

The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 2

Althaia

"No way you got yourself that car!" I gasped in surprise at the gleaming black Aston Martin.

"Sure did! Worked my ass off to get it." He said with pride as he looked at his car. I remember when we were younger how he had always said he wanted an Aston Martin, and I guess that became reality. If there was one thing we did together as kids were that we would always talk about cars. We were always excited and fascinated whenever we saw special and expensive cars in the movies. And I did have a weakness for those cars. Cars I would never be able to afford, but could only ever dream of seeing with my eyes.

Michael opened the door for me and I immediately glanced around, almost afraid to move in case I would ruin something. It was one sexy car and just sitting in a freaking Aston Martin felt surreal! I must admit, he looked even hotter driving it.

A sexy man deserved a sexy car.

"So, tell me Michael, how come you're attending the engagement party?" Sure we all knew each other, and we were close growing up. I just didn't imagine he would stay around as he always talked about wanting to travel around the world.

He turned his head to quickly look at me, and then back to focus on the road.

"Ah, I forgot you don't know." He said with a smile, and I

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Once Called Home

looked at him confused.

Didn't know what?

288 Vouchers

"I work for your father now." He said while still staring straight ahead.

Oh.

“So, does that mean you’re a part of the ... family business as well?” I didn’t know how to exactly word it out. It all sounded so strange on my tongue and made me slightly

uncomfortable. It didn’t settle well with me that he was working for my father now. Why on earth would he want to be involved in that kind of business? Even though I didn’t know much about it, the word mafia should be enough to know that was definitely not a safe career.

“Family business, you say?” Michael chuckled. “Is that what you call it?”

“Well, how else would I say it?”

“It’s just the mafia. Don’t be so modest about it and call it a family business, Althaia.” He casually said as if it was no big deal.

“Mafia...” I said out loud like it was a foreign word. “You’re saying it like it’s a normal 9-5 job you have.” I turned my head slightly to the side to scowl at him.

“What happened to the ‘I want to travel the world’ dream of yours?”

“Who said I don’t get to travel the world, Bellissima?” He said while smiling. “I get to travel around, and I get to make a

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shitload of money. That’s a win-win situation for me.” He laughed, and I felt a small tingle erupt in my stomach at him calling me beautiful.

Wait a minute.

“You speak Italian now?! Since when?” I said genuinely surprised that he spoke the same language as my father. My father was Italian while my mother was Greek. I grew up speaking both languages and spoke Italian whenever I was alone with my father, and Greek when I was with my mother, and when we were all together, English was the language we spoke. Still, my mother did speak Italian fluently as she was with my father for quite some time, and since I lived with my mother, it was both Greek and English.

“Well, you’re kind of forced to speak the language when you’ re constantly surrounded by Italian mobs. Gotta defend me if someone is out there planning to shoot my white ass.” He laughed as if he just told the funniest joke ever.

“I guess you’re right about that.” I couldn’t help but laugh along with him.

“What about you? Still speak the language or is it long forgotten?” Even though I hadn’t spoken the language in a long time, I still remembered a lot of it. I was not as fluent in the language as I was before, but I wasn’t about to tell him that. I didn’t want anyone to find out I still knew the language because I wanted to know if anyone was talking shit about

“Nah, it’s mostly forgotten.” I said while I positioned my body to face straight ahead.

“still know a few words here and there, but nothing too

major. It’s just me and mom, so there really isn’t any need to speak Italian.” I bit down on my lip, hoping didn’t catch on to the lie.

Michael turned his head slightly to face me and gave me another one of his beautiful smiles, his eyes twinkled a little in the process. He was truly one beautiful man with ocean-blue eyes you easily could get lost in. I had to tear my eyes away from him so I wouldn’t be caught staring for too long. He did make me a little nervous with his handsomeness.

“Yeah, I get that. No need to worry, I’ll be your personal translator during your stay.” He said while tilting his chin upwards like a soldier ready for duty. I gave a small chuckle at the sight of him. He looked so proud.

“Funny how the tables have turned, huh?” I smiled at him. “It used to be me who translated stuff for you.” He quickly looked at me while grinning, driving through the big gates of my father’s mansion. I could feel the nervousness only growing stronger the closer we got to the main entrance.

“We’re here!” said Michael in a singing voice.

Ready or not, here I come.

Michael parked just in front of the stairs leading up to the entrance of the house.

“Hold on a second.” He said as I was going to unbuckle my seatbelt. He quickly got out of the car and made his way to my side and opened the door for me, lending me his hand to help me get out of the car.

Handsome and a gentleman? Nice.

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288 Vouchers

I wonder what else he had to offer...

Quickly shaking the dirty thoughts that started to invade my head, I looked up at him and smiled. I gave a small thank you, holding his hand while trying to elegantly get out of the car, without flashing him too much with the long slit of my dress.

Taking my right foot out first was a mistake as the slit of the dress rose higher up, giving him a full-on look at my bare, tanned leg. I could see his eyes were fixated on my bare leg, and I quickly moved my other leg out of the car as well and stood up. I could feel the blood rushing to my cheeks when I saw Michael smirking at me.

Why was it so hot here? Or was it even hot? Or was he making me hot? Shit, I needed some strength to get through this night without ripping this man's clothes off.

I bet he looked really nice under all that clothes.

Okay, stop, don't go there.

I looked down to make sure my dress was still in place, and I wasn't accidentally flashing my underwear to anyone. Gosh, if people were going to talk about me, I certainly didn't want them to talk about how you could see my thong. I mentally cringed at the thought of that.

I trailed my fingers along with the necklace I wore, making sure it was in place as well, resting just between my breasts. It was a thin silver chain necklace with a teardrop aquamarine pendant with a gemstone.

“Still wearing the necklace, I see.” I saw Michael's eyes trail along with my fingers, giving a small side smile as he touched the gem.

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1288 Vouchers

“Of course! Nono gave it to me. This way he’s always with me. I never take it off unless I’m getting wet.” I looked at him and smiled. He dropped his hand to his side and gave a full-on smirk.

“Yeah?” He said while his face got close to mine. “How often are you wet, then?” He said in a low tone while he looked deep into my eyes with his ocean-blue eyes. My breath got caught in my throat a little at the way we were standing.

At this point, I was pretty sure my face was as red as it could be, and my heart started to beat a little faster at our closeness. I smacked his arm lightly while sidestepping around him. I felt like I couldn’t breathe when he was so damn close to me.

“Shut up! You know what I mean. C’mon, let’s go. I don’t wanna be too late to the party.” I said while looking down at my hands, holding the small gift box. I heard him chuckle behind me as he closed the car door and made his way right beside me. He took the small box out of my hands, holding it in one hand while his other hand placed it on my back.

“Ready?” He asked, and I gave a small nod. I took a deep breath, mentally preparing myself for whatever was about to come, hoping it would turn out to be okay.

Together we made our way upstairs and into the mansion, I once called home.

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