

Orange Nightmare

Elizabeth POV

Six minutes later, Elizabeth sat across from the man who had just yelled at her and lived to tell the tale. She'd made a terrible discovery, and it wasn't that her mascara was smudged, which she couldn't remove either, since she didn't have time to locate her make-up removal wipes.

No, it was far worse than that.

"You're late," he spoke, still looking down at the papers on his desk. She'd been ordered to go to the boss' office by Carl, who couldn't even look her in the eye. This felt oddly familiar to what she'd been through two days ago. She hoped it wouldn't end the same.

When he finally looked up, he started, before the corner of his mouth lifted slightly.

"Ah, I see that you've discovered Sophia's special soap. I—ahem," he coughed into his hand, obviously trying to hide his amusement—which he failed at miserably.

"I apologize. I thought I had found every last bottle of it. She went through a pranking phase, when one of her former nannies had let her watch YouTube so she wouldn't have to play with her." Anger flashed in his eyes at the memory.

"It's absolutely new," Elizabeth smiled, pretending not to be bothered, as she threw her still wet hair—now half orange—over her shoulder, holding her head up high.

When she'd gotten dressed, throwing on whatever she could find, she'd not seen it yet, but when she went back into the bathroom to comb her hair, she'd had a near heart attack.

The expensive, great smelling orange soap...might not have been a soap at all, but more of an orange dye of some sort. Her entire body was orange. ORANGE! She looked like an Oompa Loompa.

But unfortunately, she hadn't had time for a meltdown, so she just decided to go with the flow and pretend that her nearly thousand dollar hairdresser treatment hadn't just gone down the drain. She prayed to all the Gods she could think of that it would wash out. She didn't have the money for a new color treatment.

Maybe she could bleach it?

"Are you even paying attention?" The man in front of her slammed his hand on the table, causing her to jump.

"I knew this was a bad idea," he grumbled to himself, "I always seem to attract the stupid ones..."

"Excuse me?! Stupid ones?! I have a master's degree in business, thank you very much!" She'd had enough of this man's degrading bullshit! "And for your information, I don't even want this job! I got red, and that's the only reason I'm here!"

"Fired, huh? That attitude have anything to do with it?" He fixed her with a deathly stare, but she was beyond caring.

"You know what, f**k you! I don't need this—"

"Daddy?" A little girl's voice could be heard before Sophia ran into the room, her eyes landing on her immediately.

"Ellie!" Sophia ran towards her, hugging her legs and looking up at her with a beaming smile. A few of her teeth were missing, giving the little girl an even cuter look.

"I like your hair!" she giggled.

"I bet you do," Elizabeth mustered her best smile. Little brat!

"Can you come and play with me?" she asked excitedly.

"Sure, why don't you go up to your room, and me and your daddy are going to talk some more, okay?" she said, talking slowly again. Yes, she was going to feel absolutely mortified in a week, when she realized she looked like a total lunatic, but she wasn't there yet.

The last thing she wanted was for the little girl, who had already lost her mommy, to witness her and her father yelling at each other. No matter how orange her skin was.

"Bye, daddy!" Sophia skipped out of the office, running up the stairs.

"No running on the stairs!" Elizabeth called after her. She didn't know why she said that, it just popped into her mind along with images of the little girl falling on her nose or something.

When she turned around, he was staring at her with a look she couldn't decipher.

"What? You want to continue where we left off? Because I will!" She warned, pointing a finger at him. She could feel her anger rising again. Just when she was contemplating crawling all over his expensive white couches—naked—he gestured to the chair she had been sitting in, and after a few moments, and with a loud huff, she sat down again, crossing her arms in front of her.

"There are some ground rules in place." He began to drawl. It was clear that he'd given this speech many times before.

"1. Sophia is not to play on tablets, phones or any kind of electronics. TV is allowed for one hour before bedtime. There is a clause in the contract about rainy days.

2. When you leave the house with her, you will inform my personal guards of this, and two are to remain with you at all times."

"Wait, guards, is this job dangerous?" she asked, feeling a slight panic.

"No, just a precaution," he drawled, clearly not liking the interruption.

"3. There will be no physical disciplining of my daughter. If I see so much as a bruise on her..." He trailed off, as something dark flashed across his face. He didn't need to say more, she understood the message loud and clear.

"Number four,..." Just then his phone rang, "I really need to take this, the rest of the rules are stated in the contract. Read them carefully before signing,"

"Y—you still want to give me the job?" she asked, looking at him warily.

"Well, she seems to have taken a liking to you. So we'll see." He shrugged, answering his phone with the same gruff yes as yesterday. It seemed he didn't need an introduction.

When Elizabeth continued to stare at him, he looked back at her after a few moments, with a crooked brow.

"Hold on a moment," He held his hand against the microphone, "What?"

"You still haven't introduced yourself," she whispered.

"Matteo De Luca, but it's Mr. De Luca to you."