

## CHAPTER 4

### CAMILLO

Why do I wish I could give her the job?

I don't know the answer to this. What I do know, however, is that she wouldn't last five fucking minutes around Marco. He'd be pissed off in no time with her constant flinching and stuttering.

He's not one to mince his words. I can tell that this woman—Rosa—is fragile. And I can't put her through that.

The thought continues to tumble through my mind as I move about the casino, leaving Rosa so that I can finish doing what I came here to do in the first place.

It's taken me most of the interview to place her face. To put a name to the pretty cheeks that flushed pink and the full lips that trembled as we spoke. She's Conor Davis's daughter.

It looks like she's no longer with that stuck-up stiff she married—I noticed she wasn't wearing a wedding ring. But it's none of my business. I don't give a fuck about what's going on in Davis's family—although by the look of her, she clearly no longer has the benefit of the Davis money. She's just a woman in need of work, and the only thing I care about is her doing a good job for us.

Two of our soldiers across from where I sit are going on and on about yet another problem with distribution. I haven't been able to focus on any of it. Instead, my attention keeps flitting to the woman a few tables down who is writing her details on an application form.

“Boss?”

My gaze snaps back to them. “I'm listening.”

“Who is she?”

“No one you need to know,” I growl.

Both men nod and don't dare to even look in her direction again.

My eyes wander back over to Rosa and her beautiful curves. I catch her flinch as a customer shouts at their win. She's a timid thing and jittery with it.

I take the last swig of what's left in my glass, allowing the burn of alcohol to clear the thoughts away.

But a small yelp sounds. And my head whips toward Rosa, a low grumble of annoyance reverberating through my chest as the same customer shouts out yet again as the roulette wheel gives him another win.

I call another soldier over to my table with a flick of my hand. "He's drunk." I jerk my chin toward the customer. "Throw him the fuck out."

"Boss, he's teetotal. I've never seen a drop of alcohol pass his lips. And he's one of the casino's biggest spenders every month—"

"Do it," I snap.

"But..."

"Now!" I roar.

"Got it, boss." He strides off, and I watch while he carries out my order. The customer isn't happy and is threatening never to grace our casino again. Like I give a fuck.

And as I look over at Rosa again, I realize that I have no idea why I just acted like this...

On my way back to my car, I keep thinking about this woman. I shake my head. Why am I even still thinking about her? I must just feel sorry for her.

That has to be it. Because she said it herself—she has zero experience. And with her complete lack of confidence, I can't see any job with us working out for her.

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Last night, I managed to get out of cooking dinner by ordering takeout. But Alessio was less than impressed and told me that tonight he expects a home-cooked meal—or he's going to whip my ass.

I decide to make pizza. That can't be too hard, right? It's just dough, you sling toppings onto it, and you shove it into the oven. Even I can manage that.

I'll also have to break the news to my brothers that I haven't found a maid, but I'll cross that bridge when I come to it.

On the way home, I drop by the deli and pick up some readymade pizza crusts. It's sort of cheating, but my brothers won't ever find out. Ever since Alessio's been on his latest health kick, he's become obsessive about only eating stuff that's fresh and homecooked. I don't see what's wrong with takeout, but the way he looked at the food I ordered last night would make anyone think that it was food that I'd scavenged from the trash.

While I'm at the deli, I also pick up some corn on the cob. With that shoved in Alessio's mouth, hopefully, I won't have to hear any more fucking whining from him.

Getting home, I look up how to cook pizza on my phone. Scratching the back of my head, I read through it twice and then get to work.

Right on time, I hear my brothers arrive home. Shit, I forgot all about the corn. An acrid smell is coming from the oven, and I snatch the pizzas out, burning the tip of one of my fingers. "Fuck," I growl.

"That burning smell better not be our dinner," Alessio drawls as he and Marco take a seat at the kitchen counter.

I put the pizza in the center, and throwing the corn onto a platter, I add that too. Marco grabs some beers, and we're all set.

Even Mr. F, a large rust-colored Chow Chow dog, has woken up from his lazy slumber—the animal is sitting next to the counter, panting loudly as he waits expectantly for us to share the food. The dog's full name is 'Mr. Fluffy,' but we usually call him 'Mr. F'.

Marco frowns as he takes a pizza slice which looks floppier than it should be. He pokes at it. "The crust is soggy."

I shrug. "That's not my fault. The deli must have got something wrong with their dough."

Alessio slams his fist onto the counter. "For God's sake, I told you that I wanted proper homecooked food tonight."

Oh fuck, I wasn't supposed to mention the deli's contribution. "I made sure that it's organic and all that shit," I say in defense of myself. "It's not my fault that they don't know how to make proper pizza crust."

"Why are all the toppings burned?" Marco complains.

Jeez, not him as well. "There must be a problem with the oven," I reply.

"There's no problem with the oven," he growls.

"Yeah, there is. I mean, your wife's managed to burn every single thing she's ever tried to cook in it..."

His dark eyes flash at me—he doesn't take it well when we criticize his wife's cooking even though he knows everything we say is true. But before he can say anything else, Alessio takes a large bite out of a piece of corn. "Fuck! This corn is raw!"

I clear my throat. "Yeah, er, I know. Isn't it great? You can really taste all the vitamin C and all the, um, sunshine, that went into growing it..."

"For Christ's sake, Camillo," Alessio snaps. "There's no way this can be described as an adequate dinner."

I drop a bit of pizza on the floor for Mr. F. But taking one sniff at it, he gives a whine and then wanders off without a single bite. "Traitor," I mutter after him.

"Maybe we should try again to get Savona back?" Alessio suggests in a desperate voice. "We could promise that Millo will go daily to confession for two whole months."

"No way." I fold my arms across my chest, but a slight panicky feeling comes over me. There's no way in hell that I could endure two months of going to confession daily. "You know how hard it is to find anything to confess about. As we can't mention any of the killings or other stuff, I always have to resort to confessing inane shit—and the priest always knows I'm lying by not confessing the really bad stuff we do. I mean, last time I went, I even had to pretend to feel repentant that I was having dark thoughts about Maximo being the reincarnation of the devil."

Marco narrows his eyes at me as soon as I mention his eldest son. "You said what about my son?"

“Come on, you can’t be surprised about that. I mean, the little shit did put superglue in my shampoo bottle just a few weeks ago...”

Marco’s obviously in one of his volatile moods—as always—and he looks like he wants to grab me by the throat and choke me.

“Don’t worry, we’re gonna have a proper homecooked meal tomorrow night,” I say quickly.

“And how do you think you’ll manage that, numb nuts?” Alessio clips.

“Because I’ve found a maid.”

“You did?” Marco looks impressed, his attention instantly diverted from me insulting his son.

“Of course, I did...”

My brothers look relieved. But all I can think is... why the hell did I just say that?

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As soon as dinner is over, I hole myself up in the office and dial the casino, telling them to give me the number for the woman from today. Then I call her.

“Um, hello?” she answers.

“Do you still need a job?”

“Who is this?” she says softly.

“Camillo Marchiano. Are you still looking for a job?”

“Yes...”

“You’re hired. You start tomorrow morning. It’s a live-in position, so bring your stuff with you.”

I hear her suck in a breath. “I wasn’t expecting to have to live in.”

I sigh. Does she want a job or not? “Look, that’s the deal. Take it or leave it.”

“I’ll take it,” she says quickly.

“Okay. Meet me at the casino tomorrow at 10 a.m. I’ll drive you to our estate and show you what you’ll need to do.”

Hanging up and sitting back, I tell myself that I only gave her the job to get myself out of a hole with my brothers. Because there can’t be any other reason, right?

As I mull over my thoughts, my immediate relief at finding a job for Rosa and getting my brothers off my back starts to sway toward second thoughts. I scrub my hand across my jaw. What the hell am I thinking of, hiring a maid with zero experience? One who’s as jumpy as a jack-in-the-box, no less.

All the things she’ll break in our house if she’s startled flash through my mind. Alessio’s going to be whining like a bitch if she disturbs his fucking zen by dropping things left, right, and center.

She was beyond nervous during the interview. Her gaze kept darting away, unable to quite meet my eyes, and she kept startling at all the loud noises in the casino.

I wonder how good her housekeeping skills actually are. Because she definitely won’t hang onto the job if she can’t clean properly or, more importantly, cook. I groan as I remember her answers about her cooking skills. Jesus fucking Christ, we’re in for the worst week ever of meals. My stomach clenches at the thought.

Oh God, Marco is going to chew her up and spit her out.