

## The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 211 - 220

Althaia

The whole experience of me trying on dresses gave me a strong sense of déjà-vu. It sent me right down memory lane when I went dress shopping for the first time with Damiano. He kept sending my ass back into the dressing room.

And apparently, Damiano and his mother were much more alike than I had ever imagined.

Because now, she kept sending my ass back with a new dress for the same reasons Damiano once gave.

"We are not trying to give Nonna a heart attack. That is too revealing!"

"It's unsightly."

"Simply tedious."

Eleonora was a harsh critic and I was afraid we wouldn't find anything that would please her. I then accidentally made a comment about how it didn't matter what kind of dress I wore as long as I was there for Cara.

"Oh no, honey! You have a reputation to uphold. You must show that you are the soon-to-be wife of a Don. And not just any Don, but Don Damiano Bellavia. It is now your obligation to also display his wealth and power along with your beauty. You do so through the manner in which you present yourself." She explained, which caused my brows to rise.

"I had no idea..." I muttered as my gaze landed on my

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engagement ring. That must be why he chose such a large diamond. The thought of having to show his wealth and

power through the way I presented myself was unsettling, to say the least. Sure, I grew up not needing anything and lived a comfortable life, but I was not used to the kind of money Damiano possessed. Him, spending millions of dollars on me, was just still purely mindblowing to me.

"You will learn with time." Eleonora smiled.

I was starting to feel hot and if it wasn't because of the air conditioning in the boutique, I would have melted.

"I really hope you like this one because it's gorgeous!" I pulled the curtain to the side for her to see. I stepped to the circular stage and did a small spin for her to see the entire dress. I was praying she would approve of this dress, not just because I was tired of trying on dresses, but because it was a beautiful one.

It was a sparkling arctic blue dress with an off-shoulder v- neckline. It went tight down my waist and then slightly loose around my hips as it had a split to the side. I had never worn anything like this before and the color complimented my tan skin. The more I looked at it, the more I fell in love with it but dreaded Eleonora's answer.

"This is definitely the one!" She said happily and I let out a sigh of relief. Luckily, we had already found the dress I was to wear for the event tomorrow. It was a deep, royal blue dress with a sweetheart neckline and it came with a pair of matching long gloves that stopped at my elbows. The third dress was kept a secret for now for some reason.

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'Oh, that's a gorgeous one!" I turned to look in the direction of the unfamiliar woman's voice. A woman, who couldn't be that much older than me, took off her sunglasses to admire my dress.

"How come you didn't show me this one, Corinna?"

"Because it was not for you, miss Miciela." Corinna gave a tight smile and the woman returned a much more obvious fake smile.

"Buona sera, Signore!" She greeted Eleonora with kisses.

"Buona sera, Miciela."

"It's so nice to see you again! How's the family? Damiano?" My brow went up the minute she mentioned his name.

“My fiancé is doing great, thank you for asking.” I said, giving her a sweet smile when she turned to look at me when I made my way toward them. Everything in me wanted to let her know he was in fact my husband, but I managed to keep myself in check.

“Miciela, this is Althaia, Damiano’s soon-to-be wife. And this is Miciela. Her family is in business with ours.” Eleonora

explained and I understood what that meant. In other words, an ally to the family.

“Nice to meet you, Miciela.” I purposely gave her my hand with the engagement ring on to shake. Her gaze did land on my engagement ring before she shook it.

“Likewise, Althaia.” She said my name as if she recognized it, having me slightly tilt my head to the side.

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Honey, get changed, and let’s go to the jewelry store to get you something pretty.” I gave a small nod and went to the dressing room, but not before I shot Miciela one last look as she was also eyeing me from head to toe.

Fuck, I really hope she isn’t one of Damiano’s past lovers.

I immediately shoved the thoughts out of my head. I had to remind myself that it was all in the past and it didn’t matter anymore. I was his wife now and that was what mattered.

I was happy to be back in my own dress, which was nice and light and helped my body cool down from trying what felt like hundreds of dresses.

“You can go right ahead while I sort this out.” Eleonora told me when I was near.

“You don’t have to, I can take care of it.” I tried to protest, telling her I would be the one paying but she lightly smacked my hand when I reached for my card, and then she practically pushed me out to Giovanni and Luca. They had been standing outside the boutique with the two men Eleonora had arrived with.

"This was one exhausting round." I sighed out to them and hoped we would find something quick in the jewelry store. I was thirsty and hungry.

"We thought it would be. Here." Giovanni handed me my favorite iced coffee and sugar-glazed Taralli.

"You're the best, thank you so much!" I took the iced coffee gratefully and gave them both one big hug. I almost wanted to cry in happiness when I took the first sip.

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"There you go, getting recharged." Luca chuckled as he watched me happily eat my Taralli.

"It's definitely getting me the boost I need."

"Done shopping?"

"Not yet. We're heading for the jewelry store now and then I think we're done." At least, that was what I was hoping for. It was not that I wasn't having a joyful time with Eleonora, but if we had to keep going like this with every shop, we would never make get out of here.

I took my time drinking my iced coffee and eating the Taralli before going inside the jewelry store, but with how hungry and thirsty I was, it all went down in mere minutes. Luca and Giovanni stood outside again while I looked for something that would go with my new dress. As I looked around, my eyes landed on one particular ring that caught my attention.

"Can I please have a look at this one?" I asked Mr. Felini, a kind older gentleman who was the store's owner as he informed me while I browsed.

"Of course!" He immediately took out a key to unlock the display and took out the ring. It was even more magnificent up close. It was a wide, rectangular gold ring with a large, green emerald. It had tiny diamonds on each side of the emerald and even some going down along the band.

Mr. Felini told me a bit more about the ring and its price. My eyes wanted to pop out of their sockets. It was pricey but it was such a unique ring.

"I would like this one, please. Can it be wrapped as a gift?" I

asked.

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“Absolutely! It’s no problem.” He smiled and I handed him back the ring.

“And I would like to pay for the ring with this card.” I handed him my card just in case Eleonora showed up and tried to pay

for it.

“As you wish.”

“Thank you! I will still have a look around.” I said once I handed him the paperwork I had filled out since it was a large

purchase.

“Take as much time, miss.” Mr. Felini replied happily, making me smile. I continued to look around for a necklace but I didn’t want to buy just anything in case Eleonora didn’t approve of it.

I turned to look when the door to the jewelry store opened, only to see it was Miciela. I mentally rolled my eyes when she gave me her fake smile.

“So, Althaia...” She said as she stepped closer to me while looking at the displayed jewelry.

“Are you also attending the ball tomorrow?”

“I am.” I gave her one curt answer, not hiding that I didn’t want to chit-chat with her.

“I’ve heard of you.” She stopped in front of me and I looked at her blankly.

“Sofia is a great friend of mine.” Miciela smirked.

“Sofia...?” I tilted my head, pretending I had no idea who she was talking about.

“She worked for Damiano.”

“Ah, Sofia, the housekeeper! How is she? Has her nose healed well? And what about her hands? Poor girl didn’t know what she was up against.” I sighed as I feigned a sad look and shook my head. The smirk on her face got wiped away immediately and was replaced with a glare. She opened her mouth to say something but stopped when Eleonora came into the store. Miciela immediately plastered a fake smile on her face, and I slightly frowned, disgusted with how phony

she was.

“There you are. Found anything you liked?”

“I did! I thought of something like this?” I showed her what I thought would be great with the dress. It was a necklace with small diamonds on the chain and slightly bigger diamonds at the end as it was a longer-designed necklace. And it had matching long earrings too.

“Perfect! We will get you this one for tomorrow.” She said excitedly.

“Oh, is this not fitting for the wedding?”

“I have already chosen something special for you. It’s also a gift from me. Do you want to see it?” I nodded, curious to see what it looked like. Mr. Felini opened the jewelry box and I immediately shook my head.

“Eleonora, thank you, truly. But this is not something I can accept.”

“Nonsense! Damiano already told me you would try to protest but it’s not going to work with me.” She dismissed me and I really wanted to tell her it was too much but then again, I didn’t

Dividing into pages now

I want us to go back and forth in the middle of the jewelry store. Instead, I let out a small sigh and accepted my defeat.

“It’s always a pleasure to have you here, Signore Bellavia.” Mr. Felini said while he handed us the bags.

“Pleasures all mine.” She gave him a warmful smile and we bid him goodbye. We stepped out of the store and a smile immediately found its way to my lips

when I saw Damiano making his way toward us, making me walk faster until I was in his embrace.

“Missed me?” He smiled and lightly caressed my cheek.

“Always.” I leaned in and kissed him, forgetting we had a small audience. I pulled away when his mother started to chuckle and commented how we were cute lovebirds, which had me slightly blushing. I looked in the direction where Miciela happened to stand, sending glares in my direction.

“Oh, and tell Sofia I said hi.” I smiled sweetly before turning around and holding Damiano’s hand.

“Sofia?” He frowned as he looked at me while we made our way out.

“It’s nothing. Don’t worry about it.” I reassured him and he gave a nod.

“Did you eat?”

“I had a snack and some iced coffee.”

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“Let’s get you something to eat then.” He smiled.

“You know I won’t say no to that.” I chuckled and leaned into him as he wrapped his arm around me.

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Althaia

Since I had to attend an event that was taking place tomorrow, we had to spend the night at Nonna’s place. This also meant we still had to sleep in separate rooms because they didn’t know we were married yet.

Now, I was in bed, tossing and turning as I couldn’t seem to find a comfortable spot. I was used to having Damiano sleep next to me. I sat up, let out a sound of frustration, and got up from the bed. An idea came to mind when I looked at

the wrapped ring box I had. I grabbed it and shoved it in between my breasts since I had no pockets, and made my way to the door.

I carefully opened the door and peeked out in the hallway to see if the coast was clear. It was as quiet and I thought I would take this as my chance and carefully closed the door behind me. I moved silently through the dimly lit hallway and made my way downstairs.

I stopped at the end of the staircase and took a look around in case Nonna was up. I almost wanted to chuckle at how two adults had to sneak around to be with each other. But I was having fun with it right now as I played spy and tried to be light on my feet.

It wasn't that difficult as I tiptoed my way around, hiding behind any near furniture to see if the coast was clear. In no time, I stood in front of Damiano's door and slowly pulled the handle down, and opened the door. I was even holding my breath just to make sure no sound was to be heard. I let out a

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breath once I had sneaked inside and closed the door behind

I saw Damiano lying peacefully in bed with his eyes closed. And it was such a mighty sight. He was shirtless and had his arms behind his head, making his biceps look deliciously huge. I walked closer and hovered over him, expecting him to open his eyes but they remained closed.

"Damiano." I whispered to see if he was truly asleep but he didn't react.

"Damiano." I still got no response from him. I narrowed my eyes before letting out a smirk.

"I'm horny." Damiano's eyes flew open and grabbed me so fast that I was now lying underneath him. I had to bite down on my lip to prevent myself from laughing.

"I knew you weren't asleep!"

"Offer me your pussy and I will even wake up from death."

"You're too much." I chuckled quietly.



“Spread your legs, baby” His hand was already on its way down before I stopped him.

“I’m not horny, I just said it to get your attention.” He clicked his tongue at me, not impressed.

“Shame. I was about to show you a good time.”

“I know. But I just wanted to sleep next to you.”

“That’s just as good.” He smiled.

“I actually have something for you.” I smiled nervously. I turned on the light on the nightstand, and Damiano raised a brow when I reached in between my breasts to retrieve the ring box I had stuffed in there. It was one of the very few perks of having big boobs.

“Here. For you.” I handed him the gift, butterflies were flying around in my stomach as I had no idea if he would like it. I watched him unwrap it and I observed his expression but not much was showing. He finally opened it and took a look. before his eyes met mine. I gave a shy smile and took the ring, held his hand in mine, and slid it down on his finger.

“I want people to know you’re taken too. I thought it looked nice with the green emerald as you always say you love my green eyes. They say green represents growth and renewal, being the color of spring and rebirth. The gold represents divinity and power.” I finished and he gazed at it for a while.

I bit down on my lip in nervousness. I had no idea if it even was something he would wear. I had never seen him wear any kind of jewelry so this was a risky shot. I immediately thought of him when I saw it, and considering Damiano’s story, it was perfect for him.

“I can’t remember the last time I received a gift ...” Damiano said quietly while still looking at it.

“But this is definitely my favorite one.” His expression softened with a smile

“You really like it?” I asked, hopeful.

“I do. Thank you, my love.” A wave of butterflies erupted in my stomach when he pulled me in for a soft kiss.

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You look even more handsome with that ring on your finger.” I was relieved he liked it. The ring looked even better on him as it made him look rich and powerful in a different way.

“Because it lets people know I’m yours.” He stated, amused.

“Of course!” I chuckled and got comfortable in bed with him. It did make my jealous ass feel better now he was wearing a ring.

“There’s also something I want to ask you...” I trailed off.

“What is it?” He looked at me while stroking my hair.

“I met Miciela today and she asked about you.. Made me wonder if you two have -”

“No, never.” Damiano shook his head immediately.

“Okay, good. Now I can sleep in peace.” I yawned and snuggled into him with a smile.

“Is that what kept you awake?”

“Maybe.” I gave an innocent shrug.

“You silly woman.” He chuckled and I poked my tongue out at him.

“There’s no way I could ever mess around with someone like her. Miciela is known for being a climber.”

“A climber? The type who fucks her way to the top?” I asked, not expecting to hear that.

“Yes. She thought she could use Rafaelle to get to me but he was only interested in fucking her. So he did, and left as soon

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as he was done with her.” Damiano explained.

“No way!”

“I had to save his ass as he almost got in trouble with her brother. I’ve told him many times to not fuck anyone

important to my business but he still did.” He let out a small sigh and shook his head.

“... I kind of feel sorry that he used her like that, even though she used him too.” I muttered, not liking how they used each other.

“She tried to get to Lorenzo after she failed with Rafaelle.” He added and I dropped my jaw.

“I take back what I said, I don’t feel sorry for her. She tried to get with Tank Man?” I honestly had no idea how one had the guts to approach Tank Man. He looked like he could crush you with his pinky.

Damiano laughed quietly at my reactions and when I said Tank Man. He moved to lie on his side and pulled me into him.

“If it makes you feel better, I always made sure it was with women I knew I wouldn’t see again. Except for that one mistake. And I definitely don’t mess around with someone I’m in business with.” Damiano reassured me.

“It does make me feel better. Thank you for telling me that.” I smiled. I knew it shouldn’t matter because it was all in the past but it made me feel so much better knowing he never messed around with Miciela. I didn’t like her one bit and she was probably the biggest faker I’d ever met.

“Go to sleep, you have a long day ahead of you tomorrow.” I

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gave a nod as I was already feeling tired. I snuggled into him and soon let sleep take over me while he did smooth circles on my back.

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It was yet another day of training. Even though I had an event to attend later in the evening, Damiano wouldn't let me miss my training. And trust me, I tried to get out of it by saying it takes time to get ready but he simply shut me down, having me scowl at him the entire time to the field.

"Hey there, pretty lady!" I looked up at the familiar voice.

"Rafaelle!" I erupted excitedly when I saw him. He did a small run toward me and gave me a bone-crushing hug.

"Have you missed me?!" He shouted.

"I have!" I chuckled when he let go of me.

"When did you get here?" I asked.

"Not too long ago. I heard something big happened to your and I had to come and see for myself. Let me see your hand!" Rafaelle grabbed my hand and did a dramatic squeal.

"Holy fucking shit that is huge! Congratulations!" He picked me up and started to shake me as I laughed.

"How did he do it? Was he romantic? Did you spread your legs for him after?" He wiggled his brows, making me roll my eyes at him.

"As if I'm going to tell you." I shook my head and he almost pouted at me.

"Come on! Just tell me!"

"I will leave it to your imagination."

"Oh, baby, the things I imagine are going to make you feel so

dirty -" Rafaelle barely got to finish his sentence when

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Damiano punched him in the stomach, making him let out a strangled breath. I just sighed at him for never learning to keep his mouth shut when Damiano was around.

I looked at the others while Damiano was busy threatening Rafaelle's ass when I noticed Antonio was here as well. He walked up to me with a smile, completely ignoring the ruckus between the cousins.

"Congratulations, Althaia. I'm happy he finally proposed to you." He said and ruffled my hair.

"Thanks, Nino." I smirked when he slightly squinted his eyes at

"I told you, you can't call me that."

"Mess up my hair and I will call you Nino." I laughed, and he shook his head at me in amusement.

"How's Ellie and the baby girl?" Antonio's eyes brightened at the mention of them, having me smile.

"They're both doing great. Baby girl is healthy and growing stronger every day."

"Just what I want to hear! I can't wait to see her, she's going to be so cute!" I beamed. I had no doubt she would be one beautiful baby girl with the genes of her parents. Her father with blue eyes and her mother with a sepia skin tone. She was going to break hearts for sure.

"Me either. Just don't let her wait for too long, she needs her cousins." He spoke quietly to me. My heart started to beat a little faster at the thoughts of both our kids running and playing around together.

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im already working on it." I whispered to him with a chuckle.

"Good." He gave a playful wink.

"Not the face! I have to stay pretty for Ava!" Rafaelle's voice rang out and I turned to look at them.

"My God, Damiano just leave him alone!" I quickly went over to them and stopped Damiano before he could land another punch. I pulled him away from Rafaelle who tried to compose himself before he let out a goofy smile

“Don’t worry about me, I can take it. It keeps me young.” I just sighed at him but couldn’t help but laugh anyway.

“So, when’s the big date?” He asked. I looked at Damiano and he gave me a nod, letting me know I could tell them.

“Well, there’s no rush actually since we’re already married.” Rafaelle dropped his jaw open and Antonio just smiled as he slightly shook his head while looking at Damiano but he didn’t look surprised.

“Without me?!” Rafaelle erupted, offended by it.

“We haven’t told anyone, you’re the only ones who know. So, keep your mouth shut.” Damiano spoke sternly to Rafaelle.

“Does that mean she...?” He stopped talking when Damiano gave him a deadly glare, making him raise his brows a little before letting out a smirk when he looked at me again. I looked at them, not having a clue what they were talking about.

“Althaia, get started. We don’t have that much time.” Damiano gestured for me to get out on the field.

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“Which one of you losers is fighting me today?” I looked at Giovanni and Luca with a teasing smile.

“Oh, look who’s confident! Let me go for a round.” Rafaelle rubbed his hands together and got ready.

“Ready to get that ass spanked?” He wiggled his brows.

“It’s my turn to beat him up.” I said to Damiano when he pulled out his gun.

“We’ll see about that.” Rafaelle caught me off guard when he grabbed me and put me in a headlock. But I had practiced this at least hundreds of times now and knew exactly what to do.

I quickly moved my head to the side to free my airway. I elbowed him in the stomach to create some distance between us before he could restrain my arms. Next, I held onto his arm, put my chin down, and bit him.

As hard as I could.

"Ow, shit! You bit me!" He yelled in surprise and immediately loosened his hold on me. It gave me the chance to get a better grip on his arm before I flipped him over my shoulder. He landed with a loud thud upside down in front of me.

"Don't underestimate me. Look who's my trainer." I let out a taunting smile.

"Don't get cocky!" He smirked and grabbed my ankle. But I saw right through it and got down on one knee before he could push me down. I gave a painful punch to his bicep to give a temporary paralysis.

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"Come again?" I teased when he let out a groan.

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The training went on as I had fun kicking Rafaelle's ass. He obviously went easy on me in the first rounds but after seeing I wasn't that easy to take down he went tough on me. It was challenging but fun as I managed to hold my ground for a long time before he eventually slammed me to the ground. It had to be a short training since I had to get back to get ready.

I took a much-needed shower when we got and I started to get ready. I did a warm makeup look with winged eyeliner and decided to do my hair in an elegant low updo with a few strands of my hair loose around my face.

Pleased with the result I went back to the bedroom to grab my dress but stopped when I noticed my phone was ringing on the bed. It stopped ringing when I grabbed my phone. I frowned a little when I saw how many missed calls I had, and before my mind could think of the worst possible things that could have happened, it rang again.

It was Michael.

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Althaia

I stared at the phone in my hand, not too sure if I should take the call or not. I didn't have anything to say to him but I kept thinking maybe something happened to my father and he was calling to let me know. I took a deep breath to calm my pounding heart and hoped there wasn't anything serious.

"Hello?"

"Althaia! Are you okay?!" Michael asked frantically,

"I'm okay." I said, confused why he was reacting like this.

"Why didn't you answer your phone? I thought something happened to you!" His voice was laced with frustration but also relief.

"I was getting ready and didn't have my phone on me... Is everything okay? Did anything happen to my dad?" I asked nervously.

"Listen, I need to talk to you. Can I see you tonight?"

"We can't."

"Thaia, please... I know I said some fucked up shit to you and I'm sorry. I really am but I need to see you." He sounded almost desperate.

"I can't, Michael. I'm not in the states right now..." I muttered.

"What? What do you mean you're not in the states?"

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"I'm in Italy." I said and took a seat on the bed.

"Why? With who..." His voice faded as he realized with whom.

"I'm visiting his family." He went quiet when I said that and for some reason, I was nervous about his reaction. I didn't want to hear another hurtful comment from him.

"... Did he propose to you?" His question was barely audible.

"He did. We're engaged." I heard him let out a breath and I couldn't help it as my heart ached for him. To know his feelings for me and to get such news



must be heartbreaking. I didn't want to hurt him. He was one of my best friends after all. But I couldn't return those feelings he had for me.

"Congratulations..." He mumbled.

"Thank you, Michael." I got up from the bed and saw Damiano standing by the doorway, looking at me with a blank.

expression.

"Listen, I have to go but I will talk to you when I can." I said to Michael.

"Wait -." I hung up the phone.

"How long have you been standing there?"

"Long enough." Damiano simply replied.

"Eavesdropping, are we now?" I raised a brow teasingly as I walked up to him.

"No, I came to give you this but didn't want to interrupt your phone call." He handed me the jewelry box I had bought with his mother.

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Oh, okay. Well, now that you're here can you help me with my dress? I need you to zip it up." He gave a nod and I went to grab my dress.

"What did he want?" Damiano asked while he zipped me up. I shrugged and looked over my shoulder at him.

"I don't know. He asked if we could meet up but I said I couldn't." I told him. I didn't give it much thought as I fixed the matching gloves. Damiano didn't ask anything further and I turned around to face him once he was done.

"Is there something wrong?" He was unusually quiet when it came to Michael.

"No." Damiano smiled softly and wrapped his arms around

"You look beautiful as always, Mrs. Bellavia." He said quietly and leaned down to place a soft kiss on my lips. I wrapped my arms around his neck, wanting the kiss to last for a bit longer.

"I have one more thing for you." He pulled out a blue garter band. Before I could tease him about it, he pulled something else out, having me look at him in surprise.

"It's an OTF knife. Keep it on you at all times when you're there." He kneeled and slid the garter band on me and placed the knife securely into the band.

"It eases my mind if you have something to defend yourself with. And no, you're not getting a gun. Not yet. You handle the knife better." He immediately said when I was about to ask him. But he was right. I was better with a knife than with a gun at the moment.

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Okay, whatever eases your mind." I said.

"Ready?" I nodded and he took my hand.

"Are you coming as well?" I asked when we got outside, seeing cars ready to take us.

"No, it's ladies' night."

"I see. What are you doing then?" He shrugged and stuffed his hands into his pockets.

"Probably get a tattoo." He suddenly smirked and looked out of the corner of his eye, seeing his Nonna and mother make

an appearance.

"You will do no such thing!" Nonna erupted and smacked Damiano's head with her clutch. I put my hands up to my mouth to not burst out in laughter at the amusing sight. He looked at her blankly and he slowly rubbed the back of his head.

"It's the work of The Devil!" She continued to scold him, making a chuckle escape my lips. He took a quick glance at me before his smirk returned.

"Nonna, do you know what Althaia loves to call me?" My eyes slowly started to widen.

"Il Diavolo. Because of the unimaginable things I do to her -"

“Let’s go, shall we?” I said loudly to drown out his voice as I sent him a glare to which he responded with a wink.

“Yes, but let me see you first.” Nonna had me do a small spin.

“Beautiful, dear!” She had a satisfied look on her face while

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giving an approving nod.

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“Of course, she is! My son has excellent taste.” Eleonora complimented me as well, having me slightly blush.

“That’s my woman. Have fun, baby.” Damiano kissed the top of my head.

“Will do!” I smiled before we got inside the SUV. It was his father’s men who were driving but I noticed Giovanni and Luca were following in a different car. They were after all my assigned bodyguards.

“Eleonora, you mentioned that since I am soon to be wife to Damiano, I now have an image to uphold. It made me wonder what exactly is expected of me as a wife?” I wanted to be prepared and have an idea of what I had to do. Damiano never mentioned anything of what he expected of me now that we were married.

“Traditionally, you would be taking care of your home and your children. To be a good housewife.” Nonna answered and I tried not to show how much I disliked that idea. Nothing wrong with being a housewife, I just imagined doing a bit. more than that.

“That was more in our days, madre.” Eleonora smiled and looked at me

“That would be up to you and Damiano and whatever you agree upon. Ask him what he expects of you and you tell him what you expect of him as well. It goes both ways.”

“And of course, your loyalty to him but we will get to it soon, dear.” Nonna commented and I nodded as I thought about what they said.

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We arrived at probably the largest ballroom I had ever seen which was so elegantly decorated. A swarm of women was present and I still had no idea what this ball was for. Maybe it was a get-together like the auction Damiano had taken me to, but this was just for the women to show off their power and wealth. I was still so fascinated by it all as it never occurred to me one would have to do such things. But it made sense if you had an image and a reputation to uphold.

It looked like we were the last ones to arrive as we stood at the top of a long staircase, overlooking the hall. The attention was quickly drawn to us when Nonna took a couple of steps ahead, standing tall with her head held high and overlooking them all like a Queen, and they were her subjects.

It was fascinating to witness. It was as if you could feel the power radiating from her just by the way she was carrying herself. Eleonora's words made even more sense as I watched them present themselves with just their presence. Not a single word needed to be said, and it made you almost want to bow down to them in pure respect.

It was beyond incredible.

Nonna was the first to go down the stairs and we followed closely behind as a show of respect for her being the monarch.

“Do you understand now, Althaia?” Eleonora asked with her warm smile.

“I do. I have never seen anything like this before.” I was still in awe but nervous at the same time because I had no idea if I could present myself the same way they had.

“You will learn how to with time.” She assured me as if she had read my thoughts.

As we made it down the stairs, we got ambushed. Well, it felt like it when a bunch of women eagerly came up to greet Nonna and Eleonora. It was almost

the same experience I had with Damiano at the auction, now just with Nonna and

Eleanora. But I didn't mind greeting and talking to them as I was introduced as Damiano's soon-to-be wife. They gave surprised looks and a few raised their brows and looked at me from top to bottom.

I didn't pay much attention to them. Instead, I observed Nonna and Eleonora, from how they talked and how they continued to carry themselves.

"Excuse us for a moment." Eleonora smiled and led me away from the group while Nonna was still conversing with some of the older women.

I let out a breath as we had already been here for a while, greeting and talking to what felt like at least a hundred people.

"Sometimes they just don't know when to give you a chance to breathe." She chuckled and grabbed two glasses of champagne, handing me one which I took gratefully.

"It is quite overwhelming, to be honest... It's definitely something I will have to get used to." I admitted.

"It will get easier."

"Can I ask how long you have been doing this?" I asked while we slowly walked around and looked at the art hanging on the walls.

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As long as I can remember! But it mattered once I married Riccardo. I was 19 and had Damiano when I was just barely 20."

"Oh, wow! That's... young." I looked at her in surprise.

"We were young and in love. And you have seen how Riccardo's mother is. Very traditional and had us married as soon as possible." She said amused as she sipped her champagne.

"I can imagine that." I said, making her laugh.

"I am very pleased Damiano has found you. You bring out a whole new different side of him I haven't seen before, and as a mother, it makes me beyond happy. Thank you, honey." She gave my shoulder a light squeeze and my heart warmed up by her words.

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Post Views: 6

? Views, Released on February 11, 2024

"Let me just use the restroom and then we can go to our seats." I gave a nod. I sipped my champagne and continued to look at some of the paintings.

"So, we meet again, Althaia." I let out a small sigh. I turned around and saw Miciela and two other women with her.

"Miciela." I smiled tightly. There was just something about her that gave me a hard time hiding my dislike towards her.

"Have you been feeling good lately?" She asked with a wide smile. I raised a brow at her question, tilting my head a little.

"How's the pregnancy?" My heart stopped at the mention of it. She faked a sweet smile but her eyes were cunning.

"Oh, silly me." Miciela put her hand up to her mouth and let out a chuckle, having the others chuckle as well.

"I forgot you lost it. So awful for you." She placed her hand on her chest and exaggerated a sad look on her face. She took a step closer to me, her eyes turning cold, and dropped her fake, sweet act.

"I know what you did to Sofia. I won't let it slide and you will pay for it." She hissed before she quickly let out a satisfying smile and turned around to leave with the two women.

No words came out of me.

My chest heaved from the sharp intake of breath.

My eyes burned as tears wanted to spill.

But I refused to let them.

Instead, I followed her.

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I downed the champagne and took out my knife from my garter band. 1

Anger consumed me.

I couldn't hear anything.

I couldn't see anything.

Except for red.

I was seeing red.

And she was going to pay.

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"Miciela!" I said her name loudly, making her turn around to face me. She was standing by a table, chatting with people around her and her smirk was still present.

Until her eyes landed on the knife in my hand.

Miciela tried to step away from me, but I was faster. I held tightly onto the handle when I quickly stabbed her hand, feeling the knife connect with the table to prevent her from moving away from me. She let out a blood-curdling scream and I grabbed a fistful of her hair while breaking the

champagne glass against the edge of the table. And I shoved the broken glass into her mouth.

But it was not enough.

-smashed her head down at the table.

One time.

Two times.

2/4

288 Vouchers

I forcefully raised her head to look at me, seeing the blood run down her mouth. I covered her mouth with my hand as she wept, keeping the glass inside.

“You should have kept your mouth shut.” My voice was low and calm as I looked deep into her eyes.

“Sofia should have been an example of that to you. Yet, you decided to ignore it. I am the reason she is still alive, and she should be fucking grateful for that. You do not get to fuck with me!” I hissed out, my entire body shaking in anger.

I wanted more blood.

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I wanted to see the life disappear from her eyes. To see her body become lifeless the more I pressed my hand against her mouth. I snapped out of it, coming back to reality, and shoved her away from me.

“You’re lucky I’m not a killer. But speak about my baby and you will see me as one. Now, I’ve made sure you will never speak to me like that. Ever again.” I gave her a harsh look and turned around before giving in to the need to end her life.

I ignored how everyone was looking at me, still in shock, and saw the scene unfold.

“I would like to leave now. Please.” I said to Nonna and Eleanora who had made their way to me.



“Let’s get you out of here.” Nonna said when she looked behind me and Eleanora quickly led me out. I was feeling hurt but also numb at the same time as my legs carried me outside while I continued to be in this weird daze.

“What the fuck happened?” Giovanni frowned when he looked

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at me, and he and Luca immediately drew out their guns.

“You need to get her to safety right now!” Eleonora ordered them. They all moved quickly, getting me inside the backseat of the car with Giovanni before Luca drove us away while Eleonora and Nonna stayed behind with his father’s men.

“Call Damiano.” Giovanni told Luca as he looked at my gloved hands. I followed his gaze, only now noticing I had glass stuck into the palm of my hand.

“I need to cut off your glove.” He took out his knife but Luca’s voice caught our attention.

“Hold her!” He shouted just in time for me to see a car coming out of nowhere and hitting us. Giovanni held me tightly into him, protecting my head with his arms as we got violently swung into the car door.

“Are you okay?!” I looked at Giovanni, seeing he was fine before checking with Luca.

Words got stuck in my throat when I sat up and looked out of the still-intact window.

A rifle aimed right at me before shots were fired.

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Post Views: 7

? Views, Released on February 11, 2024

Don’t Fuck With My Love(1)

Damiano

“All preparation is ready.” Antonio informed me once we got inside the office.

“Good.” I said and took a seat on the couch. I looked at the different files and pictures spread out on the table. I was now convinced each attack was connected with the other. But the question was how and why.

“So, you’re confident he’s got something to do with this mess?” Rafaelle asked and sprawled on the couch.

“I found a microphone in the pendant of her necklace.” Rafaelle sat up straight and looked at me.

“And you think it’s him who did it?” He asked in surprise.

“I know he did it. He told her she forgot it in the hospital. That’s fucking bullshit. She wasn’t wearing the necklace once we got to the hospital. She either left it at their house before they got chased or she lost it in the woods. That’s what I was thinking. But when we went back to clean the house, it was nowhere to be seen.” I explained.

“And suddenly it just happened to have a microphone in it.” Antonio commented and shook his head.

“Do you still have it? Maybe I can trace it down to where it was bought, and who purchased it.” Rafaelle said.

“I do. But I broke it.” He gave me a blank look.

“And why would you do that? A magnet would have done the job just fine to disconnect any signal.”

“I didn’t want to take any chances.” I shrugged. It didn’t matter anyway as I knew it was Gataenos’s doing.

“We underestimated the bastard.” Antonio sighed and I nodded in agreement: Gaetano was an eager man, and it appeared that his eagerness had no limitations if it meant he would get what he wanted.

“I still don’t understand how he got in contact with Koreans. They keep to themselves and don’t work with anyone.” Rafaelle questioned. I rubbed my jaw as I looked at the pictures of the ones we had identified.

“Michael.” I said when I remembered. They both looked at me when I let out a humorless chuckle.

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“It’s that shitface, Michael.” I looked at Antonio.

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“When you were with her at Gataeno’s house, she went with Michael to Koreatown. He must have some kind of contact with Koreans.”

“That’s fucked up. Didn’t they grow up together? And now he’s trying to kill her.” Rafaelle scoffed. I took another look at the pictures while they discussed. I grabbed a particular one as I examined it.

I’m going to stuff a knife up in his ass

“It’s not him.” I said, cutting Rafaelle off.

“He’s being used.” I grabbed the pictures and put them in order on the table for them to see.

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“The drive-by shooting at the church, Michael was not there. At some point, Gaetano wasn’t disappeared and left his men behind as a show for us. Roberto said he had a random phone slipped into his bag when he was trapping the streets. It was most likely Michael who did it or had someone else do it to avoid getting caught.”

“It would make sense. Michael is respected on the streets and he’s got a ton of contacts.” Antonio commented.

‘Shit.. So, Gataeno tried to kill Althaia so soon?’ Rafaelle frowned as he focused on the pictures.

‘No. That was aimed at us. She just happened to stand in the way but he didn’t care. If I hadn’t gotten to her in time, she would have been shot in the head.’ I clenched my jaw as I remembered just how close she was to get a bullet in her head.

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“My guess is Michael’s the one who has contact with Koreans but he has been unaware of what jobs they were hired to do. Gataeno needed people who couldn’t be traced back to him, and they were all hired through Michael. He doesn’t ask questions and makes sure the job is done. And that would explain the bastard who attacked Althaia in the hotel.” I explained.

“And he made sure he wouldn’t be able to speak because he knew he would get caught. The pictures hung on the wall were a message. To let us know she was being watched.” Antonio finished my thought.

“That tongueless bastard was caught off guard when he saw Althaia and thought he could finish her off.” Rafaelle said, understanding how it was all connected now.

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“Most likely. Gaetano’s been keeping us busy while he blackmailed Jacinta into laundering money for him, leaving her no choice but to listen to him since Althaia was staying with him...” I continued to explain to them how I was positive it was Gaetano’s doing. The increased non-traceable phone calls Jacinta received when Althaia and Cara got to the

manor, the boutique being used for laundering money, and then burning it down to get rid of any evidence that was left behind.

“She was cleaning money for him, and I bet he used that

money to pay the people who got ordered to kill her. Jacinta knew he was going to come after her once he was done using her. That’s why she bought that property in Greece to flee with Althaia, but he attacked sooner than expected.” I finished.

“He is one sick bastard... He must know Althaia is not his daughter. Or maybe she is and he doesn’t care because wants to get revenge on Jacinta for leaving him.” Rafaelle frowned as he tried to think what Gataeno’s motive was.

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Post Views: 6

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“Whatever it is, we’re putting an end to it. I’m going to fucking skin him alive for everything he did.” I said as anger filled my body. I wanted to get my hands on him and make him suffer for all the pain he caused Althaia.

For killing the life we had created inside of her.

“Until then, I still want a DNA test to make sure. What’s the status on her?” I asked Antonio.

“She won’t talk.”

“What about Lorenzo?”

“No. She made it clear she will only talk to you.”

“We can always force her to talk. Rafaelle suggested and I gave him a sharp look.

“No. No one is to go near her. I’ll make sure she talks when we get back.”

“Or I can just charm her with my handsomeness.” He wiggled his brows with a mischievous grin.

“What handsomeness? You will send her straight back into a coma.” I smirked as he scowled at me.

“You’re spending too much time with Althaia. Her personality is rubbing off on you.” He scoffed.

“That’s definitely something she would say. Shouldn’t you be charming Ava instead?” Antonio asked amused, and Rafaelle let out a groan and slumped in his seat.

"I'm trying! One moment I think I got her, and then next, she plays hard to get. It's confusing!"

"Maybe don't say you want her mouth wrapped around your cock." Antonio raised his brow, having me slightly chuckle.

"I'm never forgiving Althaia for spilling that out to you." He muttered grimly and I shook my head in amusement.

"Don't talk to her how you talk to the women at the brothels you visit." I pointed out to him. He still had a lot to learn when it came to talking appropriately to women he wasn't paying to fuck.

"Really, Damiano? Are you keeping an eye on me?" Rafaelle shot me another blank look.

"Just making sure you're not fucking anyone important to me." I said and grabbed my phone when it started to ring.

"Luca."

"We need backup!" I immediately stood up, a frown appearing on my face as I signaled to the others to get going.

"We're on our way. What happened?" My hold tightened around my phone as we quickly made our way out to the cars, Antonio ordering more men to get going.

"Something happened between Althaia and Miciela. Maximo's men want her head in return." He quickly explained. My face darkened and my jaw clenched.

"I will hang their head on the streets if they as much misplace one hair on her head!" I growled out in fury as we got into the car and drove off.

"What's the situation?"

"We're stuck and they're still shooting after us." I nodded as I

could hear the faint shots from Luca's end. As long as they were inside the car, they would be fine as it was bulletproof. My frown deepened and my heartbeat accelerated when I heard Althaia let out a strangled scream in the background.

‘They’re going to blow the fucking car!’ Giovanni yelled.

‘Two minutes. Try and stall them until we get there.’ I tossed the phone to the side, grabbed the rifle Raffaele handed me, and got ready.

‘Surround them and don’t let anyone get past you. Get a car to Luca and Giovanni and let them escort Althaia to safety immediately.’ I ordered them as I racked the slide. I moved my neck from side to side and let out a slow breath to calm down the rage inside of me.

We arrived in no time, seeing the scene in front of us. Maximo’s 5 men aimed their firearms at the car. They were still fucking shooting. I kicked open the car, not waiting for it to come to a complete stop before catching their attention as I fired.

One shot.

Two shots.

Three shots.

Three bodies went down like flies as I moved fast, continuing to shoot, taking down more men before taking cover behind a different car. We had them surrounded, making it easier to take them out with them in the center. They were trying to take cover but my men didn’t allow them.

My gaze landed on the car where Althaia was, seeing

Giovanni covering her and in the process of getting her to a

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new car. Luca was ready with his gun, making sure no one would get to them.

Just as I was about to move again, shots were fired at them, coming from a different direction. I followed Luca’s aim, seeing one of Maximo’s men was taking cover out of his reach. Luca was stalling him as Giovanni got in the car with Althaia. I moved in between the vehicles, crouched low as I came from behind. The idiot was too focused on taking cover from Luca that he wasn’t aware of anything else.

I gave a nod to Luca to let him know I would take care of him.

The bastard was about to shoot again when Luca was getting into the car, but I smashed the back of his head with the rear of the rifle. He fell to the ground, dropping his gun as I kicked it away and continued to bash his head.

“You. Dare. To. Fucking. Shoot. After. My. Wife!” Each word came with each time the rear hit his face. I continued, making him look unrecognizable and blood smeared all over his face. I turned the rifle around and shot him to end his life. The bullet pierced its way through his neck, causing a gaping hole that quickly filled with blood and gushed out while he choked before he became lifeless.

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I looked over to my men, seeing they had finished them all off. The sounds of a car coming closer had me aiming my rifle in that direction, waiting for them to come.

“Hold your fire!” I ordered them as I recognized the car.

“What are you doing here? Leave, madre.” I glared at her driver for bringing her here.

“Maximo is on his way. I tried to talk to him but he wouldn’t listen.” My mother ignored me and took a look at the dead bodies spread around.

“What happened?” I asked with a frown. She put her hands on her hips and let out a sigh.

“I don’t know. I went to the restroom and the minute I got out, I see Althaia in the process of banging Miciela’s head against the table.” My frown deepened but before I could ask anything else, the screech of tires had me turn around.

“Get inside. Now.” I closed the door to the car, making sure my mother was safe before I made my way to Maximo. His men were aiming at me as I walked up to him, but he made them lower their guns when he faced me.

“Damiano! I demand an explanation!” He roared out when I stopped in front of him.



“Care to explain why you are protecting a woman who hurt my sister?”

Maximo hissed as he brought his sister out. I looked at Miciela, seeing her face was all messed up with blood gushing out of her mouth and hand. I tilted my head to the side before letting out a small chuckle and shaking my head.

Althaia did a good job of fucking her up.

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My reaction only had Maximo boil in anger, and I was sure smoke would come out of his ears if it was possible.

“You better deliver that woman’s head to me right now!” He yelled. I gave him a sharp look and stepped closer to him.

“What did you say?” My voice went deadly low, my face darkened as I stared at him.

“That woman -”

“That woman you’re talking about...” I cut him off.

“Is

my wife.” I said and his eyes widened. He opened his mouth. to say something but I had no interest in what he had to say. I moved quickly and grabbed him, putting him in a tight

headlock with my gun to his head. His men aimed at me once again but they didn’t fire as I used him as a shield while I

backed away.

“We have a treaty! You cannot do this!” Maximo wheezed out and I clicked my tongue at him.

“I can. Your sister broke it, and now, you have to face the consequences for going after her.” I growled out. Althaia was not a violent person by any means. I know Miciela had done something to make her react like that.

“Tell them to drop the guns or you’re dead.” I told him. He didn’t say anything as he tried to free himself. I pressed the gun into his head, my patience running out.

“Now! Tell them to drop them and I will let you go.” My hold tightened around his neck, his face turning extremely red before he finally signaled them to drop them.

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As soon as the firearms hit the ground, my men fired at them, their bodies dropping dead to the ground one by one. I let go of Maximo and pushed him away, making him stumble

forward as I pulled out my gun.

“Wait, you said -” I didn’t let him finish and shot him in the head.

“I let you go, didn’t I?” I scoffed at his dead body.

A weeping sound caught my attention. I spotted Miciela, hiding behind the car. I stepped closer and I got to take a good look at her. She really got messed up good.

I shook my head at Maximo for not getting her medical attention immediately. Instead, the son of a bitch brought her with him. Miciela tried to crawl away when she saw me but slumped down to the ground because of her injuries. I looked to my left when my mother came to stand next to me, taking a look at Miciela.

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“You’re lucky I taught my son to never hurt a woman.” My mother said and grabbed the gun out of my hand, having Miciela cry loudly. Without saying a single word, my mother pulled the trigger and shot her right in the head. I raised a brow at her when she handed back my gun.

“No one hurts my children.” My mother gave my cheek a light pat before going back to the car. Her words had me slightly smile as I followed her.

“Have someone clean up this mess.” I said to Antonio. The once beige street was covered in blood and dead bodies.

“And find Sofia. I’m going to end her for good this time.” I firmly ordered before getting in the car, desperate to see my

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wife.

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Chapter 220

Post Views: 6

? Views, Released on February 11, 2024

Closure(1)

Damiano

1288 Vouchers

I walked fast through the house until I heard muffled voices coming from the den.. The door was already slightly open, and I saw Althaia sitting on the couch with a doctor attending to her hand. Her gaze was on the floor, her usually bright green eyes seemed dull and her expression was blank.

I stepped inside, her head snapped in my direction and I watched her take a sharp breath and got up, ignoring the doctor as she quickly walked up to me. I immediately wrapped my arms around her, holding her close to my chest and I felt the tension slowly melt away. I leaned slightly back and put my hands on her cheek, looking around at her face to see if she was hurt.

“Damiano, I’m sorry... I didn’t -”

“Shh..” I shook my head as I saw her eyes glisten with unshed tears.

“Don’t apologize for anything.” I told her softly.

“Are you hurt anywhere else?” I gently took a hold of her hand, examining i. She had a few pieces of glass stuck to her hand, and she had several deep cuts, but nothing that would need stitches. I had to take a deep breath to not lose my shit in front of her. She was in a vulnerable state and I didn’t want to add to it.

"No, I just cut my hand but Gio got hurt. He was bleeding!" She ignored her injuries as she looked at me, concerned about

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Giovanni's well-being.

"It was just a flesh wound. No need to cry about it." Giovanni's voice sounded from the door. He walked to us, showing he was okay with his bandaged arm.

"You're lucky it hit me or you would have gotten a pretty nasty scar. And your husband would have detached my head from my body." He crossed his arms and looked at her amused.

"But you got hurt because of me!" Althaia's voice was laced with guilt as she looked at his arm. He slightly frowned and leaned slightly forward to talk to her.

"It's my job to keep you safe. As if I would let them hurt you." He tsked but let out a small smile. She looked a bit hesitant

when she looked back at his arm but gave a small smile anyway.

"Is that you admitting you care about me?"

"Woman, didn't I just prove I would take a bullet for you? Do you need me to spell it out to you?" Giovanni scowled.

"Yes." She said immediately and he let out a sigh.

"Fine. Yes, I do care about you. I don't know why but there's just something about you that makes me care for you. Happy?" He shot her a blank look. She took him by surprise when she suddenly embraced him.

"Very happy. I know it's your job to protect me but it lets me know you don't hate me if anything were to happen." He looked taken aback by her words before he lightly patted the top of her head.

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"I don't hate you... I'm just Uncle Grumpy." Althaia chuckled, looking relieved by his words. I immediately held her in my arms again, just wanting to feel she was fine.

"Your father wants to talk to you!" Giovanni looked at me with an expression that let me know it was important.

"He can wait. Leave us." I told him. I led Althaia back to the

couch as the others got out of the den and took a seat where the doctor previously sat. I took a hold of her hand, adjusted the small light, and grabbed the tweezer to remove the rest of the glass.

"Tell me what happened, baby." I spoke to her softly.

"Miciela... She asked how my pregnancy was going." I stopped what I was doing and looked at her, my brows furrowed.

"She mocked me for my miscarriage and I just.... lost it. I got so angry, and the next thing I know, I'm following her and stuffed broken glass into her mouth." Her was were narrowed as she talked, and I could see the anger flaring in her eyes as she relieved the moment.

"I'm not sure how I was even able to do it... But I didn't mean to cause problems. I'm -"

"Don't you dare to apologize." I held her chin as I looked at her with a firm look.

"She had it coming for opening her mouth, and you did the right thing to shut her up." I told her. If anything, Miciela didn't deserve a bullet in her head. She deserved a painful death.

"It's not that I'm regretting it, just feeling guilty about putting the others in danger." She muttered and I couldn't help but let

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out a small laugh.

"You're not putting anyone in danger. Don't underestimate my men, they're all trained exactly for such situations."

“I guess.” She gave me a small smile.

“I’m proud of you, my love.” I smiled softly. Her brows slightly rose as she looked at me. Her cheeks started to get a rosy color as she looked at me so innocently with her big green eyes. It was making it hard to believe that it was my innocent woman who had fucked someone up so badly.

“Tell me how you did it.” I winked, seeing her eyes almost sparkle and ready to tell me everything as I resumed cleaning her hand.

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I listened to every word as she explained, and I was trying to contain my anger when I heard what Miciela said to her.

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