

## The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 11

Althaia

Mother was mad.

She became so enraged that she began to stumble over the English words and had to switch to Greek, and that was how you knew someone was mad when they had to switch languages. She wasn't that mad about me not coming back. But she was furious that Cara had 'forgotten' to mention that she was marrying a Bellavia. Then she started yelling and cursing her father, then she started to curse my father for allowing this to happen. Judging by her outburst, I don't think she was very happy about it.

I, on the other hand, didn't know much about the Bellavia, and it turned out that they were rich as fuck and powerful as fuck. They owned a variety of businesses including hotels, nightclubs, and casinos. Mind you, that was the legal aspect of their businesses. The illegal aspect, they controlled everything from the street-corner drug trade to the highest levels of government.

The hotel I was currently staying in was apparently owned by them. I believe it was the next day of my encounter with Damiano in my hotel room he became an owner. How he became an owner this fast and skip the many steps I believe you have to go through when taking over a business, gave me the idea that it involved a pile of cash and a gun.

Well, guns.

I did tell Cara and Michael about how Damiano, like The Devil

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he was, appeared out of nowhere in my hotel room and all we did was eat, and then he left. I kind of intentionally avoided telling them the part of me screaming and running for my life to the bathroom, and him calmly telling me how he could easily kill me.

Michael got tense and frowned when I said I was alone with The Devil, and he promised he would find out what was going on. It turned out to be that they became owners on my second stay here. Cara wondered if it was to keep an

eye on me since I was supposed to be dead on paper but I found that to be dramatic and ridiculous to take over an entire hotel for only that reason. However, Michael agreed with her, making me look at them in surprise. All that trouble just for someone like me? It was not like I knew anything about this world, anyways.

That was the reason I decided to do my own mafia research.

A mafia family consisted of five categories, and each family needed a leader known as the boss. The boss made all the decisions, and the money made by the family flowed to him. Then there was the underboss, who was second in command which meant that he could resolve disputes without involving the boss. Then there were the capos, leading their own sections of the family-like territories. Soldiers were the lowest rank in the mafia, they had minimal power and made little money. Then there were the associates, who were not technically members of the mafia but work with mafia soldiers and capos on different illegal businesses.

In a fucked-up way, it was actually quite fascinating that, one person could hold this much power over so many people. It truly made me wonder how one could make all this happen and have this many people under them, obeying their every

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command.

Since I still had time to kill before the dinner, I thought I would do some more digging on the Bellavia family. I did find articles on how law enforcement had tried multiple times to detain Damiano, but since they never had any evidence, he was untouchable. There was even an article about evidence that had 'disappeared'. It was footage that went missing, and I immediately imagined him waving his gun around in a threatening manner.

I made a little whistle noise as I continued to read the article in impressment. This was taking the word powerful to a whole different level, only increasing my interest even more in this mysterious Devil going by the name Damiano.

My interest peaked even more as I wanted to know more about him.

A knock sounded on the door and jolted me out of my current Google research. Google was the answer to everything.

Unless when it came to sickness, then the answer was always cancer and you only had two days left to live.

I closed my laptop and made my way to the door where I knew Michael stood on the other side to take me to my father's mansion for the dinner party.

"Hiya." I greeted Michael and closed the door behind me.

"Look at us with almost matching outfits!" I said as I looked at him. Michael was wearing dark blue jeans with a deep red colored long-sleeved shirt.

"Wow." He said stunned as he looked me up and down.

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"That dress is hot!" He said pleased, having me smile. I had decided on a tight red wine-colored off-shoulder bandage dress that went just above my knees and finished the look with beige red bottom heels. I left my long wavy hair loose and tucked behind my ears. This time, I only did a simple winged eyeliner since it only was a dinner and I didn't feel like going all-in with eye makeup.

"My lady." He did a dramatic bow and offered his arm in an escort manner. I chuckled at him and placed my arm through his, and together we made our way down to the lobby and out to his car.

I sighed dreamily at the sight of his amazing Aston Martin.

"Can I try your car?" I asked in a hopeful voice. Michael let out a laugh as if I told the funniest joke.

"That was a good one, Thaia." He chuckled while he opened the car door for me. I stared at him, confused why he would react like that.

"

. I meant it." He looked at me for a long time as if trying to see if I was serious or not.

"Nope!" I gaped at him but he ignored me and had me sit inside.

The drive to the mansion consisted of me begging him to drive his amazing car, and he continued to shut me down.

"I'm a good driver!" I sulked in the passenger seat.

"And I don't care!" Michael said firmly. This was the hundredth time I had asked. I have always wanted to drive an Ashton Martin but he wouldn't let me no matter how much I was

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begging. He was being an ass right now.

"I promise I will drive like a granny." I tried again but I knew it was hopeless as he dismissed me once again.

"No can do. This is my baby." He caressed the steering wheel gently, making me scowl at him for being so dramatic.

"You suck." I huffed at him.

"You can be the DJ. I never let anyone be the DJ." He said as if it was a privilege and I frowned at him.

"I don't want to be the DJ. I want to drive your car." I tried once again.

"I want to drive your car!" He mimicked in a high-pitched voice, and I gave him a blank look.

"I don't sound like that, stupid." He just grinned at me and turned the music on. The familiar tune of the song reached my ears and I immediately forgot about driving his stupid, sexy car.

"This is my favorite song!" Michael yelled and turned the volume up. I looked at him in shock as he started singing to BlackPink. How was this man, a member of a mafia, singing at the top of his lungs to freaking BlackPink. I swear he was full of surprises. He turned the volume down when he noticed I was staring at him in pure shock.

"What?" He asked confused.

“What do you mean what? You freaking sang every single word in Korean without missing a single word!” I was truly taken by surprise. He just poked his tongue out while

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grinning, making him look so boyish in a cute way.

“Yeah, that’s because I kind of speak Korean now. I was exploring one day and I stumbled upon Koreatown. I ended up eating a shit ton of food and kept coming back so much they just knew who I was and became friends with a few people. Then I learned the language.” He said proudly and I just gaped at him.

Definitely full of surprises.

“That’s actually really awesome! Hey, now we can talk shit about people without them knowing.” I laughed now excited about this new information about him.

“Wait, you speak it too?” He asked in surprise.

“Why are you surprised? I’m the one who listens to K-pop and watches K-dramas. I slowly learned it that way. I’m just not allowed to listen to or watch anything Korean-related around Cara. She’s a bummer when it comes to that.” I snickered. I had a phase where I only listened to Korean music and only watched K-dramas, which were not her cup of tea. At all.

“Typical Cara, so uncultured.” He parked the car in front of the stairs of the mansion, got out, and made his way to my side. Apparently, he liked to open the door for me. One time I opened the door and got out before he had the chance to do it for me, he sulked almost the whole day.

Such a drama queen.

He helped me out of the car when the sudden loud screeching and revving sound of a car rang out in the air. The car was racing fast towards us, made a harsh stop, and parked right behind Michael’s car.

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“Are you fucking kidding me?” Michael mumbled as we both stared at the car.

“Holy shit...” I looked in awe. It wasn’t just any car.

“Tell me if my eyes are deceiving me, Michael. But is that a freaking Bugatti La Voiture Noire in front of me!” Fuck Michael’s car, this one was a sexy beast. This car was probably the closest thing to a real-life Batmobile. All black, shiny and so sexy...

The car door opened from the driver’s seat.

It was Damiano.

Of course, he would drive such a car! That only confirmed how rich he was because this car was worth millions. I took a step towards the car to get a closer look. I was feeling

enchanted by the car and wanted to inspect every single inch of it.

But Michael put his arm around my waist and tried to lead me upstairs to the mansion. Annoyed by his actions, I removed his arm and quickly walked over to get a closer look at the car. I was so impressed with the car as I walked around the car to make sure I would see it all, from the unique front fascia to the rear fascia featuring six exhaust pipes. I even went all the way up to one of the tinted windows to have a peek inside.

“Wow!” I was so focused on the car that I hadn’t noticed people staring at me as I studied the car. Embarrassed by the sudden attention, I let out an awkward laugh.

“Eh... Cool car, dude.” I immediately cringed when I said that. For some reason, I continued to humiliate myself in front of him and I felt like the universe loved doing that to me.

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Damiano just raised a brow at me when I called him dude as I gave him an innocent smile.

“Let’s go, Althaia.” Michael started to move towards me but Damiano turned to face him and gave him one sharp look. That was enough for Michael to halt in his steps as he glared at him, looking pissed.

“Do you want to try it?” I whipped my head to Damiano and looked at him with wide eyes.

“Are you asking me?” I pointed to myself in surprise. Was he really asking me if I wanted to try his car?!

“Who else?” He tilted his head slightly to the side as he looked at me.

“Really?” I asked excitedly and stepped closer to him.

“Yes.” Words couldn’t come out of my mouth as I looked at him, trying to see if he was joking. Before answering I looked over at Michael who looked like he was about to explode as he continued to glare at Damiano.

“Oh, uh, thanks, but maybe another time?” I gave a small smile, trying not to show how disappointed I was with this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I sighed as I walked past him. I really wanted to try his car but I feared Michael was about to do something stupid and I quickly made my way to him. He took no time in wrapping his arm around me, roughly pushed me into him, and ushered me upstairs to the front door, almost making me trip by how fast he was practically dragging me with him

What the hell was his problem now?