

The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 171 – 180

Althaia

"Are you being serious?" I gaped at him as he smiled at me.

"No, I took you to the airport for the fun of it." I gave him a blank look to which he chuckled at.

"I told you I would take you to Italy to meet the rest of my family, now is a good time before the wedding."

"Well, now I feel a little nervous." I said.

What if they didn't like me at all, or thought of me as a bad match to Damiano since I wasn't, well, the most obedient person? He did say his grandmother was a traditional and religious woman, maybe she wanted a woman like that for him. I knew Damiano came from a Catholic family but he wasn't religious at all. He proved that in more than one way ...

"Don't worry, I know they will love you."

"One can hope..." I muttered. Damiano opened the door for me and took my hand in his, leading us to the private jet. Now I was feeling nervous about flying. So many hours in the air in that thing...

"Wait!" I stopped to look at him.

"Something wrong?" He looked around my face, probably seeing how nervous I was.

"I didn't even pack anything, and what about my passport?"

"I took care of it. Don't worry and just relax. You will be fine."

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Damiano lightly caressed my cheek with his thumb before leaning and softly kissing my lips. My stomach erupted with the fluttery feeling, making me smile against his lips.

“How much did you drink? Your cheeks are flushed. “He pointed out as his tongue went across his lip.

“A little more than I should have.” I gave an innocent smile when he frowned.

“But it was surprisingly good!”

“You liked the vanilla Scotch?” He raised a brow at me.

“You could tell what it was?”

“I can still taste it on your lips. It’s also what your father usually drinks.”

“Good thing I had a drink, hopefully, I won’t be too nervous about flying. Oh, that also reminds me.” I pulled out the necklace from my pocket.

“Can you help me put it on so I don’t lose it again?” I pulled my hair up to make it easier for him. I turned around to face him again when he was done, and he was looking at my necklace with a blank expression. He touched the small pendant as if examining it.

“Turns out I had forgotten it in the hospital.” I explained to him when he didn’t say anything.

“Did you, now.” He looked at me, and I gave a small shrug.

“I guess Ellie must have taken it off while she tended to my wounds?”

“Hmm.”

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“Is there something wrong?”

“No. Let’s go” Damiano let out a small smile and took my hand in his.

We boarded the jet where Giovanni and Luca were already inside, sitting comfortably in their seats. I looked around at the very luxurious jet in awe. Being rich had its perks.

“There’s also a bedroom when you get tired. It’s a long flight.” Damiano informed me.

“Damn, a bedroom? How long does it take to get to Italy?” I took a seat and Damiano sat across from me. There was even a table

between us.

“Around twelve hours.” My eyes widened in shock.

“I have to stay in this metal coffin for twelve hours?!” I gulped a little and Damiano looked at me with amused eyes.

“You have been to Italy before, right?”

“Only once or twice when I was younger, but I don’t remember flying for so long.”

“It’s almost the same amount of time to Greece.” He pointed out.

“I guess, but it’s been a while since I last went there. Also, I took sleeping pills so I wouldn’t be thinking about flying.” I said nervously. To be thousands of feet up in the air and if something went wrong, there was nothing you could do but just wait to crash and die.

I felt the color drain from my face.

“Hey, come here.” Damiano spoke softly to me and took my hand

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to sit next to him.

“You’re looking pale... Nothing is going to happen, I promise you it’s safe.” He looked at me, concerned.

“That is not something you can promise...” I mumbled, feeling my anxiety spike.

“If something goes wrong, can you at least shoot me so I don’t have to witness crashing to my death?” I asked him seriously. Damiano’s expression darkened.

“Don’t be ridiculous.” He quietly hissed at me. I ignored him and turned to look at Luca.

“No.” Luca said immediately before I could ask.

“Gio?”

“I will happily shoot you. Don’t worry about it.” He said, barely glancing my way as he focused on his phone.

“Thank you. I knew I could count on you.” Luca kicked Giovanni’s leg, making him look at him with a scowl. He then looked at me and then at Damiano after receiving a warning look from Luca.

“I was just kidding.” He quickly said, making me turn to look at Damiano, who had a terrifying look on his face.

“Watch your fucking mouth, or I will throw you out while we’re flying. Understood.” Damiano practically growled. Chills ran down my spine at his tone, and his voice was filled with promise. Giovanni gave a nod before going back to his phone.

“And you.” He held my chin to face him as he spoke quietly to me.

“Don’t you dare joke around with something like that again. I won’t tolerate it. He said
glare.

“Sorry.” I said quietly as he let go of me.

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I held Damiano’s hand tightly in mine, trying to calm down as I felt we got slingshot into the air. Damian tried to help me, talking to me to distract me while he caressed my hand, telling me a bit more about his family and Italy. It

worked because I didn't even realize we had been flying for a while as I was deep into our conversation.

"Did you have a good time with your father?"

"I did! It was nice to see him again." I said happily and he smiled at my reaction.

"That's good. What did you talk about?"

"He asked how I was doing and gave me a pep talk of some sort about dealing with death." I let out a small sigh.

"And if there was anything I could tell him to help investigate."

"What did he want to know?" Damiano furrowed his brows.

"Just if my mom mentioned anything before she passed away." I said.

"I see." He trailed off, once again wearing his blank expression.

"I don't remember much of what happened that night..." I sighed. It was just one big blank space whenever I tried to remember anything.

"Well, maybe she did?" I suddenly said and sat up straight, my heart beating a little faster.

"What is it?" He looked at me seriously, catching the attention of the others as well.

"Something about how she should have known how he was going

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to do this sooner rather than later." Damiano shared a quick look with the others before focusing on me again. I didn't know if it was something he could use, it could still be anyone.

“As much I would rather have you not remembering that night at all, do you remember anything else she said?” I frowned, thinking hard about it.

“She... told me whatever was going to happen I need to stay with you... because you’re the only one who can protect me from him.” Damiano’s expression turned ice cold and terrifying, sending shivers through my body as he stared intently at me.

“... But it could still be anyone. She didn’t get to finish what she meant by it.” My shoulders sagged in defeat and disappointment, knowing it was probably a dead end. He still didn’t say anything, as if deep in thought, making me wonder if there was something.

“I don’t want you to worry about it now. Leave it to me.” He said before I could ask.

“You will let me know if you discover something, right?” I looked at him with hopeful eyes but he didn’t answer immediately.

“I will.” Damiano gave a short nod and pulled me closer to him, kissing the top of my head.

Hours went by and I wasn’t scared of flying anymore. I even moved to sit across from Damiano to look out to see the sunset. It was an incredible view from above. To see the soft and warm colors, and the fluffy clouds was truly a majestic view.

Damiano still had work to do so I busied myself with my sketchbook which he luckily had, and ate lots of snacks. Though I

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quickly got bored as I couldn’t get into a creative mindset. Instead, I grabbed the small bag of chips and looked around. Luca had fallen asleep in his seat but Giovanni was still awake, and still on his phone.

He had been on his phone a lot lately. He didn’t notice I was staring at him, but then my eyes widened when I saw a small smile on his lips. I gaped in shock as he texted back whoever had him smiling like that.

I took my phone out and quickly sent a text to Damiano.

Althaia

Does Gio have a girlfriend?

Damiano looked at me with a brow raised, wondering why I was texting him, but I signaled him to text me back.

Damiano

Why the sudden interest?

I rolled my eyes at his jealous ass.

Althaia

He has been on his phone non-stop, AND he is smiling. Look!

Damiano took a discreet look at Giovanni, seeing how he was still slightly smiling.

Damiano

Not that I know of.

Althaia

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Sounds like a job for me. I'm going to find out!

I grinned at Damiano as he shook his head at me before resuming his paperwork. I sat comfortably with my legs over the armrest, swinging them back and forth, pretending I was sketching something, when in fact, I was waiting for Giovanni to get back on his phone.

"I need to pee." I got up once I saw him back on his phone. I walked past him, taking a few steps sneaking back to right behind his seat, and looked over his shoulder.

I held my breath to be quiet and tried to see who had his grumpy ass smiling like this.

"Oh, my God!" I gasped loudly, making him jump in his seat.

“What the fuck?!” He scowled but I just stared at him in shock.

“When did that happen?” I pointed to his phone.

“You were reading my texts?”

“Uh, yeah?” I said as if it was no big deal.

“When did that happen?” I asked again.

“I don’t need to tell you anything.” Giovanni scoffed.

“Scoot over.” I pushed him to make room for me on his seat.

“There’s no room for your fat ass here.” He groaned as I wiggled to get comfortable.

Awh, you think my ass is fat? I have been doing a lot of squats lately. Does it show?” I stood up and his eyes went wide, and his ears got slightly red.

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“Why are you trying to get me killed today?” Giovanni looked at the ceiling, avoiding looking at me.

“I’m not. So, is my ass fat or nah?”

“If you as much look, I will carve your eyes out.” Damiano stated coldly before his eyes met mine.

“And you, stop testing me. My hand has been twitching for hours now.”

“Oh, has it?” I wiggled my brows, getting a small smirk from him.

“Now I wished I was dead.” Giovanni commented with a disgusted look on his face.

“Shut it. Now, tell me how long you have been talking to Laila?” I once again made him scoot so I could wiggle my way next to him.

"You know I won't leave you alone before you tell me." I grinned. He ran a hand down his face in annoyance.

"For a while now." He answered.

"No, I need details." I needed to know everything since it was Laila we were talking about.

"It's not what you think. You were the ones who sent me to Portugal to make sure she would be safe, so I did. Now she just texts me to let me know how she's doing."

"Bullshit." I said immediately. There was no way he would have given her his number if he wasn't interested or concerned as well.

"You like her. You have been smiling at your phone like crazy." I teased.

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"I haven't." He gave me a blank look.

"But you have." Luca yawned and stretched his arms.

"Your endless bickering woke me up. What did I miss?"

"Gio has a crush on Laila." I replied.

"Who?" Luca looked confused at the name.

"The girl she foolishly tried to help on her own, and almost got herself killed in the process." Damiano filled him in, now participating in the conversation.

"Oh, that girl." Luca said in realization while I gave blank look at Damiano for saying it like that.

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"Now tell me, how did it happen?" I went back to Giovanni, excited to hear the story.

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“It’s not that deep, okay. I was with her to make sure she got to her family safely. She then admitted she still felt unsafe and asked if I could stay for a couple of days. I hung around for a bit and helped her out with some stuff.” He shrugged and tried to dismiss us. I shared a with Damiano and Luca, also seeing they didn’t fully buy it.

“Yeah, he likes her.” Luca said amused.

“Totally.” I grinned. I was thrilled that Laila could find comfort after everything. And I knew he liked her since she had him smiling like that already. Maybe she could make him a lot less grumpy.

“You’re over your heads. I’m just seeing how she’s doing.” Giovanni tried to defend himself.

“Whether you want to admit it now or later, we know you’re into

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her. You don’t care about people.” Damiano said, and we nodded in agreement.

Damiano got up and held his hand for me.

“Don’t disturb us.” He said to them and lead me to the back of the jet where the bedroom was.

“Get some sleep. When we land it’ll be around dinner time as they are nine hours ahead.” He explained to me as he unbuttoned his dress shirt, my eyes slowly going down, following his hands as his abs came to view.

“I will sleep after you give me what you promised me.” I met his eyes after I was done drinking in his body, giving a sly smile.

“I have every intention of fulfilling my promise.” He grabbed the hem of my shirt and pulled it off me, unclasping my bra and throwing it to the side. He picked me up and laid me down on the soft bed.

“Let me show you how I am a man of my word.” Then he sealed his lips to mine.

I took a quick shower before we landed and got ready since we would drive directly to Damiano’s family house. My nerves kicked in, and my stomach was in thousands of knots as I kept changing outfits. I wanted to give a good impression.

“Is this fine? Am I showing too much skin?” I was wearing a very pretty nude midi dress with ruched details and an asymmetrical hem. It had only one sleeve, leaving my other arm entirely bare.

“You look beautiful.” Damiano smiled, pulling me into him by my

waist.

“Thank you.” I placed a quick kiss on his lips.

“So, I’m not showing too much skin?”

“No, you’re fine. You’re overthinking this.” He chuckled.

“Well, I don’t want your grandmother to tell me I’m going to hell for showing too much skin! She can never know I’ve spread my legs for you before marriage. She will for sure tell me I will burn for eternity! What if -” Damiano stopped my rambling by squeezing my cheeks together with his hand, making my lips pout.

“My love, you will be fine. More than fine because you’re you. You have a way to make people love you.”

“Do you think so?” It came out muffled.

“I know they will love you. Come, it’s time to go.” He held my hand and I took a deep breath as we made our way out of the jet.

This was it.

I was meeting his family.

We stopped right in front of a beautiful estate and my nerves kicked in full force.

“This way.” Damiano led me to the garden, and that was when I heard voices the closer we got.

“Stay behind me.” He smiled as we rounded the corner.

“Oh mio Dio, Damiano!” Gasps and sounds of excitement were heard, making me smile at their reaction to him.

“My beautiful son is back.” His mother spoke in Italian and hugged him with tears in her eyes. It allowed me to see just how much they resembled each other.

Damiano embraced her back before she stepped away and

greeted whom I assumed was his grandmother. His mother was smiling at him, and then she turned to look in my direction, only now realizing he brought someone with him.

“Damiano?” She gasped and put her hand to her chest. His grandmother had the same reaction when she spotted me. Damiano took my hand in his with a soft smile on his lips.

“Madre, Nonna. Meet Althaia, the love of my life.”

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Althaia

My heart was thumping behind my chest in nervousness. Though I couldn’t help but look at Damiano with a soft look and a smile on my lips at how he introduced me.

The love of his life.

It made me let out a breath I didn’t know I was holding as he gazed lovingly at me. His mother and grandmother were visibly still in shock at the sight of me, and trying to process what Damiano had said to them. I could tell Damiano got his looks from his mother with her golden-brown eyes and her dark shoulder-length hair. She was incredibly beautiful with her tan skin as she wore a light copper-colored halter-neck dress.

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His grandmother was an elegant woman, standing tall with her dark brown eyes and black hair pulled into a bun, and wearing a long-sleeved dark green satin dress, making her look nothing less than royal.

Not intimidating at all.

“It’s nice to meet you.” I greeted them with a smile, squeezing Damiano’s hand to hide my nervousness.

“My goodness, aren’t you a beauty!” His mother beamed in happiness and pulled me in for a hug. I got surprised but chuckled in relief as I hugged her back.

“Thank you.” Her compliment had me shy and I felt my cheeks flush. She placed her hands on either side of my face to look at me with a soft smile, her eyes were truly sparkling with happiness.

“Così bella. Don’t you think, madre?” She stepped to the side for his grandmother to look at me. She had me feeling slightly intimidated as her dark eyes looked at me from top to toe. I bit down on my lip in nervousness when she didn’t say anything, having my heart thump faster. I looked at Damiano but he looked calm and relaxed and I took that as a good sign.

His grandmother slowly walked up to me, placing a hand under my chin, turning my face slightly from side to side as she examined my face. She then let out a smile and turned to look at Damiano.

“Very beautiful. You did good, my child.” She winked, making him let out a smirk as he turned to look at me.

“I know I did.” He placed a kiss on my forehead and lightly caressed my cheek. He drew me in with his golden-brown eyes, making me forget about everything as my heart filled with warmth.

“He’s completely captivated by her.” His mother whispered with a chuckle, making me snap out of the trance he had me in. I helplessly blushed when I noticed they had been looking at us while we were in our little bubble.

“Take a seat. I want to hear all about how this happened, and how long you’ve been hiding her from us.” His grandmother raised a brow at Damiano.

He pulled out a chair for me and took a seat next to me. Servers that I hadn’t even noticed came forward and set up plates and glasses for us before serving us food. The look and the smell of the food had me salivating, and I just realized how hungry I was.

“Eat, I know you’re hungry.” Damiano said quietly to me and gestured to the food on my plate. He didn’t have to tell me twice before I dug in as elegantly as I could. I didn’t know what it was but it was cheesy and saucy, and once it hit my tongue, my eyes

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wanted to oil to the back of my head delicious it was.

“Buon appetito.” His mother smiled and gave me more food.

“Now, tell us, Damiano... When did it happen and why haven’t you told us?” His grandmother took a sip of her wine, ready to interrogate and get the details spilled.

“I’m telling you now.” Damiano rested his arm behind me, giving a sly smile to his grandmother.

“For how long?” His mother asked excitedly.

“She was already in my life the last time I was here.”

“Damiano!” His mother scolded him.

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“All this time and you didn’t even bother telling your mother that you’ve found someone?” She made a tsking sound. She was not impressed with the information.

“As long as he has found someone, I’m happy. I’m not getting any younger but I refuse to die before you give me some great grandbabies.” His grandmother’s words had me stop in my tracks, but I quickly tried to cover it up by grabbing my glass of water. As much as I wanted to reach for the wine glass, I didn’t since I tended to drink a bit too much when I was nervous.

Damiano’s hand caressed my shoulder and I turned to look at him, seeing him wearing a blank expression before his eyes turned to mine. He took a subtle glance at my stomach before grabbing his glass of wine and swirling it around as he said nothing. I placed my hand on his lap to give him some comfort.

The loss of our baby hit him hard and it tore him apart when he had to break it down to me that I had miscarried. I tried to give him a

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small smile as I felt his body slightly tense. It was an innocent remark from her side as there was no way she could have known what we had gone through.

“Don’t say that, you’re going to scare her! There’s plenty of time to think of babies and Damiano’s still young, so let them take their time.”

“Plenty of time for whom? Certainly not for me! Damiano’s not getting younger too, he’s almost forty!” I snorted out a laugh before clamping my hand over my mouth, chuckling at his grandmother’s comment.

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“I’m thirty, Nonna.” Damiano sighed tiredly. It was obvious that this wasn’t the first time they have had a similar conversation.

“She will lecture him for a while about not getting any younger.” His mother sighed and moved her chair closer to me.

“Damiano did tell me how she’s trying to get him to have some babies as soon as possible.” I chuckled, seeing Damiano patiently listening to his grandmother.

“Don’t worry, honey. Since Lorenzo is getting married soon, some of the pressure has gone on him and Cara.”

“That might take a while since Cara hasn’t gotten over the fear of giving birth.”

“You’ve met Cara?” She asked surprised.

“She’s my cousin.” I grinned and her eyes widened slightly.

“Oh, so you’re a Volante?”

“She’s the daughter of Gataeno Volante.” Damiano informed as he sipped his wine.

“How interesting.” His grandmother commented, tilting her head slightly to the side as she looked at Damiano.

“Well, at least you’re Italian, or part of you is... Tell me, dear, what are you?”

“Ay, madre...” His mother sighed and shook her head.

I chuckled at his grandmother’s choice of words.

“My mother is Greek. Is it that obvious that I’m not fully Italian?” I grimaced a little, feeling embarrassed that my Italian sucked this

much.

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“You have a slightly different accent and, well, it’s not the best Italian I’ve heard! But don’t worry, spend time with me and you will have no trouble.” She smiled,

“You’re family now, and I’m sure we will see much of each other. You may call me Nonna from now on.”

“And you just call me Eleonora, no need to be formal with me as you’re practically my daughter.” She gave my shoulder a small squeeze, smiling big as she looked at us. I felt myself relax by their words, not thinking they would have accepted me this fast. It really must be a big deal when it came to Damiano’s relationship status.

It also made me feel a little emotional as I had spent weeks thinking about how I didn’t have a family anymore, when in fact I did. Every single one in Damiano’s life had made sure I could always count on them, and I was forever grateful for that.

I ended up telling how we met at the engagement party, and I joked about how I felt I had met the Devil, fearing he was after my blood. It wasn’t a joke back then, but now I could at least joke about it since it didn’t turn out to be true.

“...I never threatened to shoot you.” Damiano raised a brow when I said he appeared out of nowhere in my hotel room.

“You said you could easily put a bullet in me through the door.” I reminded him, making him smirk.

"That wasn't a threat, my love. I was stating a fact." I scoffed as he said that so casually.

"Right... Wait, were you planning on shooting me?" Damiano pretended he didn't hear me, having me narrow my eyes at him.

"What made you change your mind?" Nonna questioned, amused by our banter with her wine glass in her hand.

"She fell face first when she tried to run away from me. Never in my life have I seen anything like that before. It made me laugh." He looked at me teasingly, making me lightly smack his arm.

"So, me trying to run for my life and falling on my face, saved me from getting shot?"

"Funny how things work in your favor." He gave me a cheeky wink before getting up from his seat.

"If you will excuse us for a moment, I want to show Althaia around." He held his hand out for me to take. I thanked them for dinner before Damiano lead me away.

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"... Isn't she just wonderful?" I heard Eleonora say, making me smile at her comment.

The estate was truly beautiful with the lights illuminating our surroundings. I could make out the different flowers that had been planted, and there were beautiful blooming trees with pink flowers. I was already imagining sitting under the tree during the day to recreate the beautiful scenery in my sketchbook.

"I told you they will love you. You can relax now." He pulled me into him as we slowly walked around the garden in the comfortable night breeze.

"I never expected to have such a warm welcome. You have a wonderful family." I rested my head on him with a smile, and he kissed the top of my head. I stopped walking and turned to look at

him.

“I know I don’t say it enough, but thank you.” I said softly.

“For what?” His brows slightly furrowed.

“For everything. Thank you is a small word for everything you have done for me. No one has ever gone to the extent as you have... just for someone like me. No man has ever loved me as you have, and you continue to show me endless love, which I’m not even sure I’m deserving of.” I smiled. Words couldn’t describe how grateful I was for everything he did for me. He truly did go beyond and above when it came to me. I didn’t deserve him but no way in hell was I ever going to let him go. He was mine.

And only mine.

I stepped on the tip of my toes, placing my hands on his stubbly cheeks that I loved so much. He immediately wrapped his arms around my waist, pulling me as close to him, leaving no space between us as we gazed into the eyes of each other, standing right under the pink flower tree.

“I love you.” I whispered to him with a soft smile as I lovingly caressed his cheeks. He rested his head against mine.

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“Say it again.”

“I love you, amore mio. So much.” I placed a sweet kiss on his lips, making my heart flutter as if it was the very first time I kissed him. He placed a hand behind my neck, deepening the kiss as he claimed me with his tongue.

“We have to stop, they might see us.” I chuckled.

“Let them.” Damiano pressed me against the tree and worked his way down to my neck, sucking on my skin.

“My love...” I breathed out a moan.

“Fuck, baby!” He grabbed the back of my thighs and hoisted me up around his waist.

"You expect me to stop when you say that to me and make that sound?" He growled out and pressed himself against me, making me feel his excitement.

"I want to believe I've left a good impression, I don't want to ruin it by having your mother and Nonna find us fucking against a tree." I chuckled seeing how frustrated he was at the moment.

"I will make it up to you, I promise." I gave him a quick kiss before wiggling my way out of his hold.

"Fine..." He scowled as he watched me fix my dress. He softly grabbed my chin to make me look at him, the lust still visible in his eyes.

"You owe me a round with that mouth of yours." His voice went low as he ran a thumb over my lips.

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"Oh, look who's loving the skills of my tongue." I wiggled my brows at him. He let out that smirk that made him look like the sexiest Devil alive.

"You did take me by surprise there... I'm afraid to ask how you've learned to use your tongue like that." I shot him a side look while we walked around the garden. I wanted to laugh at how he was not being discreet at all with his question.

"I've only ever been with two guys before you. And a woman. But the real practice you get is with popsicles." I said.

"What did you say?" Damiano stopped and turned me around to face him.

"Popsicles?"

"Before that."

"That I have been with a woman?" I asked, confused.

"You have been with a woman before?" He asked slowly.

“Yes? I was curious and went for it. Is that a problem?” I crossed my arms and tilted my head when he didn’t say anything.

“No. It sounds hot. But that would explain your tongue skills.” He winked and I rolled my eyes at him before I turned to walk again.

“Who knew my innocent Althaia was quite the freak.” I yelped out when he smacked my ass.

“How about you stop being so horny for once!” I hissed out to him, afraid someone might have heard or seen us as we were close to the house. I tried to walk faster to get away from him, but I didn’t even get that far before I got pulled back, and he threw me over his shoulder.

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“I can’t. My dick gets hard every time I see you, just like it is right now. Let’s find a room where I can fuck you.” I felt his hand going up on the back of my thigh.

“Damiano! Put me down!”

“No.”

“You won’t get laid if you don’t put me down this instant!” I tried to get out but he held me in a pretty strong hold as he walked up the stairs to get inside the house.

“Are you threatening me?” He was amused.

“No, it’s a fucking promise.” I suddenly got put down on my feet, making me blink a few times to get rid of the dizziness.

“You are getting comfortable with making those threats to me.” He raised a brow at me.

“What can I say, it works. Pussy power for the win.” I grinned.

“There you are.” We both turned to look where Nonna came from.

“Let me show you your rooms.” She gestured for us to follow her, and lead us through the house and upstairs. We came to a stop in front of a door shortly after.

“This is where you will stay, dear.” Nonna opened the door for me.

“Thank you.” I smiled.

“And you.” She turned to look at Damiano.

“You’ll stay downstairs in the guest bedroom. No, sleeping together before marriage, it’s a sin!” I let out a chuckle but it slowly died down when I saw how sternly she looking at Damiano.

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Shit, Nonna is serious.

“If you want me to have babies, then I have to get in there.” My eyes widened and my jaw dropped to the floor in mortification.

“Oh, mio Dio.” Nonna slapped his arm and scolded him while he was chuckling at her.

“It’s a sin to commit fornication! Do you want to displease the Lord?” She looked at us with a terrifying glare.

“No, Nonna, absolutely not! I am definitely waiting... for marriage. No reason to worry.” I tried to reassure her with a smile. Damiano raised his brow at me in amusement. I shot him a look, telling him to zip it when I got an approving nod from Nonna. There was no way in hell I was ever going to let her find out that we had fucked way too many times already, and hours before even coming here.

“Good. Now, Damiano, let’s go and pray to get rid of those filthy thoughts. I still have Holy Water you can wash with...” Damiano rubbed his jaw, clearly not wanting to do it but didn’t say anything. She grabbed his arm and dragged him with her downstairs.

Damiano shot me a wink as he followed her downstairs. He was so going to find a way later to get what he wanted, and Nonna would definitely need more than Holy Water if she wanted to turn The Devil into an Angel.

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Damiano

I walked out to the backyard and took a seat on one of the sunbeds by the pool. I pulled out my pack of cigarettes and lit one, looking up at the balcony where Althaia's room was.

My grandmother had made it clear to me that I was not to step anywhere near Althaia's room during the evening because the Devil will lure us and tempt us to commit unimaginable things. Too bad it was my favorite sin to commit with the love of my life. And I knew she was keeping an eye on me right now, which was why I was out here, killing time and waiting for her to fall asleep. That woman never failed to treat me like a boy instead of the man I've become.

"Why is my son sitting out here by himself?" My mother was making her way toward me, always having a warm smile on her lips.

"I'm waiting for Nonna to fall asleep." I explained as I took another drag as she sat on the sunbed in front of me.

"Of course you are." She let out a small laugh.

"She made me pray and splashed Holy Water on my face." I shook my head and my mother tried to hide her laugh behind her hand.

"That's Nonna for you. You know how she feels about doing anything before marriage, and the whole 'you need to be pure' for your better half."

"I will have to disappoint her on that part." I gave her a smug smile to which she shook her head in amusement.

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Whole Again

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“As long as you keep it yourself. She’s going to have a heart attack if she hears that!”

“I know.” I smirked as I finished my cigarette.

“Althaia’s wonderful. She’s such a bright person and I can see just how happy you are with her. I’ve never seen you this carefree before with…” She trailed off, unsure if she should say it or not.

“It’s fine, madre. You can say her name.” I told her. Her brows slightly raised at my answer.

“Does she know about Sienna?”

“She knows.” I nodded. Her name didn’t bother me anymore when it got mentioned. She was someone I had shared my life with for a short time, and I got consumed with anger when she died. I couldn’t tolerate hearing her name after that. They were trying to take down both of our families, thinking it would be my downfall to watch her die in front of me.

And they were so dead wrong about that.

But I have moved on. I had done her justice, captured her killers, and ensured they paid for what they had done.

It was time for me to let go of that part of my life.

“That’s good. I can tell why you fell for her. The bright green eyes she has and I bet she keeps you on edge.” My mother chuckled.

“You have no idea how many times she has made me question my sanity. She’s stubborn, barely listens, and is too curious for her own sake. Everything that I hate but… it’s her. I don’t know how she did it but she captured me, especially with those green eyes.” I smiled as I talked about her. Althaia had all those characteristics !

hated, but somehow she was making me love them in her.

“She does bring a different side out of you that I haven’t seen before. It has been too long since I have seen you happy, and words cannot describe how overjoyed I am to see you like this.”

“She made me a whole new man.” I admitted. My mother’s eyes teared up as she looked at me with a small smile.

“Ma, don’t cry.” I chuckled and wiped away her tears.

“Oh, hush! There’s nothing else in the world that makes a mother happier than to see her children happy. My job is done.” She gave my cheek a light pat.

“But I won’t forgive you for not letting us meet her sooner.” My mother gave me a stern glare.

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“I wasn’t trying to keep her a secret.” I said as I looked up to the balcony. The light was on in her room and her silhouette was moving around. She was most likely unpacking.

“Someone is after her and I’ve been trying to figure out who it is.” I looked back at my mother, seeing her brows slightly raised at the information.

“I had planned on taking her here to meet you weeks ago...” My gaze shifted to the ground. I rolled my neck to get rid of the tension in my body that started to build up.

“She got attacked. I had Antonio and Luca watch her, but they took them all by surprise and broke into her home, chasing her and her mother. She watched her mother get stabbed in front of her, and she...” I let out a breath and she looked at me concerned.

“We lost a baby that night.” I told her. My mother let out a small

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gasp, putting her hand on her chest. I forced down every single emotion that wanted to surface, and into a dark corner.

I tried not to think about it. It often let me wonder what it would have been like right now if it didn’t happen... What she would have looked like. She would be showing now, something I so desperately wanted to witness. The image I had

painted in my mind of how she would look with a pregnant belly, had me close my eyes for a bit before I shoved it away.

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“...You were going to have a baby?” My mother looked at me in shock.

“She was pregnant?” She whispered and I gave her a short nod. Neither of us said anything after that. It was visible to see she was trying to process the information.

“Did you get them?” Her voice was laced with anger and her eyes turned cold.

“Some of them.” I frowned, not happy that it was only some.

“Good.” She gave me an approving nod.

“It won’t be long before I get to the one behind it. That’s why I took her here, to keep her safe for a little while... I almost lost her, madre.” I shook my head and ran a hand through my hair.

“I can’t go through that again. Not with Althaia.” She was the only one who had the power to completely destroy, and if I lost her... I wouldn’t know what to do with myself if I did.

“Listen to me, my son.” My mother placed her hands on either side of my face to make me look at her firm expression.

“You won’t lose her as I do not doubt you will do everything you can to keep her safe. Sienna was a different story, and you’re not the same as you were back then. You’ve grown and become wiser. You are Damiano Bellavia and my son. Don’t you forget that.” She finished with her usual warm smile and a soft look in her eyes. Her words made me the corner of my mouth upwards.

“Grazie, madre.” I got up from the sunbed and embraced her, placing a kiss on top of her head.

“Anytime, my son.”

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The sound of a balcony door opening made me look up at Althaia's room. She was nowhere to be seen with the light off but she had opened the door, and I took that as my cue.

"Are you going to climb up to her?" My mother chuckled and I smirked.

"I am. If you don't mind, I would like to get to my woman now."

"She's all yours. I will make sure your Nonna doesn't know, but you better be out before she wakes up." She sang out and made her way back inside.

I waited and smoked another cigarette. I scanned my

surroundings, taking my time to make sure the coast was clear. I scoffed out loud in the process that my grandmother was making me behave like a fucking hormonal teenager.

I stopped in front of the wall I would have to climb up on to get to her balcony. It was going to be a piece of cake as it wasn't that high up. I had also done this too many times when I was a young boy when I wanted to go out without anyone knowing. As a kid, it was some workout, but this time I wouldn't have to do much with my height and strength.

I glanced up at the window and jumped to get a grip on the window sill. Hanging against the, I swung my body to the right to get a hold of the edge of the balcony. I pulled myself up and climbed on the other side of the railing.

Piece of fucking cake.

The curtains were slightly blowing with the night breeze, and I pushed them aside as I stepped into the dark room.

Only for something to hit my face.

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My eyes went down to the floor to see what it was. It was a pillow. I looked back up, seeing Althaia looking at me with an innocent grin on her lips.

Did she just hit me with a fucking pillow?

"I'm sorry. I definitely thought you were a kidnapper." She bit down on her lip to prevent herself from laughing at her own joke.

"Did you, now?" I stepped closer, knowing she had another pillow behind her back.

"Yes, but I can see how it's not a kidnapper, but rather The Devil decided to pay me a visit. I guess the Holy Water didn't work." She said and swung the pillow at me again, aiming for my head. I blocked with my arm, pulled it out of her grip, and threw it to the side.

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"The Devil, you say?" I gave her a devilish smirk as I walked closer to her, watching the amusement in her eyes. I came to a stop in front of her and pulled her into me.

"A beautiful one if I should say so myself." Althaia spoke softly and placed her hands on my chest.

"Took you long enough." She said before pressing her soft

lips to mine. I kissed her slowly, taking my time tasting her lips and tongue as if there was no place I would rather be.

Every time her lips were on mine, I felt the world stop for the briefest time. It often had me wonder how the shape of her lips fit so perfectly with the shape of mine. In my whole life, I have never been kissed like this. So tender and so sweet.

Althaia wrapped her arms around my neck as my hands slid down to her ass, lifting her to me. I fucking loved those legs around me.

Vouchers

"Want to dance with The Devil in the sheets?" I asked against her lips, already walking us over to the bed.

"I don't know if that's a good idea." She leaned slightly back to look at me.

"Why not?"

"I, uh...happen to be kind of...loud?" I smiled when her cheeks started to get flushed.

"You are, and your voice is my favorite sound in the world." I chuckled when she looked shy about it.

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"As much as I would rather have you screaming my name, I do have something in mind." I laid her down on the bed, hovering over her as my hands trailed up her thigh and to her underwear, before sliding them down her legs.

"Open up." I gave her a smug smile. Her brows raised but still opened her mouth, and I stuffed it into her mouth. It was enough to make sure she wouldn't be able to make much noise. I grabbed the hem of her nightgown, pulling it over her head but stopping right at her wrists and tying them together.

"Now, be a good girl and try not to make a sound." I spoke to her in a low tone as my eyes went over her naked body, watching her chest rise and fall faster in excitement. I drank her in, making sure to see every single inch of her. Her full round breasts, the curve of her waist, her full hips, and her lean, slender legs before meeting her eyes again.

And those eyes were my favorite. The way they would sparkle and look so innocent. She was absolutely perfect with the most beautiful soul that brightened up my dark world.

I got up, standing at the end of the bed as I kept looking into her bright eyes. I slowly undressed, her watching my every move, drinking me in just as I had done to her. I threw my dress shirt to the side and started to unbuckle my belt, removing my pants and freeing my already hard length.

Her green eyes went down, focusing on my length.

"Do you want it?" My voice came out low and rough as I stroked myself painfully slow, and her eyes followed every movement.

Althaia slowly spread her legs for me, making me smirk at her actions. I hovered over her again, leaning down to capture her breast in my mouth, my tongue gliding over and swirling around

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her nipple. My hands trailed down her stomach and stopped right between her legs, following her slit before pushing a finger inside of her. I grunted at the feeling of her wetness. She exhaled a breath when I curled my finger inside of her, moaning slightly.

“No sounds, baby.” I whispered to her. She gave me a displeased look but nodded anyway.

My lips slid down her body, continuing down her stomach until I stopped between her thighs. I kissed the inside of her thigh, making her squirm as I continued to plaster kisses around her before reaching my sweet destination. I pushed my tongue inside of her, tasting her sweetness and working to give her pleasure. Her breathing changed as I held onto her thighs, focusing on that spot that I knew would give her the most pleasure.

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I glided my tongue in slow strokes until I felt her legs tremble, letting me know she was close. I stopped and pinned her arms above her head, and spread her legs further to position myself. I exhaled a breath, slowly entering her, feeling her warm and tight walls consuming me. No matter how many times I had been inside of her, it was a different feeling, which had me go crazy every single time.

I sped up my pace, barely able to restrain myself to not go faster to make sure the bed wouldn't make much noise. I watched her breasts bounce with my movements, and she bit down on her underwear, struggling not to make a sound as she closed her eyes.

Fuck, I need to feel more.

I flipped her onto her stomach and grabbed her hips to get her on her knees. I carefully pressed her face into the pillow, knowing she would struggle to keep quiet. I went in with deep rhythmic thrusts, having me groan in bliss. I slid a hand down her spine, making her

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shudder under my touch as I watched the way her back was beautifully arched for me to fuck her good.

I coming out heavier, grunting quietly and filling the room with the sounds of our skin slapping against each other.

ved her ass and thrust faster and harder. My breathing was

I could hear her muffled moans as I played with her clit, knowing she was so close. I kept going, faster, deeper, feeling her tight walls as she clenched around me. Her climax rippled through her body and her legs trembled, making me hold her hips tightly.

“Fuck!” I pulled out almost a second too late and released on her. Althaia slumped down flat on her stomach while I caught my breath.

“Don’t move.” I told her even though I knew she wouldn’t be moving for a while. I went to the bathroom, cleaned up, and grabbed a damp towel before returning to bed. I wiped everything away and untied her wrists. She lazily rolled onto her back and I pulled out the underwear in her mouth as she slowly opened her eyes, giving me that sexy sly smile of hers.

“The Devil knows how to dance well.”

“Only the best performance for you, my love.” I chuckled and placed a kiss on her lips.

Chapter 180

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Damiano

I watched Althaia as she tried to stop laughing but failed so miserably.

“So, your Nonna is really assuming you’re a virgin? A thirty-year-old virgin?” She asked in between chuckles but couldn’t stop and was now full-on laughing. She was laughing so hard that no sound was coming out and tears were visible in her eyes.

“Apparently.” I smiled. She tried to compose herself and wiped away her tears.

“That is too funny!”

“She has always been like this. Nonna was after us, trying to teach us not to fool around with anyone until we got married.”

“I can kind of understand that. To not let a bunch of hormonal boys fucking around and accidentally get someone preggo. But you were once engaged! Surely she wouldn’t expect you to be a virgin when you were in a serious relationship, right?” Althaia looked amused and moved to lie on her stomach, resting her chin in her hand, and looked at me with a raised brow.

“Sienna... was different.” I placed my hands behind my head and closed my eyes.

“What do you mean different?”

“That Sienna was a proud Catholic woman.” I answered.

“Wha... Wait, weren’t you engaged for like three years or something?” I felt her move and hover over me but I still didn’t open my eyes.

“Yes.”

“And you’re telling me you didn’t have sex...?” She sounded confused but I didn’t say anything.

“Come on, just tell me! I’m not going to get jealous if that’s what you’re worried about.” I knew she rolled her eyes at me which made me slightly smile.

“We didn’t have sex.” I opened my eyes to look at her, and she gave me a look that clearly showed she didn’t believe me.

“You want me to believe that?” Althaia shot me a blank look.

“It’s the truth. She wanted to wait for marriage and I respected that.” I replied. She looked at me for a long time before slowly realizing I wasn’t joking. Her brows raised and her mouth slightly formed an ‘o’.

“Oh wow, three years and you didn’t... Did you cheat on her?” She asked accusingly with a dissatisfied look on her face. It was my turn to shoot her a blank look.

“I’m many things but a cheater isn’t one of them.” I stated firmly.

“It’s just that... You have such a high sex drive! You’re constantly horny and I can barely keep up with you!” She exclaimed, making me raise a brow.

“Barely keep up with me? My love, you’re just as horny as I am.” I smirked as I grabbed her waist for her to lie on top of me.

“No, I’m not.” She frowned as her cheeks were slightly blushing.

“You are, whether you want to admit it or not, your body says otherwise. Your pussy seems to be wet and ready when I’m around.” I said to her, my voice going low.

“Oh, my God, just stop...” Her cheeks reddened, even more, and looked away from me. I knew she felt shy whenever I talked like that to her, making me want to tease her even more. In many ways, she was so incredibly innocent, but never would I have thought she would be a wild one in bed with high stamina. There wasn’t anything she wouldn’t let me do, which surprised me but I wasn’t complaining.

“I was just wondering how you stayed in a relationship for three years and, well, didn’t dip it.” She gave an innocent shrug and I chuckled at her choice of words.

“I took care of it myself whenever I needed to.” I shrugged.

“Ah! That’s why your biceps are this huge!” She gasped.

“It totally makes sense you’re this strong if you have been jerking off like crazy for three years.” She bit down on her lip to not laugh again when she squeezed my bicep.

“Funny.” I shook my head, entertained by her teasing.

“Things were different back then. I was constantly working and flying back and forth to Italy. I was barely having time for myself, or her for that matter, so it

was mostly easy.” I explained. I was too busy building my empire and creating a reputation for myself to actually care about my sexual needs.

“Though my hands have been on a nice break since you came around. I don’t even need them anymore, especially now that I have your mouth to use.” I gave her a smug grin as she scoffed at

By My Side(1) MAN

“You’re such a dick.”

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