual melancholic sight of him. But even in his broody state, Carm was tragically beautiful and captivating. There was something about the Prince of Karnstein that suited him the dark moods and savage characteristics. She can't deny it awakens every part of her nerve whenever they engaged in make-up sex after an intense fight or misunderstanding.

*Crap.*
…And another rumble from her stomach.

Distracting herself by watching Carm was not helping.

Her craving was getting on her nerves and she felt she will die if she can't eat a pickle and a creampuff with mustard soon.

She gave up.

Carefully, she tried to get free from Carm's hold and held his face, so she can transfer him from her chest to the yellow pillow under her head.

But as she tried to disentangle her body underneath him…

"What the-?" her thigh unintentionally brushed on Carm's groin and made her eyes widened.

"Oh dear," was all she can say as she felt his morning erection and send immediately a shrill thrill of delight into her body.

How can she forget? Aside from the times, they were having wild make-up sex, Carm was always at his grandness and hardest in the morning.

No wonder he liked 'breakfast in bed'.

Once Carm woke up and felt her warm body close to his, there's no stopping the horny panther from devouring her unless she tells him that she doesn't feel better. But she hardly refused Carm's 'sexual advances', since nowadays, she also experienced her own 'morning erection'. Lately, she found herself waking up wet and ready for morning sex. There were many instances that she felt her clitoris and vagina get engorged after waking up. Ashamed at what she was going through, she did not dare asked Perry or anyone if this was normal for a woman to feel.

Anyway, Carm was doing a very good job of satiating her needs in bed, she thought. Speaking of needs in bed… She let out a frustrated weak moan, denying and ignoring the tingling in her own groin.

Was she hungry or horny?

This became sexually frustrating when Carm shifted a bit to his side and the sheet covering him slid down. And her eyes caught a glimpse of his royal hugeness.

Oh, dear.

Carm's wood-hard member resting on her thigh awoken her senses fully, not only was she craving for food, but she felt horny too and craving for something only Carm can provide.

She let out another discreet groan, realizing her predicament.

How was it possible that she craved for both food and sex now?!

If she can't get hold of her creampuff with mustard soon, she will have to satiate her other craving by disturbing Carm's sleep and asking him there and there to give her a morning bang.

But then she remembered… she already did disturb Carm last night... in the middle of his sleep!

She gazed at the sleeping figure of Carm again as she battled with the horny devil inside her. She doesn't have any intention of disturbing him again. Her poor big wild cat needed his sleep.
Perhaps she could try to release from him in one quick motion.

But one way or the other, Carm will eventually wake up, she reasoned out and struggled with a decision.

*What would Laura Hollis do?*

She decided to do the most sensible way to satiate any of her cravings.

She was sorry, but not actually sorry for what she was going to do now. She was desperate, frustrated, hungry and horny.

Smirking and biting her lower lip, she carefully reached down and stroked Carm's erection in a slow and torturous pace; not too obvious. She wanted him to enjoy the transition from the sensation of waking up aroused to finally coming to his senses and full size.

She doesn't need to wait a little longer when she felt Carm stirred up from her hand's mercy.

Carm let out a low deep groan.

His moans were music to her ears, knowing that she can evoke such pleasure in him.

She glanced at his face and saw his eyes still shut, but a smirk was forming at the corner of his mouth. She placed a tender kiss on his lips and watched his reaction morphed into a naughty grin.

After opening his eyes, "Cupcake, what in heaven's name did I do to deserve this delicious awakening?" he purred, his voice still raw and deep from sleep.

She cannot help but giggle at the sound of his satisfied and seductive purring. The next thing she felt, was his hand caressing slowly her upper arm in a most sensual way.

"My sweet Prince, Sorry to wake you up… I'm craving for some creampuff with mustard," she began and licked his lower lip. "But then I caught your wild panther awake and craving for attention. So, I thought of taking care of it first." She gestured Carm to lay on his back, while she settled beside him and stroked his raging hard-on.

"Oh, such a caring wife you are… ahhh…” Carm rasped as a graceful little hand stroked his large erection slow and hard.

"I don't want His Royal Highness to complain of being neglected…” she returned before lowering her head and swirled her tongue around Carm's left nipple. The gesture surprised him and Carm let out a groan. She smiled before putting her mouth on the other nipple and sucked it hard, while her hand worked its wonder on Carm's raging erection, pumping him long and slow. She continued her sweet assault on Carm's nipples, alternately licking and sucking from one erect nipple to the other, until she heard him whimpered underneath her.

"Cupcake…” Carm's moans were growing louder.

Feeling that Carm might come soon, she released her mouth on his nipples and she remained stroking slowly his shaft.

She bit her lower lip as she flashed him a seductive grin and stared at him under those heavy-lidded eyes of hers.
She thought of playing with him first. Elsie's words of wisdom suddenly flashed in her mind.

The idea of talking dirty to him suddenly enticed her. "Do you like how I touch you?"

"I do…" Carm answered, catching his breath. He watched with wonders the small meticulous hand that was stroking his cock.

She let out a deep breath and looked at Carm's raging hard-on; it's long, thick and bulging. His pre-cum oozed generously from the slit of the head, lubricating and making each slide of her hand slick, wet and sensual. Carm's juice had always been rich, creamy, hot and abundant; she did not want him to explode yet and waste it in her hand. So, she continued with her mission.

"God, you're so huge I'll be terrified if you'll put it inside me-" she was not even finished conveying her words that can boost his ego and made her wetter when she caught the panic in his eyes. Carm quickly covered his erection with his two hands, shielding it from her touch. Confused, she looked up at him again, while she unwillingly removed her hand from his member.

"Cupcake, am I scaring you again?" Carm's voice suddenly became a pitch higher; a sign his worried, then furrowed his brows. "I'm sorry…"

Realizing her mistake, she held his gaze, "No, no, no… it's not like that," she reassured him and rested her hand on his thigh instead. "I'm totally over my fear of penis... at least, yours," she cleared out, fumbling with embarrassment. "Didn't you notice?" she asked but received a confused look from Carm. "I'm trying to talk dirty to you…"

"Oh. You are?" was his surprised dorky remark and smirked.

She nodded and gave him an innocent look and flashed a devilish smile, as she gracefully removed his hands from his crotch and with poise, she reclaimed in her hand his royal hugeness.

"Well, if you put it that way…" Carm purred and tried to relax back on the bed, and tucked his right arm under his head, and focused his sight on his crotch. It did not take long for the heaviness of his breathing to return.

She planted a wet kiss on his lips, before asking, "Where were we?" was her equally flirtatious reply, as she resumed stroking his semi-hard shaft.

"You're telling me how scared you are to feel me inside you," Carm filled in, his voice low and raspier. There was no denying he liked where this was going.

"Yes." She breathed out deeply and grinned; growing aroused at the sight of Carm's cock waking up again, growing in her hand and becoming harder under her meticulous touch. "You make me wet and scared by just watching your cock grew thicker and longer…” she used and emphasized the word 'cock', knowing it will drive Carm crazy. "I can't even imagine how it fits inside me, without tearing me apart."

And that was all it took to send Carm growling with madness. The next thing she knew, she was lying on her back naked, and an equally naked Carm was on top of her, pinning her arms over her head on the bed.

"I don't think you realized how much you made my cock very angry by what you said," Carm whispered diabolically in her ears, and faced her closer.

She held his gaze and exhaled, and felt the dangerous arousal in between her legs dripping. Carm's predatory look was one of her weaknesses; it never ceased to arouse her.
"Tell me Cupcake, should I go easy on you?" Carm asked and then leaned to her ear again. "Or should I let my beast chase you until you're out of breath and whimpering."

Her breathing became rugged after that teasing remark. She had experienced him going rough with her and she loved the lust and delicious fear that comes along with it, especially when his raging jealous and furious. She knew the intensity of having sex with him when he was angry was different when he was not. But right now, she was aching and desperate for him to fill her.

"Show me how angry your cock is," she dared him and with a graceful ease, she turned around, stood on all fours and lowered her head on the pillow to rest. She heard Carm growled instantly as she flaunted her rear and dripping core in front of him. Curious, she looked back at him and saw Carm's chest heaving while he kneeled and settled behind her, his brows furrowed and his sight focused on her mound.

Carm's right hand held his erection and stroked it fast and short, lubricating his shaft more with his own juice. After pumping and priming himself… "My beautiful Princess, are you ready for me?" he rasped.

The act of watching Carm touched himself was enough to make her wet. "Yes." She uttered with desperate yearning.

Standing up on his knees, she felt Carm nudged the engorged head of his cock on her wet entrance, and with one thrust, he entered, stretched and filled her fully. She cried with pleasure at the sensation of his length throbbing inside her.

"Ahhh, Cupcake… you're so tight and warm," Carm moaned, savoring the feeling of being sheathed. "I hope you have the strength to take more of me."

It seemed he liked their 'dirty' conversation.

Still remembering the advice from the experts…

"Carm," she moaned while waiting for him to get her comfortable with the sudden intrusion. "You're so huge and thick," she whimpered. "I always feel claimed and possessed every time you're inside me," she added and let out a soft cry. It did not take too long to know the effect of her dirty talk to Carm. She felt him started thrusting into her slow and hard and heard Carm grunted behind her.

The Prince's hands held firmly the sides of her waist as his hips thrust faster; she felt his balls slapping against her buttocks and the sounds of their combined moans echoing in the chamber made her even wetter.

"My Prince, I'm all yours," she commented as she felt her walls tightening around Carm's and heard the sound of their flesh slamming against each other resonating across the room. Carm pounded behind her like an animal and she felt his stiff shaft invaded her deeper and harder. "Carm… faster," she ordered and he complied.

Carm's movements became harder, faster and shorter; he pounded inside her without any restraint, letting his animalistic side took over.

She felt him growing thicker, pulsating and hot inside her and knew that he cannot hold on longer.

"Cupcake…” Carm groaned in between heavy breathing and pounding.

The desperate tone of his voice told her that he was near the edge, but Carm always preferred that she comes first. She reached down and rubbed her clit firmly, it sent her quickly to the edge and she
let out a gasp and whimper, before shouting… "Carm!" and rode the waves of her orgasm.

And with one savage thrust, Carm let out a guttural growl, "Laura!" and tightened his hands on her hips.

She felt Carm shuddered and stiffened behind her as he emptied his juice inside her. A shrill delight possessed her while the torrent of Carm's seed abundantly surged inside her, filling her depth.

And not too long, she felt their combined cum overflowed and trickled down her thighs after Carm pulled out of her.

She let out a deep sigh of relief when she felt Carm's hands released her hips, and her body stumbled on the bed. Her aching was satiated but her sex drive was still high. While still beneath Carm, she did not give him a chance to relax and to come down from his high. She quickly turned around and pinned Carm on the bed; she glanced at his shaft still standing stiff between them and flashed a naughty satisfied smile at Carm's ability to remain hard even after release.

Caught off guard, a pair of surprised fully dilated dark orbs just stared back at her, "Let's try that one more time, shall we?" she uttered in her deepest sensuous commanding voice. As her right hand stroked Carm's jawline, attempting to soothe the poor confused Prince, she lined herself on top of Carm, before straddling and slid down into his thickness. "Are you ready?" she asked and tightened inside around him, as she girded to ride him.

Still shocked by the assault, Carm could only nod repeatedly, seeing the position was reversed.

Flashing a naughty grin, "Good," was her satisfied remark and clenched around him harder, making Carm groaned.

How she loved being on top and in control.

TBC
Carmilla

After pacifying her animalistic side and still recovering from the intensity of her high, she felt her world shattered and lost control when two strong hands flipped her around and found herself underneath her wife. Her eyes widened with surprise at the realization of what just happened and she can't help but growl with arousal, as the animal in her awoke again.

"Let's try that one more time, shall we?"

The deep sensuous commanding voice of Laura quickly sent her to a maddening daze, and not too long she felt a gentle hand stroked her jawline, and she dissolved immediately at the familiar soothing touch on her face.

Expecting that her little Cupcake wanted some fondling first before going again to the main course, she was surprised when she felt Laura straddled and sunk to her stiff shaft in one swift motion.

"Are you ready?"

Dumbfounded and extremely aroused, she could only nod at how dominating Laura was.

"Good," Laura uttered.

If there's one thing she was extremely grateful for amongst God's creations, it's Laura Hollis. The enchanting beauty that Laura possessed; the innocent adorable smile that Laura exhibited; Laura's generosity; the pureness of Laura's heart; Laura's magnificent breasts; and Laura Hollis' damn ability to shift from being sweet and innocent to domineering and controlling in bed.

Right now, she was on the edge of exploding soon as the sight of Laura on top of her, riding her hard and slow, and that exquisite pair of mound bouncing graciously, transpired right before her eyes. It was definitely a sight to behold. A growl escaped her mouth, she can't resist them. Her hands reached up to cup the fullness of Laura's bosom and knead them before thumbing and playing with the nipples that she loved so much.

"Feel me more, Carm," Laura exhaled, hips rocking in a smooth slow excruciating way.

She obliged and massaged those gorgeous breasts harder, "Cupcake," a desperate groan vibrated in her throat, as she gazed at the naked flesh and flushed skin in front of her, while her ears were filled with the sound of Laura's moans echoing in the chamber. It was too much for her eyes to look and
worship Laura's glorious body at the same time. "You're so beautiful," she purred and felt her balls pulled up tight and aching to burst out, as Laura continued to ride her in slow torturous manner, taking her all the way inside. "I don't know if I could last any longer…" she confessed, becoming dizzy with arousal as she felt her length dragging against Laura's tight walls.

"Then come for me, Carm," Laura ordered with unfaltering voice.

Feeling ashamed of not letting her wife come first, she stubbornly tried to hold it, "N-no… you first," she demanded between heavy breathes and put her hands on Laura's waist, as she guided Laura to steady their rhythm. Beads of sweat rolled down her temple and her breathing became harsher, as she felt being fully sheathed in Laura's tightness.

"Come with me, Carm," the Princess' drawled in between panting.

As her pelvis met every hard thrust of Laura's hip, it resulted in Laura's moan becoming shorter and louder…

"Claim me. Make me yours, Carm!" Laura demanded.

She growled while powerful orgasm surged from within her, flowing through her and making her tighter and harder. Aching and throbbing, she thrust upward and filled Laura almost to the point of pain. Just as she was about to shoot her thick loads inside, Laura cried her name and quivered on top of her, and together, they both rode the waves of their fire.

She reveled the scene in front of her as Laura melted around her, while she emptied her balls and filled Laura generously with her seed. Their combined powerful orgasm and generous cum overflowed from Laura's core, and she found her crotch and legs soaking wet.

Laura collapsed on her chest and nuzzled in the crook of her neck. Still catching their breaths, she wrapped her arms around and held Laura tight, while she also relaxed from her high.

Once her breathing evened out and returned to normal, "I love you, Cupcake," she whispered in Laura's ear and caressed her wife's sweaty hair.

"Love you too,"

She heard the muffled voice of Laura uttered in her neck and found herself amused at how adorable it sounded coming from her wife's mouth.

After pulling up the sheet and covering their naked bodies, "Do you need anything?" she asked softly, as she stroked those golden locks and recalled her pregnant wife craving for that awful looking condiment along with her favorite sweet moments ago.

The Princess only shook her head from left to right.

Unsatisfied with the reply, "Are you sure? I could get you some food if you're hungry," she suggested, testing her wife's patience and hunger. "Perry won't be coming today with your sweets and creepy looking dip unless I ask for it."

"No, just let me stay here for a while," Laura mumbled, remaining sprawled on top. "I like the feeling of you inside me… filling me fully."

A cocky grin formed in the corner of her mouth and a glimmer of pride soared in her chest. She was thankful Laura could not see it. But then another thought crossed her mind.
"I bet you like the feeling of being on top."

She wished to say it but decided not to. She did not want to ruin the mood.

Still hard, she felt how fully sheathed she was when Laura adjusted on top of her to nuzzle deeper in her neck. It felt warm and wonderful staying inside Laura. But as much as she relished the sensation of being enveloped in the warmth and tightness of Laura's, "Cupcake, you need to eat something," she offered again, growing worried.

"I will…" was the Princess' sleepy reply. "Just give me a moment and I-"

And then there was silence, and the next thing she heard was the low soft rumbling of Laura's breath against her neck. She chuckled softly, kissed Laura's temple and let her Cupcake nap.

"I guess she's not hungry anymore."

A satisfied cocky smirk reappeared in the corner of her mouth, pleased with herself for satiating Laura's other craving. She decided to relax and took a deep breath as she relished the warmth and softness of her wife's body on her. It would take a while before she becomes soft and can pull out from Laura easily without disturbing her wife. Only then she could fetch or ask for their breakfast before Laura wakes up. But right now, she cannot deny that she loved being inside and connected with Laura like this. How she wished that she could wake up every morning with Laura on top of her.

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"Good morning, Your Highnesses!" Perry announced her arrival a bit too loud than usual, her way of saying 'stop whatever indecent thing you're doing', and flashed a satisfied controlled smile when she deemed the surroundings normal to her sight.

"Ah, right on time!" She exclaimed and hopped off from the bed as soon as she saw the Lady in Waiting walked inside the Princess' chamber carrying the breakfast tray. "Thanks, Lady Ginger."

"What does my Cupcake wants today?"

She asked after taking the bed tray from Perry, which earned a smile from the Lady in Waiting and then bowed to her before walking to the other side of the bed; drawing all the curtains of the four posts bed and tying them neatly on each post.

Laura had to cover her eyes with a hand avoiding the sudden strong rays of the sun.

"Thanks, Perry," the Princess said, got up and sat on the bed before focusing her gaze to the left.

A whimsical smile crept across Laura's face, watching her carefully put the bed tray containing their breakfast on her wife's lap, before settling herself beside Laura. She was about to ask but got surprised when Laura kissed her on the cheek.

"What's that for?" she looked up, totally perplexed.

Laura gazed at her, but her obliviousness made her wife smile more.

What is she amused of?

And before she can ask, Laura hooked her left arm to her right arm and rested her head over her right shoulder, "You've been spoiling me too much, I might get used to it and ask for it even if I'm not
pregnant anymore."

"In that case, I better get you pregnant all the time Cupcake," she quipped, her voice coated with naughtiness.

The Princess looked up and flashed a playful glare. "What do you mean pregnant all the time? As far as I can remember, you told my father you only want three children…"

"Ah, that's true…" she uttered, pretending to recall the incident, then looked around and after confirming they were alone, she leaned closer. "…that's before we consummated our marriage, Cupcake." Her tone became raspier. "But when I discovered how wonderful you are in bed, I don't think three heirs will be enough."

Laura's eyes widened upon hearing it, "Carm!" and playfully shoved her and released from the hold.

"Cupcake, I'm just kidding!" she smirked naughtily.

The royal pout made an appearance again.

She put her right arm around Laura's shoulders and drew her closer, then she tilted Laura's chin with her left index finger and guided her to her lips. The Princess closed her eyes and melted at the warmth and possessiveness of her touch and tender kiss.

"Thank you for carrying my heir and being mine," she whispered into Laura's ear after releasing from the kiss and rested her forehead on hers.

After opening her eyes, Laura smiled and kissed her again, "It's a pleasure and an honor to be yours, Your Highness."

She responded with a satisfied smirk. Every now and then, her possessiveness and fondness for her wife can get intense, but Laura always knew how to appease her feelings.

"So, what's gonna be today? Steirerkas with pickles on rye bread, blueberry cupcakes or creampuffs dipped in mustard?" She asked while she perused the content of the bed tray in front of them. Perry did not just prepare their usual breakfast, but always adds some fruits and nuts too. Today they got pears and walnuts.

"Umm, I think I'll have some of your cheese but on loaf please," the Princess stated, eyes growing wide while looking at the yellow condiment.

"What's wrong with rye bread?" She asked and started putting the lumpy-crumbly cheese on a slice of loaf.

"There's nothing wrong with it," Laura explained while giving her a sheepish look. "I'm just not used to eating dark bread.

Before she realized it, her left eyebrow raised and caught Laura giving her a sheepish look.

"You're probably thinking that I'm a fussy eater."

"No, absolutely not," she corrected, not wanting to hurt her wife.

"How did you come to like that, if I may ask?" Laura's curiosity was piqued. "I rarely see rye bread being served on our table back at home, and here, you're the only one that eats it, aside from the servants."
"I grew up eating rye bread when I was a child," she related and glanced around. "Ma makes the most amazing Steirerkas too, so the two combined became my favorite. And even if we have supplies coming from Da, we don't indulge in food and drinks. She cooks our food like the way she was taught at their home. She used to tell me that we need to eat bread rich in fiber so that we have enough energy to work at the barn and farm."

"Oh." Was Laura's surprised reaction, and probably realized that the Prince of Karnstein did not grow up in total luxury at all.

"And since you're pregnant and beautiful, you got to eat what you want," She assured before handing the loaf with Steirerkas.

The Princess did not ask further when she had changed the topic.

"Thanks!" Laura quickly took it but contorted her brows.

"What's the matter? Don't you like how I prepared it?" she grew worried. "Is the bread not soft and fine enough?"

"No, no, I like it. It's just… it lack something," Laura corrected at once, and then brought the open sandwich in front of them. "Can you please put a spoon of mustard on top of it?"

She gave Laura that look of almost puking and cringed after hearing the request. But she quickly flashed a satisfied smile, hiding her disgust at once and obliged.

Growing hyper and salivating, "More!" Laura demanded excitedly.

She put a spoon full of that awful condiment on top of the cheese, thinking how horrible it was. She felt like she was ruining the delicate taste of the cheese. But as long as her wife was happy, she would do anything just to satisfy Laura's urges.

Laura took a big bite and savored the 'delicacy' while she watched her with mix amusement and disgust. The Princess tried putting the bread to her mouth but she raised her chin, widened her eyes and nervously chuckled.

"Thanks, Cupcake, but I'm alright with my old time favorite," she claimed and grabbed a slice of rye bread from the tray and shoved everything to her mouth, followed by a piece of creampuff too, not giving Laura a chance to offer her more of that awful looking bread.

Laura stifled a laugh and almost choked and pointed to her big cheek.

"You looked like a chipmunk," the Princess claimed.

She flashed Laura a playful glare, with her mouth still full and struggling to chew. If only her wife knew how scared she was to eat the foods that Laura were craving for.

"I bet you're scared to try it…" the Princess commented after swallowing the last piece and took the glass of apple juice from the tray and drunk with gusto.

She almost choked. Damn! Did Laura just read her thoughts? "No, I'm not," she replied after swallowing elegantly the rest of rye bread and creampuff that filled her entire mouth a while ago.

She meticulously took the white table napkin, brought it to her mouth and gently dabbed her lips, allowing the napkin to soak the residue before putting it back on the tray.
"You know... you are daintier and more elegant than me when it comes to eating," Laura remarked, eyes becoming rounder with delight. "You're so full of poise and graceful each time you put a food into your mouth."

"Well don't be fooled too much, Cupcake," she leaned closer to Laura. "I could eat you like a savage if I want to."

"Carm!"

The Princess pushed her lightly and then gazed at her again.

"Like what you see, Cupcake?"

Knowing that she was teasing, Laura displayed a lop sided-grin, before turning serious.

"I love how you could be elegant and wild at the same time," Laura expressed.

She displayed her signature seduction eyes, picked up slowly a creampuff from the plate and put it in Laura's mouth with such grace and carnality. The act itself caused Laura to moan after accepting the sweet; she made sure to brush Laura's lower lip smoothly by her thumb after putting the creampuff inside the Princess' waiting mouth.

"Are you trying to seduce me?" Laura's left eyebrow raised in a questioning arch while munching.

"Maybe..." she replied, her voice raspier.

Laura watched her put a creampuff also in her own mouth and chewed a bit before leaning down and carefully claimed the Princess' lips. Slowly, they kissed and she put her hand around Laura's waist and brought her wife closer to her. She paused and drew back a fraction to look into those gorgeous hazel round eyes, Laura held her gaze. Once she finished chewing and swallowed the creampuff, Laura touched her jawline and resumed kissing her; this time, more demanding and intense.

"You taste delicious Cupcake," She purred, and shut her eyes, then opened it again before putting her hand on Laura's left breast and caressed it.

"Carm... Perry is here," the Princess reminded in between heavy kissing.

Knowing that the Lady in Waiting was just in the bathroom, she felt Laura slowed down from kissing, fighting this lust filled haze that was slowly clouding their mind and possessing their body.

But she was not about to stop any moment from now and continued devouring her wife.

"Carm..." Laura whined softly.

Her thumb brushed over Laura's left nipple through the thin fabric of the chemise, teasing, and tantalizing it. It erected instantly at her eager but gentle touch. Bolts of pleasure quickly traveled to her groin, making her hard and she can't help but groan. She wanted more.

"Cupcake, I want to taste you..." She drawled her tone deeper and darker.

Laura looked at her through half-lidded eyes, struggling to give in to lust, as her thumb continued squeezing lightly Laura's nipple, edging the Princess.

Laura's eyes grew wide and rounder, "Are you crazy? Perry could just come out anytime," was her wife's hushed frustrated reply. "How will you explain to her when she sees your face between my
"Who said about me going down?" She quipped, brought her middle and index finger into her mouth then sucked them and removed it with a plop.

And before Laura could react, her hand reached down under the bed tray. She expertly fumbled inside the sheet, over Laura's thigh and lifted the chemise, until she found Laura's bare groin and flashed that naughty cat smirk. "I love that you hate sleeping with underwear..." she purred and displayed her seduction eyes. "... It's easier for me to touch and taste you," and then she slid her fingers inside Laura's throbbing core.

Surprised at the sudden invasion, "Aahhh..." the Princess moaned and clenched instantly around her.

But before Laura could get comfortable, she removed her fingers and brought it to her mouth and licked them slowly.

Laura gawked at the act and the Princess became speechless.

"You taste more delicious than the bread I've eaten," she remarked and when she had tortured enough her wife, she snaked her hand again underneath Laura's chemise and inserted her fingers back into the warmth of Laura's mound.

"So tell me... are you wet because of my fingers pumping slowly inside you? ... or you're wet because you dread of being caught by Perry," she taunted and knew that her words would send bolts of fire in Laura's body.

"Carm... we shouldn't... aahhh... do..." Laura tried to warn her.

"Shouldn't do what Cupcake?" She asked in her most innocent and ravenous voice, not stopping her finger from thrusting in and out of that velvety flesh. Her movements were unhurried and torturous.

And before Laura can put a stop to her mischief...

"Oh my god!"

The Princess cried when her fingers curved and hit the sensitive, ridged and swollen part of Laura's wall. Laura grabbed unto her arm and held her tight. She felt her wife's mouth dove into her neck and bit her hard on her shoulder to muffle the moan, as Laura trembled in her fingers. Laura had not even come down from the unexpected climax when Perry's voice startled them.

"What's the matter Princess? Are you alright?" Perry asked coming out from the bathroom, in a worried disarray.

And before her Cupcake can lift her head from her shoulder and turn to the direction of the Lady in Waiting, her free hand held Laura's head steady on her shoulder and caressed Laura's face, while she swiftly removed her fingers from the warmth of Laura's core. Laura let out instantly a weak groan at the lost contact.

Locking eyes with Perry, "She's just having a stomach ache," her voice calm as the night. "Too much mustard, I guess..." she added.

Then she felt something hurt on her arm.

"Aww!" She realized Laura pinched her lightly.
"How dare you blaming the mustard!" Laura claimed in a hushed tone.

She cringed at the pain but instantly felt relieved when soft wet lips kissed her shoulder lightly to console her, and she thought...

_I married a little Cupcake devil._

Gently, she released the hand on Laura's face, and when her wife looked up to reprimand her for putting them in an awkward situation, she raised her exquisite eyebrows to warn Laura immediately, and then flashed a quick cocky smirk, before Perry reached the side of the bed.

"Let me look at you sweetie," Perry said, removing the bed tray and put it on the bedside table before sitting on the side of the bed.

Perry's hand felt the Princess' forehead at once; on the cheeks and on the neck.

"You're a bit warm," Perry commented. "Perhaps you have too much air in the stomach. Have you been feeling a bit bloated and farting all the time lately?"

"Oh, yes."

She answered for her wife.

"Wha-? I am not!" Laura argued and flashed a warning glare.

"Cupcake, I think I've heard you farted five times while you're asleep," she remarked confidently. "But don't worry, they don't stink… they're just a little loud."

The Princess' displayed the royal pout and about to defend her dignity.

"His Highness might be right, Princess…" the Lady in Waiting nodded. "It's one of the things women experience during pregnancy. So, it's just natural that you'll feel bloated and farts often than you usually do."

Laura groaned after learning another unwanted symptom of being pregnant.

"How many changes will still happen?" was the Princess' frustrated remark. "This is all your fault!" Laura blamed and glared, royal pout fully visible.

"How come it's my fault?" was her confused and innocent reply.

"Well, if you hadn't got me pregnant, this wouldn't happen," the Princess reasoned out.

"I'm sorry Cupcake… I'm sorry you have to experience all of these unpleasant things just to-"

Probably regretting from that sudden outburst, "No, I'm sorry…" Laura said.

The Princess did not let her finish what she was saying and cupped her face instead and kissed her tenderly. When she relaxed on Laura's touch she returned the kisses and felt Laura smiled before releasing from the kiss.

Still cupping her jawline, "Don't be sorry that you got me pregnant; I'm the one who should apologize because I suddenly flare up," Laura clarified. "I hope you'll bear with my crazy moods. Sometimes I can't control my emotions, and I become tactless."

Gazing back at her wife with full of concern, she nodded and flashed a reassuring smile. Relieved,
Laura pecked on her cheek before releasing the hands that were cupping her face.

"I think a warm bath will make you feel better, Princess," Perry suggested.

They looked surprisingly at the Lady in Waiting's direction and almost forgot that there was another person inside the room, as they get too absorbed in each other.

"Please forgive me for my crazy outburst," Laura pleaded.

A naughty smirk formed in the corner of her mouth, "I love your crazy outburst," she returned.

Her comment earned a giggle instantly from her Cupcake.

Laura flashed the most adorable smile that was exclusively for her before shoving the sheets and rising from the bed. Perry stood at once to assist the Princess. But before they walked further, the lady in Waiting turned around towards the bed and said:

"It's not the last time she will blame you for feeling uncomfortable, Your Highness…” Perry stated in a firm but respectful tone. "… better be prepared when the time of birth comes."

And with that, Perry bowed before gracefully turning around.

Dumbfounded at Perry's remark, she fidgeted on the bed as she felt beads of sweat forming on her forehead and suddenly felt a large lump grew in her throat. She swallowed hard, while she thinks of different ways of how to handle a heavily pregnant raging Laura.

But her contemplation was distracted when she heard a muffled sound coming across the room. She glanced at Laura's and Perry's direction and caught them looking at her, they quickly evaded her stare and walked further towards the bathroom. She swore, she heard them giggling.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

I haven't decided yet what the chapter title… any suggestions?

If you have constructive criticism or want to correct my grammar mistakes, please feel free to correct me ;-)
Carmilla was sent by the King to a week-long camp in the forest, as part of her battle training. As expected, the women in Carmilla's life were not pleased that their beloved Prince will go out in the wilderness for fear of Carmilla having a panic attack, and not being able to help and take care of the Prince.

Heart pounding and sweating in distress, her body soared with adrenaline as she strode up the grand staircase. Her long black cape swaying as she increased her pace going two steps up, while she tried to brush off the image of the lifeless body lying on the grass. She could still smell the blood on her leather gloves and tunic despite washing them in the nearby stream on her way home and made her stomach lurch.

Upon reaching the upper story, she stood in the middle of the hallway leading to each chamber like a lost traveler. Instead of heading towards her chamber she took the opposite.

The guards to Laura's chamber opened the door right away once they saw her coming and bowed. "Don't let anyone in!" she instructed, before crossing the threshold of the chamber and the door shut behind with a resounding slam.

The warmth of the room combined with the smell of lilacs and purely Laura's greeted her instantly; it usually soothed her mind and body. But it did nothing to calm her raging nerves; the smell of blood still lingered around her. Realizing she was still wearing the thing that had most blood on, she removed her black gloves and threw it on the floor while she walked across the chamber.

Her heartbeat normalized once she caught sight of the Princess.

"Carl? Is everything alright?" was Laura's confused remarked and rose from the chair by the dressing table.

The sound of Laura's soothing cool voice helped clear the fog in her mind, and she found herself slowly relaxing.

What will she do if Laura was not in her life? Her wife had been more than her partner, Laura was her pacifier; her savior.

"Hey, what's wrong?"

But before she can reply, Laura's arms already wrapped around her neck and she was enveloped in a tight comforting embrace immediately; never questioning further but providing comfort and assurance no matter what.

She put her arms around Laura's waist and burrowed her face at the crook of the Princess' neck, breathing in the comforting scent of her wife and replacing the smell of blood that invaded her nose earlier. Her entire body managed to relax as she remained in Laura's arms for a moment.
"Carm?"

After recovering from the shock of the event, she reluctantly released from the embrace and found a pair of concerned hazel eyes staring at her.

"I just killed… a wolf…” was her weak remark. "…For the first time."

Shocked, "Oh God, are you alright? Did it bit you?"

Laura began to scrutinize her face and her body, but then she gently held her wife's upper arms with both her hands and stopped the Princess from worrying further.

"I'm alright… I'm not hurt, just shaky from the encounter. It didn't go down easily without a fight, you know," she explained and noticed that she stressed her wife as Laura's expression remained serious. "I think it didn't like my smell," she tried to make the conversation lighter.

"But why did you do it by yourself? Why not ask Armitage or the guards to kill it? And how did you end up fighting a wolf? His Majesty told me the forest is safe since there are guards that patrol there all the time. So, where were you?" Laura erupted with suspicions.

She knew Laura's worried nagging wouldn't stop until she supplied the answers. "I was riding and decided to take a tour at the foot of the mountains. That's where I found a shepherd herding his flock of sheep, and got curious when I heard someone shouting for help. I went to him right away and saw this huge wolf about to attack one of the lambs. I went down from my horse and distracted it from eating the poor thing. And then, I ended up facing and fighting it alone."

"But where's Armitage or any of the guards? And why didn't the shepherd help you kill it?" Laura queried, growing hyper.

"I kind of slipped away from them…” was her sheepish reply and averted Laura's eyes. She found it liberating to escape from the prying eyes of the royal guards from time to time, and she always managed to escape from them whenever she was out riding her horse. Noticing the lines on Laura's forehead, she resumed telling her story to avoid suspicions. "Then I told the shepherd to take away all the sheep to safety while I distract the wolf and kill it."

"You could have been hurt…"

"But I'm not." She reassured and took Laura's both hands and then brought to her lips and kissed them gently. "I just need to calm down and forget about it."

"Alright go wash up and then I'll help you relax afterwards," Laura suggested, as they headed towards the bathroom. "I think Laf had left some extra clothes in my closet and your robe is hanging over there," the Princess pointed to the chair by the bedside.

After washing up and changing to a clean white under tunic and braies, she put her robe on and slipped on her slippers.

When she emerged out of the bathroom and walked across the chamber, she searched for her wife and was surprised to find Laura on their bed, sitting with back resting on the headboard. It seemed the Princess had changed clothes too while she was in the bathroom; Laura was now wearing a cream silk robe instead of a dress.

"Are we napping?"

"Cupcake, it's not even dark yet," she teased and recalled how Laura naps often lately. "Don't tell me
this is your idea of helping me to relax. I'm not a child anymore; I don't need to nap in the middle of the day." She pretended to complain while she removed her own robe and joined Laura in bed. "Unless you want some afternoon delight."

"No, you horny bad panther," Laura giggled and began untying her own robe, and rested her head carefully on two pillows.

The next thing she knew, Laura gathered her in her arms as she settled beside the Princess. Grinning with delight, her eyes widened like a happy child receiving lots of sweets, when Laura slowly uncovered the left breast and leveled it closer to her mouth.

"I thought you might want to feed after that strenuous incident," Laura whispered.

And then she felt gentle fingers running through her hair and stroking them. Still gazing at Laura, "I do… thank you so much for offering," she uttered then licked her own lips before kissing the tip of her wife's left nipple. She put her mouth in a tight seal around Laura's breast, taking as much of the areola and started suckling hard but slow steady phase.

A soft moan escaped Laura's mouth instantly, while she felt her shaft hardening at the contact of her tight mouth latching on Laura's breast. But she decided to ignore the throbbing in her braies. Laura offered to pacify her, she reminded herself.

She closed her eyes and concentrated on the soft touch of Laura's fingers on her hair and the soothing feeling of suckling Laura's breast. Until now, she cannot fathom how nursing from Laura made her totally appeased and contented. They were still new into this kind of relationship, but every time they decided to have 'feeding time' it made them closer and happier knowing that they will spend some alone time despite their busy schedules. It felt like interacting with a loving soul and bringing calmness in their relationship, and deepening their bond as they both held each other tight, and calmly enjoy the closeness that it evoked.

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With the Karnsteins' reputation of being reserved and distant, supper time had always been silent, formal, restrained and other times tensed… until a bubbly, quirky princess arrived in the castle and lightened up the mood in their monotonous evening.

The Queen of Karnstein seemed to be less or not impressed with the Princess' loquaciousness', but to see her mother engaged in a conversation with Laura always made her relieved and pleased.

While the Princess discussed some details about the hospital project with Her Majesty, she, on the other hand, tried to keep her mind preoccupied with stealing a glance at her wife's gorgeous bosom. They seemed to be increasing in size every time she looked at it, or at least that's what she imagined. She just had a taste of them before coming to supper. But her appetite for it just grew stronger every day.

If she was going to confession now, there's only one sin to confess: lust. But then she knew that she won't be able to repent and promise not to be tempted again, so she chose not to include it in her confessions. After all, she was just appreciating the beauty of God's creation, she reasoned out to her conscience.

When Laura offered to 'feed' her when she arrived from her daily horseback riding exhausted and tensed, she just can't say no. Killing a wolf for the first time had rattled her, but the adrenaline and satisfaction of winning the battle made her want to do it again. Perhaps this was the feeling of going to battle and thirsting for victory. But above all, she felt amazing to have helped and saved the
helpless sheeps and lambs from the wolf. The shepherd was thankful that she was there to help him. Although the man did not know her real identity, he was very grateful for saving his flock and offered her to come to his house for a bread and ale. But she politely declined when a group of royal soldiers and a very worried Armitage discovered her whereabouts and she let them chased after her; a little game she enjoyed whenever out in the field.

Her eyes darted again to Laura's breasts.

She better stop ogling before her mother caught her.

Taking a deep breath, she stared instead at the silver platter containing a roasted boar's head garnished with a wreath of laurels, sprig of rosemary and parsley around it and an apple in its' mouth. Something suddenly appealed to her.

Perhaps next time she'll hunt some wild boar…

Instead of quails, pigeons, grouse, and rabbits, that she and her father usually hunt, it thrilled her to hunt and kill something wilder and bigger like she did today.

Her focus shifted to Laura's breast again.

For heaven's sake, why can't she resist looking at them?

She recalled gawking at Ell's breasts the first time she met her father's mistress, and all she could think about was touching it. Afterwards she realized that every wet dream she had when she was young was filled with lusting after Ell's breasts. And damn, she was thankful that she had a wife with fuller, rounder plump body.

A naughty smirk suddenly formed in the corner of her mouth as she realized something. Laura's breasts were rounder, and fuller compared to Ell's. And with pregnancy making Laura's breasts larger, she was grateful for the blessing.

Suddenly she had the urge to make love with Laura's breasts again. She absentmindedly licked her lips and fumbled for her goblet to quench the thirst inside her.

Too much breast dreaming? Or obsessing?

She berated herself for being a pervert and tried to resist the temptation.

Unfortunately, the wine did nothing to satiate her when she felt a sudden twitch inside her trousers, and she found herself captivated by the slight display of flesh in front of Laura's plunging neckline as Laura's full breasts rose from the low cut dress every time Laura breathed.

She never gets tired of worshipping them.

Still appreciating the beautiful sight, her ogling was interrupted when the sound of the door opened followed by the herald announcing the arrival of the King completely tore her out from her lascivious thoughts; finally.

They all rose from their seats when His Majesty walked in.

After bowing and giving respect to the King, she watched her father kissed her mother's cheek as a way of acknowledging her. Throughout the years that they dined together, her father never miss a chance of kissing her mother even if sometimes her parents had a misunderstanding. And it baffled her that she never witnessed her parents arguing or fighting like she and Laura used to do. They were
always discreet and rarely show it in her presence. And when she caught them, they stopped immediately and composed themselves. She knew that her mother was the expert when it comes to controlling emotions, perhaps her mother taught her father too. Or her father was completely whipped and always obeyed her mother’s order that’s why they rarely had a fight.

"Carl, I’m giving you a week free to use for your battle training."

She looked up and focused on where the sound came from.

"You can leave the day after tomorrow," the King announced while taking a seat on the meticulously hand-carved mahogany head-of-table chair that was pulled by two royal guards standing on both sides of it. "There’s nothing important to do that required your presence in the coming days unless you want to join a group of fussy noblemen and women… not to mention clergies and archbishops, arguing every damn year on what to do at the Harvest Festival."

Her eyes widened upon hearing it. She had not even discussed it with Laura. What will her wife say? Her mother would certainly reprimand her. She never expected that her father would give her permission right away. They were just talking about the battle in Morgarten and how the enemy managed to ambush a group of knights of Austrian Holy Roman Empire. When her father mentioned that it could happen to any of the kingdoms in Austria, she grew worried and thought she should prepare for these kinds of attacks.

She realized that her parents, especially her mother had been shielding her away for too long from the harshness of the world and that she should begin to act like a true heir. She should be learning not just how to rule a kingdom but to protect it.

After bowing to her father, "Thank you, my King Father," she replied while her mother and Laura stared at her direction while they took their seats. She could almost feel their eyes pricking her skin. To lessen her anxiety from the unexpected reaction from her mother and wife, she considered herself lucky on the other hand that she could avoid the most intriguing meeting of the year. She had been avoiding it for years now since her father mentioned that he would rather go to battle than be trapped in a room with these people. Although her mother never requires her to attend it for fear that she might have a panic attack due to her disorder, this time it might happen. She had a feeling that her mother might ask her to come after they decided that it was time for her to be formally introduced to the people of the kingdom. "I think the weather looks perfect to camp out and work out my battling skills." She returned in a calm tone, as she caught the suspicious look from her mother, and then glanced to her left and caught Laura’s equally not pleased expression.

"Will His Majesty kindly explain to me what you two are talking about?" was the Queen’s firm but courteous remark, focusing her gaze on the King.

She took her goblet immediately and took a generous swig of her wine, as she watched her mother's stoic but stern expression formed. Her mother hated being left out when it came to decisions and planning; especially when it involved her.

The King took the Queen’s hand right away and held it in his own in an attempt to calm her. "My Queen, Carl asked me before if he could have more time training in battle skills. We've been very busy lately with the new alliances, preparing for Harvest festival and with winter coming, I think this will be the only suitable time of the year that your son can go to the wilderness and sharpen his skills."

"Haven't you done this already?" was the Queen's serious reply. "What's the purpose of going to the wilderness and camp out there, when you can train inside the walls of the castle?"
As soon as she met her mother's stare, she can't help but fidget on her seat. She knew that her mother does not agree with her decision of camping out in the wilderness or traveling outside their kingdom, just like when she followed Laura to Hollis' Kingdom. But after experiencing it and learning to control her anxiety attacks when out in an open space, she had toyed with the idea of doing it again to test herself. And with so many tensions hovering around her, she had thought of taking a break to calm her nerves and enjoy the beauty of nature while training.

After taking a deep breath, "I have, my Queen Mother, and I apologize to you and Laura for not telling about it earlier," she said and glanced at her wife's direction. When she saw that the lines on Laura's face disappeared, she felt a bit relieved. "I thought that if I'm going to be a good ruler, I should also be a good warrior and protector."

"But you are already the best in swordsmanship, next to your father," the Queen elaborated with a hint of irritation. "What else is left to achieve, when you have the best royal guards and knights that can do the job?"

"My Queen, I think we can continue discussing this after we have eaten," the King suggested and afterwards, the only sounds that can be heard were the clinking of the cutleries on the plates and wine pouring on goblets.

The supper had been pleasant and silent. But she knew that something was brewing inside her wife and she knew that Laura wouldn't let her get away with it without a valid explanation and strong argument.

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After a round of bickering and bantering that almost turned into a heated argument with Laura, she managed to convince her wife how important it was for her to go to this battle training.

But despite accepting her reasons, she knew Laura was not fully confident to let her stay in the wilderness for almost a week and was not happy with the idea of not being by her side in case something happened to her.

She can still feel the tension between her and Laura when they went to bed last night and hoped that her Princess would wake up in a good mood today. She felt terrible arguing with her pregnant wife.

Luckily, she had a meeting with her father and Armitage in preparation for tomorrow's journey, so she avoided any potential argument once Laura woke up and realized that her idea was crazy.

But she felt bad evading Laura's daily outbursts and decided to cut short her afternoon training.

On her way out from the training room, and as she sauntered along the grand hall…

"What's Carrot Top doing here?" she murmured as she caught sight of her Valet standing in one of the dark corners of the hall, their back facing her and she was not surprised when Laura's Lady in Waiting emerged behind them. A naughty smirk quickly formed in the corner of her mouth and she decided to interrupt them.

They did not even notice her coming until she was five steps closer to them and the Lady in Waiting recognized her at once. The look on Perry's abashed face made her smirk wider when their eyes met, and LaFontaine caught off guard, bowed to her instead to hide their blushing.

It surely was satisfying to be the one who caught these redheads for a change. And she thought…

Revenge was sweet…
"Oh please, don't stop on my behalf whatever you two are doing," she teased in an elegant tone. "I'm sure it's very important." Raising her left eyebrow, and still flashing her signature naughty smirk, "I just want to know where my wife is and I'll be out of your red hairs in no time."

"The Princess is taking her afternoon nap, Your Royal Highness," Perry replied in a most formal way she can muster, after bowing and recovering her composure.

"I'm sure she is, seeing that you're sneaking with … red beet here," she returned staring at the very flushed and quiet Valet beside her. Then she leaned closer to them and whispered, "You're lucky…it doesn't show on your trousers, or you'll be displaying it now."

If look can kill, the glare coming from her Valet would have slaughtered her now.

"Carry on…" she suggested and walked away from them, whistling and humming along the dark hallway, with her hands on her back.

Moments later, she found herself tiptoeing inside the Princess' chamber after the door carefully closed behind her. She smiled upon seeing her wife already awake, sitting on the bed while reading a book, and looking refresh and beautiful as always after a nap.

With Laura's eyes still fixated on the book, "Hey," she uttered seeing that her wife did not look up when she entered. But once Laura's eyes focused on her direction, the book was forgotten and set aside. She gave the Princess a sweet smile while she climbed on the bed with her.

"Hey, where have you been? I missed you this morning," Laura mumbled, displaying those puppy sad eyes and cute pout. "I thought you've already left for your battle training, without saying goodbye but when Perry told me that you had an important meeting with His Highness and that you're not leaving before tomorrow, I was thankful that I still have a day to spend with you." The Princess babbled in the usual hyper tone.

"I'm sorry Cupcake, I forgot to tell you last night," she put her arms around Laura's and gave her wife a reassuring hug, before claiming Laura's lips. Laura's loving hands were instantly around her neck, and toyed the tip of her hair and caressed her nape while they kiss, and it never fails to delight her. "You looked so peaceful and in deep sleep early this morning, so I decided not to disturb you. And besides, you're not reacting when I tickled your nose."

Laura pouted at her, and then shot daggers, "Why do you keep on tormenting my nose?"

Seeing that teasing a newly awakened pregnant Cupcake was not a good idea, "I'm not. In fact, it's my favorite part of your body, because it's beautiful and adorable."

"You're lying…" the Princess narrowed her eyes.

"Wha-? I'm not… it's the truth… well partly, because your lips and smile is my favorite among them…" she explained carefully, trying hard not to upset her pregnant wife. She does not want to be on the receiving end of Laura's raging crazy hormone outburst again.

"I thought it's my breasts that you love the most," was the Princess' innocent but serious retort.

She remained silent as warmth rushed into her face. Laura absolutely knew her inside and out.

"Umm… yes, in addition to those," was her sheepish reply and laid her head on Laura's lap, and relaxed on the bed.

"When are you coming back?" The Princess asked, trying to hide the sadness in her voice.
She hated it when Laura was upset. But as the heir to the throne, there were things that need to be done and sometimes, it will not please her wife or even her mother, and the least she could do was to assure them that it was for the good of their kingdom, that's why she was doing it.

She relaxed at the hand running idly through her hair, letting Laura's fingers played on her untamed locks.

"I'm not sure, probably by the weekend," was her nonchalant reply.

"Laf's coming with you?"

Laura's statement sounded more like an order than a question.

"They are, along with Armitage, and dozens of best knights in the kingdom... and to make you more appease, I'm taking also Alfred with me," she tried to console Laura with the mention of their favorite royal coachman. She admitted that having two persons that knew her secret was convenient in case something happened to her.

Pleased with the plan. "Well, I'm glad that Alfred is coming too," Laura returned. "I'll just ask Bastian instead to take us to the village on Saturday."

Her brows furrowed in worries, and she looked up and sought Laura's gaze. The Princess never told her about this. Her wife was going to the village again without her and this time she found herself fidgeting like a possessive maniac.

"Why are you going to the village? Didn't you just bought tons of things the last time we're there?" was her worried and slightly irritated comment.

Suddenly she felt the hand stroking her hair stopped, "It's Emma's name day on Saturday, and I promised her that we'll be there... don't tell me that you'll forbid me to come because the girl would definitely be disappointed if not even one of us comes. You and Laf are already not coming; it would hurt her if I'll let her down too. So, Perry and I will go to Greta's on Saturday."

After that powerful remark, and knowing how precious Emma and Greta to her wife, she calmed herself and reached up and cupped Laura's face with her right hand. "Hey, it's alright," she tried to pacify Laura after that hyper remark and caressed the Princess' chin slowly. "You have my permission to go... I forgot that it's Emma's birthday. I'm sorry that I can't come with you."

After calming down, "It's alright, I know this training is important and your duties come first," Laura returned and smiled. "I know that Emma would love for you to be there and Laf too, but I'll just tell her that you need to guard the Prince and can't come with us."

"Tell her that, the next time I come for a visit, we'll watch the cows," she smiled recalling how she and the little girl enjoyed watching the cows and playing with the pigs and chickens in the village.

"I will..." Laura said before leaning down and claiming those thin red lips.

She put her hand on the back of Laura's neck firmly, as if persuading her wife for a deeper kiss. Laura did not disappoint her when she felt the Princess' tongue invaded her mouth and their tongues dueled in a heated battle of possession, sucking each other's tongue until they're breathless and gasping for air.

"Carm..." Laura breathed out.

The desperation in Laura's voice cannot be ignored; just the mere sound of her wife's whining was
enough to awake all her nerves and pumped blood like crazy in her body. Her trousers were becoming tighter and she was getting hard. It became even more torturous when she felt Laura's hand rubbing her thigh slowly. Laura's touch always sends her into a maddening haze and she felt exploding sooner inside her trousers if Laura continued touching her thigh and the area around her crotch.

Aching and already stiff as a rod, "Cupcake…"

Totally oblivious to the havoc that a small meticulous hand could invoke, "Hmmm," Laura uttered, in between kisses and touches.

Seriously? …Does she not have the slightest idea of what she's doing to me?

The thought of Laura fumbling on the strings of her trousers and taking out her raging hardness and stroking it long, hard and slow with those graceful small hands had already played in her dirty mind.

But before her imagination became a reality…

"Why don't we save this for tonight," Laura said, and released from the kiss and avoided any skin contact.

Frustrated and confused "What... Why?!” she whined and caught the glare that Laura flashed to her, the one that tells her to behave. Realizing that she expected too much, she tried to calm down and said in a low gentle tone, "I mean, we could have a quickie before going to supper, and I know that nobody would interrupt us because the gingers are busy."

"I know… Perry told me,"

She snorted discreetly. If only Laura knew what the gingers were doing recently… But she chose not to tell her since she had this small predicament inside her trousers that needed immediate attention.

"So, why don't we snuggle and kiss again, and then maybe-"

"I can't… I told the girls to help me dress for dinner because Perry has this important matter to attend to," the Princess explained and sighed. "I'm sorry Carm… the girls could come anytime from now."

"Then tell them to come back after half an hour," she tried to sway Laura and touched Laura's breast. "I know you missed my mouth on your nipple this morning," she whispered in a sultry tone, and lightly touched Laura's nipple, teasing it till it hardened.

"That's very tempting, Your Highness," Laura commented and removed gently the hand on her breast. "But unfortunately, I don't want to be late for supper, and neither do you. So, go to your chamber now and change."

"Oh come on Cupcake!" She exclaimed when Laura gently removed her head from her lap and rose from the bed. "I didn't get any last night… and you're depriving me now," she whined like a child that did not get a candy and sat on the edge of the bed, and grasped Laura's hand before the Princess can walk away from her. "I'll be gone for five days and I'll be sleeping alone at night." She claimed as the Princess stood in front of her.

"And whose fault it is?" Laura retorted after being caught by two strong hands.

Still sitting on the bed, she did not let go of Laura and locked her wife in her arms, while Laura tried to escape from her tight embrace. Realizing that Laura had a point, "That's unfair…” she mumbled and looked down. She was about to release Laura but was surprised when the Princess cupped her
jawline and beckoned her to look up.

"I tell you what… you can do whatever you want with me tonight and I'll grant all your needs," the Princess retorted, displaying a naughty lop-sided grin.

Her left eyebrow arched in curiosity, "Anything?"

"Yes, anything…" Laura rasped. "Since tomorrow you'll leave and I want to enjoy you tonight without interruption… I will make it worth your while." The Princess added with a giggle.

Eyes wide with excitement, "Alright," she nodded and released Laura from her arms.

"So, be a good cat and behave yourself until supper is finished… or there won't be any treats for you tonight," Laura teased before releasing from the embrace and turned around.

*****

Laura chose to tease her further when the Princess did not touch her during supper and even made a bigger gap in between their chairs at the dining room. They used to hold hands under the table or teased each other by touching one's thigh. But she managed to play the Princess' game and knew that Laura was also aching and burning inside when she pretended to be cool and reserved.

She can't wait for this meal to be over.

She can't wait to retire to their chamber.

She can't wait to devour Laura and do whatever she desires with her wife.

She will make the most of it tonight since she will be deprived of Laura's warmth, kisses, embraces and touches in the next days to come.

And she will make sure that Laura would remember her for the duration of her absence.

And now that supper was over and as they all rose from their seats ready to bid their respect to her parents and say goodnight…

"Carl…"

The Queen's voice tore her out from this lust filled reverie. The pounding in her chest slowed down, as she looked across the table and caught her Mother's fiery stare.

"I want to see you in my chamber afterwards," the Queen demanded in a firm tone.

She nodded immediately, "I will be there my Queen Mother," she acknowledged and caught a slight smirk on her Mother's expression, before turning to the King and walked beside him towards the door.

Slightly disappointed, she turned to Laura's direction and caught also the disappointed look on her wife's face. But Laura flashed a reassuring smile right away and hooked her arm on hers as they made their way towards the exit.

They were both excited a while ago knowing that tonight was special since they would be parted for many days.

"Why don't you take a bath now while His Majesty and Her Majesty are having their tea," Laura suggested as they walked along the great hall, and then towards the grand staircase. "They wouldn't
be finished in half an hour... so you don't need to waste time waiting for your mother. And then you can visit Her Majesty in her chamber when you're done and have a quick chat with her. Then I wouldn't have to wait longer for you, and we could get on with our... you know," was the Princess enthusiastic remark.

She flashed a naughty smirked at how Laura devised a scheme. "Hmmm, I think you'll be great when it comes to battle tactics and murder plotting."

"Carl! I'm serious..." Laura exclaimed and had shouted a bit louder as intended when the two guards standing by the door of the chamber looked at their way a bowed immediately as they approached the chamber.

She caught the Princess' pout and smirked at how adorable her little Cupcake when teased. They stood for a while at the hall keeping a wide distance between them and the royal guards.

"Alright, I'll be quick," she said, facing Laura and flashed her seduction eyes and leered at the Princess. She caught the blushed on Laura's cheeks immediately and knew that move never ceased to arouse her wife. Then she leaned closer to Laura's ear, "You better be naked in bed when I come," she rasped, her voice was so deep and dark, it sounded dangerous, "I'm telling you... You won't get any sleep tonight." And then she gracefully turned around and walked the other way, leaving Laura speechless and chest heaving with tension.

*****

After taking the quickest bath, changing in her sleeping tunic and robe, and sending LaFontaine early to bed, to which the Valet's immense delight, she managed to arrive in the Queen's chamber before her mother could come. She knew that when her mother summoned her to the Queen's chamber she should be there as quickly as possible.

Patiently standing on the other side of the Queen's four post bed, her eyes caught a glimpse of Bertha standing behind the Queen by the enormous dressing table with large mirror giving Her Majesty's long ebony locks a final smooth combing and then stood beside the Queen for approval. When her Mother nodded, her former nanny put the combed on the dressing table and the Queen rose from her seat and walked on the opposite side of the bed.

She silently waited for the Queen to remove and hand over the robe to Bertha before settling to bed and gestured for the lady-in-waiting that everything was alright and gave her a nod.

Bertha bowed to Her Majesty and then to her before leaving in silence and shutting the door behind her carefully.

Slowly she walked closer to the Queen's four post bed and stood by the right side, waiting for the Queen's permission to approach. Once her Mother was comfortably sitting on the bed with back resting on the red velvet headboard that towered up to the ceiling, the Queen beckoned her to finally approach the bed and she sat on the side right across her Mother.

"Are you really going tomorrow?" the Queen asked, in a low but firm voice.

She looked at her mother and caught the sadness in those cold dark eyes. Her Mother might have been expert in hiding emotions, but when it comes to her well-being, she knew that she could warm up the heart of the cold Queen of Karnstein.

"Yes, my Queen Mother," she answered firmly, not giving her Mother a motive to persuade her to cancel her training.
She was expecting a retort or another comment to convince her not to go, but it never happens. Her Mother remained staring at her for a while, as if studying her face for some changes, but she could feel the slight pain in that gaze.

Sensing that she made her Mother upset, "My Queen Mother, I apologize for-"

"What did I teach you?" was the Queen's haste comment.

"My Queen Mother… I had forgotten," was her quick retort and bowed her head.

But then she felt soft graceful hands cupped her jawline and the Queen brought her face closer to hers, and her Mother placed gently and slowly a kiss on her left cheek. She felt relieved and delighted at once upon receiving this kind of gesture from her Mother. She thought she would be reprimanded tonight for being stubborn and upsetting her Mother.

"Come here," the Queen tapped her own lap that was covered with white sheet.

She obeyed and lied down next to the Queen and rested her head on her Mother's lap.

"Promise me you won't do anything daring or foolish out there," the Queen stated firmly.

She glanced up and nodded when her Mother's worried gaze met hers. And then she settled back comfortably on her Mother's lap and felt at once the soothing touch of the Queen's loving hand stroking her hair.

Ever since she was young, she loved it when her Mother lets her stay like this on her lap, while the Queen caressed her head and hair till she became relax or asleep. It was their favorite bonding moment and she would never get tired of it. It was very private and cozy. The world seemed to stop and she felt like they were the only ones existing. She considered it a privilege to spend time with the Queen when her mother was showing her true emotions. Only with her, can the Queen of Karnstein be at her most vulnerable state. Only with her can the Queen be loving, gentle and affectionate. Even her Father, the King cannot spend a moment like this with the Queen, and it made her heart and pride swell to be the one the Queen cherished the most in this world.

She took a deep satisfying sigh as she relished this moment with the most powerful woman in the kingdom. She felt secured every time she was alone like this with her Queen Mother. Each loving stroke of her Mother's graceful hand made her appeased as if she was hypnotized. Only her Queen Mother can evoke this kind of fervor and at the same time sedateness in her. And right now she was slowly succumbing to her Mother's enchanting touches. She closed her eyes and surrendered into the soothing delight of it and let her mind and body falls into slumber.

*****

"Carl?"

She groaned as she heard a sound invading her consciousness.

"My Precious, wake up."

She grumbled and felt a hand cupped her cheek. She forcefully opened her eyes and was surprised that it was not the familiar face of her wife that beamed in front of her. But she let out a satisfied groan and smiled when she recognized the face of her Queen Mother.

Her Queen Mother.
Her eyes widened.

In her bewilderment, she stared at her Mother, almost forgetting that it was rude to look at the Queen like that.

"Your King Father wants to speak with you before you leave," the Queen stated before leaving the side of the bed and walked across the room, towards the study table and sat on the chair.

She looked around and realized that she was not in her own bed, but she was wearing her sleeping tunic and braies. Confused, she gave her Mother a questioning stare.

"You're so exhausted last night, I didn't have the heart to wake you up," the Queen explained.

When reality sunk in and she gradually recalled how she ended up waking in her Mother's bed…

*Oh my God, Laura!*

TBC
One Fiery Ball of Frustrated Cupcake

Chapter Summary

The chapter starts the night when Carm went to the Queen's chamber. A look at Laura's 
POV and what happened while Carm was in the Queen's chamber.

Laura was looking forward spending the night with Carm, and planned on many ways 
to pamper her poor Prince so that it would be bearable for him to spend the nights alone 
in the woods. Laura also thought of giving Carm a 'to remember me all those lonely 
nights' gift.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

"You better be naked in bed when I come."

"I'm telling you… You won't get any sleep tonight."

Carm's lecherous words were engraved on her mind for the rest of the evening. His voice rang deep 
and sultry, and never failed to tantalize her sense of desire. Even if Carm had this confidence of a 
man, he does possess a woman's power of seduction.

She can't help growing curious and excited at how her Prince would devour her afterwards. He 
would be gone for days and she wanted this night to be memorable for him.

As their relationship deepened, she discovered she was lustful and needy as her Prince, but Carm's 
fiery temper separated them from how passionate and sensual he was in bed when enraged and 
jealous. Sometimes she just loved Carm getting out of control when they were making love… which 
led her to think something wicked.

Perhaps she could make Carm a bit mad and frustrated.

She already started a little game with him at supper and she knew that Carm played by her rules 
when he did not touch her too. But how long would his patience last? Pretending to ignore him again 
when he comes to her chamber until he became impatient and frustrated leading to losing his temper 
and ending in a passionate angry sex afterwards could be rewarding.

The devil in her had risen again and grinned at the thought of driving Carm insanely mad and horny.

"Princess?"

"Huh?" she was snapped out from her diabolical thoughts and suddenly felt ashamed when her sight 
focused on Natalie's worried expression.

"Don't you like it?" Betty asked holding a chemise that was far from the ordinary camisole that she 
usually wears. "You asked me to bring you the most seductive lingerie, luckily there were merchants 
from Wien this morning at the village market."
She stared at the short cream floral sheer chiffon chemise with thin straps and V neckline; it had a lace-trimmed top front, a black ribbon center tie and shell skirt front opening. She can't deny it. It's gorgeous and provocative.

A naughty grin appeared in the corner of her mouth and knew that Carm would go crazy if her Prince saw her wearing it.

She was suddenly torn between putting it on or lying on bed nude like an erotic sculpture for her Prince to admire.

But Carm ordered a 'naked princess on bed'! She put aside Betty's suggestion.

And besides, her handmaiden friends might label her a pervert if ever she agreed to wear it!

She studied the gorgeous chemise in front of her and pretended to muse. She loved it and Carm would definitely salivate if she wears it. But she had other plans. "Umm… it's lovely, but I don't think I can wear it. Can you just put it in the closet?"

Slightly disappointed, "Are you sure?" Betty pouted, still holding the chemise. "His Hotness will definitely not forget you for the next five days when he sees you wearing this tonight."

"And he might go home early once he knew that you're waiting for him wearing only that," Natalie added, standing beside Betty. "Or he might even cancel his trip."

"Girls, please stop corrupting Laura's mind," Sarah Jane chided after coming out from the bathroom and walked towards the dressing table to join them. "There are other ways to show His Highness that she's going to miss him."

"Yes… like surprising His Hotness by wearing this glorious chemise, and doing all the things he likes in bed," Betty insisted flashing a naughty wide grin to everyone. "Don't worry Princess, we're not going to tell Perry or anyone," Betty added with a wink.

She knew that her handmaiden friends have more knowledge and access to the outside world and what ordinary people do when copulating. Despite the heavy influence of the Church's teachings, she was aware that not everybody follows the rules.

"Betty, let her decide," Sarah Jane strongly suggested standing beside Betty.

She flashed a sheepish grin at Betty and Natalie, before giving Sarah Jane an appreciative smile. The warmth on her face and the tingling inside her undies definitely gave the impression of agreeing with Betty and Natalie. She hoped they had not noticed it. She remained seated on her dressing table chair, surrounded by the handmaidens while she battled with her lust and decency.

"Princess, why don't I help you make His Highness' breakfast," was Sarah Jane's excited remark. "I know that Perry always brings yours and Prince Carl's breakfast, but why not wake up before him and feed him first some romantic foods, instead of your usual breakfast?"

Suddenly her curiosity was piqued. But before she can ask…

"Romantic food?" was Natalie's unimpressed comment. "We're talking about how our Princess is going to blow Prince Carl's mind in hope that he cancels his battle training; not a picnic."

"Girls, girls…" she intervened, seeing that Natalie and Sarah Jane were exchanging glares. "I know that you all mean well and I appreciate it very much. And I think all of your suggestions are great. But I already know what I'm going to do tonight," she said smiling at Betty and Natalie, before
darting her gaze on Sarah Jane. "What kind of breakfast are you talking about?"

"Well, in addition to cakes and sweets," Sarah Jane explained, her voice full of excitement and enthusiasm. "We could add some strawberries dipped in melted chocolates and white wine."

"I think that's sweet and romantic," she giggled and nodded in reply. "Alright, I'll send the guards a message for you, so you can bring me the breakfast tray before the Prince wakes up," but then she caught the disappointed look on Betty's face realizing that she accepted Sarah Jane's advice. Not wanting to hurt the feelings of her friends, "… and then I'm going to wear that chemise," she pointed out to the one Betty held and displayed a naughty grin. "…while I serve the Prince his breakfast!"

"Yes!" Betty erupted into a satisfying roar, knowing that her suggestion was not wasted.

"You go, girl!" Natalie cheered at once together with Betty.

"That's our Princess!" Sarah Jane added encouragingly and joined the cheering.

"I better clean up the piles of dirty clothes in the bathroom so that you can prepare yourself," was Sarah Jane's excited remark and hurriedly walked towards the bathroom.

"I'm going to place this in there so you can put it on quickly tomorrow," Betty said and walked towards the foot of the four post bed, where a large oak chest was placed on the end and opened it.

The moment they were out of earshot, Natalie turned to her and leaned closer.

"Should I fetch the Book?"

She felt her face flushed with embarrassment. She and Natalie hid the 'Forbidden Book' in the library to avoid any suspicions and trouble from the others, especially Perry and her in-laws. But she asked Natalie now and then to fetch the controversial book when she knew that she would have some privacy.

"Err… not tonight. I don't think I have time to read," was her honest but sheepish reply. "The Prince is coming soon and I need to be ready for him."

Natalie nodded and displayed a reassuring smile, "Well, if you need anything else just let us know, we're always here to help our Princess."

"Thanks, Nat," she said and gave Natalie a hug.

"Nat? Have you seen Laura's used underwear?" Sarah Jane asked upon emerging from the bathroom carrying piles of dirty clothes on both arms. "I just put them in the laundry basket this morning and the ones last night, but when I gathered all the dirty clothes now, they were missing."

Suspecting who the culprit was, she darted her sight towards Betty and caught her avoided Sarah Jane's eyes. The blush on Betty's face confirmed her hunch.

Sarah Jane contemplated for a moment as if recalling the day's activities one by one before focusing on Betty and frowned. "Betty didn't you just-"

Not wanting to put Betty in an awkward position…”Maybe Perry took them already," she chimed in and rose from the chair, eager to send off the handmaidens. "She was here earlier."

"Let's hope you're right…" Sarah Jane gave her a nod and stood across her, "Don't forget to send the guards a message, so that I'll know when you're already up."
"I will, thank you and goodnight," she said and both Natalie and Sarah Jane bowed to her before turning around and walked towards the door.

"Goodnight Princess!" Betty exclaimed, quickly bowed and was about to turn around when…

"Betty, can I talk to you for a moment?" she said grasping Betty's hand.

Once the door shut and they were alone…

"Where is it?" she questioned the blushing handmaiden in front of her.

Fidgeting and eyes on the floor, Betty slowly looked up and displayed an apologetic grin, "I need to pack and send them with his Highness for his trip tomorrow."

All she could do was rolled her eyes and gave her handmaiden a reassuring smile, and never asked further.

Carm was going to be alone for five days and he had already made sure that he had something to remember her on those lonely nights. She shook her head in disbelief and sighed in resignation, before finally letting her handmaiden go.

"Goodnight Betty…" was all she could say before Betty hurriedly ran towards the door.

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It had been half an hour since the handmaidens left her and Carm should be coming any moment from now.

For the nth times, she checked if everything was prepared. She wanted Carm to enjoy this night before gracing the grueling chilly nights in the forest.

Crimson petals were scattered on the white fresh crisp linen of their bed.

The subtle scent of rose and the soft lighting emanating from small candles in glasses placed on the floor around the bed set the mood and ambiance.

There was only one last important thing to do...

She drew the curtains around her bed, and then stood on the side while taking off and letting the silky robe covering her nakedness fell on the floor. She climbed onto the bed shivering with thoughts of offering her body to Carm.

Hopefully, her Prince would notice the piece of cloth lying on the floor and teased him to hurry up and get in bed.

Naked and ready for Carm, she laid and relaxed on the softness of the feather bed and can't help but groaned in anticipation.

For the first time, she allowed Natalie to use jasmine oil in her bath. She asked Natalie to get something special to entice the nose of her Prince and came back from the village market with a dozen vials of jasmine oil to her surprise. Natalie commented at once that it's for future use. According to her handmaiden, its sensual, unique and a sweet floral that had a carnal characteristic just like her: sweet bubbly princess by day, seductress by night. Of course, she denied Natalie's 'allegation' and claimed that she was not a seductress by night. But when her handmaiden mentioned about a certain book they were hiding in the library, she did not argue further. Sometimes she wondered how her handmaiden friends have knowledge about these things, and how they knew where to find the certain thing she needed for certain occasion. She was definitely the luckiest
princess in the world to have both handmaidens and friends that she can rely on and trust with her dark secrets.

Moments passed by, and yet, there was still no sign of her Prince.

She was growing worried.

Perhaps Her Majesty and Carm were still arguing about the trip. She recalled how upset the Queen was when Carm went to the woods for the first time and stayed there for days. And when Her Majesty summoned Carm after supper to come to the Queen's chamber, there was no doubt the argument was not over yet.

She took a deep breath and tried to be patient. The image of the Queen scolding Carm for planning such things without her consent or the Queen's consent played in her mind. They were both protective of their dear Prince and she can't help worrying too. But when Carm explained again to her why he needed to do this thing, she just had to agree and let him do his obligation.

"My poor Prince…" she muttered in worry. "Don't worry I'm going to make you feel better after your mother's scolding."

Once again, she tried to relax in between the soft fluffy pillows that occupied half of her bed, she recalled Carm complaining about having too many pillows in bed, but never dared to remove one of them. Seven was never too much, but she liked to be surrounded by something soft and fluffy all the time. And besides, her bed was big enough for four people, so it never really takes too much space.

She lay on her back and her thoughts were quickly flooded with all sorts of naughty things. Since this morning, she gathered her strength and convinced herself that she would make this night unforgettable. It had been months since she went down on Carm and tasted him. The first time she did it; he interrupted her right away for fear of hurting her and knew that he was worried about her fear of penis. But that was before.

Tonight, she felt this kind of boldness and confidence, she will definitely go all the way and blow Carm's mind. She wondered if she can make him moan too like the way she did every time Carm goes down on her. She'll just have to find out afterwards, she thought with a mischievous grin on her face.

Her train of naughty thoughts was disrupted when she heard the subtle ring of the bell from the chapel which signaled Compline. She usually takes a moment to pray when she was still awake like right now, however, she felt a bit ashamed of praying to God at this state of nakedness and lustfulness. She will just pray longer tomorrow when Carm was not around to distract her.

Fighting the urge to sleep, she rose and sat on the bed for a moment. She reached under a pillow and took out Carm's sleeping tunic from last night. She brought the white sleeping gown to her nose and sniffed the scent of purely Carm's. It's to tame her hormones and calm her nerves, she explained to Laf when she asked the Valet to give it to her. She reasoned out that her Prince would be gone for days and she wanted something that reminded her of Carm. She loved Carm's natural smell, it's soothing and freaking delicious! It might sound odd, but even if Carm was a sweaty mess, she wanted to nuzzle him senseless and eat him. She recalled the first time she smelled Carm arriving in the castle from horseback riding and meeting him. She did not let him go and kissed him crazy. Had they not been outside of the castle's courtyard, she would have let Carm devoured her there and there. Carm's smell was just intoxicating and it drove her crazy, especially when they were making love. Suddenly, she felt her body tightened in anticipation. Where the hell was Carm?

When she heard the bell from the chapel rung again for the second time that night, her enthusiasm
slowly faded off. It was already Matins. She usually doesn't stay awake this late. And if she did, it was to have sex with Carm when the need arises. Other than that, they were both snoring by midnight.

What's holding off her Prince? Carm never stays too long in Her Majesty's chamber during the evenings the Queen required Carm's presence. Her Prince always arrived before Compline so as not to miss so much time snuggling and cuddling with her. And with the recent 'feeding time', Carm always goes to bed early with her so as to enjoy their special moment before she began to feel sleepy.

Right now she was debating on sending one of the guards to look for Carm. How could he let her wait this long? She was growing irritated, impatient and annoyed. Was he still arguing with the Queen? But she knew Carm… he would never let his mother dictate him what to do anymore. If the Queen cannot accept that her son was going to a battle training tomorrow, Carm would just walk out like he did before.

An involuntary yawn escaped her mouth and she was beginning to feel cold. She tucked herself under the bedsheet and opted not to send a guard to search for the Princes' whereabouts. Instead, she let her mind rest for a while and closed her eyes. Perhaps it would keep her enthusiasm, while she attempted to maintain her patience and good mood, even if the excitement already disappeared. Surely, Carm would wake her up once he arrived and would not let her sleep through the night without getting his 'treat'. And this time, she would let his tardiness slipped since he was leaving tomorrow.

Confident that she would wake up in time to pamper Carm, she let sleep take over her for a moment and decided to nap.

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The delicious aroma of freshly-baked bread wafted in the air and soon filled her nostrils. In a jiffy, she was roused from slumber as her sense of smell was awoken by the scent of cinnamon. It was mesmerizing. She slowly opened her eyes while relishing the heavenly smell around her.

The familiar motherly tone of Perry’s voice broke the early morning stillness and she worried right away that Carm might wake up from the noise. She turned around to check on her sleeping Prince but narrowed her eyes when she found the space next to her empty. Confused, she rubbed her eyes with her knuckle and brushed off the residue of sleep.

Completely baffled, "What the-? Where did he go?" she fumbled the side of the bed where Carm sleeps on and furrowed her brows when she discovered it cold and untouched. Drowning in confusion, she took a deep breath while she recalled the scenes from last night.

As her memory came flooding in, she let out a long irritated growl like a bull and snatched the sheet on the bed and wrapped it to cover her naked form.

"Where the hell did he sleep?" she muttered under her breath, irritated and trying to control her temper. What could possibly the most justifiable excuse for Carm not to sleep in her bed last night? Anger clouded her reasoning. "Arrrgghhh!" She growled her patience and understanding wearing off and easily replaced by doubts and anger. "Don't tell me you've slept at your mother's…" she suspected, recalling that Carm was ordered by Her Majesty to go to the Queen's chamber. Her Prince used to sleep at the Queen's chamber, especially when he was sick. But Carm was well and don't need some pampering from the Queen. Her doubt was replaced by jealousy. What if Carm was seduced by the Royal Mistress and spent the night with her? She grew hot with almost murderous rage.
"You better pray for some divine intervention," she claimed, trembling with rage and rose from the bed. Her hand drew the drapes in one quick violent motion and was ready to storm out of her chamber and to attack the Prince. Whether Carm slept in the Queen's bed, or in his bed, or in Ell's bed, there was no excuse for him to let her sleep alone in their matrimonial bed last night.

Barefooted and just clothed in a white bed sheet, she strode towards the door and...

"Laura! Where are you going?"

Perry's voice halted her from taking another step. Right away, she felt her Lady in Waiting's hand seized her arm and motioned for her to turn around, which she reluctantly did when Perry did not let her go.

"Sweetie, what's wrong? Why are you running towards the door?" was Perry's slightly hysterical query and glared. "You're only covered in sheets!" The Lady in waiting had a temporary meltdown.

Sensing that she was upset, Perry managed to calm down and waited for an answer but without letting her hand go. "I want to find out where Carl slept last night, and I'm going to teach him a lesson for leaving me like a fool last night!" She cannot believe the violent remark that came out of her mouth.

"Laura, calm yourself. You don't know what you're talking about," Perry suggested, stressed out and panicking again.

"Calm myself?! Do you know that he didn't show up last night, and the fact that he forgot to tell me-" she was babbling with rage when their attention was caught by the door opening and they saw Carm's Valet entering the chamber.

"Where is he?!!" She demanded quickly and turned towards their direction.

"Umm… Princess, is something the matter?" Was the Valet's careful and confused remark.

"Where is Carl?!" was her impatient and irritated reply, clearing her face with the curtains of her disheveled hair. "He stood me up last night!"

"Princess, I'm sure there's a perfect explanation why His Highness didn't make it last night," Perry commented in a calm tone.

When she saw LaFontaine's eyebrows wrinkled in confusion, "He didn't sleep here!" she growled, frustrated at having to explain it.

Totally oblivious, "Forgive me Princess, but I didn't know what happened last night," was LaFontaine's honest answer. "After helping him last night, he dismissed me right away and I left him in his chamber changing to his sleeping gown," they related. "And when I wake up today and went to the kitchen, I just found out where he is when Berta informed me that he's sleeping in Her Majesty's chamber and asked me to bring his breakfast there." They explained as calm as they can muster. "I didn't know that he's supposed to sleep here last night."

"He's already married, for heaven's sake! He's supposed to sleep in my bed… our bed! He's not a child anymore and he's not even sick; he should stop sleeping in his mother's bed!" She pointed out, her sarcasm and anger showing. She was about to bombard them with all the reasons why the Prince of Karnstein should not sleep anymore in the Queen's bed, but the sudden swing of the door startled them.

In came Carm striding towards them in his purple robe, still fresh from waking up, and looking
undeniably gorgeous with his 'just got out of bed' hair look.

But her attraction to Carm did not deteriorate her rage. The anger seething inside her had reached its boiling point. She shot him daggers and she was ready to explode on him.

"Cupcake… I'm so sorry-" Carm said, walking towards them.

"Don't you dare touch me or come near me, or you'll be hurt!" She warned, as soon as the guilty Prince moved closer to her. But Carm did not adhere her warning and approached her. Just as Carm was about to embrace her, "I said don't touch me!" She demanded and hit her stubborn Prince on the lower left shoulder.

Caught off guard "Aww!" Carm cried, not expecting that someone so bubbly and lovely would hit him. Then he received another blow on the upper chest. "Laura! Let me explain first."

Perry got hold of her waist, as her Lady in Waiting's arms embraced her tight, tried to pull her apart and for further hitting Carm, while LaFontaine stood in front of her and was about to use their body as a human shield to protect the heir to the throne of Karnstein. But Carm did not let them and shove them to the side.

"Laura, will you please calm down and listen to me first before you-" Carm begged but was cut off.

"Don't you dare tell me what to do; I'm not the one who didn't show up last night and didn't sleep in our matrimonial bed!" She emphasized the last two words and caught the guilt in Carm's eyes.

"I said I'm sorry…" Carm pleaded desperately, still standing in front but holding his distance. "I didn't mean to fall asleep on my mother's bed. I-"

"I knew it!" she hissed, as he confirmed her suspicion. "Why don't you go back to your mother's bed and don't bother coming back here!" And before she could do anything that she would regret, Perry hugged her tight and switched their position, so that Perry was facing Carm instead.

"Forgive me Your Highness, but I think it would be best that we leave the Princess alone to calm down," Perry suggested in a motherly tone. "Let's not provoke her more; it's not good for the baby and the mother too."

Still hugging her tight, she felt Perry turned a bit to the side so that she could see Carm's reaction after that suggestion. She tried to calm herself for the sake of the baby and felt sorry for forgetting the baby could feel what she felt too.

"Alright, I'm going to leave now, but I'm coming back before I leave," Carm insisted, not taking his eyes off his Princess.

She huffed and avoided his gaze. Carm was trying to get her sympathy by displaying his melancholic eyes, but it would never work this time. Instead, she focused her attention on the Valet who was holding the arm of her Prince, preventing him to come nearer and be hurt.

"LaFontaine, tell him that I don't want to see his face in my chamber," she commanded in a firm loud tone, while she calmly got loose from Perry's arms, which the Lady in Waiting hesitatingly did. "He can leave whenever he wants, I don't need to see him off. And if he needs anything, he can tell to Perry and then Perry can relay the message to me." She felt victorious when she caught sight of Carm's shocked expression, upon realizing that she used the same arrangement that Carm demanded to her the first time he got angry at her. And with that, she turned around and walked away towards the bathroom, leaving a totally stunned Prince.
Grammar error? Please let me know below. I would really appreciate that you correct my mistakes. Other than that, you can let me know how you feel and what should Carm do to woo Laura...

Thanks for your kudos and feedbacks!
Emma's Name Day

Chapter Summary

It's Emma's name day, Laura and Perry spent the entire Saturday at the village market talking to her close acquaintances about the development of her project and catching up with them, checking new stalls for new merchandise and shopping new stuff and supplies, before going to Greta's house.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

She was still trembling with rage when Carm came back to her chamber to say goodbye and tried to talk to her. But she shut him out by locking herself in the bathroom and ignored his plea. Equally stubborn as her, Carm refused to leave until she heard Perry begged the Prince to give her some time to think. Carm grudgingly left and took out his frustration on LaFontaine and yelled at them for reminding him that they need to leave soon.

Four days had passed since she last saw Carm, but the anger inside her did not subside.

And tomorrow night, Carm was expected to return and she still did not know how to deal with the Prince. She thought married life was like fulfilling her duties and obligations as a princess, that if she followed the rules, nothing will go wrong and all expectations were met. But nobody told her that being married was more complicated than being a princess. They forgot to mention that in some marriage there was a third person involved: the mother-in-law.

How she wished her mother or her aunt Jordana was by her side so she could ask some advice from them in dealing with married life, especially when you were married to someone with a very overzealous protective mother. Although she was aware that she could talk to Perry almost everything, but when it comes to married life, her Lady in waiting lacked expertise on this matter.

"Laura, are you alright? You looked like you just lost a battle," Greta commented, in a playful tone. "What's the matter?"

She looked up, reluctant in confiding, but when Greta sat beside her on the small bed that was used as a chair during the daytime, and Greta's hands rubbed consolingly on her back, all her hesitation disappeared.

"You know… it's bad to worry when you're pregnant," Greta said with genuine concern.

She forced a smile and looked around the room, pretending to watch her Lady in Waiting sitting by the window with Emma on Perry's lap, eating a plate full of creampuffs and chocolate cupcakes.

Will she tell Greta?

A comfortable silence occurred between them before a heavy sigh escaped her mouth and turned to her left, "You must be tired of hearing this from me…" she began, looking at the other woman's eyes and expecting indifference. But she was relieved when she saw a concerned look instead. "Car-
Marcus and I had a fight…again."

"Is that the reason why he isn't here?" was Greta's curious and yet non-judgmental remark.

When she did not reply at once, Greta glanced around the small room and watched the few guests, until she was ready to answer.

She surveyed her surrounding too, pretending to have a light conversation. She looked again at Perry, Emma, sitting by the window; then Elsie eating at the small table by the fireplace and beside her was a woman named Ida, she remembered was Greta's stall neighbor at the market, and her son, Emma's friend, Elias.

"No, he's actually on week battle training with other soldiers in the forest, that's why he can't make it," she corrected before darting her gaze back to Greta.

"You want to talk about it?" Greta asked, careful not to pry.

But before she can respond, Ida approached them with the boy tugging behind, whining.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," the red-haired, slender young mother told Greta. "But Elias is already tired. We'll go ahead. Thanks for inviting us."

"It's alright, thanks for coming and for the gift," Greta said and rose to give the woman a hug.

"Goodbye everyone," Ida waved goodbye towards them before heading out to the door and left discreetly with the boy.

They all waved back in return and smiled. Greta took a seat again beside her when the door closed, and just flashed a reassuring smile.

Weighing her words, so as not to sound like she was speaking unfavorably of the Queen, "The night before he leaves for his battle training, I've planned something especially for him since he'll be gone and we'll not see each other for days," she began and got a bit distracted when Elsie took a seat beside her to the right and listened to her too.

"I told him that I'll pamper him before he leaves. So I asked him to be quick with his duties that day, so we can spend the night together as long as we can… but I ended up sleeping alone that night and waking up still without him by my side."

"Where the hell did he go?" was Elsie's blatant remark. "Who in his right mind would stand up a sweet and lovely woman like you?"

"Well, maybe Marcus had some important task to do," Greta commented at once. "That's why he didn't make it… he is, after all, the prince's royal guard."

"He could have sent a message to you," Elsie reasoned out. "That's all I'm saying…" and shrugged her shoulders.

She nodded towards Elsie, and furrowed her brows, realizing that the woman made sense. Their attention was focused on her left, as Greta chimed in…

"Elsie, Laura is already upset. Let's not provoke her more," Greta suggested. "I think you and Marcus should talk when he comes back."

Greta's soothing voice had a calming effect on her, and she realized that in her stage of fury, she did not give Carm a chance to explain. Once she heard the Prince of Karnstein fell asleep on the Queen's bed, she instantly snapped.
"Well, he did come to my chamber... I mean our chamber the following morning," she managed to correct herself after she caught Greta's raised eyebrows upon the mention of having her own chamber. "And was apologizing but-"

"It was already too late, and you're already angry at him," Greta finished the sentence. "I know how you feel. I'll be angry too if it were me. But give him a chance to explain his side."

"I say, let him suffer first. Let him realized his mistake," Elsie insisted. "Teach him a lesson so that he'll not do it again."

Greta took a deep sigh and all eyes were on her, "Well, I hope Marcus learns his lesson... I remembered my late husband forgetting my name day the first year we're married..."

Intrigued and curious, "What did you do then?" she asked focusing her attention fully on Greta.

"I... I didn't sleep with him for a week and I didn't serve him food before he goes to the field," was Greta's sheepish reply. "We're a young couple, like you and Marcus, and we have high expectations from one another, so we fight all the time."

"What Greta and I meant is, you cannot avoid quarrels and misunderstandings, but never forget to teach him a lesson, to let him know that he can't take you for granted." was Elsie's passionate reply. "Look at me... I always punish my customers when they don't behave well."

"Elsie! You're talking about another thing," was Greta's hushed retort, glancing at the child in the room and sighed with relief upon seeing Emma still engrossed with the sweets around her.

Confused and curious, she darted her look to Elsie then to Greta when she caught the two exchanging glares.

"Remember Laura, talk to him. I've seen how Marcus loves you and-" Greta insisted but was cut off by a noise.

A loud knock startled all of them from their seat and looked at the direction of the door. For a moment, they remained quiet and looked at one another. Perry got alarmed and looked through the small window.

After recognizing the intruder..."You have visitors," Perry simply looked at Greta, stood straight like the Lady in Waiting she was and fixed her hair.

Puzzled, Greta hesitantly rose from the little bed, "Who could it be? I didn't invite more guests," and walked towards the door.

Once Greta revealed who were standing outside..."Marcus! You came!" Emma shrieked with excitement and ran towards the door.

The ecstatic little girl hopped into the Prince's arms once he entered the small cabin and wrapped those little arms eagerly around him.

"Happy name day Creampuff!" Carm greeted, equally enthusiastic to meet the celebrant.

An involuntary gasp escaped her mouth as her eyes perceived the Prince's appearance. She was suddenly reminded of the first time she met her betrothed. It had been a while since she saw Carm
like this.

Instead of disguising in royal guard uniform, Carm was wearing the usual all-black hunting tunic, trousers, long cape, leather gloves and muddy leather boots. With the ruggedness of his appearance and facial hair, she thought he looked like a savage hunter straight from the wilderness ready to ravage her…

Whoa!

Suddenly, she felt hot.

What the hell Laura?! You should be angry now!

Irritated at herself for getting carried away, she tried to compose herself and took a deep breath.

But then another wave of emotions hit her and her heart thumped wildly.

Was it anger… irritation maybe?

Definitely anger…

She was absolutely and positively sure that she was angry at the Prince.

Her emotions were ramping up and she can't help but get suspicious and paranoid too. Carm was trying to annoy her by growing back a beard. That's for sure. The last time he had it, they had a disagreement too. She bet this was his way of getting even at her from refusing to talk to him before he left. But then again, why would Carm try to irritate her when the poor Prince had been begging for her forgiveness?

She tried to be rational…

It's just a beard. He would shave it off if I ask him…

Her eyes riveted on Carm again.

But to her astonishment, she found Carm devastatingly attractive in this rugged hunting outfit, mussed hair, bearded sharp jaw and piercing dark eyes. And she just wanted to devour her Prince there and then!

Realizing that it was madness…

What the hell is happening?

She hated this erratic uncontrollable mood swings.

Why all of a sudden she was drooling at Carm while she looked for a reason not to get irritated at his beard? She was deniably horny since it had been days since she last got laid. Perhaps this was caused by pregnancy hormones? She hoped so because she hated Carm right now and that awful beard!

She tried to get hold of herself one more time and inhaled, then exhaled.

Finally, she recalled where Carm had been and calmed down. And of course, the Prince of Karnstein cannot shave if he was going to the village, and in this case to attend Emma's name day celebration. But they were not supposed to go back until Sunday night or probably Monday morning? What changed? Did he felt guilty and decided to cut his trip short? If her Prince planned on telling her that he missed her, and expected quick absolution, he wasted his time. At this moment, she cannot handle
the thought of facing Carm again; she was still pissed.

Her ruminating was halted when Elsie rose from the bed and watched her prepared some food and drinks for the newcomers. "Damn it," she muttered under her breath.

Now she was sitting alone, and there was no one to distract Carm from talking to her. She had no choice but to remain still and displayed a glare towards Carm.

She hoped he got the warning.

But when LaFontaine emerged behind the Prince and their eyes met, she quickly smiled at them and waved discreetly before slipping into frown again when she accidentally met Carm's gaze. She flashed an angry lop-sided grin instead to him.

After greeting Greta and putting down Emma to hug LaFontaine, Carm walked towards her direction, adjusting his long cape properly.

There was no denying that she was attracted to the way Carm carried himself when she felt a tingling in her nether realms despite being angry at him. And she thought…

This is insane!

Displaying his signature 'seduction eyes', Carm held her stare while he approached her. Carm oozed with the feral confidence of a feline completely confident in his pestilent surrounding while flashing a naughty smirk.

Why is he smiling?!

There were so many reasons why she should be irritated and angry at him right now, and he still had the nerve to smile at her?!

But as Carm walked closer to her, she noticed something different in his clothes; something new that attracted her attention. She looked closer and discovered it.

Is that-?

He was wearing black leather trousers, and it was tight and hugged his legs exquisitely in every corner!

Where did it come from and when did he start wearing them? She used to salivate whenever she sees Carm wearing his gloved-tight trousers during sword training. But the site of Carm in tight leather pants was deliciously divine!

Err… what the hell I'm thinking?!

She put a stop to this lascivious thought and shook her head lightly from left to right, eliminating the filthiness in her mind. But suddenly, she caught herself biting her lower lip. She became more irritated at how her body reacted wildly to Carm.

That's enough!

She berated and composed herself. She closed her eyes and tried to convince herself that Carm did not look good in black leather trousers… but an image of her ruining the intriguing trousers by dragging her nails on his leather-clad thighs invaded her thoughts.

Hold it… She opened her eyes to cleanse her mind of these evil thoughts… But when her eyes
focused in front of her, they almost popped out of her head when she caught sight of the bulge on Carm's upper left groin.

*No wonder he's smirking! Arghh!*

Her heart skipped a beat and she felt a sudden wetness in her underwear. Realizing what just happened; she stubbornly fought her desire and focused on hating Carm and those damn leather-clad thighs!

She could barely fight and endure Carm's charisma and was annoyed when she saw the blatant sensuality in the Prince's heavy-lidded stare and naughty smirk.

Carm knew she was struggling! Knew that she was aroused!

Something must be done to stop this madness. She cannot just let Carm seduced her in order to forgive him.

But before she could scold him and order him to adjust his cape and hide his lewdness…

"Damn! You didn't tell me that your Marcus is handsome and well-endowed," Elsie mumbled beside her.

Becoming more annoyed by the woman's comment, her eyes unintentionally narrowed and looked at Elsie.

Perhaps interpreting her glare as a sign of jealousy…

"Oh, he's all yours; sweetheart… and there's no doubt he only wants you," Elsie shrugged her shoulders nonchalantly, and then grinned before lowering and motioning their gaze towards Carm's crotch. "Look at how happy he is to see you…"

She rolled her eyes instead to show her annoyance, and before Carm could reach her, she walked towards the fireplace, stood behind the table and helped Greta pour ale to the dark oak tankards.

With a wooden small table, Elsie and Greta blocking his way, Carm remained standing beside the bed when the two women offered him ale and sweets, before handing some to LaFontaine, who now stood beside the Prince. She managed to have eye contact with LaFontaine and motioned them to look towards the Prince's crotch. They nodded at once and whispered to the Prince, and Carm discreetly adjusted his cape.

The expectant look on his face earlier was gone, replaced by disappointment when Carm took the offered drink but refused the sweets. She wondered if her Prince had hoped that he could just sweep her off her feet with his naughty smirk, seduction eyes and sauntered in the room wearing a pair of tight leather trousers, which by the way, looked irritatingly great on him.

*I bet his ass looks great also in that… Damn it!*

She berated herself again for imagining how gorgeous Carm looked like in his leather trousers. If only she could control her body from reacting wildly towards Carm… Lifting her gaze off from the Prince, she walked instead towards Emma and Perry.

"Do you like it?" she asked the little girl on Perry's lap, while she took a chair and sat beside them. Perry just handed the excited celebrant her gift and opened it right away.

"I love it! Thank you!" Emma expressed and hugged Perry instantly.
The excitement on the little girl's face cannot be described, as she welcomed Emma with open arms to give her a hug too. "I'm glad you did. Shall I read for you?"

"Yes, please," Emma nodded, smiling.

She took Emma on her lap, and they both opened the book with smiles on their faces.

But before she read the first page, she stole a glance at the Prince's direction and caught Carm brooding in between LaFontaine and Elsie, who were now talking. Her eyes darted quickly on the side, once Carm looked at her way. She then caught a glimpse of her Lady in Waiting glaring towards LaFontaine and Elsie's way, and cannot help but to grin a bit at how Perry looked like she was about to attack the brothel worker.

Perhaps sensing the tension, Greta walked towards Carm and poured more ale on his tankard.

She was thankful that Greta understood their situation right now and managed to wane Carm from brooding further by talking to him.

Almost half part of the book was read before she felt Emma dozed off in her arms. Greta took the exhausted celebrant from her lap and laid the little girl on their small bed.

It was almost sundown when they stepped out of the small cabin. After saying their goodbye first to Greta, Carm and LaFontaine went ahead to fetch the carriage and the guards in disguise.

"Thank you, Laura," Greta stood outside.

"Thanks for having us too, I had a nice time," she returned and gave the taller woman a hug. When it was Elsie's turn to say goodbye to her, she found herself in a tight embrace too and before releasing her, the woman held her and whispered something that made her eyes grew wide.

"Don't forget it," was Elsie's nonchalant remark and displayed a naughty grin after releasing from the embrace.

She just nodded in daze and slowly turned around and walked towards the Lady in Waiting still partly shocked.

Displaying a suspicious stare, "You're blushing… what did she tell you?" was Perry's curious remark.

Still recovering from the shock, "Ummm… Nothing. Let's go. I'm hungry," she lied and hooked her arm on Perry's arm, and tried her best not to drag Perry towards the waiting carriage. She was aware that her Lady in Waiting was not that friendly towards Elsie since the beginning, and was always watching Elsie like a hawk whenever they meet her. And after watching LaFontaine and Elsie engaged in a conversation a while ago, she doubted if her Lady in Waiting would be as keen as to exchange recipe tips with the brothel worker. But Perry still respected her friendship with Elsie.

Before going inside the carriage, she cannot help but to search where Carm was and instantly looked at the chauffer's seat. But she got disappointed when she only saw Bastian.

"Where's the Prince?" she mumbled to Fritz, before stepping inside the carriage.

"His Highness and the others are already waiting at the gate of the village, Your Highness," Fritz replied in a hushed tone.

Relieved to hear where her beloved was, even if she was mad at him, "Thanks. Let's go home," she
smiled back at him before putting her hand on his to assist her on the carriage step. Once she was comfortably seated and before Fritz closes the door, "Please tell Bastian to take a shorter route, I need to be in the castle before His Highness arrived."

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As soon as the carriage halted by the castle's side entrance, only one thing was on her mind: to avoid the Prince. She was not ready to talk to Carm, not when she was having these mixed feelings towards him. It would just cloud her judgment.

She hurriedly stepped out of the carriage and walked straight ahead before the others. She did not even wait for Bastian or Fritz to assist her in stepping down for fear that Carm might be there. And speaking of Carm... she surveyed her surroundings and found no one else, except them. Satisfied that her Prince was not in sight, she grinned at successfully splitting from Carm and the group of royal guards. Ordering Bastian to take a shortcut from the usual path they used had been advantageous, she lost sight of Carm and his guards before they drove deep into the forest. Perhaps they were still looking for them.

Not having a hint of what she did, "Perry, can you check all the goods that we've bought and give the girls their gifts," she requested in her sweetest tone once they entered the side door. "I'll go ahead and meet you in my chamber."

"As you wish, would you like me to send you some tea," Perry asked before turning to the hall leading to the castle's kitchen.

Displaying her most adorable smile, "No thanks. I just want to take a hot bath now," she returned. "On second thought, tell the girls to come by at my chamber and help me instead, so that you can rest." She knew Carm would want to talk to her, having more people in her chamber than one would lessen the chance of Carm talking to her. She will avoid him as much as she can. When Perry acknowledged her reply, she walked straight ahead along the hallway, towards the grand staircase as fast as she can.

It's a good thing no one saw her enter the side door, except for Perry, Bastian, and Fritz, or else, any of the guards could tell Carm where she was now. But as she passed the library, she was startled and her heart pounded fiercely when she felt a firm hand held her arm and she was snatched and pulled inside the library. Once the door shut, and she came face to face with her 'abductor'…

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Ever wonder who could it be and what that person might do to the Princess? Let me know what your thoughts are and who knows, this crazy brain of mine might take your crazy guess seriously…

Please feel free to correct me for my grammar errors; and word use. I don't use English in my daily conversation, so I'm a bit rusty when it comes to using more effective conversational terms (if that's how you call it). And lastly, thanks for your continued support, comments, and kudos :-(
**Disobedient**

Chapter Summary

What could be Laura’s ‘abductor’ wants from her? Laura was still angry at Carm; Will the Princess finally forgive her Prince?

Carmilla

"Get your hands off me!"

Knowing it was difficult to calm the stubborn Princess, she decided not to let go. "We need to talk." She demanded, after shutting the door. Her voice low but firm, it bordered on angry.

Unmistakably, Laura was not amused at how she seized her by the deadly glare that was being shot at her.

After being caught off guard, "Why did you bring me here?!" the Princess exclaimed, struggling to lose from the strong grip.

As expected, she found herself facing an equally annoyed Princess. But she was more than annoyed, she was angry that Laura attempted to elude her and the guards.

"I said get your hand off me!" Laura demanded one more time.

Still maintaining composure, "I will let you go as soon as you tell me why you did that?" was her stern reply.

"Did what?!" the Princess struggled but to no avail. "Let me go!"

Laura was slowly getting on her nerves; she tightened her grip on the Princess' forearm.

"Don't play innocent with me, you know damn well what I'm talking about," she disproved, her voice growing louder and firmer.

"I have no idea what you're talking about," Laura pouted about to explode soon.

Quick-tempered and impatient, she exploded first before Laura did, "I'm talking about why your carriage separated from the guards?!" she exclaimed, not in the mood beating around the bush. "Did you really think I wouldn't notice and catch up with you? Did you really think you'll get away from me?"

The Princess threw a proud look, "Well, I didn't ask you to escort us back home."

Her brows contorted deeper at the aggressive reply. Was Laura provoking her? They agreed that Laura could go to the village as long as she was well-guarded. "You know that I don't want you traveling anywhere without enough guards. Why did you divert your carriage?"

"I didn't divert it, I just want to go home faster," Laura reasoned out, let out a deep irritated sigh after finally got loose from the grip, and maintained a haughty look.
"Then why didn't you tell me you're changing course? We could have taken the same route together with you," she argued, trying to control her temper, but failing miserably and groaned in frustration when Laura just glared at her stubbornly as if testing her patience and challenging her. She had vowed to herself to protect the love of her life at all cause, but her wife was not worried at all at the potential danger that may occur every time they were outside. "Laura, you could have been abducted!"

For a moment, the anger inside the Princess seemed to subside.

Perhaps Laura had noticed that panic-stricken worried stare of hers...

"Well, as you can see, I'm here...still in one piece," the Princess returned voice steadier and was about to walk towards the door.

Realizing the Princess was about to leave, she grasped Laura's left arm immediately...Nobody walks out on her... not even her wife.

Dealing with Laura's stubbornness was challenging... She knew from the beginning that she did not marry a submissive housewife.

"Don't walk out on me when I'm talking to you," She warned, her voice firmer and deeper.

She was exhausted, hungry, irritated and not to mention sexually deprived and frustrated for the past days. The last thing she wanted was to be involved in a heated argument with her wife after days of vigorous battle training with a bunch of rowdy knights and guards. She had enough rampages. She needed some loving and pampering!

"I think we're done here, please let go of my arm," the Princess ordered firmly and glared.

Not to be intimidated, she moved closer using her body to block Laura's way, "No, we're not done yet... not until you tell me why you're avoiding me." She insisted and rested her hands on her hip, straightened her back more and spread her feet wide. She was glad she was wearing her hunting boots; it always made her several inches higher and she towered above her wife.

Laura was suddenly caught off guard and let out a discreet gasp after being cornered...

It did not go unnoticed by her and wondered what made her wife gasp? Was it because they were both so close to each other now and she was displaying her alpha 'male' side, and showing her disobedient pretty little wife that nobody messed up with the heir of Karnstein?

Her breathing became heavier as she controlled her emotions, and bit the inside of her cheeks, still seething as she stared at the Princess with those fierce eyes like her mother's. Laura seemed to be challenging her authority.

"Didn't you hear me? You're not going anywhere until you tell me why you tried to separate from us?" she insisted in her deepest tone, glaring down at the little Princess before invading Laura's personal space.

"Fine!" Laura exclaimed, glaring back. "I'm avoiding you because you stood me up and I'm still pissed off when you didn't come to my chamber!"

And that was the root of this quarrel...

...And the result of a runaway princess.
Her anger subsided and the guilt that haunted her in the past days returned while she watched the rage in her wife's expression resurfaced.

Damn It.

She almost forgot.

Contrary to her expectation, Laura was obviously still harboring ill feelings towards her. Instead of welcoming her back with loving arms after those days of strenuous training in the wilderness. She had high hopes that her Princess would forget about that night since she shortened her trip and decided to join them in Emma's celebration. She also expected that she would be missed and showered with kisses from her sweet loving wife when she returned.

She even bought a pair of leather trousers in the market square, after a merchant recommended the latest look in Wien, and as per LaFontaine's approval, thinking that a change in her attire can distract Laura from recalling what happened before she left the castle. And while they're at Greta's house, she thought Laura appreciated her new garb when she caught the Princess staring at her. But now that she recalled how Laura glared and avoided her, she knew that she had expected too much.

There was no way to avoid this misunderstanding, except face it.

She rested her arms on her sides, relaxed her posture and gazed at her Princess. "I want to let you know that I felt so bad and very sorry that morning; but you never let me explain," she mumbled, her voice calm and husky, slightly frustrated that she just got the chance now to explain her side.

She attempted many times to tell Laura that she regretted it and was deeply sorry but her wife never gave her the opportunity to redeem herself. "How am I supposed to know how you feel, and how to fix this mess when you're shutting me out?"

Perhaps realizing that she had a point, Laura displayed the royal pout for a moment, maintained composure, before replying: "Because you're insensitive, arrogant and selfish… and…"

Her brows contorted as she watched Laura struggled to finish the sentence. She knew Laura was hiding something from her. "And what?" she taunted. "Say it!

"...And a mama's boy for still sleeping in your mother's bed!" Laura blurted out.

Taken aback by Laura's 'harsh' accusation and not pleased with what she heard, she furrowed her brows deeper and did not break her stare with Laura. There was a time Laura called her a 'mama's boy, but it did not bother her since she knew her wife was just teasing. But right now, it seemed to affect her in a different way; the bad way.

She crossed her arms and disguised her irritation with a sarcastic chuckle, "Oh, so you're accusing me of being a mama's boy, when you, yourself is a papa's girl that gets everything you desires."

"I am not!" Laura strongly disagreed.

"So, how do you explain, why the King of Hollis ordered all the men in your castle to shave off their beards?" she retorted and caught Laura blushed. "That never happens in our castle."

Abashed, "I didn't ask for that!" Laura objected. "W-where did you h-hear that story?"

The faltering of her wife's voice at the end gave her confidence. After revealing Laura's little secret and greatest peeves..."Are you calling your Aunt Jordana and Perry liars?"

"What-…I…I was young. I didn't know my father ordered the guards and men in our castle to shave
off their beards for me," the Princess defended irritated and paused. Realizing the topic had strayed… "And why are we talking about this?" and then resumed babbling. "At least I've outgrown my dislike of beard and I never ask the men who are close to me now to shave off their beards, compared to you who still have the habit of sleeping at your mother's bed and forgetting you have a wife." was Laura's confident and proud remark, raising the chin too high and crossed her own arms.

The remark caught her by surprise. She stepped backward and gave her wife space, and herself to think for a while. This argument was making her dizzy. One moment they were arguing about Laura sneaking from her, then there was this unresolved trouble before she left, and the next thing she knew she was accused of being a 'mama's boy', which she disliked because she was just being an obedient child to her mother.

"For heaven's sake Laura, I didn't mean to sleep in my mother's bed that night!" was her annoyed remark. She was tired of this accusation. "Again, I am sorry. I was exhausted and was sitting on my mother's bed explaining to her the importance of my trip… and-" she hesitated for a moment, taking into careful consideration if she would tell Laura how she and her mother bonded ever since she was a child. But when her eyes darted on Laura's stomach, LaFontaine's words or rather warnings about pregnant women made her reconsidered. "And the next thing I knew, it was already morning, and my mother was waking me up and told me that I fell asleep in the middle of our conversation. She did not want to disturb me, so she let me sleep there."

When her sight met Laura's narrowed eyes and piercing stare, she knew that her wife was not fully convinced.

Laura stepped forward, "And you expect me to forgive you just like that?" and snapped her fingers.

Her eyebrows rose, irritation barely concealed after that haughty gesture from Laura, "You could at least reconsider since I've already apologized hundred times," was her cocky reply.

Laura snorted, not accepting further excuse…"Let me just tell you that, while you're sleeping at your mother's bed, I was worrying… thinking your mother was scolding you for making that trip. And not only that…" the Princess pointed out and raised an index finger as a warning not to interrupt. "I thought of surprising you that night and asked the girls to help me prepare something special for you. I even asked Betty to buy me a negligée that only brothel workers wear at work just to please you. But I will spare you all the details and shut my mouth because it's now useless and you don't deserve to know since I woke up in the morning still alone-"

She can't help it and interrupted the 'Laura-babble'. "Then why are you telling me these things when you don't want me to know what you've planned that night?" Arguing with Laura always awakens all the emotions hidden inside her.

"Because I want you to realize and understand that in addition to worrying about you, I also waited anxiously for your return and didn't sleep until the wee hour of the morning! And I felt like a bloody idiot for waiting and lying naked on my bed, hoping you'll come soon and make love to me!" Laura finally snapped.

Her eyes widened, as realization washed over her in waves of guilt and pain, "Cupcake… I…I'm sorry," she mumbled. Laura had planned on pampering her that night, and she blew her chance and let down her wife. She felt like she was the worst lover in the world right now.

How could she be so stupid and foolish to have fallen asleep on the wrong bed?! And how could she be so insensitive not to notice that her wife was still upset? Now, she fully understood why Laura was still furious.
How can she fix this? How can she show Laura how sorry she was? How can she tell Laura that she was an imbecile to have missed that night?

Breathing heavily, she balled her fists and just wanted to hit herself. Right now, she felt hopeless, overwhelmed and angry at herself. Controlling her temper had been one of her weaknesses, in addition to having trouble expressing herself verbally. She did not know what to say or do to show how sorry she really was. Whenever she was in this kind of situation, her emotions always consumed her and she always got carried away.

All she could ever think about was to worship her wife. Show her wife that Laura was the most significant thing in her life. Without hesitation, she advanced forward, grabbed Laura's hips, then nailed Laura to the wall, and kissed her wife like a fervent sinner asking for repentance.

"Ca-Carm..." Laura uttered, taken aback. "Oh, God..."

She felt the sudden pull of Laura's head, but she did not stop from possessively kissing and biting the Princess.

"Don't you dare-!" Laura protested but was seemed overwhelmed by the sudden contact. "Argghhh... you're... you're... Ohhhh... tickling... ahh... me!"

Confused in between nipping, kissing, biting, licking and ignoring the fire growing in her crotch...

*What the hell is she ta-?*

And then it dawned on her what Laura was grumbling about, when small delicate hands tried to cup her jawline, to stop her from kissing further a struggling Princess.

"Carm!" Laura yelped.

A naughty smirk formed in the corner of her mouth after recalling that she still had a beard.

Laura was definitely shocked at the sudden contact of her bearded cheeks on the Princess' smooth face. It's been a while since she kissed Laura with a beard on her cheeks. The last time they had a conversation about her beard; Laura told her that her wife loved her with or without a beard. And just moments ago Laura pointed out that the Princess was done hating beards.

Still wrapping her arms around Laura's waist, she pulled from the kiss for a second, "Didn't I hear you said you've outgrown your hatred on beards?" displaying a sarcastic smirk, with Laura's hands cupping her bearded cheeks firmly, stopping her from kissing further.

"I did! But you can't just kiss me now! You... We're... still arguing... talking... it tickles... I mean, talking!" Laura snarled but seemed loss.

"...You mean we're talking how I will devour you and ravage you until you forgive me?" She supplied in her sweetest, raspiest voice.

"No! I'm still angry at you!" Laura protested stubbornly.

Feeling naughty and challenged, she ignored the plea and attacked Laura's lips like a savage. She kissed her way down to Laura's neck, and purposely rubbed her bearded cheeks on the smooth sensitive skin before nipping at it. Expecting another irritated groan, she was surprised when she heard instead a moan.

*What the-?*
Growing confused and aroused by the minute at how Laura's body was reacting crazy to her, she glanced at Laura's face and saw the Princess' eyes closed.

"My... my... Cupcake... it seems like you're enjoying it-" she teased in her most sultry tone, and put her lips back on Laura's mouth. But when she felt a pang of pain on her own lips and tasted metallic on her tongue, she knew not to provoke her wife. "Aw!" Surprised that Laura bit her lower lip, she did not let Laura's little vixen stunt affect her. She kissed her wife again, only this time, harder and rougher till she heard Laura whimpered and moaned... again... but then she received another surprise when a strong force slapped on her upper chest.

Miserably resisting and struggling from the embrace, "Argghh, I said don't kiss me!" Laura squealed, after releasing from the kiss. "I'm still mad at you!"

Despite being pushed away, she held unto Laura's hip tighter, she searched for some signs that Laura really meant it, but as their eyes met; only desire was written all over Laura's face.

Perhaps feeling self-conscious, Laura suddenly became silent and displayed the royal pout. A warning was shown.

Just when she was about to release her arms around Laura's waist, she caught her wife licked quickly those gorgeous lips...

*Is she playing hard to get?*

And that was all it took for her to put her own lips back unto those searing hot ones of Laura's. She wanted to know if Laura would resist again; that moan a while ago was motivating. She had the feeling that her wife was too proud to admit being horny too.

Whimpering in her arms, she continued ravaging the struggling Princess with rough kisses and bites, while she ignored her growing erection struggling under the constraint of her new trousers.

She silently cursed as she felt her erection pushing very hard against the tight leathery material. And with her legs apart, her back arched fully toward Laura's chest and her crotch rubbing lightly against Laura's groin, she could feel her hardness becoming fuller and slipping free of their constraint!

*Bloody hell!*

She was certainly on fire. This resisting and struggling from her Princess were driving her madly aroused, and she sensed that Laura was turned on too of her roughness. Getting impatient and wickedly horny, her hands slipped down to Laura's buttocks and brought the Princess closer to her raging erection and rubbed her hardness firmly for Laura to know how frustratingly hard and aroused she was. Unsurprisingly, it earned another moan from Laura instantly and the Princess' hip bucked towards her.

But her almost victory was cut short when Laura suddenly pushed her away again, and her hands released Laura's rear. Caught off guard, she glared at her wife and saw the narrowed look on her wife's eyes. But she was surprised when she caught Laura panting and glanced down at her raging bulge before sheepishly looked up and bit the lower lip.

*Well, I'll be damned!*

It was unmistakably true. The look of arousal in Laura's eyes was roaming all over her face and body. The Princess just moaned when she kissed her with her bearded cheek, and now, Laura was ogling her trousers, more specifically the raging erection stretching on the side above her upper left thigh... and she was loving the sight of it!
"Like what you see Cupcake?" she gave Laura a chance to appreciate her form and received a pout. But she caught Laura stole a glance again at her erection, before looking up.

...**Busted.**

Instead of teasing the Princess, she displayed her devilish smirk.

"Wha-?! Don't be too sure of yourself, you smug broody annoying stupid condescending sexy Prince!"

Laura quickly covered her own mouth with both hands, too shocked at what came out of her own lips.

Amused at her wife's slip, she watched with her 'seduction eyes' the Princess' face turned into the crimson ness color. But the smile on her face slowly disappeared when she felt the throbbing inside her trousers became more painful and torturous, while she watched her pretty little wife blushed with the embarrassment of being caught eyeing her hardening length. Waves of arousal coursed through her body, as the memories of lifting Laura off her feet, nailing her wife on the wall while she pumped into her wife's tight core invaded her dirty mind. She looked down and can't help but groan in frustration as she felt her erection straining even more against her trousers. She almost wanted to put her hands on it and free it in the constraint of this tight leather material.

But before she could lose her mind, she felt two small hands gripped her nape tightly and she was brought for violent kisses as their tongues battled for dominance. She let out a long growl and felt victorious at successfully seducing her wife.

Still engaged in a heated battle of tongues, she reached for Laura's right hand and guided it to where she most wanted it.

She felt Laura's flattened palm rubbed slowly her growing erection against the leather material. It was heavenly delicious!

She felt exploding right there and then!

"Ahhh..." Laura moaned in appreciation.

She felt dizzy as the blood in her body drained from her head down to her throbbing erection. Laura's other hand joined in exploring the smooth leather-clad thighs of hers and felt them on her buttocks. She let out a loud groan and pushed more her erection towards Laura's invading hand. Her mouth found Laura's neck again; she growled as the animalistic side of hers craved for more and sucked Laura's pulse point. Using both her gloved hands, she reached for the collar of Laura's kirtle and with one mighty force; she tore it apart followed by ripping the chemise underneath it, freeing the generous bosom of her wife.

Laura yelped at the violent act of disrobing.

But she ignored it and dove into those pink buds at once and sucked it hard, earning a loud straining moan from Laura. Almost a week, she was deprived of suckling from Laura's breasts; it almost drove her into madness. And now, she felt like a hungry beast, sucking, licking and biting Laura's breasts and nipples, while kneading at the same time the abundant bosom of her wife, never stopping till her needs were satiated. She was too hungry to let them go, and alternated sucking hard those engorged nipples and biting.

Groaning, she continued ravaging Laura's soft round breasts and heard the Princess cried with each untamed lick of her tongue on Laura's nipples, and each bite of her teeth on Laura's sensitive breasts.
She thought of feasting longer after being deprived for so many days of suckling Laura's breasts. But it seemed like Laura had not quite forgiven her yet... when she was pushed away... again. She groaned after being rudely interrupted and stared at the panting Princess, looking for signs that she hurt her. But she was shocked when Laura flipped them around and reversed their position. She was now nailed to the wall by an angry horny Princess.

Unable to move, she just let Laura take over.

She felt Laura's hands run down the smoothness of her leather-clad thighs, and then around her quivering buttocks, before squeezing both her asses tight with both hands. She groaned again once their eyes met and she held Laura's sensuous stare. There was no denying that Laura was equally aroused as her when she saw fully dilated brown eyes looked down at her leather covered crotch.

She let out a sigh of anticipation, when Laura reached for her growing erection and a jolt of heat shot in her spine, causing her shaft to grow harder and tighter.

She felt Laura's hand slowly run left and right at the length of her shaft, palming and squeezing it.

"Cupcake..." she moaned, begging for relief.

But Laura ignored her plea and continued the sweet and torturous ministrations on her rod. She did not know how long she would last, her brain was hazy and her knees were weakening. She was frustratingly horny and her phallus felt like a raging panther growling down there and struggling to come out from restraint.

Perhaps noticing the agony in her eyes, Laura began to untie the fly of her leather trousers. They both watched with heavy breaths as Laura tried to release the raging panther.

Finally, she heard Laura gasped, upon releasing the beast, not expecting that she was not wearing her braies as her stiff member protruded and stood proudly in between her and Laura. Precum was already oozing generously and trickling down her shaft. Expecting that Laura would take it in her hands, and stroke it...

"Owwww!" she shut her eyes and let out an agonizing groan as she felt a sudden jolt of pain hit her spine. When she opened her eyes to see what happened, she was met with a devilish grin. She looked down when she realized Laura's hands cupping her sensitive balls firmly.

"Promise me you won't stand me up again, especially when I need you most," Laura demanded, accentuating the word 'need', and loosened a bit from the grip.

Still recovering from the attack on her crown jewels, and not expecting that her pretty little angel – like Princess would do such wickedness, she nodded weakly. "Owwww!" she cried again when she felt Laura squeezed her slightly, but not too firm. If only her wife knew how fragile and powerless she felt now.

"Let me hear you say it," the Princess demanded hands still possessively on both balls.

She held Laura's gaze, "I promise never to stand you up again and to be there whenever you need me," she uttered, her voice hoarse and weak.

"And..." Laura's eyebrows raised in expectation.

Feeling ashamed, her gaze met the floor, "And I'm very sorry for being a selfish insensitive imbecile..." and before she could finish her apology, Laura was dragging her by the collar of her tunic and was led to the nearest table.
Whether Laura accepted her apology or not, it was already forgotten, when the Princess lied with back on the table half-ways, chest exposed, looking like a virgin sacrifice being offered to her. The sight delighted her at once and she found herself growing painfully hard again. Not wasting time, she stood closed to the table and helped Laura lied comfortably on it. She raised the Princess' legs to the table, feet flat on the surface before straddling them and positioned herself at the edge of the table. Once her groin was leveled to Laura's crotch, she pulled down her trousers all the way to her ankle and kissed Laura in a desperate frantic mess.

Laura moaned at the sudden contact of her bearded cheeks on the Princess' neck and the valley between Laura's breasts, as she kissed her way down the smooth bosom of her wife. This time, she thought Laura was definitely aroused at her beard and made a mental note to make love at her wife whenever she had her false beard. She had thought of devouring Laura's breasts again, but when she felt Laura's hand on her hardness and rubbed it on the Princess' soaked entrance, she understood right away. Hard and tight, she took a deep breath, took her hardening length in her hand and entered Laura in one great plunge.

After gasping for a moment, Laura elicited a long sigh of satisfaction, as if relieved to be filled and stretched at last.

She gave her wife a moment to adjust to her thickness, even if Laura had already been so wet and ready for her. She thrust fast and harder; mirroring the loudness of Laura's moans, while Laura's arms locked around her neck, as she claimed her wife. She was about to close her eyes but she felt frantic hands reached for her face and cupped it.

"Looked at me while you claim me," Laura demanded in between pants. "I want you to remember my face while you're inside me and fully sheathed and warmed. I want you to remember, I'm the only one you can fill with your hot seeds and impregnate me with your heirs. I'm the only woman in your life that you'll make love with. And I'm the only woman who can take you deeper and do this…"

She growled when she felt Laura clenched hard inside her and pushed her deeper. It was arousing too how intimately possessive to hear Laura's demands as if sending her a message or a warning. She now found herself pounding Laura to the point of losing herself and exploding soon. Both sweating and panting, their combined loud moans echoed inside the library, as they both approached their highs. She felt Laura clutched her buttocks and squeezed them hard and pushed her groin deeper, with each thrust, as if wanting all of her, ramming, pounding, hardening, throbbing, and tightening inside. She could feel them approaching climax and tried to control hers, wanting Laura to always come first.

"And don't forget," Laura chimed in; in between panting and moaning as they both race towards the finish line. "I'm the only one who could make you feel this good and the only one who can suck your cock hard!"

Laura's shocking words reverberated like a thunder in her ears and down to her phallus, provoking it. Raging with arousal, she exploded and let out an animalistic growl as she shot loads and loads of her thick seed inside Laura.

Laura followed afterward and shrieked, body convulsing.

"Carm!"

She felt Laura's arms held on her back tight, as they rode together the waves of their intense, fervent and possessive declaration of love. She nuzzled her nose at the crook of Laura's pulse point, inhaling the delicious raw carnal scent of her wife, while she continued filling Laura with her generous cum.
For her, this was the best part of their lovemaking. The thought of impregnating Laura with her seeds gave her sense of fulfillment and pride, there was something primal about it but also very intimate. And the act of claiming and marking what belonged to her both satiated and pacified her completely.

Climaxing inside Laura was the greatest thing ever; it was like marking her territory in a sexy way. It was glorious!

Still throbbing and buried inside the warmth of Laura's tightness, she shuddered and tensed while she emptied every last drop of her juice inside Laura's. She then relaxed her body on top of Laura, while catching her breath and felt right away the soft loving arms of her wife wrapped around her, and then stroking small soothing circles on her back, and she just loved it.

While she slowly recovered from their highs, shame struck her, as she realized that she came first before Laura and felt embarrassed by not having control on her libido. She was deprived of touching Laura for days and she left the castle not in good terms with her wife, the mere touch of Laura on any part of her body always sent her on high alert. But when she heard Laura's possessive demands while having sex, it triggered her libido and sent her exploding uncontrollably. She remained quiet and just enjoyed the warmth emanating from their bodies; she did not have the guts to face Laura at this moment after not letting her wife come first. She wondered if Laura would comment about it.

Her eyes were soon becoming heavy at Laura's calming soft loving touches on her back and nape. She hoped they could remain like this for a long while… but at last, every enchanting moment ends.

"Are you alright?" Laura whispered. "You seemed awfully quiet and spent. Did I make you tired?

Instead of replying, she burrowed her face deeper into the crook of Laura's warmth neck and planted a soft kiss. Sensing that she was not in the mood to talk, Laura shifted slightly and managed to maneuver her face to look at the Princess' eyes.

"Hey, what's wrong?" was Laura's worried remark.

Slightly embarrassed, she looked up and faced the kindest and gentlest gaze that she had ever seen in her life. She just loved how Laura always looked at someone with genuine concern and non-judgmental eyes.

"I… I'm sorry I didn't manage to control myself," was her sheepish reply and averted Laura's gaze, it made her guiltier and more ashamed after she confessed. But she was surprised when she felt Laura's finger lifted her chin and motioned for her to look her wife.

"It was amazing and I love you," Laura said, displaying the signature adorable smile. "It was short and fast, but you always satisfy my needs."

She did not know what she had done to deserve a loving and understanding wife like Laura. Her wife always knew how to lift her spirit and pride. Laura's ability also to make people happy and looked the brighter side was one of the best things she liked about her Princess. Laura never took delight in someone's mistakes.

She forced a smile despite feeling all ashamed, "Thank you Cupcake, I love you too." She said, with utmost sincerity and kissed Laura on the lips.

For a moment, they got lost again in each other's desires as Laura reciprocated her kiss with slow but sweeter ones, just enjoying the gentle touch of each other's lips and tongues. And when the need for air arose, she groaned when Laura pulled from the kiss. They both held each other's gaze, satisfied, happy and overwhelmed that she got to kiss and touch her wife again. She felt her heart pounding
madly at the sight of her beautiful loving wife, and she can't get enough of Laura! She wanted Laura again and she felt her sheathed shaft hardening again inside Laura. But she wanted to properly devour her wife, so before Laura could notice her growing erection, she pulled her semi-hard member from Laura's warmth and felt the generous gush of their combined come leaked out from Laura's core. She quickly took out her handkerchief and gently wiped Laura's groin, before fixing Laura's dress and then reached down for her trousers and pulled it up to her waist. She carefully inserted her sensitive hardening shaft inside, before loosely tying her trousers, careful not to suffocate her growing 'panther'. Once she was ready, she looked up and saw a beautiful and yet indecent sight of her wife sprawled on the table. She cursed herself for being impatient. She reached up to her shoulder blade and removed her cloak.

Handing Laura her long black cape, "Sorry for ruining it," was her sheepish reply while Laura rose and fixed herself and then covered her indecency with the thick cloak. She then offered her hand to help Laura get down from the table and received a satisfied smile from her Princess.

"Thanks, my knight in shining armor," Laura's amused remark.

She then felt Laura reached for her jawline and caressed it for a moment, taking time until she felt aroused by the touch. The Princess was definitely teasing her, and if her hunch was correct, Laura might be thinking of being kissed again roughly. She thought of teasing back. She gazed at Laura with full of desire, "Why don't we continue this to your bed, so that you may know how it feels to have my bearded face in between your legs?" she said in her most sultry voice and gave Laura a naughty smirk. The Princess flashed a satisfied grin and released the hand caressing her cheek.

"Who says you're sleeping on my bed?" was Laura's confident reply and displayed a diabolical grin.

She was left stunned and speechless.

TBC
Carmilla tries to apologize again to Laura after the whole misunderstanding and forgetting the night she's supposed to spend with Laura. She would do anything to please her wife and gain Laura's forgiveness. But Laura wouldn't forgive her easily, and she's getting impatient and frustrated at Laura's stubbornness. Tired of being ignored and being 'docile' she took matters into her own hands.

For the nth time, she tossed to and fro around her bed, missing the warmth and softness of her wife's body lying beside her; missing the soft and gentle touch of Laura's fingers in her hair that always lulled her to sleep; missing the familiar soothing scent of Laura; missing the taste and feeling of Laura's nipple inside her mouth that she greedily suckled every night before she sleeps.

Restless, irritated, frustrated and miserable, that was how she had been for the last two days, minus the days that she spent in the forest.

All the while, she thought Laura had completely forgiven her after they had a heated argument that led to a steamy make-out session which resulted in a hasty crazy sex. But when Laura blatantly told her that she won't be sleeping yet in their matrimonial bed, not until she showed her wife how sorry she really was, she was shocked and provoked. She did not expect rejection after sharing that lustful moment with Laura.

If it had not been to LaFontaine's intervention she would not have complied with Laura's order. But her Valet was so adamant to grant the Princess some peace and quiet moments and strongly convinced her to give it a day or two, and Princess Laura would definitely miss her.

But now that it was already the third day and nothing was happening yet, even after she personally plucked a handful of her most beautiful and fresh roses from her garden, and sent them through Perry, Laura was still avoiding her.

She had been patient and well-behaved the past two days since she arrived from her battle training and after they had their 'kinky confrontation' in the library. She had accepted LaFontaine's advice and respected Laura's 'alone moments', while she brooded in between her royal duties and the short free time she had.

Since she arrived from her battle training, she had not the luxury of spending her time for some leisure activities. It seemed the committee handling the harvest festival had not come into full terms and the King decided that it was time for her to get involved in the planning and helped him since the palace will finally introduce her to the people of their kingdom at the coming Harvest Festival. She had a glimpse of the endless dispute between the noblemen and archbishops last night and today and asked her father to continue instead tomorrow since she had a headache watching how immature these so-called holy men and educated refined men argued over a feast. She and her father cannot even join Laura and her Mother at supper nowadays due to these disagreements.

They retired to bed late at night, and since she had a very long and exhausting day, she felt grumpier.
every time she was met by an empty cold huge bed.

When she caught sight of Ell this evening sneaking into the King's chamber, it irked her knowing that her father would be getting some pleasure and care tonight, while she remained sulking and brooding alone in the four walls of her chamber. Since she came back from her battle training, she had not been sleeping properly and always wake up grumpy in the morning. And tonight, she felt it would be another long sleepless night. She wondered how long she could take it. How long will she remain 'docile' and patient? How long will she follow Laf's order? How long will she let Laura decide when she can sleep in their bed again or when can she resume touching or snuggling with her wife?

The waiting was killing her.

She was not used to being subdued, except when she was young. But now that she was already an adult and the Crown Prince, she felt her ego being crushed.

Shutting out the voice of reason… "That's it!" she grumbled and rose from the bed and put on her robe. She tightened both ends of the knot around her waist and slipped her feet on the dark-furred slippers by the foot of her bed. "I'm not some child that she could just order to be still." With a throbbing headache, irritated, needy and itching to be touched, she strode towards the door and left the vastness and coldness of her chamber.

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"Open the door!" she ordered the two disoriented royal guards guarding the Princess' chamber. Giving her a hesitant look, the two royal guards remained staring at her, with a hint of fear in their eyes. "I said open the damn door!" she shot daggers at them, not giving the frightened guards a chance to talk and bowed their heads. Laura might have given them a strict order of not to let her in, which she respectfully obeyed the last two days by not coming to the Princess' chamber. But tonight she cannot control her emotions anymore, she needed her wife!

The door to the Princess' chamber flew open and in she strode like a king in her kingdom.

Standing shocked in the middle of the room, "What are you doing herea?!!" Laura demanded, eyebrows contorted in annoyance.

"I am sleeping here, whether you like it or not," she claimed like she owned the chamber, chin's up and glaring back at the upset Princess. "You cannot forbid me to sleep in your bed, it's my right as your husband, its mine too." was her stubborn remark, her temper showing.

"What part in, 'you can't sleep here, not until you're truly sorry and not until I say so', you don't understand?" Laura retaliated, hands rested on both sides of the hips.

After hearing that unsolicited reply of her wife, she also put her hands on her own waist and bit the inside of her cheeks; she took a deep breath, trying her best not to lose her temper. As the heir to the throne, she always liked to be in control, there was no denying that. And she always did it with Laura, but she knew that she cannot always dominate her.

"I already apologized many times," she began, her voice controlled but still sounded proud, growing impatient at how many times she had to say sorry; growing irritated that Laura had not been satisfied with her apologies and gestures; growing frustrated that she cannot touch nor kiss Laura whenever she wanted to. For heaven's sake! She was the next powerful person in the kingdom; she was not supposed to apologize to anyone except the King. But when she married Laura, she learned the value and meaning of apologizing. But right now, she felt like she had not learned at all, as Laura
continued to deny her of her forgiveness. "I agreed not to disturb you for two nights and slept in my chamber alone," she continued to defend her side and caught sight of the bouquet of roses in a vase, placed on the bedside table. "I even sent you roses for two days now, just to let you know how sorry I am…" she knew it was lame to mention it when she caught Laura sneered at the last comment.

"I don't think you're trying very hard," Laura retorted.

She became offended and frustrated at how Laura did not appreciate her gestures. Feeling the nagging pain inside her head, she reached for her right temple and rubbed it irritatingly, before looking at Laura again. "Well, what more do you want me to do? Beg? Kneel in front of you? Tell me and I'll do it!" she snapped, losing her temper. She had no idea what else to do. She was tired and in pain, she just wanted some cuddles, was that too much to ask? Why did Laura have to make it difficult?!

"Fine! Do you want to sleep here? Then be my guest!" Laura snapped back, not to be dominated. "The bed is all yours!" And with that, Laura turned around and stomped towards the door.

Surprised at how Laura reacted, "W-wait, Cupcake, where are you going?" she asked, her voice full of worries and followed the Princess towards the door, like a disoriented kitty and stepped out of the chamber.

Laura ignored her and just walked through the hallways, then knocked hard on the door to the nearest chamber.

"Who is it?"

When she heard the familiar voice of the Lady in Waiting, she almost grabbed Laura's arm to stop her from entering.

"It's Laura, I'm coming in!" the Princess answered back and quickly opened the door and stepped inside the chamber.

Already too late to back out, she found herself following her wife and was annoyed when she realized that they were inside the Lady in Waiting's chamber.

Standing behind the door, "Your Highnesses, I didn't know you're coming," was Perry's surprised and controlled remark, after bowing and walked further into the room.

Though it was she and Laura who entered, the focused was more on her, when the Lady in Waiting stared at her and let Laura just come in, and ignored the fact that Laura immediately hopped into the bed in the middle of the room.

After being caught off guard, the Lady in Waiting quickly recovered her composure, "How may I help Your Highness?"

But before she could reply, her attention was caught when the door opened and saw the figure came in without any hesitation. Once their eyes met, she held her Valet's shocked stare for a moment.

"What are you doing here?!"

She and LaFontaine both asked in unison and gawked at each other, as the shock subsided. Then her eyes studied her Valet's appearance and realized they were in their sleeping gown.

"Are you sleeping here?" she asked, furrowing her brows. She knew that her Valet and Laura's Lady in Waiting were secretly in a relationship, but she never thought that they sleep together too. Thanks
to her Valet's very discreet private life, she did not even know if they already have done the deed!

Instead of answering…

"How about you? Are you sleeping here too?" LaFontaine asked, their curious eyes studying her from head to toe.

Seeing that she was indeed wearing her sleeping tunic underneath the robe, she frowned at them and shot them daggers.

"No. Carl is not sleeping here," Laura chimed in and all eyes focused on the Princess. "I'm sorry Laf, but I told him I don't want to sleep with him, but he refused to leave my chamber." The Princess explained, already tucked in bed and pouted. "And I'm already tired and just want to sleep…"

"Oh, poor sweetie..." Perry commented and climbed to bed right away and embraced the pouting Princess. "Don't worry, you can sleep here as long as you like," the Lady in Waiting reassured in a motherly tone. "I won't let anyone disturb you."

After hearing it, she rolled her eyes before flashing a glare at LaFontaine again. There goes her chance of potentially getting laid and she won't even get a chance for some snuggles tonight.

_Why do these dimwits always get in my way?!_

There was no way she could convince her wife now to go back and sleep in their matrimonial bed. Not when mother hen was already protecting Laura and preventing her from going near the Princess. She hated it when Perry got into overprotective mother mode and guarded Laura like a mother bear.

Annoyed, _Arggh! I guess I just have to come early tomorrow then…_ was her optimistic idea, as she thought of a way to prevent the redheads from disturbing her attempt at sleeping with Laura tomorrow.

Her diabolical planning was halted when she heard a familiar cough, and she looked at her Valet again as they motioned to her to look at the bed, where a nearly asleep Princess was already snuggled like a bug inside the sheet beside Perry. They both exchange glare as if trying to tell each other that one of them had to leave now, so as not to disturb the sleeping Princess. But once she saw the cocky smirk on her Valet's mouth, she knew right away what they were trying to convey.

She walked closer to them, and glared, "Oh no, you don't," she warned with her index finger. "If I can't sleep with my wife nor can you," she stated firmly and whispered to them. "Say goodnight to Lady Ginger and tell her that you won't be warming her bed until my wife goes back to my matrimonial bed."

LaFontaine let out a discreet growl and flashed a deadly glare before whispering goodbye to Perry.

Equally frustrated and irritated, they both left silently the Lady in Waiting's chamber with slouched shoulders and heads down. She cannot fathom how their women have so much power over them.

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By the time LaFontaine arrived in her chamber this morning, she was already awaked and waiting for them to help her prepare for the day. She ignored the surprised and questioning look that her Valet was throwing at her and did not speak a word about what happened last night.

As she passed beside the life-size mirror that stood near her bed she caught sight of the dark circles under her eyes and groaned.

_Damn it!_
She looked awful due to the constant waking up in the middle of the night and that damn headache did not cease till the rooster crowed early this morning. But she was more than surprised when she saw dark rings too, under her Valet's eyes. She was itching to tease them but refrained herself from doing so. She had a plan to execute and she had to focus and not give her Valet a chance to suspect. The quicker she finished her morning routine, the lesser LaFontaine can detect that she was something into no good.

When she took a break to eat her midday meal, Bertha was already waiting for her outside the throne room and thanked her former nanny for clearing the Queen's schedule for this afternoon and reserving a slot for her, so she could dine with her mother in private.

The Queen's Lady in Waiting just nodded and bowed, never saying a word before leading the way and together they walked in silence towards the hallway leading to one of the castle's small dining halls.

When they reached the entrance to the hall, Bertha bowed to her again, signaling that the Queen was inside waiting for her. Before giving her consent to leave, she studied her former nanny and wondered if this woman ever smiles or break inside. When Laura and her entourage arrived in their castle, she noticed the change of attitude among the servants the Princess interacted and worked with. Her wife's sunny and bright attitude had rubbed off on to them and most of them smile now compared before.

She wondered if she could do the same to Bertha…

Instead of a nod and displaying her stiff upper lip attitude, like her mother and notorious former nanny taught her, "Thank you, Bertha, for always making my day easier," she said with a genuine smile and caught the confused look on the Lady in Waiting's eyes. Bertha never expected some appreciation from her; her mother taught her that their personal servants were there to serve them with honor. They were grateful to be chosen to serve the royal family and were regarded as an important rank. Staring at the woman who never smiles, "And you're one of the best nannies that I ever had," she continued to muddle in the Lady in Waiting's mind, hoping Bertha would break her iron demeanor. But the Lady in Waiting remained stoic and composed. She was about to give her consent to leave, seeing that she cannot tap into her former nanny's emotion, but her eyes widened, and a naughty grin formed in the corner of her mouth as she recalled something that happened during her childhood days.

She was absolutely sure it was Bertha who did something unorthodox, every time she was punished by her mother for disobeying the rules when she was young and just arrived in the castle.

Smirking, she held the Lady in Waiting's stare and leaned closer, but not enough to invade Bertha's personal space, making sure they were the only ones who could hear what she was about to reveal, "I know that it's you who put those sweets under my pillow," she caught Bertha blinking many times and a slight grin formed in the Lady in Waiting's mouth, but disappeared quickly when their eyes met. Satisfied that she managed to draw forth some emotions from her former nanny, she gave Bertha a genuine smile and winked, before nodding and giving consent to leave. "Thank you, Bertha, you may go."

Regaining composure, "Have a nice day, Prince Carl," Bertha curtsied and left.

She grinned after hearing her former nanny referred to her informally before walking towards the family dining room.

After crossing the threshold, she cleared her throat and made her way towards where the Queen sat. No soldiers were in sight, except for the butler, chief cook, pantler, and two footmen who were all
gathered around the dining table, attending to her Majesty's needs.

Once the servants saw her, they all stopped what they were doing and bowed to her, before resuming their chores around the table.

Instead of sitting in her usual place, she chose the seat next to her mother on the right, and one of the footmen pulled the chair for her.

"Good afternoon my Queen Mother," she uttered in her deepest and sweetest voice, as she reached for the Queen's hand, bowed her head and kissed the back of her mother's hand.

Gazing back, "Carl," was the delighted reply of the Queen, smiling genuinely. "To what do I owe the pleasure?"

"The pleasure is all mine, my Queen Mother," she said, taking her seat beside the Queen's chair, and faced her mother, while the butler began filling the goblet close to her of red wine. She noticed the changed of expression on the Queen's face as soon as her mother saw her. They never had a chance to talk together since she arrived from her battle training. She was always with her father, and her mother was always out doing charity work, together with Laura. And lately, they don't get a chance to dine together at supper; since she and her father were always trapped in the throne room dealing with different kind of problems, negotiating and making sure that everything would go out smoothly on the coming festival.

She could tell that her mother missed her that much by the longing gaze that she was receiving. It made her heart swell. "Thank you for giving some of your precious time for me, I know that you are very busy too with the hospital opening soon and not to mention your daily duties in the castle and among other things." She said apologetically and saw how the creases on the Queen's forehead disappeared and was replaced by a wide smile that reached the Queen's eyes. The next thing she felt, was the Queen's delicate hand reaching her face and cupping her cheek tenderly.

"Carl, you know that I will always have time for you," the Queen stated. "And I missed you, my precious one."

It almost melted her heart to witness how the cold and stiff Queen of Karnstein transformed into loving warm mother for her. Ever since she was a child, she knew that those gentle gazes were solely reserved for her, and she never got tired receiving this kind of attention from her mother even if she was already grown up.

She leaned unto the palm of her mother and appreciated how the Queen showed her feelings and vulnerability in front of her. She was glad that she got a chance to chat with her mother, she felt abandoned lately since Laura forbade her to sleep in their bed and kept ignoring her. She was in need of pampering since she came from the battle training, and while her wife was denying her of attention and care, she knew that her mother would never deny her that.

"I missed you too, my Queen Mother," she returned with a smile, but was alarmed when the Queen's eyebrows raised in a questioning expression.

"Do you?" the Queen doubted with a hint of sarcasm. "I never thought of it. You never come to my chamber since you arrived. You always spent your time with your wife."

It did not go unnoticed to her the sarcasm in her mother's comment, mentioning her missed visits to the Queen's chamber. "I do miss you," she returned firmly. "It's just been hectic when I arrived."

The Queen removed the hand delicately from her face and nodded for the chief cook to begin
serving the entrée. "Before I forget, I asked the cook to serve your favorite, they slaughtered quickly
the finest cow when Bertha informed me that you would be joining me," the Queen explained, as the
plate of rare filet mignon with red wine sauce, baked amandine potatoes with thyme and asparagus in
herb butter were served in front of them.

"Thank you my Queen Mother, that's very kind of you," she appreciated the last minute effort and
gave the chief cook a nod of approval. She effortlessly cut the exquisite meat with her knife, put the
meat in her mouth, and savored the tenderness and juiciness of the beef.

Wishing to appease her mother's feelings, "My Queen Mother, I have never slept with my wife since
I arrived, and had not a chance to spend some time with her either," she explained after putting
together her fork and knife delicately on the plate, and wiped her mouth before taking a sip from her
goblet. "My King Father assigned me to deal with the Harvest Festival committee because he had
more important things to attend to with our new allies. And I'm also helping him with writing new
contracts. So, I'm basically exhausted at the end of the day and always sleep late at night."

"Why don't you come to my chamber tonight, so that you can relax and sleep well," the Queen
offered, voice tender and hopeful. "The last time you slept in my bed, you slept like an infant."

The offer was very tempting, knowing her wife was not there to give her some attention and had
been cold lately to her. She always enjoyed being pampered, especially by the Queen, it felt like she
was the most precious being in this world. Growing up, her Queen Mother may have been the
strictest mother in the world, compared to her Ma, but her mother always rewarded her with utmost
love, full attention, and best care whenever she demanded it. And while she grew up, her mother
continued to shower her with the same degree of attention and love that she was used to receiving as
a child. She cannot fathom why Laura cannot understand whenever she sleeps in her mother's bed.
Sure, she unintentionally slept on her mother's bed when she was supposed to spend a special night
with her wife. It was a small mistake that she admitted and apologized for. But she thought Laura
was being hard on her. The Princess could have at least given her some credit and tolerance since she
did not sleep at any woman's bed, not to mention Ell's bed, but instead on her mother's bed, which
her wife was aware of in the beginning.

She took a deep sigh and reached for her right temple and rubbed it. As much as she would like to
spend the night with her mother, she felt that it was not yet time to resume their mother-son bonding.
She still had a Princess to woo.

Recalling the root of her and Laura's quarrel, "Thank you for the lovely offer, my Queen Mother,
unfortunately, I have to decline. My King Father put me in charge of treating the Festival Committee
to a small feast tonight, that's why I am here too, to ask a favor," giving her mother her sweetest
smile, she took the hand of the Queen and held it gracefully.

"You know that I had a hard time saying no to you…" The Queen replied with a controlled grin.
"I'm sure our competent royal household here can do the job well," motioning to the four people
around them, and bowed their heads in agreement.

Satisfied that her plan will soon come into fruition, "Thank you my Queen Mother," she returned and
brought slowly her mother's hand to her lips and kissed the back of the Queen's hand delicately while
looking at the pleased expression of her mother. "May I suggest that we make a lot of those delicious
desserts that Perry makes?"
"I'm sure we could arrange that with your wife's Lady in Waiting," was her Majesty's confident remark, "She is after all our Confectioner too. It would have been a waste not to use her remarkable expertise."

Excited and happy that Perry would be out of Laura's sight tonight and busy in the kitchen instead, "Thank you very much my Queen Mother. When everything is alright and settled, I will make sure to devote part of my time to you."

"You better be," was the Queen's serious retort. "You've been distracted too much since you got married."

She just smirked at her mother's sarcastic comment, confident that the Queen would always forgive her for whatever mischief she did.

"I promise, my Queen Mother, I will visit you-" she was not even finished yet when the Queen leaned closer to her and the next thing she felt was her mother's soft knuckle rubbing on her cheek gently.

"I look forward to it, Carl." The queen whispered.

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The wine and food had not all been consumed yet, but she already sneaked out from the feast and left her father and the Harvest Committee celebrate throughout the night. Her plan worked out, not just to divert Perry and LaFontaine from allowing Laura to sleep at the Lady in Waiting's chamber again, but they finally settled and agreed on what to do at Harvest Festival.

After a quick bath and ordering LaFontaine to help in the feast, she was now striding along the hallway leading to the Princess' chamber. Already wearing her sleeping tunic under her robe, exhausted, but satisfied, she was confident that her wife would finally let her sleep in their matrimonial bed. All she needed to do was to flash her naughty smirk and display her 'seduction eyes'.

When the two guards standing by the Princess' chamber saw her coming, they did not hesitate at all and opened the door at once upon her arrival, and then bowed to her as she crossed the threshold. She sauntered into the chamber, full of confidence as if sending a message to Laura that she was back to reclaim her right. But she lost her composure when she saw not just her wife on the bed, but the three handmaidens also, each of them wearing their white long sleeping tunic too.

"What's going on here?!" was her shocked and yet irritated remark, as she stood in front of the bed, with her hands on her hips while she glared at Laura sitting on the bed, with her was Sarah Jane sitting beside the Princess on the right side, brushing Laura's golden locks. On the foot of the bed, Betty was sitting and massaging the princess' foot on her lap, while Natalie sat on the left side of the bed, holding still a plate full of creampuffs and cupcakes, clearly from the feast, in front of the Princess that was holding and reading a book in front.

When the handmaidens recognized her, they all paused from whatever silly things they were doing and bowed to her. Laura did not tear her gaze off the book yet. Truly to annoy her. When she cannot take any more this ignoring, "I didn't know that you're having a slumber party…" she said her tone firm and rich with sarcasm. The handmaidens remained bowing their heads, realizing that she was not happy with what she witnessed now. Seeing that there was no reaction coming from Laura, "If you would all excuse me ladies, but I'm exhausted and I wish to sleep beside my wife," she told the handmaidens, waiting for them to leave immediately. But her brows furrowed when they did not move. "Do I have to ask again?" she remarked, her tone deeper and her voice a bit louder than she
normally used to them. "The slumber party is over; you may all go back to your chamber."

"They're not going anywhere until I say so," Laura demanded, after putting down the book and looked up. "The girls would sleep on the floor, and stay with me every night from now on."

Refusing to believe what her ears had heard, she looked around her and saw three mattresses lying on the floor, surrounding their matrimonial bed.

_Damn it!_

Laura certainly discovered her plan of distracting the gingers and it seemed her very clever and very curious wife had prepared and planned all of this. She wondered how or who told Laura. But before she could peck a finger and blame someone, she took a deep breath and hoped that she could talk some sense in her stubborn wife.

"Princess, I know you're still mad at me, but if you keep on kicking me out of our bed, we'll never resolve this conflict between us." She held Laura's stare and lowered her gaze when she saw that Laura seemed to be contemplating and gazing at her. Feeling confident, she walked closer and displayed her seduction eyes. "Don't you miss me?" she said, her voice raspy and thick with lust, that even the handmaidens focused their attention to her in bated breath, as they all wait for Laura' sweet reply.

"No. You may leave now," Laura blatantly said, devoid of emotions. "My handmaidens would not leave me until I say so. They're loyal to me."

After that cold and harsh comment, she irritatingly growled and turned around. Her hands balled tightly into a fist, she left the Princess' chamber with her blood boiling.

Laura was torturing her.

***

After attempting to kiss and sleep with Laura again … she entered her own chamber growling, hissing, and bleeding. When her eyes met her Valet's amused look, she greeted them with a growl and walked passed at them and slumped on the chair.

"Let me guess… you tried to sneak in at Princess Laura's bed again and steal a kiss from her," LaFontaine commented a matter of fact. "Haven't you learned? You shouldn't underestimate an angry pregnant princess."

"Shut up…" she replied and clinched after accidentally touching her bleeding lips. LaFontaine came closer and examined her face to fix the mess she created.

"That was some nasty bite," the Valet commented before walking to the bathroom and emerged right away with some clean rug and a dark vial in hands.

While scanning through the piles of scrolls lying on her table, she was distracted when LaFontaine reached for her lips and dabbed a cloth on the bleeding part. "Aww! Watch it!" she exclaimed, after wincing from the pain, as her Valet stood in front of her.

"Why can't you just give her some space and wait until her anger subsides," LaFontaine castigated in between cleaning the dried blood around the lips, before applying lightly a medicinal balm on the affected area. "After all, you did succeed in seducing her with that leather trouser of yours and got a chance to shag her before-"
"Before forbidding me entry to her chamber and sleeping on her bed," she finished with an irritated growl. She did not realize how vociferous they were at the library, that LaFontaine heard her and Laura having wild sex as the Valet passed along the hallway.

Seven days.

Seven darn days she was forbidden from entering Laura's chamber and sleeping with her wife; she usually does not take no for an answer and she always gets what she wanted. But when she committed that innocent mistake of falling asleep at her Mother's bed and failing to show up in Laura's bed that night, she knew she was beyond redemption. But she never gave up.

For the past days, she had tried everything to gain back her wife's affection and forgiveness. From a romantic picnic with a basket full of Laura's favorite sweets and cheese to bringing Laura's breakfast to bed every morning, with the help from LaFontaine, of course. She made sure also that her pregnant wife had enough cheese when the craving attacked and bought a week supply of Steirerkas from Grete. She also made it a point to continue sending fresh new bouquets of roses every day before Laura started her day. And yet, Laura had not given her a slight attention and the Princess was still surrounded by the handmaidens or Perry. She had been a good and obedient lover and tried everything to woo Laura in a most diplomatic and romantic way, but right now her patience was waning.

Once LaFontaine was done and was out of her sight, she rose from the chair and walked towards the door.

"Where are you going?" Lafontaine asked, their voice sounded more like a scold than a question.

Thinking that reminding Laura of her wife duty might work, "I'm going back to my wife and I will demand that she resume her obligation to me," was her serious and impatient reply. "I'm not going to sit here and wait for her order to tell me when I can sleep in my matrimonial bed." She grunted, fixing her cape and standing straight.

"Aren't you the one who had forgotten his obligation, that's why you ended up being banned at the Princess' bed?" they remarked, run quickly across the room and blocked the door.

"How many times would I explain it…I didn't intend to fall asleep and missed my night with the Princess!" She exclaimed her temper showing and her patience thinning. "Get out of my way!"

"No." was their firm reply. "I cannot let you out of your chamber for so many reasons."

"I am the heir to the throne and you will obey me!" She ordered and shot daggers at her Valet, who moved closer to the door and barricaded it with their entire body. "What the hell are you doing? I said get out of my way!"

"You know, you would be banned longer in your matrimonial bed with that attitude of yours," LaFontaine claimed, stretching their right arm for some control. "Why don't you go to your bed now and sleep it off, then we can think of better ways to woo the Princess again."

"But I'm already tired of sleeping alone!" she blurted out. "I've been sleeping alone for almost two weeks now since I came back from the woods! And she's depriving me of my right!" She tried to shove them on the side, so she can pass at the door.

"Hold it there…" LaFontaine warned and grabbed the bronze door ring. "I know how you're feeling right now, but if you show up to Princess Laura's chamber like that, she would be more furious. Have you forgotten that she is extra angry, extra irritated, extra frustrated and annoyed? And since
"But I missed her! I missed my wife…” she blurted out, then morphing into a whisper, "I missed my Laura…" she sighed before her shoulders hunched with dejection.

LaFontaine slowly stepped forward.

The next thing she knew, she felt their arm around her shoulder blade and she was being led back to the four post bed… tired of being rejected, she finally followed them.

"We'll talk about another way of how to get back your Princess tomorrow," LaFontaine suggested, their voice low but full of determination. "In the meantime, I want you to take a rest and sleep well so that you'll look fantastic and in your best behavior tomorrow-"

She flashed a glare right away upon hearing the last sentence.

"All I'm saying is, we need you to be prince charming if you'll going to please Princess Laura," they said and smiled nervously. "Not prince broody."

She was about to snarl back at them when a knock on the door caught both their attention. LaFontaine went to the door to answer it. When her Valet let in the person, she gave them a sheepish grin as Betty approached, then bowed to her before simply handing a handkerchief to her, as if it was nothing.

"Thanks, Betty," she mumbled, suddenly self-conscious as the prying eyes of her Valet watched them.

Betty nodded happily, knowing that she delivered successfully a very valuable 'item'.

"You're very welcome Your Hotness," Betty teased.

Since the handmaidens started sleeping at Laura's chamber, she decided to play along with her wife and thought that Laura would eventually get tired of ignoring and punishing her. But she also made sure to take care of her own needs while she was banned from sleeping with Laura.

"Have you heard anything new? Did she ask for me?" Aside from asking Betty to resume doing errands for her, she also made it a point to ask Laura's friend about her wife and their status.

"I'm sorry Your Hotness, she's still cranky and don't want to see you," was Betty's sorry remark. "And she still wants us in her chamber… I guess it will take a while. Princess Laura is very confident that we won't leave her, and Perry is always by her side like an overprotective mama bear."

"Well, it's your fault," LaFontaine chimed in behind them. "If you haven't been so overprotective and worried about her being abducted in the forest, maybe she had already forgiven you for forgetting to sleep in her bed. But no, you still have to create another quarrel by criticizing her from separating from the guards and you."

_Abducted_?

A wicked thought drifted through her mind.

TBC
Chapter Summary

Carmilla's idea of wanting Laura for herself.

Laura

"Sleep, tight Princess!"

After helping her bathed and dressed for the night, the handmaidens' cheery voice echoed throughout the chamber as they begin to settle in their respective mattresses around the four post bed, Sarah Jane on the left side of the bed, nearest to the door and Natalie on the other side.

Tucked in her own bed, "Goodnight girls," she yawned, before nodding to them to blow out the candles on the six branch candelabra on both her bedsides. The room instantly became serene with the only source of light coming from the fireplace. She loved having the handmaidens in her chamber, not only they were fun to be with, they never ceased to distract her from a certain broody prince. But they also relieved her from the exhaustion of the day's work when they deliver the latest rumor and interesting stories that she will never hear from Perry, and Betty was the best when telling those stories.

"Hmmm… has anyone seen Betty?" Her eyes narrowed. She just greeted and saw Betty before going to the bathroom with Sarah Jane and Natalie. And she made it clear that she still wanted all of them sleeping in her chamber.

"No, I haven't seen her," Sarah Jane answered quickly. "Nat? Have you seen Betty?"

Instead of a reply, a low snore was heard on the other side of the four post bed.

"I think Natalie is already asleep," she returned, glancing at the sleeping form of the black haired handmaiden. "You may sleep now… Betty is probably talking to Perry."

Or perhaps she was thinking too much and too exhausted that she missed Betty gathering the pile of dirty clothes around her room and delivered them to laundry.

Just as she was about to close her eyes…

"Sorry I forgot something, I'll just deliver these to laundry!" was Betty's quick and hyper remark, emerging from the bathroom carrying something wrapped in a cloth and ran towards the door.

Caught off guard of the Handmaiden's sudden appearance…"A-Alright Betty…"

Betty did not even look her in the eyes and made a beeline for the door.

When the door shut, she raised her eyebrows in suspicions.

Confused at not knowing how Betty managed to sneak into the bathroom without them noticing, "H-how did Betty-?"
"Just go to sleep Princess," Sarah Jane commented. "Betty had been acting weird lately and
she always disappears every time we're done helping you dressed… and sneaking around."

"Alright… goodnight…” She agreed, but her curiosity was not appeased.

After a long dispute with Carm last night and ordering the 'outraged' Prince that he was not yet
welcome to sleep in her chamber even after having kinky sex with him in the library last week, she
now suspected Betty might be running some special errands again to satiate her Prince's voracious
sexual appetite.

As long as Carm was not being satiated by a mistress, he can steal all her underwear.

And speaking of kinky sex, she did not know whether to blame the whacked out pregnancy
hormones or the sexy broody Prince. But she hated herself yielding easily to temptation when she
allowed her Prince to seduce her and succumbed to his charm. She did not expect Carm to be so
sexy and gorgeous in leather trousers; he just oozed with allure and sensuality. With the combined
ruggedness of his appearance and well poised seductive demeanor, she knew that she was beyond
redemption when he flashed those naughty smirk and seduction eyes.

Carm was the epitome of seduction. There was no doubt about that. Whether he was clean-shaven or
had grown a beard, she was always captivated and put under his spell. Just the mere sound of his
raspy voice and the sultriness of it was enough to make her wet.

She thought she could never be attracted to the bearded version of him since she hated beard. But it
turned out that she unconditionally loved Carm no matter how he looked like. She admitted that one
of the reasons she still agreed to marry him, even after finding out the truth, was the fact that Carm
was not like any ordinary man. The combined beauty of Carm's femininity and masculinity was one
of the things that attracted her most. As they grew closer and became more intimate, it did not matter
to her anymore which version of her Prince she liked. Despite having a phallus, which she did not
imagine to be so well-endowed, Carm's smooth soft delicate features, small perky breasts, finely
chiseled god-like body and the occasional facial hair were all the reasons that made her loved him.
Regardless of his uniqueness, regardless of what his sex was, she did not see it as a flaw but instead
learned to accept and love it because it was part of Carm.

She just purely loved Carm… her life partner… her beloved… her soulmate… the sire of her unborn
child.

The thought of carrying Carm's heir always put a smile on her face and she unconsciously touched
her womb.

"Hey precious one…" she whispered and gazed down as she lovingly stroked her stomach through
the silk chemise. "I don't know if you can hear me… but I just want you to know that I love you and
we can't wait to see you." She smiled and suddenly felt emotional, as she continued to caress her
womb. "I know you felt something odd lately when I'm angry with your Papa. But it doesn't mean
that I don't love your Papa. I'm just teaching him a lesson. Your Papa isn't that easy to deal with, and
I need him to understand who's in charge," she chuckled, after emphasizing the last sentence and had
to restrain herself from being loud, so as not to wake up the snoring handmaidens around her bed.
"You see, your Papa is like a broody cat and very possessive, that sometimes we clashed because
your Mama is always curious and stubborn sometimes. But despite our difference, we still love each
other and I want you to remember that your parents might be crazy most of the time and always
argue, but that's just us, always bickering and bantering. But in the end, we always kiss and
makeup… your Papa is one hell of a kisser and a hottie, and I can't wait to feel his… oh, God… I'm
sorry… I mean… your Papa is sweet." After getting carried away, she put both her hands on her
stomach. If she could only cover the ears of her unborn child with her hands after that unintentional
remark. Irritated that Carm was invading her subconscious, "I think we better go to sleep now and just forget about that last thing I told you about your Papa..." she suddenly felt ashamed, as if her unborn child discovered all her naughty thoughts.

Thankfully, Carm had stopped bothering her and did not even show up for dinner the past two days. Carm's visit every night in her chamber, reminding her to resume her duty as the wife to the heir of the throne had been a challenging nightly occurrence to her but she never let him dominate her. She thought of teaching her Prince a lesson but at the same time she liked also driving him insane; not just the 'wild sex' type insane, but the 'you won't get any treats until you behave' type insane. She did not know why, but she can't help it; she felt powerful every time she successfully send him away and he leaves her chamber, hissing, and growling.

But right now, she felt something unusual... something strange... Carm did not send fresh roses for the past two days and did not come with LaFontaine to bring her breakfast in bed. It's not that she missed the annoying broody demanding sweet Prince of hers... because from what she sees, Carm was still trying to win her forgiveness and 'wooing' her. She knew that it was his way of saying sorry and making up for his shortcoming... and she enjoyed very much the attention she received, as well as lavishing her with small gifts in a form of roses, sweets, and foods she craved. So, when everything did not happen as Carm usually does for the past days, she suddenly grew suspicious.

*Don't tell me he had already given up...*

She chuckled at the thought of her Prince complaining again tomorrow about being punished for too long.

More than a week of no touching and not sleeping with her would definitely drive Carm into madness. But she did not care. She wanted her prince to learn his lesson that he cannot always sleep at his mother's bed whenever the Queen wanted to. At the same time, she wanted him to realize not to take for granted her needs... especially now that she was carrying his child.

*He better show up with my breakfast tomorrow.*

Suddenly, her curiosity kicked in and she grew suspicious... If Carm did not show up tomorrow, something was really keeping her prince distracted. And she needed to find out.

***

When she woke up this morning and found her breakfast tray already on her oak nightstand, and delivered only by LaFontaine, she summoned them back but was disappointed when Natalie told her that His Highness and his Valet were both unavailable. When she asked the handmaidens where the Prince was nobody could tell her.

Growing alarmed, she quickly ate her breakfast and dressed for the day and went to the kitchen at once. Unfortunately, the Lady in Waiting had no idea either where they were today. But the flour all over the kitchen and heat coming from the fireplace oven did not stop her from interrogating Perry about LaFontaine's whereabouts for the past days.

She found out that Carm was not busy anymore since the Harvest Committee had all came into agreement with regards to the Harvest Festival... and LaFontaine had been helping the King all along. So, what's keeping the heir to the throne busy?

Unsatisfied with the result of her 'investigation', she decided to leave Perry to deal with the breads and cakes for now. She and the Queen were leaving today for the monastery and she did not want Her Majesty giving her that look of disapproval again when she forgot one time to dust off the flour
from her dress.

***

After fulfilling her duties for the day, and as soon as the carriage halted in front of the castle's entrance, she and the Queen have decided to call it a day and agreed to cancel supper in the family dining hall. The King was not in the castle and no one knew where the Prince was, they would rather rest and eat in their respective chambers.

While walking along the grand hall leading to the grand staircase, she grinned when her eyes caught sight the source of her agitation lately. She paused and stood at the foot of the grand staircase, as she waited for her Prince to come closer to her. Wearing his hunting outfit and his boots muddy, and his hair mussed, she was certain that he had been into the woods again.

Sauntering towards her with a cocky smile plastered on his mouth and staring at her like she was his prey, Carm invaded her personal space and displayed his 'seduction eyes'. He stared at her and did not say a word, nor attempted to touch her as if testing her reaction. Her heart pounded madly and she just wanted to kiss him there and then, but she controlled herself, recalling his punishment time was not done yet, and he failed to show up and informed her of his whereabouts for the past three days now.

"Missed me, Cupcake?" Carm asked, his voice gruff and sensuous.

Overwhelmed and almost hypnotized by his presence… by how sensual he talked… the familiar blend of musk, forest and faint rose scent that she missed… her hearthammered madly and heat pooled between her thighs. Even though she was focusing on her anger, her body, on the other hand, had its own mind… and she hated how it was slowly taking control.

Damn it! Focused Laura!

Regaining control, she stepped back before she could throw her arms around Carm's neck, and declare capitulation to her Prince.

"No." she crossed her arms over her chest and pouted. There were times Carm's cocky remarks irked her, the times when she knew she will lose against seduction.

Raising elegantly his left eyebrow, followed by a devilish smirk, "Then why are you looking at me like you want to devour me?" Carm spoke slowly; his voice smooth and sultry, the kind that will wet the listener's underwear.

Damn that raspy bedroom voice!

She hated it!

When it comes to sounding sultry, Carm can easily sex-up the sound of his voice.

It's like… in addition to being well-endowed, God blessed Carm the natural oral ability to seduce with words and arousing her with his mouth. And she always falls victim to his earthy, devilish, sensual voice, and the erotic payoff was always huge.

It annoyed her that Carm used this trick to win her back whenever she was mad at him. The constant flirting, the seduction eyes, the naughty smirk, the sultry voice, and sometimes even his savage temper, everything about him screamed sexiness!

Oh god.
Not only she felt all the blood in her body rushed in her face, but she felt her underwear already wet after that accurate guess from Carm. She took a deep breath and composed herself one more time. She will not give him the benefit of winning this conversation. And the fact that they have not resolved yet their 'misunderstanding' and he had not tried very hard to gain his forgiveness…

Her eyebrows raised in amusement and annoyance. "You know… you should let Laf check up on your mental well-being, you've been so full of yourself lately, you don't know anymore the difference between, attraction and irritation."

The playful grin on Carm's mouth and the gleam in his eyes vanished. …Replaced by a broody stare.

"Oh, really... You don't miss me at all?" Carm defended his voice deeper and puffed up his chest. "You don't miss your big wildcat at all?"

She almost gave in after the last comment, when she heard the vague tone of hope in Carm's voice. Mentioning the 'big wild cat' endearment was his last attempt to persuade her, and she knew that he was trying to be sweet without embarrassing himself. But he still looked proud and unrepentant, as if he wanted her begging him back. She just hoped he would not purr… or else.

"Not the slightest bit," she proudly returned shaking her head from left to right.

"Fine… have it your way," Carm retaliated, his tone modulated abruptly from seductive, to sweet and finally to sarcastic. "My patience is running out… and I have needs… if you don't want to take care of it, I'll ask someone else to do the deed."

Her eyes widened, shocked at his statement, she found herself balling her right fist and narrowed her eyes. "You're bluffing," she accused. Even if she knew that Carm was trying to push her to her limit, she did not like this kind of taunt. Just the thought of mentioning it makes her blood boil inside. She just saw Ell last night sneaking into the kitchen to get some food for His Majesty, and the sight of the royal mistress always threatened her. All of a sudden, she felt this concealed fear surfacing…

What if Ell and Carm suddenly met in the hallways of the castle? What would be his reaction? Would Ell just curtsy to Carm or seduced him? And whether she admitted or not, the mistress was intelligent, pretty, charming and expert in bed, Ell could just wink at any man and they would be begging for her attention. What if Carm can't control his libido and just pull Ell in one of the dark corners of the castle and do the same thing to Ell like he used to do with her?

"No, I'm not."

Carm interrupted losing her train of thoughts and worries. She narrowed her eyes and masked her fear, as she listened to him.

"My mother has a list of her approved courtesans for me since I became the Crown Prince…" was Carm's proud response. "I even met them before to have an idea of what my type is… I still remembered… three of them have blonde hair, and one has large breasts," his chin high and his eyes kept blinking. "All I have to do is pick a name, ask the guards to fetch the woman and she'll be here in no time," then a cocky smile formed in the corner of his mouth. "I might as well take three also since my father has three mistresses."

Her jaw dropped. Was he provoking her?

Aarrrggh!

And before she could react violently …
"Your Highnesses, is everything alright?" The Lady in Waiting asked after curtsying.

Perry's voice broke them from the brewing war and they both looked to the direction of the Lady in Waiting.

"Oh, I'm just peachy!" She exclaimed and displayed a false controlled smile.

"Yes, everything is just peachy," was Carm's sarcastic reply and stood straight, before putting his arms both on the side.

"What's going on here?"

LaFontaine's voice came behind Perry and bowed fast, and gave all of them a suspicious look.

"Have you two made up already?" They asked carefully in a hopeful tone.

"No!" They both exclaimed together and shot daggers at each other.

"Don't expect that I'll just take you back in my bed again," She faced Carm; ready to retaliate on whatever trick he had in mind. "I'm still pissed at you. I haven't forgotten yet that night you stood me up and for luring me in the library!"

Growling and equally frustrated "Don't think that I'm not pissed off too…" Carm returned voice deeper and controlled. "I haven't got any decent sleep for the past two weeks... I've got a headache that won't disappear and you're being insensitive, uncaring and unforgiving!"

Boiling mad at the accusations and recalling Carm's threat moments ago, "Well, why don't you fetch a damn courtesan to take care of that damn headache of yours!" she knew he was not just referring to his head.

Perhaps not expecting that retort, Carm paused for a while, eyes wide and then furrowed his brows... when it finally sunk in what they were arguing about… "Fine! I'll tell my guards to fetch all three women tonight!"

Suddenly she was caught off guard and was shocked on the spot. She did not expect that he would take her words seriously... hell! she did not expect either to tell him to take some random mistresses to cure his aching heads!

It was just slip of the tongue! She just got carried away! She wanted to tell Carm. She wanted to tell him that her out of whack hormones made the simplest of things seemed so very complicated and she can't control it!

And before she could tell Carm that she did not mean it, he already turned around and went upstairs two steps at a time.

Perry was there to embrace her at once. "Oh sweetie, I'm sure His Highness didn't mean it. Come on, let's put you into bed."

And before she could complain and cry, LaFontaine was already walking by her side too, and accompanying her to the stairs, with Perry holding her on the other side.

"I hate him…" she murmured in Perry's neck, as she leaned on her Lady in Waiting for support.

"Calm down, everything would be alright tomorrow, just try to rest now…” Lafontaine suggested.

***
When she waked up that morning, she felt this heavy pain in her heart. And all she could think about was Carm... her beautiful broody wild prince. Then paranoia took over in her head.

Did he really fetch the mistresses? Did they really warm his bed and...

Just the thought of it drove her insane and furious!

But her intuition told her that he didn't do it.

Carm promised her that he would not take a mistress, and she will hold on to his words. He might be arrogant and temperamental but she knew that he will not cause her that kind of pain. Their argument last night got really out of control and she was sure that she won't be receiving any breakfast in bed or fresh roses today from him.

She hated arguing with Carm but her stubborn Prince was not making this easier too, whether Carm accepted her challenge of taking a mistress or not, which she was confident he didn't, she will not let him ruin her morning. At least not today... she would pretend that he was not causing her distress.

Instead of wallowing in pain, she decided to distract herself and start her day early.

***

By the time she finished discussing with the Queen the whole menu for the rest of the weekend, she took the opportunity to tell her mother-in-law they need supplies for the kitchen.

And what would be the best remedy for heartache and distress?

"Have they loaded everything?" she asked Perry, as they walked towards her waiting carriage outside of the walls of the market village. Having purchased twice as much as she used to buy, she ordered Alfred to send for two additional carriages from the castle.

"I told Fritz to supervise the loading," Perry returned, balancing two small pouches filled with dried figs, raisins, and newly baked bretzels. "Are you sure you could finish eating all of these? You'll be stuffed by the time we arrive at the castle, and supper would be served soon."

"That's why I bought them..." she replied and gave Perry a wicked smile, as they walked further to her carriage, carrying a basket full of fruits and sweets on her arm. She was distracted when she saw Alfred already standing by the closed door of the carriage, holding the brass ring of the door, ready to assist her to get inside. She suddenly wondered where Bastian was since he always opened the door for her. But before walking closer to the carriage, she turned to Perry again. "I'm not in the mood to eat supper, and I'm hungry now..."

And before Perry can sermon her of planning not to show up at the family supper...

Fritz came running towards them, "Lady Perry, can you please come with me?" he asked, catching his breath.

"I'm not sure if we have everything loaded, can you please check if something is missing?"

Thankfully, the two other carriages arrived on time as she finished shopping.

After visiting every merchant's stall, purchasing all the silk, wool and linen clothing that were offered to her, and not to mention buying the girls, Perry and herself new pair of shoes, she was still not satisfied with the load of goods that she bought. She decided to buy also a week supply of Steirerkas from Grete and all the stalls that sell it, she also bought every spices and herb from Lukas and purchased different kinds of chocolates from the newly arrived boats from Spain. She even treated
Alfred, Fritz, Bastian, Perry and the rest of the guards at the tavern for some ale and bread, before going back home.

"Go ahead, I'll wait for you inside," she told her Lady in Waiting, seeing that Perry was reluctant to leave her. She took the small pouches that Perry was carrying and put it in her own basket that was already full of baked goods, sweets, fruits and crammed it on the top. Alfred was quick to take the heavy basket from her arm, "Oh, thank you, Alfred," she turned to him and smiled, relieved from carrying the heavy load in her arm, before darting her eyes again to Perry and the sweating Fritz. "Go, you two, before the other guards get confused about searching for something that was actually there." Perry nodded quickly and Fritz walked in long stride to the back of their carriage, passing along the second carriage that was waiting behind them and all the way to the back and to the last carriage.

"It's getting cold Your Highness."

She heard the low familiar concerned voice of Alfred and turned her head on his direction. He had already opened the door to the carriage and stretched his arm towards her. She smiled and took Alfred's offered hand before putting her right foot on the folding step and got inside the carriage. Once she was comfortably seated, Alfred placed the overflowing basket of goodies to the seat across her and bowed to her.

"Thanks, Alfred… would you like some bretzels while we wait?" she asked as their eyes met. She was planning on munching immediately on those mouth-watering baked goods while waiting for Perry, Fritz and wherever Bastian was.

"Thanks for the kind offer Your Highness, but I'm still full from our meal at the tavern," he politely declined. "Do you mind if I close the door now? I wouldn't want our princess to catch a cold," he asked displaying a genuinely concerned smile.

In return, she gave him a bashful smile. He certainly treated her and Carm not just part of the royalty but he cared for them too. "No, I don't mind at all. Thanks." He nodded again before shutting the door. Once she was alone, it did not take long before she reached for the contents of the basket and rummaged inside it to take a bretzels. "At last!" she sighed and smiled wide as her teeth sunk in the dark brown crispy salty crust, and soft center and chewed the delicious bread, relishing it in her mouth. She took another generous bite, filling almost her entire mouth. "Oh, that's heavenly…" her craving was satiated. She was not even finished enjoying the baked good when she felt the door opened abruptly and she was snatched from calmness and savoring further the piece of bread in her hands. She had to forcefully swallow the piece that got stuck in her throat, so as to berate whoever disturbed her from enjoying her bretzels. Just as she was about to shoot deadly glares at this intruder, she got dumbfounded. She cannot believe what her eyes were seeing, as Carm shove her quickly, but gently further to her left and sat beside her.

As the shock subsided and the reality of seeing her Prince joining her in her carriage hit her, "What the hell are you doing here?!"

But instead of replying, Carm opened the small window to his side and shouted, "Let's go Alfred!" he ordered and the carriage began to move at a fast pace.

Panicking at the sudden jolt and unnatural way of Alfred's driving, she glanced at the window beside her and saw Perry and the others running after them and shouting to wait for them. But the carriage kept going and Alfred increased the speed, and turned to unfamiliar route, managing to miss the entourage's sight at once.

Realizing that she was 'abducted', "Where the hell are you taking me?!" she glared at the calm and
"Buckle up Cupcake, we're going to take a short vacation," Carm smirked, and ignored the rage inside the carriage, as he made himself comfortable on his seat and beamed at the basket full of goodies that caught his attention, and picked an apple. "Lovely! Now we could have a picnic and I can enjoy you all for myself," he said before taking a big bite of an apple.

"Carl! Stop this nonsense and tell Alfred to go back!" she protested shooting daggers at him.

"Sorry Cupcake, Alfred had already received an order and he will stop once we reached our destination," he commented, never tearing his eyes off from the apple on his hand. "This is really sweet," looking at the red fruit with fascination.

*Destination?*

Growing more worried, "What do you mean destination? Where are you taking me?"

"I told you, we're going on a short vacation," he said nonchalantly and took another big bite of the apple. "Seriously, you should buy more of these…"

Irritated that her panic and anger were being taken for granted, she hit his upper left shoulder and nabbed the apple on his hand.

"Ow! What's that for? And give me back my apple!" Carm exclaimed, turning his attention to his left while rubbing his shoulder with his right hand.

"That's for ignoring me and not answering my question," she retorted and raised her hand that was holding the half-eaten apple. "And this isn't your apple!"

"Fine! You can have it," Carm replied, equally irritated, and furrowed his brows.

Annoyed, "I said where are you taking me?!" she reiterated, trying to control herself from screaming at Alfred to stop the carriage.

"Even if I tell you, you don't know the place," Carm irritatingly glared. "So, why don't you enjoy the ride and save your energy, because even if you ask Alfred to stop, he won't listen to you."

"Aaarggh! You smug condescending superior narcissistic-" she was about to say 'mama's boy' but managed to control herself, recalling how she and Carm bickered about it. Seeing that there was nothing she could do about this 'abduction', she threw his apple out the window to show her displeasure and unwillingness of being captivated. She narrowed her eyes, shot daggers at Carm, before pursing her lips and crossing her arms tightly over her chest. She sat as far away as she can from him, before staring blankly out the window. She saw at the corner of her eyes, that Carm moved away from her too and began brooding at the other side of the seat.

***

"Laura?"

She forcefully opened her eyes and felt a sudden ache in her neck. "Ow… what the-" she mumbled as her senses slowly awaken. She got confused when she realized she had been sleeping on something hard and rough. When she looked up, Carm's worried gaze met her eyes at once and she quickly rose and sat upright after realizing that she had slept on his lap. Feeling a throbbing ache, she reached for the back of her neck to rub the pain away.
"Are you alright?" Carm asked his voice full of concern. He was about to put his hand on her neck but…

She evaded his touch and glared at him, warning not to touch her. She was still mad at him and he would find out soon how furious she was once they get out of the carriage. Understanding her warning, he put his hand down and balled into a fist. He looked hurt at her sudden avoidance.

"We're here," Carm said in a calm serious tone before opening the door and stepping out of the carriage.

When she looked out, it was almost sundown and the air felt chillier.

Where the hell could they be?

She let Carm walked further away before she stepped out of the carriage. She was surprised to see Bastian already waiting by the door and offering his hand to her; she took it and let him helped her go down. Expecting that Carm would wait for her to assist her, she got a bit disappointed when he let Bastian do the latter's job. Perhaps Carm was offended when she did not let him touch her, and she shot a warning glare at him.

Once her feet touched the ground, she looked around her and found herself in the middle of the woods and in front of her Carm was already walking ahead of them on a pathway leading deeper into the woods.

"This way Your Highness," Bastian guided the way.

She reluctantly walked to follow Carm and saw that Alfred was walking in front of her Prince, while Bastian remained by her side and helped her navigated through the forest. After some moments, they arrived in a small discreet open area and her eyes cannot believe what greeted her.

Tucked away in the serene wilderness, nestled mid-mountain where the slopes of rugged hills rising steeply serving as a backdrop stood a small log cabin.

Fascinated by the sight around them, she gasped while her eyes wandered around, "Where are we?". Despite its rugged and rustic appearance, the cabin had a charm and tranquil atmosphere that emitted comfort and coziness. There was a small porch area at the front with a table and two chairs, a perfect place to enjoy the tranquility of surrounding and nature. The façade was made of wood and rough-hewn rocks and had a stone chimney that blended perfectly into the natural setting; besides it was a pristine lake, green as the grass and raw. Its vibrant emerald color looked stunning, inviting and magical.

She suddenly had the urge to take a dip in its clear fresh water but had to resist the idea since she still had no clue who owned this place, and what the hell was they doing here. And speaking of not knowing what was happening… She was already warming up at the thought of confronting Carm and threatening him of forbidding him indefinitely from sleeping on her bed for taking her away without consent, and for ruining her shopping day with Perry. He should not take for granted the wrath of an angry pregnant woman.

Her contemplation was halted when she noticed a smoke was coming out from its stone chimney… someone definitely lived there. But why did Carm took her here?

"We're at His Highness' retreat cabin," Bastian informed gladly.

"Re-retreat cabin?" was her dumbfounded remark and gave Bastian a questioning look.
"Yes, His Majesty gave this to His Highness when he's still young and just beginning to explore the lands and forests of the Karnstein Kingdom," Bastian explained. "His Highness uses it as a getaway when he wanted to relax and escape the stressful life in the castle."

"But why didn't I know about this?" She wondered and grew suspicious. Perhaps Carm was hiding something from her.

"Because he did not use this anymore when you arrived at the castle," Bastian said with a smile. "As I recalled, the last time His Highness was here was when Her Majesty invited a lot of princesses to the castle, and there was a time His Highness did not want to entertain some of them, so he stayed here."

"Does Her Majesty know about this?" She suddenly got curious. A sense of paranoia possessed her and thought of the most ridiculous thing: did Carm take someone here with him?

"No, and please don't tell His Highness that I told you about this," Bastian's tone suddenly changed and grew worried. "We've been working for almost three days now, repairing and cleaning the cabin because His Highness wanted to bring you here. I hope Your Highness will like it," was his proud comment and suddenly turned silent when they arrived at the front.

She remained speechless and felt relieved to hear Bastian's remark.

Once they were all standing at the front door, she waited behind Carm with a good distance while he knocked on the door. The familiar face of Carm's personal royal guard opened the door and bowed to him at once, while Alfred went ahead inside carrying some sacks and her basket. Bastian waited behind her quietly.

Reluctant, Carm turned around, "Please come in," he said in a deep serious tone.

Not wanting to create a scene, as she intended earlier, she obeyed and quietly walked into the cabin with her chin up and tight lips. She wouldn't want Carm to think that he could just abduct her and take her on a romantic getaway in the middle of the woods, and she would just easily take him back in her arms again.

She was still pissed off.

"Thank you, everybody, you may all leave now," Carm said simply and Alfred, Bastian, and Armitage bowed to him.

As the three made their way to the door, they all gave her a smile before bowing to them. She mouthed a thank you to all of them, while Carm walked away and climbed the small stairs that led to the loft.

Once the door closed, her eyes surveyed her surrounding like a curious child.

It had a small kitchen to the right, where everything was within arm's reach. Pots and pans hung on the wall. A small table and two chairs were placed by the window beside the main door; further to the right was a door, which she cannot guess where it led or what it could be. On the left side of the cabin was the living room with two chairs. In the middle was a large mahogany chest, alternating as a center table. Her attention caught at once the stone fireplace blazing and crackling, creating a warm cozy ambiance into the small room. Next to it was a wooden floor-to-ceiling bookshelf, with a chaise lounge beside it. Even here, Carm's love of his books was apparent. And in front of her was the stairs leading to the loft, which she now wondered what Carm might be doing there right now.

The cabin was small, which means she would be forced to face Carm and co-exist with him closely.
It would also test their patience and tolerance to one another.

If they have not been quarreling, it could be intimate and romantic too, just the two of them spending all their time with each other, no one to bother or disturb them, nowhere to hide, no duties to fulfill… just the two of them, cooking and eating good food together… just the two of them reading books and relaxing by the warmth of the fireplace… just the two of them having time for conversation, rambling, exploring their creativity or plainly procrastinating… just the two of them sleeping together as much as they wanted to… just the two of them deprived of the outside world, and concealed from their life filled with obligations and duties… just the two of them reconnecting with nature, living among the birds and the trees, or playing in the rain or strolling under the sun, smelling the fresh piney air or taking a swim in the pristine lake nearby.

And it dawned on her…

Carm brought her here because she kept on avoiding and ignoring him, and while she had many people surrounding her, such as Perry, the handmaidens, and even Laf, in here she would have to deal with Carm alone.

The thought annoyed her.

*Did he really think he could just keep me here and expect that I'll fall for his charm, and forgive him?*

*Did he really think that he could get cozy and intimate with me here?*

*We'll see about that...* her stubbornness dominated her thoughts.

TBC
Cozy Cabin or Crazy Cabin?

Chapter Summary

It's their first night alone in a secluded cabin, without the comfort and distraction of being the Prince and Princess of Karnstein. How will Carm survive Laura's roller coaster of emotions? And for the first time, how will Laura deal with living in a small cabin like all the commoners do when she had been living in a castle surrounded by servants and loved ones all throughout her life? While Laura thinks that Carm is planning on luring her to bed again, Carm, on the other hand, is taking Laura's moodiness, irritability, crabiness with extreme patience and tolerance.

Laura

Foot tapping, hands on her hips, she stood impatiently downstairs for Carm to come down. She can't wait to rant and rave about bringing her to a middle of nowhere.

How dare him not asking her if this was alright or not!

Once she caught sight of Carm's figure descending the small stairs, she pursed her lips and narrowed her eyes when he reached the ground.

"Do you want to tell me why you brought me here?" she demanded, her voice nearly high pitched as their eyes met.

After regaining his composure, Carm walked closer, the excitement in his eyes a while ago was gone, replaced with a broody stare.

"I never got a chance to be with you…" Carm fumbled for words, struggling to express himself. "I- I miss you and you won't-" he mumbled as if almost eating the words.

"And the logical thing to do was to abduct me?!" she interrupted his explanation, too impatient to hear his side. Uncorking the anger that she bottled up since they arrived, "You cannot just take me away against my will!" she snapped, her voice so loud that it could wake all the creatures in the woods. Sensing that she got carried away, she straightened her back and composed herself. She inhaled deeply, before staring at the fidgeting Prince in front of her, "In case you have forgotten, this is an abduction and it's a crime punishable by law and the Church. The King would definitely cut your head off –"

"…When he found out that his son took his wife for a vacation? In case you have forgotten… the King is my father," was Carm's smooth sarcastic retort, and attempted to smirk, trying to lighten the situation. Regaining confidence, "And it's not abduction when you didn't struggle and stayed with me."

Coming into her senses, she let out a frustrated groan and balled her fists, "You're not the only one who have obligations to the kingdom. I have duties and responsibilities too… there are many people relying on me, not just inside the castle but outside too, and in the village…" she grumbled, recalling all her impending tasks. "I promised to help Greta's friend on this problem about a certain baron… also, who would help Perry making the sweets? And Her Majesty is counting on me to-" realizing
that she did not even have a chance to tell the Queen that she would be gone… "Oh my god! What would Her Majesty say when your mother finds out that I'm gone and left her with all the work in the castle and helping the nuns in the monastery, and feeding the entire castle!" she panicked, recalling how the Queen confidently entrusting her now on the menus of the castle, and remembering the distress Lady in Waiting of hers ran after her carriage earlier. "Oh god, Perry is definitely worrying now she must've thought I've been abducted by savages. She wouldn't be appeased since this is the first time I'm separated from her…" she panicked and paced to and from around the room, her thoughts in terrible turmoil as she realized she was away from home. "I don't even have clothes to change and-" before she got too hysterical, she felt a hand touched her shoulder lightly, and when she turned around, Carm's worried gaze met hers.

"Cupcake, calm down and let me take care of-"

"Calm down?! Carl! You just selfishly snatched me from my daily duties and family. Who knows, Perry might be hyperventilating now and the girls would be dead worried?!" she exclaimed thinking of the people she left behind and the people that relied on her.

Insulted, "Oh, and I'm not your family, is that what you're trying to tell me?" Carm taunted his voice firm and deeper. "That I'm not important in your life? That my being selfish would hurt your family because I took you away from them?"

Realizing that he misunderstood her when she referred to Perry and the handmaidens as her family, "I didn't say that… Of course, you're my family!" she corrected. "And so are Perry and the girls. They've been my family since I was a child… but enough of that," she added, growing impatient and not wanting to prolong this misunderstanding. "What I mean is… you shouldn't have taken me away without their knowledge. I don't want them to worry, and you don't have to resolve to this kind of scheme."

A sarcastic chuckle left his mouth and Carm stepped forward, not too close but enough to threaten one's personal space. He towered over her and raised his chin, "Do you even know how difficult it is to talk to you alone? Every time I want to see you, you're always guarded, and you won't give me a chance to redeem myself. It's like you shut me off of your life and you don't even appreciate those things that I've done for you lately. You've been cold to me…"

Carm's frankness softened her and she slowly relaxed her shoulders, she did not resent his candor but pretended not to pay attention to it.

That's not true… I love the roses and the breakfast in bed that you brought. I just don't want you to know how much I lose control of myself when I'm around you, even when I'm angry at you.

She held her breath, as her heart pounded wildly at the nearness of him and debated on telling the truth, or remaining mad at him for 'abducting' her. Carm could be too much sometimes, and his impulsiveness was driving her insane. And this display of dominance was making her irritatingly horny and mad at the same time and found herself speechless.

She quickly brushed off what her body's craving for.

And before she could air her side again…

"Well, it's already decided…" Carm stated his voice firm, the kind that he used when he did not want someone questioning his decision. "We're staying here until we sort this out. We're not coming back until you totally forgiven me."

Something aggravated inside her… the way Carm talk… the way he tells her… He sounded like he
was demanding her of something she did not want to give. It's like his remarks barked as orders instead of a request.

Annoyed, she stared at him and recalled his motive of bringing her here. She crossed her arms over her chest and arched her left eyebrow in suspicion. "If you're thinking that bringing me to a secluded place and getting cozy with me in this small cabin would lure me into sleeping with you… well, you have wasted your time and effort."

Carm was taken aback for a moment… then furrowed his brows.

The look of disappointment in her Prince's face was too obvious that she wanted to laugh and declare victory at once. But she contained her excitement… she was right all along about Carm planning on seducing her. But this time she would not let him win. This time she would show him she had control.

"Are you done accusing me?"

Too involved in her cynicism, Carm's bitter words brought her back to her senses.

"I… I'm not accusing you-" she returned sheepishly.

"Don't worry Princess, I will never touch even a tip of your hair if that's what you're worried about," Carm defended, with a hint of pain in his voice while displaying his cold stoic feature. "I took you here because I want us both to relax and reconnect… to clear our minds of worries, and free our body with stress. Most importantly, I want to spend some alone time with you. I want to show you my place of refuge when everything felt crazy in the castle and I just want to forget all my obligations… in here I can be happy, wild and carefree," he related beaming with joy, but the smile on his face quickly vanished. "And since you're still depriving me of your forgiveness," he paused, swallowing hard as if something got stuck in his throat, and then continued. "…believing it's not enough that I apologized… it's not enough that I brought you roses everyday… and it's not enough that I brought you breakfast every morning… in here, I will show you how sincere I am of apologizing to you in my own way… and perhaps in here," he elaborated deeply, and then took a deep breath and mumbled. "…you could appreciate my small simple gestures."

She almost felt guilty at his confession but she was confused too why she felt this way. Waving both his hands in the air, and looking around the cabin, "In here we can be whatever we want to be…" Carm explained his voice throaty and lowered his tone. "You don't need to treat me as the heir and you aren't obligated to do your duties as the princess… and as my wife," he emphasized the last words. "I won't force you to sleep with me, and I'm not going to touch you without your consent if that's what you wish… I just want you to feel free and relaxed," he reassured, with a forced smirked on his face but vanished quickly. "On the other hand, there are no servants to help us, so we have to do everything here for ourselves. Live like the peasants do. And don't worry, I'll look for our food and fetch the water and logs. Inside this cabin, you can do whatever you want or do nothing at all… it's your choice. We have all the time in the world, and in case you're still worried, I have my King Father's permission to take a break from our duties, and I left a message to LaFontaine telling Perry that you're in good hands."

She bit her lower lip, rested her arms on her side and looked at her shoes. Suddenly she felt ashamed of accusing him of those silly things, when in fact, he was just being thoughtful. But her pride was not yet ready to give up. Knowing Carm, he always had something wicked or sarcastic to say. She will just let him express his side for now. Whether she admitted or not, she was too harsh and malicious a while ago, but she will not give him the benefit of winning in this argument.
When she looked up, his gaze turned melancholy and exhaustion could be traced under his eyes. Suddenly she had the urge to cup his face and kiss him…

…But restrained herself.

This high and low of emotions was driving her insane. She should learn how to control them, she reminded herself. But she wanted to prove to Carm too that he can't just flash his tragically beautiful melancholic eyes to her, and he can have anything he wanted.

"The bedroom is upstairs, you can have the bed and I'll sleep on the floor," he stated not so eagerly. "I've asked Betty to pack some of your things and clothes, they're all upstairs. The bathroom is over there," he pointed to the door further to the kitchen. "Armitage had already filled the tub with hot water, you might want to hurry up and bath now before it gets cold. I'll just go outside and fetch some more logs. Let me know if you need anything…"

I need you…

She wanted to say badly but gripped into her emotions. Instead, she closed her eyes and brushed off the idea in her head. When she opened her eyes and before she could utter 'thank you' Carm was already walking towards the door.

Before Carm crossed the threshold, he turned around looking a bit worried, "Oh, if you need to go to the loo, there's an outhouse at the back. I apologized for not having a garderobe here," he explained quickly and the door shut behind him.

Outhouse?!

She heard about it and saw some of it, but she never used any outdoor toilet in her entire life. How could Carm dragged her into nowhere, let alone expected her to live like he wanted to?

She already hated and regretted staying…

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She took the opportunity to take a bath and change to more comfortable clothes while Carm was out. The outhouse was not that bad, it was made of logs also so it looked like a part of the cabin too. She was relieved that it was just a few steps away, and it was clean. But honestly, it was still uncomfortable sitting there and hearing these noises from the forest creatures so near her, and the sound of wind howling and blowing around her.

Thankfully, Betty had packed the clothes that were simple and easy to wear and not requiring help to put on. Carm must have told her handmaiden the purpose of their travel and Betty made it easier for her to use her things and clothes. Kneeling on the wooden floor in front of her wooden chest with a carved 'LH' on top of it, she continued rummaging inside the contents to see what else had Betty packed. Her eyes widened when she saw a familiar yellow stuff. She squealed with delight and picked her favorite pillow and hugged it.

"Thanks, Betty…" she mumbled in appreciation.

Betty must have thought that she cannot sleep without it, especially when sleeping for the first time in a new place. She stood up, walked towards the simple four-post wooden bed and put the pillow together with the other four pillows. The bed was not that big compared to her bed in the castle, but it looked comfortable and soft. The white fur blanket on top of it looked enticing and warm. It can be occupied by two people and there were also simple white curtains around it, she wished Carm would join her. But when she saw a mattress with a pillow and blanket on the floor positioned beside the
bed her hopes died and she groaned in dissatisfaction; he must have prepared it when they arrived.

She felt guilty for letting him sleep on the floor, but he insisted. Perhaps it was for the best while they were still trying to work things out between them. It would be difficult and uncomfortable for both of them to sleep together when tension was still lingering between them, she convinced herself.

Her train of thoughts was halted when she heard someone clearing its throat, and when she looked to where the sound came from, Carm was already standing on the landing of the stairs by the entrance of the loft. His short hair dripping with water, and his face wet. It looked like he had taken a bath too and was now wearing his deep purple robe.

"I'm sorry if I startled you," exhaustion can be trace in his weak gruff voice. "I forgot my towel…" he explained and walked to the smaller wooden chest beside the bigger one and retrieved what he needed. Once he had toweled dried his hair and wiped the water on his face, he tossed it on the top of the chest and walked towards the stairs again, without saying a word.

"Aren't you going to sleep yet?" she asked before he could go down. When Carm looked at her way, her heart beat rapidly at how his eyes longed for her. He looked needy and broody.

"I want to read first… you can rest now," was his laconic remark and turned around to go down.

"Umm… alright," She sighed with disappointment after he left.

Carm looked exhausted and she just wanted to make sure if he wanted something, but when he left quickly without even looking at her, she felt rejected and empty.

She let out a sigh of exasperation and groaned. "This is going to be a long night…"

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Surprisingly, she woke up feeling already the strong rays of the sun on her face. Carm must have opened the small window on the side. When she rose from the bed this morning she felt recharged and ready to start the day at once. She thought she would have a hard time last night dozing off due to sleeping in a different bed in an unfamiliar place. But her exhaustion and fatigued from yesterday might have induced a long uninterrupted dreamless sleep.

After having the luxury of sleeping without interruption she felt amazing and in a good mood actually.

But her excitement faded when she realized her Prince nowhere to be found. Then the memories of their argument and the reason why she was here came flooding back and made her heart ached.

After dressing into one of her ordinary working clothes and freshening up, which she was very thankful to find the bowl of fresh clean water that Carm left for her beside the bed, she went downstairs, curious about what awaited her. She missed saying goodnight to Carm and did not even hear him come to bed last night. And when she woke up today, the mattress beside her bed was already empty. Even if they were not on good terms, she was undeniably craving for his attention and presence.

Eager to greet him good morning, the smile on her face disappeared when she did not see Carm… thinking that he might be in the bathroom, she walked towards it. "Carl?" she called and waited by the door, but when she did not get a reply, she knocked on the door and opened it. She frowned finding it empty and shut the door. Not satisfied, she opened the window and peeked outside through
the small wooden hole. "Carl?" she called out, but only to scare away the birds on the trees, and a rabbit that she saw eating what she deciphered as an apple on the front porch. Her eyebrows furrowed, and wondered where the apple tree was; she was suddenly craving for it but shoved the idea of going out. Instead, she closed the window again, afraid for some unwanted small guests.

Burning with curiosity to explore the place the Prince of Karnstein claimed his refuge; she began checking out the kitchen and surveyed every shelves and cupboard that she could find. A satisfied smile formed in the corner of her mouth when she discovered the shelves were generously filled with honey, a variety of spices in small bottles, jars of jam, preserved fruits and surprisingly pickles where among them in addition to bottles of wine and different kinds of dried legumes. She found a sack of potatoes and flour were placed on the floor, beside the cupboard. She had no idea what Carm might be thinking about the flour since they don't have an oven to bake bread. But when she opened the cupboards, her worries were lessened when she found almost a dozen different kinds of bread along with selections of Perry's delectable cupcakes and sweets from the castle's kitchen. When she opened the next cupboard, she cannot contain her excitement and squealed when she saw Steirerkas and two other types of mountain cheese that she knew Carm loved eating, together with dried figs, dates, walnuts, butter and lard.

Amazed, she cannot believe what she saw and still cannot fathom if Carm really prepared all of her favorite foods just to please her, he even brought a jar of pickles too! Too excited and distracted at the foods that she discovered, she almost did not notice the large basket full of different kinds of fresh fruits and vegetables on the dining table, and beside it was a smaller basket. She opened her mouth and her eyes widened upon realizing that it was the basket she was carrying yesterday that was filled and stuffed with everything she craved for yesterday! She rummaged the content and found everything untouched and still looking fresh and smelled delicious. Smiling, she put aside the basket of goodies and eyed appreciatively the supply of foods around her. Even if they were not in the comfort of their castle, Carm made sure that she had access to all the foods that she craved for, and it was enough supply for both of them for the next few days. The thought of her Prince being considerate and mindful of her needs made her heart melt.

Suddenly, she missed Carm.

Where did he go?

Itching with curiosity, she walked towards the door and opened it carefully, checking first the surrounding for some unwanted surprise. She did not want any forest creature sneaking inside the cabin, especially when they have lots of food supplies stocked up inside.

When she deemed the surrounding safe from potential trouble, she stepped out and closed the door behind her. She stood at the front porch and closed her eyes, inhaling the fresh air of nature, appreciating the calmness and serenity around her, clearing her mind of any negative thoughts and releasing all the heavy burdens in her mind and heart.

Carm was right; perhaps staying here will reduce her stress.

The scene in front of her was so inviting that she decided to make herself comfortable, and stepped down on the wooden steps of the front porch, and sat on the grass. Gazing at the serene sight of pine trees, sky blue clouds, and pristine green lake, she took a deep breath, and let the fresh air filled her lungs holding it longer before exhaling. She repeated the procedure and this time, she closed her eyes and focused on the sound of birds chirping, the whooshing of the wind through the trees, and the rustling leaves around her.

She let nature hypnotized her and kept her grounded.
After that blissful solitude in nature, she felt calmer and less moody, that she was inspired to make the vegetable pottage that she cooked for Carm while they were in the Hollis Kingdom. Luckily, she found almost all the ingredients in the basket except for the saffron. She took the liberty also of boiling some water to make some tea from the herbs that she found so that it would be ready by the time Carm arrived.

But before diving into work, she heard her stomach growled loudly and decided to eat brunch without waiting for Carm. Her Prince would surely understand if she ate already, since being pregnant meant satiating her palate all the time, or she would go mad.

After many attempts of lighting the hearth in the living room and struggling to keep the fire alive for cooking and warming the room, she sighed with relief and sat on the chair in the living room after successfully whipping up a delicious simple supper for them, and keeping the fire burning as the temperature outside begun to drop. She wiped the sweat on her face and poured a wine on a beaker.

Living without servants was certainly challenging. She wondered what Carm had been up to. He was probably hunting some meat for their meal…

"I hope it's not a boar…” she uttered and cringed at the thought of butchering the beast by themselves.

Carm had been gone for almost half a day, and as the sun began to set she became worried and grew upset about not telling her where he went and when he would be back. This was one of the reasons they argue: the lack of communication.

Right now, the lack of his presence was driving her insane.

Her heart began to beat rapidly and her fingers fidgeted on the edge of her apron.

Restless, she rose from the chair, walked to the window and opened it. She searched for any signs of her Prince, and shouted, "Carl!" three times.

Nothing.

The light began to fade and soon darkness would surround the cabin, and she had no way of finding out where Carm went or how to get help. Suddenly she felt the thumping of her heart grew stronger and she had difficulty breathing.

What if something bad happened to Carm? What if he got lost or was attacked by a wild boar?

She paced to and fro around the room, her thoughts in terrible turmoil. She had no horse, and the only weapon she had was a large kitchen knife. It was getting cold outside and Carm might be freezing to death by now, in case he was hurt or unconscious.

Growing desperate and feeling helpless "Aarggh! Why did we ever stayed here?!!" she remarked, angry at herself for agreeing with Carm to stay here, unguarded and far away from the world. Not having second thoughts, she took the lantern hanging beside the fireplace and lighted it, then snatched the fur blanket on the chair and wrapped it around her, before grabbing the kitchen knife and strode towards the door. Just as she was about to grasp the iron ring handle, the door swayed open and she shivered at the cold air that rushed inside the room, as a disheveled Carm stood in front of her, with blood splattered on his face. After recovering from the shock, "Carl?! What happened?! Are you alright?!!" she grabbed his face with trembling hands to check for some cuts, and tears began to trickle from her eyes due to worry and fear. If something bad happened to him, she cannot forgive
herself for staying mad at him longer, resulting in coming to this place and having an accident.

Displaying a cocky grin, "Cupcake, relax… I'm fine, just a bit bloody since this stubborn little fellow gave me a hard time," Carm reassured, lifting the bloody rabbit by its feet and showing proudly his catch.

"I almost died of worrying about you, and all you can say is relax?!" she fumed and released her hands from his face, as she irritatingly wiped the tears on her face with the back of her hand. "Why didn't you tell me where you're going, and what took you so long?! Didn't occur to you that I'm alone here, waiting for your return and worrying that you might have been lost, or hurt out there?! Sometimes you're insensitive and didn't think of what the others might feel!"

The smile on his face vanished, "Cupcake… I'm sorry," Carm uttered, dropped the dead rabbit on the floor and was about to put his arms around hers.

Still angry at him, she evaded his touch and stepped back. "Don't you dare touch me," she warned and ran upstairs. Her emotions were uncontrollable and she did not know what she would do next. The next thing she knew, she was crying already when she reached the loft and sat on the bed. The combined relief of realizing Carm was fine and the overwhelming feeling of worry and anger had consumed her, and she had no idea how to manage her emotions. Right now, she was just happy to see him, to see the love of her life alive. But at the same time, she was angry at him for putting her in distress and torturing her of his absence.

After recovering from distress and gathering her composure, she decided to finally go downstairs.

She found Carm sitting by the fireplace, only wearing his under tunic and braise, he had already washed off the dirt and blood from his face and hands, but he still stunk of blood.

Displaying her cold domineering side, she walked to the kitchen and retrieved two bowls and walked to the hearth to scoop out some of the stew to the bowl. Carm rose from the seat and was about to help her, "No, I could manage… go sit on the dining table and wait for me there," she ordered him like a child. Surprisingly, Carm did not argue and obeyed like a lamb and sat on the chair.

She put the steaming bowl of hot pottage in front of him, before placing hers across him. She then placed a spoon and a goblet beside it and poured the wine. She poured also on her beaker, before retrieving a loaf of bread from the cupboard. She placed it on a plate and put it in the middle of the table.

Once everything was served, she took a seat across Carm and glanced at him, "You may eat now. And don't even try to speak or talk me out of my anger. I'm still mad at you," she warned him and saw the broody eyebrows contorted. "After eating, take a bath and removed all the dirt and blood in your body and face… And I don't want you spreading dirt upstairs, so wait for me here and I'll fetch clean clothes for you."

Carm nodded silently as he took a spoonful of the pottage.

"And don't you dare leave the cabin without telling me where you're going," she added with a glare.

They continued eating in silence and Carm seemed to be brooding on his seat.

But when he finished his second bowl of vegetable pottage, a satisfied grin was marked on his face.

"Thank you very much. It's very delicious," Carm said, and put his spoon on the empty bowl, before taking a swig from his goblet.
She nodded and gave him a controlled grin. Deep inside she felt happy and satisfied that her Prince appreciated her cooking, it's not every day that they get a chance to do something simple yet sweet and satisfying to one another.

They both enjoyed the comfortable silence, while she resumed eating and watched Carm poured more wine and relished the drink like his father since the Queen was not here to control his wine intake.

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The stress of the day worn her out easily, sure, she was used to working in the kitchen and cooking food and baking goods. But today she discovered how exhausting it was to do things without any servants around. She must fetch water earlier from the well for cooking and washing. Lighting the fireplace had been the biggest challenge for her. Why hasn't anyone taught her that? Thankfully, Carm supplied lots of logs beside the front porch and placed some supplies by the hearth. In addition to worrying about her Prince and waiting when he would return, she hated also not having any guards to send in order to search for Carm.

But not everything today was horrible. She loved cooking for Carm and serving him his dinner tonight was quite fulfilling; fulfilling in a sense that she had worked hard and cooked a meal for Carm without any help from anyone. And she enjoyed doing and washing also the dishes afterwards since she did not want Carm's dirty hands touching the foods and things in the kitchen. She ordered Carm to wash outside the rabbit that he caught since she cannot take the sight of the poor creature and asked him to take care of the butchering before taking a bath. She also ordered him to never show her again any animal that he caught fresh from hunting unless it was already cleaned.

One of the highlights too of her day was the constant going out to the outhouse. It was making her insane since sometimes she cannot hold on to her bladder any longer. Thank god, it was not raining or snowing, it would have been terrible to wake up in the middle of the night to go out and freeze just to pee.

But not only that, she was irritatingly annoyed when she found Carm's soiled clothes, dirty socks, and boots filled with mud scattered on the floor by the door of the bathroom, while her Prince enjoyed his bath. She wondered how LaFontaine managed to live and work with Carm like this. Not used to the chaos around her, she picked them up at once and put it on a basin filled with water. She would attempt to wash some clothes tomorrow for the first time and she had already thought of asking Carm to go with her to the lake. Who knows, she might go for a swim too.

Relieved and tucked in the warmth of the bed, she yawned, stretched her arms and sat comfortably with her back on the headboard. She took one of Carm's books from the shelves and pretended to read it while she waited for him to finish his bath. She wondered if he was going to bed early or he will spend some time again in the company of his books. She hoped it would be the first one.

After roughly reading a chapter and nearly dozing off, she was snatched from falling into slumber when she heard Carm coming upstairs and entering the room, wearing only his robe, he must have forgotten his towel again when she noticed his hair dripping wet. She just loved how fresh and clean Carm looked like, she just wanted to pepper him with kisses on his clean-shaven face, sharp jawline, down to his pale neck, and all the way to his hairless chest and to the valley between his perky breasts that was smooth as alabaster. She noticed in the end that his robe was slightly loose and low in the opening, revealing some pale flesh. Realizing that she was ogling and before she cannot control her desire, she averted the sight of his torso, then straightened her back and pretended to read the forgotten book on her lap. She stole a glance from Carm's neutral expression, whether he caught her ogling or not, he was being courteous by not teasing her. He must be trying very hard not to tease
her since she told him that it won’t work.

"I'm sorry to disturb you..." was his sheepish remark and walked closer to the edge of the bed. "I thought you're already sleeping," he added slowly, his voice deep and raspy. "Do you mind if I change here? I forgot my towel and clothes again..."

His comment fired her libido.

Heart hammering wildly, her pulse quickened instantly, she fidgeted in bed and squeezed her thighs together beneath the fur blanket. She felt sweat forming on her forehead, her clit throbbing painfully.

Her horniness was making it hard for her to think. She gingerly looked up to meet Carm's innocent gaze, as he waited for her approval. "Err... n-no, I don't mind at all. Go ahead..." she returned and gulped at the end, finding it hard to breathe as she maintained a vague expression while her libido danced under her skin.

Everything about Carm screamed sex, and when she found out that they would be alone in a small secluded cozy romantic cabin like this, her chances of succumbing to temptation grew high. And right now, there might be not enough saints in heaven she could call or pray upon to in order to lead her not into temptation.

TBC
Emotional Closeness

Chapter Summary

Staying in the cabin had been both a challenge and haven for Carm and Laura, as they struggle and navigate living like a commoner, they were also given a chance to have the privacy they sought and do the things they like.

Chapter Notes

Hi! Did someone miss this fic? Hope everyone's doing alright. Firstly, sorry it took me over a month to update I was on a long holiday and came back having a writer's block, then work was crazy and got in a way of writing some Hollstein goodness… Secondly, I hope you're all still there. Thanks by the way to all your lovely comments and kudos. It's good to know also that there were new readers out there, who enjoyed this fic, thanks for telling me that you love this! And to all non-English speakers out there, thank you also for leaving a comment in your native language, I liked it that you expressed how you feel about this story and that the language barrier doesn't stop you from telling me how you like this… so keep it coming! Thirdly, I was not satisfied with this chapter because I seemed to lack inspiration, so the sentence and word use were not that good. So if you have any constructive criticisms feel free to comment or correct, or plainly tell me what the better option was. Lastly, to those of you who were wondering when I'm going to update my other fics, I don't have a date yet. But Betrothed would likely get an update, if ever. Hope you all enjoy the update!

Laura

Carm gave her one last curious glance as she clumsily crossed her legs tightly beneath the fur blanket, before he faced the wall and untied his robe.

*Oh crap!*

Did Carm just notice the way her body reacted wildly?

Whether he did or not, she hoped the dimness of the room could hide the heat spreading like wildfire over her body and cheeks. Carm had always teased her that she blushed easily whenever she was aroused.

*Damn it!*

She felt like battling with the devil as she tried avoiding the sight of the sexy Prince in front of her.

*Calm down, Laura... you can do it.*

She tried to convince herself…
You've seen that body many times… you don't need to watch that silky smooth soft skin-

Aargh!

But to no avail.

As if her Prince heard her frustration…

"Cupcake, are you alright?"

Carm paused and turned around to face the bed. His robe already unfasted and the small gap opening heightened her arousal. Her eyes unconsciously roamed at the exposed smooth pale valley in between his breasts, down to his flat toned abs and straight below the thick tuft of dark curls in between his thighs and the growing bulge that slowly making its appearance... Realizing that her eyes were treading dangerous water…

"Umm… yeah… just peachy!"

She averted Carm's eyes and looked down to the book that had long been ignored on her lap.

"Hmmm… peachy eh?" Carm returned, his voice deep and unconvinced before turning around.

Sensing that no one was looking at her, she stole a glance at Carm's figure for the last time to quench her 'need'.

But before she could tear her eyes off him, again…

She heard the almost silent swish of satin and Carm's robe dropped to the floor……. and there he stood in all his naked glory with his rear facing her.

Holy mother of love!

She gasped, gawked like a sinner, and slowly licked her lips.

Why are you punishing me?!

Carm's striking physique never ceased to arouse her. Who would have thought that beneath the masculine appearance laid an almost perfectly chiseled feminine body that always takes her breath away?

Slim waist, soft smooth alabaster like pale skin, toned muscles, strong but soft shoulders and tight pert squeezable butts appeared to have been sculpted into perfection.

She fixed her gaze on Carm's god-like body and she cannot help but salivate at the beautifully crafted creature in front of her.

It had been a while since she felt those protective arms around her. It had been a while since those gentle hands caressed her body. It had been a while since she rested her head on those shoulders and soft collarbones. It had been a while since she gripped those firm round buttocks that she liked to grope whenever Carm was inside her. And it had been a while since she felt Carm's warm body beside her.

God! She missed him so much!

Eyes half closed with lust, her mouth parted and all she could think about was to make love with Carm; feel his warm body against hers and just forget about their unresolved issues.
She criticized herself for accepting his bad habit of seducing her whenever she was angry at him! Why can't her body be tamed around Carm? At this moment she hated herself for being weak. They were still 'fixing' things between them, and she stubbornly stated that Carm's flirtatious moves would not work out. But right now she was struggling on swallowing her pride and succumbing to desire.

Ignoring reason, she took a deep breath and threw the book resting on her lap on the side.

But before she could take the next step, the naked view of Carm's rear was rudely covered.

"Sleep well, Cupcake," Carm said after sliding on his sleeping tunic followed by his braies.

He gave her a controlled smirk before walking out of the room and descended the stairs.

"Go-good night," was all she could utter after being denied of his company and the possibility of getting laid tonight. Whether Carm was playing along with her rules or simply teasing her, she was definitely the one to blame on this and not him. She pouted her lips and tucked herself inside the fur blanket while muttering: "Hope your books give you some relief!" was her grumpy remark, upset that he had been spending more time reading books since last night.

She snorted and tossed irritantly to and fro on the bed, finding a comfortable position. Her yellow pillow was the only thing that can comfort her now, and she clung onto it desperately.

It was going to be a long frustrating night.

And she does not know how she could sleep without thinking of the certain prince that she yearned so much.

*Stupid sexy arrogant mama's boy!*

How could she have fallen to his charm so easily? Her body was still aching with desire.

As if some angel whispered into her left ear… she realized that she always had a choice when she remembered the bishop's advice with regards to what was acceptable and what was prohibited when in bed. And despite the Church condemning it as sinful, it won't stop her now from sinning.

Without hesitating, she reached under the hem of her chemise and started touching herself.

There was no way she would sleep tonight without relieving herself. Decency be damned!

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"Laura… Laura…"

The faint sound of a voice calling her name snatched her out from the deep slumber. She tried to ignore, thinking it was part of a dream.

But when it was replaced by another sound… a grunt… a moan… and she heard her name again…

Half awake and half asleep, while lying on her side "Carm?" she said inaudibly waiting for a reply.

"Carm?" she called again a little louder.

But when she did not get an answer, she got worried.

She grumbled as sleep eluded her and she turned to the other side, thinking that Carm was having one of those nightmares again. Eyes still shut; her hand reached for the opening of her chemise and
tugged the knots to exposed one of her breast. She was ready to insert her nipple on Carm's mouth to pacify her poor Prince. But she furrowed her brows when she felt an empty space beside her.

"Carm?" she whispered, her hand fumbling on the bed. As her eyes slowly checked her surrounding, she then realized that she was not home.

Slowly, her memories came back and she groaned at the thought of still sleeping alone in bed.

"Laura…mmm…"

"Carm?"

She followed where the voice came from remembering that her Prince was sleeping on the floor beside her bed, she quickly moved to the left side to check if he was alright.

Poor Carm, he must have been distressed and having a nightmare again. She would not mind offering him her breasts to calm him down even if they were not in good terms yet.

But as soon as her eyes focused on him, "What the-?!" her worrying was replaced by irritation as she saw Carm's eyes still shut, and seemed to be dreaming alright… but something was already very awaked in him… something long, thick and hard.

She felt a rush of heat shot inside her as she saw him naked under, his blanket and braies pulled down while his hand slowly stroked his thick rod.

As if she was hypnotized by the lascivious sight, her eyes remained fixated on his crotch while Carm's hand continued working on his erection.

"Laura… I'm… mmm…. coming…"

Carm whimpered and she managed to tear her gaze off his dripping cock before he comes.

That was outrageous, she thought!

She turned around and lied on the farthest opposite side of the bed before putting her yellow pillow on her left ear. How dare Carm touched himself beside her while she was stubbornly denying herself of his touch? She barely managed last night to get a temporary relief. But since she became pregnant, she had been horny all the time and being greeted by the provocative sight of Carm stroking his well-endowed equipment was unforgivable.

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When the sun hit her face, she decided to rise at once, never looking at the other side of the room. As soon as she got up and left the bed, she went straight downstairs, never bothering to check if Carm was still asleep or not. She did not want to witness another excruciating scene of how Carm enjoyed touching himself and moaned her name. When she entered the bathroom and saw the barrel of clean water that Carm filled in last night, she did not even bother warming it and quickly washed her face with cold water. "Brrr…" It made her awaked but it did not wash away her lust.

Damn it!

The scene earlier was enough to wake all her libido and there was no amount of cold water that can pacify her nerves. Growing frustratingly horny, she decided instead to pour cold water over her head to cool her 'aching' body and washed all the lust in her.
After a quick cold shower, she felt a bit better and less horny. Perry would have scolded her by now with that impulsive move. She could almost hear her Lady-in-Waiting fretting about her getting sick at this crazy antics. She let out an amused chuckle as her eyes darted at the soaked clothes that were lying on the floor. It was madness alright, but she never felt liberated like this in her life. Carm was right, staying in this cabin and just being themselves, and doing things they have never thought of doing before could calm and relaxed them from the busy and stressful life of being the Prince and Princess of Karnstein.

Just as she was about to dry herself and put on a change of clothes, she realized that she forgot something.

"Oh crap!"

She let out a frustrated long groan… not only was she wet and cold, but she showered with her clothes on earlier and she cannot even use them to grab some dry clothes upstairs!

"Cupcake, are you alright?"

Suddenly, she was torn off from cursing further… being in this stupid small cabin and not having control over her lust and emotions was slowly taking its toll. She needed to compose herself and act like a matured person.

A loud knock brought her back from grumbling and she stared at the door with those guilty eyes. Realizing that it was Carm and not someone who would condemn her…

"Yes, I'm fine!" was her irritated remark. Of all people, why does it have to be the one that she was trying to avoid, that she was stuck up with? There was no way she would come out of the bathroom naked or soaking in her chemise. She will not give Carm the benefit of teasing her.

*Where is Perry when I need her?!*

She bemoaned and got distracted when she heard another knock again on the door.

"Cupcake, I'll just go out to cut more logs and fetch water," Carm informed.

Almost panicking, "Alright! Do what you have to do! Take your time!" she replied back too quickly and heard some shuffling by the door; she stood still and waited for him to leave. When she heard the sound of the door shut, she hurriedly opened the door, so that she could make a beeline upstairs and dressed quickly before Carm comes back. But once she opened it, she was surprised to see something on the floor. "Where did this came from?" she wondered and she plucked the pile of clean clothes and dry towel by her feet after realizing it was hers. "Oh," she uttered, surprised Carm placed it there before leaving.

She looked at the main door and can't help but to gaze longingly at her thoughtful Prince. How attentive and considerate of her Prince to bring her what she needed.

She smiled wide and gladly changed inside the bathroom.

Then it occurred to her, how did Carm found out that she did not have a change of clothes?

While drying herself, all she can think about was her sweet Prince and she can't help but to smile again.

Perhaps it was time they savor this moment together in this small cabin and quit bickering.
After changing to her clothes, she started working on the kitchen and opened one by one the cupboards. Something hot, mushy and scrumptious had been looming in her mind since she was in the bathroom.

She suddenly craved for some peasant's food.

"Let's hope Carm would like it…" she said and began finding the ingredients in the kitchen.

The porridge was almost done when Carm came back. He went straight to the sink and folded his tunic's sleeves before washing thoroughly his hands and face.

Satisfied that he remembered to clean before eating, she smiled and rose from the kitchen's stool and started scooping hot porridge on the wooden bowl. When finished, she turned around to place the bowl on the table and… "Whoa!" she was surprised to see her Prince standing in front of her, and almost poured the content on him.

Luckily Carm had great reflexes and she felt his hand on her waist in an instant to still her. And the next thing she knew, it felt like she was under a spell when their eyes met. His dark eyes gazed longingly at her, full of melancholy, glowing with desire, while she tried very hard not to fall under Carm's brooding gaze. Her Prince remained staring at her and did not move a bit, as he too seemed to be mesmerized and pleading. She had every desire to cup his jawline and bring those gorgeous lips and delicate mouth unto hers.

Just as she thought of taking the plunge…

"Umm… I'm sorry," Carm suddenly removed his hand, as if he had touched something sacred and forbidden.

He stepped out of her personal space and run his hands through his natural short locks. She then remembered his promise and it made her disappointed.

"I won't force you to sleep with me, and I'm not going to touch you without your consent if that's what you wish…"

Carm clearing his throat tore her out from further sulking.

And before it got awkward, she looked around him except his face and noticed something in his hand.

"What's that?" was her curious remark, eyeing the Prince's right hand.

"Oh! I almost forgot. For you…" Carm said managing to smile a bit, offering and holding a bunch of wildflowers and looking like a bashful young suitor courting his maiden fair.

Her attention was suddenly caught by these pristine white flowers with a yellow center. It seemed like they have an endearing attachment to her. Mixed among the sharp pink of campion, yellow of buttercups, mauve of vetch, it ignited a strong affection that brought her back at the time when she was a child and she was playing in a field and running wild. It felt like she was free and very happy every time she was in that place and amongst these flowers.

"Cupcake? Are you alright?"

The worried tone of Carm's voice brought her back to reality and she looked back at him and saw the broody eyebrows on display. Absent-mindedly she took the offered flowers and gave him her signature adorable smile.
"Y-yes... thank you, their beautiful," she stated while smiling and eyed the pretty wild bouquet.

"I'm sorry they're the only ones I could find..." Carm commented as if ashamed of his offering. "There are no roses around; I know you would have preferred them--"

"I love these," she chimed in. "They're beautiful." She added bringing her nose near them and sniffed.

"Oh... well, I'm glad to hear that," was Carm's surprised remark and moved closer.

The sudden nearness of her Prince suddenly caught her off guard; she thought he was avoiding touching her. Not wanting to feel rejected again, she gingerly took one step backward and glared at him, and used the flowers to shield in case Carm attempted to close their gap again. She cannot take it anymore... this 'getting close but no touch' rule they have. Her libido was just starting to calm, it was not a good idea setting flame again when the fire in her body cannot be satiated. "Why don't you help me prepare breakfast before it gets cold," she suggested, eyeing the wooden bowl of porridge on the other hand.

"What can I do?" Carm offered but the look of disappointment in his eyes cannot be hidden.

"Can you grab some honey and cinnamon on the cupboard, please?" she said while putting the bowl of porridge on the table, she then stood next to Carm and grabbed a cream ceramic pitcher from the cupboard. She put the flowers on it and poured some water before setting it in the center of the small wooden table, and gave one last longing gaze. Then she retrieved some grapes and cheese and put it beside the vase.

"Shall I take some pickles too?" Carm asked, after finding the jar of honey and vial of cinnamon. She gave him a sheepish grin and felt her cheeks flushed.

First the clean clothes, then the dainty flowers... and now, the pickles!

*Why is he being nice and sweet today?*

Suddenly it felt like there were butterflies fluttering in her stomach and her heart palpitated like an infatuated young girl gazing at her crush.

"Cupcake?"

Her rumination was halted when she saw Carm lifted his left eyebrows, waiting for her to respond.

"Umm... yes please," was her bashful reply and stole a glance at his rear after he turned around and reached for the jar of pickles on the top shelf. She took a deep breath and gathered herself. This was no time for daydreaming and flirting, she reminded herself.

"Here you go..." Carm put them together with the cheese and grapes. But he furrowed his brows when he scanned the food on the table. "Where's the wine?"

She walked towards the fireplace, took the kettle that was hanging in the middle, then brought it to the table, and retrieved some cups.

"Don't think that I didn't notice how you've been enjoying your wine since yesterday," she chided and took a seat at the small dining table. Carm sheepishly looked at her before switching his gaze to the cups. She began pouring tea on the cups, "Take a seat and enjoy your tea," she ordered firmly. "There will be no serving of wine at breakfast... In case you have forgotten, we don't have any
servants around. We need to be sober as we go about our daily chores.”

Expecting a retort, Carm just gave her a broody glare and began spooning the porridge in front of him. She was definitely intrigued by his behavior since they woke up. Never did she expect that he would agree. She instead chose to change the topic to erase the frown on his face.

"Thank you by the way,” she said as she took a pickle from the jar and placed it on the porridge before pouring some honey on it. It made Carm wince when she started to mash the pickles and mixed into the porridge.

"For what?” was Carm's nonchalant reply, not tearing his eyes off from the cheese that he just cut.

"For bringing me some clothes and towel…” she returned, with a genuine smile followed by, "how did you know that I've forgotten them?”

"I've heard you got up, and I decided to wake up also. I followed you downstairs but you never noticed me,” Carm related while spooning the last porridge from his bowl. "So, I decided instead to go to the outhouse and then washed outside by the well. When I came back I heard you pouring some water and screaming like a banshee-"

"I wasn't screaming like a banshee!” she denied and shot daggers at him.

Carm just gave him a lopsided grin and resume. "I went upstairs to change. I noticed that your towel was there so I presumed you had forgotten it… I didn't see you taking some clothes when you went downstairs, so I took the liberty of bringing it. I don't want you getting cold when you get out of the bathroom, wet and naked."

After the last sentence, she knew that she was already blushing with embarrassment.

"You're right, I've forgotten them…” she admitted and bowed her head, and resumed eating her porridge.

"Although, I kind of like the idea of watching you walking in this cabin, wet and naked." 

"Oh, shut up and just eat!” she ordered while Carm displayed a naughty cocky grin.

***

After that light moment at breakfast, she was glad that they both were comfortable with each other's company again.

Although she noticed Carm was avoiding any physical contact the whole time, it did not stop him from teasing or more likely tormenting her while she watched him outside through the window flexed his firm muscles, while he raised the ax to cut the logs.

"Oh my… how can he still look delicious even if he's sweating under the sun…” she asked herself, as her sight caressed the toned biceps that were on display. She glanced up, thanking the good Lord for the beautiful weather and prayed for some more blessings.

Her prayer was answered when Carm folded his white under tunic's sleeves higher until his upper arms were exposed. It would have been perfect if he wore the black leather trousers too, but Carm's regular hunting trousers and tall riding boots were enough to rouse again her libido.

She felt like a mad woman as the thought of ravaging her Prince on that spot, behind the pine tree crossed her mind. How crazy would it be if they kissed and made out among the trees and bushes?
The idea thrilled her... after all, no one could see them.

Before she regained sanity, she hurriedly put out the fire on the hearth and removed her apron. The rabbit stew was almost done, the only thing missing was garnishing. The potatoes could wait. She had been working in the kitchen ever since they finished their breakfast. And right now, Carm was distracting her from doing the rest of household chores. She grabbed a bottle of wine from the cupboard and took a swig before walking out to the door taking the bottle with her.

"Hi!" was her chirpy remark as she approached the surprised Prince. She displayed instantly her most adorable smile that Carm loved so much.

Carm put down the ax to the side and eyed the bottle of wine, "I thought there would be no wine serving until we're done with our daily chores?"

"I said, no serving at breakfast," she corrected and gave him a lop-sided grin. "And besides, you've been working hard since this morning," she mentioned and glanced at those firm sweaty arms of her Prince, before looking at his direction again. "I thought you might want a drink," she reasoned out and raised the dark bottle of wine in front of him.

Carm gladly took it and smirked quickly that if she had not been eyeing his lips, she would have missed it. He looked a bit confused and still careful about how he behaved in front of her.

"Thanks, Cupcake," Carm expressed, after downing half of the content and returned the bottle.

She hesitantly took it and got disappointed when he did not even looked at her and picked up the ax again. But before he could cut another log...

"Do you want to have a break first?" she suggested and hoped that Carm did not notice the desperation in her voice. "We could take a rest over there, by the large pine tree. It's hot, you might get sunburn."

Carm's sight followed where she pointed her finger and raised his left eyebrow while looking at the shade under the tree, he appeared to be considering as he took a moment staring at it. And then he looked back at her gave her a controlled quick smile.

"It's alright, I don't need a break," Carm returned looking serious. "I want to finish cutting these so that I could go hunting after midday." And then he struck back his ax on the log that he was cutting before he was interrupted.

Her lips pouted like never before.

How could he not take the hint? Or he was plainly torturing her to get back on her.

Totally disheartened, she turned around and walked back to the cabin while drinking up the remaining liquid in the bottle. She stumped her feet when she reached the wooden steps leading to the entrance and hoped that Carm heard it. But she doubted because her Prince was still engrossed with log cutting when she took a last glance at him.

She closed the door hard and took the pail with water and brush in the kitchen and got down on her knees. She took her frustration out on the floor and deliberately scrubbed and washed the floor, while she cursed under her breath.

***

"Cupcake?"
"Cupcake…"

"Cupcake…"

She let out a frustrated groan and forced her eyelids opened as she felt someone shook her arm lightly.

"Where's the giant black cat?" she murmured, in her sleepy haze.

"Your giant black cat is here, Cupcake…"

Dazed and confused, she studied her surrounding before carefully sitting upright, she then gave Carm a questioning stare as she realized her Prince kneeling beside the chaise lounge.

"You fell asleep while scrubbing," Carm explained referring to the half-filled pail of water on the corner of the fireplace and the brush his holding on his fingers. "I found this in your hand while sleeping and took it."

"Oh…" she exclaimed when she saw the worn out brush. And then her memories rushed back and recalled what happened a while ago. She pouted at him and got up. "I'm guessing you're already hungry that's why you've woke me up…" was her sulky remark as she walked passed at Carm and left him confused. She washed her hands right away and began taking dishes and goblets from the cupboard absent-mindedly to prepare their meal until a hand touched her arm.

"Cupcake, supper is ready," Carm said his voice low and soothing.

"Huh?" she gave him a confused look before focusing her sight on the table and realized that there were indeed wooden bowls, plates, spoons and the steaming rabbit stew and boiled potatoes on the table. A bottle of wine was ready too, beside the loaf of bread and butter.

"Here, have a seat…" Carm suggested and took away the dishes from her hand and returned it on the shelves.

She let him guide her to her chair and sat.

Once she was comfortably seated, only then she realized that everything was really in place and ready. The candelabra were even lighted. The fireplace was already lit. She looked around disoriented and did not notice that it was already dark inside and outside the cabin. Then she turned her gaze back at Carm's amused face.

"Don't tell me that I've slept the entire afternoon?" she asked, confused and abashed.

"When I went inside after cutting the logs, I already found you sleeping beside the chaise lounge," Carm explained his voice full of concern. "So, I carried you up and laid you on it so you can sleep comfortably. I decided not to go hunting because I don't want to leave you sleeping and waking up alone, panicking and worrying…"

After hearing that thoughtful gesture, she can't help herself and reached up and cupped Carm's cheek, "Thanks, that's so sweet… I… I actually planned on just napping before eating a midday meal," she explained looking around her. "So, how's the stew?"

"You know that I can't eat without you," Carm returned smiling.

She released her hand on his jawline and stared at him. "What? Don't tell me that you skipped lunch after that hard work outside?" she asked worried and shocked that her Prince endured not eating after
that exhausting chore.

"I did drink a bit wine…"

She narrowed her eyes at him upon mentioning 'wine'.

"Don't worry I'm still sober after that," he defended right away. "And I took the liberty of cooking the potatoes because I noticed that you forgot to boil it."

"Oh, that… umm… yeah… about that," she fumbled for words and recalled how she ended up postponing cooking their meal. "Umm… I got distracted and forgot about it."

"Sorry, Cupcake, but I think I've overcooked it," was Carm's worried response. "I started cooking it since this afternoon because I thought you'll wake up soon and we could eat lunch together." He related furrowing his brows. "So while waiting for you to wake up, I decided to fetch water for the kitchen and the bathroom then I took a bath. When I came back you're still asleep, so I decided to go out and picked some apples in the back. I saw some of them already ripe and thought you might want to make some dessert."

While Carm was relating his story, she can't help but gaze at him. He looked so adorable when he was worried. And he was extremely attentive and mindful since this morning. Actually, ever since they arrived in the cabin all he ever thinks about was her comfort knowing that they don't have any servants around to help them. Come to think of it, Carm might not be used to doing any household chores like fetching water, cutting logs, let alone, preparing food. But he was doing almost everything. Was he trying to please her?

"Cupcake… are you listening?" Carm complained, waving his hand. "Here I am telling you how I almost ruined our supper, and you're just staring at me like I'm not capable of doing the right thing…"

And before he could humiliate himself further and interpret her stare in a wrong way… She moved closer to him, cupped his strong jawlines with both her hands gracefully and brought him for a long sweet kiss on the lips.

"I think you've been very thoughtful and accommodating for the past days, my sweet Prince," she exclaimed and then peppered him with kisses on the cheek till he turned red as a beet and bowed his head like a bashful child.

Once he recovered from embarrassment, he displayed his confident smirk and said, "I want what's best for my beautiful wife and I'll do anything for you, so that you'll feel comfortable staying in this cabin even if we don't have any servants around. Just don't expect too much from me when it comes to cooking food."

"Don't worry, I have that covered," was her reassuring reply and smiled wide. "And thank you for taking such good care of me…"

"Anything for my Princess…" Carm returned with a wink and smiled genuinely.

"And speaking of food… why don't we eat this delicious supper, so that we could go to bed early," she said slowly and gave Carm a come hither look.

She caught the brief excitement on his face. But he remained silent. She got a bit disappointed when he did not react further. Carm would usually tease her or flashed his 'seduction eyes'. But he didn't.

Whether he got the message or not, it was up to Carm if he would take the bait. But right now, she
did not want to pressure him too. Instead, she decided not to dwell on it and poured wine on his goblet, while Carm put some stew and a potato on her bowl, before filling his own.

They ate in comfortable silence while exchanging sweet smile and gazes.

When they finished their supper and after she washed the dishes, Carm decided to sit outside and gazed at the stars while she took a bath. She remembered that Carm liked watching the stars. He usually did it at the rose garden when it was a beautiful night. It always calmed him and he liked the idea that he was living among the stars. But the location of this cabin was much better and perfect for star watching, especially when there was no one to bother him.

When she got out of the bathroom, Carm was already sitting on the chaise lounge with a book in his hands. Perhaps he was waiting for her to finish, then they can go together upstairs, she presumed and smiled.

"Hey, I'm going to bed now. Are you coming?" she asked in a casual tone, not wanting to sound desperate… though she had been excited since supper to bed her sweet Prince tonight.

"Why don't you go ahead, I'm not yet sleepy and this book is amazing," Carm replied, glancing up quickly and then turned his attention again to the book on his lap.

Her mood suddenly shifted, and she pouted her lips. She was expecting a different response, "Alright… goodnight," she remarked, her voice barely audible.

Did he just reject her offer?

She painfully analyzed his remark. She had been dropping hint since supper that she wanted him to sleep with her tonight.

***

It's been a while since she went to bed, and yet there was still no sign that her Prince would follow her soon.

"Fine! If you don't want it, then don’t!" she grumbled under her breath as she tossed around the bed and tucked herself tightly under the fur blanket. She was growing irritated and impatient with waiting after informing Carm that she would be going to bed.

Frustrated and disappointed, she rose again and drew the curtains closed around the four post bed. She wished not to see Carm nor hear whatever he would do tonight or early in the morning.

And before going back to bed, she blew out the candles from the candelabra on both sides of the bed tables, leaving the only source of light coming from the small fireplace.

When she got back in bed, she tucked herself inside the fur blanket and tried hard not to think about Carm's rejection. She thought the day would end well after they both kissed at supper, and after being pampered by Carm. But she expected too much.

Once again, she shifted on the other side that was not facing Carm's mattress and tried her best to get some sleep.

"Aargh!" she put her yellow pillow over her head, as she desperately attempted to fall asleep.
But to no avail.

She threw her yellow pillow on the side and stared blankly at the ceiling.

Then she recalled the time she spent relaxing outside of the cabin and the calming effect of deep breathing exercise.

"Alright, try to calm down and erase all the negative thoughts in your head," she told herself and began inhaling, then exhaling. She repeated the process until she found herself relaxing then finally dozing off, and succumbed into slumber in no time.

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This overwhelming tingling sensation poked straight into her nipple and she felt it right through her lower abdomen, yanking her out of sleep as it became unbearably hard for her to ignore it. She stifled a moan, as she felt greedy mouth suckling hard her left nipple including her areola in slow rhythms.

Was she having one of those wet dreams again? Was the first thought that crossed her hazy mind. But when she felt a hand kneading her other breast, while the other one was being suckled, she slowly opened her eyes and woke up to the sight of Carm lying beside her.

"Oh god, Carm…” she let out another moan once she realized that she was not dreaming, and her chemise was shoved up and her Prince was suckling on her exposed breasts.

"Cupcake… I missed you … I missed this …" he mumbled, putting his mouth back into those erected buds and suckled.

She wrapped her arms around his head and held him close to her bosom, while she idly ran her fingers through his short wavy locks.

"I thought you'd never come… Ahhh…” she remarked and let out another moan when Carm suckled greedily on her left nipple as if telling her that he was there.

At this moment she felt her clit throbbing madly, and he was rock hard as she felt his erection on her thigh. But she had no intention of interrupting her hungry Prince. He deserved some of this cuddling moments after being sweet to her today, she thought, and let Carm relished this special moment…the moment where they both become intimate without resorting into sex.

"I've been thinking about this since we came in here," was Carm's honest comment as he switched to the other breast then kissed and licked it, before putting the hard buds inside his greedy mouth and began a slow steady suckle.

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"Have you…” she returned, not surprised at all. "Would you like to tell me what's on your mind?" She asked her voice calm and soft. She liked this part when Carm showed his vulnerability. He was still shy when it came to asking her to breastfeed him unless they were already in bed, it meant she and Carm can be open to anything they desire.

"I… I've thought of feeding on you when we've woke up this morning," Carm mumbled in between suckling and kneading those soft breasts. "And while relaxing downstairs by the fireplace too. I thought it would be nice to have freedom of doing anything we like in the four corners of this house,” he continued, his voice raspy. "We never got a chance to be on our own, and I think this is the right time… And maybe after doing a hard day chore… we could maybe rest together... relax together while I feed on you?"

She felt him smiled underneath her, before taking her nipple again in his mouth and suckled slowly.
"It sounded like, you want to feed all the time," she teased him and felt him paused, and released her nipple from his mouth. She met his gaze, wondering why he stopped, and then she felt guilty when she saw the ashamed expression on his innocent face.

"I… I didn't mean to be like that… I'm sorry I got carried away since we're alone here and I just thought that we could take advantage of the privacy," Carm babbled, nervously.

"Hey, it's alright," she reassured him at once, her voice low and cupped his face tenderly. "I didn't say that I don't like it… my breasts are yours whenever you want them."

Finally, he smiled and the wrinkle on his brow disappeared.

"Thank you Cupcake… as long as you're comfortable with it," Carm returned, relieved.

"Just so you know…" she said still cupping his cheek. "I love it when we do this. It feels amazing and intimate in a way that, I get a chance to be so close to you while I share a part of me that makes you calm and satisfied.

"I love it too Cupcake," Carm replied and smiled genuinely. "I don't know exactly how to explain this feeling every time I suckle, but it feels wonderful and even more intimate than sex." Then he put back his mouth on that pink nipple. "And I can't wait to taste and drink your milk," Carm added with a naughty smirk before he resumed suckling and shut his eyes.

"Me too… I can't wait to give you something that's mine," she whispered, held him close to her bosom and closed her eyes as she felt the steady rhythm of Carm's mouth suckling on her left nipple, while Carm's hand settled on her other breast. She was surprised to discover that she felt more relaxed despite the throbbing in her clit. The emotional closeness that they were experiencing right now was way better than sex, and she felt their bond becoming deeper.

TBC
House Chores

Chapter Summary

Carmilla and Laura discovered the hardships and 'joys' of doing house chores and surviving without any help from anyone in a little cabin.

Chapter Notes

I'm in a hurry and didn't get a chance to go through the entire editing again, because I want to post this now so that you guys can enjoy your Sunday treat in a form of an update. So, if you feel like being helpful or an English grammar police, go ahead and let me know if there are any grammar errors or correction. Other than that, hope you'll all enjoy this chapter and let me know how you feel about it ;-) 

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Carmilla

"Hey, sleepy head…"

Half awake, eyes still closed and oblivious to her surroundings, she grumbled after being ripped from a deep slumber. No one in their right minds should awaken her from her sleep unless they wanted to be hanged. Sleep was sacred for her. As she learned from her father the deep work ethics of being a king, her mother on the other hand always reminded her that her well-being was vital too on becoming a great ruler. And to function perfectly, the Queen put her into a strict routine of sleeping from the time the Church's bells rung Compline till Terce.

She gave herself a moment to capture her sleep again, as her lethargic body curled up like a proverbial cat and refused to move. It lasted… until she felt a soothing touch on her nape and realized she did not sleep alone.

"Good morning my love…"

Eyes closed, her eyebrows raised in excitement and a smile formed in the corner of her mouth upon recognizing the deep sensual voice of the only woman she loved. As her senses awoken and realized that, unlike the pass mornings for the last two weeks, today, she was tucked snugly under the fur and soft arms wrapped around her.

She relished the wonderful warmth of Laura's body blanketing her. Delighted, she inhaled deeply and released a satisfied sigh, as her nose caught the familiar smell of Laura and the remnants of their post-coital surrounding her.

She never knew why, but aside from Laura's breasts, her wife's scent always made her calm and secured. It soothed her nerves but at the same time, it made her crazy horny too.

After coming to bed last night and 'feeding' from Laura, she never expected the Princess would let
her made love to her. And it was not just once, but twice they had both sweet and wild make-up sex.

"Hmmm… it's a good morning indeed, Cupcake," she agreed. Her voice raw and husky from sleep while she put an arm possessively around Laura's waist then nuzzled her face deeper on Laura's bosom and stayed there for a while; a habit of hers before waking up fully. As expected, she felt Laura's dainty hands caressed the back of her neck and ears, eliciting a purr from her and giggle from her Cupcake.

"I love it when you purr, my kitty cat…" Laura teased.

And she responded with a low playful growl… still stubbornly denying that she was a softy… still pretending that she was a tough one.

"Oh, what's the matter? Is my giant wildcat still can't accept that he's a softy?" Laura taunted.

And she suddenly felt her wife caressing again the soft sensitive spot under her ear, which made her, purred louder and embarrassed herself, further.

"I told you I'm not a softy," the satisfied smile was replaced right away with a snarl. She hesitatingly released from Laura's warm embrace.

"Alright, I'm sorry, you're not a softy…" the Princess played along. "Just a cuddly panther…"

She was about to give her wife a broody glare and beg Laura to stop calling her 'Kitty cat' because it ruined her image as the heir to the throne and the future protector and ruler of Karnstein Kingdom.

But when she opened her eyes and looked up, about to reprimand her wife, she became dumbfounded. Instead, her eyes widened and she felt her shaft twitched in delight, as the beautiful naked sight of Laura smiling like an innocent virgin sent from heaven beamed in front of her. Not only did her wife have a 'drop dead gorgeous' smile but Laura embodied innocent beauty and sensuality as well. After last night's solid romp under the sheet… that left them sweaty, drained, sleepy mess, and probably Laura sore in the inside, she expected her Cupcake might be unwell, but it turned out that her wife seemed to glow.

Her ability to speak was now forgotten, as she openly gawked at the lovely sight in front of her. Laura's smooth bare shoulders never ceased to attract her but Laura's breasts always distracted her. She unconsciously licked her lips and focused on the dark pink nipples and areolas that seemed to call her attention. It was so bewildering how she was easily hypnotized by Laura's bosom.

"You've been sleeping like a hibernating panther again," Laura commented, giggling and oblivious.

The Princess' comment tore her out from salivating further and she got disappointed when her sight was diverted upwards.

"I've been up for a while waiting for you to wake up so I can do this…" the Princess continued.

She smirked when Laura cupped her face and brought her for a short sweet kiss.

After parting, "Well, somebody had been so demanding last night," she teased and gave Laura a cocky smile while she rested her head on the pillow, reluctant to leave the safety and warmth of Laura's bosom.

Not to be outdone, "You've been naughty lately, I think it's just fair that you make it up to me," Laura retaliated, resting her own head too on the pillow while they faced each other. "And besides, if I recalled correctly, you've enjoyed it most, you hungry horny panther," the Princess emphasized,
raising an eyebrow. "... You don't even want to let go of my nipple even when you're asleep."

Guilty, she gave her wife a bashful smile that quickly morphed to a naughty smirk. "If I recalled correctly, you told me last night that they are mine, and I could have them as much as I want," she reasoned out eyeing those two luscious breasts.

Laura answered with a lop-sided grin, "I guess I did."

"So, am I forgiven?" she asked, remembering the reason why they were here.

"I don't know... you haven't really apologized properly," Laura retorted.

Still lying on their sides, she took Laura's hands and brought it to her lips and kissed each knuckle gently before gazing at those round hazel orbs. "Will my beautiful Cupcake forgive her giant black cat?" she pleaded. It did not take too long for Laura to give in and next thing she felt was two soft hands cupping her jawlines again and pulling her for a long passionate kiss.

Once they parted, "How can I not forgive my broody adorable kitty?" Laura grinned, giving her a quick playful scratch under the chin like a pet and then rose from the bed.

Surprised at the sudden pull, and not the reaction that she expected, "Hey, where are you going?" she called, panic-stricken and felt the ache in her semi-hard erection growing stronger underneath the blanket. After last night, her body started craving Laura's touch again. She was hoping for some 'breakfast in bed' before they eat their actual breakfast. And since its morning, her need was more pronounced and profound, as she felt herself getting harder by the moment.

"I'm bursting for the loo!" Laura returned while stress searching for her chemise and underwear that were tossed around last night. "And if I didn't go now, I might pee in here!"

"Alright, I'm coming with you," she slid out of the fur blanket and got up, ignoring the erection jutting out in between her legs. She searched for her clothes and quickly ran downstairs to join Laura, who ran ahead.

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Once finished doing their morning ritual and being scolded by Laura after she desperately attempted to make out with her wife by following the princess inside the outhouse, she was now ordered to gather some logs that she cut yesterday to light the fireplace. She had been told to behave if she wanted to have some 'afternoon treat' afterwards.

Now she was trying very hard not to disturb her wife and keep her hands off the Princess.

Laura had already begun working in the kitchen while she started the fire in the hearth and was asked to keep an eye at the porridge. She watched her wife moved around the small room in a familiar way, taking food supplies from the shelves, whipping a simple but healthy breakfast consisted of porridge, bread, fruits, nuts, and cheese for them while humming and smiling.

Amused by her wife's natural ability to cook, she walked towards Laura, hoping the playful mood stayed with her wife.

"Let me help," she said, standing behind the Princess by the cupboard as Laura attempted to reach for the honey. She effortlessly took the jar and earned a smile from the Princess when she placed it on the table, followed by fetching the wooden bowls, plates, and goblets.

Gradually, they worked their way around the little kitchen as if they have been living there all their
life.

When everything was on the table, she pulled the chair for Laura to sit on before taking her seat. She poured the hot tea into their cups, before Laura does it and sliced the bread and then served it to her wife.

"Sometimes, I think it's better to live on our own, with just the two of us," Laura uttered out of the blue tearing a bit of bread. "Thanks."

The Princess added after she put a piece of pickle and cheese on Laura's plate which earned her another smile of approval.

"You mean, it's better when there are no gingers interrupting us whenever we want to have sex," she expressed freely the first thing that came into her mind.

"That's not what I meant, you horny panther!" Laura blurted out, glaring. "I mean this…" the Princess gestured to the food on the table before looking around, "...Preparing our own meal together and moving around in this tiny adorable house, like it had been ours for a long time."

"But this tiny adorable house is ours," she corrected earning a grateful smile from Laura, before glancing around the small cozy rustic cabin. "This is also our home, and I want you to know that you can come alone here too… if there's ever a need for you to unwind and escape from the madness in the castle."

"Don't say madness… that castle is your home and one day you'll rule it," Laura commented and grinned. "And besides, I don't want to come here without you…"

"Aww… Cupcake, does that mean we could always sneak out and come here for some uninterrupted sex?" She gave Laura a come-hither look and bit her lower lip. But she got interrupted from flirting further when Laura put a piece of green grape in her mouth.

"You're unbelievable," Laura commented, rolled her eyes and stirred in the mashed pickles in the porridge before eating a spoonful of it. "Is there any other thing in your mind aside from sex?"

"I can't help it Cupcake, you looked even more beautiful and attractive when you work in the kitchen," she reasoned out, displaying her signature seductive smirk. "Perhaps next time… you can lose the dress and just keep the apron."

Laura turned beet red and shot daggers at her, "Can you just give me some moment to eat my breakfast before you think of anything naughty again?"

She gave Laura a diabolic smirk instead while she watched the Princess eat enthusiastically. But that awful porridge mix snapped her out from pursuing Laura, and now the horrible sight was engraved in her mind and she does not know how to eat her own porridge without cringing.

"Stop thinking about sex and eat your porridge now before it gets cold," Laura encouraged, noticing the untouched bowl.

She eyed the bowl like it was one of Laf's horrible, special concocted soup that she used to take every time she suffered from a brutal hangover. Not wanting to hurt her wife, she tried to calm herself and focus on eating her breakfast.

*Let's see…*

She crinkled her brows and tried to recall what she used to do as a child, when she didn't want to eat
something dreadful but healthy, like her Ma's Beuschel.

*Topped with walnuts, sprinkled with cinnamon and drizzled with honey… voila!*

She smiled after managing to make her porridge looked appetizingly good, and then she began to eat.

"What do you like to do today?" she asked in between eating the hot porridge and sipping carefully her tea… "I don't want to waste this chance of being alone with you, since we don't know when we can do this again once the baby is already here, and we're back in the castle," she disclosed, feeling slightly threatened of the people that will steal Laura's attention again once they get back in the 'real world'. She was starting to like this kind of 'life' they have right now, where only she and Laura existed; no duties to carry out except the simple household chore; no strict rules to follow, and no one to ruin their privacy. It was almost a dream come true for her to have Laura all for herself.

Perhaps realizing this precious moment was rare; Laura put the spoon down on the half-filled bowl and gazed at her, smiling contently. "Alright, since you've been sweet lately…"

"What do you mean lately?" she contented and glared playfully at her wife who seemed to be enjoying their light bickering and bantering. "I've been sweet all the time since you met me," was her proud remark and scoop the last spoon of porridge from the bowl, put a mouthful in her mouth and swallowed it with a satisfied smile.

Displaying a lop-sided grin, "oh really?" Laura interrupted raising an eyebrow in a challenging way. "Does it include also the many times you bail out on me and refused to meet me, the first time I arrived in your castle?"

"You know that I was having a bit of a crisis that time," she half-heartedly smiled, recalling how confused and angry she was when her parents brought a betrothed to their castle until Laura opened her eyes and heart to a world of possibilities and beauty that she never thought existed.

Perhaps sensing the double meaning in her comment, Laura leaned closer and kissed her on the cheek.

"Why don't you finish your cheese and clear up the table afterwards, so that we can start our day and finish early, then I can feed you later," the Princess suggested and winked, displaying a good amount of cleavage before rising from the chair and carrying the empty bowl and cup to the sink.

As if her 'pet panther' had a mind of his own, she felt it twitched at the sudden display of her favorite part of Laura's body. She shoved the remaining piece of bread with cheese, two grapes and half fig in her mouth, and managed to swallow every food remaining on the table in one gulp, before taking a generous swig of tea. Thank God it was already lukewarm or else, she could have burned her tongue due to her stupidity and horniness. She cleared everything in one swift motion and did what she was told and followed her wife, putting back all the things and remaining foods in the cupboard, shelves and bringing the dirty dishes to the sink. Never before had she finished a chore like a gust of wind sweeping everything from its path in one blow.

She felt like a horny young version of herself again, barely an adult and just discovering her sexuality and how her body reacted to certain touch and sight. Perhaps the thought of them being alone and nobody to bother them, and the fact that she can see and touch Laura most of the time due to the small space that they were staying in, made her all the more aroused…all the time.

Standing behind Laura at arm's length, she paused for a while and watched her Princess reached in the pouch of her bodice and took out what looked like to be a floral hair pin.
Laura fixed her long golden locks in a messy bun, revealing the pale smooth neck, before dipping those dainty hands on the dirty dishes.

She could feel herself getting a stir in her crotch just from watching it. The act itself turned her on and she felt her braise constraining. How can Laura manage to make tying a hair so attractive and sensual? She cannot fathom. But there's one thing that was certain right now, she was hard and aching to kiss Laura's neck.

Like a cat, she walked closer to where Laura was standing and put carefully the last bowl and cup on the sink.

"Thanks for the breakfast Cupcake, it's so delicious," she purred in Laura's ear and made her wife shivered at the unexpected closeness.

Before the Princess could comment she slid and wrapped her arms around Laura's waist. And she began nuzzling her wife's neck, planting slow delicate kisses on the soft sensitive skin and nipping lightly, so faint like tingles; she knew it will give the Princess the chills.

And she was right when Laura suddenly shivered and elicited a low controlled moan. She knew her Cupcake loved it whenever she kissed and nibbled Laura's neck. It was one of the Princess' weaknesses. Whenever Laura was not in the mood; she would always do this and most of the time it worked. She would go on and on, taking her time ravaging this sensitive spot of Laura's body until her wife's reluctance crumbled and beg her to take her. But right now, she had no plans of taking her sweet time and had been hankering for Laura since they left the bed.

Her kisses became hungrier, quicker and wet. She knew that her needs cannot be quenched just by kisses, and she began to suck Laura's pulse points and bit them.

"Carm, you know that you're making it more difficult for me to finish here," Laura whined, trying her best to focus on washing, "Carm!" and let out a combined surprised groan and moan.

"Yes, Cupcake?" was her innocent reply, after putting her left hand on Laura's left breast and started to palm it through the thin bodice. The feeling of cupping those glorious luscious soft breasts always sent her into a maddening daze, as it traveled downwards and she felt her shaft swelling fast and growing harder. Feeling naughty and frustratingly horny, she pressed her erection on Laura's rear, and the Princess instantly gasped and stiffened at the contact before moaning.

Her breathing became heavier as this lust filled haze clouded her mind, nailing her wife to the sink while her hand fumbled for the hem of Laura's bodice and drew it up to the waist. Then she pulled down Laura's underwear in one swift rough motion, too impatient and horny to carefully remove it. "You might want to consider not wearing any underwear while we're here, Cupcake…" she purred in Laura's ear, her voice thick with lust, "If you don't want it all ruined," and she ripped the unwanted garment.

The gentleness of her touch slowly faded, as her left hand held the bodice up and the other found Laura's right buttocks and gave her wife a firm slap, before kneading it.

"Ahh… Carm…" Laura drew out a frustrated moan, just like last night.

She remembered how this new position from the Forbidden Book spiced up their mating last night: while Laura was loving the way she takes her wife from behind, and slapped the Princess' buttocks, she, on the other hand, enjoyed the sight of her wife's round firm bum reddening from her strong hand.
"Why don't we take this on the table, so that I could see perfectly how wet you are, Cupcake," was her naughty remark, and saw Laura silently nodded, as she guided the Princess back on the dining table.

Perhaps growing aroused also of how demanding and dominating she sounded like, Laura bent over on the table without a word, ready for her to devour. There were times that she liked being under Laura's mercy, but she always preferred being in control.

Right now, she was too needy and aching to put herself inside her wife and feel Laura's tightness around her. She lined up and stood behind her wife; roughly untied her trousers followed by her braies and pulled it down all the way to her ankle. Her right hand reached for her stiffed member, and started working herself up and down. Her shaft swelled up and glistened with the flow of precum, letting it oozed generously before taking Laura.

To make sure that her wife was ready, her free hand reached for Laura's core and she inserted two fingers inside. It slipped easily to her delight and she grinned. "Why Cupcake… you've been quiet all the time, I didn't realize that you're already soaking wet," was her surprised but satisfied remark, while she remained stroking herself until her entire length was slick and lubricated with precum, and iron stiff.

Laura looked over her own shoulder. "I-I just recalled how you were last night…I like it when you're dominating sometimes…" and then quickly averted eye contact as if hiding something shameful. "I also like it when you're not yourself…"

The slight blushed of her wife's face did not escape her curious stare. The muscles in her jaw tightened and she found herself breathing heavily. After hearing Laura's statement, it made her stroke herself harder and faster until her hand bath with precum, and she felt tighter and stiffer.

"And when you're rough…"

And that was all it took for her to growl and slammed hard inside Laura. The Princess cried out in surprise as she stretched Laura's walls, rested her hands on Laura's hips and remained still. She wanted Laura to feel her throbbing, swelling and growing harder inside her wife and to relish this warmth and wet feeling of being inside Laura.

The Princess whimpered while adjusting at the sudden invasion; overwhelmed.

"You're so big," Laura mentioned.

She recognized the desperation in her wife's voice and she stretched Laura's walls even more by thrusting deeper.

"Ah! Carm!" the Princess panted.

She watched Laura writhed underneath her, and made her stiffer. By the desperate cry that Laura was giving her now, she knew that the Princess was now aching for her to begin thrusting. But she will not give her satisfaction, not yet. She wanted Laura to feel how aroused she was just by being inside her wife.

"Talk to me Laura," she ordered, her voice resonated with desire and power. Last night, they tried becoming more verbal, playing along and exploring new ways while making love and the result was mind-blowing orgasms. "How do you feel?" she asked followed by bucking her hips and giving Laura another deep thrust of her throbbing hard member, holding her wife tighter by the waist.

"I… It… it hurts," Laura pleaded weakly.
As if she was released under a spell, something snapped inside her after being half insane with lust. She pulled out quickly and nervously touched Laura's hair, coaxing her wife to get up,

Guilt possessed her, "God, Cupcake, I'm sorry-"

"Carm! That's not what I meant!" Laura whined, suddenly frustrated.

She gave Laura a confused look. But the Princess glared at her as if telling her something.

"I mean… it's like last night, remember?! It's a good hurt, not a bad hurt," Laura explained frustratingly. "…You stop when I say Hufflepuff!"

Then it all became clear again to her what Laura desired.

"Oh. Yes… of course. That thing…" she realized nodding lightly. She recalled Laura used that word or whatever name it was to let her know if she was hurting her wife while they're in a very 'heated moment' and she needed to stop or pull out. When she asked Laura why used a foreign word, her wife simply said: 'It sounded adorably fluffy, lovable, softy and charming.' Then she understood why when she suddenly became soft in the middle of their wild shenanigan.

Slipping back into her position, she slammed her stiff shaft again inside Laura's dripping core, causing her wife to cry once again, while Laura bent over the table again.

After rekindling her relationship with Laura, this newfound trust and intimacy made them more comfortable and open to discovering their desires.

She tried to salvage the mood, when she was in control and Laura was helpless, by slapping again Laura's bum.

"Ow!" Laura cried her voice a mixture of pain and pleasure.

Leaning down to Laura's ear, she slipped back to her 'role' just like they did last night. "You're so tight and brave for taking me," she rasped and sounded diabolical. "Tell me, Princess," she whispered and licked Laura's earlobe, before biting it lightly, which earned a moan from Laura. "Can you handle it? Can you take every hard and deep thrust? Can you last till I fill you with my hot seed and become pregnant with my bastard?" She felt Laura shivered beneath her and clenched inside.

"I'm not afraid," Laura dared, finding the courage to express her feelings as if stubbornly refusing to surrender.

Laura's strong words provoked her and made her even harder. She thought of giving the Princess a lesson. She bucked her hips upwards, earning a squeal from the Princess, impaling her wife again with her thick hardness. Before she began thrusting deeper and rougher, challenged at how Laura wanted it rough and daring her.

Although they were being consensual and playing along since last night, being deprived for many days of touching and sleeping with Laura made her thirsty for control and her possessiveness cannot be appeased once she claimed back what's hers. Whether she admitted it or not her dominant nature always emerged in bed. And now, the way Laura looked innocently beautiful, but defiant and yet helpless while she slammed roughly inside and claimed Laura again and again, harder and faster until she heard Laura panting, crying, always turned her on! And the next thing she knew, she was growling with pride and felt appeased at the same time as Laura whimpered.

By the number of moans and cries that Laura was eliciting, and how tight the Princess was, and how Laura writhed helplessly underneath her, she was not sure if she could hold on any longer as her...
balls became tighter while she thrust continuously. Not wanting to embarrass herself of coming first, her hands held the Princess tighter; finding the position where she knew it would make Laura crazy. Still thrusting, she lifted and tilted the Princess' pelvis, taking into consideration Laura's comfort, until she heard her wife gasped and moaned louder, as her cock slashed over Laura's clit and hit that sensitive spongy spot inside over and over.

"Ahh… Carrrm!" Laura cried, gripping the sides of the table.

She felt her orgasm rippled through her throbbing cock, while Laura clenched around her before convulsing and shouting her name again as they both rode the wave of their joint orgasm.

Once she calmed down from the intensity of their intense and quick lovemaking, she drew her semi-hard member out, then quickly pulled up her braies and trousers and held Laura in her arms. She lifted her Princess like a bride sensing that her wife was still panting and spent. She brought Laura to the chaise lounge and laid her wife carefully on it, while she kneeled at the end and straddled Laura.

Having not recovered yet, "C-carm, what are you-" Laura asked, rising to see what was going on, but was caught off guard.

"You've been greedy for many days, not letting me touch you," she blamed, pulling gently Laura's legs towards the end of the long chair, till it was close to her face. "I'm just making up for the lost days…" then she lifted the edge of Laura's bodice and dipped her head, inhaling the warmth of Laura's desire before licking hard the wetness and tasting the remnants of their combined cum.

"Oh God, Carm!"

***

That night, after dinner, as she sat on the chair by the fireplace and enjoyed one of her favorite books, her mind strayed from reading; she can't help but smile with satisfaction as she recalled their day living like a commoner. Who would have thought that doing house chores would be exciting and pleasurable? Not only did they had sex twice after breakfast, but when she came back from fishing in the afternoon, Laura was already done washing their clothes, baking some apple pie and cooking pottage, but the Princess had offered something she cannot refuse. She was only supposed to relax while 'feeding' from Laura on the Chaise Lounge, but her wife became suddenly 'needy' and it led into something more and a quickie. And when they're done, she went back outside to gather more logs for the night and fetch water, while Laura prepared the fish and worked in the kitchen, prancing, and singing, as if nothing had happened in between baking the dessert, cooking the vegetables and fish.

The trout she caught was delicious and she ate most of it when Laura decided to have more space for the apple pie. Her stomach was not the only one that was satisfied today, but her libido as well. Laura was probably sore already from the rough sex last night, and twice today. She felt slightly guilty for being wild and 'harsh', though Laura made sure to tell her if she was hurting her wife.

She looked back at the page in front of her and tried to focus reading again, humming in the process and smiling. Laura was still in the bathroom and probably relaxing after she made sure to prepare a very hot bath since she knew that Laura had a very 'rough day' today.

She wondered if this was how the commoners lived their life. It was strange to say it, but she envied them. Although her muscles were aching too from all the physical hard work inside and outside the cabin, she still considered this a luxury. Because nothing was more luxurious than just relaxing in this comfortable chair with a fur blanket wrapped around her, right beside the warmth of a cozy fireplace while reading a good book, and sipping some wine as much as she wanted with nobody
scolding her. And once she was done reading, she could just go to bed to her wife waiting for her to devour her, without someone following her behind and reminding what she should do the next morning and when to wake up; and no people to bother and monitor her while doing her daily chores.

*This is definitely good…*

She sighed with satisfaction, going back to her book.

***

"Hey, I'm going to bed now…" Laura chirped, after emerging from the bathroom, wearing a white robe while dry toweling those long golden locks.

Just like the past nights, she was too engrossed and cannot put this book down until her mind was quenched. "Go ahead, I'll be there soon," she replied barely looking away from the page she was reading. Once she started an interesting book, she would like to read it in one seating. But since they were living alone, and they don't have any servants to do all these things for them, reading before bed was the only option she had since she was occupied all day, and night too.

"You better hurry up…"

Laura's voice tore her out from her concentration to focus again on the part where she left, she thought her wife had gone by now. She just nodded and did not look up.

"…Or I'll start without you," was the Princess' firm remark and climbed upstairs.

"Alright I- "she furrowed her brows, put her book down on her lap, and looked at the direction where Laura stood moments ago. "Did I… she just?-" her sight darted to the right, trying to grasp what Laura meant. Then her eyes widened upon realizing it and she shut the book hard and threw it on the side. She already felt her shaft twitching and throbbing with excitement. Right now she was torn between running upstairs and joining her wife undressing… or she could let Laura 'warm up' first before she comes to the room, and be greeted by a naked Princess in action on the bed, already wet and ready for her.

Suddenly she found herself in a very very hard situation.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Who here wants more of this 'commoners' lifestyle :-D
Living In Our Own Small World

Chapter Summary

Staying in the cabin had given Carm and Laura not just the privacy they need, but also the freedom to do some of the things they cannot do while living in the castle, such as Carm talking about her childhood like it's a normal table conversation.

Having the Princess all for herself made Carm madly aroused and horny all the time. Can Laura cope with Carm's insatiable needs?

Laura discovered something that Carm had been hiding from her since they met. Would it affect their 'honeymoon' after she found out the truth?

Chapter Notes

Finally, had time to concentrate writing again. Thanks so much for your comments and kudos, I'm always glad to read them and gets inspiration from them too. I hope the long chapter and smut compensated the lack and delay of my updating. The chapter was inspired by one of your comments. Without further ado… here's dominant, top Laura… enjoy and let me know what you feel :-D

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Carmilla

Days had passed.

…Almost too quickly.

The thought jostled her complacency.

If only she could stop time and live the moment, again and again.

She can't believe the days will soon turn to a week.

Since this morning she cannot stop fidgeting… up to the extent of almost having a panic attack, she still did not wish to go back to reality! Thankfully Laura was in the mood early this morning, and when she pressed her morning wood to her Princess, Laura moaned and wiggled, and all her worries were forgotten.

They were both fixated at each other and still indulging in this small bubble they created around them.

All she ever thought about since they arrived in the cottage was to be alone with Laura… to have the Princess all for herself; to spend quality time with Laura… more precisely, to be intimate with Laura all the time whenever she desired it.
The plan to woo back Laura in an isolated place was the perfect scheme. With no Lady-in-Waiting, no handmaidens, and no Valet hovering around them, it was one of the amazing days of her married life! Honestly, she still did not have the heart to return to the castle. Living in this simple life with Laura was truly amazing. At the same time, she never thought that going back to the life she once had would rekindle old feelings.

She also felt safe and comfortable talking freely to Laura about her Ma and the things she remembered while she was a child.

A content smile formed in the corner of her mouth as she recalled how excited she was telling Laura this morning about her favorite cheese…

'Ma used to make this when I was young… we have a barn full of cows and chickens, and I helped her taking care of the animals in there,' she said, smiling as she recalled bits of her childhood while cutting a slice of the last bit of Steirerkas before giving the biggest piece to Laura. 'She would tell me to talk to the cows and ask their consent before milking them, so they would not be upset when I'm taking milk from them.'

"I didn't know that..." Laura replied, fascinated at that little info before enjoying the last bit of cheese with gusto. "Tell me more… what you and your Ma do," Laura encouraged.

But then something dawned in her.

She just realized now that something serious happened this morning…

Laura had eaten the last bit of Steirerkas…the last bit.

Of course, she will not mention it to her wife when she came home because she did not want Laura to panic or worry.

But what if her wife asked for it?

Suddenly, her thoughts were in terrible turmoil.

Sooner or later, her wife might crave the cheese. Will she spend half a day going to the royal guards' camp in this forest just to tell Armitage that she needed him to get a cheese from the village?

But the thought of leaving Laura that long was not an option. She would have to find another way to secure that cheese.

Although she gave a strict order to Armitage and the rest of her personal royal guards to stay away from the cabin; and never to interfere at her and Laura's stay, but just guard the surrounding as discreet as they can, she knew that in the event of danger they would come charging if she blew the horn of distress.

But what if Laura suddenly had a craving in the middle of the night? Or worst, after having sex? Sex was energy consuming, and Laura sometimes loved eating after a mind-blowing rough sex. What could she offer? She wouldn't want to ruin their 'honeymoon' just because of a certain cheese.

Worst come to worst, she would definitely blow the horn in case Laura had a sudden craving.

For now, she was on her own... and the reality of having to go back to her obligations and responsibility added to her growing worries. She hoped her father managed to persuade her mother that she needed to take a break and stay out of the castle for a number of days. Her mother was always displeased and fretting every time she was gone for over a night.
"Bloody hell!" she was shoved off from worrying after almost stumbling on the large rock while crossing the shallow stream. After eating a late breakfast, she reluctantly left a whiny and needy Princess to hunt for their next meal, as their dwindling food supply cannot be ignored.

Too much worrying since this morning had stolen her focus and she missed earlier the roe deer she was aiming for supper. Luckily, there was an abundance of fish in the area. She hoped Laura would not mind having another trout.

Holding on tight her precious catch, she took a deep breath and tried to lure her anxious mind; focusing on the scent of pine trees around her. There was always something in the woods that made her calm down; the sound of the birds chirping, the fresh piney scent air, the slow steady flow of the stream on her feet… the solitude… it always cleared her troubled mind and aching heart as a rebellious young prince that was still trying to come to terms of being both a man and a woman.

…But not at the moment. She was still anxious.

It was still haunting her.

She still did not want to go back to the castle.

She still did not want to go back to the chaotic life of full of responsibilities and obligations.

Sensing a fit was coming, from frustration and irritation...

She looked up and the sun was already on its peak and scorching hot but not too strong to give her sunburn. It might be a good idea to rest for a while and clean the bloodied fish before giving it to Laura. She searched for a large flat rock to work on, took her little knife and started scaling and gutting the trout.

Once she finally calmed down and finished her task, she resumed walking back to the cottage.

She can't help smiling at the thought of her wife waiting for her to come home; cooking and serving her a delicious hot meal upon arrival after a strenuous hunting or work in the field or forest. It might sound like an ordinary boring routine of a commoners' life, but for her, it was like a fairy tale.

When she moved in the castle, her early childhood memories, her desires, her dreams, her beliefs, her morals, her faith, and her happiness were like vague murmurs behind a door, concealed and repressed. Like it was never there.

As what her mother said…

'It's time to put the past where it belonged: buried and forgotten.'

Until Laura came into her life and tapped into her innermost fears and released her from isolation and brought back some of those early memories in her life, and showed her what happiness was.

Laura was truly a fairytale.

And who would have thought that by marrying the Princess of Hollis, it led her to unintentionally discovering where her Ma was.

Was it luck? Was it a coincidence? Or was it destiny? Either way, she was very thankful to God that fate brought together not just her and Laura, but her wife had been sort of instrument too of bringing her Ma back to her life.
She felt so blessed…

And now, as she temporarily living the life that she used to have, everything felt so familiar and just came off naturally. She enjoyed and appreciated the solitude, the simplicity, the freedom, and living alone with the woman she loved.

If only she had a choice…

She would prefer living as a commoner with Laura. But they all knew that it would never happen. Her parents made it very clear to her that as the sole heir to the throne, she not only had an obligation to her father and mother but to the House of Karnstein to keep the line to the throne alive. As the only young Karnstein in Austria, the heavy burden and obligation of producing an heir were slammed to her as soon she was crowned.

She even remembered LaFontaine scaring her when she refused to marry…

'*If you don't wish to be haunted by your ancestors for failing to preserve your lineage, you better accept this betrothment.*'

Thankfully the people around her were very annoyingly persistent and adamant of forcing her to marry the Princess of Hollis. Or else, she wouldn't have known what true love was.

If that was the main purpose of her existence, she gladly accepted it now… now that she had Laura… now that she had found real love… now that her fairytale came true.

She hoped and prayed that their children and their great great grandchildren could experience the love that they have too. She knew the love she and Laura shared was rare, and she did not even know if there was someone in the world who was also like her. But finding someone who was going to accept her for what she was unlikely. It was unthinkable!

Taking a deep sigh, a satisfied smile crept over her features as the thought of growing old with Laura and siring many children with the love of her life kept playing in her mind. Thinking about the future and what in store for her and Laura always made her ecstatic. She used to hate planning for her future, hell; she did not even want a wife or family before! But when a beautiful, persistent ball of sunshine came into her life, everything made sense. Suddenly, her life was meaningful and colorful.

And now, the solitude… and having Laura just for herself was making her deliriously thrilled and horny as a wildcat during mating season.

Perhaps another week of staying in the cabin won't hurt, after all, her father told her to take all her time. She was glad to know that her King Father always agreed to her plans, especially when it comes to pleasing Laura. She even recalled her father telling her…

'*My child, don't stop pursuing your wife even after marrying her. Women need attention and pampering. And you need to court them every day for the rest of your life. And don't forget to always water the plant every day!*

Whatever her father meant by that last comment…

Speaking of plants… she began picking the wildflowers that she could find along the way as she walked on the trail leading to the cabin. She could still imagine Laura's satisfied smile when she handed her the first bouquet of flowers that she gave her wife.
After the past days, and as they established and settled into this uncommonly normal routine of living alone like commoners and depending on each other to survive, they also discovered each one's weaknesses and strengths. But at the same time, they learned to appreciate more each other and the small things around them.

The smell of apple and cinnamon lingering in the air snapped her out of reverie by the time she reached the front door and entered the cabin.

Her eyes caught at once the figure of Laura, working in the kitchen, beside the sink with the back facing her. Laura's beautiful long locks were tied up in a messy bun again, and that smooth pale neck looked invitingly delicious!

She walked to her wife in smooth strides, carrying the big trout on her right hand and a bouquet of wildflowers on the other. She leaned down and pecked on Laura's nape before kissing the Princess' cheek. She took her time feeling the warmth of her wife as their bodies touched and caught the cinnamon scent on her Cupcake.

"Hey… you're back," Laura sighed, content and glad while leaning into the kiss.

"Thank you, Cupcake," she said, before placing the 'catch of the day' on the little basin beside the sink. Instead of a reply, Laura just gave her a confused look, pausing from cutting a carrot.

"The pottage isn't cooked yet, but desert's finished," was the Princess' oblivious remark… and smiled adorably when met by a kiss again on the lips. "Why are you thanking me?"

"Is making a delicious pottage the only reason I can thank you?" She took her time kissing those soft full lips, tasting, licking them and finally, sucking Laura's tongue. The next thing she felt was her member twitching with excitement as she heard Laura's short low needy whines.

"Then what is it?" Laura asked in between kisses and was now a horny mess as the kisses became demanding and deeper. "Carm… umm… I'm cooking dinner, please don't distract me again." The Princess expressed in between kisses, attempting to release from the light sweet kissing to now heavy duel of tongues.

As much as she like making out with Laura, her stomach, on the other hand, was not cooperating when it growled louder than normal. "Oops, sorry about that…” she apologized, getting a hold of herself and calming her libidos.

"See, that's why you shouldn't distract me now," Laura claimed turning around and looked down.

"For you," she showed the wildflowers to her wife and received instantly the most adorable smile.

"Aww… thanks, Carm, they're so pretty…"

She watched Laura's face lightened up while taking the bouquet, smelled it, and then looked at them appreciating. Laura reached up with the other hand cupping her face, sending sparks of heat in her sweaty cold skin as she felt the soft warm touch of her wife's hand caressing her jawline and brought her for long but sweet kiss… How Laura can evoke such an emotion in her with just a simple gesture and touch was still an enigma for her.

"Just a small token of my appreciation for all the things that you're doing for me," was her honest remark after parting from the kiss.

She gazed for a moment at her wife's face, revering the angelic beauty in front of her, loving the thought of this marvelous creature belonged to her and only hers to devour and claim. Who would
have thought that such beauty, elegance, and kindness existed and desired her? Laura was the exact opposite of her. But still, this woman offered everything to her. Sometimes she kept forgetting how very lucky she was, that she could make love with this woman and not be judged for her flaw, but instead she was loved unconditionally and worshipped like a god.

Damn!

All she could ever think about now was undressing in front of her very pretty innocent looking wife and corrupting every part of the Princess' body. She suddenly felt a surged of heat coursing through her veins and a wicked desire to claim the most precious one that belonged to her.

Before she could think of another wicked thing, a loud 'ahem' tore her out from her lascivious thoughts. When she looked up, the sight that met hers was not actually the one she expected.

"Carm, whatever you're thinking, it's not going to happen… not until I'm finished cooking our meal," Laura chided, with narrowed eyes before turning around and resumed peeling the potatoes.

She did not need to ask what her wife meant when she felt her aching erection struggling to come out in the constraint of her trousers.

"Oh, come on Cupcake, I've been in the woods for too long, I've missed you!" she claimed and wrapped her arms around Laura's waist, and nuzzled her nose on Laura's neck before she purposely rubbed her erection through the thin fabric of Laura's dress. She had been doing that a lot lately since they arrive in the cabin. Especially when she caught Laura standing at the kitchen and the princess' bums where facing her and that pretty smooth pale nape of Laura was on display. "I want you," she purred in Laura's ear.

The freedom to touch Laura anywhere and anytime without worrying that someone might see them was a rare opportunity that should not be wasted.

"You've already tricked me yesterday, you can't fool me again," Laura reproached, fighting the urge to grind back at the iron rod that was poking at her rear. "Carm! Stop rubbing it to me or we'll never have a decent meal tonight. You've had your breakfast in bed already. And a quickie before you went out."

"That was breakfast, it's already sundown soon. I need my Cupcake to nibble on…" she reasoned out and fought the urge to say it, but it eventually slipped out of her mouth… "I want to feed…" she pleaded, her voice raspy and full of needs. Every time she grew anxious, she always sought Laura's touch or breasts. After worrying about running out of time staying here, she will not waste precious time anymore.

Perhaps she sounded too desperate; Laura finally put the knife and carrots down on the chopping wood and turned around slowly.

Brows crinkling and eyes full of concern, "Alright, I'll feed you but you have to let me finish cutting all the vegetables first so that I could put them in the pot and start cooking it while I feed you." Laura explained, the firm tone morphing into a whisper.

Every time one of them mentioned about 'feeding time' they both found themselves softening. It was their bonding time without being sexual but sensual, but of course, it sometimes led to something sexual in the end when she can't help it.

She was about to protest, but a finger on her lips silenced her.

"No buts… go clean yourself, and change," Laura ordered but in a calm tone. "By the time you're
done with your bath, I'll be sitting over there," the Princess pointed to the large white sheepskin rug beside the chaise lounge. "And these would be available and waiting for you," was Laura's enticing words and lightly cupped under her own breasts and presented it proudly.

She was already complying like a tamed panther, but her emotions were ignited again by the naughty gesture that her wife did. It made her even harder and hornier, "Arggh, why can't I have it now? You're killing me Cupcake…" she groaned frustratingly and was about to touch her wife's breasts. But Laura blocked her hand immediately and stepped back waving an index finger.

"Carl Philipp Marcus, don't challenge me now if you don't want to end up starving," the Princess glared. "And when I say starving, I meant both," Laura emphasized and motioned for the angry bulge in between them. "Go clean now, before I change my mind."

Her three names… that was her queue to take her wife's words seriously. She let out a frustrated low growl and reluctantly left the kitchen.

Later on, fresh and clean and after relieving herself in the bath, she was now standing beside the fireplace, smiling like the proverbial cat that got the milk, when her sight met those beautiful exposed breasts of her wife's. She walked slowly towards where Laura was seated and sat beside her wife, giving Laura a sweet and sloppy kiss first on the lips, before taking a gander at the luscious round breasts that were on display. She licked her lips and can't help but to revere them first till she ached to touch them.

"What are you waiting for?" Laura teased, pulled down further the bodice all the way to the waist, and laid comfortably on the pillows around them.

Smirking, and not breaking eye contact, she laid beside Laura and she felt instantly the Princess' arms gathered her and guided her mouth to one of the nipples. She gladly accepted it with full of wanton and kissed the pink nub first, before licking it and putting it in her hungry mouth.

Heavenly.

She thought as soon as her mouth enclosed around the little bud and areola and suckled in a slow steady rhythm. She cupped the other one possessively and caressed the soft globe, and felt Laura's nipples bead against her palm quickly. Laura elicited a soft moan in return and she felt soft hand caressed her nape and idle fingers ran through her short locks. She closed her eyes and relished the sensation. Everything felt calm and delightful despite the throbbing in her member. She was nuzzled in the warmth of Laura's breasts, suckling to her heart's content, while Laura held her close while caressing her hair. A combined feeling of nurturing, intimate, sensual and sexual, what more she could ask for?

How she wished every afternoon was reserved for moments like this.

Since they arrived at the cabin, despite their habit of bickering and bantering every damn day, when it came to nurturing their relationship, the intimacy of suckling Laura and committing to this kind of bonding was something they valued highly. Forgetting everything they were doing, and taking time to get closer and be in this 'bubble' they have created was the best part of their married life, next to awesome sex, of course.

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After spending that calming magical moment together, and appeasing her worries and libidos, she felt more relaxed and calmed every time she finished suckling Laura.
And the effect was remarkable.

She was like a meek lamb, obeying everything Laura said to her, she even helped Laura do the rest of the house chores and worked peacefully side by side before they eat supper.

She took the chance also during meal time to appreciate even more the food they ate, knowing that Laura had put so much love and effort in cooking their food. Laura, on the other hand, mentioned about appreciating the luxurious hot baths, knowing that she had fetched the water and cut the logs they used to warm the water and to create a fire to keep them warm… and of course, the animals that she haunts for their meals.

Inevitably, the first four days had been intense and draining. On mornings, she would make sure to provide everything they need, from food to water and keeping them warm. But she was always compensated for her hard work during afternoons and of course, at nights. She admitted that she felt like a raging horny feline always on a hunt for a fresh meat and thirsting for a flesh that only Laura could provide.

But nothing was precious as this private calm moment that they always spent every evening, sitting on the chaise lounge by the fire, reading her books while Laura sat and snuggled warmly beside her. Sometimes, Laura would read a book too, but she knew that it won’t be long before the princess got bored, and claimed all the books were so deep and philosophical.

"Cupcake is something wrong?" She asked after being distracted, put down the book she was reading while Laura shifted beside her like a curious child on the chaise lounge.

"I don't get it…" Laura claimed.

"What?" she asked and saw the Princess scrutinizing her chin and jawline area. "Are there something else you find fascinating about my face aside from my exquisite jawline?" was her cocky remark, hiding her uneasiness with a smirk, and looked at her wife awkwardly as she felt the Princess' warm breath on her neck and face.

"Why can't I see a single stubble on your face or under your chin?" Laura's intrigued remark.

She raised her left eyebrow…remained calm… and waited for the curiosity of her wife to subside.

Just as she thought that Laura would let it go, she felt Laura's hand held her jaw and tilted it gently from left to right, up and down, before releasing it.

But it did not stop the Princess from still looking the smooth line of her jawline closely like an interesting specimen that LaFontaine always did whenever the Valet was in their laboratory.

_Damn it. Why does she always find something interesting every day?_ 

She knew one day this little curious wife of hers would notice it.

Just not tonight, she prayed.

She did not want to ruin this precious moment they share in this cabin.

She did not want to ruin their 'honeymoon'.

And she did not want to get out of this 'bubble' they're living in right now.

Not yet.
Her heartbeat started to race in pursuit of a perfect answer.

_Damn! Why didn't she ask LaFontaine about it?!_

They always fixed everything for her; from rescuing her ass from being punished by her mother whenever she did something stupid, to helping her saved her relationship with Laura over and over again, to cover up all her mistakes to her father!

Oh, that's right… She might have forgotten to inform LaFontaine about this plan, or where she was. Now she was beginning to regret why she did not tell them.

A part of her wished LaFontaine was here right now. They always come up with a spectacular remark that always leaves the listener dumbfounded and agreeing. LaFontaine can easily convince Laura about anything. Perhaps this was one of the reasons also why her mother personally chose LaFontaine to be her Valet.

Unfortunately, her Valet cannot save her ass right now.

She was on her own… again.

It's either she comes up with a convincing lie or come out clean. But she was having a hard time doing both as Laura remained examining her face and neck.

Only one thing to do…

Slowly shifting into broodiness, she gathered her guts and simply looked at the Princess with a blasé attitude.

"Why do you want to know?" was her nonchalant reply, darting back her eyes on the book that she retrieved and put on her lap then pretended to read it again.

Silence fell over the room while she tried to hold her composure. She could feel Laura's eyes bored on her.

She gave it a moment, to see if pretending to be broody while ignoring the question would make Laura uninterested, and eventually impatient, resulting to dropping the subject.

However, knowing Laura, she can rest assured that her wife will not let the matter rest.

Taking a deep breath, she closed the book firmly on her lap and put it down on the floor before darting her eyes on the overly curious and waiting Princess.

"So, are you going to answer my question or you wanted to sleep here on the chaise lounge tonight?" Laura dared, left eyebrow raised in a questioning manner.

With a groan, "Alright, I don't have the ability to grow facial hair," she admitted, her voice firm but low. "Just like any woman, my face remains soft and hairless. Before you came to the castle, I asked Laf to make me a false beard because I heard that you don't like men with beards. And during that time, I have no intention of getting married so I always send away all the princesses my parents brought to the castle by playing pranks on them, or luring them with fancy dresses and jewelries."

"And since I'm not the material girl type, you played a mischievous trick on me, by doing things I dislike in men," Laura continued, annoyed as hell and displayed the royal pout.

"Cupcake, you know what I've gone through and the reason why I always drive away any potential
betrothed…" she reasoned growing desperate at how Laura glared at her and pouted fully. "I need to think of something effective, to dismiss you as fast as possible. Because I can feel that my father is so fond of you becoming my wife."

Finally, the pout had slowly disappeared, and Laura's features softened, the Princess let out a deep sigh and said, "You know that we've talked about not hiding any secrets anymore from each other…" Laura chided, voice mellowing. "Why didn't you tell me about it?"

She felt Laura's soothing hand suddenly caressing the lines of her jaw, above her upper lip and under her chin, as if tracing the 'invisible beard' of hers. "Because I honestly don't know when to tell…" she confessed, furrowing her eyebrows while gazing at those hazel orbs. "You've been going to the village too often, and I always want to be with you, and I can only do that when I'm disguised as Marcus. And you know that I can't expose myself to anyone in the village, and if I did, I can't go to the village anymore, and can't enjoy going in the village market unnoticed… and I can't see any more Emma and Greta and the rest of the-" she surprisingly felt a pair of soft lips on her own, shutting her up.

"Carm, it's alright, I understand," Laura expressed smiling after the kiss.

"You do? I mean… thank you… thank you for not getting mad," she was expecting another outburst or those bantering and bickering. Thank God Laura accepted her reason, or else, she would not forgive herself for not telling right away this last 'white lie' that she was withholding from her wife. "And I'm really sorry, Cupcake."

Laura stared at her for a moment, as if scrutinizing again her face. She did not like the look of it; the look that something tells her Laura's been thinking of something diabolical.

"Please don't look at me like that," she warned, giving a nervous smile.

Laura snapped from pondering and looked up, "Like what?"

"Like you're about to ask me to do something crazy that I can't refuse, instead of punishing me for my shortcomings," she reasoned out, catching that naughty grin that temporarily formed in the corner of Laura's mouth.

"What are you talking about? I told you, I understand and I'm not mad at you-" Laura returned.

"But-"

"Why do you think that I'm going to say but?" Laura asked.

"Because your nose is twitching," she lightly touched the tip of Laura's nose, to annoy her wife.

"Why do you always make fun of my nose," the Princess expressed and rubbed her own nose gently.

"I'm not… I just find it adorable…" she said apologetically and hugged Laura. After soothing the Princess, she kissed the intriguing nose before claiming her wife's lips. "Come on. Let's go to bed," they both rose from the chaise lounge and she held Laura's hand as they walked towards the stairs. But then she felt nature calling. "I'm going to the outhouse; would you like to go too?"

"No, I'm good."

She nodded, "Just go ahead, and I'll be upstairs in a jiffy…" she suggested and was about to turn around, but Laura seized her hand and put her index finger inside the Princess' hot mouth.
"Don't do something naughty without me…" Laura purred after sucking the finger and slipped it out slowly from that innocent mouth, before turning around and walked towards the stairs.

Mouth slightly open, she was left in a daze and cannot move for a moment, as if she was put under a spell of some wicked horny witch.

Damn! This would be one of the nights where her sweet wife liked something wild!

***

She went upstairs two steps at a time, thankful that it was not the grand staircase of the castle or else she will not last and might explode before she could even enter the Princess' chamber.

Heart pounding and sweating with lust, she felt her member twitched and already semi-hard when she arrived upstairs.

Before opening the door to the small bedroom she took a deep breath, trying not to look desperately horny. She had, after all, a reputation to uphold as the well-bred heir to the throne.

Carefully, she opened the door and smiled immediately when she found Laura standing by the bed, back facing her and taking off the robe. The dimness of the room, the soft glitter from the fireplace and the warmth eliminating from it were enough to make her want to unrobe too.

Slowly, she walked closer to Laura and stood behind her wife. Laura was about to take off the chemise but she stopped her.

"Let me…" she purred from behind on Laura's right ear and gently put her hand on the thin strap and slowly slid it off from the Princess' shoulder, followed by the other side; her dainty long fingers slid the last strap in feathery light touch.

Laura wiggled out of the silk garment and stood silently, waiting what will happen next.

When she realized that there was still an offending piece of cloth remaining, "Didn't I tell you not to wear your underwear while you're in here?" she growled softly, letting Laura know her disappointment.

"Please forgive me, Your Highness, I've forgotten," the Princess played along using a timid tone.

"Now you've made me angry," she remarked, her voice deeper and raspy, as she hovered behind Laura, like a dark shadow ready to swallow the light. "I guess you need to be punished so you won't forget next time." She warned while untying the knots of her own robe. But before she could take it off, Laura tried to turn around, but she put her hand firmly on the Princess' waist, "Don't move," she ordered, and heard Laura whined softly. "I think you need to be taught how to be patient, Princess," she whispered on Laura's ear and caused her wife to shiver instantly.

"Carm…” Laura whined once again, her voice needy.

"No Cupcake, you need to stand still, or I'll stop," she warned firmly as Laura attempted to turn around again. She knew that her wife wanted to undress her too. "I know what you're thinking…” she commented, standing again behind Laura but never touching her, making it more frustrating for Laura to feel her presence and warmth.

"Oh really…” Laura taunted, growing annoyingly horny.

"You want to take off my clothes quickly, so you can drag me to bed, and then you'll stand on all
fours, displaying your cute little soft bums in front of me, and ordering me to take you from behind," she expressed with confidence, whispering seductively the last sentence in Laura's ear.

"Err…no, I do not…” Laura denied.

"Don't lie, Cupcake, I can read your body perfectly, and right now you want a rough quickie, before we start with the real thing," she whispered in her most alluring voice into Laura's ear, her mouth almost touched the Princess' ear but managed to avoid any skin contact.

"What's wrong with a quickie?!" Laura reasoned out and was about to turn around.

"Nothing," she closed the little gap immediately in between Laura's buttocks and her aching raging member that was already standing stiff inside her braies, before wrapping her arms firmly around Laura. She teasingly rubbed her erection on Laura's rear, before stepping back and releasing her hands on the Princess, which earned a low whine from Laura.

"As I've said, you need to be taught how to be patient, and you didn't obey me, so you're getting punished. I'm in charge tonight and you don't get to tell me what to do." She explained and began to take off her robe gracefully, letting it fall on the floor with a smooth swish that made Laura shivered with anticipation, knowing that she would be soon naked too. A naughty idea slipped her mind. "Give me your hand."

"Huh?" Laura shifted in confusion.

"I said, give me your hand," she ordered, standing just behind Laura. When the Princess fully understood what she meant, Laura reached behind slowly. She caught her wife's right hand and guided it to her growing stiff shaft. "Feel me Cupcake."

Laura gasped immediately at the touch as if burned by the sensation of feeling a hard-on, before possessively wrapping the dainty little hand around the iron rod, "How can you be so hard and thick already? I haven't done anything yet?"

"Oh trust me Cupcake… just by looking at you and thinking about you is enough to make me hard and go mad," she exquisitely purred, before gently removing Laura's hand that started to become greedy. It earned a desperate whine from the Princess after she put back Laura's hand on the side. "What did I tell you?" she remarked, noticing the Princess' impatience. She seriously considering teaching her little wife the true meaning of patience but it seemed to be not working right now.

"Carl Philipp Marcus, I swear to the goddess of creampuffs, if you don't let me touch you now you'll never taste another cupcake in your life again!" the Princess spat the words like venom, and turned around, displaying the royal pout. "And don't you dare make your wife wait!"

The remark stunned her for a moment as if someone knocked some sense in her. She suddenly caught herself standing face to face with her very frustrated and obviously horny Princess. Whether the threat of not having to taste her favorite sweets anymore, or her Cupcake, whatever that meant, was real or not, she did not want to take the risk. Sometimes her wife can be a bit intimidating and demanding.

Regaining her composure, she smirked and gazed at the Princess, "Alright, I'm sorry… you can do whatever you like, tonight," she yielded and felt Laura's hand on her nape at once. The next thing she knew, Laura's arms wrapped around her neck and they were kissing.

How Laura reversed the situation, she cannot fathom?

Clearly, she liked being in charge all the time, but conceding to her wife's demands were always worth it, especially when those soft round breasts rubbed on her own, and she felt those dainty little
fingers of Laura toying at the strands of her hair. She closed her eyes and groaned, as she let herself get lost in the sweet taste of Laura's mouth and lips.

Just as she was relishing the sweetness and greediness of Laura's tongue and hands like a hungry panther…

"Alright, we'll take it slow…” Laura released from the kiss.

She frustratingly opened her eyes and tried to reclaim Laura's lips but was met with emptiness, as she saw Laura stepped back.

*Damn! Why is she making this hard?!*

She expressed with disappointment, and wondered why Laura kept on doing this?

Both panting, they tried to calm their raging lust by standing still and faced each other, but the lustful gaze that Laura was giving her did not help a bit.

She felt her nerves quivering with delight and anticipation. Any minute from now both her heads would explode from frustration and confusion, especially when her eyes caught Laura…

Biting the lower lip, "Take off your clothes," the Princess ordered afterward.

*Bloody hell…*

Laura's words surged like poison, crashing and corrupting every nerve in her body.

Nope. She was definitely not in charge tonight.

Not wanting to disappoint the horny Cupcake, she gazed at those fully dilated brown orbs and flashed her seductive smirk, while she slowly untied her tunic and took it off.

The one thing she liked staying in this cabin was the need not to cover her chest, except when going out.

She heard a low moan once her breasts were on display. Her hands slowly made its way to her braies and she took her time untying it, as she watched Laura drooled on her. "You might want to wipe your mouth, Cupcake," she paused and teased as she caught Laura's eyes feasting on her tits. She made sure to stand straight and proudly showed her small and yet perky breasts.

Not to be outdone, "I think you're the one who's dripping wet…” Laura said, darting her own eyes on the now very obvious bulge, and the wet spot on the braies. "I wonder how hard and thick you are right now?"

Her shaft twitched and throbbed wildly. She was now rock hard and aching, after hearing that daring naughty remark from her wife.

She suddenly recalled that one time Laura tasted her. She knew that her wife was not that fond of going down on her? But sometimes she can't help imagining it.

Right now, she was a total mess down there, as she felt her precum leaking out generously.

*Well, as much as I fantasize it all the time, I don't think she's into it…*

She would always put her wife's comfort first before her needs.
Not wanting to pressure her sweet Cupcake, "Why don't you give me a helping hand, and removed this for me," she motioned for her braies and earned a naughty smile from Laura.

Giving her first a peck on the lips, "With pleasure," Laura stated, before untying the braies then pulled it down, and gasped with delight as the fully erected shaft sprang forth and greeted her.

A cocky grin formed in the corner of her mouth after witnessing how her wife ogled at her erection "I think it's unfair that you're still covered," she motioned to the underwear and saw Laura gazed at her with wanton.

"You're so demanding," Laura retorted with a naughty grin and carefully removed the silk underwear.

"No… you're demanding," she disagreed and before the Princess can retaliate, she put her hands around Laura's waist and brought their bodies closer, before claiming Laura's lips. She closed her eyes and tried going slowly by kissing her wife sweetly even if all the nerves in her body was flickering and skipping with anticipation and desire. She felt Laura's hands caressed the back of her neck and under her ear which resulted in an instant purr of content from her.

Laura softly moaned back, enjoying the slow, sweet sensation of being touched on the sides of her breasts, and hips.

"I like it when you touch first my sides…" Laura commented in between soft kisses, "Before you-"

Laura was not even finished talking when she kissed back and she sneaked her hand in between them and groped one of the Princess' luscious soft breast.

"Put my hand on your breast," she finished it and earned a soft moan from Laura as they resumed kissing and her hand continued its sweet ministration on Laura's left breast and nipple that was hardening to her touch. Caught off guard, "Ahhh…" she groaned unexpectedly as she felt Laura's hands cupped both her breasts and kneaded them harder than she was doing to Laura's own. Panting she released from the kiss, opened her eyes and saw the naughty glint in her wife's hazel ones.

"Yes, on my breast," Laura said displaying a wicked grin before finding two hard nubs and squeezed them in between her thumbs and index fingers.

"Ahhh! Cupcake!" she shouted in mixed pain and pleasure as she felt Laura's fingers torturously tugged and squeezed her nipples. Now the tables were turned and she no longer had the control of Laura's breasts. "I thought you said we're taking it slow," she complained in between kisses, looking at Laura. "You never said about torturing me…"

"Oh, Carm… that's the beauty of it," the Princess leaned and whispered in the most alluring and diabolical way. "You don't know what's going to happen next…"

Still in pain and disoriented, she felt Laura bit her pulse point before sucking it hard, like she used to do with Laura.

"Cupcake…" she whimpered like a lost kitty.

She never expected that her wife was going to bite her again when Laura switched to the other side of her neck and planted a kiss before biting it hard and then licked it.

"What had gotten into you?" she asked, as she felt her heartbeat dwindling at the calming effect of Laura's tongue licking the swollen area consolingly.
"Nothing…” Laura replied like the innocent princess that she was.

"Well, you could have told me what's on your mind, so I'll be prepared…” she returned, watching her wife's lips kissed down its way to her chest.

"I like to keep you in your toes." Laura retorted pausing to smile, before kissing further.

"I can sense that you're into something no good… Aaahh." She relaxed at the wet soft sensation of Laura's tongue licking, swirling on the areola then to her aching sore nipples, causing her erection to throb harder as she got lost in lust.

"My poor big cat, does it still hurt?” Laura hummed apologetically, switching from one nipple to the other, making sure that both received equal pleasurable soothing lick after being tortured.

It did feel good and heavenly, as she can't avoid groaning with delight.

But before she could even reply and realized what was happening, she found herself dragged, pushed, landed on the bed and lying on her back. The next thing she knew, a mouth-watering naked Princess was climbing on top of her. Laura's knees sank into the softness of the mattress on both sides of her hips, and then the Princess settled above her crotch. Her eyes widened with surprise as she witnessed Laura's glistening mound sank slowly on her raging erection.

"Mmm…” Laura let out a prolonged moan after sliding her moist folds down around the stiff rod in one smooth motion, savoring the sensation of being stretched and filled completely.

Gasping for an air, "Ahhh…” She exclaimed with delight, after watching her thick hardness disappeared in Laura's wet mound and feeling the tight clasp of Laura's center around her. "Cupcake, you're so tight and warm…,” she expressed in a deep raspy tone. "You feel so good," She took time appreciating the stunning site of Laura above her, as her eyes caressed its way towards those gorgeous dangling breasts of her wife's, she thought of feasting on them afterwards. But in the meantime, she let Laura take control of her body. She relished at the same time the feeling of being sheathed fully inside Laura, savoring the warmth and slickness around her. "God, Laura, you're so beautiful."

"So are you, Carm," Laura returned genuinely with a naughty grin.

They both held each other's gaze and savored this moment of being connected not just physically but emotionally and sexually.

"I love you Carm," Was Laura's sincere words despite grinning mischievously. The Princess' right hand reached down and gently cupped that exquisite jawline that she loved so much.

Gazing back with full of love, "I love you more Cupcake," she reaffirmed her love to the only woman she worshipped in this world, as she felt the softness of Laura's hand caressing her left cheek.

Every time she entered inside Laura they always take a moment to look at each other's face, conveying to each other how much they mean and love one another. How much they desire one another… how much they ache to claim each other.

When gazing at each other became painfully and frustratingly hard… she began to buck her hip upwards. Laura stopped caressing her jawline and sat upright. Then she felt Laura's hands back on her breasts, kneading them.

"Be an obedient cat and I'll be gentle to you," Laura said displaying a reassuring smile.
She chuckled nervously and put her hands on Laura's hips and held her wife above her. "I doubt this position would give me the freedom to misbehave," she returned, with a sarcastic smirk. She did not trust her wife's words, as she noticed Laura still looking at her under those heavy-lidded eyes. She learned to recognize it whenever they were making love; it was Laura's 'sweet little angel devil in disguise' look.

"You don't have to move at all," Laura retaliated with a smile. "Let me do the moving and just stay hard as you are…"

"I'm always hard for you, my love," she said, distracting Laura in the process with a seductive smirk and received a naughty grin.

Laura rose and then sank slowly in a torturous way; rising up until only the head of her length was within her, then sinking down again slowly, until no longer holding her weight and fully sheathed. They maintained this torturous rhythm, feeling every moment dragging and becoming more frustrating but pleasurable.

Chest heaving deeply, she continued to buck her hips slowly matching Laura's, savoring the gentle and tickling sensation of Laura's fingers lightly squeezing her nipples, while keeping up in her wife's changing rhythm. Laura's fingers began to tug her aching tits…"Mmm," the combined pain and pleasure on her nipples, and how Laura clasped inside her thick shaft were enough to make her harder, tighter and ready to explode. But she fought the urge, wanting Laura to enjoy the ride and the control.

And just as she was getting the hang of it…

"Carm! Faster!" Laura ordered, rising faster up and down in smooth motion. "Harder!

And she was right, the sweet little angel suddenly turned into a naughty little devil.

She felt Laura grabbed her hands that were on her wife's hips and put them over her head, and she was pinned down by the hands of the impatient wife of hers. As if possessed by the horny devil, Laura began to slam her mound harder on the stiffness of her rod, in short, quick thrust, launching into hurried hard thrusts while firmly holding both her hands above her head.

"Ahh…" Laura cried with glorious delight.

If she hadn't had a penis, it would look like Laura was slamming inside her and pounding her hard. Not having recovered from the change of rhythm yet, she felt helpless underneath Laura, as she straddled her thighs wider and let Laura do the thrusting on her thick hardness while their breasts slammed at each other with Laura's every plunge.

Short loud moans filled the room as they both get lost in their lust-filled daze.

Laura seemed desperate and beyond caring about anything except taking further and deeper the thick cock inside her, crashing her swollen lower lips roughly into the heavy thick rod.

Relinquishing control and surrendering every fiber of her nerve, every lustful desire and her whole being to her wife, she growled and felt her balls tightened and her shaft pulsating, at being ravage with raw carnal needs. Despite how hard and huge her member felt, she had no intention of rushing and finishing, not until Laura was done with her. Another growl escaped her mouth as she felt the heavy strain of Laura's hands pinning her hard and claiming her like a wild ferocious vixen. She gawked at how Laura rode that thick shaft of hers faster, harder and quickly slathering it in white with the Princess' creamy essence.
Laura began to elicit loud short whimpers.

She felt the ride of Laura's orgasm starting as the Princess' core became greedy and gripping her swollen tight shaft. Heart pounding madly and growing light-headed; she let out a delirious groan as if telling Laura that she cannot hold on any longer.

As if her wife understood her growl, Laura clenched in agony and cried her name before shuddering above her and released a gush of liquid on her length. She felt wet all over her groin, but she was too distracted to care as she watched Laura's face contorted in ecstasy, while her throbbing cock swelled and burst inside her wife.

"Laura!" She glorified her wife's name, as the first spurt of her rich thick semen filled Laura like a flood; strong, rapid and abundant in supply.

She continued shooting jet after jet of her warm loads inside Laura, filling the Princess to the brim, never stopping even if she felt their combined cum leaked out and trickled on her crotch down to her thighs.

Quivering, she thrust hard one last time inside Laura's slick mound and released two powerful spurts of her seed. If Laura had not been with a child now, this would surely get her wife pregnant by the amount of cum that she let loose in Laura's womb. Her chest always swelled with pride every time she filled her wife's womb heavy and full with her cream, knowing that she had planted her seed and would bear the fruit of their love.

"Carm, your body's amazing," Laura complimented after regaining her breath.

Coming face to face with her very cheerful and satisfied wife, she noticed and felt the throes like she had plowed a field for a whole day and cut woods at the same time, "Cupcake, not that I didn't love being ravaged and claimed roughly by you, but my hands are starting to hurt."

"Oh! Sorry…"

The Princess released her from the tight hold and gave her a sloppy kiss, before resting on top of her, nuzzling the little nose that she loved to tease in the depth of her neck. Bodies still tense and sweaty from the intense sex, she wrapped her arms gently around her wife, as she remained sheathed.

Still hard and pulsing inside Laura, "God, Cupcake, I can't seem to stop coming," she claimed in between panting. "You rode me so hard; I never felt so helpless and surrendering everything fully until now."

Despite the dimness and Laura's face burrowed in the warmth of her neck, she could feel her wife smiling at her unexpected comment. Then she felt Laura's lips rubbed against the side of her neck, nuzzling deeper at the sensitive area under her ear, sniffing before kissing her wet skin.

"I love how you smell right after we made love," Laura said out of the blue, lifting her head up.

She now found herself gazing at Laura and damn! Her wife looked even more beautiful and always glowing every after sex.

"Well, I love the whole you," she claimed, voice husky, cracking with lust and exhaustion, and kissed the crown of her wife's head. "You surely enjoyed it…” she can't help mentioning how Laura nailed her down and took over control of her body.

Laura met her gaze and gave her the signature lop-sided naughty grin, "You're not the only one who could do it…"
"Do what?"

"Claim my body… I can be wild too and territorial, and claim yours," Laura declared, flashing a confident wide smile. "Wanna have another round?"

"I thought you'll never ask," she purred and elicited a deep carnal growl coated with pure lust and desire. "This time I'm topping you…"

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Noticed any grammar mistake? Please let me know below, would really appreciate it if anyone could point it out at once since I'm so lazy to work with a beta reader. Please let me know also if I should combine their 'feeding time' with sex or just purely that, since they both had it freely now that they were alone ;-P

And I'm aware that I used too many 'damn!' words, but it's in Medieval times and I can't use the word 'fuck', so if you have any alternative swearing words to replace it that could be used during Medieval times, just tell me, thanks!
Carm and Laura are still savoring their privacy and freedom and had been a bit daring with their newfound confidence when it comes to their sexual needs. Even if they enjoyed living and doing things like the commoners, they are not equipped to do those heavy manual labors for a long time.

Carmilla

She was strongly against it and would rather spend the rest of the afternoon sprawled on bed… procrastinating… or sleeping… or making love with Laura. Honestly, she preferred the latter and would rather stay in the warmth of Laura's breasts after their feeding time was over. But when Laura grumbled about having sore nipples, that made her regretful and remorseful and she eventually agreed to her wife's idea after apologizing for being too greedy. Laura, on the other hand, shared the blame too, since the Princess had been insatiable also.

It was one of those perfect days that should not be wasted staying inside according to the Princess. And Laura won't let this beautiful day passed by, not until they relished the sun, the breeze caressed their faces and listened to the birds chirping while forest creatures loomed behind thick bushes and tall pine trees, as if in search for food, or simply curious of seeing additional creatures in their realm.

Lying on the thick fur of a white blanket spread on the grass, around her was a jug of wine and two half-filled goblets, a handful of grapes and some leftovers apple strudels from yesterday's supper. Head resting on Laura's lap and wearing a satisfied smirk, after being fed with the juicy but slightly bitter red grapes, she let out another sigh of contentment as she felt fresh crisp air tickled her bare skin.

Never had they been so near to experiencing natures at its best… the solemnity… the beauty… the intimacy, it truly was calming and fulfilling.

Shifting on the sheepskin that she snatched from the cabin, Laura sat comfortably on the makeshift picnic blanket, wearing a content smile after successfully convincing the broody cat to go out.

"Carm…" Laura uttered, as her dainty little hands began their sweet exploration, fondling those wild wavy dark locks, while the other treaded maliciously downwards to the visible bulge forming underneath the thin fabric of those braies.

"Hmm…” she muffled a long frustrated groan as she felt her wife's hand palming harder her growing erection, tracing down her length and sending sparks of fire to every nerve of her body. Her Cupcake decided to make this picnic a bit interesting for her after she agreed, declaring in alluring tone:

'I will make it worth your while.'

She thought her wife would be quick and be done by now, after pulling her trousers down below her knees a while ago. But no, Laura had stopped stripping her of the last barrier of clothes that could give her complete pleasure and decided to play with her slowly hardening shaft with her braies still on.
"I love this picnic…" there was a hint of wickedness behind the naïve voice.

"Me too, Cupcake…" she purred…"Ahhhh…" eliciting another groan under the naughty hand of her wife, palming her slowly up and down while adding a bit firmness to the touch, making her grew harder by the moment.

At last, Laura's hand fumbled for the strings of the braies, untying it before gently pulled down the unwanted barrier, lifting her hips in the process to make it smoother and faster for Laura to free her hardening member.

They had never been this bold before and as much as she wanted to deny it, immodest … at least not in the gardens and around the courtyard of the castle. Not one of them would dare. But having the forest all for themselves, and knowing that nobody and no one was nearby to witness this lewdness, she felt more daring, more lustful of having the freedom to do anything they want around the perimeter of their love nest. There was this feeling of elation… and liberation.

Just like when Laura teased her yesterday…

"Cupcake, what are you doing?" She asked, once she put down the empty pail beside the well and was about to retrieve some fresh water. But Laura ignored her, and started nipping on her neck, kissing all the way through her jawlines, and finally licking her ear. Laura's naughty mouth found her earlobe and bit it lightly resulting in a low growl from her.

"I've been trying to tell you the other day, while you're cutting some woods… about this…"

Laura whispered like a hungry vixen, licking the most sensitive spot under her ear.

"Tell me what?" she asked, breathing heavily as she felt Laura's hand palmed her semi-hard member. She cannot stop herself from rubbing her growing erection against Laura's hand. Since they arrived in the cottage, every time Laura touched her, her body always reacted wildly. Consumed with lust, she did not even bother to hear the reply, she grabbed Laura's hand and she led them towards the cottage. Once the door shut, she had Laura for an appetizer before eating supper.

Right now she just realized that her wife might have some fascination doing it outside and she was too impatient and horny to wait and hear her wife's wish yesterday. And since Laura complained about being sore, she had no choice but to restrain her voracious libido.

She never thought that flaunting herself could make her hot to trot and yearning madly. And the thrill was causing her shaft to become stiffer, thicker, standing straight and proud in its naked glory.

"Mmm… Cupcake… don't you think we're corrupting the forest creatures… mmm… with this… ahh… scene?" she remarked eliciting a groan as Laura's finger ran through the thick vein on the underside of her shaft. Before those dainty little greedy fingers of Laura's wrapped around her thick erection, and slid a hand from base to tip, checking out its girth and exploring the length as if it was the first time her wife saw it.

"Carm, animals have been living in blissful innocence since the creation. They never sinned and had no guilt and shame… therefore this is just a natural sight for them, just like when they saw Adam and Eve before." Laura reasoned out like they were just having a normal conversation while touching lightly the tip of the broad head as it started to trickle pre-cum.

She raised her left eyebrows and smirked at her wife's 'reasonable theory'. The one thing she liked about Laura was her wife never shied away from expressing herself when it comes to religion and...
"For someone who is thin and average on height, you surely are blessed down here, Carm," Laura said nonchalantly while continuing to explore the thick erection in front of her. "No wonder my handmaidens and the rest of the women in the castle are all infatuated on you."

Shocked and surprised, "Are you talking to the girls about my panther? You said you never-"

Eyes widened, "Of course not!" The Princess defended quickly, still holding the throbbing shaft around her hand. "But they're not blind… and even if I haven't seen another man's… hmmm… panther… I could say that you're thick and big because I always felt fully filled and overwhelmed whenever you're inside me…"

"Hmmm, is that so?" she purred, displaying her diabolical smirk. "Too bad I can't do it now…"

"Well, Your Royal Hugeness, I never thought that making love three to four times a day in five days straight would leave me satisfyingly exhausted and sore," the Princess claimed with a content smile. "So try to enjoy the rest of this picnic…" Laura whispered and leaned down, as their lips and tongues began a slow and yet erotic dance of dominance. "Because this is the closest you'll get to having sex right now."

Heartbeat racing, she let out another deep groan and surrendered to desire as Laura's soft hand slowly pumped up and down on her fully exposed thick phallus. Feeling her wife's other hand cupped her jawline; she closed her eyes and savor the sensation of Laura's lips claiming her own ones, while the other one worked on rousing his royal hugeness.

"You've been sweet to me the past days… and not to mention very naughty too," Laura mumbled in between kisses, after capturing those naughty hungry lips that always enveloped her nipples.

"You deserved it… mmmm," she tried holding on a bit longer, as she felt Laura's hands cupped one of her balls and fondled it. "That really feels good…"

"And I really appreciate your thoughtfulness," the Princess continued, with a mixed hint of regret and naughtiness, giving the other ball the same attention it deserved. "Helping me with washing the clothes and cooking too…"

"Mmm… I appreciate yours too…" she mumbled lustfully. With the way Laura held her sensitive thick erection, she did not know how long she could last.

"I hope this would be enough for now," Laura's voice became deeper and vicious while pumping faster.

"Oh, trust me Cupcake, it's more than enough…" she rasped, growing tighter and harder.

"My whole body is sore, especially my breasts and my private part… all because of you and your greedy hungry mouth and your enormous panther here…"

She slightly lost control after hearing Laura's provocative comments and bucked her hip upwards against Laura's firm grip on her girth. A growl escaped her mouth in between kisses as Laura continued to pump her like crazy until her shaft was glistening with her own cream and her balls were pulsating and tightening.

"Cupcake, I'm sorry… I really didn't mean to… ahh… give you any… mmmm… discomfort," she did not know how she even managed to composed a decent sentence, when, in between kisses, and the sweet torturous ministrations on her throbbing shaft, "Ahhhhh! "Cupcake!" she shouted after she
found her release.

She erupted there and then, her heavy member shooting thick jets of cream in the air, landing on her stomach and covering Laura's hand in rich spurt of cum. "Cupcake, you're amazing!"

She panted in between words after coming down from the highs of her sudden peak. Lately, she had been like the younger version of herself and had difficulties holding longer and felt horny all the time. Perhaps this was the result of being suppressed and sexually frustrated for the past two weeks, and when she finally had the chance to have Laura all for herself, her libido became uncontrollable.

"Carm, that's just the sweetest moment I've heard you say, Cupcake," the Princess teased after releasing from the kiss, grinning naughtily. "It echoed throughout the woods…"

Recovering from that quick but strong orgasm, she rose and placed her hand possessively at the back of Laura's neck, erasing the naughty smirk of her wife's face and claimed Laura's lips and mouth like a hungry beast.

After releasing from the kiss, she stared at those hazel orbs with full of wanton, "Why don't Ilick you down there so that the forest creatures can hear you scream my name too?" she demanded, her voice thick with desire and hoarser from the recent climax. Still hard, she reached down to pull her trousers and braies, before she tucked her stiff member inside and kneeled. She had to 'leash' her panther since there will be no penetration involve after she tasted Laura. Her wife was sore due to her insatiability… they could still engage in wilder sex in the next days when Laura felt better. But at this moment her wife's comfort and well-being was the main priority.

Just as she was about to nail Laura on the ground, hoping to have a taste of her wife's lustful remnants, she heard the unexpectedly increasing thunder of horse hooves and distracted her from dragging up the hem of Laura's kirtle. Those delicate eyebrows wrinkled in fury after being disturbed, and if looks can kill, whoever these intruders were, should back off now to escape her wrath.

When they looked to where the sound came from, a carriage suddenly loomed in front of the cabin and stopped abruptly accompanied by two horsemen at the back. Out of instinct, she grabbed the nearest weapon she can find which was the ax and hastily rose, pulling Laura up along with her and drew her Princess protectively behind her.

She was about to demand who that dared come to her cabin when suddenly one of the horsemen went down and she recognized her personal royal guard, as Armitage bowed and kneeling in front of her immediately. That was the only time she recognized their uniforms and the Karnstein coat of arms.

"What's the meaning of this?" was her angry remark, still holding the ax with both hands as if ready to strike. "I didn't summon for you to come!"

"Forgive me Your Highness for intruding, but we found someone in our camp and demanded that we bring this person to Your Highness as quick as possible, as per order of Her Majesty," Armitage relayed and then stood up and walked towards the door of the carriage.

He carefully guided and escorted the person with a blindfold out of the carriage and towards them. Her eyebrows furrowed in confusion and before she realized whom Armitage was referring to.

"Oh my God… Lafontaine! Are you alright?!" was Laura's worried panic comment and ran towards the calm Valet, removing the cover on their eyes.
"Why did you have to blindfold them?" Laura chastised the serious Royal Guard, who did not have a trace of concern about what happened to the valet.

"Because my personal royal guard is just following my orders," she explained at once, to her now upset looking wife. "This place is my own personal refuge and nobody is allowed to know its location except for my trusted Royal Guards."

"But Laf is your personal Valet," the Princess implied stubbornly.

"The more reason to conceal it," she quipped, ignoring her wife's irritated tone and glared at the unwanted guest. "Not to be inhospitable, but you have three words to explain to me why you're here before I send you back with Armitage."

"Queen summons you," LaFontaine stated clearly.

Suddenly, she felt her throat dry and swallowed hard. Why did her mother always managed to give her the chill? She remained silent, contemplating what to say. And when there was nothing that came out, she cleared her throat to hide her nervousness.

After summoning her strength back, "Go on, what does my Queen Mother want?"

"Her Majesty summons you to come back to the castle at once since His Majesty would be leaving tomorrow for an urgent meeting at Wien," LaFontaine explained in a firm and formal manner like of a herald. "Her Majesty insisted that in the absence of the King, the heir to the throne should be in the castle in case something unexpected should happen…"

Perhaps sensing her hesitation…

"Carl, Her Majesty is right and I think we should already go back," Laura chimed in in a calm tone, not leaving Laf's side.

"But that's ridiculous, my father and I used to hunt together and are out in the castle for a day," she tried to find a way not to obey her mother's order.

"Her Majesty pointed out that, the King would be gone for a week and as the heir to the throne, His Highness should take the responsibility of reviewing and finalizing the contracts of the new alliances before the coming Harvest Festival, and of course, there should always be a Karnstein in the castle," LaFontaine once again stated in a fine but firm tone like of an annoying herald. "And Her Majesty also strongly stated that should His Royal Highness refused to obey, the Queen would personally come here to fetch you."

And that was all it took for her to agree… "We'll leave tomorrow morning," Her father might be the king, but when her mother wanted something, her father can never refuse her mother and will definitely reveal the location of the cottage in a heartbeat. Perhaps Laura had caught the disappointment in her expression, as she passed at them and strode towards the cabin, the Princess rushed behind her quickly.

Laura caught her as soon as they crossed the threshold of the cottage and two arms were instantly wrapped around her neck tightly, and she found herself face to face with her adorable wife, locking her in a tight embrace and seemed ready to cheer her up.

"Hey, don't be mad, we both had a good time for almost a week and we can come back again," was the Princess' encouraging words displaying the most adorable smile. "And Laf is right, her Majesty felt safer if you're there since she didn't know where we are."
How Laura always managed to lighten up her mood, she never fathomed. But whenever Laura smiled at her, everything seemed to light up around her. Her wife was truly her sunshine. "Alright, but carrot top is camping out together with the guards outside," she said, after freeing from Laura's hold.

"Carl!" Laura protested, but then batted those thick eyelashes. "They can sleep on the chaise lounge by the fireplace over there. Please?"

"Fine!" was her annoyed reply. She was familiar with her Valet's menacing habit of interrupting her at the right time that it always haunted her. "But if they tried to disturb us while in bed, they'll be joining Armitage and the guards outside."

"I'll let them know, thanks!" Laura smiled wide like the little girl who received a cat on Christmas day, before running back outside and fetched the smiling Valet.

That night, despite having a bountiful supper sent by Perry, she decided to go to bed early and left LaFontaine and Laura still chatting at the dinner table, while Armitage and five other guards camped outside of the cabin. Suddenly she was not in the mood to be around with anyone except her wife and felt a throbbing pain in her head. She reached up for her temple and tried to rub away the pain, blaming LaFontaine's arrival for this as she grumbled on the way upstairs.

By the morning, the pain had not receded and yet she remained silent about it. Lack of sleep last night combined with plenty of physical labor for the past days had caught up with her.

As soon as her eyes met the sunlight, she winced, brows furrowed tightly with pain while she stepped inside the carriage, and took a seat next to Laura.

"Hey, are you alright?" she felt Laura's hand caressing her face and hair gently as the horses started to gallop. "You looked pale and tired. Should I call Laf first so they can take a look at you?"

"No, I'm alright," she lied, ignoring her wife's worried expression and looked at the window on the opposite side of the carriage, and stole a glimpse of her blindfolded Valet sitting behind Armitage on a horse. Laura had offered LaFontaine to sit with them, but she glared at them like a savage and her Valet instantly got the message. But to make Laura at ease, she told her wife that her Valet can ride the other carriage once they reached the royal guards camp.

"Would you like to rest on my lap?" Laura offered, not convinced.

"No thanks, it's just half a day ride, we'll be home in no time," she commented, avoiding her wife's concerned eyes.

"Why didn't you tell me that we're being surrounded by dozens of guards in the forest?" Laura commented, slightly worried.

She arched her left eyebrows and gave her wife a shrugged. "I just thought it didn't matter to you... and besides, they have all their orders not to come nearer."

"But we've fooled around and almost done it outside!" was Laura's hyper restrained retort, recalling how they misbehaved.

"And it was fun!" she said and displayed her signature naughty smirk. "Calm down Cupcake, nobody had seen us, since they are all afraid that their eyes would be taken."

"Arggh! Why do you always like to tease me?!" Laura reproached growing irritated.
Not wanting to upset her wife, "I'm sorry… I didn't mean it," she sat closer and wrapped her arms around the Princess and nuzzled her face on the smoothness of Laura's neck. She felt Laura calmed quickly and caressed her hair and nape in return.

It was past midday when they arrived in the castle, and to her relief, Laura was the one who ended up falling asleep on her lap the entire journey, or else she would be bombarded with questions and worried remarks about Laf riding blindfolded on a horse and how she was feeling, and the thought of being caught by one of the guards while indulging in something naughty for the past days.

Upon arrival, they were escorted by LaFontaine at once to the throne room, despite her strong refusal and were told that it was the Queen's order.

Once the door to the throne room opened and as they approached her mother's throne, her head pounded, hard and sharp. And her heart beat faster and a chill ran down her spine, as she saw the cold icy stare that her mother was giving them. She was surprised when she saw Perry standing beside the Queen's chair and looking equally serious as her mother. The usually heavy guarded throne room was almost empty. There were no royal guards around and the only people inside the room were her mother, Perry on the left side and Bertha on the right, and LaFontaine following behind them.

"My Queen Mother, it's a pleasure to see you again," she remarked after she and Laura bowed and gave their respect in front of the Queen.

"It's lovely to see both of you too," the Queen replied hiding the sarcasm in an elegant tone. "Tell me, did you two have a great time?"

Perhaps feeling a bit nervous, Laura remained silent but looked at the Queen's direction.

"We did, My Queen Mother," she replied with a smile, trying to make things lighter even if she felt her mother's piercing gaze penetrating on her, and Perry's angry stare adding to the tension. "And I hope that you can forgive me for not asking your permission first before going on a short vacation."

"What's done is done, my son, there's no need for you to ask for forgiveness, have you forgotten?" the Queen stated in a cold but firm voice, eyeing both of them in the front. "But I just wanted to tell both of you that I and Lady Perry were very worried about that deed you carried out."

She was about to reason out but was silenced at once by her mother-in-law.

"Princess Laura, I want you to know that Lady Perry here had not been calm ever since you left," the Queen looked to her left side, before fixing her cold stare again in front. "Your Lady In Waiting had been worried like a mother; I hope you won't upset her anymore. And to you and Carl, you have
both put the Karnstein Kingdom at risk. Did it not occur to you that the heir to the throne and future heir might be abducted or worst get killed at the same time, which would leave the Karnstein Kingdom without an heir? The next time you thought of going in a secret hideaway, think of the consequences first of what your actions might cause. You are no longer a mere prince or princess, you're the Crown Prince and Princess of Karnstein the future ruler of this Kingdom, and you shall prioritize your obligations first to the kingdom. Do I make myself clear?"

This time, they both nodded in reply. The Queen's brutal but honest words hit them hard. And before they can speak, or air their side…

"Princess Laura, you may go now with Lady Perry and you will obey all of her orders from now on since this isn't just for your own good but for the baby too." the Queen explained in a stern motherly tone. "LaFontaine, make sure that you check up the Princess and that she is perfectly well. You may all leave, except for you, Carl."

She gave Laura an apologetic gaze before the Princess was led out to the door, joined by Perry, LaFontaine, and Bertha. Once the door closed, she found herself on a hot spot, as she stood still and waited for her mother to reprimand her further.

"I hope you learned your lesson," the Queen spoke again in a stern voice. "You know that I am always worried when you're gone. But not telling me where you are was one of the painful things a mother can feel. You had me so worried, Carl. You just disappeared without a word. Don't you care anymore what I feel? You told your father where you're going but not me, why? Am I not that important to you anymore?"

Haunted with guilt, she moved closer to the throne, all she could think about was to apologize, but that would just make her mother more upset. "My Queen Mother, you will always be important to me. And I did not intend to hurt you, I just thought of rekindling my relationship with the Princess and took her on a short getaway," she related, growing ashamed and realizing just now how irresponsible she was. "I know I have been selfish and I was wrong not to inform you. I swear not to do it again. But please don't force me to tell you where I have been, and I hope you will respect that."

"Very well, if you insist, I will not ask further," the Queen retorted with a hint of bitterness. "But you still made me anxious and I wasn't able to sleep well since I don't know where you are or when you're coming back."

The firmness on the Queen's voice was now replaced with a mild low tone. And when she looked into her mother's eyes, all she could see was longing. Without hesitating, she walked towards her mother's throne, kneeled in front and reached for the Queen's right hand and kissed the back of her mother's palm. "My Queen Mother, I won't hurt you again, I promise," she reassured her mother and felt right away the Queen's elegant soft hands cupping her face and kissed her on both cheeks slowly.

"I missed you, Carl, don't ever leave me like that again," the Queen whispered firmly. "I hoped you missed your mother too."

"I do," she returned, with a smile as her mother's hand held still her face drawing her nearer and stared at her eyes. "I missed you too, my Queen Mother."

"Did you really mean it?" the Queen asked, searching for any sign of doubt as they remained staring at each other.

"I do," was her feeble reply and held her mother's gaze as if she was put under a spell. Every time
she got close with the Queen, she felt like being drawn to her mother's world and everything around her were forgotten. She relished the warmth of her Queen Mother's hand around her cheeks and she felt like her fourteen-year-old self again, always seeking for her mother's touch. She was about to close her eyes and savor this moment, but she was suddenly hit by a throbbing pain in the head, and then she felt suddenly hot and sweating.

"Carl? Are you alright?" was the Queen's worried remark. "Carl, you're warm, are you sure you're-

And before she could hear another word, she blacked out and surrendered to exhaustion.

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Disoriented and groggy, "Wh-what happened? Where am I?" While she slowly regained her consciousness, she winced as she felt this throbbing pain still in her head.

"Shhh, Darling, stay in bed,"

A familiar voice ordered her. When she opened her eyes, she realized that she was already on her own bed in her chamber, and somebody was sitting beside her bed. "My Queen Mother, what happened?"

"You're sick, I've ordered LaFontaine to check up on you, they said that you've been stressed and exhausted, and consumed too much wine," the Queen explained rising from the chair and sat on the bed by her side. "I have sent for your supper, it will come soon."

She felt right away her mother's arms gathered her and brought her face to her mother's bosom, while the Queen's hand fondled her hair, the way she liked it when she was a child and sick.

"What have you done in that place that made you sick?" the Queen wondered, voice full of worries.

The episode of the past days flashed in her thoughts and she cannot help but gush with pride, excitement, and longing as she recalled how amazing were hers and Laura's lovemaking and how content they were taking care of each other during that time in the cottage. She had always wanted to be alone with Laura to show to her wife that she could take care of her too with or without the help of anyone from the castle.

"Don't worry; I'm going to take care of you now." The Queen uttered, breaking the silence.

Suddenly, she was hit by a pang of longing. "Where's Laura? I need to see her."

"Laura is alright and is ordered by Perry to rest for days... the poor Princess lost some weight," the Queen related in a firm tone. "And she can't see you since you're sick, she might catch a cold too. We don't want her and the baby to be sick also."

"But for how long?" she grumbled under her breath. She cannot bear not to see her wife even just for a day.

"Lafontaine informed me, at least a week, or when you're fully recovered," the Queen stated in a motherly tone. "You dare whine at me?"

She lifted her head from her mother's bosom and sought the Queen's gaze, "I didn't mean to, forgive me my Queen Mother," was her sheepish reply, then bowed her head but a finger lifted her chin, coaxing her to look at the Queen's eyes.

"How many times do I have to tell you that you don't need to apologize," the Queen chastised and
smiled a bit. "Now, be a good prince and obey everything that I tell you and you'll be well in no
time. I asked Bertha to help since I don't want your Valet to be sick too. LaFontaine is helping with
the preparation for the Harvest Festival and at the same time, looking after Princess' Laura's needs.
She needs to be monitored now and then to ensure the baby's well-being."

"Are Laura and the baby alright?" she was suddenly plagued with guilt after exposing her wife and
unborn child for unnecessary illness. She cannot forgive herself if anything bad happened to Laura or
the baby.

"LaFontaine assured me that Laura would be fine, and so is the baby," the Queen elaborated in a firm
tone. "But the princess looked frail and exhausted too. She needed a well-deserved rest and
nourishment. I don't know what you two had done there, but it looked like you are both physically
exhausted and lacked food."

If only her mother knew what kind of things they have done in the cottage…

But being the obedient prince that her mother adored, she decided to divert her mother's attention to
something else. She took her mother's hand and kissed the back of it, and held it tight, before gazing
at those dark orbs. "Thank you for taking care of me, my Queen Mother," she received a genuine
smile instantly and the Queen cupped her face and fondled her hair.

"I love taking care of you, Carl," was the Queen's gentle reply. "You're my precious one and I
would do anything to make you safe."

Her mother kissed her cheek slowly and she felt the warmth of the Queen's bosom on her face again,
as soft gentle arms cradled her. How it felt so good to be in her mother's warm embrace, only with
her can the Queen be this gentle and loving. She suddenly wondered if her father received this kind
of affection too.

The Queen's rare display of tenderness was halted when a light knock on the door interrupted them.

"Who is it?" the Queen asked in a cold tone, regaining composure but remained on the bed.

"It's Bertha, Your Majesty!" the voice behind the door replied.

"Ah, your supper has arrived!"

She felt her mother cupped her chin and raised it for her to look up.

"Now, be a good boy and eat your supper and don't give Bertha a hard time," the Queen ordered and
gracefully released from the embrace and left the bed.

Her eyes followed her mother's direction, as the Queen stood straight and straightened her gown and
put on the crown that was on the side table.

"I am just going to bath and change, and then I will return right away," the Queen informed like they
have done this many times.

Suddenly she understood what her mother meant. Slightly nervous, she gathered her strength and
said, "My Queen Mother, would it be alright if I just sleep alone tonight?"

The Queen's eyes narrowed and paused for a moment as if digesting what happened. Eyebrows
raised, "What's the matter? You've always wanted me to sleep with you when you're sick."

She swallowed hard, losing confidence as she watched her mother's gentle gaze turned into a
suspicious stare. But when she recalled facing the wrath of a certain Cupcake, she did not have to hesitate anymore. "I do want you to be with me when I'm sick, but you don't need to sleep beside me during the night. Because I don't want you to get sick too," she said, earnestly, hoping that her mother would accept her reasons. She did not receive a reply at once, as the Queen stared at her as if assessing what was going on. "With King Father traveling and me lying sick here, who else would take care of the kingdom?"

Not breaking their eye contact, "You may come in Bertha!" The Queen ordered and approached the bed again. "Very well, I will leave you now and let you rest for the night. I will come back tomorrow and feed you your breakfast."

She let out the breath that she was holding and nodded. "Thank you my Queen Mother, have a pleasant night," she said and bowed her head as her mother came closer and kissed her cheek.

"Goodnight Carl," the Queen uttered before signaling Bertha to come with the dinner tray. "Make sure that you stay with my son tonight, I don't want him to be left unattended while he's sick."

"I will Your Majesty," Bertha replied in an equally firm tone and bowed.

She was about to argue when she heard her mother's order, but the Queen flashed a cold glare towards her and she was left speechless when her mother waved a finger to silence her.

"It's either you let me sleep here or let Bertha watched over you?" The Queen demanded slightly annoyed.

"Fine… Bertha can stay," she decided to choose the one that will not cause trouble between her and Laura.

"Good." The Queen said displaying a satisfied controlled smiled before leaving the chamber.

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It took almost ten days for her to recover from the flu and to be declared free from a contagious disease that may harm Laura's health. Perry had been strict as a mama bear and made sure that Laura regained her ideal weight and received proper nourishment and enough rest. It had been ten damn days too that she did not see Laura and it was making her crazy. Luckily, Bertha was there to provide some news about her wife or else she did not know how she would remain sane in the four corners of her room, with just her former nanny and Queen Mother that were allowed to see her.

Heart pounding and sweating with excitement, she left her Valet in a jiffy as soon as they gave her the clearance to get out of the Prince's chamber and ran towards the Princess' chamber at once.

Still wearing her robe, and hair wet from the morning bath, she stormed right into the Princess' chamber and strode towards where Laura was.

"Laura?" she called and ignored the surprised stare that she received from Perry and Sarah Jane, who was standing by the bed, holding a pillow and the other fixing the curtains around the bed. Her eyes anxiously search for her Princess and were growing irritated already when she did not see Laura on the bed. But a smile formed in the corner of her mouth when she finally saw her precious Cupcake sitting by the dressing table surrounded by Betty and Natalie, helping the princess on her morning routine. "Cupcake!"

Laura turned her head at once and searched where the sound came from. "Carl?"

Her smile grew wider when she saw her wife rose from the chair, and the two handmaidens stood on
the side to make way for the Princess to meet her Prince.

"Carl! You're fine! Thank God!"

Laura cheered and ran towards her; she opened her arms wide, ready to take her giggling Princess in her arms.

"I've missed you Cupcake!" she exclaimed her chest overflowing with excitement and gladness, running towards to meet her Princess. She embraced Laura tight and hold for a while, savoring the moment of their sweet reunion. But then something caught her attention when she felt something blocked between her and Laura. Disoriented, she gently released her wife from her hold and when her eyes focused on the obvious bump on Laura's stomach, her jaw dropped and her eyes widened. "La-Laura? Is this…" the next thing she knew, Laura took her right hand and put it on the Princess' swollen belly.

"Our baby, Carl," Laura smiled proudly.

TBC
The Harvest Festival was approaching, and after spending time in the cabin, and being sick, Carm was left with loads of unfinished work. But the Prince would rather spend more time with his beautiful wife. The Queen Mother noticed Carm's slackness and castigated him. Meanwhile, Laura was missing Carm and took some matters in her own hands that resulted in the Prince's disappointment.

Happy New Year to everyone! Who's still reading this fic in 2019? I don't know if there are still more people interested in it. Should I continue? Let me know why and what you're thoughts/expectations are. Because I'm having a problem focusing on this story… and lacking inspirations.

Anyway, hope you enjoy the update. Got some idea for the title of this chapter?

I haven't edited this, because I want to post this now before I sleep. I've been working with this chapter for over two months and I just want to be over it. And I know that some of you need an update now. So, feel free to correct me for any grammar errors… Thanks!

Laura

"Don't fret… I'm sure Prince Carl would be back in no time," was Sarah Jane's consoling remark, looking at both their image on the mirror before putting down the gold comb on top of the dressing table. "And besides, he's just in the castle and not in the wilderness…"

"But I haven't seen him for two days," she whined, rising from the chair and walked across the room. Natalie trailed behind her after putting off the fire from the last candelabra that were on every corner of her chamber. She always enjoyed the coziness of the fireplace over the light coming from the candelabra at night.

"Why don't you write him a note, sighting some of your favorite passage from your favorite book," Natalie suggested flashing a playful grin.

She knew at once which book the dark-haired handmaiden was referring too, and she can't help but feel warm at the thought of it. Suddenly, she became speechless and she caught the curious stare of Sarah Jane.

Which book?" was Sarah Jane's naïve remark, growing excited. "Is it one of those romantic ones full of love poems from Wien?"
Caught off guard and burning with embarrassment, "Ummm..." but before she could lie, Betty approached them after emerging from the bathroom.

"If you want His Hotness in your bed tonight, I can make a delivery in the library," Betty suggested with a smile. "I guarantee you he would be here in a jiffy."

The tall handmaiden's naughty smirk made her blushed, as she eyed the used clothes that Betty gathered from the bathroom, knowing that her used underwear would drive Carm crazy and horny.

"Delivery?" Sarah Jane's eyebrows arched with the question darting her stare to Betty.

"What Betty means is delivery in a form of Carl's favorite dessert, the creampuff!" was her hyper reply, and flashed Betty a warning glare. "It's not necessary, because we don't want to disturb him on his duties."

"I think a 'creampuff' is what His Hotness needed now," Betty insisted, putting emphasize on the creampuff and ignored the glare then grinned at them. "He'd been working hard non-stop in the library. He could use a break."

"Oh, I don't know... I think writing him a note from Laura's 'favorite book' is more inviting and relaxing," Natalie insisted, putting emphasize on favorite, and gave Betty a challenging look. "Don't you agree, Princess?"

Sometimes her friends can be competitive. And by the glare that Betty and Natalie were exchanging at each other, and the secret that each of the handmaidens was concealing, with Betty being Carm's underwear errand girl, and Natalie as her caretaker and guardian of the Forbidden Book, she knew that none of them would back down.

"Why don't we ask Perry which idea is better?" Sarah Jane chimed-in, not having the slightest idea of what those suggestions were.

"No!" They all replied in unison, darting their glare on poor Sarah Jane.

Bewildered, Sarah Jane remained standing and stared at them totally confused.

Not wanting to frighten her clueless friend, "I mean... there's no need to involve Perry... I'm just being silly and missed Carl," she explained and received a nod from Sarah Jane quickly. Then she looked at the other two, "Girls, I think we all need to rest. Let's forget about this and get some sleep. We'll talk again tomorrow. Thank you and goodnight."

"Goodnight Princess," the three replied.

Before leaving her chamber, she gave them each a hug then climbed on her bed.

It was not even a week since they were allowed to see each other, and yet she was back again on sleeping alone in her bed for the third time. She wished Carm would be finished soon with the tasks he ignored in favor of being with her for the past days.

Having not seen each other for a long time and after staying in the cabin with just the two of them, her Prince became more possessive and a bit clingy that Carm spent more time with her, half ignoring his duties as the crown prince. But after noticing his 'unproductiveness', his Queen Mother castigated Carm for being distracted and dilly-dallying, and he immediately went back to his tasks and focused on his responsibilities. Carm could be intense and obsess sometimes when fixated on something or someone. Her Prince would isolate himself with the object of his desire and would not give up until he achieved his goal or obtained what he desired. And that was what happened now.
Carm was as remote as the stars when they first met. But the moment she tapped into that cold lonely heart of the Prince of Karnstein, he melted into this adorable charming broody person that he was. Even LaFontaine complimented her for taming the wild ill-tempered Prince. Transforming Carm into a smitten kitten, as what Perry described him after their honeymoon, was not what the Valet had expected to happen. LaFontaine had witnessed everything and they can vouch that the Prince of Karnstein had become more possessive, more jealous but ecstatic upon the arrival of his betrothed.

She did not imagine also falling in love and yearning for someone’s love, attention and touch the way she craved Carm’s; especially when she became pregnant with his heir.

And right now, she ached to be with him all the time and had a hard time sleeping without the love of her life beside her. Sometimes she wondered if Carm was really the clingy one or she…

It was long after the girls left her chamber but she was still fully awake and to be honest, her body craved for some attention that only Carm can provide. She tossed sleeplessly to and fro on the bed, trying to find a way to fall asleep, just like the previous nights that she and Carm were separated.

Stupid hormones!

She grumbled under her breath as she tried to find a comfortable sleeping position. She missed her big wild cat… she missed the times they shared in the cabin… the privacy… taking care of each other… the freedom to do whatever they desire… and of course the wild sex.

They explored many of the forbidden positions from the book they never imagined of doing.

And the result was satisfactory.

Carm granted her all the forbidden pleasure her body craved for and vice versa.

But after arriving in the castle, and showing to Carm her belly bump, she noticed her Prince became more careful and mindful every time they made love. It was not that she did not appreciate Carm’s gentleness and tenderness when making love to her; in fact, her Prince had been an absolute sweetie. But sometimes she missed the predatory Carm in bed… the possessive Prince of Karnstein… her big wild cat, always ravenous and greedy.

Oh god…

She closed her eyes and tried to imagine how Carm devoured her many times like a beast as she slipped her hand under her chemise. She was soaking wet just by the thought of her Prince devouring her like a wild animal.

As if complaining, "Why am I hornier when I got pregnant?” she asked herself, as she stroked languidly her outer lip, enjoying the sensation and softness that caused her to get dizzy slowly.

Good thing she discarded her underwear before hopping into bed. She never wanted the girls to suspect that she preferred sleeping sans her undies and religiously wear it when they help her dress for the night. But once the handmaidens and Perry left, and before her Prince came into her chamber, just like her slippers, she removed her underwear before going to bed and put it by the foot of the bed. She partly blamed Carm also for this naughty routine.

And speaking of her Prince…

"Oh god… Carm… where are you?” she panted in between stroking her delicate softness and pinching her nipple then quickly stripped off her chemise, growing frustratingly aroused, she freed
her bosom and kneaded her swollen breasts as well. Her legs consciously parted wider. She inserted two fingers inside her, enjoying the velvety sensation of pool of moisture, while she thrusts in a slow torturous manner. She will take her time and pleasure herself tonight until she ached and became exhausted.

Not too long, her legs squeezed tight and she pumped her fingers deeper and faster. When she felt coming, she slowed down; and paused. Then resumed slowly touching herself again, until she became frustrated and increased the pace. She was surprised to discover there was more wetness and her clit and mound swelled like never before. She repeated the process, caressing and stimulating her outer and inner lips, avoiding her throbbing clit that was already dying to be touched outside its hood. Again, she thrust her fingers slowly in her swelling center and increased the motion until she was on the brink of her orgasm and stopped abruptly, her frustrations mounting. Although frustrating, she found the experience rousingly addicting. She went back to the start and did the same thing; her moans became more high pitch every time she controlled climaxing.

She lost count of how many times she tortured herself. She went back to stimulating herself again, caressing with feathery light touches, stroking, tantalizing, holding her breath until her arousal reached its final peak, and was on the brink of her climax. Heart beating faster, bathing in sweat and aching with frustration she added a third finger, thrust faster and pressed her thumb hard on her swollen clit. When she finally cannot hold on any longer, she let go. Her body quivered hard as waves of pleasure washed over from head to toe. A flood like fluid gushed from her core, and she rode into the strong waves of her orgasm and screamed the name of her beloved. Back arched, her toes curled as her muscles continued to contract and shut her eyes tight.

It took a while before she recovered from her climax…

While her body began to relax, she opened her eyes slowly and gasped at the sight in front of her.
"C-carm! How long have you been standing there?!!" was her bashful remark, after finding out the object of her affection by the foot of the bed, standing behind the drapes of her four post bed. She was too absorbed pleasuring herself that she never noticed anything around her.

"Long enough to see you enjoyed yourself without me," Carm snarled and stared at her… standing quietly for a moment as if taking in the sight in front of him.

The way he cast those fiery intimidating gaze at her and the authoritative tone of his raspy voice was enough to make her heart pounded madly. Suddenly she felt nervous and aroused at the same time.

This was the part that she craved lately when Carm became domineering. After spending their time in the cabin, they became more open and trustful to one another. They also discovered that 'playing' before bedtime was a fun way to lessen their stressful day.

While she locked gaze with him, Carm scanned her body with those predatory seductive eyes. She wondered what was on his mind while anxiety fluttered in her belly. Here she was, lying naked on their bed, ready for him to be devoured, her center still drenched and her curls glistening with arousal, breasts heaving, she waited in bated breathes as she torturously felt his eyes boring into her. Carm always managed to intimidate her with those predatory seductive look.

Usually she would seduce and tease him. Instead, she remained calm and silent. She bowed her head slightly and gazed at him innocently under those rich thick eyelashes of hers, like a virgin sacrifice… conveying that she surrendered completely to his will while still feeling safe.

Not breaking eye contact, Carm pulled his sleeping tunic over his head and threw it to the side, then untied his underwear and let it dropped on the floor.
Standing gloriously naked, his thick rod slapped back against his stomach after it released from the constraint of his braies; he obviously saw a lot of that action recently by the way his shaft stood stiffed. But not to be ignored also were his beautiful perky breasts and rosy pert nipples; and soft smooth but firm strong body.

Carm was the perfect embodiment of both femininity and masculinity. She can't help but elicit a muffled moan just by looking at him. He was definitely a sight to behold and to worship.

Perhaps he heard her desperation, Carm slowly climbed into bed and crawled elegantly on all fours like a wild cat that was about to feast on his prey.

She grew wetter when she saw his predatory gaze. Carm surely witnessed how exposed and vulnerable she was; he watched how many times she pleasured herself, which was enough to rouse him. His fully dilated fiery orbs and stiff member dripping with precum confirmed her suspicions.

Hovering above her and naked, Carm nudged her thighs with the tip of his rod. The contact made her squirmed with anticipation and her heart pounded. She dutifully opened her legs wide until he was perfectly positioned on top of her.

"How dare you not wait for me? I've just been gone for two nights, and you're already pleasuring yourself without me?" Carm accused his voice full of authority and disappointment. He dipped his head and captured in his mouth one of those lovely globes and sucked hard a taut pebble while his hand cupped a full breast and kneaded. "You're mine to play with and you don't have the right for self-gratification. Do you understand?"

His remarks sent a shiver of delight on her spine, and she nodded quickly. This was one of those nights, where Carm take the dominant role and she assumed as the sex object of his desire. She missed this and she will definitely make it worth his while.

"If I caught you touching yourself again, I will punish you," the Prince declared, with absolute certainty, pinching those hardened nipples in front of him, as his eyes stared selfishly at those heaving bosom.

Just by hearing Carm's threatening remarks were enough to lubricate and primed her for his intrusion later on. But the greediness of his touch and mouth was causing her to go on the edge soon if he didn't stop ravaging her tight rosy buds.

"Forgive me, Your Highness… it won't happen… again…” she played along, finding a way to speak while highly aroused and whimpered.

"You denied me of my right to pleasure you, and now you made me hard without touching me," the somewhat angry Prince retorted. "Look what you've done!" he exclaimed, supporting himself on one of his arms, while he wrapped his other hand around his erection. "Do you think it's alright that I remain hard this long?" he added, as they both looked down at his thickness oozing with his cream.

"No, Your Highness and I apologize again for my selfishness," she talked like one of the servants, in a low and apologetic tone. "If it pleases you, Your Highness can use me as much as you desired. I am your servant in bed tonight." She returned using those bold remarks that she knew would make Carm madly aroused.

"Are you sure you want this now?" Carm asked, sliding slowly his hand on his length, releasing more juice. "I'm already hard and thick you know it would hurt you if you're not properly ready for me."
Even if they were 'playing a role', Carm still wanted to be sure not to hurt her.

"Forgive me for being vulgar, but looking at Your Highness' god-like body is enough to make me wet and ready…" she replied, displaying a naughty grin and batted her thick eyelashes that she knew Carm adored. "And I can't wait to show Your Highness how I worship your body."

"No. You don't get to touch my body tonight. You've been selfish and you need to be punished," was Carm's equally mischievous reply and smirked. "I'll be the one to touch you," he claimed and turned serious.

They held each other's gaze for a while, then she felt him cupped again her left breast and squeezed it hard. She closed her eyes and moaned softly once she felt the greedy touch of her possessive Prince. She knew he was yearning for her breasts and her soft center, painfully reminding him that they hadn't made love in three days. Her nipples hardened again as she felt Carm's lips clamped around one of them and he suckled slowly. Carm's hand kneaded the other globe as he sucked her nub harder and deeper inside his mouth. She knew he couldn't get enough of them and he released a growl akin to an angry wild cat not wanting to share his meal.

Oh god!

She grew anxious at Carm's aggressiveness and felt his erection pressed on her thigh. It was heavy and hard. She thought he would come and spill on her leg. But Carm released her nipple and shifted his attention to the other one. His teeth tugged harder before suckling hard again her engorged tip, while he squeezed the other one in between his thumb and index finger. She let out a loud moan as her hungry Prince torturously feasted on her breasts and nipples. Carm kept on sucking deeper, tugging and pinching her that she almost felt like having a nipple orgasm. "Aaahhh…" she writhed beneath Carm, ready to surrender her body fully to him as she felt this wave of arousal coming to sweep her soon. But then suddenly, she felt him released his mouth on her aching peaks and lapped those sensitive nubs tenderly to soothe it… and she knew all along that he won't make this easy; Carm had other things in mind.

"I didn't say that you can come…" was his hoarse remark, after he finished licking the other tip and stared at her, displaying his signature cocky grin.

She was about to retaliate but remembered her role as the 'sex object of His Highness', when Carm flashed a condescending glare to her. Instead, she curbed her arousal just like she did earlier and lowered her gaze.

Carm displayed a satisfied smirk once he saw her expression shifted into this 'submissive servant girl in bed'. "Learn to know your place, my pet…" Carm purred.

After that haughty comment, Carm grabbed the base of his shaft, guided his length in between her legs and slid his plump head into her wetness, and plunged into her without a warning.

She felt full right away and did not even got a chance to prepare herself emotionally, although she had been primed down there, his aggressiveness made her even wetter. And just when she expected him to slam hard inside her, she was surprised when she felt him cupped her face for a moment and glanced at her, his snobby glare morphed into a soft gentle concerned gaze, as he silently asked her if she was alright. She smiled discreetly at his thoughtfulness and gave him a single nod of assurance.

After he received the go signal, Carm shifted into the condescending side of his, and begun thrusting deeper and released his hand from her face. Instead, Carm raised both her hands above her head and nailed her wrists, while he penetrated her fully, entering inside her in long deep slow thrusts while being careful above her belly.
Grunting and groaning, Carm continued this slow torturous hard pace, teasing her, as he pulled almost all the way out to his tip, only to plunge deeply and fully afterwards. Carm continued this display of dominance as if using her for his own pleasure and relief.

"You're so tight and deep; I feel like I'm surrounded with fire in a tunnel of silk and being suffocated." Carm rasped his voice deep and cocky, as he torturously delved deeper and harder. "Are you feeling alright, my pet?"

"It is quite pleasant Your Highness," she returned, catching her breath with each thrust felt deeper and stretching her to the most. She loved the feeling of Carm inside her, loved the feeling of fullness; Carm's wide girth always brings her pleasure of being filled up and invaded. She managed to flash that innocent gaze at Carm when she noticed his brows furrowed… perhaps wondering why it was taking her too long to reply. "It feels like an invasion in a good way, Your Highness."

"That's good to hear…" Carm purred, releasing his hands above hers, and trailed his fingers on those rich blonde locks, as he continued these long slow deep thrusts that made them both moaned in pleasure and frustration. "Tell me, my pet… can you last being full without coming, just like you did a while ago? Surely, you enjoyed the delay of your gratification," Carm taunted and pulled all the way, earning a loud groan of complaints from her.

Flushed with frustration and arousal, and the loss of his thickness inside her, "Yes, I can, Your Highness," she almost whined but managed to lower her voice at the end. "I am yours to play with, whatever and however you like. Your gratification is my satisfaction."

"Very well, I want you to stand on all fours," Carm ordered, turning serious again as he kneeled and watched her got on her knees and hands. He inserted two fingers at once inside her and earned a frustrated groan from her. "You're so wet my pet… you must be aching to come now. But you've been disobedient and selfish… you need to learn your lesson."

She looked over her shoulder and the image of her Prince looking down at the dampness between her legs like a hungry beast and caught him licking his lips added to this lust filled daze clouding her mind. Her eyes regarded the sight of Carm gloriously naked, thick upright rigid and greedily aroused because of her. It made her heart swell with pride at how easy and quick she can turn on the Prince of Karnstein.

Carm took the base of his shaft and rubbed the head on her soft seam. He took a moment to tease her and rubbed the tip of his length up and down on her wetness until it was slick and wet; a cocky grin appeared on the side of his mouth, as his breath became shallow with lust and anticipation. She whimpered and squeezed her legs tight as she felt her arousal mounting. She did not know how long she could last this torture…

She took a chance, even though she knew how mischievous her Prince was when it comes to playing in bed. "Please… Your Highness… take me… I'm all yours…" she begged, almost crying with arousal as she felt the bulbous tip continued to rub on her sensitive folds.

"You're so hot and wet, and beautiful, my pet…tell me… who is your master?" Carm continued toying with his erection, with slow deliberate movements; as he steadily rubbed the swollen head up and down on the dripping entrance in front of him, and took pleasure watching it trickled with more wetness while he grunted in between deep breaths.

Breathing heavily, "You are… my master…" she managed to reply in between sighs. "And my-"

She was not even done speaking when she felt Carm massaged the side of her breast and evoked a
muffled moan from her. He then groped and kneaded one of those creamy fleshes and made her whimpered. The combined constant teasing on her folds and pinching and tugging on her nipples sent a rush of heat deep down her core. She grew dizzy with want and her knees wobbled at the cruelty of Carm's touch. Despite playing his role seriously, she could feel that Carm was already thick and tight, aching to explode soon. She needed to say something that would drive Carm to madness, and eventually relived both of them.

"Ahh… Your Highness… Please…. I need you inside me," she begged with profound urgency.

The result of her begging and obedience paid off. The hand on her sensitive globe disappeared and the rubbing on her entrance stopped abruptly and simultaneously. Then he put his hands on her hips. She moaned hard when she felt the fullness of rock hard cock plowed inside her.

Carm leaned down and whispered, "Are you sure you can handle it?" his voice hoarse and deep with his own need.

"I am yours to ravage, Your Highness…" she returned with a lustful glance, hoping to catch his lips as he hovered over her shoulder.

But Carm did not let her, and instead, averted her kiss like an egoistic nobleman using his servant for his own lascivious relief, and kneeled back behind her, holding her hips tighter. He glided his throbbing thick hardness through her engorged hot folds, sending bolts of pleasure within her.

Carm took his time, thrusting slow and shallow.

She loved the slow build up and the feeling of being filled. But she was teased enough, anticipated longer and waited patiently. She needed Carm to go all the way and penetrate her fully.

"Please… Fill me…"

Only then did Carm pierced into her. He sweetly assaulted her, thrusting deeper, faster, his hands clasped on her hips. Pleasure burst from every core of her nerves as Carm's length and thickness stretched and filled her beyond her limits. His carnal invasion felt almost unbearable, intense and overwhelming. It always took her breath away.

"You feel so good, my pet…," Carm growled... "And you belong to me!" Then his mouth reached for her lips. The kiss he slanted over her mouth was the last word in shameless, dominant claiming... before he sank his teeth into the sensitive spot between her neck and shoulder in a wicked caress, marking her as his most precious one. Then he licked her and released his mouth from the sensitive flesh.

Her hands grabbed the sheet and she tightened her hold, while Carm thrusts deeper into her. Every time he pulled out felt like a maddening loss and every time he shoved back was excruciating bliss. Her senses heightened and she became aware of the combined loud moans coming from her and Carm's grunts. Her moans morphing into cries of desperation as Carm drove her near into climax. The chamber became filled with the sounds of gasping, grunting, moaning and the carnal sound of wet flesh slapping together. The musky scent of sex and sweat lingered in her nose… and with Carm's thickness plunging harder and faster, into her hot swollen soft center, and after frustratingly long been denied of coming, they all fused to inflame her to the point of explosion. She knew she cannot bear it anymore. She leaned down and rested her head on the pillow, her bums still raised as Carm plowed continuously on her dripping core.

Knowing when to give her and how hard, fast and deep, Carm pounded in her, hitting and igniting every nerve and sensitive part of her center. She quivered beneath him, clenching around him as she
felt his throbbing shaft buried deep inside her, invading and claiming her. Ripples of ecstasy flooded
through her, finally letting go that long denied climax. She shouted her beloved's name and squeezed
around Carm, drawing him deeper inside. She felt him throbbing and hot.

Absolutely aware that she loved having a part of him inside her, and needed his total domination,
with one last plunge, Carm arched his back, screamed her name and exploded inside her. He shot jet
after jet of rich thick cream inside her, filling her to the brim.

It felt like Carm was taking forever to unload, as he spilled, again and again, planting his precious hot
seeds inside her, emptying every drop of cum out of his heavy tight balls. She loved this moment of
invasion, when the warm sensation of his cum spread inside her, and felt his member spasmed as
Carm claimed and marked his territory in a sexy way.

Carm usually collapsed on top of her after climaxes and while still sheathed inside her. But she was
surprised when he pulled out and felt him turned her carefully to the side then he lay beside her on
her left and faced her.

"Cupcake, are you alright?" he asked, voice still hoarse from the recent climax. He cupped her face
tenderly, his brows furrowed and his dark eyes full of emotions.

But before she could say anything, he slid downwards and kissed her womb tenderly.

"Sorry, plumcake, I got carried away..." Carm uttered as if the unborn child can hear his apology and
planted a soft kiss again on the belly bump and caressed it with his right hand. "I didn't mean to
disturb you. But your Mama is so beautiful, I wasn't able to control myself..."

She did not know which was adorable: Carm apologizing to their baby in her womb, or that he
looked serious talking to her tummy or the name he called their unborn child. Nevertheless, she
revered this beautiful moment for a while, this conversation between Carm and their baby was the
sight to behold. It looked magical.

"I missed you," she managed to call Carm's attention. She wanted to tell that since he came to her
bed. But she did not have a chance when Carm shifted immediately to his 'role', and after she was
captured doing something naughty.

"I missed you too, Cupcake..." he exhaled his voice full of desire.

When their gaze met, she reached down to cup Carm's jawline, and brought him up for a long
searing kiss.

God, she missed those lips! She missed Carm's familiar smell and taste. She missed the warmth of his
body... and above all, she missed his touch! She felt his arms wrapped around her, as she gave him
one of the most intense kisses.

As the need for air arose, she released her lips from his but still held his face close to hers. "What
took you so long?" she asked, her voice growing high pitch, as her eyes searched suspiciously
Carm's own dark ones. "I know that you're hard working and when you focus on your goal, you
won't stop until you achieved it, but why do you have to lock yourself in the library?"

Flashing a melancholy gaze and an apologetic smile, "I'm sorry Cupcake, I didn't mean to do that,
but I have my reasons," Carm uttered, closed the gap between them and kissed her tenderly. "I'm
here now and I'm all yours," he consoled her in his most soothing raspy voice, after releasing from
the kiss. "Can we just not talk about it?"

"Sure..." was her unsatisfied reply, and tried to hide her disappointment by reaching for the sheet
and settling comfortably on the bed before covering her nakedness. Carm slid also under the cover and laid beside her. She decided to let go the matter, as she noticed the trace of exhaustion on his face. Carm gathered her in his arms and she felt safe right away once her head rested on his chest. She was about to say goodnight but remembered one more thing that kept her mind awake…

"Plumcake?" She looked up and sought his gaze.

His heavy eyelids opened wide with surprise and gave her a confused stare. He raised his eyebrow questioningly.

"You said Plumcake while you're talking to my belly," she filled in growing amused at how his eyebrows shifted together with his emotions, and she cupped his cheek. "Don't tell me you're naming our baby after a dessert…"

Displaying his signature naughty smirk, Carm arched an eyebrow and said, "Why not? If their Mama's name is Cupcake, they should have a sweet name too."

Actually, my Ma used to make a plum cake during Christmas, and it's one of my favorite desserts," Carm explained. He looked at her with a twinkle in his eyes, after telling some part of his childhood life. She always liked it whenever Carm opened up some bit of his childhood memories to her. After discovering the real story behind his real identity, she stopped prying about his past, knowing that it might be traumatic for him to bring up something from his childhood days.

"I'm glad you shared that… I mean, which food your Ma made that were your favorites…” she babbled, and paused as she caught his expression turned a bit serious. "And as for the nickname…” she took a deep breath while Carm gazed at her and his naughty smirk returned. "I think it's adorable," she said with a smile and kissed him on the cheek.

"I'm glad you agreed…” was Carm's satisfied reply and raised his left eyebrow and stared at her. "…Because I'm planning on naming all our children after our favorite desserts or food."

"I think it's unfair that you don't have a dessert name yourself…” she retorted flashing a lop-sided grin.

"I don't have to," was Carm's quick retort. "Because you already named me your big wild cat… or shall we say your, big wild possessive panther," he reminded, his voice broke into a throaty whisper. Face to face, she could feel his semi-hard shaft pressed against her stomach, but she tried to ignore it, she was too tired to have another round. She kissed him one more time and wrapped her arms around his neck.

"Goodnight, my big wild cat," she teased, displaying her signature adorable smile. Carm placed a gentle kiss on her lips at once.

"Goodnight my Cupcake," Carm returned, flashing a satisfied smirk, and leaned down to kiss the belly bump in between them, "Goodnight, Plumcake…” he said before gathering her on his arms protectively.
A Day at the Village Market

Chapter Summary

Continuation from the previous chapter, it's the morning and Laura was like a little ball of sunshine, planning already what she would do for the day. The trip to the village market gave the two a time to bond together and even got a chance to see stalls selling some baby clothes. They also found out that the Harvest Festival was one of the well-anticipated occasions in the kingdom when they heard from Greta how the people of the kingdom look forward to seeing who would be the guest of honor.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Laura

Just like any other morning, she woke up with either Carm's face nuzzled in the warmth of her breasts, or his hand cupping one of them, and sometimes his arm draped protectively above her swollen belly while his head rested on his pillow. This time it was the latter.

In the momentary silence that followed after the bell rung Prime, the rooster crowed, and now she can't wait to get out of bed.

Lately, her Prince had been more attentive to all her needs to the extent of staying at her side all the time that there were times she had to shoo him out of the kitchen when she worked with Perry, so as not to get caught by the Queen. Unless he was doing his daily obligations as the heir or when Her Majesty summoned him, Carm had been like an obsessed lover stalking her all the time. It's not that she was complaining. She missed Carm very much when he was sick. But he tried to elude some of his duties just to be with her, which she found very sweet, but she did not want to be under the scrutiny of her mother-in-law again. So, she told Carm to focus on the remaining paper works that His Majesty assigned to him to take care of, and promised him that on her market day, she would take him with her, and they could spend the entire day wandering the village market like an ordinary couple.

Having missed the times they spent in the cabin, Carm agreed. The result was unexpected though. Her Prince did not show up for two days and locked himself in the library for the whole duration of time. According to Perry, LaFontaine did not sleep at her chamber also. The Valet was with the Prince the entire two days, assisting and supplying everything Carm needed, from reports to food, wine, and making an improvised bed at the library. Perry heard that the Prince refused to leave the library without finishing all the pending works that were assigned to him.

She was proud of how hard working and dedicated Carm can be, but at the same time, she was worried too that when he focused on something, he got too engrossed to the point of not stopping until he achieved it and was drained. Just like the times when he went for combat training… or during the time he was trying to figure out his feelings for her after that incident with Danny.

So when Carm came to her bed late last night, she was not just happy but relieved that he was already done with his duty for the time being. And after their intense 'play' before going to bed and a quick 'feed' from her before dozing off, Carm slept like a hibernating panther throughout the night.
And with the long even gentle breaths coming from him, she knew that her Prince was still dreaming and it will take a while before he wakes up.

In the meantime, an idea popped into her head…

Breakfast in bed consisted of all Carm's favorite prepared by her.

Now that was a well-deserved treat for her Prince. She was also craving for some plums after Carm had smartly called their unborn baby 'Plumcake'. Smiling and giddy, she can't wait to start her day.

It was still dark and Perry would not be in her chamber until the chapel bells rung Terce. This will give her time to prepare their breakfast in the kitchen and bring it to her chamber before Carm wakes up.

After experiencing the joys of living alone with Carm in the cabin, she always found ways to cook for him personally and not rely on other's help. Sometimes she would summon him in the tearoom so she can feed him a light snack in between midday meal and supper.

Carefully, she lifted and took off Carm's hand on her belly. She tried to sneak out of his hold without disturbing his sleep, but just as she was about to slip out of the sheet and leave the bed…

"Where do you think you're going?" Carm questioned his voice raw and raspier from sleep. "It's still early…"

Before she could turn around to face him, she felt his arm scooped her back gently and drew her to the warmth of his naked body.

A satisfied smile formed in the corner of her mouth once their bodies touched.

It always felt wonderfully safe and cozy to be held by her Prince like this. Their bodies were perfectly molded for each other every time Carm spooned her. The feeling of Carm's warm breath hitting the crook of her shoulder every time he burrowed his face on her neck was very comforting. And when those strong but gentle arms held her tight, she just melted at his touch instantly.

There was no one in this world that can make her feel so secure and protected the way Carm held her. But as usual, her Prince was always up to something naughty whenever they embrace.

Not wanting to ruin her breakfast surprise, she thought of distracting him so he can let her go without making him suspicious. "Carm… Perry will be here soon," she reminded, even though her Lady in Waiting would not be there, not until the sun had risen. Right now she can feel his morning wood pressed on her rear harder, as Carm hugged her closer. "I told her to come early because I want to be in the market as soon it opened…"

"Let her come… no one can stop her even if I've told her to wait outside," Carm replied with slight annoyance. "In the meantime, why don't we enjoy this quiet moment and have some early morning cuddles…"

The last sentence made her chuckle, "Are you sure you want some cuddles?" was her doubtful remark. "…Because I could feel something very pointy and hard poking on my butt right now."

"It's the morning, Cupcake… I can't control it," Carm simply justified, burrowing his nose on those thick disheveled golden locks. "And you smell so good and delicious, I could just eat you now…" The Prince purred.

She swore… every time Carm woke up with his bedroom voice, she had trouble controlling herself
too and ended up getting wet. And with the teasing and flirting… she was already sold.

"And besides, who wouldn't be excited to wake up next to you," Carm continued not having any idea of the havoc that he was causing to a certain innocent girl. "I promise… I'll behave like a lamb…" he added proudly.

In return, she didn't turn around in order to tease him too. Instead, her hand reached behind her and found him fully awake and stiffed. She heard him grunted at the touch and groaned when she removed her hand.

"Cupcake, stop teasing… I'm trying not to nail you down on the bed and unleash the beast," Carm commented, in his usual cocky self.

"Alright…Let's see how long you can hold on with just snuggling." She challenged him and brought back her hand to his lower arm that was wrapped around her big belly.

"You think I can't do it?" Carm retorted, pretending to sound humiliated. "I'm telling you Cupcake… I can be soft and cuddly too." He whispered in her ear.

Grinning, she finally turned around to face him and caught the naughty smirk on his face at once.

"Well, I do miss my big wild cat, so… let the snuggling begin." She dared and gave Carm a quick peck on the lips before putting her hand on the area under her Prince's ear, and caressed it… ignoring the big panther in between them.

"Let's see how long you'll last…"

Carm's eyes shut at once at the touch and grinned like a happy smitten cat, relishing the feeling of being fondled….And the next thing that happened made her giggled in delight.

"Carm, you're so adorable when you purr…” she said, totally amused at the sight of the broody Prince's other side, "You're definitely my fluffy kitty."

After hearing that remark, Carm's eyes slowly opened and he glared at her like he was stripped off of his reputation as 'the big wild panther of Karnstein Kingdom'.

"Aww, come on, don't be broody, you said you want to snuggle," she warned as she tickled under his chin earning a playful growl and hiss from him as she continued to giggle with amusement. "Hey, you promised to behave," she chastised and cupped his face with her hands. "Why don't we play a game, you'll be my kitty cat and I'll fondle you as much as you like. If you'll manage to last with just snuggling, I'll let you lick me anywhere you want."

Carm's eyes gleamed with excitement, his elegant eyebrows raised comically upon the mention of the last phrase. "Anywhere?" he reiterated making sure that he heard it right.

"Wherever you like…” she assured him with a genuine smile.

"Alright, I'll be your kitty cat…” he nodded and smirked.

"That's my kitty, now let me hear you purr again," she suggested eagerly and caressed both the undersides of Carm's ears and earned a very loud contented purr and a wide grin from the broody prince.

If Carm had a tail, she swore, it would be raised upward and curled at the tip and his ears would definitely face forward.
But before this cuddling moment came into full fruition... and before Carm could have his reward, a low knock followed by the door opening slowly burst their little bubble out.

Had it been that long since dawn?

She looked at Carm with slight disappointment and surprise, she was supposed to make him a breakfast treat and now she was the one who got distracted by his seductive attempts.

Caught off guard, she sat on the bed bolt upright, "Perry is already here?!” was her almost panicky remark, and searched for her nightgown. Carm just looked at her with a stoic amused expression as she snatched her chemise by the foot of the bed and hastily put it on. Before she could berate herself for ruining her plan…

"Relax, Cupcake… I don't think Lady Ginger is here-" Carm tried to calm her and sat confidently on the bed, still naked and completely unaffected by the intruder.

She clumsily put on her underwear after finishing with her chemise and was vexed at how Carm was not making an effort to cover his nakedness.

"Carm, put your clothes on, Perry didn't know that you're here, she might draw the curtains anytime soon…” she whispered worriedly, ignoring Carm's remark and glared at the nonchalant Prince beside her. "Carm!” she whispered shouted at him when he did not move. She was not sure if she was heard outside the four posts of her heavily draped bed, but she did not want Perry to have a breakdown if ever the Lady in Waiting opened the curtains.

Just as she was about to scold again the stubborn Prince…

"Good morning, Your Highnesses…"

Her eyes widened with surprised when she did not hear the familiar voice of her Lady in Waiting. She shot a glance at the side of the bed where Carm was and where the sound came from.

"Is that LaFontaine?” was her confused remark.

"I heard you're going to the village market today…” Carm returned a cocky smirk forming in the corner of his mouth. "And if I remembered correctly, you promised that you'll take me with you…”

She nodded confusedly, trying to understand the connection between their deal and why Carm's Valet was in her chamber early in the morning. "Yes, I remembered… but what is Laf doing here? It's not that I don't like them to be here, but I'm just surprised that they came early today. They usually come here to fetch you when I'm done dressing, and when you finally decided to leave the bed," she babbled and mentioned Carm's habit of taking so long to leave the bed.

"Because I told them to come early so I could get ready to go to the market with you," was his nonchalant reply and turned to the other side, "You may draw the curtain," he ordered to his Valet and the drape to his side opened. LaFontaine stood and waited while holding a robe spread in their arms.

"Good morning, Princess… sorry to wake you up," was LaFontaine's apologetic remark.

"Good morning Laf… no need to apologize, I'm already awake," she reassured them and smiled. She was about to chat more with them but got distracted when Carm slid off the sheet.

Carm elegantly rose from the bed, still naked, his flaccid and yet well-endowed member dangling in between his thighs, while his perky breasts stood out and his nipples pink and small, erected once it
sensed the cold air. While she delighted at the sight in front of her, Perry, on the other hand, would definitely faint upon seeing it and she can't help but to nervously glance at the door. Carm stood with his back on his Valet and slid smoothly both his arms inside the sleeves of his robe, before covering his body and tying the knots in front of him tightly.

Carm was both salaciously delicious.

She watched him with open mouth and realized how sensual it was to just look at him put on his robe and made her wet with how delicate and graceful he moved.

Before leaving, Carm kneeled on the side of the bed, leaned down and kissed her belly before putting his lips on her own ones.

"Do you mind if I use your bathroom first? I like to prepare now for the market," he asked, the huskiness of his voice was soothing to her ears.

She just shook her head, as if put under a spell. Once she recovered, "Go ahead and take your time. I'll go down and grab something to nibble on..."

"Are you sure it's not me you want to nibble?" The naughty Prince smirked displaying his seduction eyes. "I could send Laf instead to the kitchen and we can have a quickie..."

Realizing that Carm would take all the chance he can get to seduce her back to bed, "You're unbelievable!" she returned shooting a glare at his way. "No, it's not you I want to nibble... not right now," she corrected and rubbed her womb. "But if this kitty inside my womb doesn't get a pickle soon, I'm sure we're both going to be grumpy," her warning worked when the grin on his face morphed into disappointed frown.

"Alright," Carm nodded back but put his hand again on her belly. "Is Plumcake awake?"

"Maybe... because I'm hungry," was her smart answer, earning a smirk from Carm.

"Seriously, can you feel them moving?" Carm leaned down and put his ear on her stomach.

She put her hand on Carm's head and caressed his hair while he waited for some 'action' in her womb. "I think it's still early to feel them, but I'll definitely let you know once I feel a kick."

"A kick?" was Carm's confused reaction, lifting his head and looked at her with his brows furrowed.

"That's what they use to say when a baby is already fully grown inside," she explained to the worried Prince. "But don't worry, it won't hurt." After that reassurance, she saw him smiled again.

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Standing still by the door of her chamber, and arguing with one of the guards if he could carry the tray for her, whom she stubbornly declined, the guards opened the door for her and she crossed the threshold with a satisfied smile on her face.

Carm seemed to be not done yet as she searched for any sign of him or Laf in the chamber. She carefully put the service tray on the study table beside the window and perused again the contents not wanting to miss anything...

"Let's see..."

But a quick knock and opening of the door snatched her from concentration followed by the sight of
"Good morning, Princess!" Was Betty's cheerful greeting upon entering the chamber.

"Perry said to help you since she woke up a bit late today and had to prepare the sweets that you requested." Natalie explained.

"Oh, alright…" she began to wonder what made her Lady in Waiting woke up late.

"One of the guards told us that you've already been to the kitchen to fetch breakfast, am I right?" was Natalie's confused comment, and then caught sight of the service tray full of sweets, whole grain rye bread, some grapes and plums, pickles, cheese, and walnuts. "Oh… it looks like the dessert last night was not enough." The dark-haired handmaid said after discovering the abundance of sweets on the tray.

"Come on Nat, she's with a child, and eating for two," Betty reminded, walking closer to the table and joined them.

"Actually, that's just not for me," she tried to explain, but they all got distracted when a figure emerged from the bathroom and walked towards them, and all three of them stared with open mouths.

"Good morning ladies," Carm greeted with a naughty smirk.

She can't help but bit her lower lip at the sight that greeted her.

Clad in hunting boots, dark leather trousers that gorgeously hugged his thighs, paired with a black leather jerkin over a white long sleeve tunic with raised collar and lacing at the front, Carm oozed with the kind of sex appeal that made one's brain not to function properly. He divinely stood in front of them, displaying his signature cocky grin and sultry eyes. His short raven locks tousled in a just-got-out-of-bed look. Even when his clothes were rugged, Carm always came out looking sophisticated in whatever he wears. He looked naughtily hot also with the false heavy stubble on.

Even the way he wore those black leather gloves sent sparks to her core. Her mouth suddenly turned dry and she swallowed hard as she recalled how his leather gloved hand used to roam and touch her bare skin.

"Yo-You're Highness… please forgive us," Natalie managed to gather her wits and the first one to tear her eyes off the Prince’s, and curtsied. She elbowed Betty lightly to the side, seeing the latter had not yet recovered.

"Oh… umm… yes, forgive us Your Hotness, we didn't mean to drool like promiscuous wenches…" was Betty's blatant comment before curtsying.

She just smiled at her handmaids' remarks and caught Carm with a cocky smirk plastered on his mouth. It looked like he was enjoying the attention… A tinge of jealousy possessed her seeing that she was not alone in admiring him.

"Princess, did you made a personal delivery last night?" Betty gave her a suspicious look and then winked.

"Or did you sought help from the book and dropped by at the library last night?" Natalie accused with a naughty spark in her eyes.

"What's going on Cupcake? What are they talking about?" Carm darted his gaze to her and gave her
a naughty suspicious leer. "Have you been naughty while I'm gone?"

Glancing at her side, "Wha-?!" growing uncomfortable and abashed, at the suspicious stares that her friends gave her, she tore her eyes off quickly from the two handmaidens and face Carm's naughty gaze instead. "I haven't done anything… and these two are just teasing me because I was complaining to them last night that I haven't seen you for two days and that I missed you," she babbled and before she fully embarrassed herself…

"Good morning girls!" LaFontaine greeted and smiled at the two handmaidens then stood beside Carm, robe, and used clothes folded and hanged neatly on their left forearm while carrying a small pouch bag on the right.

"Good morning LaFontaine…" Betty smiled back waving.

"Hello LaFontaine!" Natalie said and waved to them also.

After recovering her dignity, "Can I please have a moment with my Prince?" she chimed in, not wanting to waste time and remembered the breakfast treat she prepared for him… or she just wanted her Prince for herself. Either way, she was growing hungry. "I would like to eat breakfast first with Carl, and then you two can come back when we're finished."

The handmaids curtsied right away to her and then to Carm giggling and whispering on the way out of the chamber.

When the door closed a loud ahem was heard.

She and LaFontaine looked at the direction of Carm…

Glaring to his side, "What are you still doing here?" Carm said, referring to LaFontaine.

Realizing what Carm meant by the intense look he was darting their way, LaFontaine hesitantly walked towards the door.

Carm shook his head from left to right at having to remind his Valet when it was appropriate to leave him alone.

Once the door shut and they have the chamber just for themselves, she walked across the room and approached her Prince who remained standing silently but biting his lower lip like a naughty child, while she locked gaze with him. As she came closer to him, she locked her arms around his neck and flashed that smoldering smile at him.

"Alone at last!" was her relieved comment, pressing her body closer to Carm's, and kissed him, she purposely grinded at his groin and felt his arms wrapped around her hips and drew her closer.

She felt his member slowly came to life and then his kiss became deeper and demanding. A suppressed moan escaped her mouth as she felt his false beard tickling her smooth cheeks. After finding out that Carm's beard was not real, she felt this elation and relief that she married someone without a beard. But it also thrilled her when her lover can switch from this elegant sophisticated beautiful charming prince to a ruggedly handsome temperamental one.

"You looked gorgeous with that disguise of yours," she said in between panting, almost getting carried away. "And your beard feels and looks almost real…” she mentioned, cupping Carm's bearded cheeks and kissed him again.

As the need for air arose, "How did you know the feeling of a real beard?" suddenly Carm's mood
shifted and he furrowed his brows. Staring suspiciously, "Have you kissed someone with a beard before?"

"No! I haven't!" was her strong remark, not breaking eye contact.

_Me and my big mouth!_

"What I mean is… you had fooled everyone with that beard of yours because it looked almost real!" she hastily defended, not giving her jealous lover a reason to get suspicious.

Seeing that it worked, Carm released a deep sigh of relief and managed to smile a bit. She brought her jealous Prince for another kiss, but this time, it was slow and sensual, so as to calm him. Her hands gracefully crawled to the back of his neck, caressing his nape and the tips of his short locks. Carm seemed to be appeased and rested his hands on her waist. But something was not pacified: she felt his semi-hard bulge made a comeback and it clouded her sanity once again. To make matters worse, Carm's lips began to slowly descend on her neck, then on her pulse points, nipping and nibbling at the creaminess of her neck, throat, and collarbones, and easing slowly to her bosom. Before coming up again and claiming her lips.

Just wearing her silk chemise underneath her robe, she was not surprised when Carm's finger dipped naughtily into the valley between her burgeoning apices, and his hand slipped completely inside the silky garment and found the swell of her chest. Against her breast, the leather of his glove grazed lightly on her bosom and sent a shiver to her skin. Carm gently cupped the left breast with his leather gloved hand and then carefully stroked a sensual semi-circle on top before delving down into the hardening peak. Warmth pooled slowly from her core and spread to the rest of her body as she felt his touch becoming possessive. She closed her eyes instantly, her brain growing fogged with lust, "Carm… as much as I want to make love with you…" she mumbled in between kisses and breaths. "I don't want to ruin your Marcus look-"

He pulled back hesitantly, not releasing his hand on those creaminess. "Marcus look?" Carm's left eyebrow raised in questioning, his orbs darker with desire.

Still enveloped in his arms, she sheepishly looked at him and grinned.

Getting almost lost in this lust filled daze; she managed to escape from his spell and cupped his bearded jawline again while she held his naughty gaze. "Laf worked hard to put this beard on your face and they also did a good job, dressing you in this…" she removed her hands on his face and stepped back.

Carm had no choice but to reluctantly release her from his embrace. But his disappointment faded and he slightly smiled when she leered at him.

Her Prince looked devastatingly gorgeous in this disguise and she can't help but ogle at his leather-clad thighs, it suited him perfectly with the hunting boots and with his elegant demeanor, and not to forget well-endowed… anyone would be distracted and feast their eyes on His Hotness.

But her ogling was cut short when she heard loud short coughs on the background.

They both wrinkled their foreheads realizing that none of them had coughed.

"Umm… Good morning Your Highness! Princess! Forgive me for interrupting your… umm… appreciation of His Highness' wonderful attire," Perry emphasized on the last two words, flashing a controlled smile at them and bowed her head carefully while balancing a tray on her hands. "But I
was wondering if you both would like a hot tea and some freshly squeezed apple juice?" The Lady in Waiting showed proudly the contents of the service tray. "The cook saw you earlier getting some food in the kitchen, but noticed that you forgot the drinks… I took the liberty of bringing them when I finished immediately with the sweets that you asked me to make. And I also met LaFontaine and told me that you haven't started dressing yet for the market and informed me that you need help right away…and I see that Natalie and Betty haven't been here yet." The Lady in Waiting claimed and felt the need to be at the Princess’ chamber at once, after realizing that her order to the handmaids failed.

"Perry, slow down and relax…” she suggested, seeing that her Lady in Waiting was growing hyper. Perhaps Perry had seen Carm nibbling on her neck, or she was caught ogling at Carm's crotch, which was not true! Because her eyes were on his leather-clad thighs and not looking at his groin. These stupid hormones were really turning her into lascivious wench. "Thanks for the tea and juice. You can put them over there," she motioned to where the rest of the forgotten breakfast treat was. After setting the tray on the table, Perry remained standing beside the table by the window and displayed a controlled smile.

Sensing that they made Perry uncomfortable and that her Lady in Waiting was going nowhere, she turned around and touched Carm's left elbow. By the way he furrowed his brows and glared at Perry, he was not happy about what had transpired right before his eyes.

"Carl, I know what you're thinking… but please don't get mad," she pleaded and placed her hand on the side of his face and cupped his bearded cheek and then caressed the underside of his ear. Since they woke up, she knew and felt that Carm would want to have a quickie, as what they have been doing lately since they have been busy after returning from the cabin. "Let's just eat our breakfast and go to the market early, then we can spend the rest of the day together, how about that?" she suggested displaying her signature smile.

Still broody, "You're lucky you're cute…” Carm retorted and seemed to calm down after that quick petting under the ear.

She kissed Carm on the cheek and looked to the other side. "Per, why don't you prepare my things now, while Carl and I eat our breakfast, then I'll follow you to the bathroom," she said and received a constant nod followed by a satisfied smile from Perry before walking across the room.

Perry retrieved some clothes on one of the large closets on the corner of the room, before disappearing in the bathroom.

Once they were alone, "When we get home from the market, I want to make love with Marcus," she uttered in her deepest and sultry voice. She wanted to make up for all the interruptions this morning.

The wrinkles on her Prince's forehead instantly disappeared and his eyes lit up and became darker.

***

She liked people and she was accustomed to mingling in the crowd and watched them work and live when she was just a little princess back at the Hollis Kingdom. Outgoing and friendly, and a lover of nature, there was always this sense of contentment that possessed her whenever she was outdoors, especially with people.

Upon arriving and stepping out of the carriage, she felt right away like an excited child going to the village market to buy all the good stuff and dainty things little girls liked. It had been a while since she set foot at the village market and she can't wait to see what new merchandise or food to buy.

As if on cue, the royal guards walked in front and behind, and on both sides. Carm's personal royal
guard, Armitage was in front of the Prince, while Alfred, Bastian, and Fritz walked behind them.

Since it had been a while since they had their last market day, and she knew that three carriages were not enough to carry whatever they would buy, she took the liberty of asking Alfred to tell some of the royal guards to take their horses to the market, instead of hiding it with the carriages behind the bushes. She told them that they can load their purchases on the horses' backs while in the village market, and would be easier to transport it.

Walking towards the village proper together with Carm, Perry, and LaFontaine, and a troop of royal guards in civilian clothes, she can't help but be excited as soon as her eyes caught sight of the large boat that just docked. Usually, she only saw regular merchant boats while in the village. Today they were treated to a larger one.

Eager and impatient, "Look, Carl, it's a big boat!" she pointed out to the direction of the riverbank, and took hold of Carm's upper left arm and squeezed it in a childlike gesture.

Shocked but amused, the reserved Prince uttered a low chuckle. "Cupcake, calm down…"

"According to my informer, that is a cog from the Iberian Peninsula," LaFontaine chimed in, striding beside the Prince to his right. "They come once a year and bring mostly exotic foods and spices."

Glancing to her left, "Per, we better check that out, afterwards," was her excited comment, as they walked passed the different kinds of tents, market stalls, and vendor carts.

"Why don't we go there now?" Carm suggested and slowed down, as the group of royal guards in civilian clothes in front tried to clear his path discreetly.

There was a growing crowd ahead of them. Her eyes worriedly scanned her surrounding, she was confident the guards were doing their job, but she did not expect there would be many people today. They needed to avoid the crowd.

"I'd like to drop by first at Luka's, we need the finest vanilla for the harvest festival," she said, hooking her arm tightly to her Prince's. She needed to hold him and get as close as possible in case something happened to Carm, she can feel it right away. "And we're soon out of Steirerkas. Greta's cheese sells fast, we better hurry before she runs out of it." She devised her tactic, based on her experience and while observing where the flow of people go, and it seemed most of them were heading to the riverbank.

Not having the slightest hint, "Alright, as you wish…" Carm replied, smiling. He seemed relieved to see that the crowd dispersed quickly as they took a turn towards the food stalls. "I'm just here to accompany my wife and to make sure that no one flirts with you," he teased.

She gave him an annoyed look, after hearing his comment. "Hey, I don't flirt with anyone," she retorted and pouted.

"You seemed to forget that imbecile that wanted to marry you," was Carm's bitter reply.

Lost and confused, she felt Perry walked closer, "Remember William?" the Lady in Waiting carefully whispered in her ear.

"Oh." Was all she could utter as they both exchange nods and decided no divert her Prince's attention to something else before his mood change. "Umm… can we check also if they sell some baby clothes here?" Her remark definitely caught Carm's attention, when the Prince suddenly stopped walking and looked at her in utter confusion. "You want to buy our baby's clothes here?"
"Is there something wrong with it?" She asked, totally oblivious, as she received also a confused look from LaFontaine after overhearing their conversation, and a slightly shocked and embarrassed expression from her Lady in Waiting.

"What His High-" Perry cut in.

"Perry, I think you meant Marcus…" Carm flashed a glare on the Lady in Waiting.

After realizing her mistake "I mean, what Marcus is trying to say is," Perry continued after recovering from the almost slip, and looked around her first before resuming. "Your House…" the lady in Waiting mumbled. "…Have tailors and seamstress who make clothes exclusively to your family. And her Majes- I mean your mother-in-law might not approve of the clothing that came from the village market."

"Oh, I know that… but I still want to see what they're selling here, and help those vendors to earn money," was her nonchalant reply, realizing afterwards that she was being ballsy after Perry reminded her of the Queen's strictness. "Who knows, maybe they have some adorable clothes too. And besides, it's my baby; I decide what my child can wear." She punctuated with a grin and confidently resumed walking, her arms still hooked to her Prince's arm and took along Carm with her, without looking at his reaction and LaFontaine's and Perry's. She felt victorious when the three remained quiet.

After making two rounds at the lesser crowded part of the village market, and checking some vendor carts that sell fabrics, and to Perry's relief, she finally gave up looking. But she made sure that she secured the finest and richest vanilla pods when they dropped by at Luka's stall, and she bought all the cheese in Greta's stall so that her friend can go home early.

Now they can go and check the merchandise from the boats.

As they left the main market and headed to the bank, a vendor cart under an oak tree caught her sight. There were black, white and brown linens hanging in front of it, just like the others, but this one had clothes on the counter. Compared to the other merchant's stall that she had seen that sells fabrics and imported textiles, this one looked like they have a variety of clothes.

"Carl, let's check that cart over there," she pointed to the direction and led Carm towards it before he can say anything.

LaFontaine and Perry treaded behind them, the Lady in Waiting walking beside her now, suddenly curious.

"I thought we're heading to the riverbank?" Perry asked a bit worried.

"I think she won't be satisfied until she found something for the baby," Carm concluded.

Once they reached the wagon stall, her eyes widened with fascination. She was right. The stall was filled with not just fabrics but clothes too. An old man stood behind the stall while a young woman who was about a couple of years younger than her sat on a stool, sewing some clothes.

"Good afternoon! What can I do for you?" said the man, smiling despite missing some teeth in the front. His receding gray hair reminded her of her father.

"Good afternoon!" she replied a bit too excited when she saw the collections of clothes laying in front of her. She released her arm from Carm's and walked closer to the stall. Carm remained standing on the background together with Perry and Laf. Some of the guards discreetly surrounded them and pretended to be resting, and some walked around. "We're looking for some clothes for our
baby, and haven't found any yet."

"You've come to the right place, young lady," the vendor proudly replied and selected the clothes that may interest her among the bunch. "My daughter is an excellent seamstress, her mother was a seamstress for some noble family when she was still alive and taught her how to sew the clothes of noble families. But of course, our fabric is not made of silk or cotton, but linens are the next best thing for a baby to wear."

"Wow, they're so adorable," she beamed looking at the white coif that the man first handed to her. "Ca- I mean, Marcus! Come here!" she called the Prince that seemed to be satisfied watching her from the distant salivate at the small clothes.

Carm nodded and walked towards her, his expression unreadable.

Reserved and always careful when meeting new people or looking at a new thing, Carm quietly perused the small sizes coifs, long sleeve cotte, half-long surcote, bibs, stockings, and swaddles.

"Aren't they pretty?" she asked, waving in front of Carm's face the small white coif and tiny white stockings.

Carm's nonchalant expression slowly relaxed and softened, "I guess they are…" was his careful remark.

"Oh, and check out this tiny little tunic!" She exclaimed, growing hyper by the moment.

Carm looked at it and then held it in front of him, a controlled smile form in the corner of his mouth before returning it to her.

She felt that he was not enjoying this but trying his best not to disappoint her. Perhaps he was afraid of what his mother would say if the Queen found out that his heir was wearing peasant clothes.

"Are you the father?" the vendor asked out of the blue.

Not used to being informally called or interrupted, she caught the broody stare that Carm flashed to the poor man.

"Umm, yes, this is my husband," she cut in, placing the clothes that she was holding back to the counter and walked closer to the brooding Prince. She hooked her arm again into Carm's left and patted softly his chest as if trying to cool him. "It's our first baby, that's why he's a bit cautious."

"I understand… I am a father too… perhaps…" the man tried to explain but leaned down and took something underneath the table. "This would make you interested," holding it with his two hands and palms up; the man showed Carm a small brown leather ball like the size of an apple. "I made it myself and sold a few of them… your child would love it."

For a moment, Carm stared at it like it was some contraband, her heart pounded and she became anxious as she waited for Carm's reaction. It was just a ball. What could possibly be wrong with it?

But when she saw the prince's hand-picked carefully the ball from the man's hand and closed his fist around it, she let out a sigh of relief. Still looking at the vendor seriously, Carm nodded a silent thanks to him.

"Should we take everything?" Carm asked, darting his gaze to her.

Taken aback and unsure of what he said, "Wh-what?" was her surprised and confused comment.
"I said if we're going to buy everything?" Carm reiterated.

"You mean all of these?" she asked slowly, to make sure she heard it right, referring to the small clothes in front of them.

"If you like all of them..." the Prince stated not blinking, and still holding the ball tightly on his right hand.

The man suddenly gawked in front of them, tongue-tied. Half of the merchandise in his stall was baby and children's clothes. The young woman who was sitting on the corner of the wagon rose from her stool and approached her father, who remained speechless.

"Did I hear that right, you're buying all the children's clothes?" was the woman's shocked remark. "We've been trying to sell them for months, but the town's people are telling us that it's too expensive for them. I tried selling it to the noble families, but they said that the texture isn't for their liking because they like those imported silk or cotton."

"After our village was burned, we've been traveling to every town and kingdoms, just to find some buyers, so we can save enough money to rent a room for the winter," the man finally spoke, his expression suddenly became serious and despondent.

Her heart ached at what she heard, and reached for the man's hand across him, and patted it. "If you don't have anywhere to go, we could help you," she offered right away.

"I think if your husband is serious of buying all the children's clothes it would be enough for us to find a place to stay this winter," the man said, with full of hope before looking at Carm.

"Well, if my wife wants to buy everything, who am I to refuse?" was Carm's cocky remark.

Suddenly all eyes were focused on her, waiting for her reply. Carm's comment was a bit exaggerating, for a lowly commoner. How can she explain to this vendor that they can afford buying all the baby clothes in his stall without making him suspicious? Sometimes, Carm's cockiness can bring them trouble. She cannot blame him though, it just came out naturally.

"It's our first baby and we've saved enough for our firstborn to have a comfortable life," she reasoned out, praising herself for thinking fast. "And yes, we would like to buy all the children's clothes... and the ball."

"Thank you so much!" the young woman blurted out, and started picking the small clothes and packing them.

"I don't know what to say, except thank you for your kindness," the man said, facing Carm and bowed to him.

"Thank me later when you already received the payment," Carm was suddenly in a good mood. "How much would it be?"

"It's twenty silver," was the man's nervous reply. "But if you think it's too much, I'll be fine with fifteen. It would be enough for me and my daughter to have shelter and food for the winter and spring."

"I tell you what..." Carm put his pouch of coins on the table, right in front of the vendor. "There's more than twenty silver inside that, and it's yours if you don't mention this to anyone."

She eyed the pouch that Carm placed on the table. By the look of it, it contained not only thirty or
forty silver but maybe seventy or more.

"My wife and I like to help people. But we don't like telling it to others," the Prince explained to the bewildered old man.

"You have my word, young man and my gratitude," the vendor answered sincerely, looking at both of them.

"We promised not to say a word," the lass said, handing the package to Carm. "And we wish you safe childbirth," she added, looking at her.

"Thank you for your kind wishes and I hope you'll stay here so that we can buy again those beautiful clothes that you made," she said, smiling and satisfied that they made two people happy today. "We better go now, before it gets dark."

She hooked her hand to Carm's left arm and they turned around and walked towards where Perry and LaFontaine stood.

As they were about to meet the others...

"Wait!"

She halted Carm's arm and they both turned around to see the young girl running towards them.

Still catching her breath, "My father said that this is too much. He's just expecting a forty from you… he thinks you forgot to count them," she explained and was about to hand the pouch back to Carm. "Here's your change…"

"Keep the change…" Carm simply said, smirking at the surprised girl. "And tell your father to look for a new home for both of you."

And with that, Carm turned around and motioned for them to resume walking, leaving the girl stunned.

They have not walked that far when they heard the girl's voice again…

Perhaps struck with curiosity and amazed, "Who are you?!" the girl cried out.

She felt Carm paused beside her, and she became anxious at what he was about to do. Was he irritated that the girl was so persistent? Carm stopped and turned around, staring at the girl and then said:

"I'm nobody!"

He then turned around smirking at them, and they all walked towards the riverbank, smiling.

***

On the way to the riverbank, she learned from LaFontaine that rivers played an important role in the growth of Karnstein Kingdom's wealth and economy. It provided not only protection but also possibilities for trade. The river was deep and wide for some large merchant boats to sail, and can be easily navigated from the inland and to the open sea. And this was one of the reasons they get visitors from other lands aside from Wien.

The village was buzzing with life at the arrival of the trading boats from Wien and the Iberian Peninsula. There were still many people gathered by the riverbank, eager to check out or buy the
freshest seafood, or get hold some of the latest merchandise from Wien, or make a bid on the new spices or produce goods that came from other lands.

Carm chose to stay with her despite the crowd gathering by the river bank. She had been worrying since they found out that it would be a busy day at the village market and suggested that they go back to the castle. But Carm told her that he would not let his anxiety get in their market day. He stubbornly walked towards the market place even after hearing the news of how excited the townspeople to see the merchandise.

But as they now approached the gathering crowds, busy vendors and tradesmen there was only one thing that was on her mind: to get Carm into safety.

There was no way she would let Carm suffer in this crowded place. If her Prince refused to leave, she was pretty sure that she could use her condition as an excuse.

Rubbing her right temple, "Umm… Perry, I'm not feeling well, would it be alright for you to go without me?" she pretended, knowing that Carm will refuse to go back.

After hearing the remark, Carm abruptly stopped walking, "Cupcake? What's wrong?" was his worried question.

Carm's arms were already around her, gathering her protectively in his arms. "I suddenly feel tired… and dizzy. Can we… can we go to Greta's so I can rest for a while?" She asked, as three pairs of worried eyes looked at her. "Per, is it alright if Bastian and Fritz go with you, and Carl, I and Laf will go to Greta's?"

"Are you sure you're fine to walk?" the worried Prince interrupted. "I can summon the guards and they can fetch the carriage so we can go back to the castle."

"No, I'm sure I'll be fine… I just..." she caught the melancholy dark orbs gazing at her with full of concern. "I just want to rest for a while. Greta's house isn't far away from here, I'm sure we'll find her there and she can take us in," she suggested eagerly and pouted when she saw that Carm was hesitating. "Please?"

"Alright… but at least sit into one of the horses, so you don't need to walk," he signaled to one of the royal guard walking beside a black stallion.

The horse looked grand and tall, she did not want to catch some attention on that kind of horse. Instead, she looked around and found the perfect one.

"Can I just ride on that instead?" she pointed to the donkey beside Fritz, a sack full of wheat was placed on the back of it and was removed right away when Carm raised his hand for Bastian to come with the animal. "I'll take from here, thanks," Carm said after receiving the rein. LaFontaine took the rein while he helped her mounted on the donkey.

Once she was seated, Carm took back the rein from LaFontaine.

"Are you comfortable?" he looked up and asked, worries still written on his face.

She nodded at once and gave him a reassuring smile before Carm started walking and leading the donkey out of the crowded area. She made sure to make eye contact with LaFontaine and Alfred, sending them her secret message to protect Carm every time they were in the village market. After the incident from Carm's name day celebration, she, LaFontaine and Alfred had cunningly contrived a rescue and escape plan in case Carm had another anxiety attack outside the castle walls.
Moments later, she found herself waking up after a short but well-deserved nap. She noticed that it was suddenly quiet and the absence of the little dark-haired bubbly girl was obvious.

"Where's Emma?" she yawned, after slowly opening her eyes and adjusted to her surroundings.

"We've sent her to Perry so that you can take a rest," Greta said, smiling. "You looked like you could use a nap when you arrived. I'll prepare some tea and let's hope there's still cheese in here."

Wearing a content smile, and lying on the little bed beside Carm, "Thank you for having us, Greta," she said, making herself at home, as she comfortably remained on the bed. Wanting to be closer to her Prince, she rested her head on Carm's lap, like she used to do when relaxing on their own bed.

But Carm seemed caught off guard and not at ease, as the Prince awkwardly adjusted and put a small pillow under her head as if covering his crotch.

"It's my pleasure having all of you here," Greta replied while putting the kettle on the hearth.

"Do you need some help with that?" LaFontaine asked, watching Greta tried to light the fire.

"No, thanks, I got this," Greta returned after successfully setting the fire, and then moved her way to the tiny kitchen of her cottage and took three wooden tankards hanging on the wall among the pots, ladles, and knives, then placed it on the small table beside her. "So, are you all excited with the coming harvest festival?"

Carm's fingers that were playfully fondling her hair suddenly stilled. She glanced up and caught his jaw tightened.

If they only knew the trepidation the Prince of Karnstein felt before the celebration…

They had talked about it many times and Carm assured her he was ready and she had nothing to worry. But still, she cannot help grew anxious. Carm was forced to make his debut to the people of their kingdom due to the baby's arrival, and not on his own time.

Knowing how to appease him, she reached for his other hand that was resting on her side, took it and held it, before wrapping the smooth hand of her Prince around her waist, and put her hand over his. She saw him glancing at her and flashed a controlled smile. She smiled back, relieved, then she felt again his other hand, caressed her hair meticulously.

Sensing that everybody seemed oddly tensed and before Greta can notice it… "Well, I'm definitely excited because it's my first time to celebrate it," she broke the silence before it turned awkward. Perhaps Carm prohibited LaFontaine from commenting to something relevant to the castle since the Valet suddenly looked around the small cottage.

"You better be! Because this is our chance to see them in their elaborate and stylish clothes," was Greta's delighted comment, putting a small wooden chopping board on the table and began slicing a loaf of round dark rye bread. "For us who have been living in the village, it's one of the most exciting events."

Always inquisitive, she left the comfort of Carm's lap and rose as soon as she heard Greta's remark. She sat straight on the bed and looked at her commoner friend who seemed to always provide her with some juicy information about the ever-secretive Karnstein Kingdom. She admitted that through Greta, they learn some things about the people of the kingdom and their expectations from the royal family in an honest way.
While the long dark-haired woman may have piqued her interest, Carm, on the other hand, seemed to be out of reach as she glanced at him. She darted her gaze to LaFontaine in hope of securing an answer from the Valet, but they remained silent under the Prince's warning glare.

Burning with curiosity, "So, tell me what's so special about this festival?" she asked, her gaze not leaving Carm's own dark ones, looking for a hint if she was going too far. The last time they talked about him it did not end up very well. And she did not want to put Greta in that situation again.

"Please, do tell." Carm chimed in his voice deep and commanding. Suddenly his eyes were brimming with curiosity.

Surprised, LaFontaine darted his gaze on the Prince, followed by Greta. Carm had been awfully quiet earlier.

Greta momentarily paused from slicing the Steirerkas and placed the knife on the table. "Well… aside from the celebration during the daytime, the village people are always looking forward to seeing who would be the guests and guest of honor at the Bishop's Manor."

"What's so exciting about that?" was Carm's nonchalant remark. "They're just a bunch of imbe-… I mean… overdressed noblemen and women going on a feast."

"That's exactly the most exciting thing!" Greta exclaimed, growing ecstatic. "We are just mere commoners, we don't usually see these noble men and women… and the royal family when they are on a feast. King Philip is a generous king and always provides us with food and wine on special occasions. But not everybody gets invited to a royal ball or feast and get to see these important people dress for the occasion."

"So you're telling us, the people of the village are happy to see these dressed up hightborn coming to a feast?" she cut in, growing impatient. "But how can the people see them when no one of them is invited?"

"I think what she meant is, the moment the guests arrive at the manor," LaFontaine supplied the details and Greta nodded in reply. "The Bishop's Manor is located beside the church. Unlike the castle and other manors, it doesn't have walls that surround it, so everyone can see who are the lucky ones that got invited each year and who are not. It also has a wide high grand entrance stair to the manor, in which the guests wave and greet the crowds that are gathered around the manor, before going inside."

"Wow! That really sounds exciting!" Was her cheerful response, getting all giggly, but suddenly contained her enthusiasm when she caught the lines on her prince's forehead. "Is there always a big crowd gathering outside?"

"Oh, no, not every year," Greta spoke at once, glad to be a part of the said crowd. "It depends on the weather and who's the guest of honor. If it's the Queen, most of the villagers would surely come to get a glimpse of Her Majesty. Queen Lilita is not just beautiful but very elegant and stylish, the people really like her. When she already stood there to greet the crowd, everybody just stared at her, and with her height, she looked even more stunning in whatever gown she wears. I'm telling you, King Philip had married the queen of the queens!"

She felt slightly self-conscious right away when the Queen's height was mentioned. Standing at 188 centimeters, the Queen's height was definitely prominent and exceptional compared to the average women in the land, she surely felt like a dwarf when talking to her mother-in-law. "How about the King, do you see him too?" she asked, diverting the topic to his not so tall father-in-law. King Philip was as tall as his Uncle Spencer; clearly, Carm inherited the height of his father.
"Ever since I recalled as a child, I don't remember King Philip coming. But my mother told me that the past Kings and Queens had done it because it's a tradition." Greta said.

Now she felt like a total outsider. They never had this kind of tradition during the Harvest Festival. Her father always invited the village people inside their castle. Nobles and commoners mingled together to celebrate each year's harvest. At the Karnstein Kingdom, it sounded like the aristocracies were hard to reach.

Still confused, "Isn't the Queen or King the guests of honor?" she asked, glancing at Greta, then her eyes sought Carm's, but her Prince looked equally clueless too. Maybe Carm did not care about this event since he never attended it, until this year. She opted for LaFontaine, instead, for the answer.

"As what I've heard, this event exclusively invites only," they related, as all eyes focused on them. "His Excellency is the one who hosts the feast and every year the church sends invitations to noble families, politicians, and of course the royalties. Not everyone is invited, because the seats are limited in the manor, and they want it to be an intimate and private affair as possible. They say that the purpose also of this feast is for the rich highborn families, or anyone with political ambition, to get close and acquainted to whomever royal guest would attend the feast. So, the higher the status of the guest of honor, the more guests would want to attend the feast. The guest of honor varies, sometimes Her Majesty attends the feast, and other times it's some dukes or marquis that are members of the King's Counsel who come when the King or Queen cannot attend."

"But how did the Archbishop choose who to invite, when there are so many noble families, ambitious politicians, and royalties but just limited seats?" Was her innocent query; she felt her head spinning at how this feast can be so important but yet complicated. She glanced again at Carm, who seemed to be hearing for the first time the real purpose of this feast, and surely it was not for the sake of merrymaking, but a different one.

"Don't look at me, I'm just a Royal Guard," he teased, shrugging his shoulders. "I didn't know that carrot top had gathered more information, aside from the actual ones."

"Hey, don't blame me for spreading this, and don't you dare tell this to anyone, or I'll lose my head," LaFontaine's voice suddenly became defensive. "I am just telling the three of you, whom I trusted sincerely and hopefully wouldn't betray me, the tales that my informants gathered from the tavern and brothel."

"Are you sure they're just tales and they are not spying on the royal family?" Carm accused, his voice cold and authoritative, that his Valet became suddenly serious and quiet. "You can be charged with spreading malicious rumors and espionage."

"Car-… I mean… Marcus, don't scare them," she chastised right away and elbowed lightly her Prince after she watched LaFontaine turned pale as a ghost. Sometimes she cannot tell when Carm was being serious or he just purely took pleasure on torturing his Valet. "I'm sure they meant it well and are loyal to the royal family."

"Alright, I'm not going to report you to the prince, so you don't get to sleep in the dungeons tonight," Carm returned, trying very hard not to smirk. But the amused look on his naughty eyes was apparent. "But tell us how the Archbishop selects his guests and what's really the purpose of this so-called 'feast of the year'."

Taking a deep breath and regaining their composure, "Alright… but swear to me first that you're not going to tell anyone about this, and that whatever happens, you're not going to send me to the dungeon," the Valet demanded, crossing their arms over their chest.
But the Prince shook his head, and challenged them by crossing his arms on his chest too.

Impatient and frustratingly curious, "Oh come on, you two! I want to hear the rest of the story," she blurted and glanced at Greta, hoping that her friend can continue the story.

"Sorry Laura, all I know is that the village people come to watch them, but I didn't know what the nobles are doing there, except to celebrate." was Greta's honest and yet careful answer.

"Alright, Marcus swears that he won't tell anyone," she told the Valet who seemed to be looking bored now while waiting for Carm's affirmation.

Refusing to wait further, she faced her stubborn Prince, "Marcus, if you're not going to swear to them, you're going to sleep with the horses tonight!" He flashed a glare upon hearing it. "I mean it!"

Carm rolled his eyes and stared at the grinning Valet across him, and then looked at her sincerely, "Alright, I swear." Was his soft throaty reply, but then gave LaFontaine a deadly glance.

"According to the tale, except for the royalties, those who want to get invited will have to donate to the church," LaFontaine continued, careful of the words they use. "The proceeds go to charity and other projects that the church has. Sometimes there are also rich merchants who donate a huge part of their earnings to the church so that they can get an invite from the Archbishop and meet all the rich and influential people of the kingdom."

"So, you mean to say that the Archbishop asks a royalty to be his guest of honor, so that those ambitious rich people can meet the Queen or King, and then be acquainted with them? And in return, the church received money to be used to their projects and help the poor. But what do these rich folks gain?" She babbled, trying to get to the bottom of this.

"Political influence," Carm proclaimed, and all eyes darted to the Prince. "If the royalty can be easily persuaded, or worst, corrupted, those greedy ambitious noblemen, politicians, and merchants would use their wealth to gain access on the decision making of the kingdom and attempt to influence the king's thinking, to favor their side."

There was a momentary pause, as each of them realized how a simple innocent looking feast can be an instrument to gain power and more wealth.

"Perhaps that's the reason why His Majesty never likes to attend the feast. It's too political," LaFontaine broke the silence. "I heard that last year, they had to ask the Duke of Lustig to be the guest of honor, despite being retired and deaf, because Her Majesty was sick, and most of the members of the King's counsel were out of town with His Majesty."

"Well, I'm pretty sure not everything is about political gain and acquiring more wealth," the diplomatic side of hers still persisted.

"Laura is right; the Queen had attended the feast from time to time and she had done a lot of charity works too," Greta added, to make the atmosphere lighter. "I may not know about politics or how the King rules our kingdom, but I know for sure that the royal family now are the most generous and sympathetic generation of House of Karnsteins that this kingdom ever had. They are the best. King Philip is very different from his forefathers."

Listening intently, and flashing his nonchalant look, "And why do you think the King is better than his predecessors?"

"Because when King Philip became the King, the economy grew and the people are more satisfied and I can say, happier," Greta explained with a smile. "According to my father, to celebrate his
crowning as the new ruler, King Philip gave away small lands to some commoners and didn't raise the tax since he took over the throne. We're one of the lucky families who received that land."

"That's nice to hear…" she acknowledged seeing that Carm was trying to fish some information and became aloof once again.

"And speaking of the royal family… I heard that the Queen is the guest of honor this year… and not some dukes or marquis…" Greta mentioned casually, "Many people would definitely come to see her…" then resumed slicing the cheese and put it on top of the rye bread. Handing the first slice to the nearest person on her side, which was LaFontaine… but received no comment from them about the guest of honor.

"Thanks." Was all they said.

She was unsure how to respond to Greta's remark. Had the castle officially announced the Queen's attendance? How about Carm's? Would it be a surprised appearance instead? Her prince never mentioned anything to her. This fuss about the Harvest Festival Feast was making her dizzy.

She suddenly felt hungry and salivating at the sight of Steirerkas on that dark bread. She watched with big wide eyes, Greta walked towards the bed; she smiled when her friend gave the biggest slice to her, and she giggled with delight, "thanks so much!"

"Here you go, Marcus," Greta handed the last slice to him and received a genuine smile.

"Thank you, that's so kind of you to share your last cheese," Carm said with concern, and then furrowed his brows. "But how about Emma? What would she eat when she comes back?"

"Don't worry about her, I'm sure Perry is already spoiling her with all the foods they can find around the village market," LaFontaine claimed, after swallowing the last piece of bread. "And I also told her to buy some food for Greta."

"Oh, you don't need to," Greta's face became worried.

"It's the least thing we can do to thank you for your hospitality," she added.

"You've been a good friend to us," Carm cut in, wiping his mouth delicately with his handkerchief after taking the last bite of his favorite bread and cheese. "And your cheese is really the next best one I've ever tasted," he stated, smiling and looking satisfied after his stomach was filled. "As a thank you, I want to share something that I heard at the castle. But you have to promise not to tell anyone, or else, I'll be the one who'll end up in the dungeons."

Greta's eyes glimmered with combined excitement and curiosity, "Marcus, you know that as your wife's friend, I wouldn't betray her trust and yours and the others as well," the dark-haired woman looked at them one by one to show her sincerity, they all nodded back to her before gazing back at him. "I swear, I won't tell a soul."

"You're right… the Queen is the guest of honor at the Bishop's feast," Carm spoke with certainty. "And she is going to be escorted by the Prince of Karnstein," he smiled proudly at the last sentence.

Definitely shocked at the inside information that she received, Greta covered her mouth with both hands after eliciting a loud gasp and stared at him.

This was the most anticipated event that all of them were waiting. To finally see who the Prince of Karnstein was… To finally see who would be their future king. They have all been waiting for him to show himself to his people, and the people of the kingdom have certainly waited for so long.
It's about time.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Thank you very much for the love and support that you're still giving this fic. I'm so happy to read your comments/ reasons why you love this story. Honestly I don't like to end this story too, but after you mentioned that you'll still read it even if it takes me ages to update, it made me reconsider to continue this crazy fic.

So thank you for those readers who left their comments and thanks to you also for not forgetting to leave kudos!

I think this was one of the longest chapters I've written… were you bored? Just let me know if it's tiring to read a long chapter and I'll make it short.

One more thing, should I go straight with the Harvest Festival on the next chapter, or write a short smut chapter about Laura and Carm still in their commoners' disguise upon arriving at the castle? I'm not sure how some of you readers felt about it, so if I get twenty-five comments saying they want the smut, I'll insert this chapter before we move forward to Carm's formal introduction to the people of their kingdom.

Got constructive criticisms and grammar corrections? Let me know below, or else feel free to tell me how you feel about this chapter… Thanks!
The Harvest Festival

Chapter Summary

Every year during autumn and at the end of the harvest, every kingdom in Styria looked forward to celebrating this festival with eating, drinking, merriment, contests, music, and romance. It was not just a Thanksgiving celebration but it also marks the freedom from working in the fields. As per tradition, the Karnstein Kingdom starts the day with a thanksgiving mass in the morning and offering to the Church their best harvests from wheat, vegetables, fruits, sweets to ale and wine, followed by the harvest dinner and merriment in the evening until everyone was stuffed and drunk. One of the highlights of the festival was the feast at the Bishop's Manor in the evening where the village people gathered to see and watch the rich, highborn men and women, and of course, the member of the royal family attend the feast and greet the people of the kingdom.

Carm is willing to commit sin just to please the Cupcake.

What Kind of shenanigan are Laura and the handmaids up to?

Chapter Notes

I know you've been waiting for this. Hope you all like the update this is both of all you requested (although there’s no 'Marcus' involved). I'm making this a two part so that I can update now, instead of writing more and delaying the posting. Thanks once again for the continued support and love for this fic… as usual, I appreciate all your kudos and your comments always make my day :-) So, who wants a pumpkin pie?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Note: Dinner is referred to as lunch or midday meal, and supper is the evening meal.

Laura

The accustomed sound of Church bells ringing which used to awaken and call people to mass can be heard throughout the castle and the nearby village. Today was not just an ordinary Sunday… and she was certainly not amused about the noise all over the kingdom.

When will they end?!

She grumbled. Normally, she always woke up happy and looking forward to starting her day.

But when she woke up this morning, she wished to stay longer in bed and sleep more.

And with her stomach growing bigger and heavier, she now preferred to lounge away the early morning hours by cuddling with her big wild cat before starting the day. However, her Prince chose to sleep in his chamber last night despite her strong protest.
Not used to sleeping without Carm by her side, she had a hard time sleeping last night and woke up late today and unintentionally fell asleep again when Perry came to her chamber with breakfast and while the latter was preparing her bath.

Standing in front of the full mirror, after a hasty change of clothes and freshening up, Perry finally gave her a nod and they both frantically left her chamber.

Wearing also her best Sunday dress, "Let's pray that we arrive before Her Majesty…” Perry murmured under her breath, composing herself while striding along the wide hallway of the upper floor of the castle. "You know how important this day is…” the Lady-in-Waiting reproached, voice tinged with agitation. Perry glanced at her, eyes tight and worried, if they were not actually going to mass, her Lady-in-Waiting would have begun stressed cleaning around them.

"I know… and I'm sorry to have fallen asleep again," she apologized. She could still taste the tangy zing of mustard in her mouth, after snatching a pickle from the breakfast tray, right before she and Perry left the chamber in complete utter haste.

"Now you didn't get to eat your breakfast properly …" Perry chided like a mother, and yet there was a worry in her voice… then it morphed into a stare and cast a suspicious eye. "Laura did you and His Highness stayed up all night again?"

She opened her mouth slightly in disbelief, whether Perry was accusing her of having sex all night with Carm while pregnant or 'cuddling' with Carm, as what she used to tell Perry, both of these were not the reason of her sleepless night.

"Of course not," she defended in a resolute tone. "Carl didn't actually sleep on my bed last night."

"Oh."

The Lady in Waiting put a hand on her arm, and they both stopped walking and faced each other.

"Don't tell me you had a fight again with him," Perry's eyebrows contorted, full of worries.

"Wha?!... No, I didn't," she returned and resumed walking, Perry trailing behind her. "Carl felt stressed last night, because of his first public appearance. And he didn't want me and the baby to feel his uneasiness, so he decided to sleep in his chamber instead… even if I've begged him to stay."

"Well… I think His Highness did the right thing," the Lady in waiting seemed to relax, but still looked, skeptic. "But why do you have dark circle under your eyes?"

"Because I didn't sleep properly last night," she reasoned out. "Not without Carl on my side to cuddle…"

"Oh sweetie, I know it's hard, but you have to get used to it," Perry comforted in a motherly tone. "When the baby comes, His Highness had to sleep for a while in his own chamber… and you cannot see him days before and during childbirth; no man is allowed to see a pregnant woman unless there's a need for a special doctor."

She heard about this tradition… but she knew that not all of them should be followed. Instead of making her Lady in Waiting more worried, she chose to ignore it. There were other things in her mind that needed her attention… needed focus.

Halfway down the stairs, her eyes caught sight of the three handmaids waiting for them at the foot of the stairs all wearing their best Sunday dresses and ready to accompany her for the day.
"Good morning girls!" She greeted them with a smile, as they curtsied in front of her. "You all looked lovely!"

"Thank you, Princess!" They greeted back, joining her and Perry.

"You look lovely as always," Natalie claimed, grinning and walked beside her on her left. "Everything is prepared…" suddenly the handmaid's voice turned serious. "There's going to be two carriages waiting outside the door near the rose garden…"

"The rose garden?" she gave Natalie a confused look. "Isn't that the farthest side to the drawbridge?"

"That's the only secluded place where the carriage can stay without being noticed," Natalie explained confidently.

Her face contorted, "But there's little time before they arrived at the manor," was her worried comment.

But Natalie just flashed a reassuring smile, "I talked to Fritz and he told me that Alfred is going to use the long route since they will need more securities tonight."

"And don't worry…," Betty chimed in from behind. "We're going to dress you afterwards in a gown that's easy to change… there'll be less time to waste…" the tall handmaid reassured with a smile. "So remember, I will wait for you at the wine cellar after you send off His Hotness…"

Walking beside Perry on the right side, "Are you sure this is going to work?" Sarah Jane's worried comment earned a glare from Betty and Natalie. "What if we got caught?"

"Nobody's going to get caught, as long as we're careful," she reassured them and stole a glance at her very tight-lipped and stiff Lady in Waiting, who seemed to be ignoring the exchange of conversation. As expected, Perry did not agree with their latest shenanigan. Ever since she was young, she and the girls were into mischiefs all the time and Her Lady-in-Waiting would always reprimand and prevent them from getting into trouble. She, on the other hand, would always obey Perry. Until now… she told Perry she and the handmaids will do it whether she had her Lady in Waiting's permission or not. "Nat, did you managed to find out how we can come inside?"

"Yes… the kitchen," Natalie explained like a skilled informer. "It's going to be a lavish feast, and they need extra servants in the kitchen. I already told the cook that you're a talented konditor and we three, are your assistants, so she agreed right away."

"But I don't know how to bake…" Sara Jane cut off, nervous.

Knowing Sarah Jane since they were kids, this friend of hers was not used to doing something prohibited and contraband. "Don't worry, you just have to stay beside me and I'll tell you what to do," she reassured her worried handmaiden, before returning her attention to Natalie. "By the way, how did you convince the cook to hire us?"

The handmaids turned pale and reluctantly glanced at Perry, who seemed to be doing her best not to get involved in the discussion.

When none of the two answered…

"Betty and Nat sneaked out some of Perry's desserts the other day and brought it to the head cook of the bishop to taste them," Sarah Jane blurted out.

The dullness in Perry's eyes suddenly became fiery. But before the Lady in Waiting can scold
"There you are…"

The huskiness and sensuality of Carm's voice caused them all to blush and turned their heads to where the sound came from. Whether it was due to guilt or arousal she can never tell, but she was thankful that they escaped Perry's wrath.

For now.

"Good morning ladies," the Prince flashed his signature cocky smirk to the handmaids and Perry, after bowing to him. "You all looked like you have seen a ghost, is everything alright?" he asked, as the usually boisterous handmaids remained awfully silent.

Before Carm can suspect anything…

"We're just mesmerized by you, my handsome Prince," she complimented him with all honesty that caused Carm to turn crimson. "Let's go, we don't want to be late," she suggested and hooked her arm smoothly to her Prince's arm and guided him towards the entrance to the castle's chapel, followed by Perry still flashing deadly glares to the guilty handmaidens.

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The Thanksgiving Mass would have been pleasant despite the sermon being long again, and the fact that her stomach was rumbling. However, the sight of a variety of vegetables, different kinds of bread, sacks of grains, baskets of fruits, nuts, eggs, barrels of ale and wine laid at the foot of the altar mockingly reminded her of the delicious breakfast that she missed earlier.

But that was not the difficult part.

The tantalizing scents of pies, sweets, aromas of freshly baked loaves of bread lingering in the air inside the chapel filled her nose, making her light-headed and aroused her hunger.

While Carm nearly dozed off during the bishop's long homily about giving and being grateful for all the blessings this year, she, on the other hand, was like a sinner fighting an urge not to give into temptation. Thankfully, she managed to finish the mass without jumping into the altar and grabbing one of the sweets and devouring it like a savage in front of the King and Queen.

She discreetly said a silent prayer, thanking the Lord for giving her strength… or else, she would end up in the confession booth.

Turning around, after greeting the last priest, "Crap, why do they also have pies?" she mumbled bitterly as her eyes glanced at the sinfully luscious pumpkin pies placed among the fresh fruits.

"What did you say?" Carm murmured behind as they walked down the aisle of the chapel towards the exit after the royal family was greeted by the bishop and all the priests of the kingdom who concelebrated the high mass.

Giving her a weird look, "Umm… nothing," she hooked her arm unto Carm's own and led him as quick as her feet can take towards the great hall, where a banquet was set up for the Thanksgiving dinner while Perry and the handmaids trailed behind them.

"Oh, just a moment, Cupcake," Carm turned to his left and whispered something to Armitage without breaking their hold. His personal royal guard bowed at once and disappeared as if he had vanished in the air.
"Wow, he sure moves fast," was all she could say, admiring the swiftness of the warrior. Curious as to what Carm had asked that made his personal guard act quickly, "What did you tell him?"

Smirking, "You'll soon find out," was the Prince's smug reply, as they walked along the hallway, connecting the chapel and main hall.

Following the King and the Queen together with the visiting dignitaries, the King's few selected members of the royal court, together with their wives, she snorted at Carm.

"Why do you always do that?"

Playing along and furrowing his elegant eyebrows, "Do what?"

"Tease me," she pouted.

She hated when she did not get an answer instantly. And Carm was surely relishing it right now. But before her curiosity killed her… she got distracted when Carm's Valet suddenly appeared on his left side and handed him something intriguingly fragrant and wrapped in a white cloth.

"Hey… Armitage told me to give you this," LaFontaine whispered to the Prince, and they suspiciously looked around them to check if anyone saw or hear them, aside from Perry, the three handmaidens and her. "Careful, it's still hot," they said as they put it on the Prince's hand.

She was about to intercept whatever prank Carm, Armitage, and LaFontaine were playing at and had thought of threatening the Prince to reveal to her what the mysterious thing was.

Even the handmaidens and Perry got curious and walked closer around them and discreetly looked at the mysterious object.

But before she could 'threaten' her naughty Prince…

"Here you go, Cupcake," Carm carefully unwrapped and offered it to her, as she, Perry and the handmaidens stared in disbelief.

Together with Perry and the handmaids, they elicited a simultaneous low gasp after the Prince revealed the content.

"What the-" her eyes cannot believe what she saw, and the next thing she knew, her stomach growled as her nose recognized the warm, sweet spicy smell of cinnamon and cloves. Where did it come from? And how did Carm know that she wants it? She looked up and caught the sweet smile on her Prince's face.

"I saw you glancing at it many times, so I asked Armitage to get one for you," was Carm's thoughtful remark while holding the pumpkin pie.

Caught off guard of her Prince being considerate and attentive, she got speechless and gazed at him.

For a moment, time seemed to cease as they stared affectionately into each other's eyes. Here she was, accusing Carm of teasing her when in fact; he was thinking about her well-being and being sweet lover…

"Is that the pie at the altar?"

Perry's shaky voice tore them out of their gaze. She came to her senses and realized the naughtiness that her Prince did… and stared at him for confirmation.
When he did not deny it...

"I really appreciate the thoughtfulness," she carefully spoke, hoping it wouldn't offend him. "But you took it from the offering… this is supposed to be for the Church," she explained.

"I saw you drooling at the pie and heard your stomach rumbling. I don't care if it's for the Church!" Carm reasoned out. "I won't let you and my child starve."

After that remark, her heart melted with his sweetness. Sure, Carm could be naughty sometimes, or most of the time, but her Prince certainly proven that he would do anything for her… and their baby.

Sensing that Carm was growing broody, "Thank you… that's sweet of you," she kissed him on the cheek before tearing a piece of the pumpkin pie from his hand.

Seeing that they have 'committed a sin', Perry did the sign of the cross and the Lady-in-Waiting's eyes shut for a moment, before mumbling a silent prayer along the way, while the handmaidens giggled discreetly.

"Don't worry Lady Ginger, I'm going to tell it to Bishop Klaus on my confession day, and I will take all the blame so that you won't be dragged with me to hell," was Carm's sarcastic comment and looked at the amused handmaids and winked at them. "Come on girls help Laura finished it before we're caught by my Queen Mother."

The handmaids happily nodded and each tore a bit from the pie.

Displaying a charming innocent smile, "Want more Cupcake?" Carm asked, offering a large bit of pie, even if she was still not finished with the piece that she had.

She smiled and opened her mouth and let Carm feed her, then he took a big bite from it too, and he handed to Lafontaine the remaining piece. "Eat it," he ordered while chewing in between. "So I won't be alone in case we get caught and punished by my Mother."

"You're not afraid to face alone the devil in hell, but you want me to join you in case Her Majesty caught and punished you?" LaFontaine boldly stated the obvious. Instead of a reply, they received a hissed from the Prince. Not having a choice, the Valet rolled their eyes and reluctantly put the sinfully delicious pumpkin pie into their mouth. After slowly chewing and swallowing everything, their eyes widened, "Wow! I think it's worth every whip that we'll get!" was their delighted reply and earned a glare from Perry.

They all tried to suppress laughing as they catch up with the others towards the banquet.

"Oh God, forgive them for they don't know what they're doing," Perry mumbled nervously like the Savior on the cross, glancing up and made the sign of the cross for the nth times.

Suppressing a giggle, and trying very hard not to spit out the pie in her mouth after Perry gave them a judgmental look, she swallowed the last piece then she reached for Carm's mouth and held his jawline. She gently pulled him closer to her and kissed him tenderly, tasting the combined sweetness of the pumpkin pie in their mouths, "I love you, thanks for stealing the pie and sinning for me…" she whispered and earned a wide smile from her Prince.

"Anything for you, Cupcake…" Carm sweetly uttered his voice deeper and huskier before displaying a diabolical smirk and winked at her.

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After finally eating the bountiful delicious Thanksgiving dinner in the great hall of the castle, and entertaining and feeding their guests, Her Majesty called for a meeting in the king's room in preparation for tonight's event while their guests rested.

"You may begin…" The Queen ordered taking a seat at the opposite side of the head of the table, right across the King.

Together with His Majesty, Carm, LaFontaine, and the High Constable, she quietly sat beside Carm for the first time in the King's round table, feeling the tension and power that this table emitted. A lot of important things had been discussed here between the King and his counsels, and now she got to experience how it felt to be a part of something significant.

Sitting to the left of the King, next to the High Constable and beside the Queen, "Thank you, Your Majesty…" LaFontaine bowed and rose from their seat. "There will be five hundred royal guards that will escort Her Majesty and His Highness, including myself, His Highness' and Her Majesty's personal Royal Guards, Her Majesty's Lady-in-Waiting and handmaidens. Alfred is driving the carriage and twenty of the best knights in the castle will personally guard Her Majesty and His Highness in and out of the Bishop's Manor."

Surprised… "Five hundred royal guards?" Carm looked at his mother. "My Queen Mother, I think it's too many. My personal guard and a couple of knights are enough, don't you think so?"

"My son, this is your first time in the village, and the first time the people of our kingdom will see you," the Queen explained in a calm but firm tone. "We don't know what kind of reaction or behavior the people will have when they see for the first time the Prince of Karnstein."

She suddenly recalled Carm's initial impression of the village people: they were savages. Perhaps this was the reason the Queen was a bit exaggerated when it came to guarding the heir to the throne. Right now, she was aching to tell her the people of their kingdom were nice, helpful and friendly. Based on her own experience, she knew most of them were far from being savage, and Carm had already witnessed that.

Should she tell her mother-in-law that the village people were not what she thought they were?

Before her being outspoken cause her trouble, she came to her senses when she caught LaFontaine giving her a warning look. Carm's Valet definitely knew what she was thinking and Laf discreetly shook their head from left to right, and their eyes implored her. She took a deep breath and calmed down.

This was her first attendance at this kind of meeting and for the sake of her beloved's security, she would respect the King and Queen's order… for now.

Perhaps there were some people in the village that were actually savages and did not like the Karnsteins after all… she tried to convince herself despite her conflicted thoughts.

"Carl…" the King's voice refrained the Prince from being upset further. "Your Queen Mother and I are just thinking of what's best for you. We don't know if all the people in the kingdom are harmless. It happened many times that a member of the royal family or a highborn is abducted in exchange for ransom, or worst there are people who wanted the king or the royal heir hurt or dead, so they can take over the throne."

She had not thought of that…

Thank God, she shut her mouth this time.

Sometimes, due to her sheltered upbringing, she had difficulty dealing with morally gray areas and
complicated aspects of life. She always saw the best in a person and she had never been judgmental in nature, and never thought someone can be that cruel.

"Or the crowd can be too eager to see the heir to the throne for the first time, and might cause a commotion…" LaFontaine added, once the King was finished and signaled them to resume. "I heard many times how the people in the kingdom are anxious, curious and longing to see the heir to the throne. And since they have been waiting for so long, their emotions would be heightened once they saw the Prince of Karnstein. So, we have to prepare for these kinds of receptions and reactions from the crowd. And since we already sent a formal letter to His Excellency confirming His Highness' and Her Majesty's attendance, it wouldn't be long before someone spread the news, when the guests to the Bishop's feast received their invitation."

"I agree with the Royal Valet, Your Majesty," the High Constable seated to the left side of the King rose from his seat. "Tight security around Her Majesty and His Highness are necessary. There will be people who would want to see His Highness closely and would probably want to touch him or greet him, because they had longed for him, adore him and –"

"No one…" The Royal High Constable was not even finished with his analysis of the situation when the Queen cut him off. "No one shall ever come near my son," was the Queen's authoritative firm remark, glaring at the Royal High Constable. "I don't care how many royal guards or knights needed to guard the Prince… the most important thing is for all of you to make sure that this will be a safe and comfortable event for the Prince, and that you are all prepared for it."

Still standing, LaFontaine and the Royal High Constable bowed their head to the Queen.

"We are fully prepared Your Majesty and we promise to protect His Royal Highness at all cost," The Royal High Constable replied meekly.

"LaFontaine, have you taken care of the things that I ordered?" the Queen flashed a deadly glare to them.

"I have Your Majesty," was the Valet's quick reply.

She caught the naughty glance that LaFontaine threw on her way and gave them a naughty smirk before clearing their throat and resuming.

"What's that?" Carm inquired, leaning to her ear.

Did he just catch the exchange look between her and LaFontaine? She suddenly fidgeted on her seat as Carm's curious eyes waited for her reply. But she pretended not to hear him.

"His Excellency and the head cook of the Manor were already informed, and five of our best servants would join the staff of the manor and two of them would be in charge serving His Highness and Her Majesty." LaFontaine related, looking at the Queen this time.

"May I know why we're bringing our own servants to the feast?" Carm asked all of a sudden, focusing his attention to the Valet.

"Carl, your father and I decided that it would be safer for you to have familiar faces around you once we are in the Manor," the Queen confided, giving the Prince a reassuring smile that quickly faded before focusing again to the Valet… "How about the seating arrangement, I don't want new faces near my son…"

"I've already sent the copy to the Steward of the Manor and made the necessary adjustments…" LaFontaine explained confidently which earned a nod from the Queen.
"Which is?" Carm chimed in, looking confused and lost…

"I told Bishop Klaus that my counselors and their wives shall seat nearest to you and your Queen Mother," the King supplied the intriguing information. "Just like the arrangement with the servants, we want you to feel safe and comfortable with familiar faces around you…"

"But you don't need to-" Carm argued…

"No buts, this is for your own safety," the Queen uttered firmly.

Sensing her Prince's frustration, she reached for Carm's hand under the table and held it tight. She got Carm's attention at once and he looked at her direction. She squeezed his hand lightly and gave him a reassuring smile. Carm mellowed instantly and managed to give her a quick smirk.

The meeting proceeded to the discussion of the escape plan in case of emergency and they need to extract the Prince and the Queen from the premise or in case of pandemonium when the crowd met the Prince outside the Manor. Other than that, Carm remained calm the rest of the meeting while she remained holding his hand under the table.

Once the King was satisfied with the security drill, he dismissed the meeting and joined the Queen and met their guests at the tea room.

"Are you alright?"

She asked as she and Carm walked along the hall leading to the grand staircase.

Carm just looked at her and nodded.

The Prince was still upset after not having a say at the meeting. But she totally understood her in-laws with regards to Carm's angst and safety. "Sometimes, parents can be so overprotective and exaggerated …Especially when it comes to their most beloved child."

"I feel like a helpless child," he retorted, his brows furrowed.

Sensing broodiness coming on…

"Why don't you join me first upstairs before you go to your chamber," she suggested thinking of distracting Carm from all the stress of tonight's celebration. "It looks like you could use some relaxing before you go out tonight.

Suddenly, Carm's eyes lightened up and morphed into his signature seductive eyes. "I knew there's something in that naughty mind of yours the moment you took my hand under the table," he teased and leaned to kiss her, but she averted his lips.

"That's not what I meant, you horny panther!" she exclaimed and walked ahead of him, going upstairs.

"Then what is it?" was Carm's impatient reply, trailing behind her.

She did not look back and ignored his remark. They quickly arrived in front of her chamber and the guards bowed before opening the door and shut it behind them. She walked straight to the bed and removed her crown and shoes, before hopping into bed and sat, resting her back on the headboard.

"Come here…" she beckoned the excited Prince to sit beside her.

But Carm just stood by the foot of the bed and stared at her.
"If you wish not to make love to me, I won't come to bed," he crossed his arms on his chest and smirked.

"It's a pity…" she gazed straight at him and started to slowly pull down the left sleeve of her dress, not tearing her eyes off those dark orbs, nowadays the dresses she wore were comfortable and easy to take off. Then she pulled the other sleeve and pushed the upper part of her dress down to the waist until her full breasts were freed, and she proudly sat straight. "I was hoping that I can relieve the tension inside you by cuddling and 'feeding' you before going out tonight."

His whole face lit up.

From a cocky broody Prince, shifting to a confused helpless kitten that had been denied of milk for a long time, to the aroused feline in heat.

The look on Carm's face was priceless.

"But since you don't want to come to bed, I'll just touch these heavy creamy cupcakes to ease the ache…" she teased and started to put her hands on her heavy globes. "And if you don't want to suckle them…"

"Well, if you put it that way…" Carm hopped on bed swiftly, boots still on and crawled towards her. Standing on all fours like a predatory wild cat, and dressed in his finest violet tunic and long silky burgundy cape, he paused once he was face to face with her. "Creamy cupcakes?" he commented with a naughty smirk before eyeing her breasts.

Raising her left eyebrow "Why not?" she retorted displaying a lop-sided grin. "You don't seem to have a problem when I call this-," she then cupped his groin through his trousers and found his bulge growing hard and thick. It was so amazing to know that she can easily rouse him just by showing her tits to the naughty Prince. "…The big panther." And then she released it which caused Carm to groan.

Carm captured her lips at once and sucked her tongue like a hungry beast. "Cupcake, you're killing me…" he whined in a husky tone and shifted after withdrawing from the heated kiss, noticing something uncomfortable and getting in his way. He removed his crown and tossed it at the foot of the bed, and reclaimed her mouth.

Carm's tongue made sweeping, swirling motions inside her mouth, stroking it into ecstasy. They engaged in this duel of tongues until she cannot breathe any longer and had to cup her Prince's exquisite jawline with her two hands to stop him as they both catch their breaths. Fully dilated dark orbs stared at her with full of ardent and fire when their gaze met.

She wondered how much her Prince missed her…

…One night.

Carm was denied of one night not seeing and touching her. Every day, she witnessed and felt how her Prince grew clingy and needy of her affection and attention. She had a feeling that it had to do with the coming of the baby and Carm was taking advantage of the remaining time they can spend together… alone.

Perhaps this was the reason for his hunger…

"Carm…" her voice trembled with anticipation, witnessing the same urgency in his eyes. He responded by reclaiming her mouth in a searing, bruising kiss, and made her head dizzy. "Mmmm…." She almost forgot why they were in her chamber…
Focus Laura! This isn't the way to calm him down!

She tried very hard to resist Carm's kisses and touches and put a hand on his chest to calm him down. But there was no sign that her big wild cat was going to slow down and just cuddle by the way Carm kissed her hard, held her waist and pulled her body closer to him.

Who was she kidding?

They were both yearning for something and it definitely did not involve cuddling.

As if reading her mind, Carm released from the kiss and began to work his way downward sampling her chin, her throat, biting gently on her pulse point, and then nibbling her collarbones, around her breasts and the valley between them.

"You're driving me crazy, Cupcake…"

She discreetly smiled… a victorious smile. At least, she managed to distract him from all the stress and preparations for tonight.

Carm started slow and sensual, but his desire escalated and he began to kiss eagerly, nipping on her bosom and the sensitive sides of her breasts. Did he want to play first before feeding?

Her question was answered quickly…

He drew her nipple in between his teeth and tugged before dragging his teeth naughtily on them and released it quickly as if teasing her.

Oh, God. Is he going to play first?

She whimpered at his naughtiness. Her pale pink buds grew rigid, while his mouth explored the area around her bosom, sucking and nipping around. There was something about Carm's teeth that aroused her whenever he bites her… suddenly she felt his teeth biting again the skin of her collarbone.

Was he teasing her?

But before she can react…

Carm made a noise deep in the back of his throat akin to a predatory animal. "You're so beautiful Laura… and you're mine!" Carm growled growing territorial.

Then he dragged his teeth to her sensitive skin the way she loved it, nipping on the place that connected her shoulder and neck before sinking his teeth on the softness of her flesh.

She loved ferocious Carm!

A low soft moan escaped her lips and she felt her underwear getting wetter. Carm feasted for a moment, biting, sucking and licking the area around her neck, shoulders, and throat, bosom… as if he needed to put his mark on every part of her again. Her big wild cat was being territorial and claiming what was his. And his greedy mouth was driving her insane.

She had thought of just 'feeding' Carm, but it looked like their bodies were both aching for something else… something feral.

Growing frustrated, she cannot hold on anymore and led his mouth back to one of her breasts. Carm growled at her daring move but did not disappoint her.
He dutifully responded, and sucked first at the soft flesh of her breast above her nipple, marking her, before he licked one of the engorged tips and around the areola.

Lately, her breasts were growing sensitive to his touch, and just a mere contact drives her insanely aroused.

Then she felt Carm's gloved hand knead her left breast while he licked the nipple. "Mmm… I thought… mmm… we'll just… mmm…" her mind was fogged with lust and can't even construct a decent sentence, as she watched him devour her brazenly swollen breasts and aching tits. She felt heat crawling in her body just by the sight of her Prince on her bosom. "Never mind… ahh…"

Carm grew eager by the moment, sucking the flesh around her areola.

Her fingers toyed with the soft wisps of hair on his nape and fondled it to calm him.

But instead, he became more ravenous.

Carm began to bite also around her left breast, his lips encircling the nipple. Yet, he deprived any kind of touch on her twin peaks. She almost wanted to stuff it down his hot dripping mouth to suckle them. But no, he just licked, nibbled and sucked around it.

Lost to the sensation that Carm created as he continuously devoured her sensitive breasts but never her throbbing aching nipples…

"Ahh…!" Without a warning, Carm finally sucked the nipple hard against the roof of his mouth, making her back arched and her torso lifted from the bed. Carm's hot greedy mouth finally around her hardened peak sent a lightning bolt of pleasure through her, tipping her over the edge. Her fingers curled in his hair and locked her arms tightly around him as she let out a strangled cry of elation. "Carrmm!" Her body stiffened and shook hard.

She was surprised at the intensity as a surge of liquid from the apex of her thigh hit her loins. Never had she thought of coming just by teasing and playing with her breast and nipple. Honestly, she was growing impatient that Carm seemed to be taking his time, but she did not realize the outcome could be rewarding. And now she found herself squirting more cum in her underwear and wetting the damn bed!

When Carm released her nipple and from her arms, her Prince wore the cockiest of a smile, "I thought you're going to feed me and we're taking it slowly and calmly…” he said, hovering on top of her.

Still regaining her breath, she gazed at him sheepishly as she tried to recover from that surprisingly unexpected orgasm. She did not know if Carm had an idea of how messy wet she was now, or he was pretending not to notice the soiled sheet. But she still managed to make a witty reply. "Well, that was just the appetizer… we can now cuddle and relax, and I'll feed you, but promise me you won't play anymore with my tits."

"Cupcake… as much as I like to cuddle and suckle, I don't think I can control the big panther here," Carm took a deep breath before gesturing to the raging bulge in his crotch. "Our bodies have minds of their own… let's just go with the flow, shall we?" he insisted and carefully positioned himself in between her legs, and fumbled on the hem of her dress before desperately pushed it up to her waist, and pulled her underwear down all the way to her ankle and removed it. Suddenly, his eyebrows furrowed and held it in front of him, "Oh. I thought it's just an appetizer…” the Prince's eyes widened as he discovered the soaked underwear.

She just gave him a sheepish grin and felt her face reddening with embarrassment. She did not know
what to say, but when she looked at Carm's eyes again, expecting a mocking remark…

Carm tossed the intriguing underwear over his shoulder, and he kneeled in front of her and began to untie his trousers.

But it seemed like it was taking him forever and he began to grow impatient too and fumbled on the strings.

While Carm desperately tried to open his trousers, it did not go unnoticed to her how his bulge grew thicker by the moment, stirring… as if 'calling her'. It looked painfully hard. She licked her lips and recalled how it felt inside her… throbbing and thick. Growing lustfully impatient, she bit her lower lip then reached for Carm's raging hardness and naughtily squeezed his thick erection while he still struggled taking it out.

Her mischief earned a growl and piercing glare from her Prince, but she quickly responded with a devilish grin.

After seemed like forever, Carm finally freed his thickness from the constraint of his braies and it slapped hard on his stomach. He eagerly grabbed the base of his member but was surprised when her hand replaced his…

"I think it's my turn now…" she said and wrapped her small hand around the thickness of his member. Her breathing became ragged as she started to stroke him in a slow sensual manner.

Carm groaned while she fondled him… music to her ear that she loved so much.

She can feel him hot and hard, and throbbing against her hand as soon as she grasped him. His hips flexed against her hand and she can't help but looked up and saw the hunger in his eyes. She instinctively tightened her grip and stroked him from bottom to tip and earned a deep groan from him. His breathing became labored while he remained kneeling in front of her. She loved watching Carm under the mercy of her hands.

Then a crazy thing slipped her mind… a mere idea to calm him if he ever had an anxiety attack.

"Remember this if it gets too much tonight, and you feel you can't breathe," she stated in a low sultry tone, and then her thumb brushed over his sensitive head, collecting his precum. She made sure that Carm's gaze was on her, as she brought her thumb to her lips and slowly licked his taste from her skin.

As expected, it earned a growl from her beautiful wild Prince, as he insanely witnessed one of the dirty things that she learned from the ladies of the brothel.

"Damn! That was…" Carm exclaimed frantically excited. "Laura…" he panted, his voice growing deeper and needy. "I want you now… I want to feel you around me," he begged and shifted, giving her space to comfortably lay on the bed.

Her body ached for her Prince, but she wanted this moment to last so that Carm would rid of all his stress. She took her time and slowly she wrapped her hand again around his throbbing length and positioned him at her entrance. She rubbed the sensitive tip of his head that was oozing with precum up and down between her slick folds, teasing Carm as she coated him with the evidence of her arousal.

"Go slow, my love… I want to feel you taking me every inch," she said, her voice thick with desire. Just the thought of Carm filling and stretching her caused her body quiver.

Carm seemed to be battling for control with his own lust and just nodded more than once. She cupped his face and held his gaze her soft hands caressed his jawline for a moment. A smile formed
on her lips as she felt Carm relaxed on her touch, and his piercing eyes softened.

He pushed inside smoothly.

She gasped when his thick head penetrated her, spreading her open, sweetly invading her inside.

Giving her a concerned look, "Are you alright?" Carm asked, furrowing his brows.

Ever since her tummy began to show up, and became bigger Carm had been extra careful and been reluctant to go deeper and faster.

Breathing heavily, they gazed at each other for a while and she reached for Carm's cheek and fondled his jawline. "It's perfect… Give me all you got, my beautiful wild panther," was her encouraging words, before Carm began to push slowly.

They never break their gaze as he entered her. She missed this. She craved for this last night and this morning too. When they were connected like this, nothing else mattered… only Carm and their love.

Carm began to thrust deeper. She can feel him pulsing inside her and still growing thicker, she thought she might come just by feeling his swollen member alone.

"Cupcake… you feel so good," Carm moaned his husky voice thick with desire and captured her lips. "I missed you last night," he continued, thrusting deeper and longer. "Ahhh… you're so tight," Carm grunted once he was mid-way. "Tell me if I'm hurting you…"

"My Prince… stop worrying and just enjoy me…" she moaned as he slowly stretched her inside. It always felt amazing whenever Carm entered her, it felt like an invasion but at the same time, he was so gentle and sensual. "Mmm… Carm…" she moaned wrapping her arms around Carm's neck, pulling him closer to her and feeling the hotness of his breath on her neck, while he invaded her. "I've been thinking of this since last night… ahhhh…" she felt Carm plunged deeper after the last remark. She could feel him throbbing inside her with every thrust. "I can't stop thinking about you… I can't sleep without you," she openly admitted and whimpered. "Without your body near me-" her moans became louder and shorter as she felt her Prince's aggressiveness with each confession that she made. It felt every confession she made caused him to move faster and deeper. Her words seemed to send flames in Carm's every nerve, igniting a need so primal as she heard him groaned louder and grew possessive of her body. She closed her eyes and relished this moment, and continued to confess her feelings to him. "I love the feeling of you inside me… I love how you claim me… again…and again… I'm yours-" she was not even finished yet when she felt Carm's face buried deeper on the flesh in between her neck and shoulder, and the next thing she felt was a strong gush erupting inside her.

Carm let out a suppressed groan that quickly turned into a feral growl. "Ahhhh!"

There was something in his voice that did not sound right. She opened her eyes.

She held him tight and realized what just happened when Carm continued growling. Her arms cradled him protectively in the warmth of her embrace as he continued to empty his juice inside her.

Her Prince rarely came first.

Carm always made it a point to wait for her and hold it. But it seemed he did not have control of his body. Perhaps he was extra stressed today and needed to 'release' all the anxiety inside him. She knew that he was anxious about what was going to happen tonight. But he kept on telling her that he was fine… until now.
Realizing what happened, he released from the embrace, sheepishly glanced at her and before she
could say anything. Carm pulled out from her, his rich juice gushed out from her core. They both
looked at his rod and it was unusual to see Carm softening right away. Carm's ability to remain hard
even after he climaxed was one of the things that baffled them and at the same time, amazed her.
There were just a couple of times he became limp after a late night quickie or when he was
exhausted. But of all the times that they made love, Carm had no problem with his erection...

"Damn it!" he cursed under his breath after finding out that his 'wild panther' let him down. He
looked at her, like a lost kitten, and they both awkwardly stared at each other. "Laura, I'm sorry, I
didn’t-"

She gingerly glanced at his softening shaft, and felt the need to save the situation seeing that he
cannot let it up, and wished not to add more stress on her Prince. She needed to think fast before
Carm die of embarrassment.

Thinking fast and recalling her own embarrassing situation, "Why don't we just call it quits?" she
said, smiling.

Carm just gave her a confused look. "I know you find this amusing and…” Carm bitterly
commented.

"That's not what I meant, you silly cat!" she replied and paused for a while, giving him a sheepish
grin and cupping his face with her hands. "I'm talking about how I suddenly came a while ago and
how wet I was, and I feel so embarrassed that you'll find out the mess that I've made. But instead,
you didn't make a naughty comment about it."

After that hyper babble, the lines on her Prince's forehead vanished and instead he gazed at her with
full of warmth.

Carm reached for her face, cupped her cheeks too and kissed her passionately, while her hands rested
on his nape and fondled it.

"You're amazing, Cupcake…” Carm said after releasing from the kiss, giving her a satisfied smile.

Displaying a naughty grin, she looked down and carefully reached for his soft but slick shaft. "Why
don't I wake the big panther again…” she suggested and started to pump him faster. She can already
see the result in no time when she felt his member coming to life.

"I think I'll have you instead," Carm displayed his signature cocky smirk.

And before she can protest his head dipped on her groin and he started licking her.

"Oh."

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Got constructive criticism? Let me know below… I always appreciate your help.
Thanks!
Chapter Summary

This is a continuation of the previous chapter. Carm is finally introduced to the people of their kingdom. Laura is acting like an over-protective lover and would do anything to make sure that Carm's first time meeting the people of their kingdom will go smoothly and want to be there for her Prince. Before Carm goes to the feast something amazing happened while Laura is sending him off.

Chapter Notes

If you're curious to know how the angel statue looked like:

And if you're still under 18 years old, I suggest that you visit some museums and take advantage of the free admission, if not reduced price to most of them. And if you're over 18 there are museums that are free on certain days in most European cities. Summer is already around the corner, if you're planning to travel, go explore some museums too!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Laura

It's pure madness.
Perry told her.
It's wicked crazy…
…According to LaFontaine.
It's an adventure!
…For Natalie and Betty.
But risky.
Concluded Sarah Jane.

That's why she had to be careful not to give Carm reasons to suspect… at least not before he left for the feast. She did not want to add to his worries. And with her Prince still high from her taste and recent lovemaking, she hoped that he will not suspect a thing.

Or else…Carm would definitely go insane!
But she had her reasons.

…Reasons to justify why she was doing it.

From the moment Her Majesty declared it was time for the Prince of Karnstein to make his public
debut, she had been worried.

They knew the time will come for this and there was not a right time to do it but now… before the
arrival of their baby. It was the perfect moment.

And she definitely did not want to steal the people's attention from Carm. She had no intention of
ruining this moment. The Karnstein family had been enveloped with secrets and struggles since the
day the heir to the throne was born. And today, they were all looking forward to proudly present
their Crown Prince to the people of their kingdom. So she agreed wholeheartedly to proudly present
this without her, despite the fact that her heart was telling her not to leave her Prince alone in this kind of
situation.

She knew that she was beginning to be like her mother-in-law when it comes to Carm's anxiety and
discomfort. Or perhaps this was due to her hormones… causing her to become a protective mother
and in this case… a crazy protective lover.

But she had witnessed it a couple of times and knew how to handle the situation and Carm.
Although LaFontaine would be there beside the Prince, and they assured her that they would take
good care of him, she was still not at ease letting him go by himself. Not when Carm could have
another attack and she was not there to pacify her beloved Prince. She would rather be near and
accessible for him, instead of fidgeting in the four walls of her chamber. Despite being pregnant, she
was his better half and protector too, for heaven's sake! No one can stop her from 'protecting' her
broody Prince, not even the Queen.

Her curiosity was aroused too. How the people would react when they see Carm for the first time?

She had to be there.

'I will be very careful.'

She told Her Lady-in-Waiting for a hundred times.

Perry was madly worried. The moment she revealed her plan, the Lady-in-Waiting spent a whole
day cleaning and scrubbing around her chamber while grumbling…

'Have you gone insane?! That's madness! You're up to your usual mischiefs again! Prince Carl
would definitely hang me for allowing you to go out there!'

But she did not yield to her motherly nagging… and assured that she would be fine and nobody can
stop her even if Perry locked her in her chamber.

By this time, her handmaidens, with help from her loyal guards, Fritz and Bastian, had already
assembled the perfect scheme and everything was prepared to take her 'unofficially' to the Bishop's
Manor. The only minor concern was when or if ever Carm finds out about this; she did not know
what punishment will be in store for her. She prayed that he will not forbid her again going to the
village market… But she was willing to take the risk and his wrath just to make sure that she can be
there when he had an attack.

And besides, this was one of the highlights of her commoner's disguise… she wished to see, hear
and feel the reactions of the people regarding the heir to the throne that was such an enigma to them.
"What in heaven's name are you thinking about?"

Her wicked train of thoughts was rudely interrupted and she found two worried dark orbs with furrowed brows staring back at her.

"You looked like you're somewhere else..." the Prince claimed, as they sauntered through the large hallway leading to the main entrance.

She was too immersed with her thoughts that she forgot where they were.

"Princess, are you alright?"

Her ears caught the familiar worried tone of Perry, and her eyes searched for her Lady-in-Waiting. Walking behind her, she received a motherly glare... the one that said 'to behave herself'. She rolled her eyes, then shook her head to clear her thoughts and regained her composure before turning back her gaze to her side.

But Carm was now giving her a suspicious look.

She began to fidget.

What if he found out about her plan before he could leave the castle?

Her crazy shenanigan, as Perry described.

There was only one way to distract Carm...

She displayed her most adorable smile that was exclusively for the possessive Prince's eyes only and took his hand on her own soft one. "I'm just excited and want to see how the people will react when they see you."

Her soft touch did more than erase the worry from Carm's brow.

"Oh, Cupcake, I wish you're there too, to see them," Carm replied, giving her an apologetic look. "I've tried asking again my Queen Mother if we can take you to the feast and introduce you to the – "

Realizing what he meant, "No, that's not what I'm thinking about..." she corrected and gestured for Carm to keep quiet so as not to offend her mother-in-law, as they follow the King and Queen, while their entourage followed behind and walked beside them. She tried to walk slower and kept a good distance from her in-laws. "This is your special day and you deserve to be the guest of honor... I mean, I'm happy that the people in the village and the other noble families will finally see you. You know how they're excited and longing to meet their future king."

She finished with a smile, but then caught the worried look on Carm's face, and when their eyes met...

"I'm looking forward meeting them too," Carm displayed a reassuring grin and took a deep breath. "By the way, don't wait up for me. The feast might finish late since most of the noble families and merchants are coming tonight," he said, twisting his signet ring on his pinky.

Her eyes caught the familiar sight of his uneasiness. She definitely needed to be by his side... in case. To make matters lighter, "Well, I don't care how late it will take. I'm gonna wait for you to make sure that you sleep with me tonight," she demanded and saw the surprised look on Carm's eyes.

"Cupcake, what if we finished after midnight?" Carm argued, growing worried. "I don't want to disturb you while you're asleep. I'll just sleep at my chamber tonight then we'll see each other tomorrow."
"Don't you dare sleep again in your chamber," she shot a warning glare at Carm. "You've already slept there last night; I can't bear spending another night without you. I want you in my bed."

Her strong demand certainly made an impact when she saw the surprised look in his eyes.

"My, my… you're beginning to sound demanding…" Carm displayed a naughty smirk. "I like that in a woman."

But before she can retaliate, a rush of wind swept inside the castle and the two large wooden heavy doors opened. Instantly, they were greeted by the cool brisk autumn air and the rustle of crisp leaves blown along the courtyard by a gust of wind. The warm colors of fall foliage complemented the clear blue sky of November dusk, as the red and orange hues of the setting sun dipped down over the horizon.

Outside of the castle's main entrance and courtyard stood the official Royal Carriage with two coach footmen stood waiting by the door, and behind it were five smaller carriages. In the background awaits the five hundred royal guards on their respective horses in their majestic red and black vertical stripes uniforms, dozen of them carried red and black flags and the royal banner, bearing a panther standing erect with forepaws raised and a golden crown on its head on a red background, the sigil of House Karnstein.

Carm took a deep breath after crossing the threshold of the castle, completely astonished by the sight of hundreds of royal soldiers and knights that will guard and protect him. He took in the sight in front of him for a moment, probably contemplating the inevitable: that one day he will lead this army. One day they will all obey and follow him.

But right now there was one thing he should face first: his people.

It's happening.

"I guess nobody can really come near and touch you now…" she tried to lighten up the mood, as they settled by the main entrance and wait for the whole entourage to get in their respective carriages, while the King surveyed the army of Royal Guards and Knights escorting the Queen and the Heir to the Throne.

"It looks like we're going to battle." the Prince grumbled and adjusted his neckline for the second time as if trying to get some air. "How can I see the townspeople, if these guards are surrounding me?"

"Come here," she beckoned and Carm walked closer and faced her. "I'm pretty sure they're going to make space for the village people to see you. After all, this is your first public appearance." Carm released a deep sigh after she loosened a bit his tight neckline. Then her dainty little fingers discreetly scratched behind his ears, where she knew he loved so much before she reached up gently and cupped his sharp jawlines in her hands. Instantly, she felt him relax under her soft touch and he tenderly gazed down at her while she got lost in his beauty.

Even anxious, Carm looked devastatingly stunning. His usual tousled unruly sable locks were now combed neatly out of his face, giving a simple but classic elegant look, emphasizing those melancholy dark eyes and perfectly trimmed eyebrows, and strong jawlines of his. Despite the worried lines on his forehead, Carm's face was porcelain smooth, pale and beautifully 'clean shaven', a perfect contrast to the darkness of his hair, tunic and cape.

God! If only they were in her chamber, she would have devoured him right there and then!
Get hold of yourself, Laura!

Her body temperature kept rising the more she stared at the gorgeous Prince.

She glanced on her back, pretending to look at Perry but in reality, she was trying to control the urge of disrobing Carm in front of everyone.

But as soon as their eyes met again, she was met by brows crouching down over brooding dark eyes.

"Are you alright, Cupcake?"

She took a deep breath. With great perseverance, she gracefully removed her hands from his face to pacify her increasing desire. And then she wondered… was she turned on by his broodiness? Every time Carm looked at her this way, all she can ever think about was to be devoured by her temperamental wild lover.

Aargh! Stupid hormones!

She clenched not just her hands, not just her jaw but in between her thighs as well… she would definitely savor him tonight.

Once she found her composure, "Err…Everything's going to be alright," she reassured him, her voice soothing and low. "You'll make them happy just by being there… and Her Majesty told us it isn't a formal occasion that you have to speak to the public… Just wave at them and smile."

"I know…" Carm breathed out, and put his hands firmly on her waist and brought her closer to him.

The closeness isn't helping to tame her libido and her heartbeat raced again. She began to take a deep breath while she struggled not to wet her underwear.

Thankfully Carm's left hand innocently touched and rested on her womb causing her to calm down and shut off all her lusty thoughts.

Thank God…

The Prince looked down at the baby bump "Is Plumcake sleeping?"

She stared at him for a while.

Her Prince was really adamant calling their child after a desert, like hers.

Well, as long as the Queen does not hear it. Smiling, she put her hand over Carm's hand. She took a moment to watch and relish their joined hands touching their unborn child.

How was it possible that there was a human inside her? It was surreal.

The things people take for granted were the most miraculous thing in this world.

Until now she can't believe that she was carrying Carm's baby inside her.

Smiling, "No, because it wants to go to the feast too," she kidded, earning a low chuckle from her Prince. At least he managed to smile and forget momentarily the big event.

She was thankful the child in her womb helped distract its sire.

"Take a rest after I leave and stay in bed," Carm suggested then sought her eyes, staring at her like he
was going to devour her any moment from now. "I will come to your chamber tonight," he leaned closer to her ear. "You better be naked and ready for me," his voice smoky and deep.

Batting her thick eyelashes and squeezing her thighs, "I will, Your Highness," was her equally naughty retort, giving her Prince mischievous grin, while her hand squeezed firmly Carm's hand that was over her womb. She leaned closer and gave him a taste of what's in store for him tonight by licking discreetly his lower lip before her invasive tongue slid between Carm's lips and danced and curled inside his mouth.

Still savoring her Prince's lips, her eyes suddenly opened wide and they both released from the kiss as if they were struck by lightning. Dumbfounded, they found themselves staring at each other with disbelief! Realizing what they both felt, they both darted their eyes on their joined hands on her womb, and stared at her large belly with wide eyes and half opened mouths.

Carm sought her attention right away even if he was still in awe and cannot believe what he felt. "Did it just…"
"Kicked?" She finished for him, and slowly, she saw the teary-eyed Prince of her, gazing at her and then to their unborn child with full of tenderness. "I think so," was her controlled and yet ecstatic reply; feeling for the first time their baby's kick.
"Cupcake… our baby is moving," was the Prince's overwhelmed response.

Never had she expected for both of them to feel together the baby kicking for the first time. Their child must have a strong connection with its sire.

She put both Carm's hands on her womb and strangely, they felt another kick. "Oh my God, I think it wants to go with you!" she whispered giggled as they found themselves fascinated and delighted at the first sign of life from the fruit of their love.

Carm leaned down and kissed her womb, before putting his ear on it and spoke, "Hi there little kitty… I and your mother can't wait to see you." The genuine smile on Carm's face was exceptional and rare… it emitted a sense of contentment and serenity. "Just try to be patient, alright? When you get out of there, we'll go horseback riding together, and hunt in the woods… or we could just plant roses in the garden."

She cannot describe this happiness that they felt right now. The tear in Carm's eyes was one of the most unforgettable and beautiful things she had witnessed since she married the broody Prince. What more when she already gave birth and provided him with his heir. Even she was getting emotional at the sight of the wild broody Prince talking innocently to their unborn child.

"Your Highnesses, I hate to interrupt this intimate moment of yours, but, His Majesty had been calling His Highness," the Lady-in-Waiting discreetly informed, standing behind them facing her back, as if to cover whatever indecent thing Perry thought that was happening.

The small bubble of happiness around them bursts and her eyes caught sight of the King approaching them.

Carm stood straight and cleared his throat once he saw his father.

They both stepped back and faced to the direction of the King then she gave Carm one last peck on the cheek. "You're amazing… don't forget to smile when the town people see you." She leaned closer to him and whispered, "Plumcake is cheering for you," was her excited remark, gesturing on her hand on her belly. "I felt another kick…" She added. Carm gave her a cheerful smile, leaned
down and kissed her closed eyelids while touching her womb before meeting his father.

"Carl, are you ready?" His Majesty asked putting his right hand over his heir's left shoulder.

"Just think of this as a regular trip to the village and nothing serious..." King Philipp stated, putting his arms around the Prince's shoulder, while he led him towards the waiting carriage. "The noble families and rich merchants that you are going to meet at the feast are irrelevant... But the village people over the other side that came to see you are the most important part of this trip. Remember to give them your warm attention and take time to look at them in their faces, then tell me what you see when you came back."

Showing determination, "I will, my King Father," the Prince replied in a deep resolute tone, standing by the carriage's door while the two footmen stood waiting bowed their heads.

"Alright, get in there before your Queen Mother scold us for making you late," the King stepped back, giving way to his heir to step inside the grand carriage.

As the Royal Escort departed the castle's courtyard and disappeared from their sight, only one thing was on her mind... to make sure that she was accessible for her Prince.

"Princess Laura, I wish you a wonderful evening," King Philipp gave her a warm smile standing beside her, surrounded by his entourage and advisers. The harvest feast was not over yet, and His Majesty insisted beforehand that there's no need for her to attend to the remaining guests in the castle.

Together with Perry and few of the household servants behind her, they bowed their heads to His Majesty, "I wish you a pleasant evening too Your Majesty," she replied, displaying a cheeky grin.

They waited for him and his whole entourage to go inside first, and once she knew they were already halfway to the grand hall...

From out of nowhere Natalie appeared by her side.

"This way Princess," the handmaid made a swift detour to the side of the castle, leading her to the path going to the side entrance, followed by Perry and a dozen of household servants that were with them.

Unbeknownst, to the Karnsteins, whenever she goes to the village disguised as a commoner, these loyal servants from the kitchen were part of her 'own entourage'. From the moment she arrived as the newly chosen bride-to-be of the Prince of Karnstein, she delved into working in the kitchen right away to distract her from her pending 'doom' of marrying the most irritating person she had ever met. She befriended everyone from the kitchen and worked with them to earn their trust and loyalty. After discovering the darkest secret of the castle, she learned who to trust and who were loyal to the Queen, and chose her allies.

They slipped to the side entrance where the brewery, wine cellar, and buttery were located and went inside. Holding a torch, they were met by Fritz by the door. Once they crossed the threshold of the castle, the servants hurriedly started to peel her fur robe, luxurious outer tunic, removed her crown and pieces of jewelry, before she was whisked away towards the wine cellar where Sarah Jane and Betty would be waiting for her.

By the time her handmaidens were finished dressing her as a commoner, Perry was already standing by her side. She flashed a surprised glance at her Lady-in-Waiting, also wearing a commoner's clothes. She did not even notice where Perry was once they entered the castle and presumed the Lady-in-Waiting proceeded inside the grand hall since Perry disagreed with her plan.
"Well, I'm not going to leave you out there with your crazy shenanigans," the Lady-in-Waiting proclaimed eyeing one by one her, Betty, Natalie, and Sarah Jane. "If His Highness finds out about this, I might as well join all of you in the dungeons."

After that bitter retort, she wrapped her arms around the stiff Lady-in-Waiting and kissed her on the cheek, "Thanks Perry, I owe you one…"

"Alright, let's go, we don't have much time," Natalie informed right away, growing impatient.

When they got out of the wine cellar, Fritz and other three guards disguised as a commoner were already waiting for them, "This way, Your Highness," he guided them further down the brewery and out towards a small room where he opened a small door leading to a narrow hall.

Then another door came in sight and they passed through there, at the end was a circular stairway leading downstairs.

"Careful Princess," Betty warned, walking ahead of her. "This is exciting… I feel like a spy!"

"I feel like a prisoner, escaping from the dungeons," was Sarah Jane's nervous remark.

"Hush, you two!" Perry scolded, "We'll definitely end up in the dungeon if someone hears us."

They went down and landed in a dark abandoned storage room that smelled of molds and walked towards the door. When Fritz opened it, they already found themselves outside, on the other side of the castle near the rose garden, and three carriages and…

She was taken aback at the sight that greeted her:

About a hundred royal guards in their commoner clothes were waiting for them on their horses.

"Nat, I said we have to be discreet," she called, as she perused her unexpected extra 'companions'. "Didn't I tell you to gather only twenty men?"

"It is I, who ordered Fritz to take more guards with us," Perry said in a calm but strict motherly tone. "We're going to the village during the night for the first time, and there will be a lot of people who would be out and drunk. You need all the protection that you can get. So don't argue with me about this."

She could only sigh and walked towards the first carriage where Bastian stood waiting.

"Let's go," Perry finished, and they all nodded and get into their respective carriages.

Once they were comfortably seated inside, Bastian did not waste a moment and the carriage took off in a spanking time.

"I've coordinated with LaFontaine about your plan. They informed some guards about our plan. So that there won't be any confusion when we arrived at the Manor with our own guards that are not in uniform," Perry spoke calmly but in a firm tone. "You may have started this crazy shenanigan, but I'm still in charge of your safety. So, listen to my orders and don't do anything daring."

She gave her Lady-in-Waiting a side glance and looked at her suspiciously.

"Like what?!"

As if she will do anything crazy and spontaneous.
"Like showing yourself in the presence of Her Majesty in case the need arise for you to help the Prince," the Lady-in-Waiting clarified with a glare. "Let's make this clear once and for all... You know how protective and caring Her Majesty is when it comes to her son. If anything happens to Prince Carl and Her Majesty insisted on taking care of him instead of LaFontaine, we should let her do it. Alone," Perry put an emphasized on the last word. "But in case something did happen to His Highness and Her Majesty agreed that LaFontaine can take care of him, and chose to stay at the table together with the other guests, then that's the only time that you can help," the Lady-in-Waiting explained slowly, as if wanting to make sure that every detail was understood. "I informed LaFontaine that they can take His Highness to the nearest private room in the dining hall in case Prince Carl had an attack. Then that's your queue to come and take care of him. Natalie, Betty and I will be by your side all the time and I asked about a dozen servants from our kitchen to work with us. There will be royal guards too that will be stationed in the kitchen. So, basically, half of the servants in the kitchen would be from our castle."

"Oh my God, Perry, that's great! I mean... I didn't realize that you will go as far as this," was her excited remark upon finding out that Perry had gathered her 'own people' to join them. "How did you manage to ask the head cook that you'll bring more servants from the castle?"

"LaFontaine informed the butler and head cook that His Highness is very particular with his food, especially his desserts, that's why we have to bring our own cooks, bakers, and konditors. LaFontaine even informed them that our own servants need its own space and guards, to make sure the food we are preparing for Her Majesty and His Highness is safe for them to eat," Perry related proudly, smiling slightly at the Valet's clever tactics. But then the Lady-in-Waiting turned serious once she caught her smiling whenever LaFontaine's name was mentioned. "I've asked Sarah Jane to be the lookout. So she will relay to us in case something happened with His Highness during the feast."

"Alright, I agree with your plan," was her satisfied reply, and grinned. "Is there anything else that I should do, aside from making sure that Her Majesty doesn't see me, which I doubt she will ever notice a servant girl..."

"In case the feast went out smoothly, and His Highness survived his first appearance without having an anxiety attack..." Perry explained and looked into her eyes. "We need to go home before he does so that His Highness will not suspect a thing... Then LaFontaine wouldn't have to worry about m... I mean, dealing with His Highness' temper. Do I make myself clear?"

She just wanted to get over this and be by Carm's side if anything happened. Nodding, "Yes, Perry." "Good." The Lady-in-Waiting sat up straight satisfied with the answer.

"I wonder what will happen if Carl found out that I am there too?" she almost forgot the other circumstances.

"Then you'll just have to face the fact that you'll be locked up in the tower for the rest of your life, and I'm going to be rooming with the girls in the dungeons," Perry concluded as if she had already seen the future.

"To be fair, I'll take all the responsibility and will not put the blame on all of you," she bravely reasoned out. "I've already experienced taming the big ferocious wild cat many times... I think I can handle it again."

Raising an eyebrow, "Don't be too sure," Perry warned.

***
It was almost sundown when they arrived in the village. Once the carriage halted to the nearest huge fir tree beside the Bishop's Manor, half of the guards discreetly surrounded and secured the area, joining the other uniformed royal guards that were already at their respected posts, while the rest remained with her.

When she stepped out of the carriage the sight that greeted her made her mouth opened. She was taken aback at the sheer size of the crowd. She did not expect a lot of people would show up tonight. It looked like most of the villagers gathered here tonight. The last time she saw a huge mass like this was Carm's name day.

Her eyes perused the surrounding, taking in the overwhelming sight of the people and the place.

Just a stone's throw away from the town's Church, and surrounded by agricultural land, the Bishop's manor stood to the right with a large open area overlooking the entire town and market village. A three-story brick mansion that could probably house fifty people, it was surrounded by tall spruce, fir and pine trees at both sides, and a well-manicured lawn. It had an impressive long cobblestone driveway and large wide stairs leading up to the front entrance featuring two heavy wooden carved doors with brass rings.

The manor was incredibly grand and well-maintained just like any other nobleman's house.

_Hmmm… does Bishop Klaus own this Place or the Church?_

Raised by a very strict father, her eyes were quick to recognize guards around her as she caught sight of the people the castle assigned to protect the heir to the throne on this special occasion.

Security was insanely tight around the manor.

Positioned on the rooftop were skilled archers with crossbows aiming towards the crowd and ready to shoot anyone looked suspicious. Royal guards with large shields surrounded the whole area like a barricade to control the crowd for getting near the arriving guests. Knights on horses mingled in the crowd and royal guards with huge dogs that looked like wolves patrolled the vicinity and some were even placed in front of the manor.

_What the hell are those dogs for?!_

Her Mother-in-law definitely went overboard just to protect the heir to the throne. There was no way an assassin or whoever dared to hurt the Prince will come out alive from here.

She wondered how the Queen will react if ever Her Majesty discovered that her precious child used to gallivant around the market village and mingled with the commoners… and even slept in a peasant’s bed!

A large crowd was already assembled in front of the Bishop's Manor and guests began arriving. Each of them was dropped off by their respective carriages and escorted by footmen going up to the top landing of the manor's marble stairs, where they met and welcomed by the Archbishop and other clergymen at the entry.

But before they enter the manor, she saw every guest did not miss the customary greeting; where they stand by the door, posed and presented themselves for the crowd to admire and envy. Afterward, they waved goodbye and went inside.

In reality, everybody knew these aristocrats were just showing off their extravagant and ornate gowns and tunics for everyone to see. But according to Greta, it also gave the townspeople something to talk about, like…
Who was the best dressed and who was the worst dressed?
Which noble family was not invited?
Who's the prettiest lady, and who's the most handsome lord?
Or who's the newest merchant that paid the highest price for a coveted slot in the exclusive dining table?

This celebration had been a sort of entertainment for the villagers and nobles alike.

Every year, there's always something intriguing or interesting to talk about; whether inside or outside of the Bishop's Manor. That's why according to experts who had rabidly watched the event every year: 'nobody should miss it!'

But the real climax of this festival was the chance to see members of the royal family attend the feast and take a glimpse of their royal presence... especially the unsociable reigning Karnsteins.

It was a tradition for the House of Karnstein from generation to generation to send a representative of their family. But when King Philipp sat on the throne it was not followed strictly. Not every year a member of the royal family attended the feast. Sometimes the palace sent representatives, mostly the King's advisors, on his behalf.

That's why it was a rare fabulous treat when the Queen attended, according to Greta.

Nobody should miss it. Because they never knew when will be the next time they will see the Queen or hopefully, the King again in public.

And this time, it's not just the Queen who's in attendance...

_Hmmm...._

She stroked under her chin. While she took a gander at the waiting crowd, an overwhelming joy enveloped her heart as she watched children sat on their mother's or father's shoulders to take a good glimpse of the arriving guests; their expressions' a picture of hope and innocence. Every face in the crowd had excitement and anticipation written on their faces. And cheerful murmur of an expectant crowd hummed in the air. She can really feel the excitement, anticipation, and tension emitting from the crowd. As if they knew something special will happen, and there's only one thing on her mind...

She definitely wouldn't want to miss this chance either!

"Laura, where are you going? The manor's servant door is over here!" Perry's voice was tinged with panic and followed her. "There are so many people there, it's not safe!"

"I want to see Carl when he arrives," was her innocent reply, and walked further towards the crowd who were trying to get a good glimpse of arriving guests. She tried to squeeze in between them, and before she knew it, Perry's high pitched voice was already echoing in her ears.

"Laura! Wait for us!" The Lady-in-Waiting exclaimed, and with a snap of fingers, Fritz looked at Perry and he nodded.

All of a sudden, she felt the crowd around her dispersed, as if making way for her. Finally, she realized she was surrounded by the royal guards in disguised and had encircled her. Perry and the handmaids were quick to get inside the circle and joined her.
"Why didn't you tell me that you want to watch him?" was Perry's worried hyper remark, positioning herself to the right side. "I could have asked LaFontaine to reserve a spot for us, where we can watch him safely."

"I just thought of it now," she grinned, wanting to lighten up Perry's mood. "I don't think it's necessary. And besides, don't you think it's more exciting to join the crowds?"

Catching up from the left, "I agree. It's more thrilling out here," Betty interjected but earned a glare from Perry as they navigate through the crowd.

"But it's not safe for someone pregnant," Sarah Jane reminded, walking behind. "Good thing the guards are prepared to protect you."

"That's why they're here," Natalie retorted with a wink, walking beside Sarah Jane.

Striding ahead of her and leading the undercover guards, Fritz pushed through the crowd with ease. His movements careful calculated and coordinated with the others. He was like the shepherd of the herd always had visual contact with everyone and around him, making sure to bring the flock safely to places. Being no part of the knighthood, she still felt secured and trusted Fritz that he will protect her, Perry and the girls at all cause.

The arrival of the next guests wearing the most flamboyant clothes and jewelry held their attention for a moment. Until now, she did not understand how some noble families loved to flaunt their ostentatious gaudy jewelry, fur coats, and elaborate dresses. It drew 'oohs' and 'ahs' from the crowd, but it never impressed her a bit.

She joined the crowd with great ease and curiosity, an onlooker, a listener to the murmur of anxious or doubtful villagers. She wondered how the people genuinely felt about their enigmatic future ruler who was shrouded with mystery since the day she was born. Many times she heard them asked about the Prince and how it was working in the castle, other than that she rarely heard any criticism about the Karnsteins, except for being too private… and why they have not seen yet the heir to the throne. Now she had a chance to see, hear and feel what the people really think about the Karnsteins.

"I think we can stay here," she slowed her progress and chose a spot at the side behind a spruce, but with a great view of the manor's front. "I don't want Carl to see us."

Fritz and Perry nodded and the girls settled closer to her.

As they stood and waited, she concentrated on hearing from the crowd. She listened carefully.

And what she heard surprised her…

It was laughter and hope… a good-natured banter between neighbors. Whether they knew or not if the Prince was coming, she felt the tension disappearing. Perhaps the villagers had too much to eat and drink and were still in festivity mood… or perhaps they heard a rumor of special guest arriving. Whatever it was, it's worth the risk that Carm decided to make an appearance tonight. He would make them happy. His presence would give them joy, hope, reassurance that the kingdom indeed had a healthy strong heir. The people of the kingdom could see for themselves how fit Carm to be their future king; how similar he was to his father in appearance and even in mannerism and how very alive he was.

The doubt and mystery that encompassed his existence will no longer haunt him. This moment will defy everything. Carm's appearance will be inspirational and the birth of their child will secure his hold on the throne.
Still, she waited anxiously but was happy to be out in this beautiful night, among the cheerful chattering townspeople. So, when she heard the clattering of hooves pierced the buzzing of chirpy crowd, they all turned their heads towards where the sound came from.

She recognized right away the exquisite official Royal Carriage of the Karnstein Family, with the royal emblem on the door and gold crown on the roof. The coach was trimmed in elegant black paint, and the glistening gold wheels, door panel, and gold plated lamps stood out against the night sky. It traveled up the long cobblestoned driveway of the Bishop's Manor, easily pulled by a team of six dazzling white horses. As Alfred brought the horses to a smooth halt in front of the mansion, the two footmen leaped down from their platform at the rear of the carriage. The first went to the front, where he held the horses’ heads to keep them from moving forward, while a royal guard moved quickly to block the wheels of the carriage.

Once the carriage was secured, the second footman opened the door to the carriage, lowered the steps, and helped Her Majesty out. As soon as the Queen set foot on the ground, everyone genuflected and bowed. And the door was closed again.

They gingerly followed the crowd afraid their disguise might be revealed. She kept her eye on the carriage waiting for the Prince to come out. But the Queen remained standing alone for a while. Her Majesty watched the mass of people in front of her, as her powerful glare met them they were instantly silenced by her presence.

Once the crowd was quieted, bent their knees and bowed, the Queen nodded to the footmen to open the door again of the carriage, and finally, Carm stepped out.

When the carriage drove off, and the scene was cleared for the crowd to watch properly the Queen, the herald stepped to the side and announced:

"Her Majesty, Queen Lilita together with His Highness, Prince Carl!"

Suddenly, the crowd went crazy. They clamored and scrambled to their feet as great gasps of bewilderment filled the air.

There was a moment of minute silence, confusion, shocked and surprised, as they all turn their curious gaze towards the Queen's companion. Everyone seemed entranced and possessed.

Finally, someone broke the eerie silence and shouted…

"It's the Prince!"

Overwhelmed, she felt all the hair in her body stood as she watched the townspeople slowly understood who it was as if waking up from a coma.

After so long hidden by rumor and fear, the Crown Prince of Karnstein finally made his debut to his people. Still weighing his steps and hesitant not to leave his mother's side, Carm remained calm and stood closer beside the Queen.

The others finally realizing who's the one escorting the Queen, shouted also…

"Prince Carl!"

And then there were steady chants of the Prince's name. It grew louder as the Queen stood in front of the crowd and watched them with delight and tight-lipped, while Carm remained behind his mother, standing stiff, but amazed while looking at the crowd with a controlled posture like the Queen's.
But the shimmer in the Prince's eyes cannot hide the amazement and warmth he felt, as Carm gazed at the crowd as if feeling the love and support of the people of Karnstein Kingdom through their shouts and ecstatic presence.

Folks began shouting and chanting louder: 'Prince Carl! Prince Carl! Prince Carl!' Not stopping until they get what they wanted.

The Queen took a step backward and then locked gaze with her precious son. Carm immediately understood his mother's order, and elegantly stepped forward.

The Prince stood majestically in front of everybody and raised his right arm half ways and waved to the crowd.

Instantly, the watching audience erupted in cheers and applause! And Carm smiled at them confidently.

They love him! She thought as she, Perry and the others joined the cheering and shouting.

The people grew crazy and they started to shove towards the front, to see the Prince closer.

Suddenly she felt some of the crowds at her back pushed her forward. The royal guards immediately controlled the insistent mass while she remained standing on her spot, surrounded protectively by Perry and the girls while she worriedly sought for her Prince.

But she only caught a glimpse of the Queen shielding Carm and leading him towards the stairs. The Queen and Prince were escorted quickly by dozens of royal guards inside the bishop's manor, as the crowd became wild and excited.

It did not took long before her attention was carefully snatched by Bastian, signaled her to follow Fritz as the undercover guards huddled around her, Perry and the handmaids and were discreetly led out from the maddening crowd.

A thrill of excitement ran through her, after experiencing the wild ecstatic crowd asking for more to see the Prince. She hoped that Carm didn't felt uncomfortable after the crowd went insane at the sight of him.

Once the guards successfully brought them to the servant's entrance of the manor…

"Whoa! That was amazing!" She exclaimed, still feeling the adrenalin rush of escaping the maddening crowd. "Isn't that fun?!" she looked at the girls who were all catching their breaths and nodded in agreement.

"If only LaFontaine was here. I'm sure they will enjoy it too!" Natalie blurted out.

"His Hotness will probably go insane if he finds out!" Added Betty with a nervous laugh.

"I'm glad he was out there, or else he'll worry about you," Came Sarah Jane's guilty reply.

"Alright enough chatting… Try to not draw attention once we enter the kitchen." Perry concluded, glaring at them.

"Per, can I please check if Carl is alright?" she asked, as they walked through the hall leading to the kitchen.

"Sarah Jane will do it," was the Lady-in-Waiting's reply. "I don't want you out of my sight."
After giving her the 'don't argue with me' look, she obediently nodded. And Perry gave her a controlled smile before they enter the Bishop Manor's Kitchen.

The night was still young and her creative mind will never rest… not until she found a way to see her beloved Prince.

She grinned cheekily and followed Perry.

***

"Laura, I'm just going to the privy," Perry said, wiping her hands on the cloth and then removed her apron. "They have already served the dessert and the guests are just chatting and taking a break. You can finish that batch of cupcakes then you can rest."

"Alright," she gestured for Natalie to put the last bit of sweets on the tray before Betty took it and passed it to the baker who was in charge of running the stone oven.

So far, they heard the supper was going smoothly and Sarah Jane had not returned yet since the main course was served. Worry began to invade her thoughts… she was itching to know what's going on out there.

She looked around.

Everyone was busy with their respective work.

She took advantage of the opportunity.

"Natalie, I'm just going out for some air," she removed her apron and washed her hands in the nearest bucket of water.

She did not come all the way here just to bake some sweets.

A quick glance at her beloved would ease her worry.

"I'm coming with you," was Natalie's instant reply, looking suspiciously around them, as if checking the surrounding.

"You don't need to," she insisted, stopping Natalie from taking out her own apron.

"Perry will kill me if I left you alone," the dark-haired handmaid argued.

With a resigned sigh, she removed her hand from Natalie's; nodded and let the handmaid followed discreetly out of the kitchen and into the door where they came from. She rolled her eyes when she discovered Fritz and Bastian carefully trailed behind them. Perry's words certainly had a great effect and a strong influence.

Outside, the full moon lighted up the whole courtyard with its haunting light glow. The autumn chill tickled her skin as they strolled around the small garden. The night was beautiful and the village was still alive with music and merriments. Perhaps the village people were still celebrating the arrival of the Prince of Karnstein and waiting for him outside.

Once it was deemed enough for her to take some fresh air…

"Shall we go inside?" Natalie suggested, eyeing the servants' door.

Instead of following the right path, she chose the other way and walked towards the side entrance.
Freaked out… "Princess! What are you doing?!" Natalie asked, keeping her voice low as they huddled in the darkness. "We should go back."

She ignored Natalie's plea, walked further and opened the door carefully. When she saw that it was safe for them to come in…

"It's alright. Come on. I'll just take a peek and then we can go back," was her quick retort.

Having no choice, the three followed her and they slipped inside the side entrance of the manor's main hall like thieves.

Not wanting to draw attention, "Fritz, Bastian, try to stay in the background, I won't go too far," she ordered and the two men lagged behind, not too far but enough to give her and Natalie some space to sneak in without being too obvious. But near enough to protect her in case something happened. "Now, let's see where the main dining hall is…" she salivated at the prospect of exploring around like a sleuth hunting for some clues as her sense of wonder and curiosity was ignited. She turned to the right and followed the path all the way to the end, and turned left. There, her eyes cannot believe what she saw. It's probably one of the most beautiful halls she had ever seen in her life.

She was astounded. Nothing like this can be found in her castle or the Karnstein's. The long hallway was lined with myriad murals and several life-size white marble, that looked like Roman and Greek sculptures. She recalled from one book she read that artworks like this begun to flourish in Firenze, Italia. Wealthy noblemen and merchants hired artisans and craftspeople to paint for them or create a sculpture to display in their manors or castles.

She never expected that she could see such artworks here in Austria… let alone in a Bishop's Manor. Perhaps Bishop Klaus' family was like the wealthy families of Firenze.

"I think the main dining room is in there," Natalie pointed to where two guards stood by the door. "And I think there's no way for us to go in there without being seen by the guards."

"Let's just try if it's going to work…"

They lurked behind every furniture, every large plant, and every sculpture through the main hall, each of them hiding at the back of certain marble statues until they can go near.

"Someone's coming." She warned and took cover to the nearest sculpture.

They had to pause and hid carefully when four or five guests came out and walked towards the door where they came from and out to the courtyard, perhaps in need of some fresh air too. The group barely noticed them as they were too engrossed discussing about the Prince of Karnstein.

Once the guests have gone, she put a hand on her chest and sighed with relief, thankful that she was not caught. She just realized that she hid behind a small white marble statue of a seated child.

"What do we have here?" she mumbled in fascination.

A smile crept on her lips and her eyes marveled at a cherub! It had small wings, the face of an angel but a mischievous expression, and the most adorable thing was its index finger held to its lips as if telling her that they just shared a secret together!

"We have to go, before they come back!"

Natalie's hush but firm plea cut through her reverie.
She shook her head and focused on her goal. "Maybe there's another way," she stubbornly insisted. Just as she was about to cross to the other side of the hall, one of the doors in the hallway opened and her heart raced when she caught sight of the Prince of Karnstein, together with the Archbishop, emerging out of the room and walked towards one of the large marble statues along the hallway.

The two both stopped for a moment, admiring the statue of the Virgin Mary. It looked like Carm was taken for a tour inside the Bishop's Manor. Looking dignified and confident, the Prince stood with his hands on his sides, while they stopped at every statue along the hallway as the archbishop explained to him something about the sculpture.

Still hiding behind the angel's spread wings, she sighed with relief upon seeing her Prince well composed and calm.

"His Hotness is doing great," Natalie proudly said, observing from behind. "Now we can head back to the kitchen before someone catches us."

She was about to follow Natalie, but she paused for a while as she noticed Carm's hands shifted in front and caught him touching his signet ring on his pinky. "Wait, I need to look closer," she returned and like a shadow, she swiftly strode to the other side of the hall, leaving a shocked Natalie behind.

One quick peek did not quench her curiosity. So she had to look again and moved closer. She watched Carm's facial feature closely, looking for any sign of discomfort. Perhaps her Prince was being polite and did not wish to interrupt the archbishop while growing uneasy.

"How dare you look at the Prince like that?!"

She almost lost her balance when she turned around to where the sound came from and found herself standing face to face with an elderly man. He was tall and thin, cleanly shaven and had a white receding hairline, a bald spot on the crown of his head exposed more of his scalp. He used a cane on his right hand to support himself and wore a simple but decent white tunic over a black one.

For a moment, she tried to decipher if he was one of the King's advisers that she usually sees in the castle. A Duke perhaps? A Marquis? An Earl? Or a Count maybe?

But no. His face did not look familiar.

She was thankful for that, or else he would have recognized her already.

"How dare you look at me in the eyes!"

For the second time, this man was irritating her and his arrogance was getting on her nerves. She was about to tell him, that she was not deaf and he should tone down his voice, and act like a normal human being. But the sudden reappearance of Natalie by her side halted her from reprimanding the old man.

"Mmm… f-forgive us, S-sir…” Natalie stuttered, unsure what to call or say, and bowed her head. "It's my friend's first time to meet a nobleman and she did not know the rules yet."

Glaring down towards them, "Don't you know who I am?" was his almost unbelievable remark. "I am Baron Cornelius Hans Albrecht, Lügenbaron von Vordenberg! And it's not Sir. It's Lord!" the man corrected with an exaggeration in his tone, emphasizing the word 'baron'. Standing proud, "You should call me Your Lordship, and bow your head when you're talking to me."

Deep inside, she flared up even more upon realizing that this man belonged to the lowest of nobility but was acting like a king.
And I am Laura Elizabeth Rosamund von Hollis, the Crown Princess of Karnstein!

She had an earnest desire to tell him.

"Forgive us, Your Lordship," Natalie quickly replied, tugging her shoulder and gesturing her to bow too.

Once the pleading eyes of her handmaid caught her sight, she flashed an angry glance at him before hesitatingly bowed her head a bit.

"Servants like you should know your place," was the Baron's smug comment. "And why are you two loitering here? Don't you have any work to attend to?"

They remained quiet for a moment. She was debating on telling him they get lost or tell him he did not deserve to dine with the other noblemen, women and the royalty with that kind of attitude.

"What's going on here?"

The deep raspy authoritative tone quickly sent a shiver down her spine, as the familiar voice of her Prince cut through the silence.

She realized that she was indeed in trouble.

Oh crap.

She did not dare looked up and lowered more her head, hoping and praying to all the statues, especially to the naughty cherub in the hall, that Carm would not recognize them.

"Your Royal Highness, forgive us for the trouble," the Baron lowered his tone then bowed to the approaching Prince. "I found these two servants watching suspiciously His Royal Highness. And I am about to call the Royal Guards to bring them for some questioning. They might be spies."

"I appreciate your concern, Sir…" the Prince replied in a calm but firm tone.

"It's Baron Cornelius Hans Albrecht, Lügenbaron von Vordenberg, Your Royal Highness," the old man proudly introduced himself. "Forgive me for the late introduction, I am seated at the very far side of the table and I did not get a chance to formally introduce myself. And if I may just say, that His Highness-"

"Thank you, Baron Vordenberg, you may leave now," Carm ordered in a deep tone. "I would like to have a word with these servants."

"But Your Royal Highness, it might be dangerous for me to leave you here alone, they might be spies," the Baron insisted, attempting to stand straight, but he suddenly crouched in silent pain, reached behind him and rubbed his lower back.

She caught Natalie suppressing a laugh while she tried her best to stand still and hid her face as much as she can.

"Baron Vordenberg, my personal Royal Guard is just standing few steps away from me, and His Eminence and two of his guards are also at the end of the hall, watching us, and ready to come to my rescue, in case these two small helpless girls abducted me. I'm sure I can protect myself," was the Prince almost irritated but calm reply.

"As you wished, Your Royal Highness," the Baron bowed to the Prince and left them in peace.
Once they were alone, Carm stood across her in silence. Her heart hammered wildly in anticipation and sweat began to run from the back of her neck.

Did he recognize her?

The prolonged anticipation was almost killing her, as she waited for Carm to speak.

She can see his boots right in front of her and knew also that there were people watching them, so she cannot just confront him in case he caught her.

He remained standing right across her, and she can feel that Natalie was already slightly trembling while they waited for him to speak. But he did nothing and instead, he turned around and walked away towards the group of people that were waiting for him.

As soon as Carm and the others disappeared from the hall, she and Natalie released the breath they were holding. They wiped the sweat on their foreheads, turned around, strode to the door, and never looked back.

"Princess, are you alright?" Fritz came out from one of the large statues, trailing behind them.

"Yes, I'm fine. Let's go back to the kitchen before Perry gets worried," she ordered and they silently left the main hall.

A few moments later, they were back at the kitchen safely. Perry was already fidgeting in the middle of the room, while Betty and Sarah Jane stood on the side.

"Hey…" she greeted the worried friends of hers and Lady-in-Waiting.

"Where have you been?" was Perry's stressed remark as soon as their eyes met.

"I just went out to check on him," she decided to tell the truth, knowing that the three cannot lie for her.

"But I didn't receive a message from LaFontaine," was Perry's confused reaction.

"No, they didn't send any message," she explained, her voice faltering. "I kinda get impatient and went out there to check on him."

"Didn't we talk about this before we leave?" The Lady-in-Waiting reached for her own temples and caressed it.

"Yes, we did. And I'm sorry…" she apologized as soon as she saw Perry begun scrubbing the kitchen surface that was already cleaned. "I was curious how he was doing, and when I saw-"

"His Highness saw you?!" Perry exclaimed, paused for a moment and glared at her.

"Yeah… but I think he didn't recognize us," she looked to her side, referring to Natalie who was just bowing her head.

The handmaid never dared say a word, knowing that Perry would definitely castigate her for letting the Princess out of the kitchen.

"You think? So you're not sure? And how can you tell that he didn't recognize you, when in fact he saw you," was Perry's hyper babble, and then resumed scrubbing the table.

"Well, we're bowing our heads and he didn't say anything to us and just left afterwards," she
reasoned out confidently. "So, I'm pretty sure he just thought that we're servants. So, try to relax−"

Perry was about to retaliate, but their attention was distracted when the butler came in the kitchen and walked straight to them.

They all stood behind the Lady-in-Waiting while the tall bald butler stood in the middle of the kitchen where everybody can see him.

"His Royal Highness sends His compliments to the whole kitchen household for a job well done," the Butler informed standing calmly and well composed. "Thank you all for your hard works." He said and finished it with a controlled smile. The rest of the staff dispersed and went to their specific tasks. Then he approached Perry.

"His Royal Highness was very satisfied with the desserts and particularly loved the cupcake," he said and then furrowed his brows. "And the Prince said that he wants the cupcake to go home before the cat growls… I'm not entirely sure what he meant by that?"

"Oh. I think what His Royal Highness means is; he wants to take some cupcake home for his cat, if there's still some left over," Perry was quick to reply before the butler suspected a thing. "The Prince's pet has a sweet tooth and loved munching on cupcakes right before it sleeps. We will make sure to bring the cupcake home safely," the Lady-in-Waiting gave him a reassuring grin.

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By the time they arrived in the castle, Carm's Escort was just about to depart from the Manor, according to one of their moles.

She had never seen Perry and the girls act quickly like never before. They brought her to her chamber, in a jiffy, worked together to change her clothes, wash her and finally put her to bed in no time.

They were all exhausted once they finished transforming her into her sleepwear and bid her goodnight.

"Good luck with the growling cat," Betty said before going out and gave her a sympathetic smile.

Although they knew that Carm had discovered their escapade, she would prefer that she was already on the bed and ready for him when he comes to her chamber. She would rather face the broody Prince alone and deal with his temper or whatever 'punishment' he will give to her in the privacy of her chamber.

Once the door of her chamber shut and all the candles blown out, leaving only the fireplace to warm the room, she wiggled out from her chemise and put it under her pillow, before covering herself with the blanket.

After all, she did promise her Prince, that she will be ready for him when he comes to her chamber.

Perhaps by being naked, she might receive a milder punishment.

TBC

Chapter End Notes
That's more than 10,000 words! How's the feels? Was it worth the wait? As usual constructive criticism is always welcome ;) Enjoy the summer! And Happy Pride month everybody!
Growling

Chapter Summary

Carmilla's reaction after discovering that her precious wife was outside of the castle and did not obey her order! LaFontaine would do anything for love, even if they would have to defy the Prince.

Chapter Notes

Welcome to the 100th chapter of this story! I can't believe it will go this far. Thank you for all the love and support. Here, you go…

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Carmilla

Her dread of meeting big crowds and surrounded by them was almost over.

At the same time, she was stoked watching the people cheered and received her warmly. She will never forget the frenzied crowd who shouted and revered her. How she wished she can mingle with everyone and reciprocate the same kind of attention they gave her. But as soon as they got closer, she became overwhelmed and anxious, and her Mother had no choice but to shroud her.

Thankfully the guards did an excellent job of containing the excited villagers clamoring to see her, and the insistent curious guests that wanted to meet her up close.

Together with her other royal guards, Armitage made sure that her personal space was large and respected. Her Mother's rule of being surrounded only by trusted guards, loyal servants, and familiar allies helped her feel safe. It was like an invisible protective bubble around her, and only very few chosen people were allowed into that bubble.

After dinner, Bishop Klaus was fully aware most of the guests would request her company. Aware of her condition, he immediately pulled her out from the expecting group of nobles dying to introduce themselves personally to her. Instead, she was toured around the Bishop's Manor. It will take time and constant connection with these people before she can fully interact with them, the Queen said. Her Mother did not want to overwhelm her and took the role of talking to the disappointed guests.

She thought the night would end up smoothly until a certain nobleman caught her attention while arrogantly reprimanding a pair of servants. Her intention was just to stop this haughty display of power over the servants, but she was unprepared for the surprise that came along with it.

She almost castigated the nobleman when she noticed one of the servants was pregnant and thought of defending the exhausted woman from whatever mistake she had done. Having seen Laura worked hard and pregnant at the same time, changed her view about women, be it highborn or commoner: they should to be more appreciated and protected.
But when her eyes fell on the woman's partially hidden face, she got suspicious. She studied the woman's form, and got curious and approached her. When a familiar scent hit her nose, she almost lost her composure. Fortunately, she managed to remain calm, fully aware of the eyes watching around her. And the fact they will all be in big trouble if she exposed Laura's disguise, added to her growing anxiety. Deep inside, she was already worrying as hell.

After confronting the baron, she could barely contain her worry and frustration when she turned around and strode towards the waiting group at the end of the hall.

Laura should be thankful there were other people around them, or else, she would have confronted her stubborn gallivanting wife there and there. But she did not want to create a scene, not when her mother was just on the other room, and knowing Laura, her wife will not be silenced once confronted. She did not want to add more fire to this stressful event.

What the hell is she up to?!

Her jaw clenched and her fists balled as she tried not to explode.

Worry… rage… frustration… disappointments… were threatening to erupt from the pit of her stomach.

This day alone had been intense and nerve-wracking, the last thing she wants to see was her wife not safely tucked in bed in the high walls of her castle, while she was dealing with her own anxiety.

She glanced up and saw the worried looks on Bishop Klaus' face and the two approaching guards. But before they can get closer and asked him what's the matter, she sought her personal guard's attention and Armitage was on her side in a blink of an eye.

"Fetch my Valet and tell them to meet me at the prayer room," she ordered Armitage and signaled for him to look at the unwanted company. "And take care of them… I want to be alone."

Armitage nodded silently and walked ahead to meet the three confused men while she turned to her right, and entered the room where they came from.

It looked like a chapel, but Bishop Klaus' called it the 'Prayer Room', for modesty's sake. Elaborately decorated with gold ornaments, the walls and ceiling painted by an Italian artist depicted some scenes from the Bible and life of Christ. Obviously, it looked more like a room full of precious artworks and sculpture, than a room for praying.

Once the Valet entered the room…

"Care to tell me why Laura is here when she's supposed to be in the castle waiting for me?!" she started calmly. But did not able to hold back her emotions, she could barely control her voice from yelling at the end. "Don't tell me she just went for a tour at the village market?!"

Her suspicion raised, as she watched the Valet's face turned pale… they knew something and they did not tell her.

She grew more irritated at the thought of being 'stab behind' by her own personal Valet.

After experiencing a sign of life inside Laura's womb, she felt more protective over her wife and unborn child.

"I don't know what my wife said, for you to hide this from me, but I do hope she was well-guarded wherever she is, or I will hang all of you…" she concluded with a glare.
"Please forgive me… but Princess Laura made me promised not to tell you," the calm but worried Valet began, slightly bowing their head. "She's in the kitchen with Perry and the handmaids, as a part of the castle's household staff catering food for you and Her Majesty…and you didn't need to worry… She is very well-guarded by both uniformed and civilian guards."

No wonder the desserts looked and tasted familiar!

After hearing the truth, her fists balled tighter… "Aaarrgh!" A frustrated growl escaped her mouth. She had every desire to yell at everyone, or whoever came up with the idea of sneaking her pregnant wife in the village at this late hour… she was panting as she tried to control the frustration… the worry… and anger deep inside her.

LaFontaine was panting, too, but they didn't seem the least bit deterred, and remained their head bowed.

Unable to control the rage inside her, she growled louder and paced to and fro in the middle of the room.

"Please stop growling," LaFontaine worriedly warned, and glanced at the door. "Someone might hear and they will alarm Her Majesty and –"

The Valet's comment irritated her more. "I will growl as much as I like and I don't care if someone hears us!"

"It wouldn't be wise to see the Prince of Karnstein in a state like this, especially on his debut to the public –" they flinched as they heard another growl.

"Don't tell me what to do!" She walked closer to them, grabbed the collar of LaFontaine, and glared, "You've been keeping secrets from me when you're supposed to be loyal to me instead of my wife!"

LaFontaine just gave her a silent guilty look and released them.

"We're all there in the meeting for heaven's sake!" she added frustratingly and ran her hand roughly through her carefully combed hair. "You could have given me a hint, that Laura would be joining us. But instead, you chose to remain silent!" She kicked the nearest chair, and resumed walking to and fro. "I'm so tired of people lying in front of my face!"

"I-I'm sorry…" LaFontaine mumbled their eyes remained looking at their boots.

"Fetch the butler! And don't you dare say another word!"

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Not wanting to give her mother any sign of doubt or worry, she chose to ride her own horse instead of joining the Queen in the carriage on their way home. She claimed to feel suffocated and wanted some fresh air after being in a room full of strangers. The Queen promptly agreed after giving her a worried look and ordered the knights to escort her back to the castle as discreet as possible.

She managed to arrive in the castle before her mother and stomped her way up to the grand staircase, and let loose an emotional tirade of anger, worry and frustration that had built up on her way home.

How dare Laura ignore her order?!

She was perfectly confident her sweet little wife was waiting for her in the safety of their bed. But no – Laura had to join the long list of her worries for the night. Gallivanting around the village, perhaps
in search of something to entertain herself, paying no heed to her order. If it had not been for the presence of Bishop Klaus and the others, she would have dragged Laura home on the spot.

The thought of her wife among the crowd before coming to the Manor worried her more. How did Laura manage to go to the Manor with the chaos she witnessed earlier that evening?

As she reached the landing she turned to the opposite hallway of her chamber.

"Where are you going?"

She glanced over her shoulder and saw her Valet panting and trailing behind her. She had not the patience to explain and ignored LaFontaine.

"I think its best that you talk to her tomorrow when everything is –"

And before they finished their sentence, "Don't you dare speak, or I will send you to the dungeons for disobedience!" then she resumed her steps.

They did what she told them, but silently followed her. She was angry and had thought of confronting Laura. And whoever planned this scheme with her wife and did not ask her permission were definitely in trouble.

She glared at the two guards standing by the Princess' chamber and opened the door immediately for her. When she crossed the threshold, she was seething and on the verge of exploding. She strode towards the four post bed and her hands forcefully drew the heavy drapes to both sides.

But her rage was suddenly put on halt.

Heavily pregnant and fully naked, she found her wife already sleeping peacefully and snoring. She can't help gazed at Laura's beautiful naked form and sighed with relief.

*Thank God you're safe…*

Laura did remember to be ready for her alright.

She gazed at the calm features of her precious one. Her eyes revered Laura's lovely face then traveled down those luscious breasts that doubled in size lately; as expected it made her hard. She quickly tore her eyes away from it, afraid that she would lose herself in lust and rage. Laura was heavily pregnant with her child and she did not want to hurt her wife. Every time she was furious they always end up having wild angry sex… not this time.

Despite the lovely site, the rage inside her can't still be contained.

Instead, she turned around, much to her Valet's relief and strode towards the door. She did not have the heart to wake Laura just for the sake of confronting her. But there's too much emotion inside her that's struggling to get out, she needed to vent.

"You two! Come with me!" she ordered the startled guards standing by the Princess' chamber and followed her. "Replaced them with new guards!" she ordered LaFontaine as they ran after her.

"Where are you going?" they asked, worried for the two guards.

"That is none of your concern!"

And they went down the stairs, all the way to the training room.
She took out the Blade of Hastur from its display case cabinet and eyed the two shaking guards.

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After almost an hour of sword fighting with the two guards, she finally let them go when one of them nearly collapsed, and the other twisted his ankle. Several grunts of exhaustion were heard as the two battered men limped off the training room.

She had not even put down her sword when Armitage showed up at the door.

"Your Highness, Her Majesty requests your presence at her chamber," the Royal Guard stated after bowing and waited.

Her adrenaline still pumping, but the rage had lessened. "What on earth does my Mother want?" she grumbled and sheathed her sword. Now was not the right time to summon her. She had a very long strenuous and intense night; the last thing she wanted was to be questioned by her suspicious dotting Mother.

She had to decline.

But when she saw Armitage not moving on the spot… Damn it! She understood right away the Queen won't take no for an answer.

She let out an exasperated sigh and walked towards the door, with Armitage following behind.

Unscathed, exhausted and sweaty, she arrived at the Queen's chamber still panting and flexing the hand that held the Blade of Hastur. It was here Armitage finally left her side, as if to make sure she was delivered at the doorstep of the Queen's chamber.

She walked confidently inside and towards the group of women helping the Queen dress for bed.

"What happened?" the Queen flashed a concerned look immediately, and stood from the dressing table. Bertha and the five handmaids all stood to the side and bowed their heads. "And what's that bruise on your cheek?"

"I had a swordfight with some guards… nothing serious," she reassured, reaching gently for her Mother's hand and slowly kissed the back of it, before smirking… "I hope the ride back home was pleasant?"

She prayed it will distract her Mother from inquiring further. There was too much in her mind right now. But then again, she underestimated that curious glare.

The Queen placed a finger under her chin and tilted her head upward.

"You're hurt…" the Queen ignored her remark and continued to study her face, looking for more cuts perhaps. Her Mother always panicked whenever she was hurt, even if it's just a graze or small cut. "Bertha!" the Lady-in-Waiting raised her head and approached. "Fetch LaFontaine… the Prince is injured."

"Please, my Queen Mother… I'm alright, it's just a scratch. I don't need them," she insisted, growing irritated. She's not in the mood to see her Valet… not when they lied to her and sided with Laura. "I'll wash my face and come back here…" her feet were already pointing towards the door as she saw Bertha stood beside it.

She was about to leave, bid her Mother goodnight and never come back.
"You can wash your face over there," the Queen ordered calmly, motioning for the porcelain basin on the washstand in the corner of the chamber, and then glanced at the Lady-in-Waiting stood by the door. "Bertha, can you help the Prince wash and mend his wound," equally composed the Lady-in-Waiting nodded and approached. "Go fetch some clothes from his Valet," the Queen told one of the handmaids, and the girl hurriedly went out, and then eyed the other one. "And you… draw a bath for the Prince."

The Lady-in-Waiting stood on her side, waiting for her permission as they exchanged glares. Of all the servants in the castle, there was nothing she can hide from Bertha. The middle-aged woman knew how to handle her temper. Since the first day she arrived, the strict nanny had been by her side all the time. Fulfilling every task the Queen ordered. She was disciplined according to her Mother's way, which Bertha had followed rigorously and she knew the woman would only obey her Mother. But she never tires of protesting and irritating her former nanny. "But my Queen Mother, I can wash by myself," she whined, as she glanced at the stoic face of Bertha. Until now, there's something in her former nanny that made her feel irritated and yet intimidated. "I'm not a child anymore. I don't need Bertha."

"Don't argue with me." The Queen declared.

With just one stern look from her Mother, she dissolved right away into the meek, mild little darling of the Queen. Not having a choice, she nodded towards her former nanny.

After obeying all her Mother's orders, she now found herself lying on the Queen's huge bed with an elaborately carved floor to ceiling headboard of dark, glossy oak. Dressed in her braise and sleeping tunic under the purple robe, her head rested on her mother's lap as she relished the familiar soft touch of the Queen's hand stroking her hair and face. The hot bath did help her relaxed, but all the hardness and rage from her heart melt away beneath her Mother's sweet caressed. There's something in her Mother's touch that was magical and she always fell under its spell.

Sat upright and back resting on a pillow against the headboard, "Would you like to tell me why you're angry?"

The Queen's soft voice tore her out from falling asleep. She shifted and hid her face from her mother's sight, hoping it will not reveal her real emotions.

"I'm just upset…," she fumbled for words. "Because… because I can't mingle with the village people… I panic when I see a lot of them," was her excuse, proud of herself for coming up quickly with a reason for her bad behavior. "And I… I was angry at myself for not overcoming my fear fully," she stated, half true. But Laura sneaking up in the village without her permission, and LaFontaine not telling her ignited her anger.

"Don't blame yourself," the Queen demanded. "You are the future King and one day you will be the most powerful in this kingdom. The people will understand how you will deal with them. They are the ones who will adjust to you. You are not obligated to accommodate every wishes and demand. Do you understand?"

Her mother's hand cupped her jawline and motioned for her to look up. She could only stare at her mother's intimidating glare and nodded.

Satisfied with the reaction she received, "Now… seeing you're exhausted and needed some taking care of… and I presume your wife might not be up for the task, I think the poor princess must have been tired with all the preparations for the event…" the Queen spoke firmly with motherly love and care. Eyes softening into a gaze, "Why don't you sleep here tonight, hmm?"
She lifted her head from her Mother's lap and was about to decline the offer, recalling the last time she did it, resulted in a 'catastrophic fight' with Laura.

Perhaps noticing her hesitation, she felt a finger right away on her lips silencing her.

"I won't take no for an answer," the Queen demanded, the warmth motherly tone replaced by an authoritative one. "You haven't been sleeping with the pregnant princess, have you?"

Her Mother's remark caught her off guard and left her fumbling for words. She tried not to melt from the Queen's accusing eyes and held her stare.

Remembering that it was forbidden to have sex with a pregnant woman, "I... I am not... copulating with Laura," she grasped for words. "I only come to her chamber when she needs me and to check on her," she reasoned out, not elaborating more to her suspicious mother.

If they only knew that Laura needed her all the time, the Queen would certainly send both of them to Bishop Klaus to ask for repentance. She was aware it was not common among royal couples to sleep together in one bed. But she felt this deep bond between her and Laura that needed satiating all the time. Her Mother will not understand this arrangement she and her wife had, just like Laura will not understand the mother-child bond she had with the Queen.

"I hope you're still sleeping in your own chamber," the Queen mentioned, not lifting her suspicious gaze from her. "And if you're thinking of visiting the Princess' chamber tonight, I'm absolutely sure your pregnant wife is already sleeping and you wouldn't want to bother her, especially in her condition. When I was pregnant with you, I slept alone and I was irritated every time someone disturbs me from my sleep."

Perhaps her Mother had a point about sleeping here tonight...

If she goes back to her chamber, she won't have a peace of mind... and she will be reminded again of her disappointment when she saw LaFontaine. At least in her Mother's bed, she would be pacified and feel safe.

And honestly... she wanted some pampering after the day's event. She was drained... physically and emotionally. After the stress of the event, feeling betrayed by her own Valet, deceived by her wife, she certainly deserved to be appeased! Or else she would go mad...

As she looked forward to spending the night with the Queen, her train of thoughts was interrupted as Bertha approached them.

"His Highness' clean clothes are also prepared for tomorrow. I put them inside her Majesty's extra closet," the Queen's Lady-in-Waiting informed, after coming out from the vast bathroom.

"Thank you, Bertha," the Queen nodded. "Tell the maid to bring Carl's favorite breakfast together with mine. I don't feel waking up early tomorrow. And tell the servants to take it slow. I'm sure everyone is also tired. We won't be having dinner in the dining hall... Carl and I can stay here until midday."

"How about dinner with His Majesty?" Bertha inquired since the King always eats midday meal with the Queen if they were both in the castle.

"Tell the King I will join him at supper instead," the Queen related. "My son needs me. That would be all."

"As you wish, Your Majesty," and Bertha bowed and left the chamber.
Sometimes, she wished that her Valet was as obedient and loyal as her Mother's Lady-in-Waiting. Ever since she was a child, she witnessed how Bertha had been a loyal servant to her Mother, obeying everything the Queen ordered. They were always formal, and professional, just like a master-servant should be. Unlike her and LaFontaine, or Laura and Perry, or even the handmaids, they defy and ignore the norms most of the time. Although she preferred it this way, since she treated them as her friends and families too, instead of servants, but sometimes… sometimes she wanted to have control on all of them and obey everything that she said. It's frustrating that even her own Valet was not fully loyal to her, but instead to her wife. And that infuriated her. Because when it came to Laura, she wanted full surveillance of her wife. It's her obligation to protect her. How can she protect her stubborn gallivanting wife when one of the persons she trusted so much wasn't fully loyal to her?

"How do you make your servants very loyal to you?" she asked out of the blue, and the hand that was stroking her hair stopped. She sought her Mother's gaze and found two curious dark orbs staring back at her. "I mean… how do you know that they will be loyal and truthful to you?"

"You must show them your strength and power over them. Show your authority," the Queen replied, locking their gaze. "And you should also find their weaknesses, so you'll know how to handle them."

She lifted her head and sat upright on the bed, and faced the most powerful woman in the kingdom. "You mean, exploit them of their vulnerability?" was her stunned reply.

"That is not what I meant," the Queen corrected, slightly insulted.

She bowed, embarrassed, after realizing her vulgar remark, "Please excuse me for my impertinence, my Queen Mother, I didn't-"

"What did I tell you?"

She felt her mother's finger lifted her chin, and she looked at her straight in the eyes. Expecting an icy cold glare, she was met with warmth gaze. "Don't you ever apologize again…"

She was about to say sorry again, but managed to stop herself, "I will remember," she displayed a cocky smile, and the Queen released the finger under her chin, as he Mother cleared her throat and sat closer to her.

"And to answer your question…"

She felt her Mother's dainty hand cupped her cheek and gazed at her.

"It's not exploiting, but rather helping them, and providing them what they desire," the Queen related in a mild soft tone. "When choosing a personal servant, you should choose wisely and get to know them. In this way, you will know their background and how to deal with them. Just like what I told you about your enemies… know your enemy and their weaknesses and you will win the battle." The Queen's eyes glistened with pride upon mentioning the last phrase. "As the future king, you should learn to know your people well, and what they desire and if you provide them what they need, in exchange they will be loyal to you. Do you understand?"

"I do." She nodded, as her Mother remained staring at her as if to make sure every word was ingrained in her mind, just like when she was a child… when her Mother comes to her chamber every night and reminded her that she was strong and the future king.

"People in a dire situation, will remember you in their lifetime and cherish you if you give them a chance to live comfortably," the Queen related in a passionate tone. "Give them shelter, food, and
work, but tell them you want their absolute loyalty and obedience in return. They will serve you right and support you."

She crinkled her brows for a while, "How can I be sure that they will be loyal and obedient throughout out the time?"

"By always being generous and helpful… And of course, by being strong and good king too," the Queen stated and smiled. "Is there anything else on your mind?"

She shook her head and cleared her thoughts. The things her Mother said made her realized that it was time to take matters in her hands.

"There's nothing more, my Queen Mother," she locked gaze with her Mother. "Thank you so much for your advice. I will remember everything you taught me."

"Well, I can see that you remembered the things that I taught you," the Queen's eyes beamed with pride. "You did well tonight and they love and adore you. I am not only talking about the noblemen and women but the people in the village too. They were celebrating and cheering you. We must do it again when the right time comes."

All she can do was to nod and swallowed hard, then flashed her charming smile to her Mother. It would take a lot of energy from her again to do this kind of event, but for now, she did not want to talk about the latest one.

A yawn involuntarily escaped her mouth and she brought her hand to her mouth at once, afraid the Queen might be offended by her action. It was considered rude and insulting to yawn in front of the King and Queen.

But it's quite the opposite what the Queen felt, "Hmm… it looks like you could use some sleep now, my Sweet Prince."

Relieved, she nodded, gazed at her Mother with those brooding eyes, before flashing a guilty sheepish smile. "Good night, my Queen Mother," she took off her robe before settling inside the sheet and lay on her back.

"Goodnight Darling. I'm happy you're here tonight, Carl."

The Queen whispered, lay on the side and faced her. She felt right away the warm touch of her Mother's hand on her jawline, and brought her face closer and kissed her on the cheek. She smiled back and closed her eyes, and let the familiar affectionate touch of her mother's hand on her face soothed her to slumber.

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Her eyes opened drowsily to the sound of drink pouring in a goblet and murmuring. It must have been nearly noon as her eyes met the strong rays of sun radiating from the window. The one thing she disliked when sleeping on her Mother's bed was the absence of heavy drapes around the four post bed. Her Mother preferred the lighter silk curtains.

She rubbed off the residue of sleep on her eyes and looked around her as her sight adjusted. As usual, her Mother's side was already empty, when she felt the cold air beside her. She stretched her arms, and legs to wake her muscles. Her body still lethargic, but recharged. Last night was actually one of the dreamless sleep she had. She shifted and turned on the other side and saw her Mother still wearing the long silk chemise, seated at the table near the fireplace, with Bertha serving breakfast.
"Good morning, Carl… breakfast is here," the Queen stated, reading a letter on the left hand while holding a red grape on the right. "Bertha cannot find the cheese that you like, so she brought another type. I hope it's alright. We already sent someone to buy at the village market, but they won't be here before midday."

"Good morning…" her voice broke still deep and harsh from slumber. She was about to rose from the bed and slip out from the sheet, but her eyes widened in shocked as she saw the tent her morning wood made in the sheet.

Hell!

She hurriedly adjusted the sheet and hastily barricaded her crotch with pillows, as she tried to think of a way to get rid of this unwanted hard on.

If she had been on Laura's bed, this wouldn't be a problem but a welcome delight to both her and Laura; she blamed herself… more specifically her erection.

"Carl, aren't you coming? There are creampuffs also… Lady Perry gave Bertha a plateful and wishes you a pleasant morning," the Queen explained, looking to her direction.

"I'll be there in a minute, I'm… I'm having a cramp," she quipped and flashed both her Mother and her former nanny the 'angelic' grin that she always used to them whenever she lied, as she held the sheet protectively over her.

"Do you want me to massage it?"

"NO!" she croaked and didn't realize that she shouted when two pairs of eyes shockingly stared back at her. After she calmed down, "I mean… I can take care of it… myself…" she managed to smile again, the one that earned the trust of her mother. "Just don't mind me… I'll be there in a moment. As soon as I'm relieved… err… I mean peachy."

"Peachy?"

The Queen flashed a questioning look.

She discreetly rolled her eyes. Why the hell was she talking like LaFontaine? "I mean nothing… I'm alright."

Once she saw her Mother's eyes backed on the paper, she hastily got up from the opposite side of the bed and headed towards the bathroom. Thankfully, it's on the opposite side and not passing the fireplace, where the table was.

After locking the door, she pulled down her braise and her hand reached quickly to her shaft and stroked herself. It felt rebellious masturbating inside the Queen's bathroom, and at the same time, she felt guilty too. Her memories brought her back to the time when she had done something naughty and Bertha would lock her up in her chamber's bathroom for disobeying her nanny or Mother. They would not let her come out until all her tears dried up and her throat hurt from yelling and crying, and she was totally depleted.

With eyes closed, she concentrated on relieving herself as fast as she could, and thought of her wife… the source of her happiness… the source of her strength. It put a naughty smile on her face as she masturbated like a young horny version of her thinking of Laura while in the Queen's bathroom. She felt very naughty and such a bad girl for behaving like this and knew she would be punished for it. But she no longer felt scared of being caught by Bertha or the Queen. Instead, she felt powerful and excited at the sight of doing something contraband behind their backs.
The rest of her day was spent with her Father, as she relayed to him how yesterday's event went out and they relaxed over a tall jug of wine. She only left when the King's Valet entered the chamber to help the King dress for his meeting with the court advisers.

Strolling around the garden and tending to her roses, she felt more relaxed and relieved after having that talk and drinking with her father. The night she spent with her Mother helped also to appease her temper and she began her day calmly by eating breakfast with the Queen, then asked her to give the servants the whole day off, which the Queen happily agreed. She even sent messages to Perry and the handmaidens to stay in their chamber and don't bother coming to work, since almost everybody was taking a day off.

And before going to the garden, she ordered Armitage to provide her a servant that would fit into the requirements that she had written on a list in addition to being a skilled warrior.

Everything seemed perfectly working according to her plan… her Father was satisfied with her debut, her Mother was happy that she spent the night and morning with her; the servants were relaxing, the roses were in full bloom…

"Ahem… Your Highness,"

And there it goes… the almost perfect day.

She turned around and found her Valet standing across her looking civil.

"It's almost supper, and the Princess is wondering if she can be allowed to get out of her chamber already. She's also asking for you," LaFontaine asked like a normal civil Valet, standing straight and proper. "And I know that you sent a message telling her to stay in bed and rest the whole day, which she obeyed faithfully. But she was also wondering if Perry could come into her chamber or any of the handmaids to keep her company."

"Didn't Bertha send one of my Mother's handmaids to help the Princess, while Perry and the girls can take the day off?" she asked her voice equally calm and polite.

"She did, and Princess Laura is grateful for the help. And Perry and the girls are thankful too…" The Valet explained frustratingly.

"Then what's the problem?" She raised her left eyebrow and gave them her signature condescending look.

"The new guards at the Princess' chamber are not letting anyone in, except Her Majesty's handmaid," they struggled to explain; perhaps they were not used to being civil, even if they were just alone with her. "The Princess is getting bored and wants to see Perry and the girls. And she's also requesting your presence. Would it be alright to tell the guards to let them in or the Princess out?"

"No."

Shocked at the reply they heard, "I… I beg your pardon?"

She started to walk towards the garden's exit, knowing this conversation would result in something bad.

LaFontaine was quick to follow behind.
"Perry and the girls had been asking the guards since morning, to let them in," LaFontaine explained, striding behind. "They want to stay with Princess Laura to cheer her up and keep her company. Why can't they do it?"

"Because I ordered not to disturb the Princess… to give her time to relax and contemplate what she had done!" She burst out.

"She said she's sorry and wants to talk and see you…” LaFontaine tried to salvage the situation.

"I will decide when to see her, and when she can get out of her chamber," Her emotions were out of control again. She was tired of people questioning her orders and not respecting it. "I don't want to hear any more complaints from you or a word from my wife. You've all lied to me and I'm not in the mood to hear your excuses."

"But she-"

Simmering, her jaw clenched from trying to control being mad again. "I said not a word! Can't you respect that?"

LaFontaine seemed to realize their mistake and finally shut their mouth.

That night, she slept in her chamber and her Valet had been quiet throughout the evening until she ordered them to leave her.

***

She woke up with a pang of pain in her temples. Gone was the night of pampering and sweet caress from the Queen. Her Mother would be suspicious again if she found her still brooding. Hence she decided to sleep in her chamber.

It was not just her head that was throbbing, but down there too. Out of habit, she slipped her hand under her pillow, searching for the solution to her problem. But she groaned with frustration when she found nothing under all her pillows. Even if Laura and she were fighting, she always had the Princess' undies tucked under her pillows in case she needed them. Or asked Betty to snatch one for her. But since yesterday, she did not want to see any of them. Not even LaFontaine.

Wasting no time, she removed her braise and reached down with her right hand, while the other pushed up her sleeping tunic and began pinching the hard little tip. She always found herself the hardest during the morning and waking up making love with Laura was the most wonderful thing in the world. God! How she missed Laura!? Her wife's pretty face, delectable lips, soft skin, luscious breasts, big beautiful stomach, and intoxicating smell. She missed and loved all of it! The next thing she knew, her hand was pumping faster and she's coming hard and quick.

"Laura!"

After coming down from the heights of her climax…

"Ahem… Good morning."

She heard the familiar voice of her Valet behind the heavy drapes. It was not surprising anymore, LaFontaine catching her doing her morning ritual. In fact, it was already part of their morning routine that Laf would have to wait to wake her up until she had come. Unless she had a very important appointment that she needed to be, her Valet always let her do her business first, except when Laura was sleeping with her on her chamber.
"I'll be right there," she informed while drying herself with the sheet. The maids changed her bed sheets every day when she sleeps in her chamber, as per LaFontaine's order.

When she already looked decent, she drew the curtain on her left side and put on the purple robe hanging on the chair at the side of her bed, and slipped on her fur slippers.

"Armitage is waiting by the door. He said it's regarding about the maid," they said, as they stood across her with a towel hanging on their left lower arm and a porcelain pitcher on the right.

She walked to the washstand beside her bed and washed her hands and face while LaFontaine poured gracefully the water, before finally handing her the towel.

After drying her face and hands, "Let him in," she said and sat on the chair beside her study table. There were already six paper scrolls on the table waiting for her attention beside the breakfast tray. Her usual routine had begun. It's good to be distracted from the chaos, she thought.

"Good morning Your Highness," Armitage approached and bowed in front of her.

LaFontaine's inquisitive look did not go unnoticed to her. "Can you give us a moment?"

They flashed her a surprised look and hesitatingly left her chamber.

She never hides anything from them, except some part of her sex life with Laura, but other than that, she was always open to LaFontaine about anything. The Valet must have been suspicious now.

"Have you found her?" she looked back at her personal royal guard, once the door shut.

"Yes Your Highness, I have." The Royal Guard explained. "She came from Silas and moved here in search of a better life after her entire family was killed by Zeta soldiers. She trained to become a skilled warrior to defend herself after witnessing her family's death. Although she never had an experience being a lady's or princess' maid, she is willing to learn and swear your loyalty to you."

"What is she good at?"

"Archery."

"Have you tested her skill?" she asked, trusting her personal guard's judgment. When it came to protecting Laura, she needed to be sure.

"I have, Your Highness. She's exceptional, disciplined and strong-willed," Armitage confidently related.

"Well done," was her satisfied reply, now she had a maid that would not just serve her wife but guard her too wherever Laura goes and most importantly, loyal to her. "Tell her to come to the castle as soon as possible and show her around. I have already told the butler to start training her as a maid so that she would also have an idea of how things work inside the castle. But her main task is to protect the Princess and be with her all the time. You will show her all she needs to know about being a personal guard."

"It shall be done, Your Highness," The Royal Guard bowed pleased at the outcome.

"Thank you, Armitage, you may leave."

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Going back to her usual routine at the castle helped her to forget the rage that was still brewing inside
her. She knew it cannot be appeased until she finally talks to Laura. But she still wanted her wife and the rest of the people involved to learn their mistakes, and not to take her for granted and respect her authority. As what her Mother told her, she needed to show her authority. And that was her plan before making peace with her wife.

She closed the book that she had been reading for the whole day. It was one of those books about laws in trading. Her father would like her to widen their trade relationship and look for allies outside of Austria. She rose from the chair and put the large book on the shelf. It was already dark when she looked out from the window.

"I wonder what she's doing?" she paused for a while, contemplating if she should talk to Laura now. Two days just passed after the incident. While she buried her nose among the books and paper scrolls here, at the library, her wife remained confined in the Princess' chamber with no one to see except one of her Mother's handmaid. It's a bit harsh, but she wanted to teach her wife a lesson and the rest of her conniving helpers.

The sound of opening door tore her out from rumination and her brow furrowed. She informed the guards stood by the door never to let anyone in while she's in the library, why can't people follow her damn orders?!

"I heard you hired a new maid for Princess Laura, is it true?" was the Valet's aggressive remark while walking towards her, followed by a royal guard who tried stopping them from coming in.

She motioned for the guard to let them go and leave. Trying to compose herself. "It's true. And why are you asking me, when I told you that I don't want to be disturb, especially if it was you or my wife. Didn't I make it clear that I want to be alone?"

"Is this the reason why you forbid Perry and the girls from seeing the Princess? And why Princess Laura is still locked in her chamber?" LaFontaine accused, growing redder as they remained cross.

The Valet's words provoked her. "Don't you dare speak to me like that! When it comes to my wife, everything that has to do with her is my sole decision and it doesn't have anything to do with you."

"It has anything to do with me when I see Perry, the girls, and Princess Laura suffering because of your cruel punishment!" LaFontaine exclaimed, totally upset.

She was taken aback by their strong words and aggressive behavior. She was just limiting Laura's contact with Perry and the girls to realize their mistakes. But the way LaFontaine talked to her, made her feel the bad one, and not the offended one. "And you're out of line! I will send you to the dungeons if you don't stop talking now!"

"Go ahead! Send me there, just like you locked your wife and replaced Perry and the girls!" LaFontaine retaliated, walking closer as if daring her.

Enraged by their harsh remark, and her reasoning clouded with anger…

"Guards!" she yelled and two royal guards responded right away to her call. "Take them to the dungeons!"

TBC
Next chapter: Red is the New Black

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