

# Chapter 14: Rhys

Chapter 14: Rhys had been battling an unrelenting storm of emotions for weeks, each day heavier than the last. Since Bridget announced her plan to move back to Eldorra, an invisible wall had built itself between them, growing stronger with every passing moment. He had always known their time together was temporary, but facing the reality of their impending separation sharpened every feeling into something raw and almost unbearable. As a professional, Rhys reminded himself he was still on duty, assigned to protect her for a few more weeks. However, that didn't stop his resentment and heartache from building each time he thought about the life Bridget would soon return to—one he would no longer be a part of.

Inside the pulsing VIP room of Borgia, a high-end nightclub in Manhattan, Rhys fought a losing battle with his temper. Watching Bridget dance with Vincent Hauz, a man whose reputation was as filthy as his intentions, was unbearable. Every laugh she gave, every touch she allowed, cut deeper than he wanted to admit. Bridget, stunning in a shimmering silver dress and flushed from too many drinks, was not herself tonight. She carried a reckless wildness that concerned Rhys more than the suggestive moves of the man she danced with. Every fiber of his being screamed to intervene, to protect her not just from Vincent, but from herself. When Vincent's hand strayed lower than Rhys could tolerate, his instincts exploded into action, pulling him away from professionalism into something more primal and deeply personal.

Bridget's drunken defiance only fueled his anger. Her sharp words and insistence on independence clashed with his overwhelming need to shield her. Though Rhys knew he was hired muscle, nothing about the way he felt for her had remained professional. His desire to protect her was no longer contractual—it was visceral. Watching Bridget lean into Vincent, seeing her so vulnerable in a public setting, pushed Rhys beyond his limits. His warning to Vincent was no idle threat; it was a barely contained promise of

violence should he dare cross the line again. Vincent's retreat only partially soothed Rhys's rage, leaving him to deal with the fury Bridget now directed at him.

Their confrontation outside the club was explosive. Bridget hurled accusations, insisting she was making her own choices and didn't need saving. Rhys, grappling with emotions he had buried under layers of duty and restraint, finally cracked. He couldn't stand the idea of her risking herself out of some need to rebel against expectations. The night spiraled as he issued her an ultimatum: leave with him willingly or face the consequences. Bridget, stubborn and hurt, challenged him, pushing every button he had. When she dared him with her touch, daring him to show her the feelings she accused him of hiding, Rhys lost the last shred of his control.

Their physical clash was not about tenderness; it was the manifestation of two years' worth of tension, desire, and frustration combusting in one reckless moment. Rhys had spent every day trying to pretend he didn't want her, didn't crave her, but tonight shredded that lie to pieces. Bridget's fearless defiance met the intensity of Rhys's long-repressed need, creating a volatile collision neither of them could stop. He knew that giving in would change everything, but right then, he didn't care. For Rhys, touching her, claiming her, punishing her defiance wasn't just about lust—it was about every sleepless night he'd spent wanting what he could never have. Bridget wasn't a passing attraction. She had become his obsession, his Achilles' heel, the one thing capable of breaking the armor he had spent a lifetime building.

Despite the raw heat between them, a part of Rhys remained painfully aware of the lines they were crossing. The reality of their circumstances—her future as royalty, his position as her bodyguard—loomed like a sword over their heads. Yet even knowing the inevitable fallout, neither of them backed down. They stood on a precipice, driven by anger, pain, and the overwhelming pull that had existed between them from the start. In this moment, there were no titles, no responsibilities—just two people drowning in everything they had tried to deny. Their reckless passion wasn't just about sex; it was an act of rebellion against the fate that had already been written for them.

As the night unraveled further, Bridget and Rhys faced the inevitable truth: whatever future they imagined separately was now forever entangled. The choices they made in the heat of the moment would have consequences neither could yet predict. But for now, consequences could wait. The storm inside them demanded to be unleashed, and for once, Rhys was ready to surrender to it, even if it destroyed them both. In a world where duty always won, tonight they chose to let desire reign—no matter the cost.

