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**An Excerpt From: DANGEROUSLY HIS**

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JB looked toward the door as everyone else did. Taio stood at the entrance, with Eva on one arm and a taller female who looked just like him on the other. He waited as everyone rose to their feet.

“That’s his mother, Queen Fainia Xochis of Drazlan,” Lo’Ren said from the seat next to him. “It’s customary for you to stand when she enters the room.”

“I’ve already pissed him off today, no need to do it again if it’s not totally necessary.” JB stood.

Taio proceeded through the door, followed by three other females. JB immediately found himself staring at one in particular.

Her head was cast down slightly, her face obscured by waves and waves of jet-black hair that brushed the swell of her round butt. She wore a pale-purple form-fitting dress. The floor-length gown had designs made of colored crystals. Her skin was the same color as Taio’s, but different. It seemed to glow. Her build was tall and slender with a hint of curves where they were needed most.

She turned her head.

He caught his breath.

*Beautiful.*

As her lavender eyes locked on Lo’Ren, he willed her to look his way. Her features were sharp and foreign, but beautiful in every way. Her cheekbones were high and defined. Her lips were full and pink. She had a look of longing in her eyes and he wanted to know why.

No, he *needed* to know why.

Was she upset?

Who had taken the joy away from such a perfect female?

*Look at me. I want to know you.*

“Uh, unless you’re inviting Taio to kill you, I would sit down,” Lo’Ren said, tugging on his sleeve.

He glanced around to find he was the only one still standing. JB sat but kept his eyes on the female across the room. “Why would he kill me? She’s not human.”

“She’s his younger sister, Princess Saia.” Lo’Ren popped a piece of meat in her mouth and chewed. “Look the other way, human.”

That information alone should have been enough to make him turn his head and focus his attention on something else, but he couldn’t.

*Princess Saia.*

Rasha grabbed Saia in a bear hug and lifted her from her feet. JB watched, waiting for her to turn his way. His heart thumped. He wanted to go to her, meet her.

She was *his*.

He shook his head, trying to dislodge the misplaced thought.

*Where the hell did that come from?*

Then she turned toward him. Their eyes met.

And there it was.

His heart felt as though it was seized in a tight fist then dropped to the pit of his stomach.

“This is where you take my advice before you get into trouble.”

“She’s looking at me,” he whispered.

Every nerve in his body sprang to life. Her eyes were framed in the heaviest lashes he’d ever seen. And when she blinked, they looked like wings of butterflies.

He sighed and felt as if his body had melted into the chair.

Lo’Ren groaned. “Taio will kill you.”

“I don’t care.” He couldn’t drag his gaze away. A small smile graced beautiful full lips. Lips he wanted to claim for his own. From the side, her face had appeared long, but no, it was round and soft. Her nose was perky and petite. “Princess Saia,” JB said breathlessly.

Lo’Ren shook her head. “I shouldn’t have told you her name. I don’t want any part of this.”

“I would have found out anyway.” Nothing could have stopped him from knowing her name.

Lo’Ren blew out a heavy breath. “Did I mention that she’s *Taio’s only sister*?”

“How old is she?”

“Nineteen birth cycles.” She frowned. “I think.”

JB whistled low. “She’s practically jailbait.”

“What’s jailbait?”

He shook his head and groaned. “Something bad.” He straightened and snapped his fingers. “Wait, Eva claims she’s twenty-two. She said something about how slow Sonis rotates. Does that count for Drazlan too?”

Lo’Ren shrugged. “I don’t know. I’ve never lived on Drazlan.”

“It doesn’t matter. She’s legal in my mind.”

Lo’Ren held up a hand. She pointed to a finger and said, “She’s Taio’s little sister.” Then she pointed to another. “You said she’s jailbait—which according to you is bad.” And she wiggled the third finger. “She’s also contracted to bond with Lord Ranuit Pi of the Zumagala Nation.”

“She’s getting married?” His heart seemed to twist, screaming its displeasure.

“She’s contracted, yes. That’s what all the planning is for, or have you been too buried between female legs to even notice that the palace is readying for an engagement party?”

He slumped back in his chair. Eva had told him about the engagement party for Taio’s younger sister. But he hadn’t really cared—not *then*, anyway.

“So you see? There are a number of reasons why you should stay as far away from her as possible.”

*But she’s so beautiful.*

She didn’t turn away. She appeared to be just as enthralled with him as he was with her. He wouldn’t be the first to break their eye contact. She tilted her head in thought.

“Look away now, JB. I’m warning you. It won’t end in your favor.”

*I can’t.*

“Oh Jesus.”

If it weren’t for the tone in Jess’ voice, Saia wouldn’t have been pulled from watching the human male across the room.

Jess placed a hand across her eyes and shook her head slowly.

“Pardon me?”

Jess groaned. “Please, *please* look at something else.”

Saia let her gaze go back to the male. His black hair was cut short. His blue eyes were framed with an abundance of dark lashes. Light seemed to dance in his eyes as he smiled in her direction.

*Is he smiling at me?*

She took a quick peek left then right

*He’s smiling at me!*

Her heart leapt for joy. His graceful smile was only for her. She giggled and placed a hand over her mouth.

“He won’t be satisfied until he’s dead,” Jess muttered.

She turned to Jess. “What are you talking about?”

Jess watched the male across the room as well. But instead of smiling, she made a slow motion across her neck with a finger. “I’m referring to the slow death he’s sure to get if he keeps flirting with you.”

*Flirting?*

She turned back to the male. No one had ever flirted with her. She smiled again.

“Good gracious, don’t encourage him!”

“Do you know him?”

“Unfortunately, yes.” Jess rolled her eyes. “Maybe I should start saying that I *knew* him.”

The lights turned low, signaling the beginning of the dinner entertainment. The voices in the dining hall became hushed. Saia strained her eyes to make out the silhouette of the human.

Slow, rhythmic drums began to beat. Light shone from the stage door. One torch, then two, then three, until finally there were six. In the darkness, the torches zipped through the air, swung in circles, tossed and caught.

Every now and again, she could catch a glimpse of him and found that he still watched her as well.

Her heart seemed to thump in time with the drums. His smile had dropped but his stare was intent just the same. His gaze seemed to bore through her. Right to her soul. And she found she enjoyed it.

She leaned over to whisper, “Tell me his name.”

Jess shook her head. “Ignore him like I do most days and watch the show.”

*Ignore him?* She couldn’t. “But I want to know his name.”

Jess looked at her. “Listen, Princess Saia, this can’t happen.”

“What can’t happen?”

“You and JB. Taio would never allow it. You’re getting married and JB’s going back to Laconia. I’m trying to keep him alive at least until then.”

*Jaybee.* She turned to look at him again.

*Jaybee. What a wonderful name.*

“Argh, can you at least get that dreamy look off your face?”

“Is he a slave?”

“No.”

“Is he bonded?”

“No.”

“Can you introduce me to him?”

“Absolutely not.”

“Why?”

Jess raised a brow. “Have you *seen* the size of your brother?”

Jess was right. Taio was extremely protective of her. That was the very reason why she could never tell him their father had long been striking her and her mother. And she couldn’t forget that she was contracted to bond with Ranuit Pi.

And just like that, an overwhelming sense of dread had ahold of her once again.

There could be no flirting. No smiles from across the room as she’d heard described on many occasions from people who had fallen in love. Her fate belonged to someone else.