

## The Devil's Fire by Mariam El-Hafi Chapter 4

Althaia

"Thaia!" I heard Cara's voice shout as she appeared from nowhere, and made her way toward me with a big smile on her face.

"Cara!" I squealed, matching her excitement as I quickly handed back my drink to Michael, not caring that I spilled a little in the process, and walked as fast as I could in my heels and embraced her. I wrapped my arms around her and hugged her tight. It had been so long since I last saw her, which truly sucked because we were like two inseparable sisters.

"Oh my god, I have missed you so much. It really is not the same without you." She hugged me tighter into her tiny frame.

"I know," I said with a chuckle. "I've missed you too!" I stepped back a little, holding her hands in mine as I took a good look at her.

"Cara, you look amazing!" I gaped at the beautiful gown she was wearing, a long flowy beautiful old rose-colored strapless gown with a corset-like top with silver patterns which hugged into her waist, and made her already full breasts even bigger. Her pitch-black hair was in an updo with a few loose strands of hair around her face, and her makeup was done flawlessly! Light and dark brown faded into each other and a cut crease with a light pink sparkly eyeshadow complimented her hazel eyes. She looked absolutely breathtaking.

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"Mom really outdid herself with this dress. It's more than I could ever imagine." She said with a wink, and I dropped my jaw at the new information.

"Wait, I didn't know you asked mom to make you a dress." I squinted my eyes at her. My mother was a designer and made drop-dead gorgeous gowns. When we moved, she opened her own little shop, however, it blew up in no time, and eventually, we had to expand and now it was a well-known high-end shop called Jacinta.

Yup, she used her own name...

“Yeah, well, I didn’t want you to know because I wanted it to be a surprise, and – ” Cara put her hand to her chest and squeezed my hand with the other.

“I love you so much, but you fucking suck at keeping something like that a secret.” She said while giving me an innocent smile.

I opened my mouth to say something but closed it again because she was right. I was the type of person who would get you a gift and within the next few minutes I would be all like ‘guess what I just got you.’ I mean, she already knew what I got her for her engagement. I literally took a picture of the champagne glasses and sent her a text message that said ‘OMG these are so cute! I’m getting them for you’, and sent her the picture.

“Fair enough.” I muttered.

“But damn, look at you! That dress is so hot on you. Who are you getting your titties out for, huh?” She put her hands on her hips and wiggled her eyebrows at me. Typical of Cara, always inappropriate no matter the situation we were in.

“No one,” trolled my eyes at her. “Unlike you, my titties are covered up.”

“True, but I have a man now that I need to impress, so he knows what awaits him if you know what I mean.” She winked at me and made me laugh in the process.

“Speaking of man...” I said while looking around to make sure no one was near hearing distance.

“Are you absolutely sure you want to do this, Cara? You can always, I don’t know, run away? You know I’ll come with you.” I told her with a serious expression. If she wanted to run away to a different country, for her, I would drop everything and go with her. She was my only family besides my mother, and I would do anything to make sure she would be safe.

“You know I can’t do that. He will hunt me down and definitely kill me if I ever think about running away.” She gave me a sad smile.

“Besides...” She continued. “Anything will be better than living with him. I just have to get away! I need to breathe.” As much as I hated to admit it, it was

true. Her father was an absolute maniac and abusive, to say the least. If she did something and he found it inappropriate, he would put his hands on her. One time her father came back home from God knows where,

intoxicated with both alcohol and cocaine, and almost beat her to death if he didn't gain just a little bit of his senses back.

thope one day someone would give him the same treatment.

Amen.

"This is my way out of here."

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"As long as you're happy, I'm happy." I gave a small smile and pulled her into another hug.

"Just remember, no matter what, Pitbull has been there and done that." Cara pulled away and looked me dead in the eyes with a blank expression.

"I swear, Althaia if you say that one more time, I will beat you up and make you eat your phone." I stuck my tongue out at her as I grinned. So, I may have used that phrase one too many times to lighten up the mood.

What could I say, memes were life.

"Are you done catching up? I'm feeling all lonely here by myself." Michael said as he put an arm around my shoulder and pouted his lips.

"Isn't this awesome!? The trio has finally reunited at last." He said with excitement, and I just shook my head at him and removed his arm from my shoulders. I did not spend that much time getting ready for him to get my hair into a tangled

mess.

"Come, let me introduce you to my soon-to-be husband." She nodded in the direction of a large group of men standing, smoking cigars and drinking whatever their choice of poison was. But what caught me off guard was that they were already staring at us.

Definitely nothing intimidating about that.

Nope, not at all...

“Have fun with that.” Michael said as he was already looking in the direction of the men with a blank impression.

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“Are you not coming with us? Didn’t you just say that you were lonely standing by yourself?” I gave him a teasing look.

“Yeah, but I’m not that lonely.” He smiled down at me. “See ya!” He said as he made his way in the opposite direction before either of us could get a word out.

“Let’s go.” Cara took the hold of my hand and together we made our way toward the group of men who were standing there and observing our every move.

Great...

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