

The Bitch King
Sample Chapter
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"Jhauril, look out!"

Jhauril jumped at the sudden shout and barely had time to move out of the way before a red and gold carpet went streaking by in a blur of color, skidding over the polished palace floors as if it had been oiled. A pair of nine year-olds clung to its tassels, squealing and giggling for the entire ride. One of them managed to take a dive for safety right before the carpet went careening into a wall. The other was not quite so lucky. Jhauril heard a sickly thud as the silver-haired twin's head cracked against the base of the wall, and he dropped his tray to rush to the rescue.

"Seth!" the slave barked at the other young boy, who was busy shaking out his mass of red curls and dusting himself off. "Your father is going to let the wind out of my bladder if Hadrian is hurt. And I'm not even supposed to be watching you today."

"You are always supposed to be watching us," Seth said, not phased.

Jhauril didn't even hear him as he untangled Hadrian from the mangled carpet. "As if the boy weren't slow enough. You had to go ahead and knock the rest of his brains out." The carpet finally unfurled and Hadrian's body flopped into Jhauril's lap. Jhauril cupped the young prince's face in his hands and searched for signs of life. "Hadrian, your highness, are you alive?"

Hadrian's bright blue eyes snapped open and he looked up at his caretaker, grinning from ear to ear.

"Again!" he giggled, covering his face with his hands and rolling out of Jhauril's hands. Jhauril sighed in relief.

"Again, again!" Hadrian hopped over to where Seth was and plopped down in front of him, rolling around like an excited puppy. Seth laughed and tousled his brother's hair fondly.

"See, Jhauril? You worry too much. Not a scratch. Maybe a bump," the red-haired twin lifted a lock of his brother's hair and observed the ugly purple lump on his head. "Father probably won't notice."

Jhauril grumbled and went to go clean up the mess from his fallen tray. "Do you not have something better to do? How about your studies?"

"Jhauril," Seth said, very diplomatically. "I have my entire LIFE to study. I won't always be small enough to ride on a carpet."

"Thank the gods for that," Jhauril muttered under his breath.

As soon as he said this, a nurse came bustling around a corner. Her voluminous skirts were gathered up in her thick hands and her face was red with exertion as she huffed and puffed her way down the hall.

"You boys will be the death of me, by Saldon!" she swore up and down. "Your royal father is expecting you at supper in less than an hour, and here you are - neither bathed nor dressed!"

Hadrian wrinkled his nose and hid his face in his brother's shoulder. "No baths!"

"No baths," Seth agreed, putting his arms around his brother protectively and shooting a challenging look at the nurse.

"You will NOT be filthy little urchins under my watch," the nurse chided, putting her hands on her hips. "You are princes, not beggars."

"No baths!" Hadrian called out again, wrapping his arm's tightly around Seth's neck and refusing to look at the nurse. Seth sighed.

"Hadrian doesn't like water," he reminded her.

"So testifies the dirt accumulating behind his ears," she grabbed Hadrian by the shoulders and attempted to pull him away. He wailed and screamed, kicking his legs in an attempt to keep her at bay.

"Hadrian," Seth cooed, not letting his brother go. "Would you let me give you a bath?"

Hadrian stuck out his bottom lip and frowned, shaking his head furiously.

Seth stroked his brother's long silver hair, wrapping his fingers in the soft waves. "Just a little splash? It will make you smell good." he tickled his brother's belly. In spite of himself, Hadrian giggled.

"Don't wanna smell good," Hadrian said. "Wants to be dirty. Dirty boy."

"Dirty princes don't smell good." to emphasize, Seth wrinkled his nose. "Eww, do you smell that, Jhauril? Hadrian smells like dirty toes and hounds!"

"No!" Hadrian flailed despondently.

"Yes," Seth kissed his forehead.

Hadrian sighed. "Ok," he said. "Maybe a little bath. A LITTLE bath."

"Ok, a little bath." Seth stood up, untangling himself from his brother's arms.

Hadrian looked at the nurse accusingly. "Only SETH is allowed."

The nurse put her hands up in exasperation. "Saldon spare us all. Be sure to get every speck of dirt out from under those fingernails of his or your father will have my tits on a plate."

Seth grinned again and looped his arm through his brothers. "Come on, Hadrian, we wouldn't want nurse to lose her tits."

"Tits!" Hadrian giggled, hiding his face in his hands.

Jhauril's hands passed over his eyes as the princes skipped arm-in-arm down the hallway. He was getting too old for this.

End of Sample