

The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 16

Posted by

By

Althaia

"You promised me, Althaia!" Cara scowled at me

"I did no such thing!" I mirrored her expression. I was in Cara's room helping her pack her bags as she was going to stay with the Bellavia's to plan the wedding. Well, she was packing, and I was on the bed, lying on my stomach, flipping through a magazine. Since we lived a few hours away from them, it was easier for her to stay there instead of constantly going back and forth. And now she was trying to make me come with her.

"Yes, you did! Remember when we went out for brunch, and told you I needed help to plan the wedding? You told me you would be happy to help since you're staying here for a while and had nothing to do anyway." She quickly said. I stopped flipping through the magazine as I tried to remember when I had said that.

That was when I realized it!

"Are you actually trying to force a fake memory in my mind?" I said to her accusingly.

"No." Cara avoided looking at me.

"Yes, you are you sneaky bitch!" threw a pillow at her face, and she huffed at me with a frown.

"Well, what are you going to do here alone, anyway?" She put her hands on her hips.

"I don't know, eat and chill with Michael?" I shrugged. She

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actually had a point... I didn't have anything to do whe....e had to leave. I had been staying in the mansion for a couple of weeks now and it was not like

there was much to do here unless I wanted to become best friends with Morella.

Yeah, I did not like that, and I would probably go deaf if I had to listen to her speak one more time. I felt my skin crawling every time she called me darling.

“You can eat over there, and besides, Michael isn’t going to be free all the time to hang out with you.” She continued to argue. It was another good point made. Michael had been incredibly busy these days, and I had barely seen him around.

“I hate it when you’re right.” I moped.

“But why are you even planning the wedding, and not just getting someone else to do it for you?”

“I am being handed over like I am a freaking object! The least they can do is for me to have a say in this wedding. And you have good taste, so you’re helping me. I’m older than you, you have to listen to me.”

“How lame of you to pull the ‘I’m older than you’ card. Which doesn’t even work. But fine, I will come with you.” I rolled my eyes at her when she squealed in excitement. I resumed reading my magazine, trying to get some inspiration. I have been kind of working from her whenever my mother needed my help, we would talk, and I would send her my sketch ideas. She had been surprisingly okay with me being here. Not like she could do anything to prevent me from staying with my father.

I was actually enjoying it here.

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Church

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“Well, I’m going back to my room, I’m tired. And we have to wake up early for the Service tomorrow.” A yawn escaped my lips as I rolled out of bed.

“Thanks for the help.” Cara said sarcastically.

“You are so much welcome.” I snickered and closed the door behind me. I lazily dragged my feet down the hallway when I noticed Carlos coming out of his bedroom.

“Hi, Carlos.” I gave a small smile. This was only the second time trying to talk to him. I didn’t know what his problem was, but I always found him glaring at me from afar.

“Bitch.” He muttered under his breath as he walked past me. I stopped in my tracks. Furious, I took a hold of his arm.

“What the fuck is your problem!?” Carlos ripped his arm out of my grasp and pushed me roughly against the door. Right into the doorknob. I cried out in pain, but he covered my mouth with his hand, preventing me from making a sound.

“You’re my fucking problem!” He hissed at me. I wasted no time and raised my leg and kneed him where I knew would hurt him the most. He groaned out in pain and cupped his precious balls.

“You bitch!” Before I could even move, he slapped me with the back of his hand. I fell to the ground and my head collided with the floor. A ringing sound appeared, and my eyesight got blurry. Luckily, I could faintly see Carlos walking away.

I slowly stood up, groaning a little at the back pain and holding my cheek in my hand as a stinging sensation appeared on my right side. I glared towards the stairs and hoped that wherever he was going, he would get shot.

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Church

1288 Vouchers

“What the hell happened to your face!” Cara looked shocked when she got a closer look at me. We were sitting in the car, being escorted to the church where we would meet up with

the rest.

“I had a little encounter with the cocksucker for ice cream.” I

said angrily and she looked at me confused.

“Carlos.” I elaborated and her eyes widened.

“Carlos did this to you? Where the hell is that bitch, I’m going to cut off his dick!”

“By all means.” I couldn’t care less about that scumbag. The stinging sensation I felt resulted in a freaking cut and a bruise. He was apparently wearing a ring that cut into my cheekbone. I tried to cover it with makeup, but it was still a bit visible. It didn’t help that I was also a bit swollen. It still hurt. And my back hurt.

I hope he got fucking shot.

A crowd of people was already standing outside when we arrived at the church. I guess they were pretty serious about Sunday Services. I remember going to these Services when I was younger, but since my mother and I moved away, we stopped going. She wasn’t a big believer and went purely because of my father, who came from a Catholic family. I, on the other hand, had a bit of a complex view of it all.

I spotted my father standing in front of the entrance with Damiano, Lorenzo, and three other men I haven’t seen before. My father waved us over as soon as we got out of the car, and we made our way toward them. I greeted my father and he

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put his arm around my shoulder and introduced me.

“Meet my daughter, Althaia. And this is Dale, Fabian, and Roberto, great business partners and very good friends of mine” He gestured to the three middle-aged men.

“Hello, nice to meet you.” I smiled at them and offered a little wave, and they smiled back with a little nod.

“Gentlemen, shall we head inside? The Service is about to begin.” My father went ahead inside with his business partners. Just as I was making my way inside, I felt myself being pulled back. I turned around to see it was Damiano. He glanced at my face, and I felt my breath hitch. Tingles erupted in my

stomach when he softly held my chin as he examined the cut on my face. He frowned the more he looked at it before his eyes met mine.

“Who did this to you?”

“Why?” I asked, curious as to why he cared.

“I don’t like asking twice.” He still showed no form of expression and it started to annoy me that I couldn’t just get a glimpse of what he was feeling.

“Althaia.” Damiano said in a warning tone, his patience wearing thin. I felt my heart skip a beat when he said my

name.

“... Carlos.” I breathed out. He nodded and let go of me. I quickly composed myself and hurried inside the church, finding my seat next to Cara. She gave me a teasing side look which I pretended not to notice and focused on the priest.

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Church

1288 Vouchers

The Service finished and I was engrossed the whole time. It was beautiful and I was touched by the way the priest talked about the Lord. I was not a religious person, but I liked the idea of a higher power, but the overall concept was still difficult for me to comprehend in a way. Though, sitting in there and listening to the priest still made my heart feel at

ease.

We were outside, waiting as mine and Cara’s things were being moved to a different car. We were going to be escorted by one of Damiano’s men since there was no reason for one of my father’s men to escort us all the way over to their place only to drive back again.

“Oh wait, I forgot my purse in the other car!” I said to Cara before we got inside and quickly made my way to the car we arrived in. I grabbed my purse and shut the door when a sudden screech of tires caught my attention. I looked to the main road and saw two black SUV cars driving fast.

“Get down!” Someone shouted, and multiple gunshots could be heard. I froze in place in fear, my legs refusing to move when I saw the gun pointing out of the window. I squeezed my eyes shut when I was suddenly thrown to the ground behind the car. I was prepared for a hard landing but instead, it was mild, and my head was protected.

I opened my eyes and looked up, only to see it was Damiano.

Protecting me with his body.

“Hold onto me.” He ordered and he didn’t have to tell me twice as I fisted my hands onto his shirt. He pulled me tightly into him, almost carrying me to move along with him and lean against the car in cover. Damiano pulled out his gun and fired

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at the SUV tires. One of them exploded, making them lose control as they swerved from side to side. No words came out of me as I watched it all unfold, seeing just in time for the SUV to flip.

Damiano was quick on his feet and pulled me up against him and rushed to the car where Cara was. He was still covering my body as I got inside the car.

“Keep your heads down.” He ordered and I wanted to ask what about him, but he slammed the door shut before I could.

“Go!” He yelled at the driver, and he wasted no time and sped away from the scene.

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The Devil’s Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 17

Posted by

By

Trigger Warning; Violence!

Damiano

Two more cars were coming from both directions of the main road. The powerful sounds of gunshots being fired were continuous and forced us to stay on the ground. I reached for the machine gun from the undercarriage that had been placed there for situations exactly like these. It wasn't my first time, and these fuckers either had a death wish or were just plain stupid to be shooting after us.

They wouldn't stand a chance, and I was about to show them how fast I could end their lives.

I looked over to the car next to me, seeing Lorenzo had reached for the machine gun as well. I had them planted on every single car to make sure there would always be weapons present. He looked at me and I gave a nod.

"Giovani, Antonio to your right. Dom, Luca to your left. On my count." I ordered my men. They nodded in response and waited for the signal. I moved to the front of the car and Lorenzo followed my every move. I didn't have to tell him anything. We were one mind in two bodies.

We were crouched down in front of the cars, waiting for the cars to come closer and for the moment the gunshots decreased. The idiots were all firing at the same time, making them run out of bullets at the same and had to reload... All at the same time.

Fucking amateurs.

"Now!" Right on cue, my men got up and shots were fired at the cars to create a distraction away from us. Lorenzo and I got up, back-to-back, and fired. The roaring blaze from the machine guns drowned out any other noises as they and the bullets flying took them down one by one. I aimed for the driver first, not giving him a single second of a chance to react as I made his face look like Swiss cheese. He slumped over the steering wheel and crashed right into a tree.

I held the machine gun in front of me and walked over to the car. The car door opened, and someone tried to make a run for it. I sighed at his cowardice and shot him three times in the back. If he was going to turn his back to his comrades to save his own life, then he deserved to be shot in the back.

I stopped by the car and opened the door to see if there were any survivors. A man in the backseat with a gunshot wound to his chest, groaning in pain, and gasping for air. I aimed my gun at him and shot him in the head without blinking an eye.

The light of a phone screen caught my attention on the floor. I picked it up and saw an incoming call, shaking my head when I saw who it was. I turned to face Lorenzo, holding the phone up for him to see the name.

“Roberto.” He sneered at the sight of his name, and I smirked.

“Wrap up and have someone clean this mess. We have someone we need to visit.” I ordered my men and got into my

car.

The sight of container ships entered my view as we drove up

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to the warehouse. I got out of the car and took a look around while the sun was slowly disappearing below the horizon. I turned around and made my way to the warehouse, two men standing on either side of the warehouse door, aiming their guns at us, ready to fire. I almost closed my eyes in

annoyance. The stupidity to think they would be able to stand a chance when they were clearly outnumbered.

How pathetic.

I looked over to the approaching form and saw Giannino making his way toward us with two more men behind him.

“Bellavia!” He smiled with his arms half-raised in a welcome gesture.

“To what do I owe the honor for you to come all the way out here?” He stopped in front of me and clasped his hands behind his back.

“Where is Roberto?” I got straight to the point as my patience had already worn out. He looked around and saw my men were ready to fire if they tried to make a move.

“He’s inside.” He decided to answer after having assessed the situation. I looked at Antonio and Luca and motioned for

them to follow me and Lorenzo.

“Roberto!” Giannino called out. Roberto came out from the stacks of pallets that almost filled the entire warehouse. His facial expression showed nothing, but his body betrayed him as he slightly gulped, and his hands trembled before he clenched them into a fist.

“Roberto, tell me why you have troubled the gentlemen to come here?” His father asked suspiciously.

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A Man Of His Words

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“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” He tried to have a brave look on his face, but he kept shifting his weight on his

feet.

“There was a drive-by shooting just outside the church earlier today. Do you know anything about it?” I raised my brow at him, giving him a chance to explain himself. He furrowed his brows and shook his head. I looked over to Antonio and Luca and nodded at them. In no time, they had their guns drawn out and shot the two men Giannino had with him. Two more gunshots could be heard from the outside, and the men who stood by the entrance went to meet their creator.

“Damiano, I demand an explanation!” Giannino erupted and looked at me with a furious expression.

“You don’t demand shit here.” I stated in a low tone and I glared at him. I looked over to Roberto, narrowing my eyes at him.

“My patience is running really low, Roberto. Tell me what you know about the episode.” Roberto glared at me and spit on the ground close to my feet. I looked down where he spat and looked back at him again.

“Wrong move.” I said calmly. Antonio and Luca grabbed Roberto’s arms and forced them behind his back,

straightening him up for Lorenzo to deliver a powerful punch in his stomach. I pulled out my pack of cigarettes and lit one up. I took a long draft and looked at Roberto who groaned in pain and tried to take a breath to compose himself.

“Roberto, one last time. I’ll spare your life.” I continued to smoke while I waited for him.

“You don’t spare anyone!” He yelled out angrily. He was taking harsh intakes of breaths while still being held by Antonio and Luca.

“I am a man of my word.” He looked hesitant before he finally spoke.

“Look, I don’t know who it is. A phone was put in my bag when I was doing my rounds on the streets. I got a phone call, and I couldn’t tell who it was. It was some weird robotic voice. They didn’t order us to shoot anyone, it was just to scare you.” Roberto quickly explained and I looked at him for a while. He was too much of a coward to be a part of the shooting and had sent people to their deaths.

“Where’s the phone?”

“I dumped it in the water when I received the money.”

“How much?”

“20 grand each.” I pulled my gun out.

“You gave me your word!” Roberto yelled.

“I did.” I turned around and fired a bullet between Giannino’s brows, dropping dead to the floor.

“What the fuck man!” He shouted in fright.

“For raising a cunt.” I said calmly as I walked over to him.

“I gave you my word that I would spare your life. But you see

..” I nodded towards Lorenzo.

“My brother’s soon-to-be wife was there. I wonder what my dear brother has to say to that.” Lorenzo had a devilish smirk on his face, pulled out his knife, and grabbed a fistful of

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Roberto’s hair.

“I won’t be the one killing you.” I smirked and turned around.

“No – wait!” The sound of agony reached my ears as I made my way outside. I threw the bud of the cigarette to the floor and when I neared my car. I stopped in my tracks as I looked to the right and noticed Carlos. I looked around and scoffed when Gaetano was nowhere to be seen.

That bastard always took the easy way out and let his men do the dirty work for him.

I changed my direction and walked over to Carlos, who was happily talking to two other men who also worked for the bastard. I grabbed Carlos by the collar of his shirt, and my fist went back and punched him repeatedly in the face.

One time. Two times. Three times.

I watched the blood smear out all over his face but I didn’t stop until I heard the satisfying crack as I broke his nose. No one tried to stop me. No one dared to stop, knowing it would only result in their death.

I pushed him up against the car, grabbed his jaw tightly in my hand, and took my knife out. The cries of pain satisfied me as I slowly cut deeply into his face.

“If you touch her one more time, and I promise, I will give you a slow and painful death.” I warned him in a low, cold voice. I tightened my hold on his jaw and he quickly nodded his head as he couldn’t say anything. I slammed him roughly into the car and gave him one last glare before letting him go.

I walked back to my car, now desperate to see the woman

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who had captivated me with her big innocent green eyes.

The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 18

Posted by

By

Althaia

"Do you think they are okay?" Lasked for the hundredth-time to our driver whose name I had come to learn to be Dario. The poor guy was stuck in the car with me, and I kept asking questions and wouldn't shut up. He never showed any annoyance towards me though and kept reassuring me that no one got hurt and everyone was safe. But somehow his words were not comforting me the way I had hoped for.

"Althaia, please shut up and leave Dario alone. He said they were okay, so hush!" Cara scolded and I clamped my mouth shut.

We had been driving for a while now, and I had no sense of time at the moment. I was too worried and kept thinking about if someone got shot and died. Did my father get shot? Damiano? He was the one risking his life to make sure I got out of there safe, and I couldn't stop wondering if he made it out okay.

I kept checking my phone to see if I got any messages. I texted Michael a while ago to see if he had heard from my father, but he still hadn't texted me back. I sighed and leaned back in the seat, staring out of the window with the hopes of getting to think about something else. My phone buzzed in my hand, and I quickly looked down at my phone to see Michael finally had replied.

Michael

I just talked to him. He told me what happened. Shit, Althaia,

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are you okay?

I breathed out a sigh of relief and texted him back.

Althaia

Thank God! Yes, we are okay and safe. We are on our way to the Bellavia's.

Michael

Okay, stay safe.

I smiled and locked my phone and my shoulders sagged in relief. Finally, I felt like I could relax.

"See, we told you they were okay. You have to remember they know what they are doing. It's not the first time a similar situation has happened." Cara said while playing a game on her phone. If there was one thing I had come to admire about Cara, was the fact how quickly she could recover from literally anything. If you took a look at her now, you wouldn't know that she had just been in the middle of a drive-by shooting. I, on the other hand, was shocked and scared for a while but then I started to worry for the others.

"Well, sorry for worrying. It's not exactly an everyday thing for me." I said sarcastically.

"Right... Or is it someone particular you're worried about?" She looked up from her phone and wiggled her brows at me. I rolled my eyes and ignored her. I turned to look out of the window, feeling my cheeks heating up slightly. I finally took the time to appreciate the amazing nature we were driving by. Beautiful, bright green fields with tall grass and big, tall trees with green leaves. The sun was shining brightly in the clear

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Majestic Manor

blue sky, creating a truly majestic view.

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"Holy shit." Cara suddenly erupted. I looked over at her and found her looking straight ahead. I moved a little to see what had caught her eye. My eyes

widened at the sight in front of me. At the very end of the road was the biggest house I had ever seen. It might as well be a freaking castle! I turned to look at Cara and she looked at me with her mouth slightly open.

“I guess me getting married is suddenly not so bad if it means I will stay in that.” We burst out laughing at her comment, and I even saw Dario crack a little smile at her comment.

The car slowed down as we neared the big gates of the manor. The gates opened and we drove into a big round driveway with a large granite fountain with water shooting out of gigantic lion heads. Dario stopped right in front of the manor where an older lady and a young woman were waiting for us. Based on their outfits, I assumed they were housekeepers.

We got out of the car, and I looked around, truly stunned by the place. It was something I could ever dare to dream of ever experiencing. This was something you would only see in

movies!

“Hello, and welcome to the Bellavia Manor. My name is Rosana, and this is my daughter, Sofia.” Rosana welcomed us and gave us a warm smile.

“Hi, I’m Cara, and this is Althaia, my cousin.” Cara introduced us. I smiled at them and greeted them as well.

“A pleasure to meet you, miss.”

“Oh no, please just Althaia. Thaia if you’d like.” I quickly said.

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Rosana just smiled in return, and I took a good look at her. She couldn’t be more than fifty years old, and her black hair was back in a tight bun, showing some of her graying hair. Sofia didn’t talk much, but she was tall and beautiful with her baby blue eyes, and her short black hair was up in a ponytail.

“Let’s get you to settle in, shall we? The men will bring your bags.” Rosana said and we followed her inside the house.

“Wow...” Cara and I said at the same time as we looked around. The inside was even more majestic with the two-way curved grand staircase with a black railing, carved in a unique pattern. The biggest crystal chandelier I had ever seen in my life hung right in the middle and hung right above a black marbled round table in the foyer, decorated with a large, black crystal vase. This place was huge, and I got excited about the idea of exploring.

We followed Rosana and Sofia upstairs where there were long, wide hallways on either side. I nodded a little, impressed by it all. We went down to the left hallway first, stopping after we passed a couple of doors, and Rosana opened the door.

“This is where you will be staying, Cara.” Rosana stepped to the side for Cara to walk into the room. The bedroom was

ridiculously big and could easily be mistaken for a freaking apartment.

“Althaia, you will be staying just right down the other hallway.” I looked at her surprised.

“Oh, I thought we would be staying in the same room?” I asked confused but she just smiled at me.

“Mr. Lorenzo ordered Cara to stay in this room. If you would please follow me, we will get to your room now.” I shrugged

and followed her down to the other hallway.

“This is where you will be staying.” She opened the door, and I stepped in. The bedroom was so just as large as Cara’s. It even had its own lounge area with a freaking fireplace. I did a

whistle in my mind, truly impressed.

“Dinner will be ready in a few hours. I hope you’ll settle in well.” I gave her my thanks and she closed the door right after my bags had been placed inside. I looked at the gigantic bed, and I couldn’t help but run toward it and belly-flopped on the bed.

"This feels so good!" It practically sucked me in, and the silk sheets felt amazingly good on my skin. I was going to have the best sleep of my life in this bed.

After a while, I forced myself to get up to explore the rest of the bedroom. I immediately went to the bathroom, and it didn't disappoint one bit! Everything was in glossy beige marble tiles, even with a matching bathtub and a shower with glass doors. There was even a mini chandelier hanging from the ceiling, and this time, I whistled out.

"Damn, he's rich-rich." I chuckled to myself after my comment.

I walked out of the bathroom and found another door right next to the lounge area. I opened it and saw it was a huge walk-in closet any girl could dream of having. It had built-in shelves and in the middle was a big square puff sofa in a dark, grey velour.

Returning to the bedroom, I went to the big double doors that led right out to a large balcony. I gasped in bewilderment at the view in front of me. There was a large staircase that led

right down to a huge swimming be

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high up in the air, and sunbeds scattered around the pool.

What amazed me the most was right beyond the pool, there was a two-way staircase that led down to a beautiful garden with trees, and flowers of all colors going all the way around, creating something that only belonged in a fantasy world. In between the two-way staircase was a freaking waterfall. I felt captivated by it all, and I stood there for a while, taking in the remarkable view.

This place was meant for royals.

After dinner, I had gone around and explored the manor, which took much longer than I had expected because I kept getting lost. The place was huge from the outside, and even bigger and more confusing inside. Every time I rounded a corner, I thought I had just come from, it led to a whole different area. Cara had gone to unpack her many bags to settle in, so I was alone, and my sense of place was really not

the best.

It was late and I finally found my way back to my room after bumping into Sofia after what felt like hours. I went to my suitcase to retrieve my nightgown. It was a dark, blue dress that went to my mid-thigh with the top covered in black lace. It showed quite a bit of my breasts, but it was for sleeping anyway, and I like to sleep in little to nothing.

+went to the bathroom and turned on the shower, letting the hot water run for a bit as I liked my showers to be hot. I tied my hair up in a bun and stepped inside, immediately sighing and letting the hot water melt all the tension I had gone through earlier. Cara had done an amazing job of calming me

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down since I got freaked out to say it mildly. This was not something I was used to and definitely needed to grow thicker skin around these people.

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Once I was done, I dried off my body and put on my nightgown, letting my hair fall around my shoulders. I turned off the lights as I opened the door only to stop in my tracks when I saw someone had occupied the armchair, facing me.

It was Damiano.

(AN; FB page, Author Mariam, for visuals! :D)



The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 19

Posted by

By

Althaia

I stepped further into the room and his golden-brown eyes followed my every move as I slowly walked toward him.

“You’re okay.” I breathed out in relief. I didn’t want to admit it to Cara, but I was worried about Damiano getting hurt. He had acted as a human shield to protect me from the shots fired at us. I couldn’t understand it. He risked his life for someone like me.

He didn’t say anything and held his hand out for me to take. Without giving it a single thought, I went to him and placed my hand in his, my eyes never leaving him. I let out a small gasp when he suddenly took a hold of my hips and pulled me down to him, making me straddle him. I put my hands on his shoulders to steady myself.

“How are you?” His deep voice sent a slight shiver through my body. His hands started to caress my body as he kept looking at me, and I couldn’t help but chuckle a little at him in an attempt to suppress the things I was feeling.

“I should be the one asking. You’re the one who acted like a bulletproof vest.” I said with a smile, and he gave a small smile back. My breath got caught in my throat at his smile. I had ever only seen him smirking or completely expressionless. It was a rare, beautiful sight. My body acted on its own and placed my hand on his cheek, my thumb caressing him. A man, who was so deadly, yet so gentle with me.

Damiano looked around my face and frowned when he saw

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the cut on my cheek. He placed his hand on my cheek, his thumb going over the cut as he stared intently at it.

“I’m okay. It doesn’t hurt much anymore.” I reassured him

“I should have put a bullet in his head.” His eyes hardened and his hands tightened on my hips a little. I chuckled and wrapped my arms loosely around his neck.

“Hmm, I did wish for him to get shot.”

“Do you want me to?”

“Sure, why not.” I shrugged. He moved to get up, and my eyes widened in realization.

“Wait, no!” I quickly pushed him back in the chair.

“I was just joking! Calm down, Mafia Boss.” He raised his brow at me when I said the last part, and I blushed slightly at the intensity of his stare.

“You can’t shoot him.”

“Why not?” I blinked at him a few times, trying to see if he was joking. But he wasn’t.

“Because it’s not... appropriate?” I asked, lacking a better word to use in this context. He looked at me with a slightly amused expression, his hands went to my waist and pulled me closer to him, leaving no space between our bodies. My body was reacting to how close we were to each other, and I could already feel the excitement building up in the pit of my stomach.

My heart was starting to beat faster at the way his hands were touching my body. He didn’t say anything, but he did look a

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little amused by the comment. He continued to look at me, as if trying to memorize my face.

“It’s late. You should sleep.” He said after a while but didn’t make any attempt to leave.

“I don’t want to.” I told him. For some reason, I wasn’t ready to let him go, and I wanted him to stay with me. His hands started to trail down from my waist and to my thighs. They slowly went under my nightgown and were placed on my bare hip. I could already feel a throbbing sensation as one hand made its way between my legs. And I wasn’t wearing any underwear.

A small gasp escaped me when his fingers stroked me, and I was now desperate for his touch when the memories from the bathroom came rushing to me.

I breathed out a moan as his finger slid inside of me, feeling how wet I was already. He slowly pumped while his thumb was teasing my clit. Damiano buried his face into my neck, his lips trailing around before he plastered soft kisses.

“Oh...” I breathed out a soft moan when I felt him suck my neck. I put my arms around his neck, giving him better access to my neck while playing with the back of his hair. I bit my lip to prevent myself from making much noise when he continued to hit all the right spots, at a slow, torturous, pace. Damiano leaned back to look at me and pulled my lip from between my teeth.

“Let me hear you.” His voice was husky and started to pump faster inside of me and rub his thumb faster against my clit. I couldn’t hold it back anymore and moaned out loud as I felt the familiar tightening sensation building up

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“Ah... Damiane...” I moaned as I felt my climax building faster than ever.

“Fuck!” He suddenly stood up, holding his hands under my ass. I wrapped my legs around him. He laid me down on the bed with him above me, resting his weight on his arms on either side of my head. He took a moment just looking at me, his eyes showing lust.

He grunted and wasted no time in pressing his soft lips against mine, biting my lip in the process to gain access. I complied and kissed him back just as hungrily as he did, feeling like I couldn’t get enough of him.

Damiano pulled down the straps of my nightgown and exposed my breasts. His lips trailed down from my lips, and his tongue worked its magic on my nipple while his hand went to my other breast, kneading and pinching my nipple which sent an electric feeling through my body. It all made my back arch in pleasure and my breathing got heavy as I enjoyed the sensations.

His hand went back down between my legs and resumed his work, going even faster in and out. My hands fisted the silk sheets, my breathing coming out loud, and I kept moaning for him to not stop at the incredible feeling. He then hit a spot that made my eyes roll back, my legs started to tremble, and I

cried out in pleasure as the climax rippled through my body. I closed my eyes while he softly continued to kiss my neck as I tried to calm down my breathing.

Damiano helped me get my dress back in place, got up, and pulled the blanket over my body as I struggled to keep my eyes open. He leaned down one more time, giving me a long, soft kiss before pulling away.

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“Goodnight, Althaia.” He turned around and walked out of my room and I drifted off to a peaceful sleep.

“My God, how much can you sleep? Wake up! We have stuff to do.” Cara barged into my room. Every single morning, she would barge into my room to wake me up. And every single morning I would imagine crushing her skull against the wall.

“Fuck off, Cara.” I groaned in annoyance. I was not, and would never be, a morning person. This bed did not help one bit. It was too soft to leave. A stream of bright lights hit my closed eyes, and I opened one eye to see Cara had opened the curtains. I rolled over in my bed, groaning for not leaving me alone.

“You’re such a child. Get up!” She yelled and pulled the

blanket from my body. Another thing Cara liked to do to me.

“Give me a damn minute!” I huffed and I sat up on the bed, yawning and rubbing my tired eyes. Cara suddenly went silent, and I opened my eyes to see if she had magically died. She stood at the end of the bed, her eyes fixated on my

breasts.

“What a fucking creep you are.” | scoffed and her eyes snapped to mine.

“What the hell is that on your neck and chest?” She pointed and I just looked at her confused.

“What do you mean?”

"You're covered in hickeys!" My hand went up to my neck and my eyes widened. I quickly got up from my bed and made my

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way to the bathroom with Cara hot on my trail. I looked in the mirror and I gaped in horror.

Red marks were covering my neck and breasts!

"Oh, how I wonder who gave you these marks." Cara started to tease with a mischievous smirk.

"How am I supposed to cover all this!" I stared at her in shock.

"You're not."

"What?! What do you mean I'm not? This is embarrassing." I was already dying at the thought of walking around like this.

"He's an Alpha male, Thaia. It's his way of showing you are off-limits." I gaped at her.

What the hell? Was that even a thing?

"Yeah, no thank you. I'm covering this up." I went back to my room and grabbed my makeup bag. I used a great amount of makeup to cover the marks on my neck and some on my chest. Wearing a turtleneck would be easier to hide the marks, but it was so freaking hot, and I would die from the heat if I did.

"So, tell me, did you fuck this time?" Cara was being nosey as always, and I rolled my eyes at her.

"No."

"Then what? 'Cause damn! He obviously knew what he was doing." She laughed, and I just shook my head at her, not finding it funny at the moment.

"C'mon, don't be such a prude and tell me." I sighed as I knew

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she wouldn't drop it.

"He just came to check on me after what happened at the church, and then.... Things started to... get heated." It sounded more like a question.

"Oh, he checked up on you good." She snickered.

I scowled and threw my makeup brush after her when she didn't stop teasing me.

7/7

The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 20

Posted by

By

Althaia

Planning a wedding was absolutely no joke! There were so many things that needed to be done and it was not even my own wedding, and I was out there killing myself. When I said to Cara she owed me a big time for spending hours looking at materials, cakes, colors, and whatnot, she simply said my reward is staying in this majestic manor.

What a sucker.

A week had gone by already, and it has also been a week since I last saw him. Not that I was counting the days and especially not because I think about him every damn minute. ...Okay, so maybe I did think about him... But who the fuck just comes and pleasures you, then freaking disappears out of the blue?!

The Devil apparently.

I was starting to get a sullen mood the more I thought about it as I made my way down the stairs. I raised my brows when I noticed a bunch of people rushing back and forth, carrying flowers, tablecloths, vases, and all kinds of

decorative stuff. I looked around at the people, confused as to what was going

Huh, did I miss something?

I spotted Rosana walking towards the stairs, carrying blankets in her arms.

“Hi Rosana, what is all this fuss about?” I gestured to all of

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these people. <

“Oh, a party is being held tomorrow in the garden.” She said cheerfully. I had really come to like Rosana, and we would often chat whenever I had my breakfast. She had taken a liking to me because I always returned my plate empty even after having seconds, but it was hard not to when she created heaven on a plate for me. She was such a good cook, and with this rate, I would be rolling soon instead of walking.

“A party? For what occasion?”

“For Mr. Lorenzo and Miss Cara.”

“Oh... Is it like a formal party or a casual one? If formal, then I need to do some shopping.” I said mostly to myself.

“It’s up to you, hun. It’s just family and close friends who are coming.” I gave her my thanks and continued my way to the kitchen. How many parties were they supposed to have? I mean, yes, I did ruin their engagement party, but how was I supposed to know I was supposed to be dead, and not exactly show up? Therefore, that one was not entirely on me... The dinner party was my Uncle’s fault. Hence, why he had no tongue anymore.

I smiled. The thought of that always made me happy.

I grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge and looked at the time, debating whether I should go out and buy a dress for tomorrow, or just wear something simple I could put together with the clothes I had brought with me. I decided it was better to have something fancy as a backup in case everyone decided to show up as if they came from a fashion runway.

I spotted Dario at the front door and immediately thought he

Dividing into pages now

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could give me a ride to a boutique.

“Hi, Dario! I was wondering if you could give me a ride? I need a dress for tomorrow’s party.” I asked with a bright smile, but he looked a bit hesitant.

“Sorry, but no one is allowed outside the manor.” He said and I raised my brows in surprise.

“Why is no one allowed outside?”

“Boss’s order.”

“Why?” I scowled at him.

“Can’t say.”

“Well, this is an emergency. Would you rather have me walk around naked instead?” I was exaggerating but if it got me out to a boutique then I didn’t mind pulling that trick. He looked uncomfortable when I said the last part and cleared his throat.

“I’m sorry but an order is an order. I can’t let anyone out. Especially you.” I gaped at him.

“Especially me? What have I done to be grounded?”

“Miss, I can’t tell you. I don’t ask questions and just follow the order.”

“What a dickhead ...” I muttered lowly under my breath. Not low enough because Dario’s eyes widened at the comment. Why the hell wasn’t I allowed to go out?

“Call him.” I squinted my eyes at him.

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“Miss, I really can’t do that.” He shook his head at me, having me cross my arms.

“It’s Althaia.” I corrected him.

“... Althaia, I can’t do that.”

“Why not?”

“He specifically ordered not to interrupt him unless it’s a life- or-death matter.”

“Well, where is he?” Dario stared at me blankly, not answering my question.

“Call him.” I pressed on, hoping he would budge.

“He would really have my head if I did.” I sighed. I almost gave up but then a genius idea popped into my head.

“Then give me his number.” Dario shook his head once again.

“I won’t leave you alone if you don’t give me his number. And trust me, I can be more annoying if I want to be.” Dario sighed as he looked at me, not really knowing what to do, and I just gave him an ‘it will be your hell’ look.

“Fine. But you didn’t get it from me.” He gave in, already wanting to get rid of me.

“Thank you, Dario!” I gave him a big hug and he just stood there, startled by my actions.

I went upstairs to my room, closed the door behind me, and sat on the bed. I wasn’t entirely sure what I was supposed to say but it was too late to back out anyway because I had already dialed the number and it was ringing. But he wasn’t

4/9

answering.

It kept ringing and I sighed, about to hang up.

Then he picked up.

“Althaia.” I shivered at the sound of his voice. I felt it was already too long ago I heard his voice, and it was so deep...

“How did you know it was me?” I asked in surprise.

“What’s wrong?” Damiano asked firmly, maybe almost concerned? Oh, shit! Did he think something was wrong?

“Oh... Erm, nothing. Well, I need to go out and buy a dress for tomorrow, so I have to go out.” It sounded more like a question than a statement.

“No.” He said immediately, almost cutting me off.

“What do you mean no?” I frowned.

“I said no.”

“But I need a dress.” I tried to explain to him.

“I will have someone get you one.”

“No, thank you. I want to go out and find one by myself.” What the hell was the big deal?

“No.” He said as a final order. I let out a noise of frustration.

“Why the hell not?!”

“Damiano, who are you talking to?” I stilled when I heard a woman’s voice in the background.

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“No one.” He replied.

I hung up the phone.

I stared at my phone for a long time, just blinking at it. I shouldn’t care I kept telling myself but still, I felt hurt. That son of a bitch! Did he really think he could just come and touch me, and then fuck another bitch? My fist tightened around my phone as I felt my blood boil.

I wanted to rip his stupid head.

I took a deep breath to calm down and went to Cara's room. I needed to let out my frustrations. I barged into her room but she wasn't in there. I could hear the shower running and made my way to the bathroom.

"Can you believe that bastard!" I almost yelled. Cara let a scream as I barged in. I ignored her and sat on the toilet lid.

"Could you at least knock?! What if I was shaving?!"

"Yeah, whatever. Sorry. Back to my problem." I said

dismissively and she poked her head out of the shower to look at me.

"I talked to The Devil."

"What Devil?" She looked confused.

"That Devil, Damiano."

"Ah, why?"

"Because I wanted to go out to get a dress for the party, which you didn't tell me about." Now I was frowning at her for not even giving me a heads up.

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III

"I told you about the party tomorrow. But you were zoning off. It's not my fault you decided not to listen." I must have been really tired if I couldn't remember she had informed me about the party. I shook my head as I had more pressing matters to discuss.

"But what about Damiano?" She asked.

"I was on the phone with him, going back and forth about letting me go out. And then, I heard a woman's voice in the background." Cara's mouth formed an 'o'.

“What if it’s the tv or something?”

“Nope. She said his name and asked who he was talking to. And he said no one. Then I hung up the phone.” I said angrily and Cara sighed.

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“Thaia, I hate to break it down to you But it’s common for a man like him to have affairs. Especially in his position, and multiple of them, in fact.” My heart clenched at her words, and I looked away. I couldn’t look at her as I felt so fucking stupid at the moment. Of course, he had... Why did I ever think he didn’t just because he decided to give me a little attention?

“So, I’m just a side hoe, then. Got it. Thanks.” I got up and made my way out.

“Althaia, I’m sorry.” She sounded apologetic, but it wasn’t her fault.

“For what? I’m the one who’s naïve and stupid.” I gave her a forced smile and walked out.

I locked myself in the room for the rest of the day and

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cuddled my pillow in bed. I felt so stupid that he might actually have cared for me a little. But I didn’t know why I even thought he would care about me in the first place. Maybe his actions toward me had me confused or I was just delusional. It was not like I even knew him so I shouldn’t care.

At some point, Cara came to get me for dinner, and I

pretended to be asleep. She knew I wasn’t, but she respected my wish to be alone.

I didn’t sleep a wink at all, and it was now almost time for the party. My mind kept wandering to the golden-brown-eyed Devil, and then I felt even more stupid all over again. I huffed and dragged myself out of bed and to the bathroom to take a shower. Hopefully, it would help wake me up and refresh me a little.

I wrapped a robe around my body just in time for a knock sounding on my door.

“Come in.” It was Rosana walking in with a gown bag.

“This was sent for you.” She smiled and hung it up.

“I didn’t ask for it...”

“Mr. Damiano wishes for you to wear it.” I sighed and said thanks anyway. It wasn’t the poor woman’s fault, and I shouldn’t give her a hard time about it.

I ignored the dress and went through my luggage to see what I could pull together. After almost emptying my luggage, I found a dress that I had completely forgotten I had packed, and perfect for an outdoor party.

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I started to get ready and did a soft makeup look with winged eyeliner and a red lip. I let my hair be loose since I didn’t feel like doing anything with it. The dress I decided to wear was a black halter maxi dress, with a front twist that showed a bit of my mid-drift and a very high slit going all the way up to my right hip. It was very revealing, and I had to be careful how I moved if I wanted to avoid flashing people. I had packed this one in case we decided to have a night out, but I guess a garden party would do.

I finished the look with black heels with gold chains acting as the straps.

Pleased with the result, I made my way out but stopped when I saw the gown bag.

“Stupid dress.” And I kicked it.

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