

CHAPTER 14

CAMILLO

I'd completely forgotten about the dinner party that Marco planned for tonight.

Arriving home, the presence of the guests with my brothers alerted me to my lapse in memory, and I had to excuse myself, rush upstairs, shower, and throw on a suit for this meal with one of our underbosses, together with his wife and daughter.

As we sit around the dinner table, I look at the woman across from me. My brothers are hoping to set me up with her to strengthen the bond between our families.

Of an impeccable background, she's what people would call beautiful. She has stunning features and is slim yet with big boobs—fake, obviously, given the way they bob up out of her dress.

As Rosa clears away the main course, Marco gives a loud cough into the silence and lasers a deadly look toward me.

“Oh, er, sorry, what did you just say?” I reply to her mother who hasn't stopped yapping since the moment she entered our mansion.

“I said,” she says a little too forcefully, “that our daughter is extremely bright. We've never had her tested, but she must have an extremely high IQ. She's just finished a beautician's course, you know.”

No one says anything. I mean, what the fuck am I supposed to say in response to this shit? I clear my throat. “Um, that sounds...fulfilling for Sheila.”

“Sheena,” her mother snaps.

“Oh, yeah, Sheena...,” I echo, trying to avoid looking at the woman in question. I scramble for something to say to fill the awkward silence. “Is Sheena, er, short for something?”

Her mother gives me a beaming smile. “Of course. It's short for Sheenalina.”

She must be joking. “Really?” I reply with a chuckle.

“Yes, really. I wanted to call her Serafina. But my bitch of a sister used that name for her baby before I could.”

“Oh,” I say weakly.

“And then, I wanted to call her Evangelina. But my cunt of a cousin decided to use that name for her kid before I could.”

“Oh, um, dear...” I mutter.

“And then, I wanted to call her Clementina. But my other sister—”

“Let me guess,” I interrupt, hoping to bring her boring as fuck story to an end as quickly as possible. “Your ho of a sister used that name for her baby before you could.”

She narrows her beady eyes at me. “Are you calling my sister a prostitute?” She looks like she’s about ready to rip off my head.

Marco gives another loud cough. “No, he’s not. Right, Camillo?”

“Er, right. I was just trying to continue the theme of your story.”

She hoists her bosom up—which is, quite obviously, just as fake as her daughter’s.

“Well. I wasn’t letting anyone else use my next choice of baby name. So, I came up with something completely unique. That way, none of my fucking family could claim that they’d always loved the name and that it’d been their first-choice baby name for as long as they could remember. And, guess what? It worked! Because no one used it for their baby before I could.”

“I wonder why,” I mutter, earning me a sharp glare from Marco.

I just give him a small shrug of my shoulders. I mean, what the actual fuck?

“Anyway, Sheena’s amazing IQ means that she’s the most amazing beautician in Chicago,” her mother continues, puffing out her ample chest with pride. “She can do all sorts of make-up looks. She’s in high demand for Fratellanza weddings and parties.”

“Does she know how to clean up blood and wounds?” I blurt out. Fuck, what made me just say that? And why is my mind flashing back to the day Rosa helped me take care of my injured brothers?

Sheena looks the sort of woman who definitely wouldn't get her expensive clothes and perfect manicured nails ruined by dealing with a man like me. Whereas Rosa... Man, those tight white T-shirts she wears, clinging to every tempting curve of her breasts, which clearly aren't fake, and hips that I'd love to grab and—

Alessio gives me a sharp kick under the table.

“Will I have to deal with blood and stuff like that when I marry you?” Sheena whines in an irritatingly nasal tone.

And Rosa, who's just served the dessert, takes a sharp intake of breath when she hears the word 'marry'.

Of course, she doesn't know that's the point of this meal—well, she does now.

When my older brothers suggested a little while back that this underboss's daughter would be a perfect match for me, it sounded like a feasible plan.

But something's changed since then. And that's why I can't summon up any enthusiasm for the woman sat in front of me who's wearing an expensive designer dress and has the face and body of a catwalk model.

Thank fuck that stupid dinner is over. Well, almost—Sheena is using the powder room while her parents wait for her in the entrance foyer.

After saying our goodbyes, Marco excuses us, saying that we have an urgent matter to attend to.

And then he orders me to follow him into the office.

“What the fuck was that?” Marco snarls after he slams the door shut. The office is nowhere near the foyer, so now Marco can shout as loud as he likes, knowing that there's no chance of them overhearing.

“What was what?” I mutter.

“You know what I'm talking about. When we mentioned Sheila to you before, you liked the idea.”

“It's Sheena,” I correct him.

Marco looks ready to murder me right about now. “Sheena, Sheila, Sheenalina, or whatever the fuck her name is, would make a decent wife. If you weren’t interested, you should have said that before the damn dinner. Now, we’ve offended her father, and that’s the last thing I need right now.”

I rub the back of my neck. “I don’t know, Marco. In person, she seems a lot less suitable. So, you may as well tell that irritating old bat of a mother that it’s a no go.”

Turning on my heel, I know that I have to talk to Rosa tonight and explain everything. I don’t know why, but I don’t want there to be any secrets between us—and I don’t want to hurt her in any way.