

## **The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 12**

Posted by

By

Althaia

"Michael, relax. You're hurting me!" I winced out as his fingers were digging into my side. He snapped out of his daze and immediately let me go, and I started to gently massage my side. This was so going to bruise. His eyes followed my actions, and instant regret showed on his face.

"Shit, Thaia, I'm so sorry." He ran a hand through his hair, messing it up a little in the process.

"Are you okay?" I looked at him worried. I have never seen him like this before and Michael usually kept his cool but this time I feared him doing something reckless, resulting in him getting hurt.

"I'm the one who should be asking if you're okay." He shook his head and gave me a small smile.

"Don't worry about me... He just pisses me off every time I see his stupid face." He scowled.

"Or is it because he drives a sexier car than yours?" I teased and bumped my shoulder into his.

"You're such a gold-digger, Thaia!" He jokingly accused.

"One minute you're begging me to let you drive my car, and then you see his stupid car and forget all about mine." This time I couldn't help but burst out laughing. He just looked at me with an annoyed.

"Well, what can I say, I'm a sucker for cars I will never be able

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to afford on my own." I sighed. I could only ever dream of owning such cars. Michael didn't even bother replying as we made our way to the living room where talking could be heard.

“There she is!” My father said when he saw me, holding his arm towards me for a hug. I smiled and went to embrace him. Our relationship had grown much in such a short time since I had been staying here for an extra week. And this time, he really took the initiative to get to know me, and we would meet up for breakfast and lunch. He wanted me to stay at the mansion, but I was still hesitant about that. I didn’t want to rush and risk ruining our relationship. It was better that we just took one step at a time.

I also made sure he fixed the whole ‘Althaia Volante is dead’

situation. Since the people my father tried to hide me from now knew that I was not dead, there really was no point in continuing the lie. Also, it was very disturbing to know that your official papers said that you were deceased. He made it all disappear and even changed my name from Celano to Volante. He thought it was time for me to wear my rightful name as he had said.

I, on the other hand, thought people would actually start looking for me and maybe kill me if I went by the name Volante, but he assured me that no one would dare to harm me since I was now under the protection of both the Volante and the Bellavia family. If someone did, it was because they have a death wish.

Other than that, I was just happy about having a father in my life again.

“Althaia, you remember your uncle, don’t you? He has just

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returned from a business trip.” He gestured to the man in

front of me. Of course, I remembered him. I would never forget the only person I have ever truly wanted to kill with my bare hands.

I forced a tight smile as I looked at him with no intention of stepping closer to him. He looked so different and looked like he had aged at least fifty years with his greasy shoulder-length hair. His skin was greyish and too many wrinkles on his face. He looked like he just came back from death.

“Althaia, look how grown you’ve become. You’ve turned into such a beautiful woman.” Uncle said as his lustful eyes roamed my body, stopping for way too long on my breasts. Fucking creep, go die you sicko. Luckily, he tore his eyes away when Damiano and Lorenzo made an appearance.

I had been way too busy to admire his car that I didn't take the time to appreciate just how fine-looking he was right now. Shit, he was even more handsome today than the day of the engagement party. I had actually stopped breathing a little when I gazed at him. I bit my lip as my eyes shamelessly checked him out. He was wearing a dark grey button-up that hugged his muscular, but lean, body. His shirt was tightening around his biceps as he moved, and his black slacks that showed off his strong legs.

My eyes went up to his face, meeting his golden-brown eyes that were already staring at me. He looked me in the eyes and slowly trailed them down and made a stop on my lips. I unconsciously licked my lip and his eyes snapped right back to my eyes. There was something so enchanting about his eyes. I felt like I was drowning in them.

"Gentlemen." My father greeted them, and I looked at my

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father, breaking eye contact first.

Lorenzo didn't say anything but just gave a short nod and Damiano shook my father's outstretched hand, showing no emotion at all. I have come to learn that Lorenzo wasn't much of a talker but he was one of the most feared men, and I could see that. His huge build and the mysterious silence around him screamed like a deadly assassin to me.

"Dinner is almost ready, in the meantime let's head to my office and talk business." My father started to lead the way, and they followed. Since they were going to the office I might as well make my way upstairs to Cara's room. Before I had the chance to take a step, I felt a hand squeeze my ass. I gasped and turned around to see who would dare such a thing. To my fear, I was only met with my Uncle. He winked at me and quickly followed the rest of the men.

I stilled in shock, nausea overwhelming me.

I walked away from the living room as fast as I could with the need to sanitize my entire body. I rounded the corner towards the stairs when the most annoying high-pitched voice stopped me.

"Althaia, darling!" I cringed at the darling part. I turned around to see Morella making her way toward me. My father's wife. We haven't officially met because, well, the engagement party didn't exactly go as planned, and my

father and I would meet up at neutral places like restaurants and just get to know each other again. I have been trying to avoid meeting her but looks like I couldn't get out of this one now.

"Hello, Morella." I faked a smile. She caught me off guard when she suddenly grabbed my shoulders and kissed both of

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my cheeks with big kiss noises.

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"Darling, how are you? Oh, darling, look at you in that dress!" I tried not to flinch as her voice got an octave higher for every word that came out of her mouth. And who uses the word 'darling' so many times?

"I'm good, thank you." Her hair was blonde with a pixie cut, she had blue eyes, high cheekbones, and lips that has way too much filler in with bright red lipstick on. It kind of looks like a buttock that was about to explode. She was wearing a tight knee-length black dress with sleeves stopping at her elbows and red heels. I couldn't help but think what a downgrade from my mother. She didn't even come close to my mother's beauty.

I snickered in my mind.

"Darling, have you had the chance to meet my son, Carlos?" I tried to keep my face neutral and not flinch at her voice. How was it possible to talk so high-pitched?!

"Oh no, I haven't seen him around so..." I tried to walk away but she put her hand on my shoulder, stopping me.

"I see. Your father is always keeping him busy, darling. Even I barely get to see him nowadays." Did she really have to call me darling in every freaking sentence?

"Oh well, gotta keep the business going, right?" I tried to leave again but she just kept talking and talking. By the end of this conversation, I was sure I would suffer from tinnitus. I looked over Morella's shoulder as she kept rambling on about something I couldn't care less about, and spotted Cara. A

smile almost broke out as Cara was standing behind Morella, making gag motions with her finger and I had to try my best

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not to break out laughing at the sight. Cara walked over to us, the sound of her heels clicking made Morella snap out of her rambling and face her.

“Cara, darling! Don’t you just look gorgeous!” She did look gorgeous. She was wearing a tight beige-colored maxi dress with spaghetti straps. The dress was hugging into her waist and was tight around her hips, giving her the shape of an hourglass.

“Thank you, Morella.” She smiled. Cara was the best at faking smiles, you couldn’t even tell it was fake because she was that good.

“Isn’t dinner ready yet?” Cara asked before Morella started her rambling again.

“Oh yes, I was about to get the boys. Be a darling and tell them dinner is ready.” And she walked back in the direction of

the kitchen.

“Thank God she’s gone. I was about to break my own neck if you hadn’t come in time.” I said relieved and I wrapped my arm around hers as we made our way to the office.

“Oh, you’re so welcome, darling.” She mimicked Morella, and we both burst out laughing.

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## **The Devil’s Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 13**

Posted by

By

Althaia

We were seated in the dining room, the long and dark dining table decorated with a rustic wood centerpiece box and vines with leaves surrounding the candles inside the box. White plates with gold rims, gold cutlery, and even the glasses had a gold design around the rim.

Small chatter erupted as we waited for the appetizers to be served. My father was sitting at the end of the table, and on his right side was Morella, Uncle in the middle, Cara beside him, and right in front of me. This meant that I was sitting right next to Damiano, and Lorenzo next to him.

This was either going to be a blessing or a curse. I haven't decided yet.

Unfortunately, Michael couldn't stay because of 'duty calls' as he had said before leaving.

I was sitting so close to Damiano which had me a little nervous for some reason. I tried to distract myself by quietly talking to Cara and I pretended it was a fairly normal person I was sitting next to.

Appetizers were served and I stared blankly down at my plate. There was some kind of green liquid in front of me, and I wasn't even sure it could be classified as soup. There was no way I was touching that. In no way was this appetizing looking in the least.

I then accidentally made eye contact with Morella, who gave

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me a big smile and an encouraging nod to try the green liquid in the bowl. I picked up the spoon to pretend I would eat and waited until she stopped looking at me. But of course, the universe was giving me a big fuck you today because she waited for me to eat.

I took the tiniest amount of the green liquid on my spoon and tasted it. I stopped breathing as soon as I put it in my mouth. A very pungent taste of something I couldn't even describe covered my entire tongue. I forced myself to swallow as I looked at Morella, who was still looking at me with a Cheshire smile, waiting for my response. I gave her a tight smile and an awkward thumbs-up, and she nodded in approval, returning to her conversation with my father.

I took the glass of water and chugged half of it in no time. I looked over to Cara, who was discreetly trying to squeeze her nose shut as she ate. The sight of her made me snort out loud and quickly tried to disguise it as a cough. Cara squinted her eyes at me as I tried to cover my smile. She quickly looked around and flipped me off.

Oh no, she didn't.

I stretched my legs as far as I could and kicked her leg. Her eyes narrowed and tried to kick me back, but I was faster and quickly moved my legs to the side.

Crashing them right into Damiano's leg.

-My eyes went wide and my cheeks heated up as he turned to face me with that blank look of his.

Shit, I hope I didn't piss him off...

"Sorry." I whispered and gave him an apologetic smile. The

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corners of his mouth curved in the slightest amount, having me look at him a bit surprised. I would have missed it if I had blinked.

I looked away only to see Cara with a satisfying smirk on her lips. I was going to get her back for it one way or another. As I was going to move away, he put a hand on my thigh, stopping me from moving. So, now I was supposed to sit through dinner with his hand on my thigh, and my legs pressed against him. That wasn't nerve-wracking at all. I reached for the wine and took a big sip to calm down my nerves.

The servers came and cleared the table of the appetizers, and I noticed that Damiano hadn't touched his food either. I didn't

blame him since it was truly disgusting. My breath halted when I felt his hand caressing my thigh in painful slow motions, going up and down. It made my body tingle like crazy! I took another big sip of my wine, and if I kept going at this rate, I was going to get drunk fast.

Another plate of food was served, and this time, it looked promising. Steak with roasted potatoes and glazed vegetables. I didn't waste time and dug in immediately. I almost moaned out loud when the very tender and juicy piece of meat melted on my tongue. I stopped chewing for a second as I felt Damiano's hand going up even further on the inside of my thigh. I faced him slightly to look at him, but he was facing my Uncle and listened to whatever he had to say. I tried to ignore his hand, which was getting dangerously close to my private part. I could move my leg away to stop him but it felt nice.

Maybe a bit too nice.

I finished my wine and continued to eat. My cheeks were

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warm, and I couldn't decide whether it was because of the wine or because of him.

His hand continued up north and my breath got caught in my throat as he was now touching my front and started to caress the outside of my lace underwear. I couldn't suppress the shudder that rippled through my body as he applied a little pressure every now and then. I couldn't concentrate on my food as I felt myself getting hot and...wet.

My legs started to part, thinking about how his fingers would feel inside.... I quickly stood up and excused myself to the bathroom. I hurriedly walked away from the dining room when I realized what I had done.

I walked into the bathroom, put my hands on the sink counter, and looked at myself in the mirror. My face was flushed, a hue of red on my cheeks as if I had been out in the sun for a while. I turned on the faucet, letting my hands be under the running cold water for a little, and then pressed my hands on my neck and chest to cool me down.

Why was I feeling like this? I shouldn't be attracted to someone like him. But I couldn't help it, and his touch certainly didn't help at all.

I took a deep breath, turned around, and opened the door. I stopped in my tracks as Damiano stood in front of me, and the heat of the pool returned with intensified force down south, making my clit throb almost painfully.



Damiano stepped inside the bathroom, making me stumble back a little until my back pressed against the counter. He closed the door and locked it, never breaking eye contact with me. My heart was going crazy against my rib cage. Damiano

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walked slowly towards me and placed his hands on my hips and pressed me so close against him that not even the slightest space was between us.

“Beautiful...” He whispered as his hand trailed up to my face, his fingers lightly caressing my cheek. His intense golden- brown eyes followed his movement as if he was studying my face. My breathing started to get louder when he wrapped his hand around my throat, making me crane my neck to look at him. He squeezed ever so slightly, making me gasp in surprise and my body was getting excited about it.

His face came closer to mine, his nose trailed across my cheek to the side of my face. I jumped a little as I felt a nibble on my earlobe, making my breast press up against him even more. No words could come out of me, and I was afraid if I said something, he would stop.

And I didn’t want him to stop.

Suddenly, he lifted me and placed me on top of the counter with my dress hoisted up around my waist. He spread my legs and stepped in between them with his hands on my thighs, going up to reach the lace thong I was wearing. He pulled it slightly to the side and pressed his fingers into my wet folds.

The tingles in my body intensified and a small moan escaped my lips as he started to move his finger on my clit, building the tension low in my stomach even more. I threw my head back in pleasure as he entered a finger inside of me, slowly moving it in and out.

And it felt fucking amazing.

“Yes...” I whispered breathlessly. Damiano made a sound with the back of his throat and moved his face to the side of my

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neck and started to kiss and suck my skin, and I couldn't help but moan out loud in immense pleasure.

I put my arms around his neck and bit my lip in order to be quiet, as his finger moved faster inside of me. The pressure kept building inside of me, and fast, as he rubbed my clit with his thumb while still pumping a finger inside of me. I could feel myself coming close to my climax and spread my legs even more for him to give him better access. I tried hard not to make a sound but failed miserably as he kept going faster and faster, getting me closer to a climax.

"Fuck!" Damiano wrapped his other hand around my throat and pressed his lips against mine. He bit down on my lip and his tongue played around with mine. It was intense and rough as he kept working in and out with his finger, and I loved every single thing about it.

I gasped as I felt myself clenching around him and my legs were trembling. I moaned against his lips as the climax rippled through me, making me breathe out hard and loud. For a split second, stars invaded my vision.

Damiano slowed down and pulled his finger out of me. I rested my head against his shoulder as I still had my arms around him while I came down from my high. He helped me get down from the counter and held on to my waist for a little when my legs wobbled when he put me down. He even helped me fix my dress, then turned around, and walked out of the bathroom, leaving me confused and satisfied.

## **The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 14**

Posted by

By

Trigger Warning; Violence!

Althaia

I took my time getting back to the dining room as I kept thinking about what had just happened. I had no idea what came over me and I must have lost my mind to it happen. I could have stopped it. I should have stopped him. But I didn't want to and that left me confused, and frankly, scared. He was a deadly man, and that should be enough for me to be running for my life. Yet, I was

attracted to him, and my body betrayed me by reacting so quickly to his touch.

It must be the wine! Yes, it was definitely the wine that prevented me from thinking rationally.

I walked back into the dining room and my eyes immediately went to Damiano, who was already looking at me with his intense gaze. His arm was resting at the back of my chair as he sipped his glass of whiskey. His expression was completely blank, with no sign of anything as if we hadn't just done something we shouldn't have in the bathroom.

"Darling, are you okay? You didn't finish your dinner." Morella said, now standing in front of me, putting her hand on my cheek.

"Oh my, you're burning!" She erupted and my father stood up as well and looked at me with a concerned look. He pressed

the back of his hand on my forehead and frowned..

"Figlia, are you okay? Do you need to rest?"

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"No, no I'm fine." I said quickly and gave them a reassuring smile, but they didn't look convinced.

"I just need a little fresh air and I'll be okay. I promise."

"Yes, go get some fresh air. Dessert will be out in a little while." Luckily, they returned to their seats. I looked at Cara as I avoided eye contact with a certain set of golden-brown eyes. Cara raised from her seat and walked with me out to the backyard.

The slightly cool night breeze kissed my heated skin immediately the minute we stepped out. I closed my eyes for a second as I felt my hot body cool down. My moment got interrupted when Cara grabbed my arm and started to drag me away from the entrance. She stopped when we reached behind a tree and out of view if someone was to step out.

"Okay, spill it! What is going on between the two of you." She asked and I just raised my eyebrows in surprise.

“Between whom?” I asked confused.

“Don’t play dumb with me, Thaia.” She eyed me suspiciously. “I saw the way he was looking at you.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” I looked away and crossed my arms against my chest. Cara raised her perfectly arched eyebrow at me.

“I heard you.” She said with a smug tone, and I whipped my head back to her. She was grinning widely at me.

“You heard...?” I looked at her in shock.

“Yup. So, did you fuck?”

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“What? No!” + exclaimed.

“Then what? Because whatever it was, you were enjoying it. Big time.” She wiggled her eyebrows at me.

“Ew, were you listening?!” I scrunched my face at her.

“I’m not a creep, you freak.” She rolled her eyes at me.

“When you left, Damiano got up and left as well. I thought I would check on you since you walked away fast. Instead, I heard you enjoying yourself in there.” She laughed as she said the last part and I put my head in my hands, dying from embarrassment.

“You are loud, honey.” She continued teasing me.

“Oh my God, just stop!” I said and made my way back. I could feel my body getting hot again in embarrassment.

“So, what did you do?” She walked in step with me, and I sighed, knowing she wouldn’t let it go.

“Nothing... He just ... touched me.” I said, struggling to find the words.

“He finger-fucked you, didn’t he.” She stated and I groaned at her choice of words.

“Something like that.” I admitted.

“Does he know you’re a virgin?” I stopped to look at her.

“I’m not ...?”

“You might as well be. When was the last time you got some? I heard that if you wait long enough, a new hymen will grow

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back.” Cara cracked up at her own joke. I just shook my head at her and continued to walk. God, help me with this one.

“You’re not funny.” I mumbled while she continued to laugh.

“Oh, well, looks like your man came out to check on you.” I looked up and saw Damiano standing in front of the entrance, smoking a cigarette. He wasn’t alone as Tank Man was next to him. The sight of both of them together was intimidating, to say the least. Especially when Damiano’s eyes were focused on me and my every move as we walked toward them. He finished his cigarette, and they stepped aside for us to walk in but followed close behind as we made our way back to the dining room.

We made it back just as the dessert was being served. Damiano rested his arm at the back of my chair once again, his fingers lightly caressing the back of my shoulder. I reached for my refilled glass of wine and took a little too big of a sip.

“Slow down.” Damiano said in a low voice, only for me to hear. I faced him and his golden-brown eyes were already set on me. I got lost in his eyes for a minute, forgetting the people around us.

“Althaia, we were just talking about both families should join the Sunday Service together.” The voice of my father had me break eye contact to look at him.

“Oh, I was actually planning on leaving Saturday night.”

“Leaving? Leaving where?” My father furrowed his brows at

“I’m going home, papá. I wasn’t supposed to stay this long

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Oh, Shit!

anyways.” I half-shrugged.

“Nonsense! This is your home. You’re staying.” He said firmly and I just sighed.

“I have to get back to mom. Plus, I have work.” I tried to explain but he wasn’t having any of it.

“Is this what she’s doing to you? Keeping you away from me all these years and making you work? No daughter of mine should work. You’re staying.” He said as a final order. I already dreaded that phone call I had to make to my mother.

“And no more hotels. This is your home.” He said firmly, making me feel like a child. I shook my head and chuckled a little. At least I would be spending more time with Cara.

“Damiano, let’s go back to my proposal. You should make me in charge of your products. There will be more distributions and more money!” Uncle said with a smug smile, and Damiano looked at him with a brow raised.

“If I do that, there would be no products left. Your snorting ass would leave us out of business.” He stated calmly, making my Uncle’s smile fall immediately.

“Do you think I’m a crackhead like the whore you call a mother?” He roared and everyone stopped making a sound, a cold silence surrounding us. It felt like everyone had stopped breathing to not make a sound when Damiano stared at Uncle with a look so dark I could only shudder from it.

Like a flash of lightning, Damiano grabbed Uncle’s head, smashed his head violently down at the table, and dragged him across, making the plates and glasses crash to the floor. I got out of my seat and moved away as fast as I could while I

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watched the scene in front of me in horror.

“I dare you to say that one more time.” His voice was dangerously low and ice-cold which made me shudder in fear. Everyone was standing now, not daring to interfere. He had my Uncle in front of him, staring him down with his cold eyes.

If a look could kill, this was it.

“Cara, take Althaia away from here.” My father ordered but I stood frozen in place when she tried to grab my hand and lead me away. My father tried to step in and talk some sense to Damiano, but Lorenzo stopped him and made sure he couldn’t interfere. There was no way my father would be able to handle Lorenzo no matter what.

“I said your whore of a mothe – “Uncle didn’t finish his sentence as Damiano grabbed his jaw so hard it looked like he was about to break it. He turned to look at my terrified face, and I saw the stone-cold and murderous expression on his face.

“Don’t look.” He simply said and I saw him grab a knife.

A scream of pain pierced my eardrums as I looked at Uncle’s tongue which was now on the floor. I felt myself stop breathing as I followed the trail of blood. A large amount of blood was gushing out of his mouth like a red waterfall. Cara tried to get me away from the scene, but my legs wouldn’t move. I was blocking everything out as I couldn’t move my -eyes away from all the blood.

My vision got blocked by the scene, and I looked up to see Damiano looking at me. I started to hyperventilate, suddenly feeling it was hard to get any air in my lungs

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Black spots appeared in my vision, and everything went black.

## **The Devil’s Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 15**

Posted by

By

Althaia

A pounding headache was the very first thing I felt when I opened my eyes. I was in a dark room, lying on a bed. As my sight got clearer and adjusted to the darkness, I noticed I was in Cara's room. I groaned as I sat up and closed my eyes as I put my aching head in my hands, wondering what happened. My eyes immediately snapped open when everything came rushing back to me.

Blood. So much blood.

A stream of light came in as the door opened and Cara entered the room.

"You're awake." She handed me a bottle of water and I took it gratefully.

"Are you okay?" She sat next to me on the bed, looking worried but I just shrugged. Cara sighed.

"He deserved it. He should have known better than to talk to like that." She sounded unbothered by the fact that her own father just got his tongue cut off. That man was in no way a saint, and he totally deserved to be treated the way he had been treating Cara. But seeing the actions unfold in front of me was an entirely different story. It was a friendly reminder of what kind of world I had stepped into and what kind of people I was surrounded by.

I felt sick and my head was still hammering like crazy. I got up from the bed and made my way to the door.

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"Where are you going?"

"My head is killing me. I need some painkillers." I came to the end of the staircase with Cara following behind, and it was impossible not to notice how the place was suddenly packed with men.

"What's going on...?" I wondered out loud. I caught the sight of Michael making his way towards us, his face stern and on guard.

"Althaia, are you okay?" He wasted no time and embraced me tightly into his arms.

"I'm fine." My voice muffled against his shirt. He pulled back to look at me and I probably looked like a mess.



“What’s going on? Why are there so many men here?” The entire floor was filled with men, on guard and ready to do whatever they had to do. I pressed myself into Michael, feeling a little uneasy.

“I’ll explain later. Right now, I need to take both you and Cara back to the hotel.” He wasted no time, and we were ushered outside. Several cars were parked out in the front and there were even more men standing outside. Michael was in a hurry, trying to get us out of there as fast as he could.

I was about to get inside the car when someone caught my attention. Damiano walked out with a bunch of men following him but had two men on either side closer to him, almost as if they were his bodyguards. The most frightening thing about Damiano was that no matter what, he looked calm and composed. Like nothing had happened.

I noticed he had changed into a new shirt and a jacket, and it

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Vouchers

was like he could feel I was watching him when his eyes immediately snapped to mine while he walked down the stairs. He said something to the four men, and they all looked at me as he made his way toward me. Michael quickly stood in front of me to prevent Damiano from approaching me.

“Don’t even think about it.” Michael said threatening but Damiano just stepped closer to him with his blank expression.

“Move.” He simply said with a low tone.

“It’s okay, Michael.” I put my hand on his shoulder to have him step back. Damiano had just cut the tongue off someone who was in a much higher position than he was. I wouldn’t dare to think about what he could do to Michael. But he just ignored me and continued to stare at Damiano. ‘

“Michael, please ... ” I tried to pull him away, not wanting anything to happen to him. He finally listened and stepped back to stand beside me. But he put a protective arm around my waist. I felt awkward considering what I had been doing with him earlier, and it didn’t help that he glanced at Michael’s arm around me before looking at me. But I couldn’t tell what he was thinking as he continued to have this blank expression.

I sighed.

“Can you give us a minute, please? I’ll be fine.” I said to Michael, and he frowned at me. He looked at me for a while before he turned aside and walked to the car, keeping his -gaze fixed on us. I rolled my eyes at him and walked to the

opposite side to give us a bit of privacy.

I looked around as we just stood there in silence. I played around with my necklace, not knowing what to say to him after what I had just witnessed him do.

Vouchers

“Are you okay?” Damiano broke the silence, and I just shrugged and looked anywhere but at him. I didn’t know if I was okay. I wasn’t really feeling anything at this point, and I felt like my body was still in shock.

“Look at me.” I stared at the ground for a bit longer before meeting his eyes. He glanced around my face as if to see if I was hurt. He took his time looking around at my face before his eyes met mine. My breath hitched slightly, and once again I felt like I was drowning in the depths of his golden-brown eyes.

“I’m okay.” I breathed out. A shiver ran down my spine as I looked at him. It didn’t go unnoticed by him, and he took off his jacket and wrapped it around my shoulders.

“Goodnight, Althaia.” Still, he managed to have my body tingle, especially when he said my name in his deep, rich voice. Damiano turned around and made his way to his car. I felt someone looking at me and saw Michael, who had observed everything, was burning holes in the jacket I was wearing. I tightened it around me even more, grateful for the warmth it offered.

We went to my hotel room, and after I came out of my state of being shocked, I asked questions about what would happen now.

“Does that mean the wedding is off?” I was sitting on the bed in my bathrobe after taking a much-needed shower. Cara was lying down, half asleep already and Michael stood at the end of the bed with his hands in his pockets. He had been quiet the entire ride to the hotel.

uchers

“No, the wedding has been moved up.” Cara explained. I raised my brows in surprise.

“How come? I thought that since.... well, that happened, they would break off the engagement and some kind of war would break out?” I tilted my head in confusion.

“It’s strictly for business...” Cara failed to keep her eyes open and dozed off. I looked to Michael for him to explain.

“Their products are the most sought after on the streets, and we are, whether they like to admit it or not, the fastest in moving products. We can move twice as fast as they can, which means we make a shit ton of money... That’s why there will be no war between the families.”

“That still doesn’t make sense... Why would my father still work with a man who just cut off the tongue of his brother?” It all seemed too unreal and ridiculous to me.

“Because there is more to it.” I looked at him, waiting for him to elaborate but he looked hesitant. He sighed and ran a hand through his hair.

“Look, I’m not supposed to say anything, but your father wants to gain access to their weaponry. They have currently taken over all types of weapon trafficking, everything goes through them. Every type of lethal weapon you can think of, they have it, and only them. And, with Cara marrying, not just any man from the family, but Lorenzo, he hopes to get access sooner rather than later.” He finished explaining and I dropped my jaw in surprise.

When they claimed it was all business, they truly meant it. It was a strange world and a couple of weeks ago I had lived a pretty protected life yet knowing about the mafia, and what

went on beneath the surface was terrifying. But so intriguing, too. I absorbed every new piece of information I had just been given, and I couldn’t help but be captivated by it all. I felt alive in a whole different way, and for some reason, I wanted to know more. [See more.](#)

“That’s... so cool! I mean, it still sucks for Cara, but wow! It’s like I’m living in a movie!” I said in fascination. Michael looked at me with his mouth agape and then burst out laughing.

“God, Althaia. You surprise me in every way.”

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