

God of Wreck

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/61493053) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/61493053>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Categories:	F/F , F/M , M/M
Fandom:	Legacy of Gods - Rina Kent
Relationships:	Killian Carson/Eli King , Brandon King/Nikolai Sokolov (Legacy of Gods) , Creighton King/Mikhail Orlov , Vaughn Morozov/Remington Astor , Landon King/Jeremy Volkov , Gareth Carson/Professor Kayden Lockwood
Characters:	Eli King , Brandon King (Legacy of Gods) , Nikolai Sokolov (Legacy of Gods) , Killian Carson , Creighton King , Gareth Carson , Remington Astor , Vaughn Morozov , Ava Nash , Ariella Nash , Cecily Knight , Ilya Levitsky , Mia Sokolov , Maya Sokolov , Annika Volkov , Glyndon King
Additional Tags:	Arranged Marriage
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of GOD OF WRECK
Stats:	Published: 2024-12-20 Completed: 2025-03-06 Words: 78,922 Chapters: 38/38

God of Wreck

by [Allaria_Black](#)

Summary

Eli King never wanted Killian Carson or did he?

Killian was a storm Eli couldn't control—wild, consuming, and utterly destructive.

They hated each other with a passion that burned too hot, too fierce, and for years, they clashed in a deadly game of dominance and disdain.

But obsession doesn't care for reason, and love doesn't ask for permission.

Now, as their families force an alliance, Eli finds himself trapped in Killian's world—a place where boundaries blur and desires take dangerous turns.

Killian Carson was never supposed to want Eli King.

The perfect heir with his cold eyes and unreachable aura was everything Killian couldn't stand—controlled, calculating, and maddeningly untouchable.

But the line between hate and obsession is razor-thin, and Killian crossed it long ago.

And love may be the ultimate surrender.

(P.S: I do not own the Legacy of Gods series, all the characters belong to Rina Kent)

CHAPTER 1

The boardroom of Carson Enterprises was coldly modern—glass, and a palpable tension. Asher Carson leaned back in his chair, arms crossed, a sharp contrast to Alexander Carson’s commanding presence at the table. Between them, the animosity simmered like a low flame threatening to erupt.

“You *will* help me, Asher,” Alexander demanded, his voice cutting through the silence. “Our company has been bleeding, and you’re the only one who can stop it.”

Asher smirked, his tone as sharp as his father’s. “Help? Your law firm has nothing to do with me. I have my own company to run, and I’m doing just fine without your interference.”

Alexander slammed his hand on the table, leaning forward. “It’s not just about my firm! The King Enterprises have been buying shares from our partners—*your* partners. If they continue at this rate, they’ll come for your business next.”

Asher’s smirk faltered slightly, but he didn’t respond. The third person in the room, Rai Sokolov, broke the silence, her voice calm and deliberate.

“He’s right, you know,” Rai said, her dark eyes observing the Carsons with interest. “The Kings have been securing shipments and expanding rapidly. A partnership between V-Corp and King Enterprises could be a strategic move. A win-win.”

Alexander’s expression shifted subtly, his lips curling into a sly smile. “Interesting you should say that. I’ve already spoken to Aiden King. He proposed an alliance... perhaps even between our families.”

The room stilled.

Rai’s gaze sharpened, immediately catching the subtext. “An alliance?” she echoed, her tone deceptively neutral. “You mean... marriage?”

Alexander’s silence was answer enough. Asher’s jaw tightened, but it was Rai who began thinking aloud, her mind calculating. “Marriage... Let’s see. The only eligible single in the King family is Eli King. Creighton is engaged to Mikhail Orlov.”

Asher’s frown deepened, and he sat up straighter. “Annika? No, she’s with Glyndon King.”

“My daughters are married,” Rai interjected, raising a hand, as if to absolve herself. “And Niko is with Brandon King.”

They all fell silent, the weight of the moment pressing down on them. As if summoned by fate, the door to the boardroom swung open, and Killian Carson walked in, nose buried in a file.

“Dad,” Killian said without looking up. “I’ve analyzed this file. Shall I send it to the client?”

He glanced up then, freezing as he registered the calculating stares directed at him. His instincts screamed alert escape! Escape!, but he kept his expression neutral.

Rai's lips twitched into a knowing smile. "Perfect match," she murmured, breaking the silence.

Alexander nodded approvingly, a glint of triumph in his eyes. "Indeed."

Killian's alarm bells were now deafening, and his gaze darted to his father. "What's going on, Dad?" he demanded.

Asher stood abruptly, his chair scraping loudly against the floor. "No. Absolutely not," he snapped, his voice echoing with finality. "I am not selling my youngest son to that ice-hearted fool, Eli King. No way. I refuse! And for some business deal. NO NO"

Killian looked between them, his confusion morphing into suspicion. "Selling me? To Eli King? What the hell is this?"

Alexander's smile was as cold as it was dangerous. "Just business, Killian. Nothing to worry about."

"Nothing to worry about?" Asher's voice was a growl. "He's my son, not some pawn in your schemes, and I won't stand for it!"

Killian turned to his father, "Explain, Dad".

Asher groaned, pinching the bridge of his nose. "Killian, they're—" He hesitated, his glare darting between Rai and Alexander.

"Out with it, Dad," Killian pressed, waving the file.

"They're proposing you marry Eli King," Asher said flatly, as if the words tasted sour in his mouth.

The room went still for a split second.

Then:

"WHAT?!" Killian's yell reverberated like a thunderclap, making the glass table tremble. "ME? MARRY *ELI KING*? NO!"

.....

Eli sat back in his chair, twirling a pen between his fingers, his father's words still echoing in his mind. The idea of marriage with Killian Carson should've made him laugh out loud or throw a fit—maybe both. Instead, he had managed a calm, measured response.

"I'll think about it."

His father's face had flickered with something—suspicion, perhaps. Aiden King wasn't a man who missed much, but Eli had no intention of giving him any ammunition for more teasing. Aiden might have been enjoying his retirement, but that didn't stop him from meddling in Eli's life with the precision of a seasoned CEO.

Now, sitting alone in his office, Eli let his thoughts wander. *Killian Carson*. It was a name that stirred something primal in him. Not fear, not admiration—just pure, unadulterated irritation.

They had known each other since childhood. Their parents were friends, so it was inevitable. Family dinners, social galas, business events—they'd been forced into proximity more times than Eli could count. And every single time, without fail, they clashed.

Killian was chaos personified. Eli, who thrived on control and order, found everything about him unbearable. The way Killian always had a smirk on his face, like he was in on some private joke at Eli's expense. The way he spoke without thinking, a sharp edge to his words that always found a way under Eli's skin. The way he had punched Creighton in the face during some ridiculous argument as kids.

They'd always hated each other. He wasn't even sure why. Maybe it was the way their personalities seemed destined to collide, like two storms battling for dominance. Or maybe it was just...Killian. The man was impossible.

And yet, here Eli was, seriously considering the prospect of marrying him.

He leaned back in his chair, letting out a slow breath. It wasn't like he had much of a choice. An alliance with V-Corp was undeniably beneficial. Their influence, combined with King Enterprises, would be a force no competitor could touch. It made sense. It was strategic. It was logical.

But Killian? That was chaos wrapped in a tailored suit. Could Eli really tie himself to that?

He thought back to their last interaction. It was at some gala, the details of which were already fuzzy in his mind. Killian had sauntered over, a glass of champagne in hand, and within two minutes had managed to irritate Eli so thoroughly that he'd excused himself before saying something that would cause a scene. That was their dynamic. Push, pull, clash, repeat.

He shook his head, as if to banish the thought. This was business. And yet, there was something about the idea that lingered, teasing at the edges of his mind.

He thought of Killian's sharp eyes, his defiant stance, the way he carried himself like he couldn't care less about the world's opinions. Eli hated him, truly, but maybe hate wasn't the right word. Maybe it was too simple for what they had.

This wasn't going to work. It couldn't. And yet...it might.

"Think about it," his father had said.

And so he would. Even if every fiber of his being told him that marrying Killian Carson would be a disaster of epic proportions.

But then again, what was life without a little chaos?

Author's Notes:

👁️👁️ *"What's this? A marriage proposal no one asked for but everyone needed?!"*
Killian Carson being sold off like a shiny new stock at a family auction?

Eli King twirling his pen while considering *chaos in a suit*? ✓

Asher Carson yelling “NO NO NO!” like a dramatic dad? ✓

Comment about:

Alexander Carson’s bold business- matchmaking strategies.

For Asher Carson fighting to protect his baby boy (but losing, because...plot). 😊

Let me know your thoughts.....

CHAPTER 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Killian Carson stormed into his room, slamming the door behind him with just enough force to vent his frustration but not enough to draw unnecessary attention. The muffled sound of his parents and grandfather arguing downstairs still seeped through the walls, grating on his nerves. If anyone had walked in at that moment, they would've seen a man ready to destroy the room, his face a mask of icy indifference, his fists clenched at his sides.

But Killian knew better than to show his cards, even when no one was watching. He had perfected the art of hiding behind an emotionless façade.

His sanctuary didn't last long. The door creaked open, and Gareth strolled in with the kind of smug nonchalance only an older sibling could master.

"Spill it," Gareth said, crossing his arms as he leaned against the doorframe.

Killian blinked at him, then immediately plastered on his most innocent expression, his wide eyes a picture of faux confusion. "Spill what?"

Gareth snorted, unimpressed. "Cut the act, Kill. I've known you your whole life. That's your 'I'm about to manipulate the hell out of someone' face. So, out with it. What's got your knickers in a twist?"

Killian held the innocent look for a moment longer, then dropped it with a dramatic sigh. "Fine. But first, shouldn't you be busy keeping your husband on his leash?"

Gareth rolled his eyes, but a flicker of irritation crossed his face. "Stop calling Kayden a dog."

Killian smirked. "With the way he follows you around, he might as well be. Do you carry treats in your pocket for him, too?"

"Killian," Gareth warned, his tone sharp enough to make Killian raise his hands in mock surrender.

"Alright, alright," Killian said, his smirk fading as he sat down on the edge of his bed. "You're no fun, you know that?"

"Stop deflecting," Gareth said, stepping fully into the room and shutting the door behind him. He walked over to lean against the desk, his arms still crossed. "Let's talk about what's really going on. Grandfather's sudden burst of genius to suggest an alliance with the Kings? That man can barely figure out how to use his phone. Someone put the idea in his head. Who was it?"

Killian hesitated for a split second, but Gareth caught it.

"It was you, wasn't it?" Gareth said, his eyes narrowing.

Killian sighed, knowing there was no point in lying. Gareth always saw through him. "Fine, yes. It was me. I suggested it."

Gareth's brow shot up. "You suggested it? Why?"

Killian leaned back on the bed, staring at the ceiling as if it held the answers. "How long am I supposed to keep looking at Eli King from afar?"

Gareth stared at him for a long moment before muttering, "You're obsessed."

Killian let out a humorless laugh. "Always have been. Ever since we were kids. You'd think I'd have grown out of it by now."

Gareth tilted his head, studying him. "So, what's the endgame here, Kill? Why do you even want this? Do you really think marrying Eli is going to solve whatever this...obsession is?"

Killian fell silent, his thoughts churning. Why did he want this? He searched for an answer but came up empty-handed. "I don't know," he admitted quietly. "It's not like I have some grand plan. I've always clashed with him—this stupid tug-of-war for dominance. But then, during college, I experienced everything. People, parties, meaningless hookups. Nothing stuck."

Gareth raised a brow, but Killian wasn't done.

"And then last year, at the gala...I saw him talking to Ava Nash." Killian's jaw tightened, his voice growing colder. "He looked at her like she was the only person in the room. And I hated it. I hated her. And I hated him for making me feel that way."

"Feel what way?" Gareth pressed.

"Like I needed to act," Killian said, his voice dropping to a whisper. "Like I couldn't just sit there and watch him anymore."

Gareth let the silence stretch between them before finally speaking. "You're playing a dangerous game, Kill. Eli King isn't exactly known for being easy to deal with. Are you sure you're ready for whatever this is?"

Killian smirked, but it didn't quite reach his eyes. "Ready? No. But I'll figure it out."

"And if it blows up in your face?"

Killian's smirk widened, this time with a touch of genuine amusement. "Then at least it'll be interesting."

Gareth shook his head, standing up and heading for the door. "You're insane. Just don't drag yourself into a mess, alright? But seriously a marriage"

"No promises," Killian called after him, his tone light.

But as the door clicked shut, his smirk faded, replaced by a thoughtful frown. He didn't know why he wanted this—why Eli King had always gotten under his skin, why he couldn't stop thinking about him. But he was determined to find out, no matter the cost.

And if chaos was the price of that knowledge, so be it.

Eli King sat in his sleek, minimalistic office, his fingers tapping a steady rhythm against the armrest of his chair. The soft hum of the air conditioning and the distant ticking of the clock on the wall were the only sounds in the otherwise silent space. He glanced at the clock for what felt like the hundredth time. Ten minutes late. Killian Carson was ten minutes late.

Eli closed his eyes briefly, inhaling deeply to maintain his composure. He was a creature of habit, a man who thrived on precision and order. Schedules weren't just a guideline to him—they were law. And Killian, it seemed, had already begun testing his patience, even before their arrangement had officially begun.

Eli leaned back in his chair, his sharp eyes narrowing as he imagined all the inevitable headaches this marriage would bring. The late arrivals, the unpredictable moods, the chaos Killian Carson seemed to embody. *Bloody hell*, Eli thought to himself, his fingers now drumming faster against the chair. *I've willingly signed up for a lifetime of this.*

He glanced at his watch again. Eleven minutes.

The door finally swung open, and in strolled Killian Carson as if he owned the world—or, at the very least, this office. Eli's jaw tightened slightly as his eyes took in the man before him.

Killian was wearing a red leather jacket, its bold hue practically screaming defiance against the otherwise neutral tones of Eli's office. Underneath the jacket, a simple black t-shirt clung to his frame, paired with black jeans that fit *entirely too well*. And, to top it off, Killian wore black sunglasses indoors, no less, as if he were making a statement that Eli hadn't yet figured out.

Eli blinked, his irritation spiking. *He's wearing that into my office?* The thought echoed in his mind. The stark contrast between Killian's rebellious attire and the room's sophisticated decor—a blend of glass, steel, and muted grays—was jarring. It was as if Killian had walked in from an entirely different universe.

Killian casually removed his sunglasses, hooking them onto the collar of his shirt, and flashed a smirk that made Eli's annoyance bubble just beneath the surface. "Sorry I'm late," he said, his tone entirely unapologetic.

Eli stood from his chair, adjusting his suit jacket as he moved around the desk to face Killian directly. He was tall, imposing, every inch of him exuding the controlled authority he prided himself on. "Eleven minutes late," Eli corrected, his voice clipped but calm.

Killian shrugged nonchalantly, shoving his hands into his jacket pockets. "Traffic," he said, as if that explained everything.

Eli's lips pressed into a thin line. "You could have left earlier," he pointed out, his words sharp.

Killian tilted his head, his smirk deepening. "You're not my boss, King. Not yet, anyway."

Eli forced himself to remain calm, though the urge to lecture Killian on professionalism and punctuality was almost overwhelming. Instead, he took a step closer, his eyes narrowing as he

looked Killian over.

"Do you always dress like that for formal meetings?" Eli asked, his voice laced with quiet disdain.

Killian glanced down at himself, then back up at Eli, his smirk never wavering. "What's wrong with it? You don't like the jacket?"

Eli's eye twitched. "It's not about what I like. There's a standard—"

"Relax, King," Killian interrupted, holding up a hand as if to stop Eli's impending tirade. "I'm not here to audition for a corporate job. Besides," he added, leaning in slightly, his voice dropping into something dangerously close to a purr, "you were staring. So maybe you don't hate it as much as you say."

Eli froze for a fraction of a second, caught off guard by Killian's brazenness. Heat prickled at the back of his neck, but he quickly schooled his expression back into one of cold indifference. "Don't flatter yourself," he said icily, stepping back to put some distance between them. "You're late, you're underdressed, and you're already proving to be a headache."

Killian chuckled, low and amused, as if Eli's words were the punchline to some private joke. "You knew exactly what you were getting into when you agreed to this marriage, King. Don't act surprised now."

Eli's jaw clenched. He hated that Killian was right. He had known what he was getting into—or, at least, he thought he had. But standing here, faced with Killian's audacious grin and infuriating confidence, he realized that no amount of preparation could have readied him for this.

"Let's get one thing straight," Eli said, his voice cutting through the air like a blade. "This arrangement is about power and alliances. Nothing more. So, if you think you can walk in here, late and dressed like..." He gestured vaguely at Killian's attire, "...this, and expect me to tolerate it, you're sorely mistaken."

Eli straightened his posture, crossing his arms as he leaned against the edge of his desk, his sharp gaze fixed on Killian, who lounged in the chair like he had all the time in the world. "Let's set some ground rules," Eli began, his voice cool and precise, cutting through the lingering tension like a blade.

Killian tilted his head, his expression amused but curious. "Rules already? I thought we were going to discuss our honeymoon phase."

Eli ignored the jab, continuing without missing a beat. "First, no one outside this marriage must know it's an arrangement. To the media, we're a loving couple who married for love. The story is airtight, and there will be no deviations. Only we know the truth."

Killian smirked. "Pretending to be madly in love with you? Shouldn't be too hard."

Eli's expression didn't change, though his jaw tightened ever so slightly. "Second," he said, continuing as if Killian hadn't spoken, "we will not interfere in each other's business. I don't care what you do with your ventures, and you will not involve yourself in mine."

Killian raised an eyebrow, his interest piqued. "Not even a little curiosity about what I do in my spare time?"

"None," Eli said flatly. "As long as it doesn't affect me or this arrangement, I don't care."

Killian's smirk widened, and Eli could tell he was filing away that little admission for later use.

"Third," Eli pressed on, his tone growing firmer, "there will be no affairs or cheating. Our reputation must remain impeccable. Anything that tarnishes the image we're presenting to the public will not be tolerated."

Killian tapped his fingers against the armrest of the chair, the corners of his mouth twitching upward. "So possessive already," he drawled. "You might scare off any suitors before they even try."

Eli ignored the provocation, his sharp gaze locking onto Killian's with steely resolve. "Fourth," he added, his tone dropping into something colder, "you will respect the boundaries I set. You will not turn this marriage into some twisted game to get under my skin, Killian. This arrangement is strategic, not personal."

Killian chuckled, a low, rumbling sound that made Eli's annoyance flare. "Respect your boundaries?" he repeated, his voice laced with mock sincerity. "What about mine, King? Or do you expect me to simply play along with your rules without question?"

Eli's lips curved into a faint, humorless smile. "You can set your boundaries too. As long as they don't conflict with mine."

Killian leaned forward slightly, resting his elbows on his knees as his smirk turned more predatory. "How generous of you."

"Fifth," Eli continued, ignoring Killian's growing amusement, "this marriage will not interfere with our daily routines. We'll maintain appearances when required, but beyond that, I have no interest in sharing a life with you outside what's necessary."

"Sounds thrilling," Killian remarked, leaning back in his chair with exaggerated casualness. "Anything else, your majesty? Or are these royal decrees enough to keep me in line?"

Eli narrowed his eyes. "Last rule," he said, his voice dropping into something colder, more final. "Do not, under any circumstances, underestimate me, Killian. You think you know me, but you don't. And if you cross me, this arrangement will end in ways you won't enjoy."

For a moment, the room was silent, the weight of Eli's words hanging in the air. Then Killian smiled, slow and deliberate, his sharp gaze meeting Eli's without a trace of fear.

"Noted," Killian said, his voice soft but laced with something dangerous. "But if you think I'm going to play the obedient husband, you're in for a surprise. I don't follow rules, Eli. I break them."

Eli's eyes narrowed further, his composure unshaken. "You'll find I'm not so easily broken, Carson."

Killian stood, as he leaned in just enough to breach Eli's personal space. "Good," he murmured, his voice low and challenging. "This might actually be fun."

Eli didn't move, his cold gaze locked on Killian's, neither man willing to back down. "We'll see," Eli said quietly, his tone sharp as a blade.

Killian's grin widened before he stepped back, turning toward the door with a casual wave. "Let the games begin, King."

Eli watched him leave, his sharp mind already calculating how to handle the storm that was Killian Carson. This marriage was going to test him in ways he hadn't anticipated—and he wouldn't lose. Not to Killian, not to anyone

Chapter End Notes

Killian and Eli's battle of hearts has officially begun.
An electrifying tug-of-war—who will bend first?

Are you Team Carson's chaos or Team King's control?
Let me know in the comments!

Thank you for reading and supporting this story!
Stay tuned for the next chapter—it's only going to get interesting from here.

Until next time, happy reading! ❤️

CHAPTER 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The church was grand, its high ceilings adorned with intricate carvings and gold accents that gleamed under the soft light filtering through the stained-glass windows. The pews were packed with their families, friends, and influential faces from both the business world and the darker alleys of power they navigated. Cameras flashed relentlessly, capturing every angle of the union that no one saw coming—King and Carson, two names that commanded attention and dread in equal measure.

Killian stood at the altar, dressed in a sharp black suit with subtle crimson details, a nod to his signature style. His expression was impassive, his hands clasped loosely in front of him, though his sharp eyes flicked around the room, taking in every face and every movement with calculated precision. To anyone watching, he might have looked calm and composed.

But inside, Killian was counting down.

One more minute. Just one more.

His inner monologue was a mix of irritation and exhaustion. The ceremony was dragging. The priest's voice, a monotonous drone, might as well have been a lullaby.

Eli King stood across from him, every inch the perfect picture of confidence and control. His tailored suit was crisp and immaculate, the faintest shimmer of gold embroidery catching the light whenever he moved. He had the air of a man who owned the world and knew it.

As the priest's voice crescendoed to the climax of the ceremony, declaring, "I now pronounce you husbands," Killian felt a flicker of relief. *Finally, it's over. Can I sit now?* He was already picturing himself at the reception with a glass of champagne, far away from the prying eyes and saccharine speeches.

But then, in one swift, unexpected motion, Eli stepped forward.

Before Killian could register what was happening, Eli's arm wrapped around his waist with surprising firmness, pulling him close. Killian's eyes widened in surprise, his body stiffening as Eli dipped him dramatically backward.

The crowd erupted into cheers, whistles, and laughter. Cameras clicked frantically, capturing the moment that would undoubtedly grace every headline the next morning.

Killian glared up at Eli, his voice a low hiss. "Ask for consent first, *dude.*"

Eli smirked, his face annoyingly close as he murmured back, "The media is watching. A wedding kiss is magical and mandatory, is it not?"

Before Killian could retort, Eli's lips brushed against his. The kiss was firm, deliberate, and just long enough to cement the illusion of their "loving" marriage. Killian's fingers twitched against Eli's chest, tempted to shove him away, but he knew better. The cameras were on them, and he wouldn't give Eli the satisfaction of looking unprepared.

When Eli finally straightened, pulling Killian upright with him, his smirk remained firmly in place. Killian shot him a glare, his voice low and biting. “You’re enjoying this way too much.”

Eli’s gaze didn’t waver, his tone infuriatingly calm. “Why wouldn’t I? You’re such a cooperative partner.”

Killian’s jaw clenched, but before he could escalate their verbal sparring, Eli turned to face the crowd. His sharp gray eyes scanned the sea of faces until they landed on Asher Carson, who sat in the front pew, his expression thunderous.

Asher’s glare was a weapon in itself, an unspoken warning that Eli didn’t even pretend to heed. Instead, Eli smirked, a slow, deliberate curve of his lips that spoke volumes. *Go ahead, hate me all you want. I’ve already won.*

Killian caught the exchange and followed Eli’s gaze, noting his father’s obvious displeasure. “You just can’t help yourself, can you?” he muttered under his breath.

Eli’s smirk only widened as he turned back to Killian. “What can I say? I’m a man who likes a challenge.”

Killian rolled his eyes, adjusting his suit as the applause of the crowd swelled around them. The priest was announcing the couple’s first steps into their new life together, but Killian barely heard him.

As they walked down the aisle, side by side, with cameras trailing their every step, Killian leaned in close enough for only Eli to hear. “You’re playing a dangerous game, King.”

Eli didn’t look at him, his smile perfectly photogenic for the cameras. “Danger’s the only game worth playing, Carson.”

Killian huffed, his lips twitching despite himself. *Let the games begin.*

.....

The reception hall was a masterpiece of opulence, dripping with elegance and wealth in every corner. Crystal chandeliers cast a warm glow over the sea of perfectly dressed guests, murmuring and mingling to the soft strains of classical music. The air was thick with perfume, champagne bubbles, and the unspoken politics of alliances both familial and financial.

Killian Carson stood near the edge of the room, his expression carefully neutral as his closest friends gathered around him. Vaughn leaned casually against the wall, his champagne flute balanced between two fingers, his sharp gaze observing the crowd like a predator surveying prey. Jeremy had a sly grin playing on his lips, while Nikolai lounged lazily in a nearby chair, sipping his whiskey.

“So,” Jeremy began, his voice dripping with mischief, “how in hell did *you* of all people end up marrying *him*?” He jerked his chin toward the center of the room. “Eli King? Really? The man might as well be carved out of ice.”

Nikolai snorted, turning his head to follow Jeremy’s gesture. His sharp eyes landed on Eli, who stood by a cluster of men—Mr. Shaw and Mr. Weslett, two men of the corporate world. Eli was

in his element, speaking smoothly, his posture impeccable, his face calm and unreadable.

“That,” Nikolai said, raising his glass in Eli’s direction, “is your choice? Kill, he looks like he’s negotiating a hostile takeover even at his own wedding. Honestly, you might’ve married a statue. He’s not even looking at you.”

Killian gave Nikolai a flat look before glancing over his shoulder at his husband. Sure enough, Eli was fully immersed in conversation, his sharp gray eyes focused on whatever business matter he was discussing with Shaw and Weslett. Killian’s lips twitched, the faintest hint of a smirk threatening to surface. *Let him have his fun.*

“He’s exactly what I expected,” Killian muttered, turning back to his friends.

“Exactly what I expected *you’d* marry?” Jeremy raised an eyebrow. “Hardly. I thought your type was more... kinky or I don’t know Not him though with all the orgies you did at Uni.”

“And less... robotic,” Nikolai added, grinning.

Killian rolled his eyes but didn’t take the bait. Vaughn, who had been silent, took a long sip of his champagne before finally speaking.

“I saw this coming a long time ago,” Vaughn said, his voice calm, cutting through the teasing like a blade.

The group turned to him in unison, startled. Killian’s brow furrowed. “What the hell are you talking about, V?”

Vaughn’s lips curved into the faintest smile, his dark eyes glinting with amusement. “You think I didn’t notice? I’ve spent enough time during university sneaking around the Elites’ mansion for Remi to know things most people don’t.”

Jeremy’s eyes narrowed, his playful grin fading into a more serious expression. “Explain,” he demanded.

Vaughn’s grin widened, but before he could elaborate, a booming voice interrupted them.

“Vaughn, my boy!” Ronan Astor, Vaughn’s father-in-law strode toward them with a wide grin. Without hesitation, Ronan threw an arm around Vaughn’s shoulders in a jovial side hug.

“Come on,” Ronan said, his tone hearty. “I’ve got a few friends I want you to meet..” He gestured vaguely toward a group of men across the room.

Vaughn, still smirking, gave his friends a pointed look. “Don’t overthink it,” he said cryptically before letting Ronan lead him away.

The remaining three watched him go, a mixture of confusion and irritation etched across their faces.

“What the hell was he implying?” Nikolai finally asked, his voice laced with annoyance.

“Doesn’t matter,” Killian said firmly.

.....

“I’ll keep this brief,” Asher began, his tone clipped, his voice low but sharp enough to cut. “This marriage—this *arrangement*—is just that. An alliance, nothing more. I don’t want you meddling in my son’s life beyond what’s necessary.”

Eli tilted his head slightly, as if considering the words. His eyes glinted with something that wasn’t quite amusement but came close. “Meddling? That’s an interesting choice of word, Mr. Carson,” he said smoothly. “Killian is a grown adult. I’m not exactly tucking him in at night or reading him bedtime stories.”

Asher’s nostrils flared, but he held his composure. “I mean it, King. Keep your distance..”

Eli leaned forward, resting his elbows on the arms of the chair, his expression shifting to something darker, more pointed. “Let’s not play games, Mr. Carson. Your son agreed to this marriage of his own volition. It’s not like he’s some fragile little girl I’ve stolen from her family home. I’m not exactly out here stealing his virginity and making him pregnant, now, am I?”

Asher’s fists clenched at his sides. His jaw worked furiously, but he remained silent, his lips pressed into a thin line. He began counting under his breath—one, two, three—trying to keep his composure. Losing his temper here would only play into Eli’s hands.

Eli watched him with a glint of satisfaction. “Oh, don’t hold back on my account. Go ahead, make a scene if it’ll make you feel better. Though I doubt your esteemed guests would appreciate it.”

“Don’t test me, King,” Asher said through gritted teeth, his voice low and dangerous.

Eli’s smirk widened. “Test you? Now why would I do that? I’m merely pointing out that Killian is no delicate flower. He’s a Carson, after all. Strong, independent... a little volatile, perhaps. But then, I suppose he gets that from you.”

Asher’s hand twitched, but he took a deep breath, exhaling slowly. “If you hurt him, I’ll—”

“—What?” Eli interrupted, his voice laced with mock innocence. “Destroy me? Please. You and I both know Killian can take care of himself. If anything, *I’m* the one at risk here. Who knows what your charming son might do if he decides he’s tired of me?” His tone was deliberately taunting, and he rose from the chair with unhurried grace, adjusting the cuff of his suit as if dismissing the conversation altogether..

“You wanted an alliance,” Eli said his voice dropping to a near-whisper. “And now you have one. So let’s not pretend you care about anything beyond your own interests, Mr. Carson. I suggest you stop wasting your breath and focus on the real business.”

No one told me taunting my father-in-law would be this much fun, Eli mused,. His footsteps echoed softly against the polished floor as he headed back toward the main hall.

Eli King barely stepped into the main hall when a familiar voice reached his ears, dripping with mockery and amusement.

“Well, well, if it isn’t the newlywed himself,” Landon drawled, appearing out of nowhere and sliding into Eli’s personal space with his insufferable smirk firmly in place. “How’s married life treating you, cousin? Or should I say, *husband of the year*?”

Eli sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose before glancing at his cousin. “Landon, I don’t remember summoning you, yet here you are. Like a bad habit I can’t shake.”

Landon chuckled, unperturbed by the jab. “Oh, come now, don’t be so cold. You’re married now, Eli. Shouldn’t you be practicing *warmth*? You know, for the cameras.” He gestured around the room where guests mingled, undoubtedly curious about the union of Eli King and Killian Carson.

Eli’s eyes narrowed. “What do you want, Landon? Or are you here just to irritate me?”

“Both,” Landon said breezily, snagging a flute of champagne from a passing server. He took a sip, watching Eli with that same mischievous glint in his eye. “But mostly, I wanted to see the look on your face when I say this: You’ve truly outdone yourself. Marrying Killian Carson? That’s a new level of self-inflicted hell, even for you.”

Eli’s jaw tightened, but his expression remained composed. “Your concern for my marital well-being is noted and, as always, unnecessary.”

“Oh, I’m not concerned. I’m *entertained*.” Landon leaned in conspiratorially, his grin widening. “I mean, don’t get me wrong. Killian’s good-looking—if you like the psychotic, ‘I’ll stab you in your sleep’ type. But you, Eli? I’ve never seen someone so willingly walk into their own doom.”

Eli arched an eyebrow, his tone cool. “You’re married to Jeremy Volkov. Perhaps you should be more concerned about the *gaping abyss* you call a husband.”

Landon feigned a look of offense, placing a hand over his chest. “Jeremy’s not an abyss. He’s... complicated. But we work, Eli. Unlike you and Killian, who are going to be like oil and fire—volatile, destructive, and probably the talk of every tabloid for the next decade.”

Eli crossed his arms, his patience wearing thin. “If you’re done sharing your unsolicited insights, I have more important things to attend to.”

“Oh, I’m never done, dear cousin,” Landon quipped, a mischievous sparkle in his eye. “But I’ll leave you with this: I hope you have a good supply of headache medicine, because your future looks... chaotic.” He grinned

Eli stood there, barely masking the irritation bubbling beneath the surface, as Landon disappeared into the crowd with his parting jab hanging in the air.

“Well, that was a trainwreck,” a familiar, softer voice remarked.

Eli turned to see Brandon, Landon’s twin and the far gentler counterpart to his chaos-incarnate sibling, approaching with a reassuring smile. Just behind him was Creighton his sharp eyes scanning Eli’s face as though searching for cracks.

“Don’t mind Lan,” Brandon said warmly, clasping Eli’s shoulder. “You know how he is. He doesn’t mean half the things he says.”

Eli exhaled “Unfortunately, he means *every* word when it comes to annoying me.”

Brandon chuckled softly. “He just likes pushing your buttons. But you’ll be fine, Eli. You always are.”

Creighton smirked, giving Eli a teasing look. “Good luck, big brother. You’ll need it.”

That’s definitely one way to put it.

Chapter End Notes

Hey hey, my beloved chaos gremlins! 💖 ✨

First off, **ADVANCED MERRY CHRISTMAS** 🎅 🎁!! Yes, I’m that person who starts celebrating early. Sue me.

Let’s talk about this chapter, though.

Can we just take a moment to appreciate Killian and Eli’s “strangers or enemies to... forced allies to what-the-hell-even-is-this” dynamic? And Landon’s chaos? And Asher’s inability to catch a break because Eli lives for being the Worst? 😊 Honestly, I need champagne after surviving this wedding arc.

Also, someone PLEASE tell me your favorite part below 👉 👈—was it the dramatic dip kiss?? Vaughn being all cryptic? I live for your reactions, so let me know! And if you screamed at any part, comment it.

Thanks for sticking with me through this chaotic mess. Sending you all the love, festive vibes, and possibly some mistletoe shenanigans. 🎄 🤪

Stay fabulous, and I’ll see you in the next update! 💖 ✨
—Your (slightly unhinged) author ❤️

P.S. Comment or Landon might come for you next. 😊

CHAPTER 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The car door shut with a soft click, cocooning Eli and Killian in the dimly lit luxury of the vehicle. The soft hum of the engine was the only sound as they settled into the plush leather seats. Eli immediately pulled out his phone, his attention diving into whatever emails or messages were awaiting him.

Killian let out a dramatic sigh, leaning back against the seat. “Well, *darling*, what a day. Did you enjoy the circus? Or should I say, our wedding?”

Eli didn’t even glance up, his thumb scrolling through his screen with precision. “Hmm.”

Killian rolled his eyes. “Wow, riveting conversation. Don’t overwhelm me with all this attention.”

Eli flicked his gaze toward him briefly before resuming his focus on the phone. “You’re exhausting.”

Killian smirked, leaning closer with a mischievous glint in his eyes. “You know, I was thinking...” He paused for dramatic effect, waiting for Eli to take the bait. When no response came, Killian pressed on. “Since we’re *husband and husband* now, maybe we should do that ‘Sniper sniper sniper, wifey wifey wifey’ trend. You know, really let the world see what a match made in heaven we are.”

Eli didn’t so much as flinch, still glued to his screen. “No.”

Killian’s smirk faltered, replaced by mock indignation. “No? That’s all I get? No? Not even a, ‘Killian, you’re the love of my life, of course, let’s do a TikTok together?’”

“Shut up.”

Killian groaned, letting his head fall back dramatically against the headrest. “Unbelievable. This is the man I married. Completely heartless.”

When Eli remained silent, Killian shifted his focus to the driver. “Hey, what do you think? Shouldn’t the newlyweds indulge in a little social media fun?”

The driver, as if sensing the impending annoyance, pressed a button, and the partition silently rolled up, cutting Killian off mid-rant.

“Oh, great,” Killian muttered, throwing his hands up. “Even the driver doesn’t want to deal with me. What is it with you and the people who work for you? Are they all like you? Cold, aloof, allergic to fun?”

Eli finally looked up, locking eyes with Killian for the first time since they entered the car. “Are you done?”

Killian paused, considering it, then grinned. “Not even close.”

Eli sighed, turning to stare out the window. “Just shut up, Killian.”

“Wow, such sweet words from my *beloved* spouse,” Killian quipped, crossing his arms. “You sure know how to make a guy feel special.”

Eli didn’t respond, his gaze fixed on the passing city lights. The quiet stretched between them, thick with unspoken tension and exhaustion from the day’s events.

Killian leaned his head against the window, glancing sideways at Eli. Despite the irritation that seemed to cling to his husband like a second skin, there was something oddly comforting about the silence. Maybe this was just how they’d be—two people with sharp edges and little patience, trying to navigate this strange new dynamic.

And maybe, just maybe, Killian didn’t mind the challenge.

.....

Killian stepped out of the bedroom, the soft click of the door shutting behind him signaling the end of the night. He was clad in simple sweatpants and a T-shirt, his hair messy from sleep. He padded into the massive dining room, his eyes immediately catching sight of Eli, who was seated at the long, polished dining table. Eli was the perfect image of control—suited up, hair immaculately styled, and his gaze fixed on the tablet in front of him as he ate scrambled eggs and toast with methodical precision. It was a sight that almost annoyed Killian. *A control freak*, he thought, already knowing the exact vibe Eli was giving off this morning.

The sight made his blood boil, yet there was something about it, something about Eli's focus and composure that had always made Killian....*since they were kids*

Killian made his way toward the table, pulling out a chair with the casual ease of someone who owned the space. As he sank into the seat, he looked at the sparse breakfast laid out before him—milk, scrambled eggs, and toast. *Bland*, he thought. It was fitting, but it wasn’t enough. Killian’s appetite for more, always more, gnawed at him like a beast clawing its way out. He hated—how little Eli seemed to care.

“Is this the only thing to eat?” Killian asked, breaking the silence. He let his gaze linger on Eli, who didn’t even look up from his screen.

Eli’s response was cool and calm, not even sparing him a glance as he speared a piece of toast with his fork. “You can ask Sam if you want anything else. She’ll prepare whatever you like.”

Killian was having none of it. He leaned back in his chair, tapping his phone absently, before his eyes narrowed. “Not today. This is enough for now,” he muttered, though his dissatisfaction was palpable.

He scrolled through the headlines on his phone, his eyes skimming the various articles that were plastered all over the internet. "Couple of the Year," one article proclaimed, followed by "Corporate Power Couple," and "The Kings of Business." Killian’s jaw tightened. It all seemed

so... *perfect*—and yet, it was all a façade. Nothing in his life had ever been this clean, this neat. *This controlled.* And it was starting to eat at him. He hated it. *They both* were the ones who should be in control. Not just Eli.

He glanced up, meeting Eli's cold eyes. The man was still calm, still in his element, not giving a single shred of attention to the chaos brewing in Killian's mind. But that was the problem. Eli wasn't just calm. He was *unbreakable*.

Eli swallowed a mouthful of eggs before setting his fork down, eyes never leaving the tablet. "From tomorrow, be punctual to the office. You're the Legal Director of King Enterprises now. At the office, we will keep it professional. Don't confuse personal with business," Eli said, his tone as sharp and precise as ever.

Killian's fingers gripped the edge of the table until his knuckles turned white. *Professional*, Eli said. *Business*. The words echoed in his mind, though his lips remained pressed together in silence.

"Right," Killian said flatly, his eyes narrowing slightly. He wasn't going to let Eli get away with this—let him believe he could be the perfect picture of professionalism while Killian seethed with obsession underneath the surface.

There was something about the idea of Eli trying to keep control of their public lives that triggered something darker in Killian. *If he's going to try so hard to stay perfect, to keep everything in order*, Killian thought, *I'll break that order. That control..His schedule, his life, his every damn breath.*

Killian could already feel the excitement building inside him. There was something intoxicating about the idea of disrupting Eli's meticulously planned world.

For the first time, he allowed himself a small, twisted smile. A thought bloomed in his mind, and it was a dangerous one. *What would it take to make Eli lose his temper? What would it take to make him come undone?*

The idea of it consumed him. Every little act of disruption he could make, every moment where he could rattle Eli's calm composure—it was all a challenge now. The very control Eli exuded only made Killian hunger for more. He wasn't just going to sit back. He wasn't going to let Eli have the upper hand.

He was going to push. And push. Until Eli broke or Eli breaks him.

Well, this is going to be fun.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Christmas, my lovely readers! 🎄🎁

This chapter is my Christmas gift to all of you—a chance to delve deeper into the chaos that is Eli and Killian. From their unforgettable (and hilariously tense) wedding day to Killian’s mischievous suggestion of becoming “Sniper wifey,”

I had so much fun writing the contrast between their public personas—powerful, polished, and picture-perfect—and the messy, volatile dynamic that simmers beneath the surface.

Thank you for your continued love and support for this story. Your comments, kudos, and excitement for Eli and Killian inspire me to keep exploring their world and bringing their relationship to life.

Let me know what you thought of their wedding and whether you’d side with Eli’s “no” to the TikTok trend or cheer for Killian’s yes. As always, I’d love to hear your thoughts—your feedback means so much to me!

Here’s to a season filled with love, laughter, and just the right amount of drama.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Killian Carson stepped into the sleek, glass-paneled office of King Enterprises, and the first thought that crossed his mind was: *God, when does this day end?*

He glanced at the enormous clock on the wall. 9:00 a.m. *Nine. In. The. Freaking. Morning.* His soul groaned. Time seemed to move slower in this corporate hellscape, as though it took joy in watching him suffer.

Killian was a creature of chaos, not labor. He thrived in the thrill of chaos, the sharp adrenaline of a good fight, the way blood splattered like abstract art if you threw a decent punch. That was the kind of problem-solving he was made for. But no. Not today. Today, he was the Legal Director of King Enterprises, wearing a goddamn suit and tie, and dealing with "issues" using *words*.

Words. Ha! He'd rather take a punch to the gut than draft another policy memo. What did they even need him here for? He wasn't exactly the "sit behind a desk and play with paperclips" type. Sure, his signature was terrifying enough to make a grown man cry, but did that mean he had to *use* it all the time? He was practically allergic to contracts and fine print.

Killian stopped at the threshold of his corner office, already regretting every life decision that led him here. The space was pristine—glass desk, leather chair, shelves stocked with books he'd probably never touch. Not a single drop of chaos. *Sterile.*

He sat down, rolling his eyes at the mountain of paperwork waiting for him. *Wow, what a dream come true,* he thought sarcastically. Legal disputes? Tax implications? Compliance policies? *Oh boy, this is the life. Forget brawling in back alleys or hunting down enemies; let's talk about liability clauses! That's the real adrenaline rush.*

He flicked through a document, his eyes glazing over the tiny text. His brain checked out halfway through the second paragraph. *Why do they even make the font this small? Is this some sort of psychological torture?* He groaned and leaned back in his chair, tapping his pen against the desk.

It wasn't just boring. It was soul-sucking. He needed chaos, unpredictability, the kind of problems you solved with a well-aimed punch, not... a strongly worded rebuttal. And yet here he was, trapped in this corporate circus, with no escape in sight.

Killian sighed dramatically, rubbing his temples. *So this is my life now. Killian Carson, bringer of chaos, breaker of skulls, reduced to filing briefs and reviewing contracts. I should've just married some random criminal. At least then, I'd get a reason to get into fights.*

A knock at the door broke his train of thought. He straightened up, putting on his "professional" face. "Come in," he called, trying to sound like he wasn't plotting an office mutiny in his head.

The assistant entered, dropping another stack of files onto his desk with a polite smile. Killian stared at the pile, then at the assistant. “You know, every time you do that, a piece of my soul dies,” he said dryly.

The assistant blinked, clearly unsure how to respond, before retreating with an awkward nod.

Killian looked back at the files and muttered under his breath, “I swear, if one more person hands me paperwork today, I’m going to start solving legal disputes the old-fashioned way—with my fists.”

And yet, as he begrudgingly picked up another document, the corner of his mind wandered. *Eli King, you icy bastard, this is your fault.* He could almost see Eli in his perfectly tailored suit, smirking somewhere, knowing full well that Killian was probably suffering.

Killian smirked to himself. *Alright, Eli. You want me to play this game? Fine. But I’ll make it interesting.*

And with that, he dove into his work—or at least pretended to. The chaos would come soon enough.

.....

Killian strolled down the pristine hallway of King Enterprises, his polished shoes clicking against the glossy marble floors. It was lunchtime, and he was practically vibrating with boredom after the dulllest morning of his life. If he had to look at another contract or sit through another meeting where people threw around legal jargon like it was some sort of secret language, he might actually lose his mind.

So, what better way to entertain himself than by annoying his husband? He smirked, already imagining Eli’s perfectly composed expression twisting with irritation.

Reaching Eli’s office, Killian didn’t bother knocking. He simply pushed the heavy door open, striding in like he owned the place—which, technically, as Eli’s husband, he sort of did now.

Eli looked up from his desk, his sharp eyes narrowing. He was impeccably dressed, as always, in a tailored black suit and tie, looking every bit the cold, calculated CEO. His posture was perfect, his desk meticulously organized, and his aura screamed *control freak*.

“Killian,” Eli said in that clipped, disapproving tone he’d perfected, “in the future, you will knock before entering my office.”

Killian didn’t even flinch. Instead, he plopped down on the leather chair across from Eli’s desk, leaning back with an easy grin. “Why?” he drawled. “Were you jacking off? I doubt you even know what that is.”

Eli’s jaw tightened ever so slightly, his fingers pausing over the tablet he’d been scrolling through. It was subtle, but Killian knew he’d struck a nerve.

“I’m working,” Eli replied coolly, his gaze returning to the screen. “Which is what *you* should be doing.”

Killian chuckled, propping his feet up on the edge of Eli's desk just to annoy him further. "Work's boring. I decided to take a break and join my delightful husband for lunch. Thought we could play the part of a loving couple for once."

Eli glanced at Killian's feet, then back at him, his expression pure disdain. "Get your feet off my desk."

Killian didn't move, his grin widening. "Why? Afraid I'll scuff your precious wood? Relax, husband. I'll pay for a new one if I do."

Eli exhaled sharply, clearly counting to ten in his head. "Killian, if you're here to waste my time, I suggest you leave. Otherwise, spill out why you're really here."

"I just told you," Killian said, dropping his feet to the floor and leaning forward with mock sincerity. "I came to join you for lunch. Isn't that what loving husbands do?"

Eli gave him a withering look. "Loving husbands knock before entering, for one. And they certainly don't sit in my office uninvited, making asinine comments."

Killian smirked, undeterred. "Careful, Eli. If you keep talking to me like that, I might start feeding you next. Isn't that what *loving* husbands do?"

Eli's eyes narrowed dangerously, but he refused to rise to the bait. "If you're expecting me to share my lunch with you, you're mistaken. My assistant can arrange something for you in the cafeteria."

Killian feigned offense, placing a hand dramatically over his heart. "Eli King, are you denying your husband a meal? What will the media say if they find out? 'Coldhearted CEO refuses to eat with his husband'—sounds scandalous, doesn't it?"

Eli set his tablet down with a quiet *click* and folded his hands on the desk, finally giving Killian his full attention. "Killian, do you always talk just to hear yourself speak?"

Killian tilted his head, pretending to think about it. "Nope. Not really."

Eli sighed, leaning back in his chair. "Fine. Join me for lunch. But if you make one more ridiculous comment, I'll have my assistant serve you in the hallway."

Killian grinned triumphantly, leaning back in his chair. "See? Was that so hard? You're already warming up to me, Eli. Give it another week, and you'll be begging me to join you for dinner too."

Eli gave him a pointed look. "Don't push your luck."

Killian just laughed, thoroughly enjoying how easy it was to get under Eli's skin. This marriage was going to be *very* entertaining.

.....

The red Aston Martin purred into the driveway of the King-Carson mansion, its headlights cutting through the twilight. Killian leaned back in the driver's seat, letting the soft hum of the

engine settle into silence before finally cutting it off. The long day was over, and as he glanced up at the towering, modern facade of his home, he couldn't help but feel... bored.

Another day, another lifeless routine, he thought, running a hand through his disheveled hair.

Eli was, predictably, still at the office. His husband—if one could even call him that—was a workaholic with no room in his tight schedule for anything as trivial as a social life. Killian scoffed, slamming the car door shut as he stepped out into the cool evening air.

Dinner was uneventful but not unpleasant. Sam, one of the few people Killian genuinely liked in this house, had outdone herself tonight with his favorite pie. At least he had her to keep him company in this oversized mausoleum of a home. He made idle conversation with her while she prepared a cup of coffee, her warm laughter and teasing remarks a balm to his otherwise dull evening.

But as always, when the meal ended, the empty silence of the house swallowed him whole. He retreated to his room—*his* room—and flopped onto the oversized bed, staring up at the high ceiling.

Killian's room was the opposite of Eli's meticulously minimalist aesthetic. Where Eli's space was all clean lines and muted tones, Killian's room was a chaotic mix of dark woods, leather furniture, and shelves cluttered with books, odd trinkets, and even a few boxing trophies from his younger days.

But tonight, even his sanctuary felt suffocating.

He reached for the half-empty glass of bourbon on his nightstand, swirling the amber liquid idly as his mind wandered to a memory he could never seem to let go of: the first time he'd met Eli.

He'd been what, eleven? Twelve? It was at one of his mother's endless charity galas, the kind of event where rich people pretended to care about causes while sipping champagne and gossiping behind one another's backs. Young Killian had found these events dreadfully boring—until Eli King had walked in.

Even then, Eli had that untouchable aura, the kind of presence that made people straighten their backs and lower their voices when he entered a room. He was only a couple of years older than Killian, but he carried himself with a poise and confidence that seemed almost unnatural for his age.

Killian had been fascinated. Every month, he would look forward to the next gala, not because he enjoyed them, but because it meant he'd get another chance to watch Eli. Not interact—just watch. Eli didn't notice him, of course; he was too busy charming the adults and exuding that holier-than-God attitude he'd perfected over the years.

Some things never change, Killian thought bitterly, downing the rest of his bourbon. Even now, with Eli just down the hall, he felt like he was still that twelve-year-old boy trying to analyze the enigma that was Eli King.

What was it about Eli that had hooked him so deeply? His pride? His confidence? That maddening composure that made Killian want to rip it apart just to see what was underneath?

He set the glass down and sighed, running a hand through his hair. This marriage was supposed to be... what? A game? A power play? A means to an end? Killian didn't even know anymore. He'd agreed to it on impulse, driven by a mixture of fascination and obsession, but now that he had Eli—*legally, at least*—he wasn't sure what to do next.

Every time he complained to his parents about Eli, his father would remind him that divorce was always an option. His mother, ever the pragmatist, would tell him to weigh the benefits of staying married against the costs of leaving.

But divorce? No. That wasn't an option for Killian. It wasn't about love—he wasn't naive enough to think that—but he couldn't let go of the one claim he had on Eli. It was the only tether connecting them, however thin and fragile it might be.

The problem was, Eli had grown resistant to his usual antics. His taunts, his provocations—things that once made Eli's composure crack—were now met with an almost infuriating indifference. It was like Eli had built an impenetrable wall around himself, and Killian was left banging his fists against it, desperate for a reaction.

What next? Killian thought, staring up at the ceiling. What was the point of all this if he couldn't even get under Eli's skin anymore? What did he really want from this marriage?

The answer eluded him, as it always did when it came to Eli.

Frustrated, he sat up and grabbed his phone, scrolling aimlessly through the news. Headlines about their marriage were still everywhere—“*Corporate Power Couple of the Year,*” “*Eli King and Killian Carson: A Match Made in Heaven,*”

Killian snorted, tossing the phone onto the bed. *Match made in heaven?* More like a match made in hell.

But as much as he hated the constant media scrutiny, part of him relished the attention. It wasn't about the fame—it was about being tied to Eli in a way the whole world could see. No matter how cold and distant Eli might be, no matter how much he ignored Killian's taunts and provocations, their marriage was a fact no one could deny.

And for now, that was enough to keep Killian going.

He stood and walked over to the window, looking out at the dark expanse of the estate. Somewhere out there, Eli was probably still at the office, working late as always. *Boring husband,* Killian thought with a smirk, but his chest ached with a feeling he couldn't quite name.

Tomorrow was another day, another opportunity to disrupt Eli's perfectly controlled world. And if there was one thing Killian Carson excelled at, it was chaos.

.....
The silence tonight was too loud.

Killian Carson sat in the middle of his sprawling room, the dim light from a single bedside lamp casting long shadows on the walls. The bourbon glass he'd set down earlier sat untouched, the amber liquid glinting faintly. Usually, he could drown out the restless chaos in his mind with

noise, distractions, or, better yet, action. But here, in this sterile and suffocating mansion, distractions were few and far between.

His hand twitched, curling into a fist before he consciously relaxed it. He stared down at his hand, flexing the fingers, the knuckles pale and taut. It was a good hand—skilled, precise, capable. It had been wrapped around hunting rifles in the forests, landing jabs in boxing rings, gripping the wheel of his Aston Martin as he pushed it to its limits. It was a hand made for doing, not sitting idle.

But here? Here, it felt useless.

Killian ran a hand through his hair, tugging at the strands in frustration. The gnawing need for violence, for movement, for *something*, clawed at him like a beast locked in a cage. It wasn't just about anger—it was about control, about channeling the chaos in his head into something tangible, something he could hold and shape.

Back in the States, he had outlets. Hunting trips where the crack of a rifle and the thrill of the chase silenced the noise in his head. Boxing matches that left his muscles sore and his mind blissfully empty. Even the occasional act of violence when Vaughn let him off the leash, a rare gift from his friend that Killian secretly cherished.

But here in London, there was nothing. No hunts, no fights, no Violence. Just an endless parade of sterile meetings, fake smiles, and Eli's maddening indifference.

Eli.

The thought of his husband stirred something in Killian—a mixture of frustration, longing, and something darker he didn't want to name. Eli King was the one constant in this chaos, the unyielding force that both grounded Killian and drove him insane. But Eli couldn't see this part of him, the part that craved destruction, the part that thrived on chaos and blood.

No. Killian wouldn't let him.

He stood abruptly, the chair scraping against the hardwood floor. The movement was sudden, sharp, a release of the tension coiled in his muscles. He paced the room, his bare feet silent against the cool floor. The demons in his head whispered to him, taunting him with memories of hunts, of fights, of bloodied knuckles and the rush of adrenaline that came with it.

But Killian wasn't some uncontrolled beast. He had restraint. Boxing had been his first outlet, then hunting, then the calculated violence Vaughn occasionally allowed him to indulge in.

He prided himself on his control, on the fact that he could hold himself back when others couldn't. It was what made him different, better. He didn't lash out without reason; he didn't let his emotions rule him.

But tonight, the control felt fragile.

He stopped pacing and stared at his reflection in the floor-to-ceiling window. The man staring back at him looked composed, almost serene, but Killian knew better. He knew the chaos simmering beneath the surface, the constant push and pull between order and destruction.

But labels didn't define him. Actions did.

Unlike other parents, his parents were never horrified by him.

When most people saw glimpses of Killian Carson's darker nature, they either recoiled or avoided him entirely. Teachers whispered behind his back, neighbors kept their distance, and even his peers treated him like a creature to be cautiously observed, not approached. But his parents? They didn't flinch.

His father had always been pragmatic, seeing Killian's unique nature not as something to be feared but as something to be honed. He was the one who taught Killian how to channel his urges, how to control the chaos that others found so unsettling. When Killian was old enough, his father took him on hunting trips, teaching him the discipline of stalking prey and the satisfaction of a clean shot.

"Focus," his father would say, watching him through narrowed eyes as Killian steadied his rifle. "Control isn't about suppressing who you are. It's about knowing when to let it out and when to hold back."

Boxing had come next. His father arranged private lessons with a no-nonsense coach who didn't bat an eye at Killian's ferocity in the ring. Killian remembered the feel of his fists slamming into the punching bag, the sharp sting of his knuckles against leather, and the thrill of landing a well-timed blow on an opponent. It wasn't just a sport—it was an outlet, a way to quiet the noise in his head.

But it wasn't just hunting and boxing. His father trusted him in ways no one else did. When Killian was older, he was allowed to join missions with Vaughn, Jeremy, and Niko. The adrenaline, the precision, the high-stakes nature of those operations—it all appealed to the part of Killian that craved chaos. And for once, he didn't feel out of place.

He belonged.

His mother, on the other hand, was his soft landing. She didn't try to change him or mold him into something he wasn't. Instead, she reminded him of his worth, of his uniqueness.

"You're special, Killian," she would say, her voice soft but firm. "Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. If they can't see it, that's their problem, not yours."

She never spoke to him like he was broken or dangerous. To her, he wasn't a problem to be fixed—he was her son, perfect in his own way. When others might have tried to medicate him, suppress him, or shove him into therapy he didn't want, she simply loved him.

Her encouragement became his shield against the world. Whenever someone looked at him with fear or disgust, he'd hear her voice in his head, calm and reassuring: *You're special.*

Because of them, Killian had never felt ashamed of who he was. Different? Sure. Intense? Absolutely. But never ashamed.

His parents didn't just accept him—they equipped him. They gave him the tools to channel his impulses, the confidence to stand tall, and the belief that he wasn't the problem. The world was.

And his brother, well lets say his brother never let anyone who dared to humiliate him or taunt him leave alive.

He clenched his fists again, tighter this time, the nails digging into his palms. The pain grounded him, pulling him back from the edge. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, the air filling his lungs in a steady rhythm.

He needed a distraction. Something to focus on.

His thoughts drifted to Eli again, and a bitter smile tugged at his lips. Eli would never understand this part of him. Eli, with his perfect composure and unshakable control, would probably look at Killian like he was some kind of animal if he ever saw the chaos lurking beneath the surface.

And Killian couldn't bear that.

Because as much as he loved to taunt Eli, to push him, to crack that perfect veneer, he didn't want to push him away. He couldn't lose the one tether keeping him grounded, even if that tether was fraying at the edges.

So he wouldn't let Eli see this side of him. He wouldn't let anyone see it.

Killian walked over to the nightstand and picked up the glass of bourbon, swirling the liquid idly. He took a slow sip, letting the warmth spread through his chest. It wasn't much, but it was enough to take the edge off.

He sat down on the edge of the bed, staring out the window at the dark expanse of the estate. Somewhere out there, Eli was still working late, probably sitting in his sterile office surrounded by spreadsheets and contracts.

Killian's lips twitched into a small, wry smile.

Boring husband.

Tomorrow, he'd wake up, go to the office, and play the part of the dutiful legal director. He'd sit through meetings, review contracts, and smile politely at people he didn't care about. He'd keep the chaos in check, for now.

And maybe, just maybe, he'd find a way to silence the demons in his own head along the way

.....

The silence of the house was oppressive,. He couldn't sit still anymore, the need for release clawing at his insides.

A glance at the clock told him it was 1 a.m. Who cared? The roads would be empty, the world asleep—perfect for what he needed.

As he descended the grand staircase, his sneakers barely made a sound against the polished floors. The house was dark, except for the faint glow of a lamp in the living room. He glanced toward Eli's office out of habit. The door was shut, and the light beneath it was off. Of course.

Eli had stayed late at the office again. Killian's lip curled in frustration. His oh-so-perfect husband probably wouldn't even notice he was gone.

"Not like he'd care anyway," Killian muttered under his breath as he stepped outside, the cool night air hitting his face.

Killian grabbed his keys from the marble counter, the cold metal grounding him for a moment. He slipped on his sneakers, not bothering to lace them properly, and stepped out into the crisp night air. His red Aston Martin gleamed under the faint moonlight, a stark contrast against the muted tones of the driveway.

Sliding into the driver's seat, he let out a deep breath, gripping the steering wheel tightly. The low rumble of the engine coming to life was like a balm to his frayed nerves. It was a sound he could control, a force he could command.

As he pulled out of the driveway, the city seemed eerily quiet. Streetlights flickered overhead, casting fleeting shadows as he sped through empty streets. Killian pressed his foot on the accelerator, the car responding instantly as it surged forward. The engine roared, echoing in the stillness.

The speedometer climbed steadily. 60... 80... 100 mph.

Killian's heart raced, not from fear but from the sheer exhilaration of it. The wind whipped past, the scenery blurring into streaks of light and shadow. He didn't care where he was going. All that mattered was the freedom—the rush of adrenaline that dulled the chaos in his mind.

For a while, it felt like nothing could touch him. The world faded away, leaving just him, the car, and the road stretching endlessly ahead.

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone!

Surprise!!! This double chapter is my Christmas gift to all of you—thank you for being the most incredible readers and supporters. I wanted to dive deeper into Killian's mind and give you a glimpse of the chaos, restlessness, and vulnerability that make him who he is.

Killian is a character I've loved writing because of his contrasts—his capacity for destruction and control, his sharp tongue and softer moments, his relentless need for connection, and his prideful refusal to admit it. I hope you enjoy this deeper dive into his psyche and his unyielding fascination with Eli.

As we close out the year, I just want to say how grateful I am for each and every one of you. Your kudos, comments, and love for these characters mean the world to me, and I'm so thrilled to share this journey with you. Let me know your thoughts—I can't wait to hear how this chapter lands!

Merry Christmas, and may your holidays be filled with love, warmth, and maybe just a little bit of chaos. 😊

With all my gratitude,
Allaria(call me Ria)

CHAPTER 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli King was not a man accustomed to being disturbed in the dead of night. Yet here he was, his eyes snapping open at the faint, unmistakable sound of an engine revving outside.

He sat up in bed, listening intently as the sound grew louder, then faded just as quickly. A quick glance at the clock confirmed the ungodly hour: 1:07 a.m.

Who in their right mind would be driving out of the estate at this hour?

A sinking feeling curled in Eli's gut, though he kept his expression impassive as always. His mind immediately went to Killian. His brash, impulsive husband wasn't exactly known for his prudence.

Eli slid out of bed, his movements deliberate as he grabbed his robe and headed for the hallway. The mansion was silent, the kind of stillness that made the faintest sounds feel deafening. As he made his way to Killian's room, his thoughts churned with growing irritation.

What the hell could Killian possibly be doing at 1 a.m.?

Reaching the door to Killian's room, Eli pushed it open without knocking. His sharp gaze swept the room, taking in the ruffled bed that was conspicuously empty. The faint scent of Killian's cologne lingered in the air, a maddening reminder of the man's presence—and absence.

Eli's gaze landed on the phone lying on the bed, its screen dark but not silent. He strode over, picked it up, and pressed the button to light up the display. It confirmed what he already suspected: Killian had left it behind.

"Idiot," Eli muttered under his breath, his voice cold with annoyance.

He stepped back, the phone still in his hand as he tried to suppress the dark storm brewing inside him. He hated this feeling—this gnawing, restless uncertainty. Killian was a wildcard, unpredictable and reckless in a way that clashed entirely with Eli's meticulously controlled nature.

The thought struck him suddenly, unbidden and unwelcome: *Is he meeting someone?*

Eli's jaw tightened, his fingers curling around the phone. Their marriage wasn't one of love; he had always known that. It was a calculated move, a merger of sorts, and nothing more.

At least, that's what it was supposed to be.

Yet the idea of Killian with someone else—a lover, perhaps, or even just a fleeting distraction—sent a surge of anger coursing through Eli's veins. He didn't like sharing what was his.

And Killian is mine. My husband.

The thought was possessive, obsessive even, but Eli didn't care. He had always been this way—cold, detached, yet fiercely protective of what he claimed as his own.

Killian might frustrate him to no end with his impulsiveness and childish antics, but that didn't give him the right to run off in the middle of the night without a word.

Eli paced the room, his mind racing with dark possibilities. Was Killian's recklessness going to lead him into trouble? Or worse, was it deliberate?

No. Killian might be impulsive, but he wasn't careless. Not like this.

Unless...

Eli's grip on the phone tightened. *If he's with someone else...* The thought alone was enough to ignite a dangerous fire in his chest. Eli wasn't sure what he'd do if it were true, but he knew one thing for certain: he wouldn't tolerate it.

Not that he would ever admit it to himself in so many words, but the idea of Killian belonging to someone else—of someone else knowing him, touching him—was unbearable.

“Where the hell are you, Killian?” Eli muttered, his voice low and venomous.

He strode to the window, his sharp gaze scanning the driveway below. It was empty, save for the faint tire marks where Killian's Aston Martin had roared out not long ago.

There was nothing left to do but wait.

.....

The mansion was quiet as Killian pulled his Aston Martin into the driveway, its engine purring to a stop. The once-frenzied need for speed had dissipated, leaving him calmer but still restless. He stepped out of the car, the cool night air brushing against his skin as he made his way to the house.

Inside, the silence was even more pronounced. The dim light from the foyer guided him as he kicked off his shoes and headed for the stairs. But just as he crossed the threshold of the living room, a voice cut through the darkness like a blade.

“Where were you?”

Killian nearly jumped, his heart momentarily racing. He turned sharply, his eyes landing on Eli, who was sitting in the shadowed corner of the living room. Dressed impeccably as always, his posture was relaxed, but his sharp gaze gleamed in the low light like a predator's.

“Jesus, Eli,” Killian muttered, placing a hand over his chest. “You scared the crap out of me. What are you doing, sitting in the dark?”

Eli ignored the question, his tone cool but edged with something darker. “I asked you a question, Killian. Where were you?”

Killian huffed, running a hand through his hair as he stepped further into the room. “Out for a drive. Is that a crime now?”

Eli leaned back in his chair, his fingers steepled under his chin. “At 1 a.m.?”

“Yes, at 1 a.m.,” Killian snapped, his irritation flaring. “Why does it matter to you?”

Eli’s gaze didn’t waver. “Because it does. You left your phone behind, didn’t tell anyone, and drove off in the middle of the night. If something had happened—”

“Nothing happened,” Killian cut him off, his voice flat. “I’m here, aren’t I? Alive and well.”

Eli’s expression darkened, the faintest crease appearing on his otherwise perfect brow. “You could have at least let someone know. I wouldn’t have to sit here waiting for you like—”

“Like what? A worried spouse?” Killian smirked bitterly, shaking his head. “Spare me, Eli. You told me to mind my own business, remember? Why don’t you try practicing what you preach?”

That struck a nerve. Eli straightened, his gaze narrowing dangerously. “Killian—”

But Killian was already turning away, heading for the stairs. “Goodnight, Eli,” he said over his shoulder, his tone dismissive.

Eli’s jaw clenched as he watched him leave, the sharp clicks of Killian’s footsteps echoing through the quiet house. This was... different. Normally, Killian would stay to poke and prod at him, to throw taunts and smirks until Eli was forced to engage. But this time, he’d simply walked away, his disinterest cutting sharper than any barb.

Well, well, Eli thought, leaning back in his chair, his fingers tapping rhythmically against the armrest. *It seems I struck a nerve.*

He couldn’t deny the pang of irritation—or was it something else?—at Killian’s uncharacteristic dismissal. But if Killian thought Eli would let this slide, he was sorely mistaken.

“Killian,” Eli called out, his voice smooth but firm.

Killian paused at the top of the stairs, his hand resting on the banister. He didn’t turn around, but Eli knew he was listening.

“Next time,” Eli said, his tone clipped, “notify me before you leave in the middle of the night. I don’t care how impulsive you are—this isn’t a bachelor’s pad. And don’t forget, we have the gala tomorrow.”

Killian didn’t respond immediately, his fingers tightening on the banister. Finally, he muttered, “Noted,” before disappearing down the hallway to his room.

Eli sat in the quiet once more, his gaze fixed on the spot where Killian had stood. This wasn’t over, not by a long shot. Whatever was going on with his husband, Eli would figure it out—whether Killian wanted him to or not.

.....

Eli raised an eyebrow, his fingers drumming against the steering wheel as he rolled down the tinted window. "Killian, get in the car. We're going to be late."

Killian didn't budge. Instead, he cocked his head slightly, a faint smirk playing on his lips. "A husband must open the car door for his husband. Don't you even know basic etiquette, Eli?"

Eli's jaw tightened, his patience wearing thin. Of course, Killian would find a way to turn a simple ride into a battle of wills. "Killian, get in, or I'm leaving without you."

"Oh no," Killian said, mock horror dripping from his tone. "Whatever shall I do? Left alone in this mansion without a ride to the gala?" His arms remained crossed, and his smirk widened. "Open the door, Eli. Or are you too much of a King to stoop to such chivalry?"

Eli's dark eyes narrowed. He knew Killian was toying with him, pushing his buttons just to see how far he could go. Normally, Eli would brush off such antics, but tonight, with the gala looming and the thought of the media waiting to capture their every move, he couldn't afford to waste more time.

With a resigned sigh, Eli pushed open his door and stepped out of the car. The sound of his polished shoes against the pavement echoed in the crisp evening air as he strode around the vehicle. His movements were precise, calculated, and carried an air of authority that made most people shrink back. But not Killian. Killian merely watched, his expression one of amused triumph.

Eli opened the passenger door with a sharp tug, stepping aside to allow Killian entry. "Satisfied now?" Eli asked, his voice laced with frustration.

Killian grinned, leaning forward slightly as if inspecting Eli's work. Then, with an exaggerated flourish, he stepped closer, brushing past Eli's shoulder. "Much better," Killian quipped, his tone light and teasing. As he slid into the seat, he turned his head and blew a kiss at Eli.

Eli froze for a fraction of a second, his composure cracking just enough to let a flicker of something darker shine through. Killian's audacity was maddening, infuriating—and utterly captivating. Eli leaned down slightly, his hand resting on the edge of the door, his voice low and dangerous as he spoke. "One day, Killian, you'll see what happens when you push me too far."

Killian raised an eyebrow, his lips curling into a smirk. "Is that a threat or a promise?" he asked, his voice dripping with challenge.

Eli straightened, slamming the door shut with a force that made Killian chuckle from inside the car. Returning to the driver's seat, Eli gripped the steering wheel tightly, his knuckles whitening as he fought to keep his composure. He could still see Killian's grin in his peripheral vision, could hear the faint hum of satisfaction in the air.

The grand hall of the gala shimmered with opulence, chandeliers casting a golden glow over the sea of high-profile figures draped in designer suits and gowns. Eli and Killian entered together, their presence commanding attention like two monarchs entering their court. Eli, in his flawlessly tailored suit, exuded control and elegance, while Killian's devil-may-care demeanor in his dark suit was magnetic in its own right.

All eyes turned to them, whispers rippling through the crowd.. The corporate power couple, as the headlines loved to label them. Eli offered polite smiles and firm handshakes as they navigated the room, weaving between CEOs, chairmen, and political figures. Killian followed beside him, his posture relaxed, hands in his pockets, his expression caught somewhere between boredom and amusement.

Eli led the way to a cluster of older gentlemen in the center of the room, their wealth and influence practically oozing from their tailored suits and polished shoes. “Ah, Mr. King,” one of them greeted with a wide smile. “Always a pleasure. And this must be your husband. Quite the pair, aren’t you?”

Killian nodded, offering his usual charming smirk that didn’t quite reach his eyes. The man launched into a long-winded story about his latest business acquisition, and Eli, ever the diplomat, feigned interest with effortless grace. But when Eli glanced at Killian, he caught the flicker of disinterest in his husband’s expression.

Killian’s lips curved into a faint, polite smile, but his eyes were half-lidded, his head tilting slightly as though he was nodding off to the old man’s droning voice. Eli’s gaze lingered on him, a small smirk tugging at the corner of his mouth.

Killian, always too restless to sit through formalities. A creature of chaos, bound in a suit for appearances.

Eli’s thoughts drifted as he continued to study Killian. He thought back to the first time he’d truly noticed him, nearly a decade ago. Killian had been nothing more than a teenager, leaning against the edge of a table at a charity gala, fiddling with the edge of a pen while his eyes scanned the room with disinterest. He was tall and lean, his hair slightly tousled, a careless streak that defied the prim setting.

Eli , already honing his reputation as the perfect heir to the King empire, and his sharp eyes had picked Killian out instantly. He had spoken a few words to the boy, charming ones designed to test the waters, and the flush that had risen to Killian’s cheeks had been... addictive.

.....

Ten years ago:

Eli’s smirk deepened as he leaned against the railing beside Killian, his presence looming yet effortless. The younger boy seemed completely uninterested in engaging, his gaze fixed on the glittering city below. It only spurred Eli on. He thrived on attention, on reactions, and something about the way Killian seemed utterly unfazed by him was both a challenge and an irresistible lure.

“You’re quite blunt for someone so young,” Eli remarked, his tone light but laced with intrigue. “I’m starting to think you’re not as indifferent as you pretend to be.”

Killian turned his head slightly, raising an eyebrow at Eli. “I don’t pretend,” he said flatly. “I just don’t find this—” he gestured vaguely toward the gala inside “—worth the effort.”

Eli’s smile didn’t falter. Instead, he tilted his head, studying Killian with the kind of intensity that made most people squirm. “You should smile more,” he said suddenly, his voice dipping lower,

intimate, as though they were sharing a secret. “It would suit you.”

Killian blinked, clearly caught off guard. “What?”

Eli didn't move, his dark eyes locking onto Killian's. “I said you should smile more. I bet you'd look even more striking.” His words were deliberate, his tone smooth, dripping with charm

Killian's cheeks flushed a faint pink, the color creeping up to his ears. He stiffened, glancing away quickly to hide the sudden heat in his expression. “I don't need your opinion on how I look,” he muttered, his voice sharper than before but betraying his flustered state.

Eli chuckled softly, the sound rich and indulgent. “Oh, but I think you do,” he said, straightening up and stepping closer, his shoulder brushing against Killian's. “I think you secretly enjoy it when someone notices you, even if you won't admit it.”

Killian's blush deepened, his grip tightening on the railing as he turned his face further away. “You're insufferable,” he muttered, his tone biting but lacking its usual venom.

Eli's grin widened. He leaned in slightly, his voice a whisper now, just for Killian. “And you're far too easy to read, Carson.”

Killian turned sharply to glare at him, but his expression faltered when he met Eli's gaze—dark, unyielding, and brimming with something that made his heart race. “You're impossible,” he snapped, though his voice wavered slightly.

Eli stepped back with a self-satisfied smirk, his hands slipping casually into his pockets. “I'll take that as a compliment,” he said smoothly. “Try to enjoy the party, Carson. It's more fun when you loosen up a little.”

.....

That was the moment it started.

His obsession with Killian had grown over the years, consuming him in ways he didn't fully understand. He'd seen the way Killian's fascination lingered on things that would repel others—like a photograph of a war-torn battlefield. There was something disturbingly raw in Killian's curiosity, a thirst for knowledge that danced too close to the edge of darkness.

To anyone else, Killian's interests might have been unsettling. But to Eli, they were enthralling.

He's like a live wire, dangerous and uncontrollable, and yet... mine.

Eli's chest tightened slightly as his gaze swept over Killian now. The man had grown into his chaotic brilliance, wearing his sharp edges like a crown. But there was something else—something Killian probably didn't realize—that only Eli could see.

You think you're untouchable, Killian, but I know better. I know how to unravel you.

The man speaking to them laughed heartily, clearly expecting Killian to join in. Instead, Killian offered a dry chuckle, clearly not paying attention to the punchline. Eli stepped in smoothly, steering the conversation away and drawing the attention back to himself.

Killian's eyes flickered to him briefly, and Eli caught the faintest curl of his lips—the telltale sign of amusement. Eli suppressed a smile.

You're so predictable sometimes, Killian, and yet so maddeningly unpredictable. It's what keeps me tethered to you.

Their marriage was not one born of love—at least, not in the traditional sense. But obsession? Oh, there was plenty of that. Eli's need to possess Killian burned like a constant flame, one he tended to carefully.

“Excuse me for a moment,” Eli said smoothly, stepping away from the group and motioning for Killian to follow. Killian raised an eyebrow but complied, falling into step beside him as they made their way to the quieter edges of the room.

“What's the matter?” Killian asked, his voice low. “Finally bored of charming the old geezers?”

Eli smirked, leaning slightly closer so his words were just for Killian. “I thought you could use a break before you fell asleep on one of them.”

Killian's laugh was soft and dry. “Well, I do appreciate your concern, dear husband.”

At the word *husband*, Eli's chest tightened, a familiar darkness coiling in his veins like smoke. The way Killian said it—so casual, so devoid of the weight Eli attached to it—always sent a ripple of something twisted through him. Possessiveness. It wasn't the word itself; it was what it symbolized. *Husband*. The claim, the bond, the irrevocable tether tying Killian to him in a way no one else could touch.

The way Killian used it, without thought, without the reverence it deserved, was maddening. He said it like it was just another label, another piece of paper binding them together, but to Eli, it was *everything*.

You're mine, Killian. Every part of you, even the pieces you try to keep hidden.

That one word stirred his darker thoughts, the ones he rarely let surface. The possessive urges to remind Killian what that title meant, to ensure no one else could ever even dream of using it for him. To mark him in a way that would silence the dry laughter, the casual remarks, the subtle defiance that lingered in his voice.

Eli kept his composure, his outward expression calm and controlled, but inside, his thoughts burned. *You may not see it yet, but that word belongs to me as much as you do. Husband*. It tasted sharp on his tongue, like the edge of a blade, something he wanted to wield and bury deep into the very fabric of Killian's being.

His fingers itched to reach out, to grasp Killian's wrist and pull him closer, to feel the undeniable proof that he was real, that he was his. But Eli's mask stayed firmly in place, his smirk curling just enough to appear amused.

“Careful how you use that word,” Eli murmured, his voice soft but laced with an undertone that made Killian glance at him, curious but unbothered.

“Oh? Did I offend you, dear husband?” Killian teased, his tone mocking, his grin sharp.

Eli's smirk deepened, his eyes darkening as they met Killian's. *You have no idea what you do to me when you call me that.*

"No," Eli replied smoothly. "But you should remember who gave you the right to use it."

Killian's eyebrow arched, the amusement in his expression flickering briefly before he rolled his eyes and looked away. "Always so dramatic," he muttered, his tone dismissive, but Eli didn't miss the slight flush creeping up Killian's neck.

.....

Eli's gaze flickered to Killian, who was now leaning against the bar, his sharp profile illuminated under the soft glow of the chandeliers. He looked almost bored, his usual air of chaotic mischief dulled by the formal setting of the gala. Yet, even in this dullness, Killian was captivating, a flame Eli couldn't help but be drawn to.

But the flame was dangerous, wasn't it? Eli knew that better than anyone. His obsession with Killian was like a wildfire—burning fiercely, consuming everything in its path, but always hidden beneath a carefully constructed mask of indifference.

Why do I always act like this? Why do I keep my distance when all I want is to close it?

Eli's fingers tightened imperceptibly around his glass, his knuckles whitening as his mind swirled with the answers he already knew but hated to confront. He acted indifferent because he couldn't afford to suffocate Killian. His obsession, his possessiveness, his dark need to have Killian all to himself—it wasn't something most people would tolerate, much less someone like Killian.

Killian was chaos incarnate, a creature who thrived on freedom, rebellion, and unpredictability. Eli knew that if he let himself give in to his darker desires, if he showed Killian the depth of his need, it might drive him away. And that, Eli couldn't bear.

You're mine, Eli thought as he watched Killian laugh at some joke the bartender had made. *But I can't let you feel trapped by me. I won't give you a reason to run.*

More than that, Eli didn't know how to act around Killian. He was a master of control, of calculating every move, every word. But Killian had always been the exception to his precision. With Killian, Eli faltered, unsure of how to bridge the chasm between his obsession and his need to keep the younger man close without pushing him away.

But there had been no hesitation when it came to making Killian his. Eli had orchestrated everything. He'd bought the shareholders of Killian's grandfather's company, ensuring that the Carsons would be in a precarious financial position. It had been easy, almost too easy, to plant the idea of marriage in Alexander Carson's mind—a man so consumed by greed that he'd sold his grandson off like a pawn in a corporate chess game.

And of course, Alexander had suggested the marriage to Eli's father, sealing the deal. It was all so perfectly calculated, every step leading to this moment—Killian standing here, wearing Eli's name, bound to him in a way no one else could ever claim.

But now that he had Killian, Eli found himself at a loss. How was he supposed to act? What was he supposed to do with this man who consumed his every waking thought but was so maddeningly untouchable?

Eli forced himself to take a sip of his drink, letting the burn of the alcohol steady him. Killian glanced back at him, their eyes meeting briefly before Killian rolled his eyes and looked away, a smirk tugging at his lips.

He doesn't know, Eli thought, his grip on the glass tightening. He doesn't know how far I've gone to make him mine. And he can't know.

Chapter End Notes

I love spoiling my readers, and what better way to do that than uploading one more chapter? 💖

Thank you so much for your continued support and love. Every comment, every read, it all means the world to me. I hope this chapter brings you some cheer, and I can't wait to share more of Eli and Killian's journey with you soon!

Enjoy, and stay safe this season! 💖💖

CHAPTER 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli King sat in the vast, quiet living room, the dim light from the chandelier casting golden shadows over the marble floor. A chessboard lay in front of him on the coffee table, its pieces meticulously arranged. He often played against himself—it was an exercise in strategy, in control, and a way to silence the restless noise in his mind. His fingers toyed with the black queen, his thoughts drifting, until a faint sound disrupted the stillness.

A low hum, soft and melodious, reached his ears. It was unassuming at first, but it grew louder, carrying with it a peculiar rhythm that made Eli's brow furrow. His sharp eyes turned toward the grand staircase, and his breath caught.

Descending the stairs was Killian, his husband, in nothing but a pair of black boxers that clung to his lean, athletic frame. His damp hair fell messily over his forehead, droplets of water trailing down his neck and over his bare chest. He moved with an unintentional grace, a light sway to his step as if dancing to the faint tune playing from the earbuds in his ears. Eli's sharp senses caught the scent before Killian even reached the bottom of the staircase—sandalwood and something sweeter, muskier, something that threatened to unhinge every ounce of Eli's self-control.

Killian's movements were careless, uncalculated. He seemed utterly unaware of the effect he had, and that only made it worse. Every sway of his hips, every languid stretch of his arms as he adjusted the towel slung over his shoulder, was a taunt, a dare. Eli's knuckles tightened on the chess piece in his hand as he forced himself to breathe evenly.

Killian hadn't seen him yet.

For a moment, Eli allowed himself to watch, his dark gaze tracing the droplets of water that glided down Killian's torso, pooling at the waistband of his boxers before disappearing. It was maddening. Killian was right there—something Eli could see but not touch.

But Eli King had never been good at resisting temptation. He had always been greedy. Always wanted more.

Yet, for Killian, he would wait. He wouldn't break the delicate game they were playing. No, he would make Killian ask for it, beg for it. That was his revenge for this slow, unknowing torture.

Killian finally turned and noticed him, pausing mid-step. His face betrayed no surprise—if anything, there was a flicker of amusement in his eyes. "Didn't see you there," he said casually, pulling out one of his earbuds and crossing the room as if he hadn't just been performing a private show.

Eli didn't respond. His jaw tightened as Killian plopped down onto the couch opposite him, his long legs stretching out lazily. He grabbed the glass of water sitting on the table and took a long sip, tilting his head back. Eli's gaze zeroed in on the single droplet that escaped, trailing from Killian's jawline down his neck, past the sharp curve of his collarbone, and over his abs. The path it took was almost sinful, and Eli's fingers twitched with the urge to trace it.

Focus, Eli. Concentrate on the board.

But the chessboard was a blur. The only thing he could see was Killian, radiating an unintentional allure that tested every limit of his restraint. He wanted to grab Killian by the waist, pin him against the wall, and taste every inch of him. But no—Killian didn't know what kind of fire he was playing with, and Eli wouldn't let himself lose control. Not yet.

“Are you just going to stare at me all night, or are you going to move?” Killian's voice broke through Eli's haze. His tone was light, teasing. He gestured to the chessboard. “You're terrible at this, by the way. That knight's in the wrong place.”

Eli blinked, dragged back to reality by the comment. *Killian is talking about chess. Of course, he is.*

Killian leaned forward, reaching across the table to adjust one of the pieces. The motion brought him closer, his scent flooding Eli's senses again. Eli clenched his fists under the table, willing himself to stay composed.

“You're dressed like this for everyone to see?” Eli asked suddenly, his voice low, almost dangerous. His dark eyes bore into Killian's, who looked back at him with a raised eyebrow.

Killian smirked. “Everyone? Last I checked, it's just us here.”

Eli's gaze darkened further. “Exactly.”

Killian leaned back, his smirk widening. “What are you going to do? Pounce on me? Take my virginity?”

Eli's lips curled into a wolfish grin. “You're not a virgin, Killian. Let's not pretend otherwise.”

Killian shrugged, feigning nonchalance but with a flicker of amusement in his eyes. “Then what's stopping you, husband? Afraid you can't handle me?”

The air between them crackled with tension, but Eli leaned back in his chair, a picture of calculated composure. “You're playing a dangerous game,” he said smoothly, his voice laced with dark promise.

Killian tilted his head, studying Eli for a moment before chuckling softly. “You're no fun,” he said, standing up and stretching, his arms rising above his head and giving Eli an unrestrained view of his body. “But I'll give you credit for restraint. For now.”

As Killian sauntered away, the towel still slung over his shoulder, Eli stayed seated, his eyes following every step. His grip on the chessboard tightened until his knuckles turned white.

One day, Eli thought, his dark obsession burning brighter than ever. One day, you'll beg me to lose control, Killian. And when that day comes, there will be no going back.

.....

The early morning sunlight streamed through the expansive windows of the King-Carson estate, casting a golden glow on the marble countertops of the modern kitchen. Eli King stood by the

counter, his movements deliberate as he prepared coffee. His shirt sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, exposing the corded muscles of his forearms. The rich aroma of freshly brewed coffee filled the air, and for once, the house was quiet. Too quiet.

It was a rare occurrence for their household to be this peaceful. Eli had sent Sam, their cook, away for the day, under the guise of giving her a break. Truthfully, he wanted this moment alone with Killian—just the two of them in the intimacy of a shared morning. Eli wasn't the kind to prepare meals, but today, he made an exception.

He placed two cups of steaming coffee on the counter.

Just as he finished, the faint sounds of steps in the stairs pulled his attention. Eli turned, his sharp gaze softening ever so slightly as Killian entered the kitchen. He was adjusting the cuffs of his shirt, his hair still slightly damp from the shower. The crisp white fabric clung to his shoulders, and his tie hung loose around his neck. He looked half put-together, half undone, and entirely irresistible.

Killian's eyes swept over Eli before landing on the coffee cups. "Morning," he mumbled, his voice still thick with sleep. He ran a hand through his hair as he approached the counter. "Where's Sam? Isn't she usually here by now?"

Eli leaned casually against the counter, his dark eyes fixed on Killian. "She couldn't come today. I figured we could have breakfast outside instead." He slid one of the coffee cups toward Killian. "Here. I made coffee."

Killian arched a brow, clearly skeptical. "You? Made coffee?"

Eli's lips twitched into a smirk. "Don't sound so surprised. Try it."

Killian lifted the cup to his lips, his expression cautious. He took a small sip, his brows furrowing as he swirled the taste in his mouth. He set the cup down, crossing his arms. "It's... okay. Not too good."

Eli's smirk faltered, his dark gaze narrowing into a glare. "Okay? Not too good?" His tone was sharp, laced with mock offense.

Killian shrugged, leaning against the counter with a nonchalant grin. "I'm just saying, Sam's coffee is better."

Eli stepped closer, reaching for the cup with a deliberate slowness. "If it's not good enough, I'll take it back."

Killian's eyes widened as Eli plucked the cup from his grasp. "Hey! Give it back!" Killian reached for the cup, but Eli held it just out of reach.

"I can't let you suffer through mediocre coffee, now can I?" Eli teased, his voice a low purr. The glint in his eyes was dangerous, predatory.

Killian huffed, crossing his arms over his chest like a petulant child. "Okay, okay, it's good! Satisfied? Now give it back. I can't start my day without coffee."

Eli watched him for a moment longer, letting the tension build before finally relenting. He handed the cup back, but not before casually switching it with his own. His movements were so smooth, so calculated, that Killian didn't even notice the swap.

As Killian took a sip, Eli brought the other cup to his lips, savoring the warmth of the coffee that had just touched Killian's mouth. His mind raced with dark satisfaction. *An indirect kiss.* The thought sent a shiver down his spine, his possessive nature reveling in the intimacy Killian was oblivious to.

Killian, unaware of Eli's thoughts, took another sip and let out a soft moan of pleasure. "Mmm, okay, this is actually really good," he murmured, his eyes fluttering shut for a brief moment as he savored the taste.

The sound hit Eli like a bolt of electricity, his body suddenly feeling too warm. His grip on the cup tightened as he fought the urge to close the distance between them, to press Killian against the counter and make him moan like that for an entirely different reason. The way Killian licked his lips after each sip, the slight tilt of his head as he enjoyed the coffee—it was maddening.

Eli forced himself to focus, his jaw clenching as he took another sip from his cup. The taste of Killian lingered on the rim, fueling the dark, obsessive fire that burned in his chest.

"You're full of surprises," Killian said, finally setting the cup down with a satisfied sigh. He glanced at Eli, his expression softer now. "Guess you're not entirely useless in the kitchen."

Eli smirked, leaning closer until their faces were mere inches apart. "Careful, Killian," he murmured, his voice low and dangerous. "You might start to like me."

Killian rolled his eyes, but there was a faint blush creeping up his cheeks. "Don't push your luck," he muttered, turning away and missing the way Eli's smirk deepened.

As Killian left the kitchen, Eli leaned against the counter, his dark gaze following his husband's every move. The cup in his hand felt heavier now, a symbol of the little victories he allowed himself in their game of push and pull.

One day, Killian, Eli thought, his mind racing with unspoken desires. One day, you'll realize just how much of you already belongs to me.

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone!

Thanks for reading this new chapter!

One of my friends asked if there will be angst in the story. The answer is YES!! But we have a long way to go to that so enjoy as long as you can my dear readers because. I am sorry if the pacing is slow but i promise you the wait will be worth it. Enjoy the fluff and tension for now.

I really enjoyed writing this one—especially the tension between Eli and Killian. They're such a fun pair to explore, and I love how Eli's control over the situation plays off Killian's playful and carefree attitude. The little moments, like the coffee scene, are so satisfying to write because they show the deeper layers of their relationship, even when they're just teasing each other.

As always, the obsession and possessiveness Eli has for Killian are part of what drives him, and I'm so excited to see where that tension goes. I hope you're as excited as I am.

Thank you for all the support, feedback, and love! I can't wait to share more with you all.



And.....another chapter will be out by tonight. Its a short chapter though. Wait for it.

CHAPTER 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The sleek conference room of King Enterprises was bathed in soft natural light streaming through the floor-to-ceiling windows, reflecting off the polished mahogany table where the board members sat in pristine suits. Eli King stood at the head of the table, radiating authority and precision in his tailored dark suit and navy tie. His every word carried weight, his every gesture calculated. A file lay open in front of each member, detailing the company's proposed site plans for their next major venture.

“As you can see,” Eli said, his voice smooth and unwavering, “this location will yield significant returns, positioning us not only as market leaders but innovators in urban development. The projected timeline is aggressive but achievable, and the potential political alliances will solidify our standing further.”

Heads around the table nodded in unison, a chorus of unspoken agreement. The board members were used to this—Eli presenting his plans with such precision and logic that dissent seemed almost laughable.

“Brilliant, as always,” murmured one member.

“I don't see any issues with this,” added another, flipping through the pages of the file.

The atmosphere was one of consensus, of unwavering faith in Eli's leadership. But then, breaking through the hum of agreement, a single word rang out like a shot in the silence.

“No.”

The room stilled. Heads turned, eyes widening in collective disbelief as they landed on the source of the dissent: Killian King-Carson, the legal director of King Enterprises—and Eli's husband.

Eli's gaze shifted to Killian, who leaned back in his chair with an air of nonchalance, his sharp jaw resting on one hand as he casually flipped through the file. He looked completely at ease in his gray suit, the only hint of rebellion being the absence of a tie. His hair was slightly mussed, as though he hadn't cared enough to fix it perfectly before the meeting.

“No?” Eli repeated, his voice calm but laced with intrigue. Few dared to challenge him in these meetings, let alone outright reject his plans.

Killian met Eli's gaze, a smirk tugging at the corner of his lips. “That's what I said.”

The room was thick with tension, the board members exchanging nervous glances. One of them cleared his throat, clearly uncomfortable with the idea of conflict in a space where Eli's word was typically law.

Eli leaned back slightly, his fingers steepled as he regarded Killian. “Enlighten us, then. Why is it not possible?”

Killian straightened in his chair, his smirk fading into a look of sharp focus. He tapped the file with a finger. “The proposed site is in a zone currently under heavy political scrutiny. There’s already backlash against corporations moving into that area, and this project would only amplify that. You think it’s an opportunity to form alliances, but I see a minefield of legal challenges and protests waiting to happen.”

He flipped to a specific page in the file, pushing it slightly toward Eli. “Here. You’re banking on this piece of legislation going through unopposed, but I checked—there are already several lobbyists actively working against it. Even if we grease the wheels, the risk of delays is high. And then there’s the environmental angle—lawsuits from activists would be inevitable, dragging our name through the mud and tying up resources for months, maybe years.”

The room was silent, every pair of eyes darting between Eli and Killian.

Eli studied the file, his face unreadable. “And your solution?”

Killian leaned back again, a glint of satisfaction in his eyes. “Move the site. There’s an alternative location just outside the current city limits. Fewer political complications, fewer environmental red flags, and just as much potential for profit, if not more. Sure, it’s less glamorous, but it’s smarter.”

Eli closed the file, his expression calm and composed. But there was a flicker of something in his eyes—something sharp, dangerous, and impressed. It was rare for someone to challenge him like this, rarer still for them to be right.

He met Killian’s gaze, a small smile curving his lips. “Well argued, Mr. King-Carson.”

The shock in the room was palpable, as if someone had flipped a switch and plunged the board members into a surreal alternate reality. Eli King had just complimented someone.

Whispers rippled through the room as the members exchanged glances, their disbelief evident. Nobody spoke against Eli King. Nobody dared. His reputation as a corporate titan wasn’t just built on his brilliance but on the absolute authority he wielded in these rooms. His word was law, and for years, they had seen challengers crushed under his calm yet cutting retorts.

But today? Today, the unthinkable had happened.

“I must’ve heard that wrong,” one board member muttered under his breath to the colleague beside him.

“Did he just—did Eli King *smile*?” another whispered, his voice tinged with incredulity.

Killian, on the other hand, looked entirely unfazed, as though this was the most natural outcome in the world. Leaning back in his chair, he stretched his arms lazily, his smirk only deepening as the murmurs grew louder. If he noticed the stunned reactions around him, he didn’t let on.

Eli, composed as ever, acted as though nothing was amiss. He gathered his papers with the same precision he applied to everything in his life, seemingly unaffected by the disruption his words had caused.

Still, the board members couldn’t help but stare.

One of them, an older man who had been with the company since its inception, shook his head in disbelief. “I’ve seen Eli rip apart executives for less, and now he’s... *complimenting* his husband?”

The others nodded, still processing what they’d just witnessed.

Killian, finally rising from his chair, cast a quick glance at Eli, who was already making his way to the door with his usual air of authority. “You’re all acting like it’s a miracle,” Killian drawled, his tone teasing. “I told you—I keep him on his toes.”

And with that, he followed Eli out, leaving the boardroom buzzing with speculation and awe.

Behind the scenes, though, Eli’s mind was far from the calm facade he projected. Complimenting Killian hadn’t been planned—it had been instinctual, a reaction to something he couldn’t ignore. Killian had challenged him, openly and unapologetically, and had backed it up with undeniable logic.

But it wasn’t just that. It was the way Killian carried himself—confident, sharp, and utterly unbothered by the power dynamics that left others cowering. Eli couldn’t help but feel a strange sense of pride, mixed with that dark possessiveness that always stirred when it came to Killian.

As they walked toward the elevator, Killian broke the silence. “Did you enjoy that, Mr. King?”

Eli glanced at him, his expression unreadable. “Enjoy what?”

“Me putting you in your place in front of your precious board.”

Eli’s lips curved into the faintest smile, but his gaze stayed locked on Killian’s, sharp and unrelenting. The elevator hummed quietly around them as it descended, the tension between them growing thicker by the second.

Eli stepped closer, just enough to breach that invisible space Killian liked to think he controlled. His voice dropped an octave, smooth as velvet but edged with a teasing sharpness.

“You didn’t put me in my place, Killian,” Eli murmured, his eyes scanning Killian’s face deliberately. “But watching you try? That was... *enticing to watch.*”

The word hung in the air like a live wire, and Killian’s usual confident smirk faltered for a fraction of a second. His cheeks betrayed him, blooming with a soft pink that only deepened as Eli stepped back as if nothing had happened.

The elevator dinged. The doors slid open, but Eli was already walking out, his stride unhurried, his posture effortlessly composed. He didn’t look back, didn’t give Killian the satisfaction of catching his expression or lingering in the moment.

Killian stood frozen in the elevator for half a beat, his mind scrambling to catch up. *Enticing?*

He shook his head, a mix of irritation and amusement bubbling up inside him. Eli King was the only person who could twist his words in a fraction of a second.

“Bastard,” Killian muttered under his breath, stepping out of the elevator and adjusting his collar, the pink still warming his cheeks.

Eli’s voice drifted back to him from down the hall. “I heard that.”

And, of course, Eli didn’t even pause.

.....

Eli stood stiffly near the construction manager, his attention half on the man explaining site reports and half on the car a few feet away. Killian was slouched against the vehicle, arms crossed loosely, his head tilted back as if the weight of the day had worn him thin. His sharp suit clung to him, rumpled just enough to make him look effortlessly gorgeous even in his exhaustion.

Eli’s jaw tightened. *Just finish this and go home*, he told himself, though his patience was already thinning.

He glanced at Killian again—and froze.

A woman had approached Killian, standing close enough that Eli’s irritation spiked. She was speaking animatedly, her body language open and far too familiar for his liking. Killian, ever the composed one, listened with polite disinterest, but Eli could see it: the faint crease of Killian’s brow, the slight downward tug of his lips. He was too tired to deal with whatever this woman wanted.

Eli didn’t care who she was or what she wanted. All he saw was someone intruding on *his* space. His husband’s space.

“Excuse me,” Eli cut off the manager mid-sentence, his tone curt as he strode toward Killian and the woman without a second glance at the man he’d left behind.

The sun beat down on him, as he closed the distance. By the time he reached them, he didn’t even spare the woman a polite smile. Instead, he slid his arm firmly around Killian’s waist, pulling him close.

Killian looked up, startled. “Eli—”

Eli didn’t let him finish. He spun Killian gently but decisively, turning him so they both leaned against the car. Killian’s back pressed to Eli’s chest, their closeness unmistakable. His free hand rested possessively on Killian’s hip, the gesture one of complete ownership.

Turning his sharp gaze to the woman, Eli tilted his head slightly. “Ms. Whitmore,” he said evenly, though his voice carried a dark edge that warned her she was trespassing.

Ms. Whitmore blinked, then let out a soft chuckle. “Young love,” she said with a bemused shake of her head, her voice light and unbothered. “Enjoy your evening, Mr. King. Mr. Carson.” With that, she turned on her heel and walked away.

Eli exhaled, his grip on Killian loosening, but he didn’t let go. His pride took a small hit as he realized she wasn’t a rival at all—just a middle-aged manager doing her job. But Killian, ever

observant, had already picked up on his earlier jealousy.

“Seriously?” Killian asked, his voice a mix of exasperation and amusement as he turned to face Eli. “She’s probably older than both our mothers.”

Eli’s eyes narrowed. “Doesn’t matter. People swarm you every time I’m not around.” His voice was low, his jealousy still simmering beneath the surface. “I hate it.”

“Why jealous though? Its not like we are lovers or any cheesy shit, right?” Killian teased.

“No, but you are my husband, aren’t you? So learn to tolerate this. Now, don’t open your mouth again and get in the car or I will leave without you.” Eli replied.

“So cruel” Killian muttered and got in the car thinking of ways to tease Eli with this later.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, lovely readers! 💕

Welcome to another chapter of Eli & Killian's story.

I hope you’re enjoying the slow burn between these two as much as I am writing it! 😊🔥
The tension is thick, and Eli’s possessiveness is starting to show in ways that is both delicious . Their dynamic is just so much fun to explore, especially when Eli's normally cool, calculated persona starts to crack just a little bit. 🙄

This chapter was all about power dynamics, not just in the boardroom, but also between Eli and Killian.

Eli complimenting Killian was a rare moment of softness, but also really loaded with other emotions beneath the surface. You could feel the respect, the pride.

And of course, there’s that little moment of jealousy at the end—Eli is definitely not a fan of anyone invading Killian’s space, especially when it comes to his husband. 😞

As always, thank you for your patience, and for the amazing support you all give this story! I know some of you have been dying for more Eli and Killian content, and I promise that things are only going to get more interesting soon 😊

Let me know what you think, and don’t be afraid to leave a comment! You guys are the best. 💕

Until next time... ✨

CHAPTER 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The thrum of the lights and the echo of punches in the air brought a welcome sense of calm to Killian's restless mind. His body, tight with pent-up tension, ached for the familiar, almost cathartic relief of a good fight. The boxing ring was his sanctuary, a place where his mind could shut off the dark thoughts swirling around and just *exist* in the rhythm of jabs, hooks, and sweat. It had been too long.

He slipped into the arena, the cool smell of leather and old wood filling his senses. It felt like home. He stretched his limbs, the tension in his shoulders loosening slightly as his gloves hit the punching bag with sharp thuds. He needed this—something to channel the gnawing itch in his chest, the ache of being caged in a world he barely recognized anymore. University days were long gone, where he could lose himself in the chaos, the wildness of it all—now, there were only the rules, the boardrooms, the contracts, and Eli's watchful eyes.

Just as he threw a solid uppercut into the bag, his gaze flickered toward the entrance. A woman entered the arena. Her posture was confident, and he had seen her somewhere before but where?. His mind clicked for a moment, but before he could fully place her, she was stepping toward the ring with purpose.

She wasn't wearing the usual flashy gear, but her stance was enough to tell Killian she could hold her own. Silver hair pulled back into a tight ponytail, athletic build, and a determined glint in her eyes. As she got closer, she gave him a look, challenging, almost as if she could sense the judgment rolling off him. It wasn't often that someone dared to approach him like this, and the fact that she did intrigued him more than it should have.

Without hesitation, she climbed into the ring, her movements fluid and sure. She glanced at him, taking in his height and stance, a wry smile playing at her lips.

"Come on, then," she said, nodding toward him. "I'll show you how I fight."

That was all the invitation he needed. He dropped into his stance, the gloves tight and secure. He hadn't felt the rush in a while—there was something about the fight, the rawness of it, that made him feel like himself again. No politics, no expectations, just him and the ring.

The first few seconds were a slow build. She moved gracefully, her footwork swift but measured as she circled him, waiting for an opening. Killian mirrored her, gauging her movements. She was good—faster than most men he'd fought, and there was an energy in her strikes that suggested she wasn't some novice.

Then, without warning, she lunged forward with a quick jab aimed at his jaw. Killian barely dodged it, feeling the wind from her punch just inches from his face. She was fast, and he realized just how much of a challenge this was going to be.

He swung back with a left hook, aiming for her ribs, but she blocked it with a swift motion, the sound of leather on leather punctuating the tension in the air. Her counter came quickly, a low

punch aimed at his midsection. He grunted as it connected, the sharpness of the hit pulling a reflexive grimace from him.

“Nice one,” he said, stepping back for a moment, assessing her. His eyes flicked to her face, seeing that she wasn’t sweating yet.

“You’re not bad yourself,” she replied, her voice playful but sharp.

She closed the distance between them again, her left hand swiping for his chin while her right went low. Killian dodged her left but couldn’t avoid the right—he twisted his torso to take the hit to his ribs, the sting familiar and grounding. He didn’t flinch.

It was a dance—each of them testing, prodding, finding weaknesses in the other’s defenses. She was nimble, quick with her jabs, but he could see the slight openings she gave away with every punch. She wasn’t a seasoned fighter, but she was damned close. She had a sense for the rhythm of combat, and that was something Killian respected.

They went on for several more minutes, the noise of their punches and feet hitting the canvas filling the arena. Sweat dripped down his forehead, his body starting to feel the strain of the fight, but there was no stopping now. His mind was clearer than it had been in days.

Finally, with a well-placed jab to her shoulder, Killian pushed her back slightly, giving himself a moment to breathe. He didn’t want to finish it just yet—he wanted to enjoy the exchange, the rawness of it.

But then she did something unexpected—she swept low, trying to trip him with her foot, and before he could react, she knocked him off balance. He stumbled but didn’t fall, quickly regaining his stance and turning to face her.

She grinned, satisfied with herself. “Gotcha.”

Killian smirked, shaking his head. “Nice move.” He was panting slightly, the fight leaving him exhilarated. He hadn’t felt this alive in weeks.

“I’m just getting started,” she said, bouncing on the balls of her feet, ready for another round.

There was something wild and unpredictable about her. She wasn’t playing it safe. She was in this for the fight, just like him, and for the first time in a while, Killian found himself truly *seeing* her.

As they squared off again, Killian felt the lingering pull of the past—the urge to fight, to let the violence flow through him.

The bell rang, signaling the end of their match, but neither of them seemed eager to stop. The fight was too satisfying, too consuming.

“I could keep going,” she said with a grin, breathing heavily but looking unbothered.

Killian chuckled, wiping the sweat off his forehead. “You’re not bad. Not bad at all.”

Killian leaned against the ropes, breathing heavily, the familiar sting of the fight still lingering in his body. He wiped the sweat off his face with a towel, reaching for his water bottle, when a voice interrupted his quiet moment.

“You don’t remember me, do you?”

He looked up, , before his eyes landed on the woman who had just challenged him in the ring. She was standing in front of him now, hands on her hips, a playful glint in her eyes. Her posture was confident, but there was a hint of amusement in the way she watched him.

He furrowed his brow, trying to place her. Her face seemed vaguely familiar, but nothing clicked. He swallowed, taking a swig of water before answering. “Sorry, I don’t think we’ve met before. I would have remembered someone who could throw a punch like that.” He gave her a crooked smile, hoping to cover for his lack of recognition.

She raised an eyebrow at him, clearly not buying it. “Oh, I’m sure you would have. You really don’t remember me?” She feigned a pout, putting a hand on her chest as if offended. “I even attended your wedding, and we work in the same office, Killian.”

He couldn’t recall ever speaking to her before, but then again, there were a lot of faces in the corporate world, and his life—especially lately—had been a whirlwind of deals, meetings, and corporate gatherings.

"Wait, what?" His confusion was written all over his face, and he rubbed his temple as if trying to force the memory to come back. She chuckled at his response.

“I’m Cecily Knight,” she said, leaning in slightly, her eyes gleaming with mischief. “Xander Knight’s daughter? You know, Eli’s father’s friend? Family friend, and I currently intern at King Enterprises.” She nodded as if it should be obvious.

The mention of her last name clicked. *Xander Knight*, Eli’s father’s business partner. He’d seen her name on a few internal memos, but it didn’t quite connect in his brain until now.

“Oh, right!” Killian exclaimed, his eyes widening in realization. “Cecily Knight Wait, is that what you’re doing now? Interning at King Enterprises?” He tried to piece it all together, finally catching up to the conversation.

“Well, thanks for the fight. It was good to meet you, Cecily.” He gave her a half-smile

She raised both hands in mock surrender. “You’re welcome. Just don’t forget me again, alright? I’ll see you at the office, King-Carson.”

“Don’t worry,” he replied, but with a playful edge. “I won’t forget you, not this time.”

Well not everyone is as stoic as Eli in that office it seems.

.....

Eli King sat in his sprawling office, the walls lined with shelves. The city skyline stretched out before him, a testament to his power and control. Yet, in that moment, the papers and contracts

spread across his desk might as well have been blank. His attention was entirely consumed by his phone, where a series of images and messages had stolen his focus.

It had started innocently enough—or as innocent as anything involving Killian King-Carson could be. Eli's phone buzzed with a notification, and the name *Killian* flashed across the screen. He unlocked it with practiced ease, his breath hitching slightly as the first picture loaded.

The image was casual yet disarmingly captivating. Killian was seated in the driver's seat of his red Aston Martin, one hand on the steering wheel and the other holding his phone at an angle that caught the sharp cut of his jawline and the mischievous glint in his eye. The caption read: *"Off to knock some heads. Don't miss me too much."*

The message was accompanied by a winking emoji and a flexed bicep.

Eli's lips twitched into a smirk, his thumb hovering over the screen. He saved the image without hesitation, tagging it with a simple label: *My Husband*. The folder on his phone, a digital shrine to the man who was both his greatest challenge and his most intoxicating obsession.

Before he could dwell too long on the first photo, another buzz followed. This time, the image showed Killian standing in front of a brightly lit donut shop, holding a glazed donut between his teeth. His boxing bag was slung over one shoulder, and his other hand was raised in a mock salute. The caption read:

"Fueling up. Don't judge me."

A laughing emoji followed, as if Killian himself was chuckling at the absurdity of it all.

Eli leaned back in his chair, the muscles in his jaw tightening as he stared at the screen. There was something infuriatingly charming about Killian's casual defiance of the polished, controlled world Eli had meticulously built. He saved this photo too, noting the way the neon lights of the shop reflected off Killian's damp hair, adding an almost ethereal glow to the image.

The third notification came not long after, a selfie this time. Killian stood next to his Aston Martin, the sleek red paint gleaming under the sunlight. His expression was playful, lips curved in a smirk that could only be described as taunting.

"The car or the man? Tough choice, I know."

The cheeky caption was paired with a flame emoji, as if daring Eli to choose.

Eli's fingers tightened around his phone. The audacity of Killian to flaunt himself like this—unapologetic, carefree, and utterly irresistible. Eli's thumb brushed over the save button once more, his mind racing with thoughts he'd never voice aloud. It wasn't just the pictures. It was the way Killian unwittingly held the power to command Eli's attention, to make him forget the weight of his responsibilities and lose himself in the indulgence of these fleeting moments.

The final image was the one that undid him. Killian was in the boxing ring now, dressed in his gear. His taped hands were raised in a mock victory pose, his muscles glistening with a faint sheen of sweat. The caption was simple but effective:

"Let the games begin."

A devil emoji punctuated the statement, as if Killian knew exactly how maddening he was.

Eli stared at the photo for what felt like an eternity. His chest tightened, the raw possessiveness bubbling just beneath the surface. Killian was everything Eli wanted—everything he couldn't fully have. Not yet. The thought was both exhilarating and infuriating.

He saved the photo, adding it to the *My Husband* folder, which now held hundreds of moments like these. Some were candid shots Killian had sent, others were ones Eli had taken in secret. Together, they painted a picture of a man who was so achingly human, so maddeningly out of reach, and yet so irrevocably Eli's.

Eli's phone buzzed again, this time with a text:

"Don't forget to eat something, Mr. Workaholic. Don't make me come back and force-feed you."

Eli's lips curled into a dark smile, his mind already envisioning scenarios where Killian might have to make good on that threat. He typed a response, his words calculated yet teasing:

"I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself, but I'll consider it if you're the one feeding me."

The three dots indicating Killian's reply flickered for a moment before the message appeared:

"In your dreams, Eli."

Eli chuckled, his dark eyes gleaming as he locked his phone and leaned back in his chair. His fingers tapped rhythmically against the desk as he replayed the images in his mind, each one stoking the flames of his obsession.

"In my dreams? Oh, Killian, you're in far more than just my dreams," he murmured to himself, his voice low and possessive.

As the morning sunlight shifted, Eli resumed his work, though his thoughts never strayed far from the man who had unknowingly consumed his every waking moment.

Chapter End Notes

Hello lovelies!!!

This is just a small chapter. Hope you will like it.

Happy reading<33333333

CHAPTER 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Killian sat on the edge of his bed, his hands gripping his hair, pulling at it as if the physical pain would silence the chaos in his mind. His breaths were uneven, sharp intakes of air followed by slow, deliberate exhalations. His demons—the ones he thought he had locked away so long ago—were clawing their way back to the surface. They were relentless tonight, their whispers no longer just a hum in the background but a deafening chorus in his skull.

Red.

The color danced behind his eyes like a taunt, vivid and raw, dripping like paint spilled over a blank canvas. **Red.** It called to him, demanded his attention, promised relief.

Killian clenched his fists tightly, his nails biting into his palms. He welcomed the sting, hoping it would be enough to ground him. But it wasn't. The urge was a beast tonight, snarling and snapping, threatening to devour him whole. He hated nights like this, hated the way the shadows in his mind grew teeth and fangs, tearing through his carefully constructed walls.

Dinner was out of the question. He had heard Eli's voice earlier, calling for him to join downstairs, but Killian couldn't. Not tonight. The thought of sitting at the table, pretending to be fine while this storm raged inside him, was unbearable. Eli would notice—he always did. Eli would look at him with those dark, piercing eyes, would ask questions, would push. And Killian couldn't let that happen.

He'd locked the door to his room hours ago, the click of the lock giving him a momentary sense of security. But it wasn't enough to keep the whispers out. They were here, inside his head, mocking him.

Destruction. Damage. Blood.

The words repeated like a mantra, the demons urging him to act. His hands itched, his body vibrating with the need to do something—anything—to let the pressure out. He wanted to scream, to lash out, to let the chaos spill over, but he couldn't. Screaming would alert Eli, who was likely just down the hallway. Eli would come storming in, breaking through the door if he had to, demanding answers.

Killian couldn't let Eli see this side of him.

He stood abruptly, the sudden movement causing the blood to rush to his head. The room tilted for a moment before steadying. He paced the floor, each step measured and deliberate, trying to distract himself. His bare feet made no sound against the cold wooden floor, but the silence only amplified the noise in his mind.

The whispers grew louder.

Red. Just a little. No one has to know. Just enough to feel alive again. No to feel human again.

Killian slammed his fist against the wall, the impact reverberating up his arm. The pain was sharp, immediate, but it didn't quiet the whispers. He stared at his knuckles, the skin turning an angry red but not breaking. He needed more.

He stumbled to his desk, yanking open a drawer and pulling out a sketchbook and pencil. Drawing used to help, used to be his outlet when the demons clawed at him like this. He flipped open to a blank page, his hand trembling as he began to sketch. Lines appeared on the paper, sharp and jagged, forming shapes he didn't recognize. His hand moved of its own accord, faster and faster, until the pencil snapped under the pressure.

"Damn it," he hissed, throwing the broken pencil across the room.

The room felt smaller now, the walls closing in around him. His chest heaved as he fought to stay in control. He pressed his palms against his temples, trying to drown out the whispers, but they only laughed at his attempts.

. You can't escape us.

Killian's vision blurred, the edges of his control fraying. He dropped to his knees, his hands curling into fists against the floor. The cold wood beneath him was a stark contrast to the fire burning inside him, threatening to consume him whole.

A knock at the door shattered the silence. Killian froze, his breath catching in his throat.

"Killian?" Eli's voice was calm, but there was an edge to it, a subtle warning. "You've been in there all night. Open the door."

Killian didn't respond. He couldn't.

Another knock, firmer this time. "Killian, I know you're in there."

Killian squeezed his eyes shut, his heart pounding in his chest. He couldn't let Eli see him like this—couldn't let him see the cracks in the facade.

"Go away," he finally managed, his voice barely above a whisper.

There was a long pause, and for a moment, Killian thought Eli might actually leave. But then he heard the faint sound of footsteps retreating down the hall.

Relief washed over him, but it was short-lived. The demons were still there, still whispering, still waiting. Killian took a shaky breath, his body trembling as he leaned back against the wall.

Tonight, he had survived. But the whispers were a reminder that they would always be there, lurking in the shadows, waiting for the next moment of weakness. And Killian wasn't sure how much longer he could keep them at bay.

.....

The house was quiet, save for the occasional creak of the walls settling and the soft hum of the fridge in the kitchen. Eli King sat on the couch, his iPad in hand, though he hadn't turned the

page of the document he was supposed to be reviewing for the past thirty minutes. His dark eyes kept flicking toward the closed door upstairs, the door that led to Killian's room.

His husband had locked himself in there hours ago, skipping dinner—a rarity for Killian, who loved food and wouldn't willingly miss a meal unless something was deeply wrong. Eli had tried coaxing him out earlier, but words had never been his strong suit, and Killian's stubbornness often left Eli at a loss. So now, Eli sat vigil in the living room, pretending to work but really waiting. Hoping.

He hadn't realized how tense he'd become until he heard the telltale sound of a door creaking open. His head snapped up, his pulse quickening. And there he was—Killian.

Killian stumbled out of his room, his movements unsteady. His cheeks were flushed, his dark eyes glassy, and the faint scent of alcohol clung to him. Eli's lips pressed into a thin line. Killian rarely drank; he hated losing control. For him to drink enough to get drunk...

Eli's sharp gaze softened as he took in the sight. Killian looked... undone. Vulnerable. And yet, even in his disheveled state, he was devastatingly beautiful. His damp curls fell over his forehead, and his muscular frame moved with a loose, uncoordinated grace.

Killian didn't notice Eli at first, his focus entirely on the fridge. He opened it and rifled through its contents, eventually pulling out a chocolate bar his mother had sent him last week. He hoarded those bars like treasures, rarely eating them unless he was in a mood. Killian unwrapped it with clumsy fingers, plopped himself onto a chair, and began nibbling at the edges like a sulking child.

Eli couldn't help himself. He cleared his throat.

Killian froze, his head snapping toward Eli, and for a moment, he just stared. Then, his lips parted in surprise. "Why do you always come in my dreams... or my nightmares?" he slurred, his voice soft and thick with alcohol.

Eli raised an eyebrow, amused despite himself. "Dreams or nightmares, huh? Which one is this?"

Killian didn't answer. Instead, he got up from the chair and walked unsteadily toward Eli, the chocolate bar forgotten on the table. He stopped in front of Eli, swaying slightly before plucking the iPad from his hands and tossing it onto the couch.

"Do you ever stop working?" Killian muttered, his tone somewhere between a complaint and a whine.

Before Eli could respond, Killian surprised him further. Boldly, he climbed onto Eli's lap, his strong thighs straddling Eli's. The move was clumsy, his balance wavering as he placed his hands on Eli's shoulders to steady himself. Eli's hands shot out instinctively, gripping Killian's waist to keep him from falling.

Killian leaned closer, his breath warm against Eli's neck. "Aren't you supposed to kiss me now?" he asked, his voice low and teasing. "That's what you usually do in my dreams."

Eli's grip on Killian's waist tightened, his heart pounding in his chest. "Is that so?" he murmured, his voice dropping to a dangerous, husky tone. "Then I can't disappoint you, can I?"

Killian's dark eyes sparkled with mischief. "You're so slow," he muttered, and before Eli could react, Killian closed the distance, pressing his lips to Eli's in a heated kiss.

Eli froze for the briefest moment, shocked by Killian's forwardness, but then his instincts took over. His lips moved against Killian's, claiming him, dominating the kiss. Killian tasted of chocolate and the faint bitterness of alcohol, a combination that was intoxicating in its own right.

But as much as Eli wanted to lose himself in the moment, he couldn't ignore the fact that Killian was drunk. This wasn't how Eli wanted it. Killian might not even remember this tomorrow, and Eli would never take advantage of him in this state.

With a low growl, Eli pulled back, his hands still firm on Killian's waist to keep him steady. Killian pouted, his lips slightly swollen from the kiss, and it took everything in Eli not to capture them again.

"You're drunk," Eli said, his voice rough but steady.

Killian tilted his head, his expression somewhere between confusion and defiance. "So?"

Eli smirked, though his eyes held a hint of restraint. "So, I'm not going to do anything you might regret in the morning."

Killian groaned, burying his face in Eli's neck. "You're no fun," he mumbled, his voice muffled.

Eli chuckled softly, his hands slipping under Killian's thighs as he stood, lifting him effortlessly. Killian let out a surprised noise, his arms instinctively wrapping around Eli's neck.

"Let's get you to bed," Eli said, his tone leaving no room for argument.

Killian didn't protest, resting his head against Eli's shoulder as Eli carried him upstairs. His breaths grew slower, heavier, and by the time Eli laid him down on the bed, Killian was halfway to sleep.

Eli pulled the blankets over him, brushing a stray curl from Killian's forehead. He lingered for a moment, his dark eyes softening as he watched Killian's peaceful expression.

"You're going to be the death of me, Killian, And I would welcome it gladly for you" he murmured, his voice barely above a whisper.

And with that, Eli turned off the light and left the room, his heart still racing from the kiss that burned brighter than any dream he could have conjured.

.....

Eli King sat on the edge of the couch, his hand brushing over the spot where Killian had straddled him moments ago. His other hand rested against his lips, as if to trap the remnants of the kiss—the kiss that still lingered like a brand on his skin.

It wasn't the kiss itself that haunted him, though that alone was enough to stir something dark and primal within him. No, it was Killian's words.

"Why do you always come in my dreams or my nightmares?"

Eli's mind replayed those drunken, slurred words, dissecting them with ruthless precision. Killian dreamed of him. Of *him*. Whether those dreams were sweet or bitter didn't matter—Eli lived in Killian's head, haunting his thoughts, lurking in the shadows of his subconscious.

The thought should have been unnerving, but to Eli, it was a dark kind of satisfaction. His lips curved into a faint smile, his fingers curling against his palm. He wasn't just a fleeting thought in Killian's mind. He was a ghost, an obsession, something Killian couldn't escape even in sleep.

"You're supposed to kiss me now—that's what you usually do in my dreams."

Eli let out a low, humorless laugh, leaning back against the couch. His dark eyes glinted with something dangerous, something possessive. Killian dreamed of him kissing him. Did he imagine it often? Did his mind conjure scenes of Eli's lips claiming his, over and over again, in the quiet solitude of the night?

The kiss had been... incendiary. Killian, bold and impatient even in his drunken state, had kissed him like he was staking a claim, like Eli belonged to him. And Eli had kissed back, dominating, taking over, as if to remind Killian that he *already* belonged to Eli. That there was no escaping this—whatever *this* was.

But then, Eli had stopped. He had forced himself to pull back, to reign in the fire threatening to consume them both. Killian had been drunk, and as much as Eli wanted to drown in that moment, to lose himself in the feel of Killian's lips, his warmth, his weight... he wouldn't take advantage. Not like this.

Still, the kiss had been a crack in the armor, a glimpse of something deeper, something more dangerous.

Eli clenched his jaw, his hands tightening into fists. Killian had no idea what he did to him. How much control it took not to devour him whole. How every careless smile, every sulky pout, every challenging glare made Eli's blood roar with need.

And now, knowing that he haunted Killian's dreams, that he was something Killian craved even in his most vulnerable moments... It made Eli's obsession grow sharper, darker.

He ran a hand through his hair, trying to steady himself, but the memory of Killian's flushed cheeks, his glassy eyes, his soft, drunken confession wouldn't leave him. Killian had looked so vulnerable, so painfully beautiful. And when he'd straddled Eli's lap, his strong, muscular body pressing against Eli's, it had taken every ounce of restraint Eli had not to lose control.

Hi, lovely readers! 💕

First off, thank you for taking the time to dive into this chapter with me. The kiss is finally here!!! But not what you expected just a drunken one but still its a kiss right?!!

That kiss, though! 😬 It was equal parts sweet, messy—exactly how I imagine these two navigating their dynamic. I hope I managed to do their emotions justice!

Also, can we take a moment to appreciate Killian eating chocolate in the middle of an emotional breakdown? It's such a Killian thing to do.

Let me know your thoughts in the comments! Did the chapter pull at your heartstrings? Do you have a favorite moment? ❤️

Thank you so much for your support—it means the world to me. Stay safe, take care of yourselves, and see you in the next chapter! ✨

CHAPTER 11

Killian groaned as he blinked his eyes open, the dull morning light streaming through the blinds doing little to soften the pounding in his skull. He dragged a hand over his face, wincing as the movement made his headache spike.

"God, how much did I drink last night?" he muttered, his voice hoarse. The taste of alcohol lingered on his tongue, bitter and dry.

Fragments of the night before flickered through his mind. He remembered the whiskey, the swirling demons in his head he had tried to drown, and... nothing else.

His brows furrowed as he pushed himself up on the bed. How had he gotten to bed? The last clear memory he had was sitting on the couch, devouring the chocolate bar his mom had sent, trying to calm the storm inside. After that, his memories were like shattered glass—blurry and disjointed.

"Whatever," Killian mumbled, pressing the heels of his hands against his temples to stave off the pounding. Thinking only made his headache worse.

He swung his legs over the side of the bed, bare feet touching the cool floor. With sluggish movements, he grabbed a pair of sweatpants and a T-shirt before heading downstairs. His stomach churned at the thought of food, but the faint smell of coffee and something warm lured him onward.

In the kitchen, Sam stood by the counter, her posture stiff and her lips pressed into a disapproving line. She turned to him with a glass of what Killian immediately recognized as her infamous hangover cure—a concoction of herbs.

"You look awful," she said bluntly, her gaze sweeping over him.

"Good morning to you too, Sam," Killian replied, his voice dripping with sarcasm as he took the glass from her.

The liquid burned on the way down, but it was oddly refreshing, and he already felt a bit of relief from the pounding in his head.

"Thanks for the cure," he muttered, avoiding her glare as he set the glass on the counter.

"Where's Eli?" he asked, his voice casual, but there was an undertone of curiosity he couldn't hide.

"Left for the office hours ago," Sam replied curtly, folding her arms.

"I'll head to my room," Killian said, his tone dismissive as he turned on his heel and made his way back upstairs.

Once back in his room, Killian shut the door behind him and leaned against it for a moment. His room felt both comforting and suffocating, the silence pressing against his ears. He glanced at

the clock on his nightstand and grimaced. He was late for the office—very late—but he couldn't bring himself to care.

Killian walked to his dresser, pulling out a fresh shirt and slacks for the day. As he moved, his mind kept drifting to Eli.

With a sigh, Killian ran a hand through his messy hair and caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror. His reflection stared back, tired and disheveled, but there was something else in his eyes—a flicker of unease, as if the memory of the previous night was trying to claw its way to the surface.

He shook his head, brushing it off. There was no use dwelling on it now. He'd get through the day, hangover be damned, and if Eli had something to say about his tardiness, he'd deal with that too.

Still, as he buttoned his shirt and adjusted his cuffs, he couldn't shake the feeling that he was forgetting something important—something that had happened last night, something that made his chest tighten and his pulse quicken.

But no matter how hard he tried, the memory remained just out of reach, lurking in the shadows of his mind.

.....

Killian leaned back in his leather chair. The spreadsheets on his computer screen blurred together as he rubbed his temples, the residual ache of his hangover lingering like an unwelcome guest. His mind, still not fully alert, was torn between his work and the nagging headache.

As he was about to focus on a particularly confusing set of numbers, something bright caught the corner of his eye—a sudden blur of color that seemed out of place in the muted tones of the office. He turned his head slightly and froze.

Pink.

Everywhere.

It was almost offensively vibrant against the neutral decor of his office floor. The girl, whoever she was, wore a pink dress, paired with matching heels, a bag, and even what looked like a pink hairband. His eyes narrowed, wincing slightly at the sight. Who in their right mind thought that much pink was a good idea?

"Who is that?" Killian asked his personal assistant without looking away from the girl. He hadn't seen her face yet—just the blur of color as she flitted through the hallway.

His assistant, glanced up from his tablet. "Oh, that's Ava Nash," Brian replied casually. "She started interning yesterday. Daughter of Mr. Cole Nash, your father-in-law's old friend."

Killian's stomach twisted at the name, and his expression darkened. "Ava Nash," he repeated, his voice low.

"Yes," Brian continued, unaware of the shift in his boss's demeanor. "She's a friend of Mr. Eli King. Used to visit him often before your marriage, I believe."

Killian clenched his jaw, his fingers tightening on the armrests of his chair. Of course, he knew who Ava Nash was. How could he not?

She was the golden girl, the one who had Eli's attention long before Killian ever stepped into his life. The object of Eli's obsession for years.

Killian had done his research, of course—Ava Nash had been a part of Eli's world in ways that had made him jealous, even before he knew how much Eli truly meant to him. She was the girl who was always there, a constant presence in Eli's life.

She hadn't attended their wedding. That absence alone had been a small victory for Killian. But now here she was, in his office, wearing a nauseating amount of pink and walking around as if she belonged.

Why was she here?

Was she trying to win back Eli?

The thought clawed at him, igniting a dangerous spark deep inside. His demons stirred, whispering in his mind, their voices a low, guttural chant of destruction. His vision tinted red for a moment, and he had to force himself to breathe, gripping the edge of his desk to keep himself grounded.

He wouldn't let her take Eli away.

If Ava thought she could waltz back into Eli's life and undo everything, she was wrong. Dead wrong.

The pink fur on her bag, the soft shimmer of her shoes, the delicate way she walked—it all painted a target in his mind. His demons whispered promises of sharp edges and crimson spilling over pink, but he shoved the thoughts away.

No.

He couldn't lose control. Not here. Not now.

Hurting Ava would mean revealing the darkest parts of himself, the parts he kept locked away for Eli's sake. It would mean Eli looking at him with disgust, with hatred, and that was a fate worse than death.

Killian inhaled deeply, steadying himself. He would have to watch her, keep her close enough to know what her intentions were but far enough that he didn't snap.

Killian's eyes followed the pink blur until she disappeared around the corner. His demons whispered again, but he silenced them with a sharp mental rebuke. This wasn't over. Not by a long shot.

Ava Nash might have been a part of Eli's past, but Killian would be damned if he let her become a part of Eli's future.

.....

Killian leaned back in his chair, glaring at the email he was supposed to respond to. His fingers hovered over the keyboard, but his mind was elsewhere. Or rather, on someone else.

Eli.

Earlier that morning, Eli had sent him a text: *"Going out for lunch. Will be back by 2."*

Killian had rolled his eyes at the message, but now it gnawed at him. Who was Eli having lunch with? He knew his husband's work schedule well enough to know he rarely went out for casual lunches unless there was an important client involved.

The thought simmered in his mind until it boiled over into restless frustration. His curiosity—and, fine, jealousy—was eating him alive. He pushed back his chair, grabbed his phone, and stormed out of his office.

Eli's office was just a short elevator ride away, but it felt like miles. His fists clenched as the elevator doors opened, and he strode through the halls like a man on a mission.

When he reached Eli's office, his sharp eyes darted toward the desk—but it was empty.

Empty?

Killian's brow furrowed, irritation prickling at his nerves. Eli was supposed to be back by now. Where the hell was he?

His gaze snapped to Tina. She was typing away on her computer, looking as calm and composed as ever. Killian approached her desk, his shadow falling over her screen.

"Where's Eli?" he demanded, his voice cold and clipped.

Tina glanced up, blinking in surprise. "Oh, Mr. King-Carson," she greeted him with a polite smile. "Mr. King is out for lunch."

Killian narrowed his eyes. "With who?"

Tina hesitated for a fraction of a second—barely noticeable, but enough to make Killian's blood simmer. "Miss Nash," she finally said. "They left about an hour ago."

Miss Nash.

Ava Nash.

The words were like a grenade in Killian's mind, detonating every shred of patience he had left.

That pink **bitch** was stealing his husband's lunch dates now?

Killian's jaw clenched so tightly it felt like his teeth might crack. He could feel the anger bubbling up, his jealousy mixing with the dark, possessive obsession that always lay just beneath the surface.

Of course, Ava Nash would find her way into Eli's lunch hour. It wasn't enough that she was suddenly interning in their company, hovering around like a pastel-colored specter—now she was worming her way back into Eli's life, sitting across from him at some fancy restaurant, probably laughing at his dry wit and gazing at him with those doe eyes.

Killian's demons clawed at the edges of his mind, whispering in their dark, serpentine voices. *She's taking what's yours. She's sitting where you should be. Stop her. Break her.*

His hands curled into fists at his sides, his nails digging into his palms. He couldn't lose control, not here, not in the middle of the office. But the image of Eli and Ava together, sharing a meal, smiling, maybe even laughing—it was enough to make his blood boil.

Without another word, he turned on his heel and stormed back to the elevator.

.....

Killian sat in his office, elbows propped on his desk, glaring at the screen in front of him. Reports, emails, and figures blurred together, but it wasn't the workload that soured his mood—it was *him*. Eli King. His husband. The man who had singlehandedly made his morning unbearable.

The thought of Eli having lunch with Ava Nash had festered like an open wound. He hated the possessive itch clawing at his chest, hated how his mind kept circling back to the image of Eli smiling at that pink-draped interloper. *Does he laugh with her? Does he talk to her the way he refuses to talk to me?*

Killian leaned back in his chair with a groan, running a hand through his hair. Just as he was about to sink further into his pit of irritation, a knock interrupted his brooding.

"Come in," he called out, straightening his posture.

The door opened to reveal Cecily Knight, her sharp gray eyes scanning the room with a knowing smirk. Cecily was a familiar face in this otherwise foreign corporate labyrinth—a sparring partner in and out of the ring, someone who listened to his endless rants without rolling her eyes, and most importantly, someone who didn't judge him.

"Looking like you've been stood up at prom," Cecily teased, stepping into the room and plopping herself onto the chair across from him.

Killian sighed dramatically, waving her off. "Not now, Knight."

"Come on, K. What's got you sulking like a kid who dropped his ice cream?"

Killian shot her a glare but didn't bother responding. Cecily's smirk only widened.

"Well, if you're going to sit here and pout all day, I'll just go have lunch by myself." She rose, brushing imaginary dust off her blazer. "Unless you want to join me, of course."

Killian hesitated, his initial instinct to decline. But he was alone, stewing in his thoughts, and Cecily's offer was a welcome distraction. "Fine," he muttered, grabbing his jacket.

"That's the spirit," Cecily said with a grin, leading the way out.

The restaurant Cecily chose was a quaint little spot a block away from the office, its warm wooden interior a stark contrast to the sterile corporate world they'd just left. They found a cozy booth in the corner, and as they settled in, Killian pulled out his phone.

He had a habit—one that annoyed him more than he cared to admit. No matter how irritated he was with Eli, he still sent him snaps of his day. It wasn't about Eli deserving them—Killian convinced himself it was just routine. Still, today, he couldn't muster the effort to add a caption.

He probably just opens them and closes them without a second thought, Killian thought bitterly, snapping a quick shot of the restaurant's interior before tossing his phone onto the table.

"Wow," Cecily said, raising a brow. "That was the fastest I've ever seen you lose interest in your phone."

Killian snorted. "Not much to be interested in these days."

Their food arrived quickly, and as they began to eat, Cecily launched into her usual sharp commentary about the corporate world.

"Today's meeting," she said, spearing a piece of chicken with her fork, "was like watching paint dry, except less entertaining."

Killian chuckled, shaking his head. "Corporate meetings are always like that. A bunch of people talking in circles because they love the sound of their own voices."

"Except for your husband," Cecily said with a sly grin.

Killian froze mid-bite, his eyes narrowing. "What about him?"

"Oh, come on, Killian. Eli's practically a statue. Emotional level of a wall.."

Killian smirked, though it didn't quite reach his eyes. "You think I don't know that? The man could probably win an Olympic medal for repressing emotions."

Cecily laughed, clinking her glass of water against his.

Killian chuckled, but the humor faded quickly and they settled into their usual chatter. His thoughts drifted back to Eli. Despite his irritation, he couldn't help but wonder if Eli had even noticed the snap he sent.

As they finished their meal, Cecily leaned back in her chair, eyeing Killian thoughtfully. "You know, for someone who's supposedly married to Mr. Perfect CEO, you sulk an awful lot."

Killian rolled his eyes. "If you had to live with him, you'd understand."

"Maybe," Cecily said, smirking.

Killian didn't respond, simply staring at his empty plate. Cecily didn't press further, and for that, he was grateful.

As they left the restaurant, Killian couldn't shake the gnawing feeling in his chest. No matter how much he tried to convince himself otherwise, Eli occupied his thoughts more than he cared to admit. And that, more than anything, annoyed him.

CHAPTER 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli King sat at the table, his hands resting lightly on the white linen cloth, trying to tune out Ava Nash's incessant chatter. She had chosen a chic bistro downtown, the kind of place with overpriced salads and minimalist decor that seemed to echo her own polished image. Ava sat across from him, radiant in pink, a picture of elegance.

Seriously what is he even doing here, he took her to meet one of his clients for her startup and now he is sitting opposite her listening to her chatter about this and that. Ugh.

"...and that's why I think launching my own fashion line someday is more than just a dream," Ava was saying, her tone brimming with excitement. "I want it to reflect empowerment, individuality, and sophistication—something people can wear and feel invincible."

Eli nodded politely, his gaze flickering toward his glass of water. He appreciated her enthusiasm, even admired it in a distant way, but his mind wasn't in the conversation. Instead, it wandered back to his husband, Killian.

Ava's voice became white noise as Eli allowed himself a moment to dwell on the man who occupied his every waking thought. Killian's fiery temper, his unfiltered sarcasm, the way he filled their home with a vibrant energy Eli could never match—it all haunted Eli in ways he hadn't anticipated when they married.

Ava had harbored a crush on him during her teenage years. While he had hoped she'd grown out of it, there was a subtle edge that made him wary. Eli had no desire to entertain even the shadow of her old feelings. His marriage to Killian was already precarious, like glass threatening to crack under the slightest pressure.

Just then, his phone buzzed on the table. Eli glanced down and saw Killian's name flash across the screen. He couldn't stop the small smile that crept onto his face, a warmth blooming in his chest.

Ava paused mid-sentence, raising an eyebrow. "Good news?"

"Just my husband," Eli replied casually, picking up the phone.

The moment he opened the message, his smile faltered, turning into a focused frown. It was a photo—a selfie of Killian at a restaurant—but something was... off. There was no caption. No emojis. Nothing but the image itself.

Killian loved emojis, often overusing them in a way that Eli found both endearing and exasperating. But today, the absence of those playful symbols made the photo feel strangely hollow.

Without thinking, Eli zoomed in on the picture, his eyes scanning every corner of the frame. Killian's sharp features were as striking as ever, but his expression carried an edge of irritation.

Eli's lips pressed into a thin line as he stared at the image, trying to decode what his husband wasn't saying.

"Something wrong?" Ava asked, tilting her head curiously.

"No," Eli said quickly, locking his phone and setting it aside. But his fingers lingered on the edge of the device, itching to type out a response.

He pouted inwardly, frustration simmering beneath the surface. *Why no emojis today?* It was such a small detail, yet it gnawed at him, a reminder of how much he depended on those little quirks of Killian's to brighten his day.

Ava, oblivious to his inner turmoil, continued talking about her future aspirations. Eli nodded at the appropriate moments, but his thoughts remained firmly tethered to Killian.

What's bothering you, love? he wondered silently, his heart heavy with the realization that he didn't have the answer.

As Ava droned on, Eli found himself growing restless. The longer he sat there, the more he yearned to return to the office—or better yet, to Killian. For all their fights, all their unspoken words, Killian was his anchor, the one person who made him feel alive.

He made a mental note to check in on Killian the moment he returned to the office. Perhaps it was nothing. Perhaps it was everything. Either way, Eli couldn't shake the feeling that his husband needed him, and that thought alone was enough to make him want to leave this lunch behind.

.....

The dining room was silent except for the soft ticking of the clock on the wall. Eli sat at the head of the table, his fingers drumming idly on the polished wood as he glanced at the empty seat across from him. Dinner was laid out immaculately—steaming plates of Killian's favorite dishes that Sam had painstakingly prepared. But the absence of his husband gnawed at him, just as it had the night before.

Sam stood nearby, her knowing gaze flickering toward Eli as she spoke. "Would you like me to take a tray upstairs? He didn't come down yesterday either."

Eli shook his head, his voice firm but polite. "No, thank you, Sam. I'll handle it tonight."

Sam raised an eyebrow, her lips curling into a faint, knowing smile before she turned and left the room. Once she was gone, the smile faded from Eli's face, replaced by a frown of determination. He wouldn't let Killian sulk alone, starving himself out of sheer stubbornness.

Rising from his chair, Eli walked to Killian's room. He paused outside the door, his hand hovering over the wood before he knocked firmly.

"Go away," came Killian's muffled voice from inside.

Eli's jaw tightened. "Dinner's ready."

“I’ll eat later.”

“You said that yesterday,” Eli countered, his tone hardening. “And you didn’t eat. Come out, or I’ll break down the door.”

Silence followed, thick and heavy.

“Killian,” Eli warned, his voice low and commanding.

When no response came, Eli’s patience snapped. He raised his fist and began knocking insistently, the rhythmic sound echoing through the hallway.

“Alright, alright, I’m coming!” Killian’s irritated voice called out. Moments later, the door opened to reveal him, his dark eyes glaring with annoyance.

Eli stepped back, crossing his arms as he watched Killian brush past him and head toward the dining room. The younger man’s movements were brisk, his posture tense, but he didn’t say a word.

Once at the table, Killian’s irritation seemed to melt away as he saw the spread before him. His favorite dishes were all there, the familiar scents making his stomach growl despite himself. He sat down and began eating, his focus entirely on the food.

Eli followed him, taking his seat once more and watching Killian eat in silence. At first, he let it slide, allowing the quiet to settle between them. But as the minutes dragged on, the silence began to grate on him.

“How was your day?” Eli asked, his voice cutting through the stillness.

Killian didn’t look up. “Good.”

Eli’s brow furrowed. “Did you have lunch?”

Killian nodded, finishing a bite before answering. “I went out with Cecily.”

At the mention of Cecily, Eli’s mind froze, then darkened. His thoughts spiraled as jealousy clawed its way to the surface. His grip on his fork tightened, his knuckles whitening.

“Cecily?” he asked, his tone deceptively calm. “How did you meet her?”

Killian looked up, his expression neutral. “She stopped by my office and asked if I wanted to grab lunch. I didn’t have anything else planned, so I went.”

“What did you two do?” Eli pressed, his voice a notch lower, the tension palpable.

Killian shrugged, oblivious to the storm brewing in Eli’s chest. “We just ate and talked. She’s a friend, Eli. That’s all.”

Eli’s mind raced. A friend. Cecily, of all people. The idea of Killian sharing a meal, sharing laughs, sharing *anything* with someone else filled him with a dark, burning jealousy.

Killian, completely unaware of Eli's inner turmoil, stood and picked up his plate. "Thanks for the dinner. I'll wash this and head back upstairs."

Eli watched as Killian walked to the sink, the sound of running water filling the room. His eyes traced the lines of Killian's back, the casual way he moved as if everything were fine, as if Eli weren't being consumed by the thought of Cecily.



The plate clinked softly as Killian set it on the drying rack. Without another glance at Eli, he left the kitchen, retreating to his room once more.

Eli sat there, alone at the table, his mind churning. The jealousy that simmered within him wasn't just about Cecily. The thought of anyone—friend or not—sharing a piece of Killian that Eli couldn't reach was unbearable.



His fingers tapped against the table as he made a silent vow: Killian was his, and no one—not Cecily, not anyone—would take him away.


Chapter End Notes


Hey, lovely readers!  <3

First off, HAPPY NEW YEAR!  I can't believe we're stepping into 2025 together—it's been an incredible journey sharing this story with all of you. 

This chapter was a rollercoaster to write! From Eli's simmering jealousy to Killian's quiet defiance.

Oh, and guess what? Another chapter will be dropping later today!  So stay tuned for more chaos and havoc (as usual). 

Here's to another year filled with love, drama, and all the stories that make our hearts race.  You guys are amazing, and I couldn't do this without you!

Until next time, stay safe, stay fabulous, and let me know your thoughts in the comments—I love hearing from you! 

CHAPTER 13

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli leaned back in his plush office chair, staring at the selfie Killian had sent him during lunch. The photo featured Killian and Cecily sitting together at a chic restaurant, the caption mocking him in its nonchalance: *Lunch with bestie*. The audacity. A part of Eli felt pleased that Killian had company, someone to make him smile in his boring day. But an even larger part of him—the darker, possessive part—was simmering.

No one deserved Killian’s attention more than he did.

Without a second thought, he reached for his phone and called Killian.

Killian walked into Eli’s office moments later, the door swinging open with his usual lack of decorum. "What’s up, *darling*?" he asked, casual as ever, sauntering over to stand near Eli’s desk, hands tucked into his pockets.

Eli looked up at him, his expression unreadable but his sharp eyes locked onto Killian like a hawk. "Why didn’t you call me to lunch today?"

Killian tilted his head, clearly caught off guard by the question. "Lunch?" he echoed, a mischievous glint creeping into his eyes. "I thought you’d be busy, you know, doing whatever *serious businessmen* do. I didn’t want to bother you."

Eli’s brow twitched. He leaned forward, resting his elbows on the desk. "Bother me? That’s your excuse?"

Killian shrugged, entirely unbothered by Eli’s tone. "Why not? Besides, Cecily and I had a good time. She’s great company. Maybe you should try it sometime."

Eli’s jaw tightened. His eyes dropped to the phone on his desk, still displaying the offending selfie. "From now on," he said slowly, deliberately, "have lunch with me. Not Cecily."

Killian’s lips quirked into a sly smile, his teasing nature kicking into full gear. "Oh? Is someone jealous?"

Eli’s gaze shot up to meet his, sharp and unflinching. "I’m not jealous," he said, his voice calm yet laced with steel.

Killian didn’t buy it for a second. He stepped closer to Eli’s desk, leaning on it slightly, his grin growing wider. "Right. Of course, you’re not. You just decided, out of the blue, that you’d rather I have lunch with you every day. Totally not jealous behavior."

Eli’s silence was telling, but he didn’t give Killian the satisfaction of a response. Instead, he waited, his eyes narrowing as Killian continued to bait him.

“Relax, Eli,” Killian said, his voice playful as he tapped the edge of the desk. “Cecily’s not stealing me away. What’s the big deal? She’s just a friend. You should try trusting your husband for once.”

The words were meant to be light, teasing, but the moment Killian turned to step away, Eli moved.

With one fluid motion, Eli stood, closing the distance between them in an instant. He caught Killian by the wrist, spinning him back around and pinning him firmly against the edge of the desk. Killian’s breath hitched, his playful demeanor faltering for just a moment as Eli loomed over him, his presence overwhelming.

“Yes,” Eli said, his voice low, intimate, as he leaned in, his hands braced on either side of Killian. “Why wouldn’t I be jealous? You’re my husband, Killian. Not hers. Not anyone else’s.”

Killian blinked, startled by the raw honesty in Eli’s tone. For a moment, he forgot how to breathe. But then his smirk returned, albeit shakier than before. “Wow, Eli,” he teased softly, trying to maintain his usual composure. “I didn’t know you cared so much.”

Eli’s lips curled into a faint smile, one that didn’t quite reach his eyes but sent a shiver down Killian’s spine nonetheless. “You have no idea how much I care,” Eli murmured, his voice a silken threat. His hand slid to Killian’s chin, tilting it up slightly. “But keep testing me, and you’ll find out.”

Killian’s heart raced, a mix of amusement and something darker flickering in his chest. “Possessive much?” he quipped, his voice betraying a slight tremor.

Eli didn’t respond. Instead, he let his actions speak. He closed the gap between them further, his lips brushing against the shell of Killian’s ear as he whispered, “You’re mine, my husband, Killian. Remember that.”

Killian swallowed hard, his usual snark failing him as Eli pulled back just enough to look him in the eyes, his gaze smoldering. The room felt too warm, the air thick with unspoken tension.

For once, Killian was at a loss for words. And Eli? Eli relished every second of it.

Killian, despite the blush creeping up his neck, wasn’t one to back down. The way Eli claimed him with his words, the possessive tone in his voice, sent shivers through him—but it also stoked his mischievous streak. He couldn’t let Eli win this so easily.

“Oh, is that right?” Killian drawled, tilting his head defiantly, his smirk back in full force. “So, what exactly are you going to do about it, Mr. King? Declare me yours in every meeting?huh?”

Eli’s jaw twitched, but his intense gaze remained locked on Killian. “You think this is a game?” he asked, his voice quiet, but the dangerous edge to it was unmistakable.

Killian chuckled, his fingers casually toying with the fabric of Eli’s tie, pulling him closer by just a fraction. “Everything’s a game, Eli. You’re just mad because you’re losing.”

Eli leaned in, their faces now mere inches apart. The heat in his gaze was almost suffocating, but Killian refused to falter. He thrived in this tension, in pushing Eli’s buttons until he broke that

cool, composed façade.

“You really want to test me?” Eli asked, his voice dropping into a low growl, his hands tightening on the edge of the desk on either side of Killian.

Killian bit his lip, his smirk morphing into something more daring. “Oh, I’m counting on it.”

That did it. Eli’s patience snapped like a taut string. He surged forward, his lips crashing against Killian’s in a heated, possessive kiss. It wasn’t soft or tentative—it was a claiming, a declaration of everything Eli had been holding back.

Killian gasped against him, momentarily caught off guard, but quickly recovered. His hands slid up to Eli’s shoulders, gripping him as he kissed back with just as much fervor, refusing to let Eli think he had the upper hand.

The kiss deepened, Eli’s hands moving to Killian’s waist, pulling him flush against him. Killian couldn’t help the small sound that escaped his throat, and Eli smirked against his lips, clearly satisfied at finally turning the tables.

When Eli finally pulled back, both of them were breathing hard. Killian’s cheeks were flushed, his lips slightly swollen, but his eyes still gleamed with that playful defiance.

“So,” Killian said, his voice slightly breathless, “is this the part where you confess your undying love or just tell me to stop having lunch with Cecily?”

Eli’s smirk returned, his thumb brushing lightly over Killian’s bottom lip. “Neither,” he said, his voice smooth and low. “This is the part where you stop underestimating just how far I’ll go to remind you who you belong to.”

Killian blinked, his heartbeat thundering in his ears. For once, he didn’t have a snarky comeback. Eli stepped back slightly, adjusting his tie as if nothing had just happened, but the satisfied gleam in his eyes said otherwise.

“Lunch tomorrow,” Eli said casually, straightening his jacket. “Don’t forget. With me. Not Cecily.”

Killian watched him walk back around to his desk, utterly stunned but unwilling to admit it. A slow grin spread across his face as he turned to leave. Eli King was maddeningly attractive when he was like this.

And damn it, Killian wasn’t sure whether he wanted to tease him more—or kiss him again.

.....

Killian leaned back in his chair, still reeling from the kiss that had unfolded earlier. His fingers ghosted over his lips, the phantom heat of Eli’s lips still lingering. A giddy grin spread across his face as he thought about it, his heart thrumming with exhilaration. Eli King, his composed and infuriatingly perfect husband, had finally cracked, and oh, Killian loved it. He loved this raw, possessive side of Eli—a side he hadn’t seen before, a side he desperately wanted to draw out again and again.

He started scheming, wondering what new buttons he could push to make Eli lose that tightly wound control once more. Perhaps another lunch with Cecily, or maybe...a teasing picture at dinner tonight. Yes, something to fan the flames. Killian chuckled darkly to himself, already plotting.

But then his grin faltered.

Movement outside his office caught his eye. A familiar figure walked purposefully down the corridor toward Eli's office. Killian's gaze sharpened. Ava Nash. He straightened in his seat, his playful thoughts evaporating like smoke.

Ava, with her perfectly styled hair and pristine business attire, held a tablet in one hand and a folder in the other, her heels clicking confidently on the marble floor. Killian's jaw tightened. He knew all about Ava's long-standing crush on Eli.

Killian's fingers drummed against the armrest of his chair, his initial irritation deepening into something darker. His demons stirred, their whispers insidious.

She's going to him. She wants him. She's always wanted him. Does he want her? Does he miss her?

Killian's grip tightened on the chair. *No*, he told himself, forcing his breathing to slow. *Eli isn't interested in her.* But even as he tried to reassure himself, the demons pressed harder, their voices like venom in his ear.

You don't know that. She's beautiful. Ambitious. Devoted. Everything you're not. What if he thinks you're just a game? What if she's the one he truly wants?

Killian clenched his fists, his nails digging into his palms. His mind conjured images of Ava leaning over Eli's desk, her lips curling into a smile, her fingers brushing his as she handed him a document. The thought was unbearable.

Red. Red. Red.

The demons wanted blood. They wanted chaos. They wanted to rip Ava Nash apart limb by limb, to silence her smug confidence and erase her existence from Eli's world.

Killian's breath hitched as he imagined it—his hands wrapped around her throat, her terrified eyes looking up at him as he whispered, "He's mine." He shuddered, shaking the dark thoughts away. *No. Not here. Control is everything.*

He forced himself to take a steadying breath, his chest rising and falling as he tried to quell the storm raging inside him. He leaned forward, resting his elbows on his desk, his fingers threading through his hair. *Eli isn't interested in Ava*, he repeated silently, trying to make the words stick. *He kissed you. He told you you're his.*

But the whispers didn't stop. *Then why is she going to him?*

Killian cursed under his breath. He hated this feeling—the gnawing insecurity, the jealousy that burned like acid in his veins. He hated that Ava Nash could reduce him to this.

His vision swam with red for a moment, the demons howling for release. They wanted him to follow her, to throw open the door and stake his claim. They wanted him to remind her—and Eli—exactly who Eli belonged to.

But he didn't move.

Control. Control. Control.

Killian sat back, his hands trembling slightly as he gripped the arms of his chair. *He's yours. Eli is yours*, he told himself again. But the demons whispered back, their laughter cruel. *Then why do you feel like you're losing him?*

He exhaled slowly, his eyes narrowing. If Ava Nash thought she could worm her way into Eli's life, she was sorely

For now, he would wait. But if Ava crossed a line...

The red would return. And this time, Killian wouldn't hold it back



Chapter End Notes

Hi lovely readers! 🥰💕

I had way too much fun writing this scene! Eli and Killian's dynamic is just a delicious mix of possessive tension and playful banter that I simply live for. 😊🔥 Eli finally showing his jealous side? Ugh, And Killian? Our lovable little chaos gremlin just can't help but push his buttons, can he? 😂 Honestly, these two are the embodiment of "when unstoppable force meets immovable object," and I'm so here for it.

Let me know what you think of their chemistry! 💌 Did you want to shake Killian for poking Eli, or were you rooting for his mischief? And that kiss—too much, or just perfect? 🙄

Thank you so much for reading and supporting! Your kudos, comments, and love mean the world to me. 💕

How was the image??

See you in the next chapter! 🙄

CHAPTER 14

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli entered Killian's sleek office, the faint smell of coffee and cedar lingering in the air. He was ready to sweep his husband away for lunch when his gaze landed on Cecily, perched casually on the edge of Killian's desk, her heels swinging idly. They were chatting, seemingly about nothing particularly important, but it was enough to light a possessive fire in Eli.

"Killian," Eli said, stepping further into the room, his tone calm but unmistakably firm, "I came to call you for lunch."

Cecily looked up with a smirk, clearly delighted to see him. "Lunch? How cute."

Eli's sharp gaze flicked to her. "Yes. *My husband* and I have planned a lunch today." He emphasized "husband" as if daring her to contest it.

Cecily, never one to back down from a challenge, arched a perfectly shaped brow and smirked mischievously. "So what?" she said, her voice laced with playful defiance.

Before Eli could retort, she turned to Killian with a grin. "Can I join you?"

Killian looked between Cecily and Eli.

"No," Eli cut in firmly, his tone leaving no room for debate.

Cecily's smirk widened into a full-blown grin as she turned her gaze to Eli. "Oh, don't be such a broody spoilsport," she teased, her eyes dancing with amusement. "Relax, Eli. I promise not to steal your *beloved husband*."

Killian glanced between them, clearly trying to process the interaction. "I don't mind if Cecily comes?" he ventured hesitantly, looking at Eli like a man who knew he was about to step into quicksand. Knowing the danger of provoking Eli full well, because Eli had the audacity to take Ava Nash for lunch so he is bringing his friend for lunch maybe to make Eli jealous too.

Eli narrowed his eyes, his jaw tightening. "Cecily, you have your own lunch plans, don't you?"

"Have fun, Killy", she said, hopping off the desk and giving Eli a wink. She grabbed her purse and strutted past Eli, tossing a sly grin over her shoulder. "Don't wait too long, Kill. We wouldn't want your *husband* to get any grumpier."

With that, she disappeared down the hallway, her laughter echoing behind her.

Eli glared after Cecily before looking at Killian. "I don't like her" he said flatly.

Killian bit back a laugh, pressing a quick kiss to Eli's cheek. "Whatever you say, *husband*."

Eli stands there stunned tracing his cheek his ear turning red.

What the hell is happening to him?

.....

Eli and Killian sat across from each other in a quiet, upscale bistro. The dim lighting and soft music gave the illusion of intimacy—something that neither man would openly admit they felt but couldn't quite ignore.

Killian's eyes flicked over the menu, his brows furrowed in concentration. Eli, however, had abandoned his menu entirely, his gaze fixed on his husband.

"You're staring," Killian said without looking up.

Eli leaned back in his chair, a faint smirk tugging at his lips. "Can you blame me? You're the most appetizing thing at this table."

Killian's hand paused mid-page-turn, his ears going faintly red. He recovered quickly, glancing up at Eli with a dry expression. "And yet, here you are, still hungry. Strange."

Eli chuckled, low and rich, before resting his chin on his hand. "Hungry is an understatement."

Killian's eyes narrowed slightly, though the corners of his mouth betrayed a ghost of a smile. "Do you plan to order, or are you just here to torment me?"

Eli's gaze lazily drifted to Killian's lips, lingering for just a moment before he replied, "Oh, I've already decided on what I want."

Killian cleared his throat and went back to the menu, trying—and failing—not to notice the way Eli's eyes stayed on him.

When the waiter arrived, Eli spoke first. "I'll have the steak, medium rare. And he'll have..." He paused, his lips quirking upward as he studied Killian. "Need help?"

Killian glared at him over the menu. "I'll order for myself, thanks."

Eli raised his hands in mock surrender. "Fine, fine. Just looking out for you, *darling*."

Killian ignored him, though his ears were red again as he placed his order.

Once the waiter left, Killian folded his arms and leaned back in his chair, his blue eyes meeting Eli's with a calm intensity. "You're in an awfully good mood today. What's the occasion?"

Eli grinned, leaning forward slightly. "Do I need an occasion to enjoy spending time with my husband?"

Killian scoffed, though there was no heat behind it. "You mean 'annoy' your husband."

Eli feigned shock, placing a hand dramatically over his chest. "Annoy you? Kill, you wound me. I'm just here to keep you entertained."

Killian quirked a brow. "Entertained, huh? Is that what we're calling this?"

Eli's grin turned wolfish, his voice dropping just a fraction. "Oh, I can call it whatever you want, Kill. I aim to please."

Killian's breath hitched, but he masked it with a quick sip of water. "You're impossible."

"And yet, here I am," Eli said smoothly, his tone both teasing and intimate. "Your *impossible* husband."

Killian opened his mouth to retort, but the waiter returned with their drinks, breaking the tension.

As the waiter left, Eli lifted his glass of wine, tilting it slightly toward Killian. "To us."

Killian gave him a skeptical look. "To us?"

Eli shrugged, his smirk playful. "Why not? We've survived this long, haven't we?"

Killian shook his head but raised his glass anyway. "To survival, then."

Their glasses clinked softly, and Eli's smirk softened into something warmer, more genuine. Killian caught the look, his chest tightening in a way he didn't fully understand.

"Careful, Kill," Eli said, his voice low and teasing as he took a sip of his wine. "You keep looking at me like that, and I might think you're starting to like me."

Killian rolled his eyes, but his cheeks were faintly pink. "Don't flatter yourself."

"Oh, I don't need to flatter myself," Eli said, leaning forward with a glint in his eye. "I've got you for that, don't I?"

Killian groaned, though he couldn't stop the small smile tugging at his lips. "You're unbearable."

"And yet, here you are," Eli repeated with a grin, his voice dropping just enough to make Killian's pulse skip.

The rest of the lunch passed in much the same way—hidden smiles, teasing remarks, and the kind of banter that felt more like foreplay than conversation. Neither of them would admit it aloud, but beneath the laughter and the jabs, there was something real. Something they were both too stubborn—and too scared—to put into words.

.....

The sleek black car pulled up to the grand King's mansion, its imposing facade illuminated by the soft glow of elegant lanterns. Eli parked with precision, his expression as calm and composed as ever. Tonight was another one of those dinners—a blend of family formality and subtle jabs.

Stepping out of the car, Eli adjusted his suit jacket, already anticipating the scene to follow.. Last week's gift from Killian's father—a book titled "*How to Treat Your Husband Like Royalty*"—

had been wrapped neatly in a gift box, dripping with Carson family pettiness. Killian seems to get it from his father.

Eli rounded the car, opening Killian's door with practiced ease. Killian, leaning casually in his seat, arched a brow. "Oh, you're learning," he teased, his voice laced with mock surprise.

Killian then offered his hand for Eli to take with an infuriating smirk that made Eli want to swallow Killian whole.

Eli held back a smirk, leaning slightly as if to offer a hand, but instead, his warm lips pressed gently against Killian's hand. The kiss was soft but deliberate, a tender act that sent a spark of electricity between them.

Killian's usual sharp retort caught in his throat. His eyes widened slightly, and a faint flush spread across his cheeks, betraying the carefully maintained nonchalance. He quickly turned his head, pretending to inspect the mansion while his free hand brushed against his warm, rosy cheek.

"What was that?," he murmured, his tone attempting to be scolding but faltering under his flustered state.

Eli straightened, his dark eyes glinting with playful amusement. "Isn't that how good husbands act?" he asked smoothly, his voice low and intimate as he extended his arm, gesturing for Killian to step out of the car.

Killian mumbled something under his breath—likely a snarky comment—before accepting Eli's hand, avoiding his gaze as he stepped out. Eli found himself savoring the sight, cherishing the small, flustered gestures Killian tried to mask.

As they walked toward the grand entrance, Eli's lips quirked into a barely-there smile. No matter how cool and composed he appeared to others, he adored every single one of Killian's unpredictable quirks. The snark, the fire, the fleeting vulnerability that only Eli was privy to—it was all his. And Eli wouldn't have it any other way.

.....

The grand doors of the King mansion swung open as Eli and Killian stepped inside, the air filled with a mix of formality and familial tension that always seemed to accompany their gatherings. Before Killian could fully take in the familiar opulence of the place, a whirlwind named Reina Carson, his mother, swept toward him.

"There's my baby boy!" Reina cooed, her arms enveloping Killian in a tight embrace that could rival a boa constrictor's. She stepped back, her sharp eyes scanning him as if searching for any signs of mistreatment. "You've lost weight, haven't you? Are you eating enough? And what's this?" She poked lightly at his cheek. "You're not moisturizing properly, are you? That's it—after dinner, I'm giving you that serum I told you about."

Killian groaned, his cheeks flushing slightly. "Mum, I'm fine. Stop fussing. I—"

Before he could finish, Reina had already begun listing all the reasons why he needed to take better care of himself, her voice fading into the background as Elsa King, Eli's mother, swept in

with her own warm welcome.

“Killian, darling!” Elsa exclaimed, pulling him into a hug that was just as tight but infinitely more graceful. “I’m so happy to have you here today, as your mother-in-law.” She pulled back, her hands resting on his shoulders as she smiled. “But none of this formal nonsense—call me Elsa, please.”

Killian managed a polite smile. “Of course, Elsa. Thank you for having us.”

Next came Aiden King, Eli’s father, who offered Killian a handshake and a faint but sincere smile. “Welcome, Killian,” he said simply, his words more reserved but not unkind.

Killian had barely finished shaking Aiden’s hand when Asher Carson, his father, swooped in with a bear hug that nearly lifted him off the ground.

“There’s my son!” Asher boomed, laughing as he set Killian down. “How’s married life treating you? Is that husband of yours taking good care of you, or do I need to have a word with him or better yet there is another option?”

Killian rolled his eyes but smiled despite himself. “He’s doing fine, Dad. No need for any dramatic interventions.”

Eli’s grin only widened as he looked at his father-in-law. “You know,” he began, his tone infuriatingly calm, “for someone who thinks I’m unworthy, you sure did go out of your way to send me that book. Sounds like you were rooting for me after all.”

“That book was just tips on how to worship my son,” Asher growled, his protective papa-bear instincts flaring. “Not a sign of approval.”

“And here I thought it was a blessing,” Eli quipped, his voice practically dripping with sarcasm. “Guess I’ll just have to keep working on winning you over, hmm?”

Asher’s face darkened, and he took a step closer, his imposing frame casting a shadow over Eli.

Killian finally intervened, stepping between the two of them and holding up his hands. “Alright, enough,” he snapped, glaring at both men. “Dad, stop acting like Eli is the enemy. And Eli, stop provoking him.”

Eli tilted his head, clearly unrepentant. “What? I’m just trying to bond with my father-in-law.”

Asher snorted. “Bond? More like antagonize.”

“Tomato, tomahto,” Eli shot back with a shrug.

Reina stepped forward, her voice stern as she addressed her husband. “Asher, stop. Seriously you are both fighting like kids.”

Killian shook his head, exasperated. “Why do I even bother?” He turned to his father, softening his tone. “Dad, I appreciate the protectiveness, but I can handle my own life. And Eli—believe it or not—is good to me.”

Asher scoffed. "I'll believe that when I see it."

Eli smirked, stepping closer to Killian and casually slipping an arm around his waist. "Oh, I think you'll see it soon enough. After all, I've got a lifetime to prove you wrong, don't I?"

Asher looked ready to retort, but Elsa cut him off. "Enough, both of you. Dinner's waiting, and I am *not* letting your petty squabbles ruin my perfectly cooked roast."

Asher gave Eli one last glare before reluctantly following his wife. Killian sighed, turning to Eli with a tired look. "You really can't help yourself, can you?"

Eli shrugged, his expression softening as he gazed at Killian. "What can I say? Annoying your dad is my second favorite hobby. My first? Making you smile."

Killian rolled his eyes but couldn't hide the faint blush creeping up his neck. "You're impossible. How can you even talk like this? Sometimes you never speak and when you speak you just speak all those cheesy shit"

"Married life seems to treat me better it seems," Eli teased.

.....

As they all gathered around the dining table, the rich aroma of what was supposed to be a roast filled the room. Or rather, the slightly smoky scent of something that had spent a little too long in the oven. Elsa, radiant as ever, beamed at her family as she placed the dish in the center of the table.

Killian, ever the polite son-in-law, took the first bite with a practiced smile. His palate was immediately assaulted by the unmistakable bitterness of charred meat, but his expression didn't falter. Instead, he swallowed it down like a champ, turned to Elsa, and said with conviction, "This is wonderful, Elsa. You've really outdone yourself."

Elsa's face lit up like the morning sun, her pride palpable. "Oh, Killian, you're too sweet! I'm so glad you like it. I wasn't sure if it turned out okay."

Asher and Reina, on the other hand, were not as practiced in the art of deception. They exchanged a look of mutual betrayal as they struggled to choke down their bites, their eyes watering slightly. Reina discreetly reached for her glass of water, while Asher gritted his teeth, his jaw working overtime to make it through the overcooked meal.

Killian noticed their distress and internally winced but kept his act up. He was too far in now. "It's really got a... unique smoky flavor," he added, trying to find something salvageable to say.

Aiden, who had been silent up until now, nodded in approval, his stoic expression betraying no sign of discomfort. He set his fork down and commented, "A man of good taste. Appreciating Elsa's cooking is the mark of a discerning palate." His words carried the weight of approval.

Killian caught the subtle shift in Aiden's demeanor and realized with a mix of relief and dread that praising Elsa's cooking was apparently the way to win his father-in-law's respect. **Easy peasy**, he thought. Or so he believed until Elsa's delighted expression grew even brighter.

“Oh, you’re such a dear, Killian!” she chirped, picking up the serving spoon. “Here, let me give you another helping.”

Killian’s polite smile faltered for a fraction of a second as the charred remnants of the roast landed on his plate. He glanced at the heaping portion, regret and resignation warring in his mind. **Regrets. So many regrets.**

Asher, still chewing what might as well have been charcoal, shot him a withering look that said, *This is your fault for marrying Eli King.*

Killian smiled faintly, lifting his fork again, thinking about how he was going to get through the rest of the night. As he speared another piece of the roast, he muttered under his breath, “For love and family... even burnt sacrifices.”

And across the table, Eli smirked, watching the entire spectacle unfold with poorly disguised amusement. *Welcome to the family, love*

Chapter End Notes

Hey readers! ✨

I AM BACKKKK!!!

I hope you enjoyed this chapter! From the fluff to teasing to banter toflirting?, I had a blast bringing these moments to life. The dynamics are heating up, and I can’t wait for you to see what happens next. 😊 Things are only going to get more intense, so brace yourselves for drama, passion, and maybe a few surprises along the way.

Thank you so much for your support—it means the world! ❤️ Stay tuned for the next chapter; it’s going to be worth the wait! 🙏

CHAPTER 15

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The night air was crisp and alive with chatter as Eli and Killian walked hand in hand into the grand estate, the venue for tonight's get-together. The place was brimming with friends and family, their laughter and conversations echoing off the marble floors. Fairy lights twinkled above, and the faint scent of champagne lingered in the air.

The opulence of the gala swirled around Killian, but he was too focused on his champagne flute and the two men standing near him—Vaughn Morozov, ever the smug provocateur, and Gareth Carson, his older brother, the unflappable anchor to Killian's storm. Vaughn, leaning casually against the bar, smirked as he swirled his drink.

“So, Killian,” Vaughn began, his tone laced with mischief. “How's married life treating you? Eli's quite the doting husband, isn't he? All tender words and romantic gestures, I'm sure.”

Killian froze, his champagne flute halfway to his lips. He blinked, his expression deadpan, before setting the glass down with an exaggerated clink. “Doting? Tender?” he repeated, his voice dripping with incredulity. “Oh, Vaughn, sweet summer child. Let me educate you.”

Gareth glanced at Vaughn, already bracing himself as Killian turned toward them with a dramatic flair, his hands gesturing like a theater actor about to deliver a soliloquy.

“My dear husband,” Killian began, sarcasm dripping from every word, “is what you'd call emotionally constipated. A man of few words and even fewer feelings. You think he's romantic? You think he's tender? Oh no, my dear Vaughn, Eli would rather make love to his spreadsheets than to me! I can't even understand him. One minute he is so silent and the next minute he is too flirty. That man surely has a personality disorder.”

Vaughn chuckled, clearly enjoying the show, while Gareth pinched the bridge of his nose, sensing a storm brewing.

“Do you know how many times I've tried to seduce that man?” Killian continued, his tone turning conspiratorial as if he were sharing state secrets. “I could walk into his office wearing nothing but a tie, and he'd say, ‘Killian, I'm in a meeting.’ A meeting! As if his meetings are more important than this—” he gestured to himself dramatically, “—this absolute hot mess of a husband he vowed to love and cherish!”

Vaughn tried to stifle a laugh, but Killian caught it. “Oh, you think it's funny, do you?” Killian jabbed a finger at Vaughn. “You don't live with him”

Vaughn was shaking with laughter now, and Gareth sighed. “Killian, maybe this isn't—”

“Oh, don't ‘Killian’ me!” Killian snapped, turning to Gareth. “You're my brother. You're supposed to be on my side. Do you know how frustrating it is to live with a man who thinks romance is scheduling quality time like it's a quarterly report? I deserve better. I deserve passion. I deserve to be worshipped!”

“I’m sure Eli worships you in his own way,” Gareth said diplomatically.

“In his own way?” Killian repeated, scandalized. “Gareth, his ‘own way’ is asking me if I’ve seen the quarterly profit margins while we’re supposed to be cuddling!”

Vaughn, sensing an opportunity, added fuel to the fire. “Dude you signed up for this when you agreed for the arranged marriage.”

Killian’s eyes widened, and he leaned closer to Vaughn, his voice dropping to a stage whisper. “Fuck you. But but still.....”

Vaughn’s amusement reached its peak, and he subtly began edging away. “Well, Killian, it sounds like you’ve got a lot to unpack there. I, uh, need to grab another drink.”

“Oh, no, you don’t!” Killian exclaimed, grabbing Vaughn’s arm. “You started this. You’re going to listen to the whole rant.”

But Vaughn, ever the slippery one, managed to extricate himself. “Gareth, I think you’ve got this under control. Good luck, buddy,” he said quickly, clapping Gareth on the shoulder before slipping into the crowd.

Gareth groaned as Killian turned to him, undeterred. “And another thing! He has this annoying habit of pretending he doesn’t hear me when I’m mad—”

Gareth rubbed his temples as Killian continued his rant, now comparing Eli’s emotional distance to the cold vacuum of space. Vaughn, meanwhile, smirked from a safe distance, raising his glass in salute to the chaos he’d left behind.

.....

Killian way to the center of the party, where Jeremy and Nikolai stood talking. With a glass of whiskey in hand, Killian wasted no time joining the conversation, though it quickly devolved into his favorite pastime: roasting Jeremy and Nikolai.

“Jeremy, who even chooses your shirts? They are,” Killian asks.

Jeremy rolled his eyes but chuckled. “Oh please, I’m still the best-dressed man in the room.”

“Keep telling yourself that, jerry,” Killian replied, raising his glass mockingly. “Nikolai, do you even own a shirt that isn’t three sizes too small? Are you trying to show off the muscles we all know you Photoshop?”

Nikolai laughed, shaking his head. “Jealousy doesn’t suit you, Killian.”

As Killian took another sip of his drink, his sharp ears picked up on a conversation happening at a nearby table. The voices were unfamiliar: a girl’s lilting tone and some girls voice that he doesn’t recognise.

Killian turned slightly, his gaze narrowing as he honed in on their words.

“How did Eli king even marry Killian Carson?” A girl voice spoke. “Why so suddenly? When did they even fall in love? I though he liked Ava”

Killian’s grip on his glass tightened. He froze, his chest tightening as he waited for the response.

Another girl’s voice chimed in, dripping with amusement. “Oh, come on, Amy. Isn’t it obvious? King used to come to the island all the time while Ava were at university. He’d stay in the Elites mansion for days. If that’s not interest his interest in Ava, then what was that? I would even as far as to call it love.”

Killian’s vision blurred at the edges as a surge of jealousy and anger consumed him. The thought of Eli’s past visits to the island for Ava suddenly took on a sinister undertone in his mind, his insecurities feeding the flames.

Without thinking, Killian set down his drink with a sharp clink and strode past Eli, his movements brisk and tense.

“Killian?” Eli called after him, his brows furrowing in concern. He reached out, but Killian pulled his arm away, brushing past the gathering crowd.

“Killian, wait!” Eli’s voice was louder this time, drawing the attention of a few onlookers, but Killian didn’t stop. He made his way to the driveway, his sleek red car waiting.

Eli caught up just as Killian got into the car, his face taut with frustration. “What’s wrong? Talk to me.”

Killian ignored him, slamming the door shut. The engine roared to life, and before Eli could say another word, Killian drove off, the tires screeching slightly as he sped down the estate’s winding driveway.

Eli stood there, stunned for a moment, before cursing under his breath. He quickly made his way to his own car, determination written across his face. He had no idea what had set Killian off, but he wasn’t about to let him leave like this.

The drive back to their home was tense. Killian’s car was just ahead, weaving through the streets with reckless speed, and Eli kept a safe but close distance behind. His mind raced as he tried to piece together what could have happened.

By the time they reached the house, Killian was already inside, slamming the front door behind him. Eli parked hurriedly and followed, stepping into the foyer just in time to see Killian disappear up the stairs.

“Killian!” Eli called out, his voice echoing through the house.

Killian didn’t respond. The sound of a door slamming upstairs told Eli where he’d gone.

Eli took a deep breath, steeling himself before heading upstairs. He paused outside the closed door, his hand resting on the cool wood. For a moment, he considered giving Killian space, but the memory of his husband’s stormy expression pushed him forward.

“Killian, open the door,” Eli said firmly.

Nothing.

Eli sighed, his patience wearing thin. “I’m not leaving until you talk to me. So, either you open this door, or I’ll stand here all night.”

The silence stretched, heavy and tense, before the door creaked open just a fraction. Killian’s face appeared, his expression still dark with anger and . . . hurt.

“What?” he snapped.

Eli stepped inside, closing the door behind him. “What happened? Why did you leave like that?”

Killian turned away, crossing his arms as he moved to the window. “It’s nothing. Forget it.”

Eli frowned as he took a step closer. “It’s not nothing. You don’t storm out of a party for no reason.”

Killian’s shoulders tensed, and for a moment, Eli thought he wouldn’t answer. But then he spoke, his voice low and bitter.

“I overheard someone talking,” Killian said. “About you. About how you used to stay at island to visit Ava Nash” he says Ava’s name with disgust.

Eli’s heart sank. He reached out, but Killian stepped back, shaking his head.

“Killian, it’s not like that—”

“Then what is it like, Eli?” Killian cut him off, his voice rising. “Because from where I’m standing, it seems like I’m the second choice. The one you settled for.”

“What did you just say?” Eli asked, his voice barely above a whisper, though his grip on Killian’s shoulders tightened.

Killian pulled back, his gaze icy and detached, though his trembling hands betrayed him. “You heard me,” he said flatly, his tone sharper than a blade. “If you want that pink bitch so badly—if that’s who you really wanted all along—there’s only one solution.”

Eli stared at him, a sinking feeling pooling in his stomach. The words that followed were both unexpected and a punch to his gut.

“Divorce.”

Chapter End Notes

Dear lovelies,

Ahhh, how was the chapter? I hope you felt all the emotions pouring out of these characters because they’ve been holding this in for so long. 😭

What do you think is gonna happen next?

Take care, my lovely readers! Sending you all the hugs and hearts. 🤗❤️

CHAPTER 16

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli's arms tightened around Killian, his voice a low, possessive growl against the shell of his ear. "Divorce?" he echoed, his breath warm but his words cold and absolute. "No. That will never be an option. Not now, not ever. You are mine, Killian. Not even death can sever what we have."

Killian stilled in his arms, his sharp tongue silenced by the gravity of Eli's voice.

Eli leaned closer, his lips brushing against the soft skin of Killian's temple. "Do you know what 'till death do us part' means to me?" he murmured, his tone both dark and tender. "It's not a vow—it's a promise. Even in death, Killian, I will chase you to the edges of the afterlife. If you think you can escape me, you are mistaken. My love doesn't end with breath; it doesn't falter with time. You are bound to me, in this life and in every life after."

Killian swallowed hard, his heartbeat pounding against Eli's chest.

Eli's hand came up to cradle the back of Killian's neck, his thumb brushing gently against his pulse. "And if you ever think of leaving me, know this—I would tear through every veil between us. I'd drag you back from the grave, tether your soul to mine, and hold you in my arms until eternity itself shatters. Divorce?" His lips curled into a faint, humorless smile. "No, my love. Our story ends only when the universe itself burns to ash, and even then, I will find you in the embers."

Killian's breath hitched, his sharp wit momentarily dulled by the sheer weight of Eli's declaration. He should have been angry, should have snapped back, but Eli's words settled deep within him, wrapping around the cracks of his fragile heart like chains made of fire and steel.

Eli pulled back just enough to meet Killian's gaze, his dark eyes blazing with unyielding possession. "You can be angry, jealous, or even push me away, but I will never let you go. You're mine, Killian. Till death do us apart—and even then, I will be there, waiting, watching, loving you in the shadows."

For a moment, neither of them spoke. The only sound was the faint hum of the city outside the window and the uneven rhythm of their breathing.

Killian finally broke the silence, his voice shaking, though he tried to mask it. "What about Ava then? Don't you like her?"

Eli's smile turned into something reverent. He stepped closer, his hand cupping Killian's jaw with a gentleness that felt like a contradiction to his intensity. "Oh, Killian," he said, his voice dripping with certainty. "No. Never her. Ava has never been in the picture—she never even mattered. Do you think I came to the island for anyone but you? I didn't return to that island to see her. I returned because that's where you were. *You* were the reason. Always."

Killian's breath caught, but Eli didn't let him speak, his thumb brushing over Killian's cheek as though erasing the doubt.

“Ava?” Eli continued, his tone dismissive, almost scornful. “You, Killian—you have been the sun and the storm, the fire that burned through my very existence. You think I could ever waste my time on anyone else?”

Eli leaned in, his lips hovering just above Killian’s ear, his voice dipping into something darker, more fervent. “A decade ago, the moment I knew I could make your cheeks dust pink with just a few words, you became my everything. I’ve spent years watching you, unraveling you, learning every secret, every flaw, every perfect imperfection. You were, are, and always will be my object of obsession, *my beautiful chaos*.”

He pulled back just enough to look into Killian’s eyes, his gaze a mixture of adoration and possessiveness. “Making you mine was never just a goal, Killian. It was my destiny. And I’ll be damned if I let you forget it. Ava was never the reason. You are the reason I breathe, the reason my heart beats. I’ve been lost in you since the moment I first laid eyes on you, and I’ll stay lost in you until my last.”

Killian’s lips parted, but no words came out, silenced by the weight of Eli’s confession. Eli smiled again, his thumb brushing against Killian’s lower lip. “So don’t you dare speak of Ava again. She’s nothing, Killian. *You are everything*.”

Killian’s lips curled into a challenge, his tone low but laced with something dangerous. “Prove it to me,” he whispered, knowing full well he was playing with fire, with the devil himself.

Eli’s gaze darkened, his pupils dilating as if those words had unlocked something he’d kept chained for years. His lips parted in a slow, predatory smile, the kind that promised destruction and devotion in equal measure. “That’s what I’ve wanted to hear for years,” Eli murmured, his voice as soft as velvet and as sharp as a blade.

Before Killian could utter another word, Eli closed the distance between them, claiming his lips with a kiss so intoxicating, so consuming, that it felt as though the world tilted on its axis. The kiss wasn’t gentle; it was raw, hungry, a culmination of every dark, possessive thought Eli had ever harbored.

Killian gasped into the kiss, his hands instinctively gripping Eli’s shirt as if anchoring himself. Eli’s fingers tangled in Killian’s hair, pulling him impossibly closer, his lips moving with an urgency that made Killian feel as though he was both drowning and soaring.

It was intoxicating, this kiss—Eli kissed as if he were a man starved for years, devouring Killian with a ferocity that left no room for doubt, no room for air. Killian’s chest tightened, and he pulled back slightly, gasping for breath, but Eli didn’t let him go far.

“Breathe later,” Eli growled, his voice rough, his lips brushing against Killian’s as if he couldn’t bear to part even for a second. “I’ve waited too long for this. For you. For every damn piece of you, Killian.”

Killian shuddered, feeling his knees go weak as Eli kissed him again, slower this time but no less consuming. Eli’s hands slid to Killian’s waist, holding him steady, grounding him in the chaos he’d unleashed.

By the time Eli finally pulled back, his forehead resting against Killian’s, both of them were breathless, their hearts pounding in sync. Eli’s voice was hoarse but resolute as he whispered,

“Do you feel it now, Killian? My devotion. My proof. You’re mine, and I’ll never stop proving it.”

Killian’s response was a shaky exhale, his fingers still clutching Eli’s shirt.

***Smut warning**

“Eli,” Killian whispered, surprised at how raspy his voice was. He cleared his throat before saying. “I…” He couldn’t think of how to phrase it. “I want you,” he finally said. Eli’s eyes narrowed and he tilted his head. Killian continued. “Every part of you.”

Eli’s eyes held curiosity. That was the best way to describe it, curiosity. But also a fierceness sparked by either love or passion.

Eli’s eyes were still wild with fierce energy, “I want to fuck you.” The bluntness in his words threw Killian for a spin. “Yes or no?” Eli asked, impatient.

Killian nodded but he could tell that wasn’t enough consent for him, so he said “yes,” barely above a whisper. He cleared his throat and said again, “Yes. Yes. I’m so fucking ready, Eli.”

Killian watched Eli’s eyes widen before rushing Killian.. Eli sat with his knees on the bed and positioned Killian’s ass against his crotch, placing Killian’s legs on his shoulder. Eli leaned over Killian, grinding against him. Killian could feel Eli grow harder underneath his pants. His eyes would flutter in synchronicity with his hitched breaths.

Before Killian realized what he was doing, Eli tucked his fingers into Killian’s boxers and pulled. In one fell swoop, Eli left Killian exposed. Killian shivered at the sudden cool air. Eli took off his clothes while Killian slipped out of his shirt. Now that they were both bare, Eli once again lifted Killian’s legs, but this time he wrapped them around his hips. He slowly moved over top of Killian until their lips could touch. After a long kiss, Eli whispered, “Relax.”

Killian chuckled. If Eli didn’t say anything, he might not have ever noticed how much tension he was holding. “I am,” he said against Eli’s lips.

“You aren’t.” Eli said, flatly. “Just tell me what you need.”

Killian pulled down Eli for another kiss as if parting from Eli’s lips was not acceptable.

Eli spit in his hands. As he spread it across his middle finger, he met Killian’s eyes. With his other hand, he began slowly stroking Killian’s cock and Killian’s entire body filled with heat.

After a handful of strokes, Eli slowed. As soon as Killian got his breathing under control he felt Eli’s fingers rub against his spot. His eyes rolled back far enough to see stars.. He let out a moan, a cry for something he’s wanted longer than he even realized.

“Fuck!” His cheeks burned with embarrassment. Never did he think he’d like to be led this much. He had never bottomed for anyone. Unbeknownst to him, his body filled with tension

causing his legs to wrap Eli tighter. Killian felt a sudden change and mustered up the strength to look at Eli.

His hair now disheveled hung in front of his gray eyes, wide like an animal. His mouth hung open in a snarl, and his breathing was ragged. He held a ferocity Killian wasn't familiar with.

Eli's expression softened. "Are you still ready to do this?" He spoke a lot calmer and quieter than Killian expected.

"Yes," Killian said, scanning Eli's face for any sign of hesitation. There wasn't any.

Eli brought Killian's legs around him again. "Then relax, Killian." Killian followed orders and let himself relax.

They kissed hard enough to bruise lips. Eli's hands resumed movement, one hand stroking and the other tracing circles. His finger's applying pressure at Killian's opening, without ever going in.

Eli kept the eye contact, rubbing the entrance of Killian,...

"Are you ready?" Eli asked again. As soon as Killian said no screamed "YES, For God's sake hurry Eli", Eli pushed a finger inside.

Then Eli's hand stroked the head of his cock and Killian melted again. Eli matched the pace of his hands. As Killian's body relaxed, Eli stuck a new finger in, never breaking pace. It wasn't until then that Killian felt pleasure from Eli's fingers.

Without his permission, another whine escaped his mouth. He clenched his jaw and brought his hands over his face. Eli continued his pace, so Killian grabbed the pillow next to him to bite. Immediately after, Eli dropped Killian's cock to snatch the pillow and throw it.

"I want to fucking hear you, *husband*." Eli growled.

They kissed like they would suffocate if they stopped. Eli quickened his fingers and Killian had to break their kiss to gasp. Eli grabbed Killian's hand and pulled it towards his cock. "Touch me," Eli ordered, Killian obeyed.

They kissed passionately between gasps. Meeting Killian's gaze, Eli pushed three fingers in. Slowly, gently, pushing and pulling.

"Fuck, Eli, you're so incredible. You're fucking amazing." Killian quickened his hand, wanting to bring Eli to the edge. He wanted to try and get Eli as impatient as he felt. "I want you, Eli." Killian nearly whispered, his throat dry. "I want every part of you.. I want you-I want you to fuck me."

Killian felt tears well in his eyes as he tried to fight off an orgasm. Just when Killian opened his mouth to warn Eli, Eli stopped. Killian gasped for much needed air before catching his breath. "Fuck! Eli ...why?" Killian screamed.

Eli grabbed Killian's chin, forcing him to meet face to face. Eli had the same wild expression he wore earlier, but now Killian knew what it meant. His eyes bore into Killian as if they could see his thoughts. His hair was a mess, but he pushed it back so that it didn't hang over his eyes. His lips were puffy and pink, lingering marks of Killian's kiss.

“You want me to fuck you?” Eli asked.

“Yes,” Killian said, keeping eye contact.

Eli let go of Killian’s chin in favor of his throat, before kissing Killian with an open mouth. They’re tongues slipped against each other. Killian felt heat rising in his chest again and he wondered how long he’d be able to last. Eli ended their kiss by biting Killian’s lip, just hard enough for it to still be felt when Eli pulled away.

They caught each other’s eyes again. “Tell me if it hurts.” Eli demanded. Killian nodded.

Eli began pushing and Killian felt him go in. A jolt of pleasure shot up Killian’s spine making him moan. Instead of continuing to push, Eli pulled back before rocking forward again, over and over and over again. Killian could feel himself stretching. He could feel Eli going deepening thrust after thrust.

Killian bit back his moans. Fuck. Shit. Oh my God. Fuck. Fuck. He couldn’t form a single thought past what he felt. Nothing but hot friction. Occasionally, Eli would stop to check in with Killian. He’d lean down next to Killian ear to ask, “Does it feel good?” Every time he asked, Killian’s body shuttered and the moan he’d be choking back would escape uncontrollably loud.

It wasn’t until Eli was mostly in that he moaned, his whole body shaking. “Fuck, Killian” Eli growled through a clenched jaw. “You’re so fucking tight.” Before Killian could speak, Eli quickened his pace. Pulling out before slamming back in, going deeper each time. Eventually Killian felt himself expand and Eli slammed all the way inside.

Both of them gasped before finding each other's lips. Eli lifted Killian’s hips by wrapping his arms underneath Killian’s legs and holding tight to his back. They rocked together, pushing and swaying into each other while their tongues danced in each other’s mouths.

After confirming that Killian felt good, Eli started to pick up pace again. A few powerful thrusts later, and Eli slid in and out easily. Killian never knew he could feel this much pleasure at once. It nearly overwhelmed him. He always knew this would feel good, most people raved about how good sex feels, Yes he had his playboy days during uni fucking everything during those days, but it was so different from what he was used to. Because he didn’t know he even craved Eli like this till now and Oh God the wait was worth this moment.

Eli’s hands and lips drifted around, touching everything in range. Killian gasped for air each time Eli pulled out, before having his breath taken with every aggressive push. “Eli,” gasp, “Eli!” “Eli! Fuck!” Killian stuttered out, letting Eli know it felt good.

“Scream my name,” Eli growled in his ear. “Killian,” he said again, grabbing Killian by the throat and pushing all the way in. Instead of pulling out, he kept pressure on Killian’s prostate. “Look at you,” Eli says, glaring down at Killian. “You’re so fucking amazing taking everything I give you, Killian. You are mine. Mine.”

Eli’s praise nearly sent Killian over the edge.. Eli took note of the way Killian’s body shivered at the compliment.

Without warning, Eli resumed his fast pace. His hips smacked loudly against Killian’s ass with each thrust. Killian’s eyes rolled back as he relinquished his self control. He let all of his moans

out while a wave of pleasure rushed up his body. Sloppy kisses and soft bites were frantically placed across Killian’s neck, shoulders, chest. Eli’s hot breath in between kisses gave Killian goosebumps.

Killian shivered and pulled Eli closer. “Oh God, Eli I am so close do-don’t s-stop.” Killian whined, unable to think. He knew now they were both close. He reached down and began to stroke himself slowly. Another rush of pleasure surged through Killian and he wondered how it was possible to feel this good.

As Killian came his whole body shook. The sound he made was pathetic. Never in his life has he sounded more desperate. Shortly after, Eli’s body shook and he held his breath. Eli pushed into Killian, holding pressure one more time before finally pulling out.

Killian almost dozed off in exhaustion. “Come keep me warm,” he murmured to Eli. Silently, Eli wrapped his arms around Killian’s waist and pulled him tight.

Killian buried himself in Eli’s neck, relishing in the warmth.

Chapter End Notes

Hello lovelies!!

Eli finally broke and confessed ..OHHHHH MY!!! Killian is absolutely speechless, and honestly, so am I! 😭🔥 The emotions, the tension, the intensity—it all came pouring out in this chapter, and I am beyond thrilled to finally share this moment with you all.

How was the chapter? Comment your thoughts, and, of course, your favorite scenes! I can’t wait to see which parts had you screaming.

Did Eli’s confession live up to your expectations? Was Killian’s reaction what you hoped for? 🤔

Favorite emojis for this chapter? Let me know! Mine are: 🔥💖🥳🖤💕

Thank you for your endless support and enthusiasm—it keeps me going. As always, your reactions fuel my writing, and I’m already so excited to hear from you.

Until next time, Bieeeeeee bieeeee!



CHAPTER 17

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Killian stirred awake, his body achingly warm and cocooned in a strange, yet not unpleasant, tightness. He blinked groggily, shifting slightly, only to find himself immobilized by a firm arm wrapped possessively around his waist. His head was tucked into the crook of Eli's neck, the faint, intoxicating scent of his husband's cologne lingering on his skin.

It took a moment for the haze in his mind to clear, but when it did, the vivid memories of last night came rushing back, flooding his thoughts like an unstoppable tide. Eli's lips tracing every inch of his body, his hands gripping him with an intensity that spoke of years of pent-up longing, and the sound of his own desperate moans filling the room.

Killian's cheeks flushed a deep crimson as he buried his face in Eli's chest, hoping to stifle the embarrassing memories of him acting like a jealous wife but he loved the end result though ..seeing Eli lose control. He tried to wiggle free, intent on escaping to the sanctuary of the bathroom, but the arm around him tightened like an unyielding vice.

"Where do you think you're going?" Eli's voice was a low rumble, gravelly with sleep, yet impossibly commanding. He nuzzled against Killian's hair, his lips brushing the shell of his ear. "You don't know how long I've waited for this moment—to claim you, in every way possible—and now you're trying to escape? Huh?"

Killian stiffened, his heartbeat thundering in his chest. He tilted his head to glare at Eli, though the redness on his face betrayed his indignation. "I'm not escaping. I was just going to take a shower." His voice was sharp, defensive, but he was all too aware of how small he sounded.

Eli chuckled softly, the sound vibrating against Killian's skin. "A shower, huh?" He leaned closer, his breath ghosting over Killian's ear. "If you're able to walk after what I gave you last night, then I failed."

Killian's mouth opened, ready to retort, but no words came out. Instead, he shoved at Eli's chest weakly, his limbs still boneless from the previous night's pounding.

Killian pushed at Eli's chest again, this time with more resolve. "Let me go," he muttered. Gathering his strength, he managed to slide out of Eli's grasp and sit up on the edge of the bed. His bare feet touched the floor, and he gave himself a moment to breathe, trying to ignore the lingering ache in his body—a constant reminder of Eli's thoroughness last night.

But as soon as he tried to stand, his legs buckled slightly, and a sharp pang radiated through his lower back. Killian winced, biting his lip to stifle a curse. Without a choice, he sank back onto the bed, his hands gripping the edge for support.

Eli sat up leisurely, his gaze locked on Killian with that familiar blend of amusement and smug satisfaction. "What's wrong, my love?" he drawled, his voice dripping with faux innocence. "Feeling a little sore, are we?"

Killian shot him a glare, his face heating up again. “Shut up.”

Eli chuckled, swinging his legs off the bed and leaning toward Killian. “You’re not going anywhere like this.” He reached out, brushing his fingers against Killian’s wrist. “Let me carry you to the shower.”

Killian’s eyes widened, and he immediately pulled his hand back. “Absolutely not!” he snapped. “I can do it myself.”

Eli tilted his head, his lips curving into a sly smile. “You can’t even stand, Killian. Stop being stubborn.”

“I said no!” Killian snapped again, though his tone lacked conviction as he looked away, clearly embarrassed.

Eli sighed dramatically, shaking his head. “I never take no for an answer, my darling.” And without waiting for permission, he stood, scooped Killian up effortlessly into his arms, and cradled him against his chest.

Killian let out a startled yelp, his hands instinctively clutching at Eli’s shoulders. “Eli! Put me down!”

“Nope.” Eli’s tone was firm, but his grin was undeniable. “You’re my husband, and it’s my duty to take care of you. Besides...” His lips brushed against Killian’s ear, his voice dropping to a teasing whisper. “I like carrying you.”

Killian muttered something unintelligible into Eli’s neck, resigning himself to his fate as his husband effortlessly swept him off his feet—quite literally.

What kind of monster has Killian unleashed.

.....

As the warm water cascaded over them, Killian leaned back against the shower wall, his arms folded, watching Eli. Eli was washing his hair with methodical precision, the silence between them oddly comforting. But Killian’s curiosity gnawed at him, refusing to let the question slip away unnoticed.

“Why don’t you eat much?” Killian finally asked, his voice quiet but firm, breaking the sound of water hitting tile.

Eli paused, his fingers halting mid-motion. For a moment, it seemed like he wouldn’t answer, his sharp eyes fixed on the tiled wall in thought. Then he let out a soft breath, his lips curling into a humorless smile.

“I was poisoned when I was maybe six,” Eli said, his tone even, almost detached. “It was some maid sent by one of Dad’s rivals to eliminate his only heir.”

Killian stiffened at the revelation, his eyes narrowing. Eli noticed but continued, his voice steady as though recounting a distant memory.

“Mum figured out something was wrong in time and drove me to the hospital. I had a gastric lavage that cleared me out of harm’s way. But after that... I couldn’t eat.”

Eli turned to face Killian now, water streaming down his face, his gaze unwavering. “My parents tried everything—coaxing me with my favorite dishes, even junk food. None of it worked. After I refused to put anything in my mouth for a few days, the doctors had to pump me with fluids. My parents consulted a child therapist, but nothing helped. Any external force just made me withdraw further into my shell.”

Killian studied him, his own expression unreadable. He didn’t offer immediate words of comfort or platitudes. That wasn’t how they worked. Instead, he reached out, brushing his fingers over Eli’s forearm.

“I see,” Killian said softly, his voice laced with quiet understanding. “You don’t eat much because it feels safer not to.”

Eli’s lips twitched, not quite forming a smile. “It’s not as bad now as it was back then,” he admitted. “But... yeah. Eating has always felt more like a chore than a pleasure.”

Killian tilted his head, water droplets clinging to the strands of his dark hair. “I’m not going to pity you for that, you know.”

Eli chuckled,. “I didn’t think you would.”

Killian smirked faintly, crossing his arms again. “Still, you should eat better. Not because I’m going to nag or force you. Just... because you deserve to treat yourself better. You’re not that six-year-old anymore.”

Eli stared at him, something soft and almost vulnerable flickering in his icy eyes. “You’re annoyingly perceptive sometimes,” he muttered.

Killian shrugged. “You knew what you signed up for.”

.....

Eli leaned against the counter, his arms crossed over his broad chest as he watched Killian move around the kitchen. For some reason Killian still refuses to talk or acknowledge what transpired last night, so he is not going to force Killian talk about it unless he wants to. Well Last night was fun though and Eli can still hear remnants of Killian’s moans and screams. Oh God!! He has waited years to achieve this.

There was a calm efficiency to the way Killian worked, pulling out ingredients with practiced ease, his focus unwavering. Eli’s gaze followed every movement—how Killian’s fingers wrapped around the handles of jars, how his brows furrowed slightly in concentration, how even the smallest action seemed deliberate.

“What are you doing?” Eli finally asked, his voice a low rumble, curiosity tinged with suspicion.

Killian didn’t look up as he grabbed a chopping board and set it on the counter beside Eli. “Making pie and soup,” he replied simply, as though it was the most obvious thing in the world. He handed Eli a knife and a pile of vegetables. “Here, cut these.”

Eli stared at the knife in his hand, then at the vegetables. “You’re putting me to work now?”

Killian glanced up, his lips curving into a smirk. “If you’re so suspicious of food, might as well let you see how it’s made. This way, your overthinking mind can relax.”

Eli blinked, momentarily stunned. His mind raced with the implications of Killian’s words, each one hitting him like a carefully aimed arrow. Killian wasn’t just doing this out of practicality—this was for Eli. Only for him. The thought curled around Eli’s chest, dark and possessive.

“You think watching the cooking process will convince me the food’s safe?” Eli asked, his tone bordering on mocking, though his fingers were already curling around the knife handle.

Killian shrugged, his smirk softening into something almost fond. “Isn’t that how it works? If you see every step, you know there’s nothing to fear. No surprises. No hidden threats. Just... food.”

Eli couldn’t stop the sharp intake of breath that followed. This was Killian’s way of showing care—practical, thoughtful, and devastatingly intimate. Eli’s fingers tightened around the knife, not out of frustration, but to ground himself in the moment. He didn’t deserve this level of attention, yet Killian gave it freely, without hesitation, without judgment.

He began cutting the vegetables, his movements slow and methodical as he watched Killian prepare the dough for the pie. Killian’s hands worked the flour and butter with precision, his eyes narrowed in concentration.

Killian was his. He always had been. Every movement, every action, every thought—Eli wanted to claim it all, to keep it for himself and never let anyone else have a sliver of Killian’s attention.

Killian spoke, “See? Nothing to worry about. By the time we’re done, you’ll know exactly what went into this meal. No poison, no tricks. Just food.”

Eli let out a low chuckle, dark and rich. “You’re too perceptive for your own good, Killian.”

Killian glanced at him, raising an eyebrow. “Someone has to be, considering how emotionally constipated you are.”

Eli smirked, but his eyes never left Killian’s face. He savored every second, every word, every gesture. This wasn’t just a meal—it was an offering. A piece of Killian’s care.

As Killian turned to grab more ingredients, Eli’s gaze darkened, he wanted to kiss Killian, to pull him close and consume him whole. He wanted to carve this moment into his memory, to hoard it like a dragon with its treasure.

But more than anything, Eli wanted to savor Killian’s attention, knowing it was given willingly, intentionally, and entirely for him. For Eli. Only for Eli.

“Killian,” Eli murmured, his voice low and rough.

Killian glanced over his shoulder. “What?”

Eli’s smirk widened, “Nothing. Just... keep cooking.”

Killian rolled his eyes, but Eli could see the faint flush creeping up his neck.

.....
...

The table was set, plates steaming with freshly prepared food, the aroma wafting through the air. Eli stood back, arms crossed, watching as Killian deftly plated the soup and pie with an efficiency that bordered on perfectionism. There was something mesmerizing about it—Killian’s movements were brisk and no-nonsense, but Eli knew, deep down, that every action was layered with care.

When everything was ready, Killian grabbed Eli’s plate and, without a word, filled it to the brim. He slid it across the table to Eli, locking eyes with him as he leaned forward slightly, his expression unreadable. Then, without hesitation, Killian picked up Eli’s fork, speared a piece of the pie, and took a bite.

Eli froze, confused by Killian’s action. He opened his mouth to speak, but no words came out. Killian chewed slowly, deliberately. When he finally swallowed, he raised an eyebrow and said, “There. I ate it. See? I’m fine. Now go on, eat your food.”

Eli stared, his mind racing. Behind Killian’s brash, uncaring façade was someone who noticed, who thought, who cared. Someone who would take a bite of food not to satisfy his own hunger but to coax Eli into eating, into letting down his walls for a moment.

Killian, mistaking Eli’s silence for hesitation, tilted his head. “What? Why aren’t you eating?” he asked, his tone edging toward irritation.

Eli smirked, leaning back in his chair, his voice a low, teasing rumble. “Maybe I’ll eat... if you feed me.”

Killian blinked, his eyes narrowing as if to gauge whether Eli was serious. When he realized Eli wasn’t bluffing, a wicked grin spread across his face. “Oh, you want me to feed you?”

Before Eli could answer, Killian stood up, his movements confident and fluid. He picked up Eli’s fork, and instead of leaning across the table to feed him, Killian did something that made Eli’s breath catch. He swung a leg over and sat down sideways on Eli’s lap, settling himself comfortably against Eli’s chest.

Eli raised an eyebrow, his hands instinctively resting on Killian’s waist. “Not that I’m complaining, but... why are you on my lap?”

Killian shot him a look, his lips curling into a smug smile. “You’re the reason my ass is sore, and that chair is too hard. So, take responsibility. And I am gonna say this is my favorite place to sit now” He shifted slightly, adjusting his position until he was perfectly comfortable.

Eli let out a low chuckle blushing, his fingers tightening ever so slightly on Killian’s waist. “You’re impossible, you know that?”

“And yet, here I am, feeding you,” Killian retorted, spearing another bite of pie and holding it to Eli’s lips. “Now, eat.”

Eli obeyed, his dark eyes locked on Killian's face as he took the bite. The intimacy of the moment was almost overwhelming. Killian, perched on his lap, was an intoxicating mix of brash confidence and subtle care. Eli savored not just the food but the act itself—the way Killian was so unapologetically Killian, the way he put Eli at ease without even trying.

Piece by piece, Killian fed Eli, his movements unhurried but deliberate. Eli finished every last bite, not because he was hungry, but because Killian had made it impossible to refuse. Each bite felt like a victory, a quiet declaration of Killian's determination to take care of him in his own unique way.

When the plate was empty, Killian set the fork down and smirked, clearly pleased with himself. "See? That wasn't so hard, was it?"

Eli's hands slid up Killian's back, pulling him closer. His voice was low and dark as he murmured, "This game is dangerous, you know that? One of these days, I'm going to lose control, and you'll have no one to blame but yourself."

Killian's smirk deepened, his eyes gleaming with mischief. "Promises, promises," he teased, leaning in until their faces were just inches apart.

Chapter End Notes

Hey lovelies!!!

Hope you guys are doing great.

This chapter depicts the way their relationship oscillates between teasing banter and heart-wrenching vulnerability!!! 🔥

Don't forget to let me know your favorite scene in this chapter. 🙄💕

I love reading your comments 💕

Announcement

Hey, lovelies! 💜

I wanted to share a little update—I'll be taking a short break from writing to focus on my academics . I promise this is just a pause, not a goodbye!

I'll be back soon with more stories to share. Thank you for your endless love and support—it truly means the world to me. 💖

Take care, and I'll see you soon! Love you all so much! 📖 ✨

CHAPTER 18

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The meeting room buzzed with monotonous chatter as old men took turns presenting their ideas, many of which Killian found laughably outdated or outright impractical. The weight of their self-praise hung heavy in the air, and Killian sat stiffly in his chair, suppressing the urge to roll his eyes. He drummed his fingers against the table, counting the minutes until this ordeal would be over.

When one particularly pompous man, Mr. Lockwood began presenting an idea that defied basic logic, Killian couldn't hold back. "That's not possible," he said flatly, his tone calm but razor-sharp. "The infrastructure required would take years to implement, and the costs would outweigh any potential benefits. Your numbers don't add up."

The room went quiet, the man in question freezing mid-sentence. His face flushed an angry red, and he turned to Killian with a condescending sneer. "What would you know about it?" he snapped, his voice dripping with arrogance. "You're just a boy playing dress-up in a big man's game. Let's not forget the only reason you're even sitting here is because you're Eli King's... husband."

The word was laced with disdain, and the man wasn't finished. He leaned forward, his tone growing nastier, sharper, each word like a dagger. "Tell me, Mr. Carson, how does it feel to be nothing more than arm candy? A pretty face keeping the boss warm at night? Or are you just here to play the role of a trophy—maybe even something less dignified than that?"

Killian's vision blurred at the edges, the words echoing in his mind like a taunt to the beast lurking within him. His breath hitched, his fingers curling into fists on the table. His chest tightened with the unmistakable fury of his demon clawing to get out. Red. Red. Red.

The room felt smaller, darker, like a cage closing in on him. His heart pounded as he fought the primal urge to lash out, to tear the man apart with words—or worse.

Just as the tension reached its peak and the demon within him threatened to break loose, the door to the room slammed open.

Eli walked in.

Every head turned as Eli strode into the room, his presence commanding and unrelenting. His dark eyes scanned the room, landing immediately on Killian, whose knuckles were white from gripping the table. Then Eli's gaze shifted to the man who had spoken, his expression turning cold, dangerous.

"What did you just say?" Eli's voice was deceptively soft, but it carried a lethal edge.

The man stammered, caught off guard by Eli's sudden appearance. "I—I was just—"

Eli didn't let him finish. "You were just insulting my husband," he said, his tone hardening. He stepped closer, his figure looming over the man. "Let me make one thing abundantly clear. This is *my* husband you're talking about. The man who sits beside me not because of his last name but because he's more capable, intelligent, and worthy than you'll ever hope to be. And he is King-Carson by the way not just Carson."

The room was deathly silent. Eli's presence was suffocating, his dark gaze boring into the man with unrelenting fury.

"If you have a problem with him," Eli continued, his voice dropping to a low, dangerous growl, "then you have a problem with me. And trust me, that's a battle you don't want to fight."

Mr. Lockwood paled, his bravado crumbling under Eli's unyielding stare.

"And as for your disgusting insinuations," Eli added, his lip curling in disdain, "if I hear so much as a whisper of this kind of behavior again, I'll ensure you never work another day in your life. Consider this your only warning."

Eli turned to Killian, his expression softening slightly as he reached out a hand. "Let's go, Killian."

Killian hesitated for a moment, still grappling with the red haze of anger, but Eli's hand was grounding, pulling him back from the edge. Killian stood, his shoulders squaring as he glanced back at the man who had insulted him.

.....

Eli paced outside the bathroom, his nerves fraying with each passing minute. Killian had been in there for over an hour, and Eli's mind churned with possibilities—each darker than the last. What if Killian hurting himself? No, Eli shook his head, clenching his fists. Killian wouldn't... would he? But then again, this was Killian, who could be unpredictable in ways that made Eli's tendencies spiral out of control.

Or worse—what if Killian had fallen asleep in there? It wasn't impossible, considering his husband's habit of dozing off anywhere, anytime.

"Killian!" Eli called, his voice sharp with concern. No response.

He knocked on the door, more insistently this time. "Killian, open the door."

Still no response.

Panic began to claw at Eli, his composure slipping. He could hear the faint sounds of movement, but then—*thud!* A loud crash from inside.

Eli froze, his blood running cold. Then came a hiss, the kind of sound someone made when they were hurt.

That was it. "Killian, I swear, if you don't open this door right now, I'm breaking it down!" Eli's voice was laced with pure, unfiltered desperation. His heart pounded like a drum, and his hand gripped the doorframe, ready to act.

Just as Eli prepared to follow through on his threat, the door creaked open. Killian stood there, perfectly unharmed—except for the glaringly obvious *face mask* smeared across his skin. The pale green mask contrasted hilariously with his raised brow and irritated expression.

“For god’s sake, Eli,” Killian huffed, adjusting the headband keeping his hair back, “I was doing my skincare routine. Can’t I have one moment of peace without you thinking I’m on the verge of death?”

Eli blinked, his brain taking a moment to catch up to the sheer absurdity of the situation. He opened his mouth, closed it, then opened it again. “You—”

“Don’t.” Killian cut him off, holding up a hand. “Whatever sarcastic remark you’re about to make, just...don’t.”

But Eli couldn’t hold it in. A low chuckle bubbled up from his chest, quickly escalating into full-blown laughter. “You’ve been in there for an hour...for *this*?” He gestured vaguely at Killian’s face.

Killian narrowed his eyes. “Yes, *this*. Some of us care about not looking like a sleep-deprived vampire.”

Eli smirked, leaning against the doorframe. “I don’t know, I think vampires are sexy.”

Killian rolled his eyes, pushing past Eli. “Laugh all you want. I’m not skipping my routine just because you’re incapable of patience.”

Fast forward ten minutes, and the scene was one Eli would’ve never predicted in a thousand years. He was sitting cross-legged on the bed, a face mask of his own slathered across his skin, while Killian stood in front of the mirror, methodically applying serums to his face.

“This feels ridiculous,” Eli grumbled.

Killian smirked at Eli’s reflection in the mirror. “Oh, shut up. You’ll thank me when your skin stops looking like it’s been through a sandstorm.”

.....

The television in the background, showing breaking news.

The anchor’s voice was steady but laced with urgency. “Breaking news: Renowned businessman Max Lockwood was found dead earlier this evening.. The police are treating it as a potential murder. More details to follow as the investigation unfolds.”

The camera zoomed in on a photograph of Max Lockwood—his body lying in a pool of blood and **RED** paint surrounding the whole room.

This was only the beginning.

Hey lovelies!!!!

I AM BACK!!!! I am very happy to share this chapter with you.

Don't forget to comment i will be waiting for it!!!

Have a great day!!! Stay amazing

CHAPTER 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Killian strolled into Eli's office with his usual unannounced flair, the door swinging shut behind him. Eli was seated at his sleek mahogany desk, his legs crossed and a faint, rare smile playing on his lips as he looked down at something in his hands—a piece of paper or a letter. Killian's gaze sharpened instantly.

What could possibly make Eli smile like that?

"Something interesting?" Killian asked, his tone casual, though his curiosity was anything but. He leaned against the doorframe, arms crossed, watching Eli like a hawk.

Eli, as always, looked unfazed. The smile on his face only deepened as he quickly folded the paper and tucked it into a drawer, locking it with a soft click. "Oh, just something trivial," he said lightly, his deep voice tinged with teasing. "Nothing to worry your pretty head over."

Killian's eyes narrowed. That only made him more suspicious. "Let me see it."

Eli leaned back in his chair, a devilish glint in his eyes. "No."

"No?" Killian repeated, stepping closer. "What do you mean 'no'?"

Eli tilted his head, feigning innocence. "I mean exactly that. It's nothing important. Maybe you can find it later if you're so curious."

Killian stood before the desk now, hands on his hips, his lips pursed in annoyance. "You know I'm not going to drop this, right?"

Eli's smirk widened. "I know. That's half the fun."

Killian huffed but decided, for now, to let it go. He could always come back when Eli wasn't around. It wasn't like Eli's office was impenetrable, and Killian wasn't above a little creative snooping. He straightened his tie, choosing to shift gears instead. "Fine. But I'm not letting this go forever. Now, get up. Let's go for lunch."

Eli didn't move. Instead, he reached out, grabbing Killian's wrist and tugging him forward. Before Killian could protest, Eli pulled him down, settling him firmly on his lap.

"Eli!" Killian's voice came out higher than intended, his cheeks flushing red. He wriggled slightly, trying to get up, but Eli's hands held him securely in place. "What are you doing? Let go!"

Eli leaned in, his breath warm against Killian's ear as he murmured, "Isn't this your favorite place to sit, my dear husband?" His voice was low, dripping with amusement, and Killian could feel the heat rising to his cheeks.

Killian turned his face away, his ears burning. “It most certainly is not! Let me up!”

Eli’s hands slid to Killian’s waist, holding him steady. “You’re so cute when you’re flustered, you know that?” he teased, his tone deep and velvety.

Killian scowled, though the redness in his face betrayed him. “How do you even speak like this all of a sudden?. I said let me up.”

But Eli wasn’t done yet. He leaned back slightly, his dark eyes gleaming with mischief. “If this seat isn’t to your liking, I do have another one available.”

Killian froze, his heart skipping a beat. “What—”

Eli’s smirk turned into a wicked grin. “I’ve got a face to sit on too, if you’d prefer.”

Killian’s mouth opened and closed like a fish out of water, his words failing him. “Y-You—Eli!” he finally spluttered, his hands coming up to cover his flaming face. “You’re impossible!”

Eli chuckled, the sound rich and thoroughly satisfied. “Only for you, love.”

Killian shoved at Eli’s chest, though it lacked any real force. “You’re insufferable,” he muttered, still hiding his face.

“And you’re adorable,” Eli countered smoothly

“Fine, fine. Let’s go. What do you even want for lunch?” Killian asked.

Eli’s voice came smooth and loaded with heat,. “You.”

Killian turned his face sharply, his cheeks immediately turning pink. “Excuse me?” he asked, feigning incredulity, though his heart was hammering in his chest.

Eli said. “I said...” His hands wound tight around Killian’s waist again, “. . .I want you for lunch.”

“Eli!” Killian’s voice cracked slightly, his protests lost in the deep, magnetic pull of Eli’s gaze. Before he could protest further, Eli’s lips descended on his, capturing them in a kiss that was anything but gentle. It was hungry, demanding, and absolutely possessive, leaving Killian no choice but to melt into it.

Killian’s hands fisted into Eli’s shirt, the initial shock fading as he leaned into the kiss, his lips moving fervently against Eli’s. It was intoxicating, the way Eli kissed him like he was the most important thing in the world, as if Eli couldn’t get enough of him. Killian’s fingers slid up to Eli’s shoulders, gripping tightly as he tilted his head to deepen the kiss.

Eli’s hands roamed up Killian’s back, pulling him closer until there was no space left between them. One hand tangled in Killian’s hair, angling his head to take the kiss even deeper, his tongue teasing and exploring until Killian let out a soft gasp, lost in the moment.

And Eli didn’t stop there. Let’s just say they didn’t go for lunch today.

.....

Killian sat on the couch, scrolling aimlessly through his phone when the news broadcast caught his attention. The headline was glaring: *“Famous Businessman Max Lockwood Found Dead – Police Suspect Foul Play.”*

Killian’s brow furrowed as he set his phone down and focused on the TV. The anchor, her voice calm yet chilling, described the scene as disturbing, with the presence of blood and what investigators believe to be red paint smeared across the walls and floor. Authorities are still determining whether this is the work of a deranged artist or a deeply personal act.”

Killian froze, his body going rigid as the words sank in. Red paint. Blood. The imagery burned into his mind, too familiar for comfort. His heart began to race, pounding painfully against his ribcage. *No... no, no, no. It couldn't have been me.*

He leaned forward, gripping the edge of the couch tightly, his knuckles turning white. His thoughts spiraled, memories of his university days clawing to the surface—those dark nights, the thrill of creating "art" that no one else could understand, the satisfying splash of red paint that mimicked blood so perfectly it had almost become an obsession.

But that was years ago. He had buried that part of himself. Locked it away, never to see the light again. Or at least, that’s what he told himself.

His throat felt dry as he tried to swallow. “I didn’t do it,” he whispered aloud, as if saying it would make it true. “I wouldn’t... I didn’t lose control.” His hands trembled as he raked them through his hair. But the nagging voice in his head whispered otherwise.

Killian shook his head violently, as if to dislodge the thought. No, he couldn’t have. He hadn’t even seen Lockwood since their heated argument last week, where Lockwood had smugly disrespected him in front of others, dismissing his capabilities like Killian was a joke. The memory surfaced, but it wasn’t enough to warrant—*No! You wouldn't. You're not that person anymore.*

But the details on the screen told another story. Red paint. Blood. *That's your signature,* the voice whispered cruelly. *Your art.* His chest tightened as doubt began to creep in. What if he *had* done it?

Killian stood abruptly, pacing the room, his breathing quick and shallow.

He clenched his fists, nails digging into his palms as the denial warred with the creeping suspicion. *Red paint. Blood.* It was too specific, too familiar. His mind flashed to the studio in his old apartment during university—walls splattered with paint, canvases drenched in crimson, each piece more grotesque than the last. He had reveled in it then, finding beauty in the chaos, in the destruction.

The voice whispered again, sly and insistent. *You did it. You lost control. You let yourself go, just like before.*

“No,” Killian said firmly, his voice trembling despite the conviction he tried to summon. “That’s not me anymore. That’s not who I am. I have more control now.”

But as the news anchor continued to describe the scene, the details growing more grotesque and vivid, Killian's resolve began to crack. He sank onto the couch, his head in his hands, the weight of doubt crushing him. "I didn't..." he murmured, but the words felt hollow, unconvincing even to himself.

But this was too similar. Too personal. *Too much like you.*

His breaths came in short, panicked bursts. Was it possible? Could he have done it and forgotten? Could the demons he had buried so deep have resurfaced without him even realizing it?

He shook his head again, harder this time, as if the physical motion could banish the thoughts. "I didn't do it," he said again, louder, trying to convince himself. But the paint on the screen glared back at him, vivid and accusing, a silent testament to the darkness he thought he had left behind.

The voice in his head laughed softly, mockingly. *You'll never escape it. It's who you are. It's who you've always been.*

Chapter End Notes

Hello lovelies!

How are you guys doing?

I hope you loved this chapter.

Don't forget to comment your fav dialogue or moment from the chapter. I would love to know that.

CHAPTER 20

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli watched Killian carefully throughout the day, his sharp eyes catching every detail of his husband's unusually quiet demeanor. Normally, Killian was full of sharp wit and playful jabs, always quick to turn a conversation into a verbal sparring match that left Eli either laughing or exasperated. But today? Today was different.

Killian had been distant, retreating into his own head like he was trying to solve an impossible puzzle. The usual glimmer in his eyes was gone, replaced by something heavy and shadowed. He barely responded to Eli's teasing remarks during breakfast, offering only distracted hums or half-hearted smiles that didn't reach his eyes.

By lunchtime, Eli's patience was wearing thin. He tried to initiate physical contact, brushing his hand against Killian's as they passed each other in the kitchen. Normally, Killian would roll his eyes and mutter something about Eli being "too clingy," but this time, Killian flinched ever so slightly, his body going rigid before he quickly found an excuse to walk away.

"Forgot to check something upstairs," Killian mumbled, not meeting Eli's gaze as he slipped past him.

Eli stood there, frowning, his hand still outstretched. That was the fourth time Killian had dodged him today. It wasn't just physical distance, either. Killian had been moving through the day like a tightly wound string, ready to snap at the slightest pressure. His usual confidence had been replaced with an edge of nervous energy, his hands fidgeting with his phone or the hem of his shirt when he thought Eli wasn't looking.

Something was wrong. And Eli doesn't know what it is and knowing Killian he wouldn't talk about it to Eli. So Eli has to find it on his own.

.....

The clock on the wall ticked relentlessly, its sound slicing through the suffocating silence of the room. Killian lay on the bed, staring at the ceiling, his hands fisted in the sheets as if holding on to the last shreds of his sanity. His chest felt heavy, as though the weight of his own thoughts was pressing him into the mattress. Sleep was a distant dream—taunting, elusive. Every time he closed his eyes, the image of Lockwood's blood and the glaring red paint haunted him. Not because he was afraid of it or due to guilt. No what he fears above all is losing control.

He couldn't remember doing it. That had to mean he didn't, right? But the whispering shadows of his darker self begged to differ. They mocked him, curling around his mind with cruel whispers: "*You did it. You know you did. This is who you are.*"

No. No, he wouldn't—he couldn't.

Every breath he took felt sharp, like it was laced with shards of glass. He gripped the sheets tighter, as if they were the only thing anchoring him. His demons—the ones he thought he had caged—were clawing at their prison walls. They whispered darker truths, fed on his fears, and painted scenarios that made his stomach churn. He couldn't let them out. Not now. Not ever.

And then there was Eli.

The thought of Eli was like a light piercing through the storm, and yet, it was a light that hurt to look at.. If he reached out, would Eli hold him like he always did? Would Eli's steady presence quiet the chaos in his head, or would it unravel him completely?

Killian's nails bit into his palms as he wrestled with the thought. He wanted Eli—no, *needed* him. Eli was the only person who could pull him out of this abyss, the only one whose voice could drown out the whispers. But what if he hurt him? What if the darkness clawing at his insides spilled out and touched Eli? That thought was more terrifying than any nightmare.

"No," he whispered into the stillness of the room, his voice trembling. "*I'd rather—*" The words choked in his throat. He'd rather destroy himself than let Eli be touched by the filth of his mind. He'd rather live in this endless torment than risk hurting Eli.

But the silence was too loud. The walls felt like they were closing in, and the shadows of his fears were consuming him whole. Every second without Eli was another step closer to the edge, another inch closer to breaking.

His breaths came faster now, shallow and uneven. He sat up abruptly, clutching his head as if trying to physically hold his thoughts in place. He couldn't do this alone. He didn't *want* to do this alone.

"Eli," he whispered, his voice cracking under the weight of his despair. The name was a lifeline, a prayer.

Killian swung his legs over the side of the bed, his body trembling as he stood. His bare feet made no sound against the cold floor as he moved toward the door. The dark whispers followed him, hissing warnings, mocking him for his weakness.

He stopped in front of the door, his hand hovering over the handle. He could go to Eli. He could knock on the door, crawl into Eli's arms, and let the warmth of his husband chase away the cold. But what if...?

No. He didn't care about what ifs now. He wanted Eli now.

Eli sat on the edge of his bed, the dim glow of his laptop casting soft shadows on his face. His eyes were focused, sharp as ever, scanning through a document on the screen. The quiet of the night was broken only by the faint tapping of his fingers on the keyboard and the occasional rustle of papers by his side.

The door creaked open without warning, and Eli's head snapped up. His gaze narrowed at the figure stepping into his room, uninvited. "Killian what-," he began, but the words died on his tongue the moment he saw the look on Killian's face.

Killian didn't say a word. His shoulders were tense, his usual mischievous glint nowhere to be found. His eyes, heavy with something Eli couldn't quite place, locked onto Eli's for a brief moment before he broke the silence. "Don't ask," he murmured, his voice barely above a whisper. "Just... hold me."

Eli blinked, stunned. He wasn't used to seeing Killian like this. Before he could say anything, Killian moved. He crossed the room in a few determined steps, brushing aside the laptop and the scattered documents on the bed with a single sweep of his hand. Eli opened his mouth to protest, but then Killian gripped his bicep, firm but not rough, and sank onto the bed beside him.

Killian pressed his head against Eli's chest, his breath warm and uneven against Eli's skin. His fingers curled into the fabric of Eli's shirt as though anchoring himself. "Don't say anything," Killian murmured again, softer this time, as though the weight of the day was finally catching up to him. "Just let me stay here."

Eli hesitated for a fraction of a second, then his features softened. A small, almost imperceptible smile tugged at the corners of his mouth. He slid an arm around Killian's back, holding him securely. His other hand found its way to Killian's hair, his fingers threading through the soft strands in soothing motions.

Killian's tense frame began to relax, his breathing evening out as the warmth of Eli's presence seeped into him. The silence between them wasn't awkward or heavy; it was comforting, filled with unspoken understanding.

Eli leaned his head back against the headboard, his gaze drifting to the ceiling as his smile grew just a little. "what are you doing to me, Killian?" he murmured, his voice low and affectionate.

Killian didn't respond. His grip on Eli's shirt tightened briefly before loosening again. For once, the ever-quick-witted Killian had nothing to say, and Eli didn't push him to fill the silence.

Instead, Eli held him tighter, his hand brushing gently over Killian's back. The documents and laptop lay forgotten on the other side of the bed, and for the first time that evening, Eli felt no urgency to return to them.

Whatever was weighing on Killian, Eli would be there. Always.

.....

Killian lay draped against Eli, his cheek resting against the steady rise and fall of Eli's chest. The room was quiet save for the occasional rustle of paper and the soft ticking of the clock on the wall. Eli, ever the multitasker, was back to going through the documents he had set aside earlier, his left hand skillfully managing the pages while his right hand never ceased its soothing motion through Killian's hair.

For a long moment, Killian simply basked in the warmth of the moment. But then his gaze flicked upward, curiosity tugging at him, and he found himself watching Eli—not just looking, but truly observing him. Eli seemed oblivious, entirely focused on his work, the faint furrow between his brows deepening as he concentrated.

Killian let his eyes trace the sharp lines of Eli's face, appreciating details he rarely stopped to notice. The strong slope of his nose, the chiseled jawline that seemed almost too perfect. His lips

—Killian couldn't help but notice their natural curve, the way they pressed together slightly when he was deep in thought, and the faint indent on his lower lip from where he must have unconsciously bitten it earlier.

Eli's jet-black hair fell in neat waves, but up close, Killian could see a few strands glinting with the faintest hints of brown under the dim light—a detail so minute it felt like a secret only he was privy to. His eyes, dark gray and piercing, shifted ever so slightly as he read, the intensity in them softened by the way his lashes framed them. They were striking, almost too much to take in at once, and Killian suddenly understood why so many people found Eli intimidating.

But there was a warmth to Eli that others didn't see. Like now, the absent yet tender way his hand kept combing through Killian's hair, his fingers brushing lightly against his scalp. It wasn't calculated; it was instinctual, a quiet reassurance that Eli was there, solid and unshakable.

Killian's chest tightened as he continued to watch Eli, unnoticed and unguarded. What were they to each other? They were husbands, yes. Bound by the promises they made in front of witnesses and the unspoken ones they kept between themselves. They flirted, kissed, and fought with a passion that could burn down entire cities. But what more was there? What more *could* there be?

The questions felt heavier the longer he stared. Were they moving toward love? Toward heartbreak? He didn't know. He wasn't even sure if he *wanted* to know. The uncertainty terrified him, but not enough to pull away. Not enough to leave Eli's side.

He shifted slightly, his cheek brushing against Eli's chest, and Eli's hand paused for just a fraction of a second before resuming its gentle rhythm. That small pause, that moment of awareness, sent a flicker of warmth through Killian. Eli always noticed, even when he didn't say it aloud.

Killian's lips curved into a faint, almost bittersweet smile. He might not know what the future held, but he knew one thing for certain: he wanted to face it all with Eli. The good, the bad, the heartbreak, the love—whatever came their way, he wanted Eli by his side.

And for now, this moment was enough. Just the two of them, the quiet intimacy of Eli's hand in his hair, and the steady sound of his heartbeat beneath Killian's ear. If this was all they ever had, Killian thought he might still be content.

The rest of the world could wait


Chapter End Notes

Hello lovelies!! 💕 ✨

Since it's the month of love, consider this your official reminder that I'd totally let you steal my heart... but only if you promise to give it back in one piece. 🙄

What was your favorite moment in this chapter?👁👁 I swear, my inner thoughts while writing were like: "Should I make them suffer? ...Nah, let's add some bittersweet moments

first.”

Drop your unfiltered feelings in the comments—I live for them.  And as always, thank you for reading, screaming, and loving these chaotic gremlins as much as I do!
<33333333

ANNOUNCEMENT

Hey everyone! ✨

Note:

BUY ME A COFFEE: buymeacoffee.com/allariablack/



CHAPTER 21

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli leaned back in his chair, the hum of the office quiet around him. He glanced toward the sleek wooden desk, his fingers drumming lightly against its polished surface. Finally, with a sigh, he reached for the drawer on the bottom right—a drawer he rarely touched, one that he kept locked for good reason.

Fishing out the small key from his pocket, he unlocked it and pulled the drawer open. Inside lay a handful of neatly organized documents, but his hand bypassed them, reaching instead for a single folded letter tucked away at the back. The edges of the paper were slightly crinkled, a testament to the years it had been hidden away yet read often.

Eli held the letter between his fingers, staring at it for a long moment before a small, amused smile tugged at his lips. He remembered exactly how this letter had come into his possession—an event as ridiculous as it was unexpected.

Years ago, Vaughn Morozov had snuck into the Elite mansion. At the time, Eli had been ready to confront him, initially out of concern for Remi, who Vaughn had been pursuing with what could only be described as reckless determination and lots of stalking. Eli had been prepared for the usual shovel talk—he was quite good at those, after all the speeches he gave to Mikhail Orlov—but Vaughn, to Eli's surprise, had come prepared with a counteroffer.

“Before you threaten me,” Vaughn had said with that insufferably cocky grin of his, “I have something you might want.”

Eli had raised a brow, unimpressed. “Unless it's your immediate departure from my property, I'm not interested.”

But Vaughn had only smirked, reaching into his jacket pocket and pulling out this very letter. “Ah, but this is *Killian's*. From what I read in it, you might be interested. You're telling me you don't want to know what's inside?”

Eli had frozen at that. His initial instinct had been to grab the letter immediately, but he held back, narrowing his eyes. “And how exactly do you have this?”

“Oh, nothing sinister,” Vaughn had replied breezily. “Let's just say I ‘borrowed’ it during one of his rare moments of carelessness. He has no idea it's missing. Yet.” He'd leaned closer then, lowering his voice. “And I'd be happy to hand it over to you...if you agree to look the other way while I, uh, visit a certain someone.”

Eli had felt a flicker of irritation. Vaughn's audacity was unparalleled. But as much as Eli had wanted to throw the man out of the mansion right then and there, the mention of Killian's name—and the letter—had sealed the deal. Vaughn had waved the letter like bait, and Eli had taken it without hesitation.

“Fine,” Eli had said curtly, snatching the letter out of Vaughn’s hand. “But if you breathe a word of this to anyone—”

“Oh, I’m a vault,” Vaughn had interrupted, grinning.

Eli had chosen to ignore that last comment, shoving Vaughn toward the door and slamming it shut behind him.

Now, years later, Eli unfolded the letter carefully, his gray eyes scanning the familiar handwriting. It wasn’t long, just a few lines scrawled in Killian’s usual blunt style, but it was enough to make Eli smile—a real, rare smile that softened the hard edges of his face.

The letter read:

Eli,

What is it about you that you won’t leave my mind? What is it that you’ve done to have my attention so completely, even when you’re not around? Do you even notice me?

You’re infuriating. Every time I think I have you figured out, you throw me off balance, and it’s maddening. It’s the way you walk into a room, and suddenly, everything else fades. Do you even know what that does to me?

I hate it. I hate that I can’t stop thinking about you, and I hate that I don’t want to stop.

What’s so special about you? Tell me, because I don’t know if I’ll ever figure it out.

And yet...here I am. I won’t even give this letter to you and still here I am writing this letter like a teenager in love.

-Killian

The words were sharp, and unpolished, as if Killian had written them in a fit of frustration. The ink in certain places was darker, like he had pressed the pen down too hard in irritation. It wasn’t a love letter. It wasn’t even a confession. It was Killian’s way of fighting against the pull Eli had on him—a fight he knew he was losing. long ago.

They had always been something to each other. Even before either of them had the words to define it, before they understood what this pull between them truly meant. It wasn’t love—not yet, not quite. It wasn’t friendship either; they’d gone past that line too many times. Obsession came close, with its sharp edges and dangerous allure, but it wasn’t enough to encapsulate what they were.

It was...a connection. A thread tying them together, fragile yet unbreakable, like they had been meant to cross paths, meant to collide in a way that neither of them could fully unravel.

Eli didn’t know what they were. Not yet. They flirted with labels, danced around definitions, but nothing seemed to fit. Still, there was something undeniably theirs in every glance, every argument, every moment of quiet tenderness when Killian fell asleep on his shoulder or stole into his office just to be near him.

Perhaps it wasn't meant to be named. Perhaps it was meant to evolve, to stretch into something neither of them could predict. Eli would wait. He had never been impatient when it came to Killian, had never felt the need to rush whatever this was. The future held its secrets tightly, and Eli trusted it to reveal them in time.

For now, he would hold onto this—the moments, the chaos, the unspoken promises that wove between them. Whatever they were, whatever they would become, they had always been *something*. And that was enough for now.

Eli sat at his desk, the lingering thoughts of the letter slipping away as he glanced at the clock. Killian had been coming in and out of his space lately, distracted and sullen for reasons Eli hadn't yet deciphered. And right on cue, as if the universe couldn't help but indulge his musings, Killian walked through the door.

His usual sharpness was dulled, that restless energy simmering low. But then Killian's eyes fell on the table—a spread of food Eli had arranged on a whim. Specifically, on the apple pie resting in the center.

The change was instant. Killian's face lit up, a boyish excitement chasing away the gloom as he crossed the room in a few strides. "Oh, thank you so much!" he exclaimed, already reaching for the pie. "You have no idea how much I needed this break after all those meetings."

Before Eli could respond, Killian leaned down and pressed a quick kiss to his cheek. The gesture was casual, almost instinctive, but it sent a jolt of heat through Eli.

My lips are too close to my cheeks, Eli thought. *Why can't you kiss that instead?*

The words spilled out before his brain caught up. The moment they did, his eyes widened, realizing he had spoken aloud.

Killian froze mid-reach, pie temporarily forgotten. Slowly, he turned to Eli, cheeks dusted with a faint pink that only made him look more radiant. For a moment, Eli wondered if he was about to get teased mercilessly.

Instead, Killian leaned down, cupped Eli's jaw gently, and kissed him. A quick press of his lips—soft, fleeting, and warm. It left Eli stunned, rooted to his chair as Killian pulled back with a mischievous glint in his eye.

"Happy now?" Killian teased, a smirk playing on his lips before he turned his full attention to the pie. He dug in with the enthusiasm of a man who'd been starved for joy, leaving Eli to sit there, utterly dazed and completely wrecked by one brief kiss.

Eli finally exhaled, a helpless smile tugging at his lips as he watched Killian savor the pie. It was ridiculous how easily the man unraveled him, how one kiss could leave his mind spinning.

But then again, this was Killian. And Eli wouldn't have it any other way.

.....

Chapter End Notes

Hello lovelies!! 💕✨

Since it's the month of love, consider this your official reminder that I love you guys!! 🥰

What was your favorite moment in this chapter?👁️👁️

CHAPTER 22

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli sat at the dining table, flipping through a stack of documents with a practiced ease that came from years of managing people and expectations. The papers didn't need his immediate attention, but they were better than watching his husband buzz around the kitchen like a kid high on sugar.

Killian had been a whirlwind of energy all day, practically glued to Sam. Instead of taking advantage of the rare free day they had together, Killian had spent it helping Sam cook and arrange dishes for Gareth's arrival. *Seriously?* Eli thought, glancing toward the kitchen. *You have a hot husband right here, and you're ignoring me to fuss over your brother's favorite food.*

From where Eli sat, he could hear Sam chuckling as Killian balanced two trays of hors d'oeuvres with the enthusiasm of a waiter on his first day. "Sam, do you think Gareth will like this lemon tart?" Killian's voice carried into the dining room, full of an almost boyish excitement that made Eli's lips twitch despite himself.

Before Eli could stew too much, the sound of a car pulling into the driveway broke through the hum of activity. Setting the documents aside, he stood and made his way to the front window, just in time to see Gareth Carson-Lockwood and his husband, Kayden Lockwood, step out of a sleek black car.

Eli's brows lifted as he watched Kayden walk around to Gareth's side and open the door for him with practiced grace.

Eli's eyes narrowed as a thought struck him. *Did Asher send Kayden a copy of "How to Treat Your Husband Like Royalty"?* The thought of Asher Carson mailing etiquette guides to Kayden made Eli snort under his breath. Considering Asher's eccentricities, it wasn't entirely out of the realm of possibility.

The front door opened, and Kayden stepped inside first, his sharp eyes scanning the room before they landed on Eli. "Eli King," Kayden said with a small smile, extending a hand.

Eli shook it firmly, his grip confident as always. "Kayden Lockwood. Still keeping Gareth in line, I see."

Kayden sighed, his expression half exasperated, half resigned. "If you're about to make a sugar daddy joke, please don't. I've heard enough of those for a lifetime."

Eli smirked, his dark eyes glinting with mischief. "I was actually going to comment on the car.."

Kayden rolled his eyes but relaxed slightly. "Oh please."

Before the conversation could continue, the sound of rapid footsteps echoed from the hallway. Killian shot into view, running past the living room like a blur. "You can't catch me, brother!" he shouted, his voice laced with laughter.

Gareth followed close behind, his long strides a sharp contrast to Killian's quick, darting movements. "Killian!" Gareth called, his tone somewhere between fond and exasperated. "I'm not going to hurt you! I just want to ruffle your hair, you brat!"

Gareth's mind drifted, unbidden, to a moment etched deep within the recesses of his memory—a memory so pure and untouched by the cruelty of life that it almost felt like a dream.

He could see it now, as vividly as if it were happening before him. A little boy, no older than three, with unruly dark curls and chubby legs pumping as fast as they could go, was running across the garden. Tiny giggles bubbled up like music, filling the air with unbridled joy.

"You can't catch me, brother!" little Killian squealed, his voice high-pitched and gleeful, his words tumbling out between peals of laughter.

And there he was—Gareth, not much older but tall enough to loom like a giant over his toddler brother, chasing after him with exaggerated steps. "Oh, I'll catch you, alright!" Gareth called, his own laughter mingling with Killian's, his arms outstretched as he pretended to be a fearsome monster.

Killian shrieked, his little legs wobbling as he darted behind their mother's skirt, his safe haven. She turned with a playful gasp, scooping Killian up in one fluid motion and hoisting him onto her hip. "Oh no, the monster is coming!" she cried, her voice tinged with the kind of laughter that only mothers seem to master.

Killian buried his face into her neck, still giggling, his tiny hands clutching at her dress. "He can't get me now!" he declared, triumphant and secure in her arms.

But Gareth wasn't done. Their father appeared, grinning from ear to ear, and without warning, he scooped Gareth up in his strong arms. "Oh, we'll see about that!" he boomed, holding Gareth. Together, they began to chase after their mother and Killian, the garden erupting into laughter and mirth.

"Run, Mama, run!" Killian urged, his little fists shaking with mock determination as their mother twirled and dashed, pretending to flee. The sound of their laughter—the kind that came from deep within the belly—echoed across the lawn, carried away by the warm breeze.

And then it was over, as quickly as it had begun. Their mother spun around, laughing breathlessly, and their father finally let Gareth down, ruffling his hair. Killian, now out of breath, leaned his head against their mother's shoulder, his tiny body still quaking with leftover giggles.

Gareth exhaled deeply, pulled back to the present. How fast time ran, he thought, a pang of melancholy blooming in his chest. That little boy with chubby legs and endless laughter was gone, replaced by the sharp, clever man Killian had become. He is so proud of his brother.

Killian's yelling brought him back to the present.

“No way!” Killian yelled, laughing as he dodged Gareth and sprinted toward the other end of the house.

Eli and Kayden exchanged a look, their shared exasperation evident. Kayden crossed his arms and leaned against the wall, his lips twitching as he watched the scene unfold.

Eli asks, “Does this happen often?”

Kayden sighed, his expression a mixture of resignation and amusement. “More than I care to admit. You’d think they were still kids.”

Eli shook his head, his voice dry. “I married into this madness.”

Kayden smirked, leaning casually against the doorway. “Welcome to the club.”

.....

Killian sat in the living room, the dim glow of the chandelier casting shadows across his sharp features. He was curled up on the couch, absentmindedly sipping from a glass of water while Gareth stood at the bookshelf, his gaze skimming over the spines of old volumes. Despite the quiet atmosphere, Gareth’s sharp eyes flicked to his brother every so often, noting the subtle tension in Killian’s posture, the way his fingers tapped the glass in an uneven rhythm.

“Why so gloomy?” Gareth asked casually, breaking the silence as he turned around with a book in hand.

Killian looked up, his lips curving into a smile that was a little too bright, a little too rehearsed. “What do you mean gloomy? I’m happy. Look, I’m smiling,” he said, gesturing to his face with a flourish that only made the forced expression more obvious.

Gareth sighed and crossed the room, setting the book down on the coffee table before settling into the armchair across from Killian. “Killian, we’ve lived in the same house for 24 years. Don’t insult my intelligence by pretending I can’t see right through you. What’s bothering you?”

Killian’s smile faltered, the mask slipping for just a moment before he sighed, his shoulders sagging. He set the glass down and ran a hand through his hair, the tension in his body palpable. “It’s nothing,” he started, but the look Gareth gave him—sharp and unyielding—made him pause. Killian swallowed hard and looked down at his hands, his fingers twisting together in his lap.

“I don’t want to hide anything from you,” Killian admitted quietly. His voice was strained, each word carrying the weight of something he’d been holding back. “I just... I don’t know how to say it.”

“Start from the beginning,” Gareth said gently, leaning forward, his elbows resting on his knees as he watched his brother intently. “Take your time.”

Killian nodded, his throat bobbing as he took a deep breath. “I feel like I’m losing control,” he began, his voice barely above a whisper. “My demons—they’re always there, but lately, it’s like they’re clawing at the edges of my mind. Last week, there was a man who was killed. The way

he was... it was too similar to what I did back in university. The same method, the same... precision.”

Gareth’s expression didn’t change, but his hands tightened into fists where they rested on his thighs. He didn’t interrupt, letting Killian continue.

“The thing is,” Killian said, his voice breaking slightly, “I don’t even remember doing it. I don’t know if it was me or someone else trying to copy me. But the thought that it *might* have been me...” He trailed off, his breathing unsteady. “What if I hurt Eli? What if one day, I lose control completely and he’s the one who gets caught in it? I couldn’t live with myself if that happened.”

Killian’s voice cracked on the last word, and he looked up at Gareth, his eyes shining with unshed tears. “I can’t tell him. I don’t want him to look at me like I’m some kind of monster. Or worse, what if I accidentally hurt him because of this—because of *me*?”

Gareth let out a long breath, leaning back in his chair as he processed his brother’s words. After a moment, he stood and moved to sit beside Killian on the couch. Placing a firm hand on Killian’s shoulder, he waited until his brother looked at him, his gray eyes filled with turmoil.

“Killian,” Gareth began, his voice steady and filled with conviction. “You are my brother. Nothing you could do would ever change that. Not your past, not your demons, not even this... uncertainty you’re feeling now.”

“But what if I—” Killian started, but Gareth cut him off, his grip on Killian’s shoulder tightening.

“Listen to me,” Gareth said firmly. “You are allowed to be who you are. You don’t have to hide that from me—or from Eli, for that matter. But if you’re afraid, if you ever feel like you’re losing control, you come to me. Do you understand? No matter what, you come to me. I’ll help you, Killian. You’re not alone in this.”

Killian blinked, the tears spilling over despite his efforts to hold them back. Gareth reached out, placing a hand on the back of Killian’s neck and pulling him into a firm, grounding embrace. “You’re not a monster, Killian,” he said quietly. “You’re my brother. And I’ll be here, no matter what.”

For a moment, Killian didn’t move, the tension in his body coiled tight. But then he let out a shuddering breath and leaned into Gareth’s hold, his hands clutching at his brother’s shirt like a lifeline. “Thank you,” he whispered, his voice hoarse. “I don’t deserve it, but... thank you.”

“You do deserve it,” Gareth said firmly. “And don’t ever forget that.”

The two brothers sat there in silence, the weight of Killian’s fears hanging between them

What neither brother realized was that Eli had heard every word. He had stepped out onto the room quietly, intending to call them back for dessert, but their voices caught his attention, stopping him in his tracks.

Eli leaned against the edge of the doorway, staying just out of sight. His sharp gaze softened as he listened to Killian’s trembling voice and Gareth’s firm, reassuring responses. Every syllable

struck a chord in him—Killian’s fear, his self-doubt, and most of all, his desperate desire to protect Eli from himself.

It wasn’t like Eli to eavesdrop, but in this moment, he couldn’t bring himself to interrupt. This was a part of Killian he rarely saw, a side his husband kept hidden under layers of charm and wit. And yet, as much as it pained him to know that Killian was struggling, Eli also felt a deep, unshakable resolve bloom within him.

Killian thought he had to shield Eli, to bear his burdens alone, but Eli knew better. He had made his vows for a reason.

Still, Eli didn’t step forward. He knew Killian well enough to understand that forcing the issue wouldn’t help. If Killian wanted to tell him, he would. Until then, Eli would wait. Patiently. Lovingly.

When he finally heard the sound of their footsteps approaching, Eli straightened up, his expression carefully composed. He stepped back into the dining room as though he’d been there all along, his heart heavy but determined.

If Killian needed time, Eli would give it to him. If Killian needed space, he would honor that. But when Killian was ready to lean on him, Eli would be there—steadfast and unwavering.

Because no matter how deep Killian’s demons ran, Eli would never be repulsed. He’d face them together with Killian, every step of the way

Only if the future was not as cruel as it is going to be. How foolish Eli is.

.....

Chapter End Notes



Hey lovelies!!!

What do you think of the chapter??? Comment anything and everything I love reading them.



CHAPTER 23




Chapter Notes

Hello, my lovelies!!!! 

I've decided to gift you all—because why not?  You've supported me through all my stories, and I couldn't be more grateful! 

So here's the plan: ONE CHAPTER EACH DAY!!!

Make sure to comment because I love reading them! You have no idea how many times I come back just to re-read your words—they truly mean everything to me!  

I love you guys so much!!! Thank you for reading all my stories and for being the absolute best!!!   

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Killian had never been one for secrecy, but today was different. Today, he had a single, obsessive goal: to find out what Eli was hiding. That letter—there had to be something significant about it, something that had Eli acting strangely when he tried to keep it hidden. It had nagged at him for days, and the curiosity in him was burning too brightly to ignore any longer.

He had waited until Eli had stepped out of his office for a meeting, giving him just enough time to sneak inside. Quietly, he slipped through the hallways of the building, trying his best to keep his footsteps soft and unobtrusive. His mind was racing with possibilities—what if it was a secret he wasn't supposed to know? A letter from someone else? An old confession? He was almost too eager, too restless. Killian didn't know what he expected, but he couldn't let it go.

He reached Eli's office door and, glancing around to make sure no one was watching, quietly turned the handle. The door creaked open, and Killian slipped inside, shutting it quietly behind him.

Before he could take a step toward the desk where he knew the letter was hidden, the sound of footsteps approaching froze him in place. He straightened up and held his breath, hoping whoever it was would walk by without noticing him. But of course, it was Ms. Whitemore—always in the right place at the wrong time.

"Mr. King-Carson," she said with a teasing smile, her tone light. She leaned against the doorframe, her eyes twinkling with amusement. "And what brings you to Mr. King's office?" She stepped into the room with a knowing look.

Killian stiffened, his heart rate spiking for a brief moment. He wasn't prepared for this. "I—uh," he stammered, his face flushing with embarrassment. "I'm just... just here to discuss a few

documents. Nothing too serious."

Ms. Whitemore's smile widened as she arched a brow. "Uh-huh, sure. Well, if you and Mr. King are planning to do anything dirty in here, remember to lock the door." She winks at him, her voice dripping with playful sarcasm.

Killian's face burned crimson, and he stuttered out, "What? No! That's not—" He swallowed hard, trying to recover his composure. "I'm just here to—" But she was already walking away, laughing to herself.

Killian let out a shaky breath, his pulse still racing from the interaction. He wasn't sure whether to be mortified or amused. But He had something more important to focus on.

As soon as she disappeared down the hallway, Killian locked the door behind her and quickly moved toward Eli's desk. His heart was still thumping erratically, but his mind was locked on one thing: the letter. He knew it had to be there, tucked somewhere secret. He searched quickly, flipping through papers and files, his hands shaking with anticipation.

But before he could find anything, a sharp, sudden pain in his hand made him stop in his tracks. He looked down, blinking in confusion, only to see that blood was flowing freely from his bicep, pooling on the floor beneath him. Where had it come from? He hadn't even felt the cut. His brow furrowed, and a wave of panic gripped him as the blood continued to flow.

"What the hell?" Killian muttered under his breath, his heart racing with confusion and fear. He glanced around the office, his gaze searching for a reason behind the injury, but the cause was unclear. It was as if the wound had appeared out of nowhere.

Instinctively, he reached for the door, intending to leave the office and find a medical kit. But as his hand grasped the handle, something caught his eye—something impossible.

The glass in the door was smeared with what looked like blood, and upon closer inspection, there was something scrawled on the surface in red liquid, something that made his blood run cold.

"You did it!!"

The message was clear, written in a hasty, jagged script that looked far too familiar. His breath hitched in his throat as his gaze flicked between the blood on his arm and the message on the door. He staggered backward, his mind spinning with panic. No. No, he didn't do this. He couldn't have.

He stared at the door, his pulse pounding in his ears. He tried to tell himself it was a trick of the light, that the blood was from something else, that someone else had written it. But deep down, he knew it wasn't true. It was his blood. His blood on the door. His blood, and his message.

The doubt, the fear, the denial—it all rushed in at once.

"No," he whispered desperately, shaking his head as if he could dispel the vision in front of him. "I didn't do this. I didn't write this."

But the words burned into his mind, clawing at his sanity, tearing through his fragile control. The demons inside of him stirred, and for a moment, he felt their whispering voices calling to him, urging him to embrace the chaos, to let it consume him.

Killian's hand trembled as he pressed it to his forehead, trying to push the thoughts away, to remind himself that he wasn't the same person he once was. He wasn't the monster that he used to be. He couldn't be.

But there was no denying the truth in front of him—the truth that his mind refused to accept. He had done this. He had lost control again, and now, there was blood on his hands, both literally and figuratively.

His eyes burned with frustration, tears stinging at the corners.

The door—no, the glass—seemed to taunt him, a reminder of his darkest moments, of the things he couldn't escape. The blood. The message.

Killian swallowed hard, his throat tight with emotion.

But the uncertainty—it gnawed at him, louder and louder, until it felt like he was drowning.

Eli had barely stepped into his office when he saw Killian. His husband was standing there, looking frozen in place, blood dripping steadily from his arm, pooling beneath him. For a moment, he was confused, trying to process what was happening. Then, the reality hit him like a cold wave, and panic surged through his chest.

He was bleeding.

"Killian!" Eli's voice was sharp with concern as he rushed toward him, dropping the briefcase he had been carrying without a second thought. His eyes darted over Killian's pale face, the blood on his arm, and his husband's vacant, dazed expression.

Killian looked lost, muttering under his breath in a way that sent a sharp pang of fear through Eli's heart. "No... no..." He shook his head, almost as if he was trying to convince himself of something, his gaze unfocused.

"Hey, hey!" Eli was at his side in an instant, gripping his shoulders to steady him. "What happened? Killian, look at me!"

Killian didn't seem to register the urgency in Eli's voice, his body swaying slightly as he fought to make sense of whatever was going on in his head. The blood continued to flow from the cut on his arm, and Eli's mind raced.

What did he do? What happened to him?

But the only thing that mattered right now was getting Killian out of this state. Eli wasn't about to waste time figuring out the details. His priority was to help his husband.

He gently but firmly guided Killian toward the couch in his office, careful not to make any sudden movements that might make him stumble. Killian didn't resist; he just let Eli lead him, his steps shaky, his mind elsewhere. Eli helped him sit down, immediately kneeling beside him.

"Killian, let me see," Eli said, voice soft but filled with command. He knew his husband wasn't in the right state of mind to take control of the situation himself. He carefully unbuttoned Killian's shirt, trying to stay calm despite the panic surging in his chest.

The blood was starting to stain the fabric, and Eli's fingers trembled as he peeled it back. His breath caught when he saw the long but not too deep cut running along Killian's bicep. It wasn't life-threatening, but it was still enough to make Eli's heart ache in his chest.

He pressed his hand gently against Killian's arm, trying to stop the bleeding as much as possible. Killian's gaze flickered toward him, but his eyes were distant, almost unfocused.

"Killian, what happened?" Eli asked again, his voice thick with concern. His mind was racing, trying to figure out why his husband was so shaken. "Why are you bleeding like this? What did you do?"

Killian's lips parted, and his voice was low, barely a whisper. "I didn't do it, Eli. I didn't... I didn't mean to." His words were broken, like pieces of something falling apart.

Eli's brow furrowed, but he didn't have time to question further. The words were a haze in his mind, but it didn't matter. All that mattered was that Killian was sitting here, hurt, and in no condition to explain himself.

His hands moved quickly, grabbing a clean towel from his desk and pressing it to Killian's arm to help stem the bleeding. His mind was too full of panic to wonder about the cryptic words. He had to get Killian to a hospital. Now.

"Don't worry about it, okay?" Eli said, trying to reassure him even though his own chest was tight with fear. "We're going to the hospital. I'll take care of you. Just... just stay with me, alright? Killian."

Killian barely reacted. He remained frozen, his gaze still unfocused, but Eli didn't care. He took charge. His heart was pounding, his mind racing through the what-ifs, but none of that mattered now. Not while his husband was sitting there, trembling and bleeding, and needing him.

He turned back to Killian, his heart sinking further as he saw how pale and exhausted he looked. His hands moved quickly to help him to his feet, supporting him as they left the office. Eli's hands were gentle but firm as he helped Killian out of the building, into the waiting car.

The drive felt like an eternity.

During the ride, Eli kept his arm around Killian, the quiet hum of the car the only sound between them. Killian was still barely responsive, muttering to himself every so often, but Eli didn't try to make him speak.

Eli sat beside Killian, his hand still gently resting on his husband's, watching as the doctor worked with practiced ease to bandage the cut on Killian's arm. The doctor had said it was just a minor injury, that it wasn't serious, and that Killian would be fine in a few days. But Eli couldn't shake the tightness in his chest. He felt a simmering tension, something that clawed at him, something that was never quite at ease when it came to Killian's well-being.

The doctor's casual words barely reached his ears. *"Don't worry, it's just a minor cut, Mr. King."*

Eli's jaw tightened, his grip on Killian's hand firming. *"Don't worry?"* He wanted to shout. What did that doctor know about how he felt? His eyes narrowed at the doctor's back as the man wrapped Killian's arm with clean gauze, completely unaware of the maelstrom of thoughts crashing through Eli's mind.

His thoughts were sharp and heated. *This is my husband, damn it.* Even something as simple as a paper cut would make him worry endlessly, so why did the doctor think he could brush this off so easily?

He could feel the muscles in his shoulders tightening. Every single word the doctor spoke only made him more irritable. *"It's just a scratch."* *"Don't worry, you'll be fine."* If Eli wasn't so focused on making sure Killian was okay, he might have walked over there and punched the doctor.

Killian, still dazed but no longer in the state of panic he had been earlier, finally spoke, his voice soft and hoarse. "Eli, it's fine. Really."

But Eli wasn't buying it. Not when he saw the haunted look in his husband's eyes, not when he could still feel the cold panic rising in his chest. *"You don't get it."*

The doctor's voice broke through his thoughts. "Alright, Mr. King, just make sure he rests up and avoids strenuous activity for a few days. It should heal just fine, but if you notice anything unusual, please bring him back in."

Eli didn't respond to the doctor right away. He wasn't sure if he trusted that "minor injury" label. The way Killian had been acting—the strange, frantic muttering, the way he seemed completely unfazed by the injury itself—it wasn't just the cut that had Eli so rattled. There was more here than what the doctor was willing to see, and Eli was damn sure he wasn't going to leave this room without getting to the bottom of it.

When the doctor finally left, Killian shifted in the chair beside him, but his movements were slow, lethargic, like his body wasn't fully aware of what had happened. Eli could see his exhaustion, the emptiness in his eyes, and he wanted to ask, wanted to demand that Killian explain. But instead, Eli reached up and brushed a strand of hair out of Killian's face, his voice quiet, almost tender.

"You scared me, you know that?" he said softly, his thumb brushing against Killian's knuckles.

A slight smile tugged at Killian's lips, though it wasn't fully there—more of an echo of his usual charm. He shook his head a little, not meeting Eli's eyes. "I didn't mean to. I swear, Eli, I didn't do anything wrong. It's just... I don't know, I didn't remember how it happened." His voice faltered, and the words came out like a confession.

Eli leaned closer, his concern mounting again. "I don't care how it happened, Killian. I care about you. *You matter, damn it.*" He softened, trying to keep his tone gentle, though his heart was still racing from the panic. "I just... I need you here. With me."

Killian finally looked up, meeting his gaze with those haunting eyes of his, full of a thousand unspoken things. "I'm here," he said quietly, almost as if trying to convince himself.

Eli wasn't sure what had happened, what Killian was hiding from him, but right now, that didn't matter. All that mattered was the man sitting beside him, hurt and fragile in ways that Eli wasn't sure how to handle. And for now, Eli wasn't going to press him for answers. He wouldn't push.

But he'd be damned if he wasn't going to keep a watchful eye over Killian, no matter how "minor" the doctor claimed the injury was. He wouldn't let anyone else downplay it. Not when it came to Killian.

The nurse returned with a fresh set of gauze, and Eli helped Killian adjust his sleeve, then stood up. He could feel the weight of everything—the tension in his chest, the anxiety of what was unsaid between them—but for now, he would just be there for Killian. They would face it together, no matter how much it scared him.

As they left the hospital room, Eli pulled Killian closer, his arm wrapped around him protectively.

"Let's go home, yeah?" Eli asked, voice a little hoarse. He had no idea what was going on inside Killian's head, but for tonight, he wanted nothing more than to hold his husband close.

Killian nodded, leaning into him with a quiet sigh. It wasn't a perfect resolution, but for now, it was enough

.....

Eli stood in the middle of the living room, arms crossed, watching as Killian paced back and forth, his shoulders stiff and his movements erratic. The air between them was thick, charged with tension that had been building for days. Killian had been distant, tensed like a spring ready to snap, and Eli had had enough. He wasn't going to stand by and watch the man he loved yes loved , but that was a confession for another day, unravel without doing something about it.

"Killian, stop," Eli demanded, his voice sharp, cutting through the tense silence. Killian froze mid-step but didn't look at him. "You've been acting like this for days. Paranoid. Distant. Avoiding me. What the hell is going on?"

"I'm fine," Killian said, his voice clipped and low, his back still turned to Eli.

Eli's fists clenched at his sides, his patience hanging by a thread. "You're not fine, and we both know it. Stop lying to me, Killian. I'm your husband. Let me in."

Killian finally turned to face him, his expression hard, but Eli could see the cracks beneath it—the flicker of fear, of guilt, of something darker. "I said I'm fine," Killian repeated, his voice rising slightly. "Just drop it, Eli."

Eli stepped closer, his frustration boiling over. "No. I won't drop it. You're shutting me out, and I'm done pretending that's okay. Whatever this is, whatever you're going through, you don't have to face it alone. Let me help you."

“I don’t need your help!” Killian snapped, his voice loud and sharp enough to make Eli flinch. “You don’t understand, Eli. You don’t—” He stopped himself, running a hand through his hair, his breathing uneven. “You don’t want to know. Trust me.”

“Don’t tell me what I do and don’t want, Killian,” Eli said, his voice lower now but no less intense. He took another step forward, his gaze locking with Killian’s. “I want to know because I care. But I can’t do this if you keep shutting me out.”

Killian’s eyes darted away, his jaw tightening. “I’m trying to protect you, Eli. You don’t know —” He stopped again, his words trailing off into silence.

Eli threw his hands in the air, exasperated. “Protect me? From what? From *you*? Do you think I can’t handle whatever this is? Do you think I’m so fragile that I’ll just break if you tell me the truth?”

“It’s not about you being fragile,” Killian said, his voice quieter now but still strained. “It’s about me being... being—” He cut himself off, shaking his head violently. “I can’t do this. I can’t tell you.”

Eli felt the sting of those words like a slap to the face. His heart ached, but his frustration won out. “Fine,” he said, his voice colder than he intended. “If you don’t trust me enough to let me in, then I can’t help you. But don’t you dare think for a second that I’m just going to sit here and watch you self-destruct.”

Killian’s silence was deafening, his eyes refusing to meet Eli’s. That was it. That was the breaking point. Eli turned on his heel, heading for the door.

“Eli, wait,” Killian called, but his voice was weak, hesitant.



Eli didn’t stop. “Figure it out, Killian. And when you’re ready to actually talk to me, you know where to find me.”

He slammed the door behind him, the sound echoing through the quiet apartment. As he walked away, his heart clenched painfully, torn between anger and worry. He didn’t want to leave Killian like this, but what choice did he have? If Killian refused to let him in, then how could he help?

Inside, Killian sank onto the couch, his head in his hands. The silence was unbearable, the weight of Eli’s departure crushing. But the fear—the fear of revealing the worst parts of himself—kept him frozen, unable to chase after the one person who meant everything to him.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, my lovelies!!!! 

I’ve decided to gift you all—because why not?  You’ve supported me through all my stories, and I couldn’t be more grateful! 

So here's the plan: ONE CHAPTER EACH DAY!!!

Make sure to comment because I love reading them! You have no idea how many times I come back just to re-read your words—they truly mean everything to me! 🥹💕

I love you guys so much!!! Thank you for reading all my stories and for being the absolute best!!! 💕💕💕

CHAPTER 24

The house was quiet, bathed in shadows and the soft hum of the refrigerator. Killian lay in bed, staring at the ceiling, his chest rising and falling with uneven breaths. Sleep eluded him again, as it had for days now. Every time he closed his eyes, he was haunted by memories, by thoughts he couldn't suppress. The weight of Eli's absence beside him, despite his physical presence, felt like an ache in his bones. Eli was turned away from him, his back stiff, his breath steady in the rhythm of sleep.

It felt like a wall—tangible, impenetrable.

With a heavy sigh, Killian swung his legs over the edge of the bed. He glanced briefly at Eli, his throat tightening. He wanted to reach out, to smooth away the tension he could see even in his husband's sleep, but his hand fell limply to his side. No, he didn't deserve that. Not after pushing Eli away. Not after hiding so much.

Silently, Killian left the room, padding down the stairs to the kitchen. The coolness of the floor against his bare feet grounded him momentarily, but it wasn't enough to ease the chaos swirling in his head. He opened the fridge, grabbing a bottle of water, and leaned against the counter as he unscrewed the cap.

Get a grip, he told himself, taking a long sip. But the water did little to soothe the storm inside. His mind replayed the fight with Eli, the hurt in his husband's eyes, the tension in his voice. He wanted to go back upstairs, to shake Eli awake and confess everything, but the words stuck in his throat even in his imagination.

The room felt too quiet now, the kind of quiet that pressed against his ears. He tried to focus on the small sounds—the faint hum of the fridge, the creak of the floorboards as he shifted his weight—but a chill ran down his spine, unprovoked and unwelcome.

Then, a sound broke the silence. A soft, lilting laugh, echoing faintly through the air.

Killian froze, the bottle slipping from his hand and landing on the counter with a dull thud. His heart raced as he turned his head, scanning the room. The sound came again—a woman's voice, low and melodic, dripping with malice.

“Whom should I kill next?” the voice crooned, light and teasing, as if it were a joke between friends. “What do you want, darling?”

The laugh followed, echoing as if the walls themselves carried it. It was chilling, the kind of sound that sank into his bones and refused to leave. Killian's breath hitched, his body stiffening as he gripped the edge of the counter. His heart pounded so loudly he thought it might drown out the eerie sound, but then... it was gone.

Just like that, it vanished, leaving only the quiet hum of the fridge and the weight of his own ragged breathing.

Killian stumbled back a step, his hands trembling. He looked around the kitchen, his eyes darting to every shadow, every corner, every crevice. There was nothing. No one. The room was empty.

But the words lingered in his mind, each syllable cutting deeper. *Whom should I kill next? What do you want, darling?*

“No,” he whispered, shaking his head. “No, no, no.” His voice broke, the denial spilling from his lips like a mantra.

He pressed his palms to his temples, his fingers digging into his hair as he squeezed his eyes shut. “You’re losing it,” he muttered to himself, his voice trembling. “You’re just tired. You’re stressed. It’s nothing. It’s nothing.”

But the doubt gnawed at him, relentless and unforgiving. What if it wasn’t nothing? What if the voice was real? What if it was a part of him, some dark corner of his mind that he couldn’t control? What if... what if he really was losing his mind?

The thought was unbearable, crushing him under its weight. He thought of the blood, the writing on the glass, the memories he couldn’t trust anymore. He thought of Eli—sweet, stubborn Eli—and the way he’d looked at him with hurt and frustration. He thought of the danger he might bring, the harm he might cause.

“I’m not mad or insane. I am fine. I am fine. I am fine,” he whispered, his voice cracking. His knees buckled, and he sank to the floor, his back against the counter. The cold tile pressed against his skin, but it did nothing to numb the pain spreading through his chest.

Killian pulled his knees to his chest, wrapping his arms around them as he rocked slightly. He wanted to cry, but the tears wouldn’t come. He wanted to scream, but his voice was gone. All he could do was sit there, haunted by the laugh, the words, and the fear that he was slipping into something he couldn’t escape.

Upstairs, Eli stirred but didn’t wake. If he had, maybe he would have seen Killian’s silhouette in the kitchen, small and fragile against the darkness. Maybe he would have heard the silent plea that Killian didn’t know how to voice: *Help me.*

.....

The morning sun filtered through the curtains, casting soft beams of light across the bedroom. Killian stood in front of the mirror, meticulously buttoning up his shirt. His movements were slow, almost mechanical, as if he were conserving every ounce of energy. His mind still swirled with thoughts he couldn’t quiet, and the tension between him and Eli only added to his unease.

He tightened his tie, frowning slightly at his reflection. He hated how the bags under his eyes betrayed his sleepless nights. He hated the quietness that had settled between him and Eli—a quietness that was heavier than any argument they’d had.

Lost in thought, he didn’t hear Eli enter the room. It wasn’t until he felt warm hands snake around his waist from behind that he froze, his breath catching.

“Let’s go out today,” Eli’s deep voice murmured against his ear, soft but firm, like a command disguised as a suggestion. “You need to relax. Ease whatever tension you have.”

Killian’s eyes widened, meeting Eli’s in the mirror. For a moment, he didn’t know how to respond. The warmth of Eli’s embrace, the weight of his arms around him—it felt so grounding, so safe, and yet it caught Killian off guard.

“Out?” Killian finally managed, his voice quiet. “But you have work—”

“Work can wait,” Eli interrupted, his tone brooking no argument. “. We’re going out, no debate.”

Killian hesitated, his fingers brushing over the edge of his tie as he looked down. “What do you want to do?” he asked softly.

Eli smiled faintly, his lips brushing against Killian’s shoulder before he straightened. “Our first Christmas shopping,” he said.

Killian let out a soft breath, his lips curving into a small, hesitant smile. “Alright,” he said, turning slightly to meet Eli’s gaze. “Let’s go Christmas shopping.”

Eli’s eyes lingered on him for a moment, warm and searching. “I’m still upset with you,” he admitted, his voice low but steady. “But I’ll wait. When you’re ready to talk, I’ll be here. Right now... let’s just focus on today.”

The honesty in Eli’s words made Killian’s chest tighten. He nodded, swallowing hard. “Thank you,” he murmured.

Eli didn’t respond, simply pressing a brief kiss to the side of Killian’s head before stepping back. “Let’s go,” he said.

The two of them walked to the garage in silence, but it wasn’t the heavy, strained silence from the past few days. It was lighter, a tentative truce hanging between them. Killian felt a flicker of nervousness as they approached the cars. His gaze swept over the rows of vehicles, his steps faltering slightly when he didn’t see his Aston Martin.

“Where’s my car?” he asked, his brows furrowing.

Eli glanced at him, a faint smirk tugging at his lips. “I noticed you’ve been avoiding the color red lately,” he said, his tone casual but with an undercurrent of meaning. “So, I thought it was time for a change.”

Killian’s breath caught as Eli gestured to a sleek green Aston Martin parked at the far end of the garage. The deep, rich color gleamed under the soft lights, a perfect balance of elegance and power.

“You bought a new car?” Killian asked, his voice barely above a whisper.

“For you,” Eli said simply, leaning against the car with an easy grace. His eyes glinted with amusement as he added, “Do you like it, or should I have gone with something else?”

Killian was speechless. His hands clenched and unclenched at his sides as he stared at the car, his mind racing. It wasn't just the car, hell he could have bought 1000 cars with his own money but—it was the fact that Eli had noticed something so small, something Killian hadn't even realized he was doing. It was the fact that Eli had acted on it .

Killian felt his cheeks heat, a flush creeping up his neck. He looked away, his gaze dropping to the floor as he tried to compose himself. “I... I didn't think you noticed,” he admitted, his voice quiet.

Eli stepped closer, his eyes softening as he reached out to lift Killian's chin with two fingers. “Of course I noticed,” he said, his voice low. “I notice everything about you, Killian.”

The words sent a shiver down Killian's spine, and he couldn't help the way his blush deepened. Eli's smirk widened, and he leaned in, his breath brushing against Killian's ear as he teased, “Blushing, are we?”

Killian pulled back slightly, his expression flustered. “I'm not—But seriously did you have to buy Green .That's my brother's color. Ewww” he began, but the protest died on his lips when Eli's hand found its way to the small of his back, steady and reassuring.

“Oh please, I have enough money husband , I can buy the entire company for you if you want, what's a little color change. Come on,” Eli said, his tone light. “Let's take your new car for a spin and we can change it later. Christmas won't shop for itself.”

Killian managed a small smile, the tension in his chest easing slightly as he followed Eli to the car.

.....

The bustling aisle of the store was a kaleidoscope of reds, greens, and golds, shimmering under the soft glow of fairy lights strung above. People moved about, laughing and chatting, their joy filling the air like the hum of a cheerful melody. Yet for Killian, the world remained muted, like a distant echo he couldn't quite reach. He stood there, fingers brushing over a garland of holly, his mind consumed by a storm far removed from the festive cheer around him.

It was his first Christmas with Eli. Their first holiday together as husbands. The thought should have filled him with joy—should have wrapped him in warmth and anticipation. Instead, it clawed at the edges of his mind, stirring a deep, gnawing fear he couldn't shake. How could he make it perfect? How could he make it worthy of Eli?

Killian's eyes wandered to the mistletoe hanging from the nearby rack. A faint smile tugged at his lips, though it didn't quite reach his eyes. Mistletoe. The tradition was simple: stand beneath it, kiss the one you love. *Love*. The word felt strange, like a foreign thing he wasn't sure he was allowed to hold. But he wanted it. Desperately.

Maybe hundreds of mistletoes, he thought, the faintest trace of amusement coloring the darkness of his thoughts. If he bought enough, he could hang them all over the house—on doorways, above the stairs, over the kitchen table. Everywhere. That way, every time Eli passed by, he'd have an excuse to kiss him. And wouldn't that be something? A way to anchor himself, even for a moment, to the man who felt like a beacon in the endless dark.

Killian clenched his jaw, the weight of his thoughts pressing down on him. Why did Eli feel like that? Why did the sound of Eli's voice have the power to pull him out of the shadows he had drowned in for so long? What was it about him—his smile, his touch, the way he said Killian's name—that made the chaos in his mind quiet, even if only for a fleeting second?

He didn't know. He doubted he ever would.

Killian... Killian was the dark. A storm of madness and hunger and unrelenting shadows. He didn't deserve this light. He didn't deserve *him*. But Eli stayed. Eli reached for him, even when Killian tried to pull away. And that... that terrified him.

What if one day, Eli realized the truth? What if he saw the monster that lurked beneath the surface, the one Killian tried so desperately to keep at bay? What if he decided it was too much, that *he* was too much? The thought twisted in his chest, sharp and suffocating.

Yet, even in the depths of his fear, there was something else. Something selfish. Killian wanted to keep Eli. To hold onto him with everything he had, even if it meant dragging him into the dark with him. Was that love? Or was it something darker, something far more twisted?

He didn't know. He didn't care.

All he knew was that when Eli looked at him, smiled at him, touched him, the darkness felt... less. It didn't go away—it never would—but it receded, like a tide pulling back from the shore. And in its place, there was something warm, something that made Killian think, just for a moment, that maybe he could be whole.

His fingers closed around a box of ornaments, the shimmering glass catching the light. He imagined them on the tree in their home. Would Eli notice the mistletoe? Would he find it endearing? Or would he tease Killian for his ridiculous idea? It was all Eli in his mind.

Killian didn't mind. Whatever Eli did, whatever he said, it would be enough. Because Eli was there. And as long as Eli was there, Killian could keep going. He could fight the darkness, even when it felt like it was winning.

"Excuse me, sir," a store clerk interrupted, pulling Killian from his thoughts. "Do you need help finding anything?"

Killian blinked, his grip on the box tightening. He said while shaking his head. "No, thank you," he said, his voice steady, even though his mind was anything but.

As the clerk walked away, Killian let out a slow breath. He looked down at the mistletoe in his basket, the fragile sprigs of green and white a stark contrast to the chaos swirling in his chest. He didn't know what made Eli stay.

But as he reached for another strand of mistletoe, he realized he didn't need to know. Eli was here, and that was all that mattered. Because in a world where darkness reigned, Eli was his light. And Killian would do anything—*anything*—to keep that light from going out.

.....
.....

Notes:

Hello, my lovelies!!!! 💖

Here we are again..... another Valentine's Day upcoming, and guess what? **Still single.** 😭 ✨
No candlelit dinner, no cute "good morning, my love" texts, no mysterious secret admirer—*just me, myself* 😞 💔

Cupid? **Fraud.**That little winged menace has *never* once aimed in my direction....whyyyyyy?!!!. At this point, I must have been *blacklisted* from the love lottery because **ain't no way** I've been THIS single for THIS long. 🐼

At this rate, my own book ships have a *higher chance* of coming to life than my love life does. *Embarrassing.*



But you know what? **Fine.** This is my villain origin story. Hahaaaa heheeee 🍷 I'll be my own Valentine. I'll buy myself chocolates. I'll write myself a love letter. And I'll keep slaying while waiting for the universe to *stop playing games* and send me my **mysterious, brooding, morally gray love interest** already.

Until then, Happy **Singles Day** to me. 😞 💖

CHAPTER 25

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The aroma of freshly baked pastries wafted through the air as Killian pushed open the glass door of the bakery. The warmth of the interior, filled with the chatter of customers and the clinking of utensils, offered a stark contrast to the biting chill outside. Leaving Eli at the decor shop had felt wrong—like peeling away from his anchor—but Killian had insisted. A quick stop for pastries. Something sweet to brighten their first Christmas together

The bell above the door jingled softly as Killian stepped in, scanning the display case filled with intricately decorated confections. For a brief moment, he allowed himself a sliver of calm, his mind quieting in the presence of something as mundane as choosing a dessert.

But then he bumped into someone.

“Oh!” A high-pitched voice, syrupy yet laced with venom, sliced through the peaceful atmosphere. Killian’s eyes narrowed as he stepped back, only to find himself staring into the face of a ghost he thought he’d buried long ago. Cherri.

Her painted lips curved into a smirk, her manicured nails brushing imaginary dust off her coat as she looked him over. “Well, well. Killian Carson,” she said, her voice dripping with mockery. “How’s life been treating you, darling? Still playing the tormented little freak?”

Killian froze, his body stiffening as his eyes darkened. Cherri, his ex. Once upon a time, she had been nothing more than a distraction—a pretty face with ulterior motives, a serpent in human skin. She’d used him, betrayed him, and walked away without a care. That she was still alive was a testament to Jeremy’s calculated diplomacy; the Serpents gang wasn’t worth a war, Jeremy had said. But Killian had never forgiven her. And now, here she was, standing before him like a specter from his past.

“Carson?” he repeated, his voice low and cold. “It’s King-Carson now.”

Cherri’s smirk widened, her eyes glinting with malice. “Oh, my apologies,” she purred. “How could I forget? You’re married now, aren’t you? Playing house with someone who doesn’t know the real you.”

Killian’s jaw clenched, his fingers twitching at his sides as she stepped closer, her heels clicking against the tiled floor. “Does he know?” she whispered, her voice taking on a sinister edge. “Does he know what a monster you are?”

The word *monster* struck him like a blow, sharp and searing. Killian’s vision narrowed, the bustling bakery fading into the background as the shadows within him stirred, clawing at his mind. He grabbed her by the arm, his grip like iron, and dragged her outside before anyone could notice.

The cold air bit at his skin as he pulled her into the alleyway, away from prying eyes. The narrow space was dimly lit, the faint hum of a distant streetlamp the only sound besides their

footsteps. Killian shoved her against the brick wall, his hand wrapping around her throat as he pressed her back with calculated force.

“Say it again,” he hissed, his voice trembling with barely contained fury. “Say that word again.”

Cherri’s laughter echoed in the confined space, high-pitched and deranged. She wasn’t afraid. If anything, she seemed to revel in his anger, her eyes alight with twisted delight. “Monster,” she said, drawing out the word like a dagger. “That’s what you are, isn’t it? A freak, a little demon masquerading as a man. You’re nothing like your brother. Gareth was perfect. But you... you’re broken. You’ve always been broken.”

Her words cut deep, tearing through the fragile veneer of control Killian had spent months trying to maintain. The darkness within him roared to life, a beast unleashed, its claws sinking into his soul. His grip on her throat tightened, his nails digging into her skin as her laughter choked off into a strangled gasp.

“You don’t know anything about me,” Killian growled, his voice low and deadly. “You never did. And you—” He leaned closer, his face inches from hers, his eyes burning with fury. “You don’t get to say my brother’s name.”

Cherri’s lips twisted into a cruel smile, even as her breath came in ragged gasps. “You’ll never be anything more than a shadow, Killian,” she wheezed. “A shadow pretending to be a man. And no matter how hard you try, you’ll never outrun it.”

The snap was sudden, a sharp, sickening sound that echoed in the alley like the final note of a symphony. Killian’s hand fell away as Cherri’s body slumped to the ground, lifeless, her eyes still open, frozen in that mocking expression.

For a moment, there was only silence. The beast within him purred, satisfied, as the weight of his actions settled over him like a heavy fog. He stared at her body, his chest heaving, his mind a whirlwind of chaos and clarity.

Killian turned, his hands trembling as he leaned against the wall, his breath visible in the cold night air. What had he done? No. He knew exactly what he’d done. And the worst part was, he didn’t regret it.. Maybe not ever.

The faint echo of Cherri’s taunts lingered in his mind, a bitter reminder of the darkness he carried within him. But as he straightened, wiping his hands on his coat, he pushed the thought away.

The silence of the alley was thick and oppressive as Killian turned to leave, his breath fogging in the cold air. His pulse thundered in his ears, the beast within him still prowling, sated by the act he had just committed. But he froze mid-step, his eyes narrowing as he caught sight of a figure leaning casually against the brick wall a few feet away.

Eli.

The golden light of the distant streetlamp cast a soft glow on Eli’s sharp features, his arms crossed loosely over his chest, his head tilted slightly, and a faint smile playing on his lips. He looked utterly unbothered, almost amused, as though he had been standing there for hours, watching every move, every snap of control, every moment Killian had unraveled.

Killian's heart plummeted. He opened his mouth to speak, but the words refused to come. The rush of panic that accompanied Eli's presence made him feel more exposed than any courtroom or spotlight ever could. What would Eli say? Was this the moment everything fell apart? Would Eli scream? Walk away?

"Did you get your pastries, darling?" Eli's voice was soft, a stark contrast to the tension thick in the air. His tone was so casual, so disarmingly normal, that Killian almost believed they were discussing dinner plans.

Killian blinked, his throat dry. "Eli, I... What?" His gaze darted to Cherri's lifeless body crumpled on the ground, the mocking smirk still frozen on her face. "Aren't you going to ask me anything?"

Eli pushed himself off the wall with a feline grace, taking slow, deliberate steps toward Killian. There was no anger in his eyes, no judgment—just a calm, almost affectionate curiosity. "Ask you what?" Eli murmured, his voice low, soothing, like honey laced with arsenic. "Who am I to judge you, love?"

Killian's breath hitched as Eli stopped inches from him, their faces so close he could feel the warmth radiating from his husband's skin. "Eli, I—"

Eli's hand rose, a single finger pressing gently against Killian's lips, silencing him. "No, no, darling," Eli whispered. "You don't need to explain. I have my own share of blood spilling, don't I? We both know what it's like to have... moments of clarity." His eyes flicked briefly to Cherri's body, then back to Killian, the faintest hint of a smirk tugging at the corner of his mouth.

Killian's chest tightened, a cocktail of shame, guilt, and twisted relief churning inside him. "You're not... mad?" he asked hesitantly, his voice barely above a whisper.

"Mad?" Eli repeated, his eyebrows lifting slightly as though the question amused him. "Why would I be mad? She was a pest, wasn't she? Someone who didn't know when to keep her mouth shut. That wasn't your fault, my sweet husband. It was hers. All hers."

Killian stared at Eli, his mind reeling, trying to make sense of the sheer lack of condemnation in his words. Eli reached out, his fingers brushing lightly against Killian's jaw, tilting his face upward so their eyes met.

"You were just stress-relieving," Eli said softly, his tone so gentle it felt like a caress. "And if she was stupid enough to provoke you, well..." He shrugged elegantly, as though discussing an unfortunate accident. "Actions have consequences, don't they?"

Killian's lips parted, but the words caught in his throat. There was no judgment in Eli's expression, no horror—only understanding. Twisted, dark understanding.

Eli's hand fell away, and he turned his gaze back to the body. "My guards will handle the mess," he said casually, as if arranging for the disposal of a body was no different from scheduling a dinner reservation. "They always do"

Killian nodded mutely, his mind still struggling to process Eli's reaction. He had expected anger, questions, accusations—anything but this unflinching acceptance.

Eli turned back to him, his smile softening, “Now,” he said, his voice a soothing balm to Killian’s frayed nerves, “why don’t we head back? We have decorations to buy, don’t we?”

Killian felt a lump rise in his throat, a strange mixture of love and desperation washing over him. How could Eli be so calm, so accepting? What kind of man did it make him, to feel so grateful for it?

Eli leaned closer, his lips brushing against Killian’s ear as he whispered, “We’re a team, my love. Always. And nothing—no one—will ever change that.”

Killian swallowed hard, his arms moving of their own accord to wrap around Eli, pulling him close. The warmth of his husband’s embrace was like a lifeline, grounding him, pulling him back from the abyss.

Eli pulled back slightly, his lips curling into a playful smile. “Now,” he said, his tone lighter, almost teasing, “did you get your pastries, darling?”

Killian let out a breathless laugh, shaking his head. “No. I got... distracted.”

Eli’s smile widened, his hand slipping into Killian’s. “Then let’s fix that, shall we? We can’t have Christmas without something sweet, can we?”





Killian nodded, letting Eli guide him out of the alley, leaving the darkness behind. But as they walked, he couldn’t help but glance at Eli, the man who had seen his worst and still stood by his side. His light in the darkness. His salvation—and his greatest temptation.











.....

Chapter End Notes

A small help suggest me some couples in comments on whose story i wshould write next...I am stuck oops..

 Tragic Update 

My dear laptop, my loyal companion in crime, has been admitted to the tech hospital. Yes, lovelies, the unthinkable has happened—my laptop decided to betray me at the worst possible time, forcing me to send it off for repair. This is the only chapter i had as draft. Sorryyyy    

So, while I wait for my beloved to return , the chapters might be a tiny bit late. Blame technology, blame fate, blame the mysterious forces that only strikes me when i need luck on my side.....          

I promise I’ll be back soon. I am so so sorry for this..... Until then, pray for my laptop’s speedy recovery.

CHAPTER 26

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Killian sat at his desk, scrolling through reports with a rare calmness. The soft hum of activity outside his office was a familiar backdrop. The office door swung open with a dramatic flourish.

“Killy!” Cecily’s voice rang out, vibrant and full of warmth, as she stepped in wearing a sharp suit that screamed power and confidence. Her grin was wide, her dark eyes sparkling with mischief.

Killian’s head snapped up, and a rare smile broke across his face. “Ceci!” He stood abruptly, abandoning all pretense of formality, and met her halfway across the room. They collided in an enthusiastic hug, laughing like old friends reunited after years apart—despite it only having been a few days as she left for a project.

“You look stunning as always,” Killian said, pulling back slightly to hold her at arm’s length. “When did you come back? And why didn’t you tell me you were coming?”

Cecily smirked. “Oh, you know me. I like to keep my favorite Carson-king on his toes.” She winked, her teasing tone unmistakable.

Before Killian could respond, the sound of a deliberate throat clearing cut through their reunion. Killian felt a familiar hand slide possessively around his waist, pulling him back against a solid chest. He didn’t need to look to know who it was.

“Cecily,” Eli King’s voice was calm, but the edge of territorial jealousy was impossible to miss. His piercing gaze flicked between Killian and Cecily, his grip on Killian’s waist tightening slightly, as if to silently assert ownership.

Cecily burst out laughing, her head tipping back as she let out a melodic peal of amusement. “Oh, Eli,” she said, her eyes glinting with a knowing smile. “Don’t tell me you’re jealous.”

Eli’s expression didn’t waver, though a faint flush of irritation colored his cheeks. “Jealous? I don’t get jealous,” he said smoothly, his tone as sharp as ever. “I’m just reminding my husband where he belongs.”

Cecily grinned, her amusement only growing. “Oh, darling, if that grip on his waist gets any tighter, we’ll have to call it a love-strangle.” She winked at Killian, who was valiantly trying to suppress a laugh.

“Ceci,” Killian said, his voice tinged with both affection and exasperation. “Don’t tease him.”

“Why not?” Cecily retorted, shrugging. “It’s fun. And besides, he makes it so easy.”

Eli’s eyes narrowed slightly, though there was no real malice in his gaze—just a simmering possessiveness that made Killian’s cheeks flush. “I’ll remind you,” Eli said smoothly, his lips curling into a faint smirk, “I’m not the one who had to drop by unannounced to get attention.”

Cecily raised an eyebrow, clearly unfazed. “Touché,” she said with a grin. “But don’t worry, Eli. You’re still his number one. For now.”

Killian groaned softly, shaking his head. “Alright, enough. Ceci, you’re coming to Christmas dinner.”

“Am I?” Cecily said, feigning surprise. “Well, in that case, can I bring someone? A friend?”

“Bring whoever you want,” Killian said without hesitation, waving a dismissive hand. “The more, the merrier.”

Cecily’s eyes sparkled mischievously. “Oh, Killy, you’re going to regret giving me free rein like that.”

Eli arched an eyebrow, clearly unimpressed. “As long as your ‘friend’ knows how to behave,” he said, his tone clipped. “We have standards, after all.”

Cecily laughed again, clearly enjoying the verbal sparring. “Don’t worry, Eli,” she said, patting his arm as if he were a particularly grumpy cat. “I wouldn’t dream of bringing anyone who might overshadow you.”

Eli’s lips twitched, the faintest hint of a smirk breaking through his usual stoicism. “Good,” he said simply.

Killian sighed, running a hand through his hair. “You two are exhausting.”

“And yet, you love us,” Cecily said with a grin, leaning in to kiss his cheek. She turned to Eli, her expression softening slightly. “Don’t worry, Eli. I won’t steal him from you. He’s yours, body and soul.”

Eli’s smirk deepened, and he tugged Killian closer, his hand sliding to rest possessively on his hip. “Don’t forget it,” he said, his voice low and dangerous, though there was a flicker of amusement in his eyes.

Cecily just laughed, her sharp, infectious joy filling the room. “Oh Eli, all these years we have known each other since childhood I didn’t know this side of you.”

Eli just chuckled, “Trust me, I didn’t know it myself.”

The moment Cecily’s laughter faded down the corridor, the door clicking shut behind her, Eli’s demeanor shifted. The teasing edge he’d worn in her presence melted away. He stood silently for a moment, his gaze locked on Killian, who had already returned to his desk, seemingly unfazed by the encounter.

“Killian,” Eli said, his voice low, almost a growl.

Killian looked up from the documents in his hand, his brow arching slightly. “What?” he asked, though a faint smirk tugged at his lips. He knew that tone well.

Without a word, Eli crossed the room in a few long strides. He didn’t stop until he was standing right in front of Killian’s chair. Then, with one swift motion, Eli grabbed Killian’s wrist, pulling

him up and guiding him to sit on his lap. Killian let out a soft grunt of surprise but didn't resist, his smirk widening as he settled onto Eli, straddling his thighs.

Eli's hands immediately found their place, one wrapping firmly around Killian's waist while the other trailed up his spine, fingers splaying possessively across his back. "Why are there so many admirers around you, *'Killy'?*" Eli murmured, his voice silky and low. His lips brushed against Killian's ear as he spoke, sending a shiver down the other man's spine. "Do I need to remind you who you belong to?"

Killian leaned back slightly, just enough to meet Eli's piercing gaze. His smirk deepened, and his eyes glinted with mischief. "A reminder wouldn't hurt," he said, his voice smooth and laced with challenge. "You know, just to be sure."

Eli's lips curled into a predatory smile, his grip tightening around Killian's waist. "Careful what you wish for," he warned, his tone a dangerous whisper.

Killian tilted his head, exposing the column of his neck in a deliberate taunt. "I'm not afraid of you," he murmured, though his heartbeat quickened under Eli's intense gaze.

Eli didn't hesitate. He leaned in, his lips brushing over Killian's throat, soft at first, before turning into a firm, claiming kiss. His teeth grazed the sensitive skin, eliciting a sharp inhale from Killian. The hand on Killian's back slid upward, tangling in his hair and tilting his head further back, giving Eli full access.

"You're mine," Eli whispered against Killian's skin, his voice rough with emotion. "Every breath, every heartbeat, every thought. Mine."

Killian let out a low chuckle, his hands gripping Eli's shoulders for balance. "Possessive much?" he teased, though the flush on his cheeks betrayed his enjoyment.

Eli pulled back just enough to look into Killian's eyes, his expression fierce and unyielding. "You have no idea," he said, his thumb brushing over Killian's cheek before trailing down to his jawline. "And you seem to enjoy it."

Killian's smirk softened into a genuine smile, his eyes warm despite the teasing glint. "Maybe I do," he admitted, his voice quieter now, almost vulnerable. "But don't stop reminding me."

Eli's gaze softened for a brief moment, his thumb brushing over Killian's lower lip. Then, with a growl of approval, he pulled Killian closer, his lips capturing Killian's in a kiss that was anything but gentle. It was hungry, demanding, and full of unspoken promises—a reminder, indeed, of exactly who Killian belonged to.

Killian lets his lips drag over Eli's, tasting the sharp inhale he gives back. "Why don't you remind me now?" he suggests, gaze flicking up to snare Eli's. So he sees when Eli's eyes go wide.

Killian also sees the burn of arousal in those dark eyes.

Killian's lips curve and he says teasingly. "Come on... Think about it — every time you work here, you can remember your cock in my—"

Eli moves forward to meet Killian's mouth, hands jumping up to cup Killian's chin and claims Killian's mouth for another hungry kiss.

"You're not fucking me over your desk," Killian chides, gripping Eli's jaw to force his husband's attention to him. "I wanna ride you in your chair."

The chair creaks when Eli falls into it, but he doesn't have time to get comfortable when Killian slides down between Eli's knees.

Just the sight of him between Eli's legs, eyes burning with that heat that makes Eli's arousal peak... He wants to get a taste of Killian's lips again, get his hands on all that skin, mark him as his, carve a place inside him just for him, no one else.

A pleased chuckle falls from Killian's lips. "Fucking me with your eyes, huh?"

Eli speaks, his voice is still a bit hoarse, "Do you have any idea how you look right now, darling?"

Killian smirks when Eli's already hard cock springs free of his pants..

Killian says, "Aren't you a bit eager, Eli?"

"Understatement," Eli wheezes.

Eli's hips jolt upwards with Killian's firm stroke, his hands gripping Killian's hair.

He's leaking in no time, biting his lip bloody, he wants Killian to go faster, *harder*, to make him come, no he wants to come inside Killian.

It's only when Eli is on the verge of coming that Killian finally leans down and licks up the underside of Eli's cock. He groans, as Killian takes Eli between his lips.

Just the wet, tight heat of Killian's mouth around him would be enough to send him over the edge.

All too quickly, his climax is rushing up at him. Eli tips his head back against the chair as he empties down Killian's throat, the release washing over him like... like fireworks under his skin.

Eli cracks his eyes open to chance a glimpse down at Killian. His breath skips at the sight of those bright red lips, those hooded eyes with a desperate hunger. Killian stands up back to his full height in a moment as he rises to straddle Eli's lap.

The leather chair creaks, tipping backwards as Killian climbs up his lap.

Killian settles his weight over Eli's thighs. Those gorgeous eyes drag over his skin, drinking Eli down with bone-deep the satisfaction.

He jolts when Killian's hand dips into his open slacks, stroking him back to hardness. Eli does his best to hold still, letting his husband play his game.

Eli can't help the moan that falls from his lips when Killian lines up and sinks down on Eli's cock though. Taking him in smooth and steady as Eli's head spins from the tight heat .

It feels like an eternity before Killian finally sinks down completely, his thighs flush to Eli's.

But Eli wants to pleasure Killian too. He grabs Killian's waist tightly and stops his movement, watching as Killian whines at him to fuck him, he slightly shifts Killian, not fully entering him.

"Fuck, Eli. Fuck me" Killian says.

"You look so hot when you're desperate," Eli hums, his gray eyes crinkling with hunger.

"Eli," Killian gasps. It's taking all his concentration not to sink down completely, so he jumps when Eli slams up.

"Love you like this, You look so fucking pretty sitting in my lap riding me. Me" Eli says.

Killian rolls his hips down on Eli's cock to tease.

Killian rises and falls so suddenly that it punches the air from Eli's lungs, head tipping back against the leather chair.

"We are both in control here, Eli", Killian purrs. There's nothing Eli wants more in that moment than to fuck Killian, to return the pleasure Killian has given him. And that's what he did.

He can see, from the flush that's darkening Killian's cheeks, and the flutter of his lashes, that Killian is near.

Eli winds his fingers into Killian's hair and tugs Killian's head towards him and kisses him hard. He sucks a bruise into the skin of Killian's neck for everyone to see.

Killian rides him with a thirst of a starved man, the chair squeaking with every thrust.. Killian's fingers dig into his skin, squeezing in time with every clench he makes around Eli's cock.

When Killian comes with a cry, trembling, it's a beautiful thing to behold. His forehead tips forward into Eli's shoulder, his whole body shuddering atop Eli as cum paints the space between them.

Killian finds himself nearly dozing, the lazy swipe of Eli's lips over his is what brings him back..

"Something to remember every time you sit on it," Killian teases, climbing off Eli's lap .

Eli grabs Killian's hand in his own, and tugs his husband down again. "Promises, promises."

Okieeee....SO

What do you think of this chapter????

Don't forget to leave a comment or i will haunt you..hehee

Have a great day!!1

CHAPTER 27

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli stared at the TV screen, his expression caught somewhere between disbelief and resignation. The Grinch's fuzzy green face filled the screen, his voice high-pitched and grating as he schemed about ruining Christmas. Eli leaned back against the couch, glancing at the popcorn bowl in Killian's lap.

"You're telling me," Eli began, voice laced with disbelief, "that of all the Christmas traditions in the world, *this* is the one you cling to?"

Killian, who was utterly engrossed in the movie, didn't even glance his way. "It's not just a movie, Eli," he said, his tone slightly offended. "It's a *classic*. A masterpiece, even."

Eli arched a brow. "A masterpiece? Really? It's a green furry monster plotting against holiday cheer. I thought you'd be more into—oh, I don't know—*Hannibal* or *Psycho*. Something dark and brooding. This..." He gestured toward the screen, where the Grinch was now prancing around in a Santa outfit. "...is so beneath your aesthetic."

Killian finally turned to look at Eli, his eyes narrowing just slightly. "Hannibal isn't a Christmas movie," he said matter-of-factly, as though the idea of watching it during the holidays was preposterous.

"And *this* is?" Eli asked, incredulous.

"Of course," Killian said with a small shrug. "It's about redemption, holiday spirit, and—"

"Kidnapping a dog and traumatizing a town?"

"*Holiday cheer*," Killian repeated firmly, throwing a piece of popcorn at Eli for good measure. "And Max isn't kidnapped; he's the Grinch's companion. There's loyalty there."

Eli sighed, his gaze drifting back to the TV. The Grinch was now cackling maniacally while pulling some elaborate prank. Eli's patience was wearing thin. He was a CEO of one of the biggest companies in the world, nearing thirty, and here he was, sitting on his couch, watching *The Grinch* of all things.

His hand inched toward the remote. Slowly. Subtly. Maybe if he could just change it to something else—a Christmas concert, a classic like *Home Alone*, even some boring news channel—anything to escape the green monstrosity on the screen.

But before his fingers could reach the remote, he felt it. *The look*.

Killian's head turned slightly, and Eli froze mid-reach. Killian's eyes weren't wide or angry—no, it was a subtle, sharp look, his brows furrowing ever so slightly, one corner of his mouth quirking downward. But it carried the weight of a thousand unspoken words, all boiling down to: *Touch that remote, and you will die*.

Eli slowly retracted his hand, muttering under his breath, “The power of the husband stare...”

Killian turned back to the TV as though nothing had happened, satisfied that his unspoken warning had been heeded. Eli sat back, crossing his arms, casting a sidelong glance at his husband. “You know,” he began, his voice teasing, “I’ve seen that look before.”

Killian didn’t bother looking away from the screen. “Oh?”

“Yeah,” Eli said. “It’s the same look my cousin Bran gives your cousin whenever he tries to do something stupid..”

Killian snorted, finally tearing his gaze away from the movie. “He is a disaster.”

“And so is this,” Eli muttered, pointing to the TV.

Killian’s hand shot up, silencing Eli with a single raised finger. “Hush. This is the best part.”

Eli rolled his eyes but couldn’t help the small smile tugging at his lips. As much as he hated to admit it, seeing Killian’s rare moments of childlike enthusiasm made it worth enduring the green terror on the screen.

.....

The doorbell rang, pulling Killian’s attention away from the kitchen, where he’d been setting up the final touches for the Christmas dinner. His heart skipped a beat in anticipation. It wasn’t unusual for Cecily to bring someone along, but it didn’t make it any less curious. He opened the door with a polite smile, expecting to see his friend walk in with some casual company, ready for the evening’s festivities.

Instead, Cecily was standing there with a woman Killian recognized right away. And before he could process it, Cecily grinned widely and announced, “Killian, this is Ava Nash, my girlfriend.”

Killian froze, his smile faltering as he tried to absorb what Cecily had just said. Ava Nash? The same Ava Nash he had thought might have some sort of secret crush on Eli? The one who had made his stomach churn just with the thought of her spending time with his husband in the past? His mind was struggling to reconcile everything he thought he knew.

He stared at Ava, still shocked. She was dressed in an effortlessly elegant pink dress, her hair falling in waves around her shoulders. She looked calm, warm, and inviting—so much different from the image he had built in his mind.

Cecily noticed the frozen look on his face and chuckled, her voice teasing. “Don’t be so shocked, Killy. This is just new for both of us. We’ve been dating for a few months now. We were best friends since childhood, and suddenly, *boom*, we found out we liked each other. It kind of came out of nowhere.”

Ava smiled softly, and Killian watched, unable to hide his surprise. His mind whirled, trying to piece together this new dynamic. He had thought Ava was one of those people who exuded coldness, a sharp edge, like she had some secret agenda. But standing before him now, she

seemed entirely different from his expectations. She was warm, kind even, her eyes glinting with something sincere as she took a step forward.

“Thank you for having us for dinner, Cecily told me so much about you. I am family friend of Eli’s too” Ava said, her voice full of genuine gratitude. She leaned in to kiss Cecily on the lips, a soft peck that only made Killian feel even more shocked.

He as dumb and stupid for getting jealous of his bestfriend’s...girlfriend.

Shaking himself out of his stupor he invited them in.

.....

The dining room was warm with laughter and the soft hum of Christmas music in the background. Killian handed Cecily a neatly wrapped box, its shiny red bow catching the twinkling lights from the Christmas tree. Cecily grinned mischievously as she took it, unwrapping the gift with the kind of dramatic flair only she could pull off.

“A watch?” she said, holding it up to admire the sleek, elegant design. “Killian, you really do have good taste.” She slid it onto her wrist, twisting her hand to watch how it caught the light.

Killian smirked, leaning back in his chair. “I figured you needed one. Maybe now you won’t be late to our meetings now.”

Cecily laughed, a genuine sound that filled the room. “Touché, Killy.” She stood abruptly, her grin turning secretive. “Well, now it’s my turn. I got you something too.”

Killian tilted his head in curiosity. “What is it?”

Before Cecily could answer, Ava interjected with a playful smile. “She thought about this for *weeks*, Killian. Trust me, you’re going to love it.”

That only made Killian more curious. He watched Cecily slip on her coat and head out to her car, the cold winter air sweeping in briefly as she opened the door. He turned to Ava, whom he actually likes after speaking to her, more like he likes her because she is not interested in Eli, with eyebrows raised he asked, “What’s she up to?”

Ava just shook her head, her smile widening. “Patience, Killian.”

By the time Cecily returned, Killian was practically bouncing in his seat. She stepped through the doorway carrying something small, wrapped in a soft blanket. Killian stood up immediately, craning his neck to get a better look.

“What is that?” he asked, his voice a mix of excitement and suspicion.

Cecily stepped closer and pulled back the blanket, revealing a tiny, floppy-eared beagle puppy with the most soulful brown eyes Killian had ever seen. The puppy yawned, a tiny squeak escaping its mouth, before wriggling in Cecily’s arms.

“Oh my God,” Killian breathed, his eyes going wide. He reached out instinctively, and Cecily placed the puppy in his hands. “Is this—?”

“It’s yours,” Cecily said, her smile softening. “I thought... well, with Eli working so much, maybe you’d feel lonely sometimes. So, I figured you could use some company.”

Killian stared at the tiny creature in his hands, his heart melting in ways he didn’t think were possible. “He’s so cute,” he whispered, cradling the puppy like it was the most precious thing in the world. The little beagle looked up at him, his tail wagging slightly. “Cecily, this is... this is amazing.”

“What are you going to name him?” Ava asked, leaning closer to get a better look at the puppy.

Killian considered it for a moment before a smile spread across his face. “Clover,” he said decisively. “Doesn’t that suit him?”

Cecily clapped her hands together. “It’s perfect! Clover it is.”

The three of them—Killian, Cecily, and Ava—gathered around the puppy, cooing over him as he wiggled and sniffed at their hands. Clover let out a tiny bark, which only made Killian laugh, completely enamored with the little ball of energy.

Eli, however, stood off to the side, his arms crossed as he observed the scene with a dark expression. His sharp eyes were fixed on the tiny intruder in Killian’s arms. Clover, the audacious little beagle, was soaking up every ounce of Killian’s attention, and Eli was not pleased.

Killian glanced up, noticing Eli’s brooding silence. “Eli, isn’t he the cutest?” Killian said, holding Clover up slightly so Eli could get a better look.

Eli’s jaw tightened. “Adorable,” he said flatly, though his tone suggested anything but. He stepped closer, his gaze locked on the puppy like it was some kind of threat. “A new... companion, huh?”

Killian raised an eyebrow, amused. “What’s with the tone? You jealous of a puppy now?”

Eli didn’t answer right away. Instead, he crouched slightly, his intense eyes narrowing at Clover, who wagged his tail enthusiastically in response. “I didn’t anticipate having competition for your attention,” Eli muttered, his voice low.

Cecily burst into laughter, clapping a hand over her mouth. “Oh my God, Eli, are you seriously jealous of a *puppy*?”

Eli straightened, his expression unamused. “He’s already monopolizing Killian’s attention,” he said, gesturing toward the way Killian was holding Clover like he’d found his new best friend.

Ava smirked, leaning against Cecily. “You’ve officially been upstaged by a beagle. Tough luck, Eli.”

Killian, still cradling Clover, grinned at Eli. “Don’t worry, Eli,” he said teasingly. “You’re still my number one.”

Eli’s gaze flicked to Killian, softening ever so slightly, but it didn’t stop him from glaring at Clover one last time. “We’ll see about that.”

As Clover barked again, wagging his tail, Cecily nudged Eli playfully. “Looks like you’ve got some serious competition. Better step up your game.”

Eli didn’t respond, but the look he shot at the tiny puppy said it all: *Game on.*

Chapter End Notes

Okieeee...Sooo

I initially planned to write this chapter during my winter vaction but it got delayed due to my uni project...

So....consider this as EliKill christmas.

Comment your thoughts!!!!

I love reading them

XOXO

Allaria

CHAPTER 28

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Killian leaned casually against the sleek black car, his gaze drifting toward Eli, who was deep in conversation with the architect. His husband's presence was impossible to ignore, but the buzz of his phone in his pocket pulled his attention away. He glanced at the screen. Unknown Number.

Without hesitation, he answered. "Killian Carson-King speaking."

The voice on the other end was soft, almost melodic, but laced with something unsettling. "Hello, darling," the woman purred. "Want a little show?"

Killian raised an eyebrow. "I think you have the wrong number," he said, his tone cool and dismissive.

A low, almost gleeful laugh echoed through the speaker, sending an odd chill through the air. "Oh, I assure you, I don't. I know exactly who I'm calling, Killian." Her voice sharpened slightly, carrying an edge that was both mocking and sinister. "And I have a little... *gift* for you, my dear."

Intrigue flickered in Killian's eyes, but he remained composed. "A gift? I hope you didn't go to too much trouble. I'm not big on surprises."

"Oh, but this one's special," the voice said, dripping with an unsettling kind of glee. "I've been saving it just for you. You've been such a... fascinating creature to watch."

"I'm flattered," he drawled, glancing toward Eli, who was still absorbed in his meeting. "But I'm not in the habit of accepting gifts from strangers. Maybe you should introduce yourself first?"

The woman hummed thoughtfully. "Where's the fun in that? But I'll tell you this—your darling Eli won't find this nearly as entertaining as you might." Her laughter returned, this time darker, more unhinged.

Killian's grip on the phone tightened slightly, his posture still relaxed, but his mind sharpened. He cast a brief glance at Eli. "Now, that's interesting," he murmured, his tone low. "But you're making it sound like I should be concerned. Should I?"

"Oh, concern, fear, thrill—whatever you'd like, darling. I wonder which one suits you best?" the voice teased, her tone almost playful, though it carried an undercurrent of malice. "Time's ticking, and I do *hate* to be keep you waiting."

The line went dead.

.....

Killian pocketed his phone, dismissing the strange call as some elaborate prank. His lips curled into a faint smirk, shaking his head at the absurdity. Whoever it was clearly underestimated his patience and his wits. He turned back toward Eli, ready to tease him for dragging this meeting out longer than necessary.

But the teasing words froze on his tongue.

Above Eli and the architect, a crane loomed, holding a massive boulder suspended in mid-air. In an instant, the cable snapped, and Killian's sharp eyes caught the sickening jerk of the boulder as it began its deadly descent.

Time seemed to slow.

“No,” Killian breathed. Then louder, more desperate, his voice tore through the air. “*Eli!*”

Eli's head jerked up at the sound of his name, confusion flashing in his dark eyes. The architect, however, moved faster. Seeing the danger, the man lunged forward, shoving Eli and himself out of harm's way just as the boulder smashed into the ground with a deafening *crash*. Dust and debris shot into the air, and the earth seemed to tremble beneath the force of the impact.

Killian's heart raced, his vision narrowing to Eli lying sprawled on the ground, his pristine suit smeared with dirt. Without thinking, Killian sprinted toward him, his long strides eating up the distance as adrenaline surged through his veins.

He dropped to his knees beside Eli, his hands immediately scanning for injuries, brushing over Eli's arms, shoulders, and face. “Are you hurt? Can you move? Look at me!” Killian demanded, his voice sharp with panic.

Eli coughed, his expression a mixture of annoyance and surprise as he sat up, brushing debris off his jacket. “I'm fine,” he said, his voice steady but slightly strained. “It's nothing, Killian. Relax.”

“*Relax?*” Killian snapped, his voice low and dangerous. His hand gripped Eli's wrist tightly, as if reassuring himself that Eli was truly unharmed. “A fucking boulder just missed you by inches, Eli. *Inches*. Don't tell me to relax.”

Eli sighed, his gaze softening as he placed a hand over Killian's. “I'm fine,” he repeated firmly. “Look—no injuries. Just some dirt.”

Killian exhaled sharply, his grip loosening but his worry far from gone. His gaze flickered to the crane above, then back to the shattered remains of the boulder. The timing, the precision of the fall—it was no accident.

That call.

His mind raced as he replayed the woman's cryptic words: *I've been saving it just for you.*

Killian's jaw tightened. This wasn't over. This was the beginning of something far more sinister. Whoever she was, she'd just made her first move.

And if she thought she could get away with threatening Eli, she was gravely mistaken.

.....

As Killian stood by the counter, Eli paced the room with his phone pressed to his ear. His sharp, clipped tone carried the weight of authority that always commanded attention. Even now, after what had transpired, Eli's composure was a marvel to Killian.

"Yes, it's a dead end," Eli said, his voice steady, though the tightness around his jaw betrayed his frustration. "The number's deactivated. Whoever they are, they're covering their tracks." He paused, his gaze flickering to Killian. "If another call comes, tell me immediately. Understood?"

Killian just nodded.

Eli ended the call and turned to him, his expression softening just a fraction. "If I get my hands on them—"

"Relax, darling," Killian interrupted, his tone light but laced with reassurance. "Gaz already promised to dig into it. If there's something to find, he'll find it. You know how thorough he is."

Eli didn't respond immediately. His eyes searched Killian's face, as if trying to gauge how deeply the incident had unsettled him. Before he could say anything, the soft pitter-patter of tiny paws filled the room.

Clover bolted into the kitchen, his floppy ears bouncing with each step. The little beagle yipped excitedly, making a beeline for Killian, his tail wagging furiously.

As Eli leaned against the doorway, watching Killian feed Clover with that rare, soft patience he reserved for the smallest things, the weight of the day crept back into his chest. The moment when death had brushed so close he could feel its cold breath lingered in his mind—not as a source of fear, but as a stark reminder of something far greater.

He hadn't feared the fall of the boulder. He hadn't feared his end. What had seized his heart in that fleeting moment was the thought of leaving this world without telling Killian what truly lay beneath his composed facade.

How much he loved him.

Killian, with his sharp edges and quiet storms, his unspoken thoughts and veiled smiles. Killian, who moved through life like a force of nature—unyielding, untouchable, yet so heartbreakingly human when no one else was looking.

Eli's mind drifted back to that first moment, all those years ago, when he'd seen Killian at the gala. He'd been fifteen, still trying to find his footing in a world that demanded so much, but the instant his eyes landed on Killian Carson, the room had shifted. He hadn't understood it then—the pull, the magnetism, the way Killian's presence seemed to fill every corner of the space, leaving Eli breathless.

It wasn't love then. Not yet. It was fascination, curiosity, an ache he didn't know how to name. He remembered the way Killian had stood, chin held high, his eyes sharp and observant even as he exchanged pleasantries with adults who demanded his time. Eli had admired the way Killian didn't just exist in that world—he owned it.

And now, years later, that fascination had grown into something so much deeper, so much more all-consuming, it left Eli reeling.

The thought of losing Killian, of never being able to tell him what he meant, was a pain Eli couldn't bear. How could he explain that his love wasn't just something that had blossomed over time? It was rooted in him, in every glance, every shared breath, every moment Killian had unknowingly carved himself into Eli's soul.

It was in the way Killian's presence steadied him, like an anchor in the chaotic seas of his mind. The way his voice, sharp or soft, could cut through Eli's doubts and fears. The way Killian could look at him—truly look—and see beyond the layers of perfection Eli had built for the world to admire.

Killian was his gravity, his storm, his calm. And now, as Eli watched him laugh softly at Clover's antics, he realized how much he craved Killian—not just his presence, but everything he was.

Eli wanted to tell him. Wanted to whisper it into the quiet moments, shout it into the chaos of their lives, carve it into the fabric of their existence so that Killian would never forget.

But how could he say it in a way that was enough? How could mere words capture the depth of it—the way Killian had become his reason, his tether, his light in the darkest of nights?

Eli steadied his breathing, the words that had been clawing at his chest since the moment death brushed so close finally breaking free. His gaze softened as he looked at Killian, who was crouched down, watching Clover nibble at his food with that rare patience that only made Eli's chest ache more.

"I love you," Eli said, the words coming out steadier than he'd expected.

Killian turned sharply from where he'd been crouched, watching Clover nibble at his food, his heart pounding in disbelief. "What did you just say?" he asked, his voice barely above a whisper.

Eli didn't falter. He didn't look away. Stepping closer, his gaze locked onto Killian's, he repeated the words with unwavering certainty, as though he'd been holding them back for far too long. "I said I love you."

For a moment, Killian just stared, his usually sharp, calculating mind utterly blank. He searched Eli's face, looking for any trace of hesitation or jest, but all he found was sincerity.

Eli took another step forward, his hands clenching at his sides before he let them fall loose. The words that spilled out next were softer but carried the weight of a thousand unspoken truths.

"I love you, Killian," Eli began, his voice growing more intense with every word. "I've loved you for longer than I can remember, longer than I probably had the right to. It started as a spark—a fascination, maybe. Years ago, at that gala, when I first saw you, you were... different. You didn't blend into the crowd like everyone else. You stood out, this whirlwind of chaos and confidence, and I couldn't look away. I thought it was just admiration back then, or maybe something fleeting, but it never left me."

Killian's lips parted as if to say something, but no sound came out. He was rooted to the spot, captivated by Eli's words, his eyes drinking in every expression that crossed Eli's face.

Eli smiled faintly, the memory warming his voice. "You have this way of existing, Killian, that makes everyone else feel like a pale imitation of life. You're magnetic, impossible to ignore. But that wasn't what made me fall in love with you. It wasn't the sharp wit or the endless layers of brilliance. It was the quiet moments—the way you care for the things and people you think no one notices. The way you laugh, Everything about you.."

Eli stepped closer, standing just a breath away now. His voice dropped, softer but infinitely more vulnerable. "I've spent days trying to convince myself that you were just my husband in name. That this was business, nothing more. But every time I'm near you, it's like the world shifts. You're my center, Killian. My storm, my calm, my everything. And today, when I thought I might die, the only thing I feared was leaving this world without telling you these three words..."

Killian's breath hitched, his chest tightening with emotions he couldn't yet name. He felt something break open inside him, a flood of feelings he'd kept locked away for far too long.

"Say something," Eli whispered, his voice barely audible now. "Please."

Killian moved without thinking, his hands reaching up to cup Eli's face. He looked into those deep, earnest eyes, his own trembling as if they held back the weight of his heart. "You love me?" he asked, his voice cracking just slightly.

Eli nodded, his hands finally finding their way to Killian's waist. "I do. I always have."

Killian's lips curved into the faintest smile, a laugh—half disbelieving, half joyous—escaping him. "You love me," he repeated, as if saying it aloud would make it more real. "You... Eli King, you absolute fool. Do you have any idea how long I've loved you too?"

Eli blinked, startled by the sudden shift in Killian's tone. Before he could respond, Killian's hands slid down to grip Eli's shoulders.

"I love you," Killian confessed, his voice shaking but filled with a passion that matched Eli's. "I've been in love with you for years. I didn't want to admit it—not to myself, not to anyone—because how could someone like you ever love someone like me? You're this perfect, untouchable light, and I've always felt like a storm chasing it. But I've been drawn to you from the start. You fascinated me, Eli. You still do. The way you hold yourself, the way you see the world... and me."

Killian shook his head, his voice thick with emotion. "I didn't know it was love at first. I told myself it wasn't because I couldn't afford to fall for you. But you're impossible, Eli. Impossible not to love. And now, standing here, hearing you say it first, it feels... like everything I never thought I'd have."

Eli's hands tightened around Killian's waist, his heart racing as the words sank in. "Killian..."

Killian silenced him with a kiss—not rushed, not frantic, but slow and tender, like a promise sealed with every touch of their lips. When they pulled back, their foreheads rested together, their breaths mingling in the quiet.

“I love you,” Killian said again, as though saying it once wasn’t enough.

“I love you too,” Eli replied, his voice steady, his heart full.

In that moment, the world outside ceased to matter. It was just them—two souls tangled together, finally unafraid to claim what had always been theirs

Just then, a bark interrupted their quiet moment.

Yeah, yeah Eli, Killian and Clover.

Now Eli feels what Mikhail must have felt about Luna.

Clover be damned he pulled Killian for another kiss.

The kiss had barely ended when the sound shattered the fragile perfection of the moment—a gunshot, sharp and unforgiving, splitting the air.

Everything slowed.

Killian felt it before he saw it, the way Eli’s body jolted against his, the look of confusion and pain flashing across his face. And then Eli fell back, his weight slipping out of Killian’s grasp as though the universe had suddenly turned cruel.

“Eli!” Killian’s voice broke, raw and desperate, as he caught him before he hit the ground.

The world blurred. The only thing sharp, the only thing real, was the crimson blooming across Eli’s chest, staining his pristine shirt. Blood. So much blood.

“No. No, no, no,” Killian murmured, his hands trembling as they pressed against the wound, trying to stem the flow. His fingers were slick, useless, but he kept trying, his heart pounding in his chest.

Eli’s eyes fluttered, his breath shallow. His lips moved, but no sound came out.

“Stay with me, Eli,” Killian begged, his voice trembling. “Stay awake. Please. Just hold on.”

He fumbled for his phone, his blood-slick fingers barely managing to dial. “911,” he gasped into the receiver, his voice frantic. “My—my husband’s been shot. He’s—he’s bleeding out. Send an ambulance. Now. Please!”

The operator’s voice was calm, asking questions, but Killian barely heard it. He dropped the phone onto the ground, the call still active, and focused on Eli. His arms cradled him, holding him close as though he could shield him from the pain, from the reality of what was happening.

And then his phone buzzed again, a second call.

Killian’s first instinct was to ignore it—who could possibly matter right now? But something compelled him to glance at the screen. The number was unfamiliar, unlisted, just like earlier.

With trembling fingers, he answered.

The voice on the other end sent a chill down his spine.

“Did you like my present, darling?”

Killian’s breath caught. It was her. The woman from the earlier call. The voice was light, almost playful, tinged with childlike glee, and yet it dripped with malice.

“You...,” Killian growled, his voice low and dangerous.

“Oh, don’t be mad, darling,” she purred, the mockery evident. “This is just the beginning. You stole something from me. Something precious. And you think you deserve happiness? No, no. That wouldn’t be fair, would it?”

“Who are you?” Killian demanded, his voice shaking with equal parts rage and fear. “What do you want?”

She laughed—a high, lilting sound that made his skin crawl. “I want you to know how it feels. To have something you love ripped away. To feel the weight of what you’ve taken from me. Do you feel it yet, darling?”

Killian’s grip on Eli tightened, his other hand clutching the phone so hard it trembled. “If he dies,” he hissed, his voice deadly calm, “I swear I’ll find you. And when I do—”

“Oh, Killian,” the woman interrupted, her tone mock-sympathetic. “You won’t have to find me. I’ll find you. Again. And again. Until you’re nothing but a shell of what you are now. Just like me. Leave him Killian, leave your happiness behind only then you can save him.”

The line went dead.

Killian stared at the phone in his hand, his mind racing. Who was she? What had she meant? And why Eli?

His thoughts snapped back to the man in his arms, the man whose life was slipping away with every agonizing second.

“Eli,” Killian whispered, his voice breaking. “Please. Don’t leave me.”

In the distance, he heard the faint sound of sirens, but they felt a lifetime away.

Chapter End Notes

Okieeee....So.

I know that you are probably looking for ways to kill me for this cliffhanger.

But please don't, We have a long(not so long i guess)..way to go.

So. What do you think of this chapter??????

Comment or say something? I love reading your comments!!!<3

CHAPTER 29

Eli is alive.

That singular truth pulsed through Killian's veins like a lifeline, a fragile thread tethering him to sanity. He sat by Eli's side, the soft rhythm of his husband's breathing a balm against the storm raging in his chest.

The room was quiet, save for the faint rustle of papers as Eli worked from the comfort of the couch, propped up by pillows. A blanket was draped over his legs, a compromise Killian insisted upon even though Eli had rolled his eyes at the fuss. Eli spent a whole week at the hospital before getting discharged to stay at home for at least one more week.

Killian's gaze flickered to Eli's face. The color had returned to his cheeks, and his focus was sharp as he read through the documents on his laptop. Yet every so often, his hand drifted to his side, where the wound still rested beneath layers of healing tissue and bandages.

It was a stark reminder of how close Killian had come to losing him.

Love is weakness.

How many times had he heard that phrase? Spoken it himself in cold, calculated moments in the past when he needed to remind others—and himself—that attachments were liabilities? Yet now, as he watched Eli lean forward, his brows furrowing slightly at the screen, Killian knew with a devastating certainty that it wasn't weakness.

No. Love wasn't weakness. It was both strength and destruction, the fire in his chest that burned for Eli even as it consumed him alive.

He thought of the bullet that had missed Eli's heart by mere inches, how fate had played its cruel games and left him with a truth he could no longer deny: every monstrous act he had committed, every sin he carried on his shoulders, meant nothing if it put Eli in harm's way.

"Killian?" Eli's voice broke through his thoughts, soft but steady.

Killian blinked, realizing he had been staring. "Yes?"

Eli gave him a knowing look, the corners of his lips quirking into a faint smile. "You've been sitting there for twenty minutes, glaring at me like I've committed some heinous crime."

Killian stood, walking toward him and sitting on the edge of the couch. His hand reached out instinctively, brushing Eli's cheek before his thumb ghosted over his lips. "I wasn't glaring," he murmured. "I was just...thinking."

Eli's smile softened, his hand coming up to rest on Killian's. "You're overthinking, as usual."

Killian let out a low chuckle, but it held no humor. "Can you blame me? A few inches, Eli. If that bullet had landed a few inches closer—"

“Killian.” Eli’s voice was firm, cutting through his spiraling thoughts. “It didn’t. I’m here. I’m alive. Stop torturing yourself over what-ifs.”

Killian looked at him, his eyes darker than usual, filled with a storm of emotions. “You don’t understand,” he said quietly. “You don’t know the things I’ve done, Eli. The people I’ve hurt. Maybe that bullet wasn’t meant for you, but it found you because of me.”

Eli’s fingers tightened around his. “I know exactly who you are, Killian,” he said. “You think you’re some monster . Oh please I am not a saint either, maybe that bullet was meant for me.”

Killian’s breath hitched, his walls crumbling under the weight of Eli’s words. “I can’t lose you,” he admitted, his voice breaking. “You’re the only thing in this world that keeps me human.”

“You won’t lose me,” Eli said softly, his other hand reaching up to cup Killian’s face. “But you have to stop punishing yourself, love”

Killian pressed his forehead against Eli’s, his eyes closing as he took in the steady rhythm of his breathing, the warmth of his touch. “I’m sorry,” he whispered.

“For what?” Eli asked.

“For everything,” Killian replied. “For dragging you into my darkness, for not protecting you better.”

Eli smiled, his lips brushing against Killian’s in a feather-light kiss. “Stop apologizing,” he said. “And just stay by my side.”

“I’ll never leave,” Killian promised, his voice steady and resolute. “You’re mine, Eli. My light, my life, my everything.”

“Just as you are mine” Eli whispers.

.....

Killian's heart raced as the familiar, unsettling sensation of a phone call from an unknown number washed over him. His hand trembled slightly as he pulled away from Eli, careful not to make any sudden movements that would draw his attention. Eli, lost in his work, didn't seem to notice, his eyes glued to the papers in front of him, focused on whatever task he had at hand.

The moment the call connected, the woman's voice came through, low and mocking. "I missed it, huh?" she purred, a note of childlike glee in her tone. "But I won't miss him now. Red is your favorite color, right? It's mine too." There was a pause, the air growing thick with tension. "Find the red in the room, Killian. Quick."

A chill crept down Killian's spine as his mind raced. He snapped his gaze around the room, every inch of it scrutinized with frantic precision. His eyes locked onto a glaring red dot shining directly on Eli's shirt—a perfect, deliberate mark, its laser point glaring with an intensity that sent a sickening wave of panic through him.

Killian’s pulse quickened and he opened his mouth to yell. The woman’s next words cut through the air with terrifying calm. "Say a word, and I’ll take the shot."

His throat constricted, words lodged in his chest, but Killian swallowed them down. He forced a tight, strained smile, locking eyes with Eli, who glanced up from his papers. Eli's gaze softened, eyebrows furrowing slightly in question.

"Who is it, Killian?" Eli asked, his voice warm, but tinged with concern.

Killian held his breath, his smile unwavering as he glanced down at his husband, trying to seem casual, even though the panic threatened to overwhelm him. "Gaz," he replied, the name slipping from his lips with unnatural ease, masking the dread coiling in his stomach. "It's just Gareth."

Eli nodded, not questioning further, returning to his work, unaware of the deadly game unfolding around him.

The woman's voice came again, cooing with a motherly tone that sent a ripple of unease through Killian. "I told you to leave him, didn't I?" she said, her voice dripping with cruel sweetness. "What are you still doing, sweetie? I don't have patience, darling. Don't keep me waiting. Now, go sit near him and act as if nothing happened, sweetie."

Killian's grip tightened around the phone, his heart pounding in his chest. He could hear the sickening edge of amusement in her voice, like a child playing a game, but this was no game. This was something far darker. He knew what was at stake now. He had to be careful, but every part of him screamed to act, to protect Eli, to shout, to move—anything to stop this madness.

But he stayed still, forced himself to play along, his breath shallow, mind whirling with calculations. With a last, lingering glance at the red dot on Eli's shirt, Killian turned back to him, his hand gently resting on Eli's shoulder as he sank down beside him, trying to look as casual as possible.

His voice, when it came, was steady, but there was a weight behind it that wasn't there before. "How's the work going?" Killian asked, his words carrying the quiet desperation of someone trying to hold a crumbling world together with a smile.

Eli looked up at him, his gaze flickering with mild confusion at the sudden change in the air between them. But he smiled, unfazed, reaching for Killian's hand. "Good," he replied. "Just need to finish this and then we can—"

Killian squeezed his hand, forcing a smile. "Great. I'm glad. Just let me know if you need anything, alright?"

He let out a sigh of relief as the red mark disappeared. And Killian, even as he sat there beside Eli, holding his hand, couldn't shake the feeling that the worst was yet to come.

Notes:

Join my discord if you want to discuss about books and my stories :

<https://discord.gg/gR5Yf59Q>

Follow my instagram : <https://www.instagram.com/allariablack/>

Sooooooooo, what do you think of this chapter?? Who is this person?? Why are they targetting Killian..Poor EliKill...

Don't forget to comment your thoughts, you don't know how much they mean to me, I often come back to read the comment you guys drop all the time

So flood the comments section

-XOXO

Allaria<3

CHAPTER 30

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The darkness of Arianna Carson's mind was a labyrinth of twisted thoughts, memories half-formed and fractured like shards of broken glass. Her mind wasn't what it had once been—no, it was sharper now, colder, a cacophony of emotions that bled into each other. There was rage, oh yes, and pain, but most of all, there was the haunting whisper of betrayal.

How long had it been? Twenty-four years? A lifetime ago. The last clear moment she remembered was falling, her fingers clawing at the air as it swallowed her whole. The betrayal had cut deeper than the pain of impact, and then... nothing. Just an abyss of silence.

When she woke, the world had moved on. Her world had moved on. **Without her.**

Reina.

Her Reina.

Her beautiful Reina, who had once whispered secrets in the dark and laughed as though the world could never harm them. Arianna had loved her—*truly* loved her. But Reina... Reina had hated her, hadn't she? The thought cut like a razor, twisting in her chest. Yet Reina had belonged to her, whether she admitted it or not. She always would.

And yet..., Reina had married *Asher*. Her brother.

Arianna's lips curled into a smile that was more a grimace, her nails digging into her palms until blood beaded on the surface. *How could she?* Reina, with her delicate beauty and that smile that could soften even the sharpest edges of Arianna's soul. Reina had given that smile to Asher. To *him*.

And not just to him.

Oh no.

Reina had given her love to their children. Children. Gareth and Killian. A happy little family, all of them so blissfully unaware that Arianna was still here, that she had returned. She had stood outside their house in the shadows, watching. She had seen the way Reina laughed, her head thrown back, her hand on Asher's arm. She had seen Gareth's broad smile, the warmth in his eyes. She had seen *Killian*.

Sweet, sweet Killian.

Oh, he was special, wasn't he? So much like her. A piece of her legacy, carried in his veins. The way he craved red, the way his madness simmered just beneath the surface, held back by a tenuous thread of control. Arianna saw it all. She *felt* it all. He was hers, wasn't he? Her creation, her shadow brought to life.

But Reina loved him.

How?

How could Reina love him, when she had never loved Arianna? The thought made her tremble, a storm brewing in her chest. Reina, who had hated her madness, her obsession. Reina, who had turned away from her when Arianna needed her most. And now, Reina could love *Killian*? Could she not see that he was a mirror of Arianna, a reflection of everything she had once been?

Her fingers flexed, her breathing uneven. It wasn't fair. None of it was fair. Why did *he* get to stand in her place? Why did *he* get the love that had always been meant for her? Arianna's smile twisted, sharp and predatory. No, this wouldn't do. This wouldn't do at all.

But what was the fun in simply taking back what was hers? No, no. She wanted them to *feel* it. To taste the bitterness she had swallowed every day since she woke. She wanted to be the shadow in their perfect little world, the thorn in their side. She would make them suffer, yes, but she would do it with a smile. She would be the perfect aunt, wouldn't she?

"Oh, Killian," she murmured, her voice a soft, chilling sing-song. "My sweet little legacy. Don't you see? You're just like me. The madness, the hunger—it's all ours. But you've stolen what was mine, haven't you? You've taken Reina's love, her affection. And I wonder... do you even realize it?"

Her mind spiraled deeper, a torrent of plans and whispers. She would watch over him, guide him. She would be the perfect protector, the perfect shadow. And when the time came, when the pieces fell into place, she would step into the role that had always been meant for her.

She would take back what was hers.

Reina's love. Reina's devotion.

And oh, how they would all suffer.

Arianna's laughter echoed softly in the empty room, a sound both beautiful and horrifying. Her eyes glinted with a dangerous light as she whispered to the darkness,

.....

Arianna stood in the shadows, her eyes narrowing as she watched Killian. Her thoughts churned with a deep, twisted envy, the kind that was sharp and bitter. She had spent years in the dark, abandoned by the world, presumed dead—an empty, forgotten shell of a woman who had once lived with ambition, power, and beauty. But now, she was a ghost, existing in the periphery of the life she could never truly claim.

And there he was. Killian. Her nephew. The one who had everything. The love, the devotion, the life that had been denied to her. His success, his happiness, his marriage—it all twisted inside her, a suffocating knot in her chest. Why him? Why was he worthy of all of it when she was nothing but a stain on the family legacy, a woman who had been cast aside as if she were disposable?

*How could he have it all? Arianna seethed inwardly. What is it about him that makes him worthy of love when I've been discarded, thrown away, as if I was never worth anything at all, when he is just **like me**?*

Her eyes flickered toward the image of him laughing with his husband, Killian so unburdened by the weight of the world. He had someone who loved him, someone who cared for him. The kind of love that she had once dreamed of, but never received. *How easily he smiles*, she thought bitterly. *How easily the world bends to him. He doesn't even have to try, does he? They all love him... Everyone loves him.*

Her fists clenched, nails digging into her palms as her thoughts became more venomous. *I was always the one they feared, the one they whispered about. They said I was too much—too beautiful, too clever, too powerful. But now... now I'm nothing. What makes him so special?*

The jealousy consumed her, a gnawing hunger that she couldn't control. *It's not fair*, she thought. *Why did he get to have everything? Why did they shower him with affection, with adoration, with this... warm love? And I was left in the dark, forgotten, alone, just a shadow of the woman I used to be.*

She felt a sickening, twisted grin pull at her lips. *Well, if they won't love me, maybe I can take that love from him. Maybe I can teach them all a lesson about what happens when they turn their backs on someone like me. I'll make them see who I am. I'll show Killian just how fragile his precious little world really is.*

Her thoughts grew darker, more sinister, as the jealousy morphed into something much more dangerous. *What if I took it all from him? What if I made him suffer the way I have? I'll make him regret ever thinking he could have everything I was denied. It's not too late to remind them all that I'm still here... and no one is safe when I'm around.*

Arianna's eyes flickered with a dark promise. She wasn't just going to watch from the sidelines anymore. No, she would step into the spotlight, take what she had always deserved. *Killian's happiness... it's mine for the taking.*

And as she watched him, the cold smile on her lips deepened. She had always been a force to be reckoned with—and now, she would make sure that everyone, especially Killian, knew it.

Chapter End Notes

Okieeee....yeah..Not much of a twist I know.

What do you think of the chapter????

Don't leave me hanging here, comment something.

Happy reading!!!!

CHAPTER 31

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Killian rested his head on Eli's chest, listening to the steady rhythm of his heartbeat, a sound that brought him comfort after the murder attempt. The room was quiet, the dim glow of a bedside lamp casting long shadows on the walls. For a moment, he hesitated, then asked softly, "What if I leave you one day, Eli? What would you do?"

Eli's hand, which had been lazily tracing circles on Killian's back, stilled. A chuckle escaped his lips, low and resonant. He tilted his head down, his gaze burning into Killian's as if the very question were an affront to the world they had built.

"If you leave me?" Eli murmured, his voice dripping with an almost dangerous tenderness.

He leaned closer, his lips brushing against Killian's temple, his words soft but carrying a weight that settled deep in the soul. "Even if you ran to the ends of the earth, Killian, I would still find you. You could lock the doors, change your name, disappear into the folds of time—but I would be there. Because you are not something I can lose. You are not a thing I can live without. You're mine, Killian. Always."

Killian swallowed, the intensity of Eli's words sending a shiver through him. Still, a part of him couldn't help but push further. "But... what if it's for your safety?" he asked, his voice quieter now, almost tentative.

Eli's lips curled into a smile, his fingers tightening slightly around Killian's waist as he tilted his head back. "For my safety?" he repeated, as if the idea itself were laughable. "Killian, there is no safety without you. What is a body without its soul?"

He exhaled, his tone dipping. "If you left me for my safety, you would shatter me more completely than any bullet or blade ever could. Do you think I would let you protect me at the cost of breaking yourself? No, my love. If danger comes, it comes for both of us. I would rather stand in the fire with you than live a thousand lifetimes without you."

Eli's hand cupped Killian's cheek, forcing his gaze upward. "If you left to save me, I would simply follow. Because I would rather bleed beside you than breathe without you. Do you understand that, Killian?"

Killian's throat tightened, his heart pounding as he stared into Eli's unwavering eyes. There was no escape from the love Eli offered—it was consuming, and utterly eternal. And for Killian, there was no desire to run from it. Not now. Not ever.

Eli's fingers stilled in Killian's hair as the weight of his silence grew heavier. The question hung in the air, unanswered, and Eli's brow furrowed in concern. He tilted his head, trying to meet Killian's downcast gaze.

"Killian," Eli murmured, his voice steady but firm. "Why are you suddenly asking this? What's going on?"

Killian stayed silent, his hands trembling slightly where they rested against Eli's chest. For a moment, it seemed like he wouldn't answer, but then Eli's hand cupped his jaw, tilting his face upward.

"Talk to me," Eli pressed, his voice softening but laced with determination. "We promised, remember? Whatever comes, we face it together."

The dam broke. Killian collapsed against Eli, burying his face in his chest as the words tumbled out, raw and jagged. "She keeps calling, Eli," he whispered, his voice cracking. "She's been calling for weeks, taunting me, threatening you. It started as a game, just words, but then... the crane... the bullet..."

Killian's breath hitched as his fists clenched against Eli's shirt. "She said if I didn't leave you, if I didn't walk away, she'd kill you, Eli. She warned me—'Red is my favorite color,' she said. And then I saw that laser on your chest. I couldn't—"

Eli's arms wrapped tightly around Killian, grounding him as he began to break apart.

"She's not stopping, Eli," Killian choked out. "And if something happens to you because of me—if I lose you—I'll never forgive myself."

Eli's jaw tightened, his grip on Killian almost bruising. He pulled back slightly, just enough to look into Killian's tear-filled eyes. His voice was low, deadly serious. "And so what?" he demanded. "You're going to leave?"

Killian looked away, shame etched into his features. "If it keeps you safe..." he whispered, the words barely audible.

Eli's fingers tightened on Killian's chin, forcing him to meet his gaze. His eyes blazed with an intensity that made Killian's breath catch. "Don't you dare," Eli hissed. "Don't you dare think for one second that leaving me will keep me safe."

His voice softened, but his grip didn't waver. "Killian, I don't need safety. I need you. If you think I'd survive without you, you don't know me at all."

Tears streaked Killian's cheeks as he shook his head. "But I can't bear the thought of you getting hurt because of me. If something happened to you..."

Eli cut him off, his voice like steel. "Nothing will happen to me. Do you hear me? I'll find her, Killian. I'll make sure she never touches us again. But you—" His voice cracked, just slightly, and he cupped Killian's face in his hands. "You leaving would hurt me more than any bullet ever could. You leaving would destroy me."

Killian's breath hitched, his heart breaking under the weight of Eli's words. "Eli, I just—"

"No," Eli interrupted, pulling Killian closer until their foreheads touched. "No more. You're mine, Killian. And I am yours. We fight this together, just like we promised. You don't get to make that decision for me."

Killian closed his eyes, his tears soaking into Eli's shirt as he clung to him. For the first time in weeks, the fear began to ease, replaced by the fierce determination in Eli's voice and the

unyielding strength of his embrace.

“I won’t let her win,” Eli whispered against Killian’s hair. “I won’t let her take what’s ours. We’ll end this. Together.”

Killian stood at the edge of the driveway, his gaze lingering on the house that had become his sanctuary over the past ten months. The warm light from the windows spilled onto the lawn, a soft, golden glow that seemed to beckon him back inside. Clover squirmed in his arms, barking as if sensing the turmoil in Killian’s heart.

“Shh,” Killian whispered, gently stroking Clover’s ears. The pup’s tiny yips quieted, but the sorrow in Killian’s chest only deepened.

He’d told Sam to deliver the lie: a sudden emergency with his parents. It was the only way. If he’d tried to explain himself to Eli, the man would never have let him go. Eli’s unrelenting will, his fierce devotion—it was both a comfort and a curse.

Killian swallowed hard, his throat tight. “It’s not forever,” he murmured, more to himself than to Clover. “I just need to end this, to find her and finish it. Then I’ll come back. We’ll be fine. Everything will go back to normal.”

But the words felt hollow, a desperate attempt to justify the ache in his chest. He knew Eli. Knew that this would devastate him, that no lie or excuse would ease the pain of waking up to find Killian gone.

Killian took one last look at the house, his fingers tightening around Clover as he committed every detail to memory—the ivy crawling up the brick walls, the faint silhouette of Eli’s desk lamp in the study window.

“Staying away is for the best,” Killian told himself, though the words felt like shards of glass in his throat. “If I’m gone, she can’t use him to get to me.”

But even as he turned toward the waiting car, his steps felt heavy, his resolve wavering. Gareth was working tirelessly to trace her—this faceless, nameless woman who had turned their lives into a nightmare. Killian had faith in his brother’s skills, but he couldn’t sit idly by while Eli remained in danger.

He opened the car door, carefully setting Clover on the passenger seat. The pup whined, his wide, innocent eyes staring up at Killian as if to say, *Why are we leaving?*

“I’ll come back,” Killian whispered again, as if saying it out loud would make it true. “I have to.”

But as he drove away, the house fading into the distance, a gnawing doubt crept into his mind. What if Eli hated him for this? What if, by trying to protect him, Killian had already broken the trust they’d worked so hard to build?

The thought was unbearable, but he pushed it aside. There was no other way. Eli’s safety came first—always.

And so, with Clover curled on the seat beside him, Killian drove into the night, the weight of his choice pressing heavily on his chest.

Chapter End Notes

Okie...hello

What do you think of this chapter?

What is gonna happen next??

How is Eli gonna react ...how do you think he is gonna react?

Happy reading!!!!

XOXO

Ria

CHAPTER 32

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Killian's foot hovered over the gas pedal, his mind racing faster than his car ever could. The dark road stretched ahead, empty and open, just like the path he thought he could take. If he left now, if he just kept driving, maybe it would be easier. He could sort things out—find a way to keep Eli safe, find a way to escape the looming threat that hung over them both.

But then, the inevitable happened.

In the rearview mirror, a set of headlights gleamed in the distance, growing closer with every passing second.

Killian cursed under his breath, his grip tightening on the steering wheel as Eli's car came into view in his rearview mirror.

"Damn it, Eli," he muttered, pressing harder on the gas. His car sped up, but so did Eli's. The man was relentless, his headlights flashing insistently in Killian's mirrors.

"Of course, he wouldn't just let me leave," Killian said to himself, frustration laced with a reluctant admiration. Eli hated losing, and this chase was no exception.

Killian's stomach sank as Eli's car overtook his, smoothly cutting him off and forcing him to hit the brakes. His tires screeched against the asphalt as his car came to a stop.

"Great," Killian grumbled, leaning forward to lightly bang his forehead against the steering wheel. "Couldn't even make it five minutes."

Eli stepped out of his car with the calm, determined grace that always unnerved Killian. His husband didn't look angry, exactly—just utterly resolute, which somehow was worse.

Killian rolled down his window as Eli approached. "Going somewhere, darling?" Eli asked, his tone light, but his sharp gaze cut straight through Killian.

Killian fumbled for a response. "Uh... yeah. I was going to meet my parents."

"Without telling me face-to-face?" Eli raised an eyebrow, leaning one hand against the roof of Killian's car.

Killian opened his mouth, trying to form an excuse, but nothing came out. Eli's gaze pinned him in place, unyielding and knowing.

"Didn't I tell you not to leave me?" Eli said softly, his voice calm, but the undercurrent of warning was unmistakable.

Killian's throat went dry. He knew he couldn't lie anymore, but he also didn't know how to tell the truth without breaking Eli's heart.

Eli sighed, the tension in his shoulders softening slightly. "Let's go together, then," he said.

Killian blinked. "What?"

Eli smirked faintly. "I said, let's go meet your parents together. Problem solved."

Before Killian could protest, Eli opened the car door. Clover, the little traitor, immediately jumped into Eli's arms, wagging his tail enthusiastically.

Eli grimaced at the pup but didn't shove him away. "You're lucky you're cute," he muttered, scratching Clover's ears. Then, in a quieter voice, he added, "At least someone around here listens to me."

Killian stared, caught between frustration and reluctant amusement. "You hate Clover."

Eli shot him a wry look. "I'm reconsidering. He seems to know who needs support right now."

Killian sighed, defeated. "I can't believe this."

Eli's expression softened, his voice quieter. "I mean it, Killian. You're not going anywhere without me. Not now. Not ever."

Killian's resolve crumbled as he nodded. "Fine. Let's go."

Eli smiled, a rare, genuine smile that made Killian's chest ache. "Good."

And just like that, the man who could outmaneuver Killian in every way climbed into the passenger seat, Clover still in his arms. Killian had no choice but to drive forward—this time, with Eli by his side.

.....

Asher stood by the door, his arms crossed, eyes narrowing at the entrance like a hawk waiting for a prey to cross into its territory. His mind was running in overdrive, though, and it wasn't just about the usual fatherly concerns. No, this time, his thoughts were filled with something a lot more complicated.

"Maybe Killian's thinking about divorce," he mused, his mind immediately flashing to the conversation he'd had with his son about Eli. "That emotionally constipated bastard Eli King. What kind of man just bottle up his feelings like that and think it's normal? Is he hurting my boy?" Asher's protective instincts flared at the thought. *"He better not have hurt my son."*

Asher couldn't help but feel the twinge of frustration that had been simmering for months now. He'd fought tooth and nail when Killian agreed to that business marriage, against his better judgment and instincts. It had always felt off. He had warned Killian that Eli was nothing more than a cold, calculating, and emotionally unavailable mess. Now, Asher found himself wondering if he had been right all along.

"That damn Eli..." Asher thought, exhaling a long, dramatic sigh. *"I swear, I'm gonna go knock some sense into him myself—if Killian wasn't married to him."* He clenched his fists in

frustration, briefly forgetting to be calm. *"Ok, stop. Take a breath. Your son is coming home. Let's focus on that first."*

He straightened up, making a conscious effort to pull his mind away from the troubling thoughts. *"Let's take care of him first,"* he muttered under his breath. *"Get him back in one piece, if that boy has been hurt, I will have words. Words with a few people. Maybe cash in a favor with Damien. Yeah, he owes me big time. I can have him take care of Eli. Fix that little shit right up. Get some therapy going. Maybe even a couple of hitmen. Joking. Mostly."*

Asher glanced at Reina beside him, her expression calm as usual. His wife always sees the brighter side of things.

"Are you planning on doing something to Eli, Asher?" she asked dryly, raising an eyebrow.

"Hypothetically," Asher answered, barely missing a beat. "Just saying, I have connections if it comes down to it. And if my son's happiness is in question..." He trailed off, a dramatic pause as if considering the possibilities.

Reina shook her head. "You're impossible."

"Well, you know how it is," Asher said, giving a little shrug. "I'm just looking out for my boy.."

Reina laughed squeezing his arm. "Killian is happy with Eli, Asher. They are making progress in their relationship. Maybe he just missed us, darling."

But Asher still kept brooding.

With a sigh, Reina stepped closer, her voice calm yet firm as she addressed her husband. "Ash," she began. "You're overthinking this again."

Asher's eyes flicked to her, the sharp edges of his frustration softening for a moment. He raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean, overthinking?"

"I mean," she said, taking a breath, "I get it. You're worried about Killian, you've always been worried about him, but Eli..." She paused, meeting his gaze directly. "Eli is not the villain you think he is."

Asher snorted under his breath, but Reina wasn't deterred. "I know you've never liked the guy, but Killian spoke highly of him, the last time we talked. He loves him. Eli is a good husband for Killian, Asher. I see that, and I think you need to give him a chance."

Asher's frown deepened, though the sharp edge of his anxiety seemed to dull a little. "A good husband?" he muttered. "He's emotionally distant, Reina.."

Reina crossed her arms, looking at her husband with a mix of affection and mild exasperation. "You're always looking for problems that aren't there, Ash. Eli may not be your idea of perfect, but he's there for Killian. He's not going anywhere, and it's about time you accepted that. No marriage is perfect, but Killian's happy. He's safe."

Asher's lips pressed together in a tight line, and he exhaled sharply, but there was a slight softness in his eyes now, the protective anger turning into something more thoughtful. "I just... I

don't want him to get hurt. Not by anyone. Especially Eli."

Reina reached out and placed a hand gently on his arm, offering him a soft, reassuring smile. "Killian's an adult, Asher. He made his choice, and it's not about us anymore. He loves Eli, and from what I've seen, Eli loves him back. You just need to trust that, even if it's hard."

Asher sighed, rubbing the back of his neck, still conflicted. "It's just...."

Reina's expression softened as she stepped in closer. "Killian's stronger than you think.. Maybe he's not your ideal son-in-law, but he's the man Killian chose. All you can do now is support them both."

Reina's eyes sparkled with mischief as she looked at her husband, a knowing smile curling on her lips. She couldn't resist teasing him a little, especially after all the brooding and fretting he'd been doing. Asher was so wrapped up in his protective instincts, but Reina saw the bigger picture. Her words would get him thinking.

"Do you really think Killian married Eli for business, love?" she asked lightly, her tone dripping with teasing affection. "Come on, don't fool yourself. He got his manipulative side from you, after all."

Asher stopped in his tracks, his brow furrowing as he turned to look at her. "What's that supposed to mean?" he asked, sounding more defensive than he intended.

Reina raised an eyebrow, crossing her arms as she leaned back slightly, like she was about to drop a bomb. "Well, think about it. Did your father think of the arranged marriage idea for Killian, or was someone else planting that seed in his mind? Someone must've told him it was a smart move," she continued, her voice playful but with an edge of truth to it.

Asher's eyes widened as he caught on to where she was going. "You're not saying—"

"Oh, I am," Reina interrupted with a sly grin. "Killian had a crush on Eli since childhood, remember? Oh please, I am his Mom, I know when he gets those twinkling eyes when he looks at Eli. He was just waiting for the right moment to make his move." She smirked, knowing she was about to hit the nail on the head. "And now, look at the dots connecting. Doesn't this all seem like Killian's manipulation? If anyone's been playing a game, it's our son. He's been setting the stage for years, and Eli didn't even notice until it was too late."

Asher stood frozen, his mouth slightly agape, caught off guard by his wife's bold observations. His mind raced, trying to process everything she had just said. Was Killian that good at orchestrating things? Had he known what he was doing all along?

Reina took a step back, sensing the silence was all she needed to leave her husband in his thoughts. "But the best part," she added with a soft chuckle, "is that Eli doesn't seem to care much about any of it. He's in too deep already."

With that, she turned on her heel, leaving Asher standing there, speechless, his thoughts swirling in a storm of realization. She had planted a seed, and now, Asher was left to wonder if he'd underestimated his son's ability to play the game—and just how much of it had been by Killian's design all along.

Reina's soft laughter echoed in the distance as she walked away, leaving Asher alone with his thoughts, and the uncomfortable realization that maybe, just maybe, his son had outsmarted him.

Asher's thoughts were still buzzing from Reina's words when the sound of a car engine interrupted his internal monologue. He squinted toward the driveway just in time to see the sleek black vehicle pull up, its tires whispering against the pavement. The car stopped smoothly, and the door opened. Eli King—his son-in-law, his troublesome, emotionally constipated, highly irritating, but somehow still 'perfect for his son' as if—stepped out .

Asher blinked, momentarily stunned by the sight. He watched, unable to move, as Eli smoothly opened the passenger side door for Killian, who stepped out with a look that could only be described as affection toward his husband. The two exchanged a few quiet words, but Asher didn't hear them. His mind was too busy short-circuiting from what he had just witnessed.

"Wait a damn minute," Asher muttered to himself, his eyes narrowing in confusion. "What the hell is Eli King doing here?" He blinked several times, as if he could somehow erase the image from his mind and start over.

His brain struggled to catch up as he processed what was happening in front of him. Killian had told him he was coming alone. He'd said he just needed some time with his parents. But now here was Eli—standing there with his confident, self-assured demeanor as if he'd been invited in as a guest... or worse, like he lived here.

"No, no, no," Asher muttered under his breath, his mind beginning to spiral out of control

He was going to have to live in the same house as *Eli King*, his son's husband. His mind was already flooded with a thousand uninvited thoughts, none of them good. Was this what he had to look forward to now? Sharing his home with a man whose emotional complexity could rival a steel trap? A man who was so cold and calculated, yet so completely capable of making Killian's heart race?

What did he do to his sons to make him suffer like this? His eldest son fell for a professor. And his youngest has to fall for Eli King, who is maybe not so much emotionally constipated judging by the way he is now smiling at his son.

Asher stood frozen, his mind still in a daze from the sudden turn of events. He watched as Eli approached, his every step as smooth and deliberate as always, and extended a hand toward him with that confident, almost regal air he seemed to carry naturally. Asher, still trying to piece together the whirlwind of his thoughts, shook Eli's hand, his grip tense but polite.

"Mr. Carson," Eli greeted with a subtle smile that was both warm and unsettling, as if he already knew everything about Asher and was simply waiting for him to catch up. "It's good to see you again."

Asher's lips barely twitched in response, still trying to grasp the reality of the situation. His son was here with his husband.

"Dad!" Killian's arms wrapped around him in a tight, unexpected hug. The warmth of Killian's embrace briefly grounded Asher, and for a moment, he felt the same rush of affection he had

when his son was younger, before all the business dealings and complicated emotions began to overshadow their relationship.

“Hi, Dad,” Killian murmured against his shoulder. Asher patted his back, awkwardly caught between a burst of love for his son and the crushing weight of the chaos he was slowly sinking into.

Then, Killian pulled back, his face lit with that mischievous glint Asher knew so well. “Oh, and I should introduce you to the newest member of the family,” he added with a teasing smile.

Asher’s gaze flickered down, and there in Killian’s arms was a tiny, squirming ball of fur. The puppy’s wide, round eyes and fluffy coat. The little dog yipped and wiggled, its tiny tail wagging energetically.

“Is that... a puppy?” Asher asked, his voice softer than he intended, but the sight of the little creature warmed him in a way he wasn’t prepared for.

“Yeah, this is Clover,” Killian said, clearly proud of the little addition to his family.

"Well," Asher muttered to himself, unable to help the wry smile tugging at his lips, "this is going to be a hell of a comedy show. Just hope I can survive till *intermission*."

With a sigh, he followed them inside, ready to endure what would no doubt be a long, and thoroughly amusing, stay with his son-in-law.

Chapter End Notes

Yeppp...you read it right...Our Eli won't let Killian go.
And here comes our long suffering father-in-law Asher..
Poor him both his sons are bringing home problematic men.
Comment your thoughts on the chapter

CHAPTER 33

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Asher sat on the couch, arms crossed, eyes glued to the muted news playing on the television. He could feel Eli's presence like an itch he couldn't scratch, sitting primly beside him with that perfect posture and that maddening air of calm superiority.

Eli cleared his throat.

Asher didn't even glance over. *Ignore him*, he told himself. *Maybe if I stay still long enough, he'll lose interest and disappear.*

Another throat clear, this time louder.

Asher's eye twitched. He adjusted his position slightly but still refused to look.

"Father-in-law," Eli said finally, his tone as smooth as polished glass.

Asher groaned internally. *This man is worse than a mosquito in summer.* Out loud, he grunted, "What?"

"I have a favor to ask."

Asher turned his head slowly, fixing Eli with a pointed glare. "And why, pray tell, should I agree to whatever you're about to ask?"

Eli didn't miss a beat. He leaned forward slightly, a glint of amusement in his eyes. "Because it will make Killian happy."

Asher paused, his glare softening slightly before he caught himself. He sat back, crossing his arms tighter, and sighed heavily. "Killian. Of course."

Eli waited, a knowing smile tugging at the corners of his mouth.

Asher finally muttered, "Alright, what is it? Spit it out."

Eli's smile widened, and for a moment, Asher regretted asking. "Well, you see," Eli began.

"I love Killian," Eli said plainly, his tone as steady as if he were discussing the weather. "And he loves me too."

Asher turned to Eli with a raised eyebrow. "You're telling me this because...?"

Eli smiled, "Because I want to propose to him again. A vow renewal. This time, for love."

Asher stared at Eli as if he'd just announced he was moving to Mars. "Love? You love him?"

"Yes." Eli's smile didn't waver. "I do."

Asher squinted suspiciously. “You love my son, Killian Carson, whom you married for business?”

Eli chuckled. “Yes, “.

For a moment, Asher stood there, trying to process the information. Then, his mind latched onto the word *love*. He pointed a finger at Eli. “Wait a minute. You’re saying you’re marrying him again... for love? Not for business, not for alliances, but because you *love* him?”

“Exactly.”

Asher blinked, his suspicions now thoroughly scrambled. “What are you expecting from me in all this?”

“Your support,” Eli said simply. “And your approval.”

Asher nearly choked. “Approval? You want *my* approval?”

Eli nodded, his expression calm but sincere. “Yes, I do.”

Asher opened his mouth to retort but stopped short. This was new. He barely tolerates his eldest son-in-law, and Kayden didn’t even ask for his blessing, he had a lot of audacity. Brat. And now here was Eli King, bold as brass, asking for his approval to propose to Killian.

He crossed his arms,. “You want *my* approval? Why?”

Eli’s smile turned a little wry. “Because it matters to Killian. And so to me too.”

Asher grumbled something unintelligible under his breath and ran a hand through his hair. “Well, I’ll tell you this much. You’re already better than my eldest son-in-law. That one acts like every conversation is a battle to the death. Approval? He doesn’t even know the word exists.”

Eli chuckled, clearly unbothered by Asher’s grouchiness. “So... is that a yes?”

“Slow down there, King,” Asher said, holding up a hand. “I didn’t say yes. I’ll see your efforts, and then I’ll think about it. Maybe. Later.”

Eli nodded, as if he’d expected nothing less. “Fair enough. In that case, I do have another favor to ask.”

Asher groaned dramatically, throwing his hands up. “What now???”

Eli’s lips twitched in amusement. “Actually, I was hoping you’d help me pick out a ring for him.”

The groan caught in Asher’s throat. He stared at Eli, speechless. “A ring? You want me to go ring shopping with you?”

“Yes.”

Asher rubbed his temples. “You’re really pushing your luck, son-in-law.”

“I thought I was your favorite son-in-law,” Eli said with an infuriatingly smug grin.

Asher barked a laugh despite himself. “You’re the *only* son-in-law, I barely tolerate Lockwood.”

“Then I’ll take that as a win,” Eli said smoothly.

Asher sighed, throwing the dishtowel over his shoulder. “Alright, fine. Let’s go find a ring. But just so we’re clear, this doesn’t mean I’ve approved anything yet.”

“Of course not,” Eli said, his tone almost teasing.

Asher grumbled sarcastically under his breath as he grabbed his coat. “You know, King, you’re dangerously close to becoming my favorite.”

“Thank you,” Eli said brightly.

“That wasn’t a compliment,” Asher muttered, but Eli’s grin only widened.

As they headed out, Asher couldn’t help but shake his head. “This guy is really on his way to becoming my favorite son-in-law. God help me.”

.....

Asher pushed the glass door of the jewelry shop open with one hand, a small box tucked into Eli’s grip as they stepped into the sunlight.

“Killian’s going to love it,” Eli said confidently, examining the ring box.

“Yeah, yeah, but if he doesn’t, don’t come crying to me,” Asher shot back, waving a hand dismissively. Stealing his son again from him.

Just as he was about to launch into another tirade about the ring and his son’s tastes, Asher’s phone buzzed in his pocket. He pulled it out, squinting at the screen. Reina.

He answered, “What happened love? I’m trying to—”

Her sobs cut him off. His stomach dropped instantly.

“Asher,” she managed through her tears, her voice shaking.

His grip on the phone tightened. “Reina? What’s wrong? What happened? Is it Killian or Gareth?”

“No,” she whispered, the word like a shard of ice sliding into his chest. “It’s... it’s Ari. She’s— she’s alive.”

The world seemed to tilt on its axis. “What?” His voice was barely audible.

“Ari is alive, She is at our home” Reina repeated, her voice breaking before the line went dead.

For a moment, Asher just stood there, staring blankly at his phone. His breath caught in his throat, and his free hand gripped the railing beside him as if he needed the support to stay

upright.

Eli, noticing the sudden change in Asher’s demeanor, stepped closer. “Asher? What’s wrong?”

“No, no, no,” Asher muttered under his breath, his mind racing. His worst nightmare. The one ghost he’d buried—*literally* buried—decades ago was back.

He turned to Eli, his face pale and eyes wide with a mix of disbelief and panic. “We have to go. Now.”

Eli frowned. “What’s going on?”

Asher didn’t answer, shoving his phone into his pocket and moving toward the car with a sense of urgency that made Eli’s stomach churn. Did something happen to Killian.

“Asher, talk to me. Who’s this Ari?”

Asher stopped in his tracks, his gaze distant, haunted. “Arianna. My sister. The one who’s supposed to be dead.”

Eli blinked, taken aback. “She’s... alive?”

“Apparently,” Asher bit out, climbing into the car and gripping the steering wheel like it was the only thing tethering him to reality.

Eli slid into the passenger seat, still holding the ring box, now forgotten in his hand. “And that’s bad because...?”

Asher started the car, his knuckles white on the wheel as he muttered, “Because Ari isn’t just alive. She’s trouble. *Big trouble*. And if she’s back, it’s not for a family reunion.”

Eli’s brows furrowed, his mind already calculating possibilities. “What kind of trouble are we talking about here?”

Asher shot him a sharp look. “The kind that makes me wish Killian had married a dumb idiot who would listen to me. Now just shut up and put on your seat belt.”

.....

Chapter End Notes

Hello lovelies!!!

what’s up, my chaotic readers?

So, the next chapter? Hah. Y’all ain’t ready. Typed by a very sleep-deprived human who may or may not regret what they’re about to drop.

Listen, don’t come for me when you read the ending—I can already hear the “WHY WOULD YOU DO THIS???” comments loading. But like... I had to. It just felt right, you

know? 🦴 (pls don't kill me).

Anyway, buckle up. It's gonna be angsty, a little insane, and maybe—just maybe—you'll hate me a little less after the chapter after this one. (No promises tho. 🙄)

Drop your predictions in the comments, I wanna see if anyone guesses it right. 🙄

I have an interview tomorrow ...wish me luck and pray for me

Happppy reading!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!11

CHAPTER 34

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Mom! Come down, see this!” Killian yelled, his voice carrying through the mansion as he held up Clover, who wagged his tail energetically. His excitement faded when silence greeted him. No response, no footsteps from the staircase, nothing.

He frowned, glancing at Gareth, who stood a few feet away with a drink in hand.

“She probably didn’t hear me,” Killian said, heading for the stairs.

Gareth’s sharp voice stopped him in his tracks. “You are like a child Seriously.”

Killian turned, raising an eyebrow. “Hey!”

Gareth’s sighed. “She’s probably busy. Give her a moment.”

The words were barely out of Gareth’s mouth when a blood-curdling scream ripped through the silence.

“Mom!” Killian’s heart dropped, and he lunged for the stairs, but Gareth was quicker. He grabbed Killian by the arm and yanked him back.

“You are not going up without a weapon. Stay behind me,” Gareth commanded, pulling his gun from its holster with practiced ease. His face was a mask of stone, but the tension in his jaw betrayed the storm beneath.

Killian obeyed mentally berating himself for not having his gun with him, dread curling in his stomach as he followed Gareth up the stairs. They moved swiftly, their footsteps silent despite the hammering of their hearts.

When they rounded the corner, Killian froze.

Reina was on her knees, trembling, her tear-streaked face pale as she sobbed against the barrel of a gun pressed to her temple. The woman holding it was tall, with dark hair that fell in waves over her shoulders, and a manic grin plastered across her face.

Killian’s breath caught in his throat. He recognized that voice.

“Ms. Whitmore?” he called cautiously, his voice trembling as he stepped out from behind Gareth.

The woman’s laughter rang out, sharp and familiar. It was the same laugh he’d heard in those haunting phone calls.

“Ah, there he is,” she cooed, turning her head slightly without moving the gun away from Reina. Her eyes gleamed with a terrifying mixture of glee and hatred. “My darling nephew. Or should I

say, the *thief of my love*?”

Killian’s blood turned to ice. “Who are you?”

She tilted her head, her grin widening. “Oh, Killian, sweetie. Haven’t you figured it out yet? I’m Arianna. Your Aunt Arianna.”

“You are the one from the phone calls” Killian says the realisation dawning .

Gareth tensed, his gun aimed steadily at her. “Let her go,” he barked, his voice cold and authoritative.

Arianna didn’t even flinch. Instead, she leaned down, her lips brushing against Reina’s hair as she cooed mockingly, “Oh, Reina, my dear Reina. Look at you, so fragile, so scared. Don’t worry, we’ll be together soon.”

Reina whimpered, her hands clutching at Arianna’s wrist, but Arianna only pressed the gun harder against her temple.

“Stop it!” Killian yelled, his voice breaking.

Arianna’s head snapped up, her expression twisting into something unhinged. “*Stop it?*” she repeated, her voice dripping with venom. “Oh, Killian, you don’t get to tell me what to do. Not when you’ve stolen what’s rightfully mine.”

“What are you talking about?” he demanded, his fists clenched at his sides.

Arianna chuckled darkly, shaking her head. “Oh, don’t play dumb. You know exactly what I mean.” Her gaze flicked to Reina, who was still sobbing against her hold. “*Her love*. It’s mine. It’s always been mine. But no. No, she gave it to *you*. You! You are just like me. Why you and not me?”

She spat the words like they were poison, her expression contorting with rage.

“But why, Reina?” Arianna continued, her voice taking on a pleading, almost childlike tone. “Why him? He’s just like me. Don’t you see? He’s a monster just like me. He’s *me*.”

“That’s not true,” Killian growled, stepping forward. Gareth immediately pushed him back with a sharp glare.

“Stay back,” Gareth hissed under his breath.

Arianna’s laugh pierced the air again, high and hysterical. “Oh, darling, it’s true. You just don’t want to admit it.” She turned her attention back to Reina, her tone softening into something sickeningly sweet. “Reina, darling, don’t cry. Don’t cry. It’s okay. We’ll fix this. You’ll see. We’ll be together again. Just you and me. No one else.”

Her grip tightened on the gun, and Gareth’s heart stopped.

“Please,” he choked out, desperation and warning lacing his voice. “Please, don’t hurt her.”

Arianna's eyes darted back to him, her smile faltering for a moment before twisting into something darker. "Oh, Killian. You don't get it, do you? There can't be two of us. We can't both fight for her love. And if she won't love me while you're around..."

Her voice dropped to a whisper, her eyes glinting with madness. "...Then one of us has to go."

Killian felt the air leave his lungs, his chest tightening as he stared into the eyes of the woman who was supposed to be family but was clearly anything but.

"Let her go, Arianna," Gareth said, his voice low and dangerous. His finger hovered over the trigger, his gaze unwavering.

Arianna smirked. "Oh, Gareth, always the hero. Tell me, are you willing to risk your precious little brother's life? Because if you pull that trigger, I'll pull mine. And Reina, well..." She trailed off, her smile widening.

Killian's mind raced, panic clawing at his chest as he tried to think of a way out.

Arianna tilted her head, her gaze settling on him once more. "Don't worry, darling. I'll make it quick. You won't even feel a thing."

"Stop!" Killian yelled, his voice cracking. "Please, just stop!"

Arianna's smile faltered, her eyes narrowing. "Why should I?"

"Because..." Killian's voice shook, his hands trembling as he held them out in front of him. "Because I'll go with you. Just... let her go, and I'll go with you. Whatever you want, just don't hurt her."

Arianna's gaze flicked between him and Reina, her expression unreadable. For a moment, the room was deathly silent.

And then she laughed, a sound so chilling it made Killian's skin crawl.

"Oh, Killian," she said, her tone dripping with mockery. "You're even more pathetic than I thought..."

Arianna's grin widened, her eyes alight with deranged delight. "But I will take your offer," she purred, lowering her voice to a venomous whisper. "Because, my dear nephew, there can't be two of us fighting for Reina's love. It's simple, really." Her grip on Reina tightened as she cocked the gun. "You can die, and I'll have Reina. Problem solved."

Killian's chest tightened, his vision blurring as the weight of her words crushed him. He could barely process the madness unfolding before him.

"No," Reina's voice cut through the air, sharp and filled with fury. She struggled against Arianna's hold, her tear-streaked face twisting with hatred. "Killian, no! Don't listen to her. She's manipulating you!"

"Mom..." Killian's voice cracked as he took a step forward.

Reina's voice grew louder, desperate. "She doesn't have morals, Killian! She doesn't know what love is! Don't listen to her lies. Don't leave me, baby, please. I can't lose you!"

Her words were a lifeline, but Killian's heart felt like it was being torn apart. Arianna's laughter rang out again, sharp and mocking.

"Ah, Reina," Arianna cooed, tilting her head to press her cheek against Reina's hair. "Such passion, such devotion. You see, Killian? That's the love I've been deprived of my whole life. *My Reina's love.*"

"Stop it!" Killian roared, his fists clenching. His voice reverberated through the room, but Arianna only smirked, her expression darkening.

"Why should I?" Arianna sneered, her eyes gleaming with malice. "You've stolen it all, Killian. Her affection, her attention—everything that was supposed to be mine! And now, I'll make it right."

Her finger twitched on the trigger, and Reina let out a broken sob.

"No!" Killian screamed, his entire body trembling with fear and rage. "If you want to take someone, take me! But let her go. Please, just let her go."

"Killian", Gareth hisses.

A shot rings and Gareth screams, falling down blood pouring from his thighs.

"GARETH", Reina and Killian yell at the same time.

"Now, Killian about your offer", Arianna starts.

Reina's voice broke, her anguish spilling out as she cried, "No, Killian! Don't you dare! You're my son! My baby! You can't do this!"

For a moment, the world seemed to pause. Killian's chest heaved, his vision swimming as he stared into the eyes of the woman who claimed to be his aunt—a woman consumed by her own darkness.

"Arianna," Killian said, his voice firm despite the tremor beneath it. "If you do this, you'll lose everything. Mom won't love you. She'll hate you for what you've done. You'll never have what you want."

Arianna's smile faltered, her manic eyes narrowing.

"She'll never forgive you," Killian continued, his voice lowering. "No matter what you tell yourself, you'll always be alone."

Arianna's laughter echoed in the air, a chilling melody of madness that sent shivers down Killian's spine. The wind howled around them, carrying her words like a haunting refrain.

"Go to the edge, darling," Arianna commanded, her gun trained unwaveringly on Gareth, who knelt bleeding from his thigh. Reina sobbed helplessly, her voice hoarse from screaming. "Let's

see if you're brave enough to rewrite history.”

Killian hesitated, his feet rooted to the spot, but her manic gaze bore into him, leaving him no choice but to inch closer to the roof's edge.

“Killian, *no!*” Reina cried, her voice cracking. “Don't you dare listen to her!”

“Stay where you are, Kill!” Gareth gritted through clenched teeth, his hands pressing against his bleeding leg. “We'll figure this out. Don't give her what she wants!”

But Arianna was unfazed. If anything, their pleas seemed to fuel her twisted delight. She tilted her head, her lips curling into a sinister smile.

“Do you know why this place feels so familiar, Killian?” she asked, her voice dripping with mockery. “Because this is similar to a place where I died. Right here. I fell from a rooftop just like this one. Reina was by my side, and I—” Her voice broke, for just a moment, before she recomposed herself. “I died, Killian. But you know what's ironic?”

Her smile widened, her eyes gleaming with maniacal fervor. “How poetic would it be if *you* fell from here, too? If you tumbled into the abyss like I did, and *I* rose in your place?” She let out a sharp, unhinged laugh. “A full circle, don't you think?”

“Stop this, Arianna!” Reina screamed, her face streaked with tears. “This isn't you! You're sick, twisted—this isn't what you want!”

Arianna's head snapped toward Reina, her expression darkening. “What I *want*, Reina?” she hissed. “What I've *always* wanted was your love. Your attention. But no, that was reserved for everyone but me, wasn't it?!”

Her hand wavered for a moment, and Gareth seized the opportunity to lunge forward despite his injury. But Arianna turned the gun on him instantly, her finger tightening on the trigger.

“Don't,” she warned, her voice icy. “I might not kill you yet, but I don't need another reason to pull this trigger.”

Gareth froze, his jaw clenched in frustration, as blood seeped through his fingers.

“Killian,” Arianna cooed, her attention snapping back to him. “Darling nephew, do me this one favor. Step to the edge. Show Reina what it feels like to lose someone she loves.”

As Killian moved closer to the edge, the cold wind whipped around him, stinging his face like a thousand tiny needles. The abyss below loomed larger with every step, its darkness swallowing the faint glow of the city lights. But the true weight crushing his chest wasn't the fear of falling—it was the thought of everything he would leave behind.

His steps faltered as his mind screamed in protest, but Arianna's maniacal laughter rang in his ears, driving him forward. His breaths came in ragged gasps, each one more shallow than the last. He tried to steady himself, but the shaking in his legs betrayed the turmoil inside him.

It wasn't the fear of death that had his heart pounding like a drumbeat of despair. No, he had faced death before, had stared into its cold, unflinching eyes. He wasn't afraid of the unknown—

he was afraid of breaking the one promise he swore he'd never break.

I promised Eli.

His mind spiraled, Eli's face flashing before his eyes like a vivid dream he couldn't reach. That smirk Eli always wore, the way his eyes softened in those rare, private moments when it was just the two of them. The way his hand would brush against Killian's, as if grounding him, anchoring him to this world.

I promised him I'd never leave. That no matter what, I'd always come back to him. Always.

But now? Now he stood on the precipice, and all he could feel was the cruel hand of fate ripping that promise from his grasp.

Why now? Why, when I just started to live?

A tear slipped down his cheek, carried away by the relentless wind. His heart clenched as memories flooded his mind. The way Eli looked at him that morning, the playful teasing in his voice as he made Killian promise not to burn the house down while he was gone. The way they'd laughed together over something so small, so insignificant, yet it felt like everything.

I didn't even get to say goodbye.

His chest heaved, the ache inside him growing unbearable. The thought of Eli returning home to find an empty house, to realize Killian was gone, was like a knife twisting in his gut. He imagined Eli's reaction—first confusion, then anger, and finally, the soul-crushing realization that Killian had broken his promise.

He'll hate me.

The thought brought a fresh wave of tears. Eli, who had peeled back every layer of his guarded heart, who had shown him that love wasn't a weakness but a strength, who had promised him forever.

And here Killian was, ready to shatter that promise with a single step.

It's not fair.

His mind screamed the words over and over, a desperate plea to the universe. He clenched his fists, his nails digging into his palms until they drew blood, but the pain was nothing compared to the anguish consuming him.

I've barely had time to love him.

They hadn't even celebrated their first anniversary. He hadn't had the chance to show Eli all the ways he loved him, to grow old together, to laugh and fight and make up a thousand times over.

"I can't leave him," Killian whispered, his voice trembling. "Not yet. Not now."

But Arianna's laughter sliced through his thoughts, a sharp reminder of the reality he faced.

If I don't do this, she'll kill them. She'll kill Mom. She'll kill Gareth. She'll kill everyone I love.

His breaths came faster, the air too thin, his lungs too heavy. He stared down at the edge, the void beckoning him like a cruel mistress.

Eli... forgive me.

The thought of him finding out, of him being left behind, was unbearable. Killian bit his lip hard enough to draw blood, his body trembling as the weight of it all pressed down on him.

He thought of Clover, the silly little puppy Eli pretended to hate but secretly adored. He thought of their lazy mornings together, tangled in bed, the world forgotten outside their door. He thought of all the things they hadn't done yet, all the moments they'd never get to share.

I'm sorry.

He closed his eyes, a sob breaking free from his throat. He wasn't ready. He'd never be ready. But if this was the price to save them, to protect the people he loved, then he would pay it.

.....

Asher froze, his knuckles turned white.. His eyes followed Eli's desperate figure as he sprinted toward the house, screaming Killian's name, but Asher couldn't move.

It was the edge of the roof that did it. The jagged outline against the darkening sky, the precarious drop, and the figure standing there, his son, Killian. The sight cracked something inside Asher, releasing a flood of memories he had buried deep, memories he had spent decades trying to forget.

The car seemed to dissolve around him, the present fading into the past. Suddenly, he wasn't a man in his fifties; he was a brother, who lost his sister who lost her life due to her own madness.

But back then, he hadn't been fast enough.

He saw her again—Arianna. Her face so vivid in his memory till now.

Once upon a time, he had shouted until his throat was raw, pleaded until his knees had buckled beneath him, but nothing had reached her. And then, in one horrifying instant, the truth came out and his entire life shifted on his axis. But then slowly he and Reina built a life in the ashes Arianna's fire left behind.

And now here he was, staring at his son standing on the very edge of repeating that same nightmare.

"No," he whispered, his voice barely audible, choked with fear. "Not again. Please, not again."

His chest felt like it was caving in, the weight of his failure crushing him all over again. His vision blurred, not with the tears of a grown man but with the panicked, desperate sobs of the father who is reliving his worst nightmare and a fury that's battling inside him to be unleashed on the very sister he grieved.

Asher's vision turned red as the past shattered and the present snapped into focus. His heart, still battered by the weight of memory, ignited with a fury so consuming it burned away the fear. All

that remained was raw, unyielding rage.

Arianna.

She was there, her laughter ringing out like a twisted echo of the woman he had once loved and mourned. Arianna, the sister he had failed to save, was now the monster threatening to steal everything from him.

His son.

"My son."

Asher's fists clenched so tightly his nails bit into his palms, drawing blood. His jaw tightened, veins bulging in his neck, as he watched the scene unfold above. The audacity, the sheer gall of her to return after all these years and wreak havoc again.

The Arianna he had known was gone—if she had ever truly existed. This wasn't the fragile, heartbroken sister he had loved decades ago. This was something else. Something vile. Twisted.

And she was *laughing*.

It was that laugh, that haunting, maniacal laugh, that snapped the last thread of restraint in him. He could barely hear Reina's cries or Eli's desperate shouts over the roar of his own fury.

.....

Eli King had never tasted powerlessness before. His entire existence was built on control, on bending the world to his will, on always being the one who stood above it all. Yet, in this moment, watching Killian slip closer to the edge, the very fabric of his being unraveled.

Powerlessness wasn't just a feeling; it was a cage, cold and unyielding, trapping him in a nightmare he couldn't wake from. The roar of his voice, the desperate "*NO!*" that tore from his throat, was swallowed by the chaos, meaningless in the face of what was unfolding.

He had built his dreams with his hands and stood tall even as the world burned around him. But now, his hands hung useless at his sides, trembling, unable to reach the one person who mattered more than all his victories combined.

Killian.

The name reverberated through his mind like a prayer, a plea, a curse. This man—his husband, his heart—was slipping through his grasp, and for the first time in his life, Eli could do nothing to stop it.

He had fought for Killian.. To see him smile, to watch him thrive, to share a life that no one else could touch. And now, that life was teetering on the brink, dangling precariously over an abyss Eli couldn't bear to imagine.

He wasn't the King anymore. Not here. Not now.

How could a king rule if he couldn't even save the one he loved?

The world around him blurred— All he could see was Killian. Killian, standing at the edge of eternity, his body framed by the cruel, indifferent sky.

Eli's knees buckled, but he forced himself to stay upright, his heart pounding like a war drum. This wasn't supposed to happen. Not to them. Not to *Killian*.

"I'm supposed to protect you," he whispered, his voice cracking, the words barely audible over the chaos. "I promised you. I swore I'd never let anything touch you. I swore—"

But promises were hollow in the face of this moment, and the weight of his failures crushed him.

Eli's chest heaved, his breath coming in ragged gasps as he took a step forward, then another, his entire body trembling. He had to move. Had to act. Had to *do* something. But every step felt like wading through quicksand, every breath like inhaling shards of glass.

His mind raced, a storm of helplessness and fury. He thought of Killian's laughter, the rare, unguarded moments they shared in the quiet of their home. He thought of the way Killian's eyes softened when he looked at him, the warmth that melted the ice in his own heart.

He thought of their future—the one they'd fought so hard for. The one that now dangled by a thread, fraying with every passing second.

This was what powerlessness tasted like. Bitter and sharp, sinking its claws into his soul and ripping away everything that made him who he was.

Eli King, the untouchable, was brought to his knees by the sight of the one he loved standing on the edge of oblivion.

"Killian," he whispered, his voice breaking, his heart shattering.

Because in this moment, he wasn't a king. He wasn't powerful. He was just a man, terrified and helpless, watching the love of his life slip through his fingers. And he didn't know if he could bear it.

.....

Tears blurred Gareth's vision, but his eyes remained locked on Killian, refusing to blink, as if by doing so, he could freeze time, prevent this moment from happening. He opened his mouth to scream, to say something, anything, but no words came. Only the deafening sound of his own heartbeat pounding in his ears.

Killian smiled at him, but it wasn't the same mischievous smile Gareth knew so well. No, this was a sad smile, one that seemed to carry all the weight of the world. Killian's eyes held a pain Gareth had never seen before. The smile was a fragile mask over something deeper, something broken. And in that moment, Gareth understood.

Killian wasn't afraid. Killian was letting go.

"You can't catch me, brother," Killian said softly, his voice barely above a whisper. The words should have been playful, teasing, like they always were when they were younger, racing around

the house, laughing as they fought over who was faster. But now, they were filled with finality. A goodbye.

And then, with a shift of his body, Killian was falling. The world around Gareth seemed to slow to a crawl, the air thick and heavy, each second stretching longer and longer as he watched his brother slip away from him. Time itself felt cruel.

The scream that tore through Gareth's throat was a sound he'd never heard before—raw, guttural, the sound of a heart breaking in real-time. "NOOOOOOOOO!" His voice cracked, hoarse from the agony that flooded his chest, but the word felt so small, so insignificant against the enormity of the moment.

With all the fury coursing through him, he didn't mind the pain in his leg, he lunged towards his gun and shot Arianna's both hands, her screams echoing like melody in his head. No she deserves a fate worse than death and he will grant her that.

.....
...

Red had always been Eli's favorite color. Not because of some trivial reasoning. No, it was simply because it was Killian's favorite. Killian, with his sharp smile and his unpredictable spirit, had always loved red. The vibrant crimson, the deep, intoxicating hue that burned like fire, fierce and unyielding. Eli had never questioned it, never considered anything else. To him, red was synonymous with his husband—the color of his strength, his energy, his life.

But now... now, as he stood frozen, looking at Killian's broken form sprawled across the hood of the car, blood staining the once-pristine surface, Eli knew one thing with a clarity so sharp it tore at him from the inside out.

Red would never be his favorite color again.

The blood that pooled on the car, darkening the gleaming surface with its stark, unforgiving presence, was no longer a symbol of anything but the destruction of his world. It was a memory of what he could never erase, of the life that had slipped through his fingers.

Eli's breath hitched, his chest tight as if some unseen hand were crushing the air from his lungs. His eyes traced the cruel line of blood dripping slowly, almost deliberately, from Killian's body, like the universe itself was marking the cruel end of something beautiful.

The vibrant red that had once spoken of warmth, love, and the fire of life, now whispered only of death. It was as if the color had been stolen, reduced to something cold, distant, and irreversible. The blood on the car's hood, the blood that was once just a part of Killian's fierce spirit, now lay there like a cold testament to a tragedy that would never leave him.

Killian had always been full of life—fire and passion and a soul so powerful that it seemed to burn with every step he took. And now... now that fire was gone. Snuffed out, reduced to a stain on a car, a stain that would haunt Eli for the rest of his days.

HEHEHEHEHE 😈 Oh, dear readers, I can already hear the sound of pitchforks being sharpened and torches being lit. Yes, I did it... *nervous chuckle..heheee. And yes, I am currently sprinting away from the chaos I have unleashed.

Put those weapons down, take deep breaths, and channel your energy into screaming in the comments instead. . Mwahaha.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll be hiding in my room, sipping coffee and watching the chaos unfold. See you next chapter... if I survive. 😊

CHAPTER

Eli stood in front of the tombstone, the weight of the world pressing down on his shoulders. The sky was a dull gray, mirroring the emptiness inside him. He knelt down, placing a bouquet of deep red roses at the base of the grave—Killian's favorite color.

Killian Carson
Beloved husband, son, brother.
Gone too soon.

Gone.

Eli's throat tightened as he traced the name etched into the cold stone. How unfair it was that Killian, so full of life, so utterly vibrant, was now reduced to this—just a name, a memory, a ghost of laughter that once filled their home.

"I brought your favorite," Eli murmured, his fingers brushing over the petals. "Though I know you'd probably roll your eyes and say something like, 'I'm dead, Eli, I don't care about flowers.'" He let out a hollow chuckle, but the sound felt foreign, wrong.

JUST KIDDING.

Killian is *well*....., the next chapter will be out sooooooooooon! *Hehe.* 🐱💀

CHAPTER 35

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eli sat in the cold, sterile corridor outside the surgery theater, his hands gripping his knees so tightly his knuckles had turned white. The fluorescent lights buzzed faintly overhead, the hum a dull backdrop to the deafening silence in his mind. The rhythmic tick of the clock on the wall marked time in slow, agonizing increments, each second dragging him further into despair.

He wanted—no, *needed*—someone to come out of that surgery theater. A doctor, a nurse, anyone who could tell him that Killian was alive, that he was fine, that he would wake up. *He has to wake up.*

Eli leaned forward, elbows on his knees, head bowed as if in prayer. Not that he was a man of faith—he'd lost that a long time ago—but right now, he was willing to make any bargain, swear any oath, if it meant Killian would open his eyes again.

A cruel voice whispered in the back of his mind: *What if he doesn't?*

“No,” Eli muttered under his breath, his jaw tightening. He couldn't let himself think like that. Killian *had* to survive.

The images from earlier flashed in his mind, vivid and unrelenting. Killian's broken body sprawled over the car, his blood painting the hood a stark, unforgiving red. Red, the color that used to be Eli's favorite simply because it was Killian's. Now, it was the color of his nightmares.

A part of Eli, dark and primal, burned with fury. Arianna. That twisted, deranged woman who had dared to hurt his Killian. He wanted her to suffer, to feel every ounce of the pain she had caused. His fists clenched at the thought of her. Gareth and Asher were handling her now, and Eli didn't care how they did it—he only wanted to know that she would never hurt Killian again.

But another part of him, quieter and infinitely more desperate, only wanted to be there when Killian woke up. He wanted to see those piercing blue eyes open, to hear his sarcastic quips, to feel the steady warmth of his presence. He wanted to be the first thing Killian saw, the first voice he heard.

Eli swallowed hard, his throat tight with unspoken fears.

Beside him, Reina sat slumped in the chair, her face pale and drawn, her eyes red and swollen from crying. But now, she had no more tears to shed. She stared blankly ahead, her hands trembling slightly in her lap.

“It's all my fault,” Reina said suddenly, her voice barely above a whisper.

Eli turned to her, his brows furrowing. He didn't have the energy to play therapist, not right now. But he couldn't ignore her either—not when Killian cared for her so deeply.

Reina's gaze remained fixed on the floor, her voice cracking as she continued, "Arianna targeted Killian because of me. She... she..... , Killian is paying the price for my mistakes."

Eli exhaled slowly, running a hand through his hair. He was so tired. Tired of the blood, the chaos, the heartbreak. Tired of feeling powerless. But Reina's pain was real, and Killian would never forgive him if he let her spiral into guilt like this.

"Reina," Eli said, his voice quieter than usual but steady. He placed a hand on her shoulder, and she flinched slightly before looking at him. "Killian wouldn't want you to blame yourself."

Her eyes filled with fresh tears, but they didn't fall. "How can I not? If it weren't for me—"

"Stop," Eli interrupted, his tone firm but not unkind. "Arianna did this because she's sick. Twisted. This isn't on you."

Reina shook her head, her lips trembling. "But if I hadn't—"

"You loved Killian.," Eli said, his voice gaining strength. "And he loves you, Reina. Do you think he'd want you to sit here blaming yourself for something you couldn't control?"

Reina let out a shaky breath, her hands clutching the fabric of her skirt. "But I failed him."

"No," Eli said firmly, his grip on her shoulder tightening slightly. "You didn't. And you won't. He's going to pull through this, and when he does, he'll need you. He'll need us."

Eli's words were meant to comfort her, but they felt hollow in his own chest. Because the truth was, he wasn't sure Killian would pull through.

He leaned back in his chair, his hand falling away from Reina's shoulder as he stared at the theater doors. He felt like he was being torn in two—one part of him burning with rage, the other drowning in despair.

Killian, you can't do this to me, Eli thought, his chest aching. *You can't leave me. Not now. Not ever.*

He thought about their mornings together, the way Killian would grumble about Eli stealing the covers. The rare, soft smiles Killian would give only to Eli. The sound of his laughter, sharp and unexpected, that always made Eli's heart skip a beat.

"I can't lose you," Eli whispered to himself, his voice breaking. His hands trembled as he clenched them into fists. "Not like this."

He was Eli King—powerful, untouchable, unshakable. But now, sitting outside that theater, he felt like nothing. Powerless in the face of the one thing he couldn't control.

Love.

It wasn't just love. It was Killian. And without him, Eli didn't know how to be.

.....

The warehouse was dimly lit, a single flickering bulb casting long, erratic shadows that danced across the stained concrete floor. The air smelled of rust, dampness, and blood—a fitting stage for the family tragedy playing out within its walls.

Arianna lay slumped against the wall, her body battered and broken. Her lips curled into a bloodied smile as her wild eyes flicked between Gareth and Asher. Despite the physical pain she was in, her words were sharp and venomous, slicing through the silence like a razor.

“You’re both pathetic,” she rasped, her voice hoarse yet laced with mockery. “This performance? This... righteous fury? All for him? What about me brother?” She laughed, a harsh, fractured sound.

Asher stood several feet away, his face a mask of cold fury. His fists were clenched at his sides, his knuckles smeared with blood—hers. He hadn’t stopped shaking since he’d walked into the warehouse and seen her alive, still laughing, still tormenting. His son, was fighting for his life in a hospital because of her. And now, she dared to mock them?

“Reina doesn’t love him, you know,” Arianna continued, her voice taking on a sing-song quality. “She loves me. Isn’t that right, Asher?” She tilted her head, her matted hair falling into her face. “You know it’s true. She loved me first. She’ll love me last.”

“Don’t,” Gareth growled, stepping forward. His voice was low and dangerous, a stark contrast to the usual measured tone he used as the eldest son, the protector of his family. “Don’t say another word about my mother.”

Arianna’s gaze snapped to him, her smile widening. “Oh, Gareth. Always the dutiful son, aren’t you? But you’re no different from me. We’re blood, you and I. And blood always wins.”

Gareth’s jaw tightened, his fists trembling at his sides. “You don’t get to talk about blood. Not after what you’ve done.”

“What I’ve done?” Arianna repeated, feigning innocence. She let out a maniacal laugh, leaning her head back against the wall. “All I’ve done is love. Love your precious Reina, love her so much it hurts. You think Killian matters to her? He’s just a shadow of me, a poor imitation of what he’ll never be. And you—” She turned her gaze back to Asher. “You let it happen. You let her choose him over me. You failed me, Asher.”

Asher stepped forward, his presence suffocating, his eyes dark with unrelenting rage. “You hurt my son,” he said, his voice low and steady, yet carrying the weight of his fury. “You put your hands on my boy.”

“Your *boy*?” Arianna sneered, pushing herself upright despite the pain it caused her. “He’s weak. Pathetic. Just like you.” She spat blood onto the floor, her smile never faltering. “And Reina? She’ll always belong to me. Not him. Not you.”

“Shut up,” Gareth hissed, his voice trembling with rage. He stepped forward, but Asher held up a hand, stopping him.

“She’s mine,” Asher said, his tone cold and final.

Gareth hesitated but then stepped back, his chest heaving with the effort it took to restrain himself. He watched as his father approached Arianna, his movements slow and deliberate, like a predator stalking its prey.

Arianna's bravado faltered for the first time. She flinched as Asher crouched in front of her, his face inches from hers. "You think this is about Reina?" he said, his voice barely above a whisper. "This is about Killian. My son. The boy you tried to kill".

Arianna's smile returned, though it was weaker now. she echoed. "Oh, Asher. I just showed him the truth. That Reina's love isn't his to have. It's mine. Always mine."

Asher's hand shot out, gripping her jaw with bruising force. "You don't get to say her name," he growled. "Not ever again."

She struggled against his hold, her laughter turning to a choked, gasping sound. "You think you can silence me?" she spat. "You think you can stop me?"

"I don't think," Asher said, his voice icy. "I know."

Gareth moved beside his father, his own fury boiling over. "You should've stayed dead," he said, his voice shaking with emotion. "You should've stayed buried in the past where you belonged."

Together, father and son unleashed their rage, their blows raining down on Arianna with a calculated brutality. This wasn't justice—it was vengeance, pure and unfiltered. Every strike was a declaration: for Killian, for Reina, for the family she had tried to destroy.

Arianna's laughter faded into silence, her body limp and lifeless on the cold concrete floor. Asher stood over her, his chest heaving, his hands trembling. Gareth placed a hand on his father's shoulder, grounding him.

"She's gone," Gareth said softly, his voice filled with a mixture of relief and sorrow.

Asher nodded, his gaze fixed on her lifeless form. "She won't hurt us again," he said, more to himself than to Gareth.

But the weight of what they had done lingered. They had won, but it didn't feel like victory. Not with Killian fighting for his life in a hospital bed. Not with Reina's broken sobs still echoing in their minds.

As they turned to leave, the shadows of the warehouse seemed to close in around them, a haunting reminder of the darkness they had embraced to protect the ones they loved.

.....

Eli sat in the sterile hospital room, the faint hum of machines and the rhythmic beeping of Killian's heart monitor the only sounds breaking the heavy silence. The room was dimly lit, the curtains drawn to shield its occupants from the harsh daylight. Killian lay on the hospital bed, his normally vibrant presence reduced to a still, pale figure hooked to countless wires and monitors. A ventilator helped him breathe, and the sight of its steady rise and fall filled Eli with a mixture of gratitude and anguish.

It had been three weeks. Three agonizing, soul-crushing weeks since Killian had been placed in a medically induced coma to give his battered body a chance to heal. For Eli, it had been three weeks of torture—having Killian so close yet so far, his presence tangible but unreachable. The man he loved, his husband, his everything, was right there, but he might as well have been on another plane of existence.

Eli hadn't left the hospital since the day Killian was admitted. Not once. He lived on coffee and the occasional meal forced on him by Gareth or Reina. He showered in the staff bathroom and slept in the uncomfortable chair by Killian's bedside, his body perpetually stiff and aching, but he didn't care. He couldn't bring himself to leave. What if Killian woke up and he wasn't there? What if the first thing Killian needed was him, and Eli wasn't there to hold his hand, to reassure him that everything would be okay?

Killian's friends had come and gone, their visits filled with awkward silences and stifled tears. They had whispered words of encouragement, promises of seeing him soon, but none of them had stayed. Eli didn't blame them—Killian's condition was too heartbreaking to witness for long—but he couldn't be like them. He couldn't just leave.

Eli leaned forward in the chair, his elbows resting on the edge of the bed, his hands clasped together tightly as he stared at Killian's face. He looked so different like this. Vulnerable. Fragile. Eli had never seen Killian this way before; it was as if the man who had always been his rock, his unshakable force, had been reduced to glass, threatening to shatter at any moment.

He let out a soft, shaky breath, his voice barely above a whisper. "Your father brought me food today," he said, his lips quirking into a humorless smile. "Can you believe that? *Your father*, the man who hates me, walked in here with a sandwich and told me to eat. He didn't even insult me. I almost fainted from the shock."

Eli chuckled weakly, the sound hollow in the empty room. "I wanted to ask you if I was dreaming. But you can't answer me, can you?" His voice broke on the last word, and he swallowed hard, trying to push down the lump forming in his throat.

He reached into his pocket, his fingers brushing against the smooth, cool surface of the ring he had been carrying for weeks. It was supposed to be Killian's. It was supposed to be on his hand by now. Eli had dreamed of a grand proposal, something extravagant and unforgettable, because Killian deserved nothing less. He had imagined getting down on one knee, the look of surprise and joy on Killian's face, the way his eyes would light up when Eli asked him to spend forever together. This time a marriage for love.

But all of that felt so meaningless now.

All Eli wanted was for Killian to open his eyes. To look at him. To say anything. He didn't need a grand proposal or an elaborate plan anymore. He just needed a "yes."

He pulled the ring out of his pocket, turning it over in his hands. The diamond caught the faint light of the room, glinting like a distant star. He stared at it for a long moment before placing it on the bedside table. "It's waiting for you," he murmured. "Just like I am."

Eli's fingers trembled as he reached out, brushing a strand of hair from Killian's forehead. His skin was warm to the touch, a small comfort in the face of everything else. "You're so stubborn,

you know that?” he said, his voice soft. “I always knew you were, but this? This is next-level stubborn. Three weeks, Killian. Three weeks of you lying here while I lose my mind. You’ve got to wake up. You have to. Because I don’t know how to do this without you.”

His throat tightened, and he blinked rapidly, willing the tears away. “I need you,” he admitted, his voice cracking. “I love you. And I’m not leaving until you wake up and let me say it to your face. So hurry up, okay? Stop making me wait.”

.....

The soft touch of fingers combing through his hair pulled Eli from the depths of a restless sleep. His head jerked up, his heart racing, unsure if it was real or just another cruel dream. But then his eyes locked onto a sight he had been yearning for—Killian, awake, his soft gaze resting on Eli with a faint smile tugging at his pale lips.

“Killian,” Eli breathed, his voice cracking, the name tumbling out like a prayer he had been reciting in his head for weeks. He shot up from the uncomfortable chair he had been rooted to for days, his hands trembling as they hovered over Killian’s, hesitant to touch, as if this fragile moment might shatter.

Killian’s smile widened, though his voice was weak. “Hey, Eli.”

Eli let out a strangled laugh that was equal parts relief and frustration. “Hey? *Hey?* That’s all you have to say after *three weeks* of making me lose my damn mind?” His voice cracked, and tears brimmed in his eyes. He didn’t care if he looked pathetic. He didn’t care about anything except the fact that Killian was alive and awake.

Killian’s brow furrowed faintly, concern flickering in his tired eyes. “I didn’t mean to...” he whispered, but Eli cut him off, his emotions bursting like a dam.

“You *promised* me, Killian!” Eli’s voice rose, shaky and raw. “You promised you’d never leave me, and what the hell do you do? You pull that stupid, self-sacrificial stunt! Do you have any idea what it was like seeing you like that? Hooked up to all these machines, not knowing if you’d wake up? I—” His voice broke, and he ran a hand through his disheveled hair, his chest heaving. “I can’t... I can’t lose you. Ever.”

Killian’s fingers twitched, and he slowly reached out to grasp Eli’s hand. “I’m sorry,” he murmured, his voice raspy but sincere. “I didn’t want to leave you. I was... I just wanted to protect you. Protect Mom. Everyone.”

Eli’s hand tightened around Killian’s as he sat down on the edge of the bed, his free hand cupping Killian’s face gently. “You think I care about being protected if it means losing you?” His tone softened, but the desperation in his words remained. “You are my *everything*, Killian. I can’t—I won’t live in a world without you in it.”

Killian’s eyes shone with unshed tears, his resolve melting under Eli’s heartfelt words. “I’m sorry,” he whispered again. “I’ll never leave you. I swear.”

“Damn right you won’t,” Eli replied, his voice thick with emotion. “Because I won’t let you.” He pulled back slightly, his hand slipping into his pocket. “Actually, I’ve been holding onto this

for weeks.” His fingers closed around the small velvet box, and he took a deep breath, his heart pounding in his chest.

Killian’s brows knit together in confusion, but as Eli knelt beside the hospital bed, his eyes widened in realization. “Eli…”

Eli’s lips quirked into a soft, almost sheepish smile as he opened the box, revealing the ring inside—a sleek, understated band that held all the love he hadn’t been able to express until now. “I had this whole grand proposal planned,” he began, his voice trembling slightly. “Something big and flashy, because I thought that’s what you deserved. But after these three weeks…” He paused, swallowing hard as his emotions threatened to overwhelm him again. “All I care about now is one thing. Just hearing you say yes. Killian, when you first agreed to this marriage, I thought it was a deal, a transaction. Two people playing their parts in a game neither of us asked for. But somewhere along the way, you became my *everything*. The air I breathe, the ground I stand on, the reason I even bother to exist. Do you know what it’s like to crave someone so much it burns? To feel like you’ll die if you’re not near them? That’s what you do to me, Killian. You’ve ruined me. You’ve consumed every corner of my mind, every beat of my heart, until there’s nothing left but you. This ring… it’s not just a promise. It’s a claim. A mark that you’re mine, and I’m yours. That no one else gets to have you, touch you, even *think* about you the way I do. It’s a declaration that I’ll love you in ways no one else ever could, that I’ll fight for you, die for you, kill for you if I have to. I had this grand plan, you know. Something extravagant, because I thought that’s what you deserved. But then these last three weeks happened, and I realized I don’t care about plans or perfection. All I care about is you saying yes. That’s it. Just you, Killian. Always you.”

Killian stared at the ring, his throat bobbing as he tried to speak. The vulnerability in Eli’s eyes, the rawness of his voice, made his heart ache. Slowly, he smiled, the tears that had been gathering finally spilling over. “Yes,” he said, his voice barely above a whisper. “Yes, Eli. A thousand times, yes.”

The relief that washed over Eli was so intense it nearly brought him to his knees. He slipped the ring onto Killian’s finger, his hands trembling, and then he leaned up, cupping Killian’s face again as he pressed their foreheads together. “You’re mine,” he murmured, his voice low and fierce. “Always.”

Killian’s smile turned wry despite his tears. “Always,” he echoed, his voice steady as his hand came up to curl around Eli’s neck. “Now are you going to kiss me, or do I have to ask?”

Eli laughed, a genuine sound that seemed to dispel the lingering heaviness in the room. “Bossy, even now,” he teased, but his lips descended onto Killian’s in a kiss that was slow and deep and full of everything he couldn’t put into words. It was a promise, a plea, and a declaration all in one.

When they finally broke apart, their foreheads still touching, Eli whispered, “I love you.”

Killian’s smile was radiant, despite the faint exhaustion in his eyes. “I love you too,” he said, his voice soft but sure. “Always.”

Eli and Killian were still lost in the euphoria of their moment, the kiss lingering like a whispered promise as the world around them seemed to blur into irrelevance. The quiet hum of hospital

monitors was the only sound that punctuated their shared breath, their foreheads resting against each other as they smiled like two fools in love.

What they didn't realize was the doorway had become a silent theater for their audience: Gareth, Kayden, Asher, and Reina. The four of them stood there, an odd assortment of expressions gracing their faces—soft smiles, amused smirks, and, in Asher's case, a begrudging but unmistakable twinkle of approval in his sharp eyes.

Reina, standing at the forefront, nudged her husband with her elbow, her tone laced with triumph. "See? Told you. Eli is good for our son. Look at them."

Asher crossed his arms, his expression a masterful blend of stubbornness and denial. "I just tolerate him," he said with a sniff, though his eyes betrayed him as they lingered on the way Eli gently held Killian's hand, his thumb brushing over the ring he'd just placed. "Barely."

Reina rolled her eyes. "Barely? You call bringing food to Eli every day 'barely tolerating'? Honestly, Asher, you're impossible."

"I did for Killian," Asher shot back, his tone defensive. "Not for *him*. That one's still just a peasant." He gestured vaguely toward Eli, who was entirely oblivious to the conversation happening just feet away.

Beside him, Kayden leaned casually against the frame, his signature smirk in place as he whispered something to Gareth that earned him a nudge.

"Don't think I've approved of you either, Kayden," Asher said, his voice low but deliberate, snapping everyone's attention to him.

Kayden, unperturbed, straightened up with a grin. "Oh, I know, sir. But the way I see it, you're stuck with me. Marriage and all that. Unless you plan to disown Gareth—and let's face it, you love him too much for that."

Gareth rolled his eyes but tried to hide his amusement. "Kayden, don't push it."

But Kayden, being Kayden, couldn't resist. He placed a hand dramatically over his heart. "Come on, Gareth. I'm just trying to bond with my father-in-law. Isn't that what you wanted?"

"I wanted peace," Gareth muttered under his breath, earning a soft laugh from Reina.

Asher's glare remained steady. "You think you're clever, don't you?"

Kayden gave him an almost innocent look, though his eyes twinkled with mischief. "Not clever, sir. Just persistent. You'll come around eventually. I mean, you're practically halfway there with Eli, and he's more stubborn than I am."

Reina chuckled, unable to hide her amusement. "Kayden does have a point, Asher. You've softened on Eli. Maybe it's time you gave Kayden a chance too."

Asher turned to his wife, his expression incredulous. "Don't start."

“I’m just saying,” Reina said, lifting her hands in mock surrender. “You can’t hold onto your grudge forever.”

“I don’t hold grudges,” Asher said gruffly, though the faint twitch of his mouth betrayed him. “I just have standards.”

“Standards I’ve clearly met,” Kayden quipped, earning an exasperated groan from Gareth.

“Kayden, stop,” Gareth warned, though his tone was more tired than angry.

“Why? I’m charming,” Kayden said, flashing his husband a grin before turning back to Asher. “And, if I may add, loyal. Isn’t that what you value most, sir?”

Asher’s lips pressed into a thin line. “Don’t try to butter me up, Kayden. It won’t work.”

“I don’t need to butter you up. I just need to keep being me,” Kayden said with a wink, which earned him a sharp glare from Asher.

Gareth sighed, rubbing his temples. “Kayden, for once in your life, stop talking.”

Reina laughed softly, nudging Asher. “He’s good for Gareth. Just like Eli’s good for Killian. You’ll see it eventually.”

“I’ll see it when I see it,” Asher grumbled, though his gaze flicked briefly to Kayden. “And don’t think for a second that I’m letting my guard down around you.”

Kayden’s grin widened. “Wouldn’t dream of it, sir.”

Gareth groaned. “I can’t take you two anywhere.”

Asher gave his eldest son a look, but there was a glimmer of something less stern in his eyes. “You chose him. You deal with him.”

“Every day,” Gareth muttered, though his lips twitched into a faint smile.

Reina leaned closer to Kayden and whispered conspiratorially, “Don’t worry. He’ll warm up to you in another decade or so.”

Kayden winked. “I can wait.”

“But you are already too old”, Asher says

END

Oh my God!!!! I can't believe I've completed writing this story... Itjust...still feels surreal.

Even though I don't pick favorites, this is undoubtedly one of my favorite works. I loved every moment of writing it—I lived with these characters, breathed their emotions, and walked with them. EliKill my babies!!!!

It's bittersweet to reach the end, but their story will always stay close to my heart. I'll try to write some epilogues for them because I'm not quite ready to say goodbye just yet.

Thank you for reading and being part of this journey with me!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!