

## **The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 231 - 240**

"Is that a threat, brother?" Damiano smirked.

"A promise." Lorenzo retorted, mirroring his smirk.

"Cara, come here." Damiano called after her, and her eyes lit

"Althaia." Lorenzo looked at me, and Damiano's head snapped to look at Lorenzo so fast with a warning look.

"Now, that's a death wish, brother."

"... I don't understand... Are they joking, or are they really trying to kill each other?" I asked, looking at them and trying to understand their relationship when they continued making threats to one another.

"Just their usual pissing contest." Arianna sighed.

"You will see a lot of that." Cecilia said, amused as she came up to me with Ava to congratulate me.

"I guess." I chuckled.

The evening continued with more people coming up to greet and congratulate us, and I loved every single moment of it. They all made me feel warm and welcome. It also surprised me that many women were working for Damiano and were part of this family. It wasn't a traditional all-male organization like others. He really was a man with his own ways, and I loved that so much about him.

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Nonna and his parents gave me a heartfelt welcome, and almost had me in tears. His mother was happy that all of her children were gathered, and his father took me by surprise by saying he was wrong about me, and that I had shown I was fit to be Damiano's wife.

Nonna was busy telling the others to hurry up and get married because she wanted great-grandbabies, and she continued to state she was not getting any younger. They were all standing awkwardly and listening to Nonna's rant about babies.

I chuckled quietly and took a break from the crowd. I went up to the bar to grab another drink when I noticed Rafaelle was also there, glaring into the crowd.

“What’s up with the glaring?” I asked him and grabbed a glass of wine. He didn’t respond as he continued staring daggers at someone. I followed his gaze and saw Ava talking to another man, laughing and touching his arm.

“Oh...” My brows went up, and I looked at Rafaelle.

“I don’t like that. I fucking hate it. Why the fuck is she touching him?” He snarled, and I rubbed his back in comfort.

“Are you still being very explicit with your words, or...?” I asked, and he gave me a blank look before sighing.

“No. At least, I don’t think so...” He muttered and rubbed the back of his head in frustration. I felt sorry for him because it was obvious he wanted her. Otherwise, he wouldn’t be feeling like this.

I let out a small sigh as I tried to comfort him. When I saw Damiano making his way toward me, it had me laughing out

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Omena(2)

loud as I realized what Ava was going.

“Oh, my God!”

“Yeah, thanks for laughing....” He sulked out, and I shook my head at him as I chuckled.

“You have it wrong, honey. She is trying to make you jealous.” I told him. This had his attention, and he straightened up.

“What?”

“Remember when we first met? flirted with you and touched your arm and all that stuff?”

“How can I forget.” Rafaelle wiggled his brows, and I rolled my eyes at him. I looked at Damiano, who had reached us, before turning my attention back to Rafaelle.

“I did it solely to make him jealous. And it worked.” I pointed out to him, and he gave a surprised expression.

“You almost had me kill him.” Damiano said.

“That’s on you. No one told you to be jealous.” I grinned.

“Okay, so what do I do? Punch the shit out of him as Damiano did to me?” Rafaelle asked impatiently.

“You can. If you’re sure you can win the fight.” Damiano said as he pulled me into him. Rafaelle scoffed.

“Are you saying I’m weak?”

“No, but Renzo is a cage fighter. He has never lost a fight.” Rafaelle looked back at Renzo and rubbed his chin.

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“I could always shoot him....”

“Okay, that’s enough. No one is punching or shooting anyone.” I gave a stern glare to both of them.

“I just tried to help.” Damiano shrugged.

“Yeah, by sending him to his death.” I replied.

“So far, I’m only getting insults from you both.” Rafaelle gave us a sarcastic smile.

“Listen, she’s obviously doing this to get a reaction from you because she has been glancing your way throughout the evening. You don’t need to fight him or freaking kill him. Just go up to her and show him she’s yours. And show her you’re serious about her.” I smiled, and he nodded a few times, taking in the information.

“Okay. How do I look?” He straightened out his dress shirt and made sure his hair was in place.

“Handsome! Now, go get her tiger.” Rafaelle looked in the direction of where Ava was, still talking to Renzo.

“Ava!” He shouted, attracting attention to him, and practically stormed towards her. I dropped my jaw as this was not how I meant he should do it.

Ava turned around to look at him, and Rafaelle grabbed her by the waist and kissed her. It didn’t take long before Ava wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him back.

“Huh... I guess he could do it like that.” I said in surprise and chuckled.

“Took him long enough.” Damiano commented. I nodded in

agreement as I watched them. They were a perfect fit for each other, and their personalities were much alike.

Something caught my eye and I looked across the other side of the water, and to the mountain that was curved around.

“Damiano, look!” I gasped and pointed.

Luca was down on one knee!

I waited in anticipation as we could only see them and not hear them. It felt like the longest moment before we finally saw Cecilia saying yes to him and leaping into his arms. I couldn’t stop smiling. It was such a cute moment!

“About time. But I still did it better.” I burst out in laughter at Damiano’s comment.

“Not everything is a competition.”

“You’re right. No one can compete with me.” He looked at me with a teasing look. I shook my head at him and leaned into him as I sighed blissfully.

“Are you happy, my love?” Damiano asked softly, caressing my cheek.

“I couldn’t be happier.” I smiled.

“And you, my love, are you happy?”

“Always when I’m with you. You are my happiness.” He gave me his soft, beautiful smile that had my body tingling, my heart fluttering like crazy, and me helplessly blushing all at the same time.

I placed my hands on his cheeks, leaning closer to him until

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our lips met in a sweet kiss.

Everything is perfect.

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Althaia

Before the wedding ceremony, walked around and made the last round of checks in the massive banquet hall. Everything looked like it belonged in a fairytale, and Cara deserved every single moment of it.

The wedding was held in a gorgeous castle and the reception banquet was exquisitely decorated in all white. Even the floor was in a beautiful glossy white design. The ceiling was just as stunningly decorated with flowery chandeliers, and long white vine flowers were hanging down, almost creating a beautiful curtain of white flowers. This was her dream wedding, and I was so happy that she could finally have some happiness in her life with Lorenzo.

I glanced around one more time, pleased with the work that had been done, and walked up the stairs and down the long hall in the direction of the master suite. I opened the door to the suite to check on Cara to see how much time she needed to finish getting ready.

My eyes met hers in the mirror, and I let out a gasp in astonishment.

“Wow... You look so gorgeous!” entered the room, admiring her big, sparkly princess dress. It was an off-shoulder dress with gorgeous streaks of silver design, and diamonds and pearls stitched to it. It was a stunning Cinderella-

esque wedding gown. Her hair was beautifully done in an updo, and she even wore a tiara that just completed the look altogether. Her neck was decorated with a classic round diamond

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necklace with matching earrings.

“Thank you, Thaia.” Cara smiled warmly, and I noticed her take a deep breath. I smiled as I grabbed the veil and walked up to

her.

“How nervous are you?”

“So fucking much, and I don’t even know why. I knew this day was coming, and it’s all part of the deal.” She breathed out, nervously.

“Because this is no longer just a business deal for you. You love him.” I chuckled.

“I guess... He’s nothing I ever thought he would be like. When I first saw him, I thought it was the end for me. He would be able to snap me in half if that’s what he wanted. I thought I would die... but he is so gentle with me.” She smiled softly at

the mention of him.

My heart clenched hearing how much suffering she had gone through. Her father was one crazy bastard who loved to abuse her. I didn’t blame her for having these thoughts about

Lorenzo when she saw him. Hell, I was scared of him for a long time because he was this huge, silent, and mysterious man. And everything about him screamed deadly assassin.

“You’re finally free. To live the life you want with Tank Man.”

“He’s never going to hear the end of that nickname, is he?”

“Never!” We both laughed.

I finished putting on the long veil and took a look at her. She looked like the most beautiful Disney princess ever.

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"I wish mom-was here to see you. She would have been so proud of you." I told her. She smiled sadly, and I felt tears brim

my eyes.

"I'm happy I got to see her one more time ..." Cara sniffed.

"Oh no, the tears are coming, and I just got my makeup done!" She quickly looked up to avoid tears. I chuckled as I blinked my tears away and helped her blow some air to not ruin her makeup.

"I will check on Tank Man and see how it's going on their end." I told her once I was sure she was ready.

I walked down the hall where Lorenzo's suite was and looked at the unique interior and paintings as I passed. I couldn't believe I was in a freaking castle! This was always a dream of hers to have a big, beautiful wedding, and I couldn't describe how happy I was that it was finally happening for her..

I neared the suite and saw some of Damiano's men outside.

"Donna." They greeted me with a nod, and I smiled in return.

"I told you, Althaia is just fine."

"Not going to happen." I shook my head, a little amused at them. They insisted on calling me Donna as a sign of respect, and no matter how many times I told them just call me by my name, they refused big time.

I knocked on the door, waited for a bit, and poked my head in. When I saw it was the usual gang present with Lorenzo, I stepped inside.

"Oh wow, look at you! You cleaned up well." I chuckled as I

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walked up to Lorenzo. I quickly glanced at Damiano and drooled a little, but I snapped my attention back to Lorenzo.

He did look impressive in his wedding tuxedo; an elegant silk dress shirt in a deep copper color with gold patterns on the collars, his cuffs following the same design, and a tie to match it all together. His west was black with crisscross patterns of the same deep copper color and had a crown symbol in the middle. He finished the look with a black velour blazer and classic black dress pants.

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It's Time(2)

"Thank you, Althaia." Lorenzo looked at me as I stood before his tall, broad frame.

"So, Lorenzo..." I trailed off while fixed his tie.

"Since Cara has a useless father, I have taken the role to say this." I tugged on the tie to have him meet me at eye level, and have it slightly tighten around his neck.

"If you hurt her, I will kill you. I'm not sure how since you're Tank Man, but I will find a way. I promise you that." I said firmly. The corner of his mouth went up.

"I can assure you I'm not going to hurt her." He promised.

"Good!" I said happily and released him with a big smile.

"You're lucky you're my brother's wife. Or else I wouldn't have let it slide that you just threatened to kill me." He said with a slight smirk.

"Ah, yes! This kind of power feels amazing! How does it feel to be outranked by someone who has only been around for a few months?" I teased. Damiano had told me about my new status as his wife, and I may have rubbed it in Giovanni's face that I outranked him. He gave me his usual scowl in return as I continued to make fun of him.

“Only because you’re fucking Damiano.” Lorenzo scoffed.

“Guilty.” I grinned, and he cracked a smile.

“You may outrank me in status, but I outrank you in everything else. Let’s have a fight and see who will win.”

“Oh, as much fun that sounds, I will happily give you the win. I’m pretty sure my head would pop off if you put me in a

headlock. And I’m definitely not about to have you smash me to the ground Tank Man style and break my back. I would rather have Damiano break my back if you know what I mean.” I wiggled my brows. My answer had him throw back his head in laughter. I gave a surprised expression but smiled as it was the first time I had ever heard him laugh like that.

“You’re really something else. It’s good to see you’re not scared of me anymore.” He said with a smile.

“I’m almost there. I still get intimidated sometimes. The only reason I’m not right now is because my husband and

bodyguards are present.” I joked, and he gave an amused look.

“Anyway, you look amazing.” I gave one more smile before I turned around to leave, but not before giving a cheeky wink to Damiano.

I walked out of the suite and down the hall, smiling a little as I knew Damiano was following me. Before I knew it, a hand clasped around my arm, and I got pulled into another hallway. I was pinned against the wall, and Damiano claimed my lips with his. I placed my hands on his chest as he wrapped his arm around my waist, pulling me into him as much as possible.

“Hey, handsome.” I said, smiling against his lips.

“Hey, beautiful.” He gave one more kiss before leaning slightly back.

“You look heavenly, my love.” Damiano smiled as his eyes raked over my body.

“And you look magnificent as ever.” My eyes went down to

check him out. He was wearing an elegant three-piece suit tuxedo with gold outlining, and the inside of his blazer had a beautiful gold flower design. He looked royal as always.

“How are you feeling?” He asked, having me look back at him.

“Good. Though I can’t wait to hit the bed and sleep.” I let out a small sigh. Damiano looked at me, almost concerned.

“You were tired a lot the last time..” He trailed off, and I immediately shook my head.

“Maybe because I have never attended so many parties in such a short time before.” I chuckled.

Of course, we had to celebrate Luca and Cecilia’s news, and a massive engagement party was held. And we also celebrated my birthday in Italy. With everything that had been going on, I had completely forgotten all about my birthday, and Damiano held a surprise party for me. I had never been spoilt that much in my life as I did on my birthday, and I may or may not have cried a little for all of them showing their love to me.

Damiano did really go out of his way once again and had my jaw drop to the ground. He gifted me a Bugatti Chiron. I thought he was joking, but it turned out he wasn’t.

He freaking gave me my own Bugatti!

Not before saying something along the lines of ‘don’t make me regret it’ as I’ve had a tiny bit of history of driving fast. I found that situation fitting to make a joke about how we should race to see which Bugatti was faster, to which I received warning glares from him.

But what truly left me speechless was Damiano made me his

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official designer for his winery business. He wanted to redesign all of the wine bottles to have their own unique

styles. I also signed a contract to be a part-owner as well. That part still felt unreal to me.

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And then there was Cara's bachelorette party, which was beyond crazy! It was just us girls going out and it came to a point no one could stand upright from drinking too much. We were laughing at everything, and when Damiano, Lorenzo, Luca, Rafaele, and Dom came to get us home, we tried to run away from them.

So far, being twenty-five was not too bad.

"It has been crazy and then dealing with jetlag on top of it all. I also didn't get that much sleep to make sure everything was ready on time." I explained. Damiano slightly frowned, his eyes landing on my stomach. I put my hands to his cheeks, smiling a little.

"If it will make you feel better, I will take a test when we get home." I offered, and he gave a nod.

Ever since that food-baby moment in Italy, he had been very attentive to me. More than usual. I had to keep reminding him that just because we got lucky that it happened fast the last time, it wasn't guaranteed it would happen just as fast. It could take months, years even. But I knew his excitement was talking, and I knew just how badly he wanted a baby. I was thrilled about the idea of having a baby with him, but I also didn't want to get my hopes up and just get disappointed in the end if it turned out to be a false alarm.

Damiano wrapped his arms around me, giving me a grin.

"I have been filling you up pretty good..." He said lowly, having me chuckle at his comment.

"You have. If you're not too busy later, I'm pretty sure we can find a room and have a little fun. I winked. We might as well use this opportunity and say we have fucked in a castle.

"Or we can just find a room now.

“Nope. Can’t ruin my hair and makeup and wrinkle my dress before the wedding. Keep it in your pants for now.” I said and pushed a finger into him to make him step back.

“... Worth a try.” He muttered, a bit disappointed. I shook my head at his horniness.

“I will let Cara know you’re ready.” I informed Lorenzo, who had stepped outside.

Just as I was about to leave, I stilled when I spotted Uncle at the end of the hall with some of my father’s men. An involuntary shiver ran down my spine in disgust at the sight of him, and I took a step back. I didn’t want to walk past him and decided to wait until he was gone.

“What’s wrong?” Arms wrapped around me, and I only just realized I had pressed myself into Damiano to comfort myself.

“He just creeps me out..” I muttered. They all turned to look at Uncle, their expression blank but their gaze so intense. Uncle looked our way for a split second, his eyes meeting mine before he turned his back to us.

“Disgusting perv for grabbing my butt....” I shuddered again in disgust as I relived the moment, and nausea started to appear. They all snapped their heads at me at the same time, and a flare of anger showed in Damiano’s eyes as he looked at

\_me.

“What did you say?” His tone let me know he was one second away from storming to Uncle and giving him a brutal death.

“When the fuck did he do that?” Damiano’s jaw tightened, and

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his hands clenched into fists when I didn’t say anything.

“... At the dinner party.” I quickly grabbed his hand when he started to move.

“Damiano, no. Besides, you already cut his tongue that day. Let us just enjoy the wedding and deal with him another time.” I tried to tell him, but he kept glaring daggers into my uncle’s back. Eventually, I got to tear his gaze away

from him and calmed him down. I didn't want anything to start when this was Cara's and Lorenzo's big day, and I was not about to have it ruined after all this hard work.

"Did he do anything else?" Damiano almost sneered at his question.

"No." I shook my head. I would have broken a vase on his head if he had. When he grabbed my ass that evening, I was too shocked to react and just left in a hurry to be as far away from him as possible.

"I need to go back to Cara. It's time for you to go as well." I told them.

"I will go with you." Damiano said, his expression still deadly.

"Only if you can walk past him without crushing his skull against the wall." He looked at me for a long time, clicking his tongue in annoyance.

"Yeah, I thought so... Oh, look, he's going now, so all good! Hurry up and go to the altar. I will get Cara." I smiled and quickly went on my way before he could say anything. It was first when I was closer to Cara's suite I started to hear them

move.

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"He's ready." I smiled excitedly at her, and Cara took a deep breath.

"It's time to get married." She said and plastered a smile.

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Damiano

"He fucking grabbed her ass. There is no way they're related. What kind of fucking sick pervert would do that to their niece?" Giovanni spat out as we made our way to the altar. It was taking everything to keep myself in check, and not empty my gun on her so-called uncle's face.

"I should have fucking killed him that day." I said, clenching my jaw. The only reason I didn't was that I knew their days. were numbered in the first place. I needed to have this deal go through because, at the time, I was still working on getting to know the infrastructure of their organization. I needed to know how they were operating and who they were involved with to take them all down.

And now, it turned out to be a greater deal than it was ever supposed to be in the first place.

"He's mine. I've waited a long time to end his life after everything he did to Cara. The fucking years of abuse." Lorenzo stated. It had not been easy to keep him at bay but I promised him, once everything was over, he could do

whatever he pleased with Cara's father for the years of abuse she had gone through.

"I want that DNA test done as soon as possible." I ordered them.

"Is it necessary with a DNA test? Just after what she said is good enough proof to me." Luca commented.

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The Wedding(1)

"It is. Because after tonight, we're shutting down his

organization and ending this once and for all. The DNA test is proof for Althaia to see because I will need to come clean with everything." I have been gathering proof to show her everything that had been going on, and who had been behind the attacks.

I only told her a small fraction, giving her the impression that I was letting her in on this. It was just enough to feed her

curiosity. If she knew what really had been going on, she would want to get involved or do it on her own, knowing how reckless she could be. I couldn't have that happening.

Althaia wasn't going to take it easy to learn her entire life has been a lie, and the one she saw as a father, has been trying to get rid of her and her mother.

Her mother had hidden her true identity and only allowed Althaia to see her as a regular, single mother. Who else knew what kind of crap she has been hiding? Her mother was mysterious and not one who should

be underestimated.

I also knew that once coming clean with everything, Althaia was going to be pissed at me. Maybe even hate me for what I have done and kept from her. But this was something I had to do in order to protect her and carry out this plan. If it did come down to that, I would have to live with the fact that she hates me. But at least she would be alive. And that was what mattered to me. To have her alive, safe, and happy.

“Everything is ready and everyone is in position. We’ll be waiting for your signal.” Antonio informed me and I gave a firm nod.

“Good. I want anyone vulnerable out of here as soon as I give the signal.” My Nonna and mother were present and I wanted

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them out of here along with Althaia, Cara, and whoever wasn’t fit to fight and needed protection. Even though I had been training her and she was quite impressive already with her skills and with her creative thinking, this was a different kind of fight and nothing I wanted her to witness.

The plan was to trap them inside the castle. It was easier to have them locked in one place to have complete control over the situation. I wasn’t going to play games anymore but I still wanted to take him down as quietly as possible to avoid a bigger war. My men were my responsibility and I wanted to do this with minimal casualties on my side.

My father was right that this has gone on for too long already. We were supposed to take down Gataeno months ago. Quick and easy after gaining his trust and giving a false belief of he could have access to my weaponry.

Gaetano’s organization was increasing in strength and power. He was gaining territory after territory and recruiting more people than ever before. It piqued my interest, and I wanted to understand the infrastructure, and how he functioned, and then bring him down for good. I couldn’t have him be a threat to my businesses, and I got rid of anyone before they could even become one.

Because that was how it all worked. It was all a game about wealth and power, and I loved to set an example for everyone that I was running the shit here, and no one could fuck with

Though, I got much more intrigued when Althaia appeared out of nowhere when it was clearly stated that she had died. And, while Althaia was the greatest blessing of my life, she did complicate my entire plan. I didn't want her to go through

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any more pain in her life.

"Stay alert." I gave one final order before they went ahead and took their seats.

I walked down the aisle with Lorenzo and stopped at the altar with him since I was the best man. I glanced around at the seated people, Nonna, and our parents sitting at the front of our side, while Gaetano, his wife, brother, and Carlos were on the bride's side, sitting at the front.

Those bastards were smiling, thinking this was all in their favor, and it took everything in me not to glare in their

direction and pull out my gun. Instead, I directed my attention to Lorenzo.

"How are you feeling, brother? Nervous?" I gave a teasing smile when he shot me a blank look.

"No."

"Of course, you're not. You are Tank Man after all." That gave an amused reaction from him.

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Post Views: 8

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"That wife of yours has a unique way of expressing her thoughts."

“You don’t say. She calls me The Devil.” I found it funny when she called me that the very first time, and now she just kept calling me The Devil, having me like it.

“How fitting.” Lorenzo snorted.

“Tank Man is quite fitting as well.” I chuckled lightly with him. Lorenzo had worked incredibly hard to get to his impressive form and I didn’t blame Althaia for calling him that.

“It is actually. And Cara is definitely not complaining.” He smirked and it was my turn to give him a blank look.

“Not interested in hearing about that. I’ve already seen your ass, and I’m not in the mood to be anymore traumatized.” I told him.

“Really? My ears were bleeding when I heard you fucking in the bathroom. Besides, I blessed your eyes with my pretty ass.” Lorenzo gave me playful smile.

“There’s nothing pretty about your ass. And I bet you were almost wanking at the sound of me fucking.

“...That’s fucking disgusting.” We both stared at each other before we cracked a smile. It was obvious to hear just how much their personalities had rubbed on us.

The chatter died down when the music started to play and I went to take my place behind Lorenzo. All attention was directed toward the large double doors when they opened. I found myself smiling when Althaia walked out as the first one as she was the maid of honor. She was looking heavenly in her

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dress that fitted her body so elegantly as she walked down the aisle with a small flower bouquet in her hands.

Althaia smiled beautifully, her green eyes sparkling majestically and having me feel pride that I could call her my wife. Her eyes met mine when I couldn’t stop looking at her, giving me her shy smile as her cheeks started to get that

rosy color. I watched her until she came to a stop, and my eyes trailed down her body, shamelessly checking her out. That dress and color complimented her tanned skin so well and hugged her figure deliciously.

I definitely wanted to rip that dress off her later and touch her silk-like skin.

The change of the music helped me snap out of my thoughts, and not take any action to them when everyone once again directed their attention to the doors. Cara in her big wedding dress and veil-covered face started to slowly walk down the aisle. I looked at Lorenzo, smiling a bit as I watched his reaction. A reaction I knew all too well from experiencing it many times with Althaia.

He looked at her completely mesmerized, trapped under her spell as she walked towards him. Lorenzo went to her, took her hand, and together stood before the priest for him to begin the rites and prayer.

As the priest talked, my eyes found their way back to Althaia, watching her cheerful face as she looked at Cara and Lorenzo. Twas lost in my thoughts once more as I lost myself to the

sight of her, visualizing her in a white bridal gown. I never

cared about marriages and never thought of starting a family of my own... It was unexplainable how she made me want it all with her. And with her only.

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Althaia bit down on her lip, trying to prevent herself from

laughing while raising a brow at me. That was when it dawned on me they were waiting for me to give the priest the rings for him to bless.

“... Take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

Cheerful applause erupted when Cara and Lorenzo sealed the beginning of their marriage with a kiss.

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“Have you seen Michael anywhere? I can’t believe he’s not attending the wedding ...” Her brows dipped when we entered the reception banquet. She looked around but Michael was nowhere to be found.

“I haven’t.” I said. I had noticed he wasn’t present which was unlikely for Gaetano not to have him around wherever he was since Michael was his right hand. Althaia let out a sigh.

“Why are you looking for him?”

“I just want to talk to him. I forgot to call him back in Italy and thought I would hear him out what he had to say...”

“He didn’t try to call you again?” questioned.

“No, which I don’t get now that I think about it. He asked if I was okay and needed to talk to me.” My brow slightly raised at the information. Now, that was interesting. I could tell she was feeling guilty about not returning his call.

“Don’t worry about it now, he’ll probably show up later.” I said to keep her from overthinking and ask around for him.

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“I

guess. Well, I got to say hi to my dad. I haven’t talked to him yet.” She let out a small embarrassed chuckle and headed in the direction of Gaetano. He was standing with his wife and a few of his men, smiling when Althaia got close to him and hugged him.

I faced away from them and looked around before I pressed a small button on the inside of my collar where a microphone

was.

“Keep an eye out for Michael. He might be lurking around.” I ordered before I walked up to Althaia, not wanting her to be alone in their presence.

“Damiano! I see you snatched my little girl.” Gaetano smiled happily. I stared at him blankly, watching him smile unusually at me as he raised his glass.

“May this only bring our family closer and more powerful.”

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Post Views: 6

? Views, Released on February 11, 2024

Game Over(!).

Damiano

“Oh, darling, the ring is just beautiful!” My jaw clenched at the horrendous high-pitched voice. Every single time that woman opened her mouth, it felt like a bunch of knives was stabbing into my ears continuously. I was convinced Gataeno was partially deaf. It was impossible he heard that voice and decided to marry her.

“Thank you, Morella.” Althaia gave a tight smile and I knew it was taking everything in her not to grimace.

“Wonderful news, figlia! When’s the big day?” Gaetano smiled widely.

“Oh, actually...” Althaia started and my hand squeezed her waist a little to warn her not to let it slip out. She quickly glanced at me before facing Gataeno again with a soft smile.

“... We haven’t decided yet. Plenty of time to figure it out.” She told him instead. Gaetano nodded a few times.

“Good, good. The sooner, the better.” He looked at me when he said that, not being discreet about his underlying message

to me.

“Congratulations again, darling.” Morella smiled big.

“Enjoy the party.” I told them with a nod and led Althaia away from them. Hell, I was desperate to get away from that voice.

“We certainly will.” Gaetano replied.

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Not for too long.

“What was that about?” Althaia asked me quietly when we stepped away from them and stopped at the champagne table.

“About what?” She let out a sigh and grabbed a glass, taking a small sip.

“Why couldn’t I tell my father that we got married?”

“I thought you said you wanted to keep it a secret?” I frowned as I looked at the glass in her hand.

“Yeah, well, we already told your family and everyone who works for you.” I knew she was annoyed that I prevented her from telling them.

“It’s not the same. My family and men need to know who you are as it changes things. Your status as my wife and second in rank lets them know you are the top priority when it comes to safety.” I took the champagne glass out of her hand and placed it aside. That earned me an eye roll from her.

“You’re always acting as if my father is going to hurt me.” Althaia looked at me as if trying to figure out what was going

“I’m just cautious. That’s all.” I told her, and that was the truth.

“Is that why you’re all tense today? Is there something going on that I don’t know of?” She looked at me with a concerned expression, and I gave her a smile.

“No, nothing’s going on, my love. Don’t worry and enjoy the wedding.” I placed a kiss on her forehead, seeing her visibly

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Game Over(1

relax at my words.

“All right... Oh, you should get excited about the cake! I know you’re not that into sweet things, but I helped choose the filling and it’s freaking delicious!” Althaia’s eyes lit up at the mention of the cake, having me look at her amused. Food was truly the way to her heart.

“That’s not true.” I pulled her into me as I leaned slightly down to her and talked quietly.

“I eat you all the time, and you’re deliciously sweet.”

“Damiano!” She gasped and looked around to see if anyone heard me while her cheeks started to flush in such an

adorable way.

“Don’t say that! Our families are here.” She hissed.

“So?” I raised a brow at her as I continued to tease her.

“You shameless man.” I chuckled when she turned around and left to join Arianna, Ava, and Cecilia. I took one more look around, seeing everyone was acting as they should, chatting with each other and making sure there still was a festive atmosphere.

I joined Althaia and the others when the chatter died down and Cara and Lorenzo made their grand appearance. Another round of applause sounded for them, people cheering as they made their way down the stairs together.

“I can’t believe you’re actually married now! Congrats once again.” Althaia embraced Cara tightly.

“It was about time.” Cara chuckled.

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“Yeah, sorry about that... But hey, at least you’re Mrs. Tank

Man now! Better late than never!” Althaia grinned.

“How in the world are you coming up with those names?” Arianna laughed.

“Apparently, she thinks I have the same build as Lorenzo. Thanks for that, by the way.” Cara gave her a sarcastic smile.

“... I never thought I would be called fat on my own wedding day.” Lorenzo commented, crossing his arms as he looked at them all.

“No, not fat. Just big.” Cara gave him a cheeky wink.

“Ew, gross. Save that talk for your wedding night.” Arianna groaned and I nodded in agreement.

“Congratulations.” I wished them both. I gave a small smirk to Lorenzo when I wrapped my arm around Cara’s shoulder.

“Oh, my God! It’s happening!” Cara gasped in excitement. Lorenzo’s gaze was focused on my arm around her with a glare.

“I wish you a lifetime of happiness with Lorenzo.” And I kissed the top of her head just to piss him off. Arianna and Althaia looked at me with surprised looks while Cara stood still in shock.

“Althaia, you look a little tired on your feet.” Lorenzo looked at her with a small grin, ignoring the warning glare I was sending him.

“Huh...?” She looked at him confused but then let out a small squeal when he suddenly swooped her into his arms. Althaia’s

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eyes went wide and she was blushing uncontrollably.

“I don’t care if you’re my brother, I will shoot you.”

“Likewise.”

“Put her down.”

“Only if you let go of my wife first.”

We stared at each other, waiting until one of us gave in. But I refused to lose. Instead, I pulled Cara closer to me and wrapped both arms around her. Cara didn’t care and was only happy about what was happening and even wrapped her arms around me. This pissed Lorenzo off, even more, to see her like this.

“Althaia, wrap your arms around my neck.”

“Fuck off, you bastard.” I went to grab her out of Lorenzo’s arms.

“Wow, this is some next-level possessive shit I have never witnessed.” Ava shook her head in disbelief.

“Poor Althaia, you left her all stunned and overwhelmed.” Cecilia chuckled as she looked at Althaia, who was trying to process what had just happened.

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The evening continued as it should and people were having a good time. Slowly, one by one, I had all the vulnerable people, and people whom I didn't need present to fight, escorted out of the castle if something were to go wrong. My father was talking to Gaetano to keep him distracted while we did so. It had to be as smooth and unnoticeable as possible while I had my men in position.

“I'm going with Cara to help her into her second dress for the cake cutting.” Althaia told me with a smile. I had made sure Arianna had kept Althaia distracted as well so she wouldn't notice why my Nonna and mother were suddenly missing.

I wrapped my arm around her waist and placed a soft kiss on her lips.

“Be safe.” She looked at me slightly confused before letting out a smile.

“I will try and make it back and forth safely.” She chuckled with a teasing look. They both went on their way and soon were out of view. I looked around at my men, giving a discreet nod that it was time and they were to get ready.

“Dario, they're coming your way now. Escort them quietly and safely out of here.” I ordered. They were the last ones I needed to get out of here.

“Cop -” I stilled when he got cut off. I looked at Lorenzo, and his eyes narrowed, letting me know it wasn't just me who heard it.

“Dario, answer me.” My entire body tensed up when the only response was the sounds of him gagging and gargling.

In his own blood.

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“... What’s going on here?”

“Oh, my God, Dario!”

I held my breath at the sound of Althaia’s voice.

No...

No!

Fucking no!

This couldn’t be happening!

My legs moved in a sprint towards the stairs with Lorenzo in front of me when we heard them scream. My heart was already pounding in fear of not getting there in time. I couldn’t let that happen.

Not again!

The sounds of whistling and crackling reached my ears as we ran.

Someone had set the fireworks off.

I halted at the top of the stairs when the power suddenly went out, leaving us completely in the dark.

“Rafaelle, what’s going on?” I spoke into the microphone. But he didn’t answer.

“Rafaelle!” I shouted but still radio silent.

“I don’t have time for this.” Lorenzo said and moved again. The only light we had was from the moonlight corning in through the large windows in the hallway. I followed Lorenzo

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as we hurried. At the same time, two men came from a connected hallway, aiming their machine guns at us. I quickly grabbed the back of Lorenzo's shirt and forced him back with me when they fired continuously.

By a hair's breadth, we made it into cover by the staircase, wood pieces flying over our heads. We laid down low as the commotion in the banquet had gotten louder and the sounds of gunfire could be heard from different directions. Shouting and screaming along with glasses being shattered could be heard, and I dreaded that I might already be too late.

That fucking bastard.

How the fuck did he take us by surprise?!

"Where the fuck is Gaetano?!" I shouted as I pulled out my gun. Rage overtook my body and I shot whoever came into my view. Bullets were flying from all different directions, my men taking cover and firing whenever they could, and I joined them while I scanned the room.

And Gaetano was nowhere to be found.

That was his cue. He snuck out when the power went out.

"Damiano, cover me!" Lorenzo bolted up, and I took out my second gun, creating a distraction as I shot after those men for Lorenzo to get back into the hallway. They sought cover as I continued to fire, and it was enough for Lorenzo to get far enough into the hallway as he moved closely along the wall.

I stopped shooting, waiting for them to get back out again. Just as one of them was about to step into view, Lorenzo grabbed him and slammed him to the ground. The other one came out shortly, and I didn't waste a second before I shot

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him before he could get to Lorenzo.

I ran in the direction of the room where Dario was supposed to be. I moved my legs as fast as they allowed me, Lorenzo following closely behind me. I tried to get in touch with any of my men who were positioned on this end but no one was answering, and I already knew what this meant.

“Fuck...” I stopped at the doorway, the sight of Dario on the floor with his throat cut open.

“Check the rooms.” I told Lorenzo as I kicked the doors open in the next room. But there was no sign of Althaia and Cara. My heart was pounding as I rushed from room to room, shouting in pure frustration and anger when I found my men lying on the floor.

All dead.

“Damiano!” I ran back to where Lorenzo was, seeing him on the floor where Rafaelle was unconscious.

With a pool of blood around his head.

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“He’s alive. They knocked him out.” I let out a breath as I took off my jacket and pressed against the wound on the back of his head. He was supposed to watch over the cameras and controlled the power, but they got to him before we could even put action to our plan.

The sound of footsteps coming our way had me aiming my gun at the door but lowered it when I saw it was Luca.

“Shit!” He erupted when he saw Rafaelle.

“They can’t have gone far -” I stopped talking and shared a

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look with Lorenzo. He heard it too. The fireworks had ceased and we were now able to hear the whirling helicopter rotors.

“Luca, help Rafaelle!” I got up on my feet in a split second and rushed out in the direction of the front lawn. It was the only place close enough to the castle where a helicopter could land.

“Take that way, I will find another!” I shouted to him as we split ways. I had to get there before it was too late.

Running down a different hallway, I spotted the helicopter through the large windows. I stopped running when I saw Gaetano standing next to the helicopter as they got the unconscious Cara inside. A snarl of rage escaped me when I saw Althaia fighting against three men to break free of their hold.

“Don’t fucking touch her!” I shot at the window, cracking it and breaking it as I jumped through. I landed on the ground, rolling to break the fall, not caring about the pieces of glass cutting into my skin before I got to my feet. The sound of her screaming for them to let her go pushed me to run faster to get her.

“Knock her out already!” Gaetano shouted at them and one of them pulled out a needle to sedate her.

“Althaia!” I shouted in desperation.

I couldn’t let this happen.

I refused to let this happen to me again!

“Watch out!” She screamed to me. I quickly followed her gaze where I had failed to notice Carlos between the trees. I aimed

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my gun at him and fired.

But it was empty.

The sound of gunfire rang out and I hit the ground. The wind got knocked out of me and an excruciating burning sensation took over my body. My hand touched the side of my stomach, feeling nothing but blood gushing out of me.

“Damiano! No!” I heard her scream before her voice died down.

I tried to get up but my body was heavy. I felt paralyzed and completely powerless as I lay there.

“Althaia... I’m sorry...” My sight got blurry and I was met with darkness.

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Althaia

“...Althaia...”

A small groan escaped my lips. I felt groggy and completely disoriented as I felt my body slightly shake. I felt nauseous. and my eyelids were heavy when I tried to open them.

“Althaia, please wake up.” Cara’s voice sounded clear and I pushed myself to open my eyes despite their heaviness.

“... I don’t feel too good.” I almost whimpered as she helped me to sit up. I rested my head against the wall, slowly blinking, and looked around. It looked like we were in a small basement room with grey walls, a tiny lightbulb that was barely giving any light, and there was a sound of water dripping somewhere in the distance.

Where the fuck were we?

“Are you okay?” I blinked a couple of times and looked at Cara. Her hair was a complete mess and looked like she had been through hell.

“I... What happened -” I stopped breathing as everything rushed back to me.

Dario. Blood. Fighting. Damiano.

Damiano!

No no no no!

1/6

My eyes widened and I suddenly felt suffocated. The images of Damiano getting shot and laying still on the ground. Tears. started to stream down my face while Cara in a panic tried to make me snap out of it.

“Breathe! Please, breathe!” Her voice shook, tears glistening in her eyes. I finally gasped, air filling my lungs as I clutched tightly onto her arms.

“Damiano... They shot Damiano...” I croaked out. My entire body was shaking as the image of him getting shot repeatedly played in my mind.

“What...?” Cara breathed out, tears leaving her eyes.

“My God, they shot him!” I cried out. I clutched my chest, my heart aching as I felt it break into a million pieces.

My love.

My life.

My everything.

The man who was supposed to be the father of my children.

“...He’s dead...” I whispered out in a sob, feeling completely numb. Cara stumbled up to her feet in shock, grabbing her head as she paced the room.

“No... This can’t be happening... He can’t be dead. This is not happening!” She shouted in frustration. She ran to the door and began banging violently on it while screaming.

“You fuckers! You can’t be doing this! You made me miserable for years, you don’t get to do this to me again!” Cara screamed at the top of her lungs as she took all of her

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frustrations out on the door.

I wiped my tears away, taking a deep breath before I shakily stood up. My body was heavy and it felt like gravity was pulling me down. But, I couldn’t sit here and feel sorry for myself. We had to do something to get us out of here. All those hours Damiano had spent training me, I had to put them to use now. I breathed out as I tried to clear my head. I had to stay alert and aware of my surroundings, assess the situation and figure out what to do.

Just like he taught me.

“Cara!” I pulled her away from the door before she could hurt herself. I hugged her tightly as it was her turn to sob. I gulped down the sob that wanted to escape me but I managed to keep it together. Crying wouldn’t help anyone.

“It’s going to be okay... We’ll be okay.” I kept saying, trying to convince myself.

Both of our heads snapped to face the door as we heard it unlock. My father stepped inside, staring at me with cold, cunning eyes holding so much hatred in them.

“Dad -” He put his hand up to stop and silence me, his jaw clenched.

“Don’t you ever call me that.” He hissed out.

“What...?” I breathed out when he looked at me with so much disgust. I glanced behind him, seeing Maso and Carlos present as well with the same expression. My heartbeat accelerated and my breathing got louder at the sight of Carlos.

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“You son of a bitch!” I screamed and lunged at him, wanting to smash his head repeatedly into the wall. I felt it before I saw it coming and I landed on the ground. I blinked as my sight got blurry, and the entire right side of my face was stinging in pain when my father backhanded me before I could get to

Carlos.

“What the fuck are you doing?!” Cara yelled at him and she hurried to my side. I spat out as the taste of blood filled my mouth. I barely got to breathe when I cried out in pain as I got

kicked in the back.

“You filthy Russian!” Carlos laughed and I whimpered in pain when he kicked me again.

“Don’t touch her!” Cara punched his face, having his head thrown back a bit from the force.

I stumbled up on my feet when he turned his hateful glare to her. He pulled his hand back, about to hit her when Maso grabbed his arm. He didn't say anything as he gave Carlos a warning glare. Carlos scoffed at him before ripping his arm away. I looked down to the floor, grabbed my heel that fell off, and threw it at Carlos's head. Satisfaction filled me when he winced and grabbed his head.

"You little -" He hissed out and pulled out his gun, aiming at

"Enough, Carlos. We can't use her if she's dead." My father put his hand on the gun and made him lower it. I took a couple of steps back, taking Cara with me.

"Count your fucking days, you filthy Russian." Carlos spat out.

"I don't understand..." I frowned and looked at them in

4/5

confusion. My father gestured for Carlos and Maso to get out and he clasped his hands behind his back before facing me.

"You should ask that whore you call a mother. Oh, right... I forgot I got rid of her." He said, making me take a sharp intake of breath and grasped onto Cara's arm.

"What?... It was you? You... you killed mom?" Tears filled my eyes, my heart was pounding behind my chest and my legs were a second away from collapsing.

"I should have gotten rid of her a long time ago for all the betrayal. But at least she was useful to me in the end. Just like how you're going to be useful to me in getting what I want. Although, it would be rude of me to take all credit for it when it was Michael who made it happen. He was a great kid. A good asset. Such a shame I had to get rid of him as well when he stuck his nose in business that didn't concern him." He sighed as if he was sincerely sad, but the malicious grin on his lips revealed the opposite.

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Cara screamed at him while I felt numb at his words. My mother, my baby, Damiano, and now Michael. He killed everyone I cared about.

I closed my eyes.

Please, don't let this be true.

Tears fell down my face uncontrollably. I felt sick and suffocated.

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Chapter 240

Post Views: 7

? Views, Released on February 11, 2024

"You're a dead man walking... He's going to kill you." I spat out furiously with tears still in my eyes. I clenched my hands into fists as I glared at him.

"And who's going to kill me? That dead husband of yours?" Gaetane asked, mockingly.

"You sick fucker!" I screamed at the top of my lungs and went after him. He let out a chilling laugh and closed the door before I could get to him. I banged my fists against the door, kicking it while I screamed for him to get back so I could kill him with my bare hands.

"It's no use... Save your strength." This time it was Cara's turn to pull me away from the door. I was breathing heavily and my mind was going crazy.

"He took everything away from me!" A choked-up sob came out of me and I finally broke down crying, unable to keep it together.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. This is all my fault." Cara sniffed as she held me tightly into her frame. I looked at her, wiping my tears away.

"This wouldn't have happened if I told you to come to that stupid engagement party. And mom would still be alive! I was being selfish because I knew it would piss them off if you showed up... That's what I wanted after all those fucking years of making me miserable. I'm really sorry, Thaia, I shouldn't - have..." Cara's eyes filled with guilt as she looked at me

heartbroken.

“No, no. It’s not your fault.” I shook my head and embraced her tightly. I sighed and slid down the wall to sit on the ground and patted the space next to me.

“Did you hear what that cocksucker for ice cream called me?” I stared at the ceiling before facing her.

“Russian.” Cara said and I nodded. She looked at me

confused. Hell, even I was so fucking confused about the whole thing.

“Mom was not exactly who I thought she was... There were many things she kept from me and it frustrates me so much I can’t even ask her what the fuck has been going on.” I started. I had no idea my mother was so mysterious. I never once thought there was something unusual about her and she really did everything she could to make sure I would live a normal, comfortable life.

“Do you know who Alexei Vasiliev is?” I asked, before continuing.

“Who doesn’t? He’s a fucking lunatic.”

“First time I met him was at the auction Damiano took me to.”

I swallowed hard at the mention of his name and bit down on my lip to avoid it trembling. I took a deep breath and cleared my throat.

“He told me I reminded him of an old lover back in his days. At first, I thought it was creepy that he told me that, but then he continued to talk about how they loved each other but were bad for each other. But no matter what, she would always be his Solnishko. And she called him Lunnyy svet.” Cara dropped her jaw open and her eyes slightly widened, and I knew she recognized the word.

“When I went back to the house, I found a small treasure chest with some letters and a picture. That picture was of mom and Alexei together.” Cara continued to look at me in complete

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astonishment while I continued to explain everything from when I found the picture, and to my meeting with Alexei at the LuxePalace.

We sat in silence as we let the information process. However, my thoughts were all over the place, giving me a banging headache the more I was left to my thoughts.

My mother had an affair with Alexei Vasiliev during her marriage with Gaetano.

And now, piecing everything together, it was most likely possible that Alexei Vasiliev was my biological father. But if it was true Gaetano wasn't my after, then why the hell did he pretend he was?

My entire life has been a whole damn lie.

I started to chuckle at how fucked up everything was at the moment.

"No wonder my Italian fucking sucks." The chuckle turned into a burst of full-on laughter, and Cara couldn't help but laugh along with me.

"Zdravstvuyte, bitch!" Cara greeted as we laughed.

"Hey, what if you're Russian too? Maybe your mom had an affair as well?!" I gasped at the possibility.

"Shit, I wouldn't blame her if she had an affair. Have you seen how ugly that piece of shit of a father I have? I would have cheated in a heartbeat, too! Does Alexei have a brother? Maybe she hooked up with him?" Cara questioned, wondering if it was possible.

"You definitely didn't get those genes from Uncle, that's for sure." I said before bursting out in laughter.

The jokes continued and we laughed as if we had lost our minds. We laughed, then cried, then laughed again as we listed out how miserable we were. Our laughter died down as we caught our breath, sitting once again in silence, each in our own thoughts.

"You know..." Cara broke the silence.

"I never told anyone, but one day I decided enough was enough and tried to end my life by jumping from a bridge." I whipped my head so fast to look at her, seeing her smiling sadly as she spoke.

"I was beaten and broken so much already. And then they wanted me to marry off to someone who was known to be a freaking powerful and skilled assassin, adding to the pile of shit I was already going through. I snuck out of the house, got drunk to lessen the pain, and then I jumped. Without giving it a single thought."

"Cara..." I sniffed, holding her hand tightly in mine.

"Lorenzo saved me. He found out where I was and jumped in to save me." She smiled as she thought back to it, and I looked at her in surprise.

"Then it turned out the bridge wasn't more than just five feet tall but because I was shitfaced drunk, I thought I was higher up." Cara smacked herself on the leg and burst out in

laughter.

"I shouldn't laugh, but I can't help it if you laugh." Tears were visible in our eyes as we couldn't control ourselves anymore. If

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we were being watched, they would definitely think we had lost our minds.

"I wanted just wanted to make one decision about my life, and that was when to end it. But even that I couldn't do right. And later, I was happy it didn't happen because for once, he gave me the will to finally live." Cara sobbed and my heart broke

even more.

"We'll get out of here." I promised her. Whatever I had to do, I had to get her out of here.

"You deserve to live a normal...ish life with Tank Man 'cause let's be honest, they're anything but normal." I lightly chuckled, trying to somehow lighten the mood.

"I do want that normal-ish life with my Tank Man." She sighed and I smiled at her.

“You will. But first, we need a plan to get the fuck out of here.”

5/6

Post Views: 7