

Chapter 131 - Fall For My Ex's Mafia Dad

“Hey, Fay,” Ivan says, smirking at me as I cross the parking lot to him. His eyes sweep over me, as they usually do, as they didn’t yesterday. “I like your boots.”

“Thanks,” I say breezily, stepping close to him and unable to keep myself from grinning up into his face. “So glad you could make time for me today, Ivan.” I murmur. “Considering you were so busy last night.”

“Ahhh,” he says, the corner of his mouth pulling up into that smile that makes my stomach twist as he looks down into my face. “But it worked, didn’t it?”

I laugh, shaking my head at him. “So that’s what it was?” I ask, a little miffed but pleased to hear that he wasn’t just disinterested. “A tactic to get me to reach out to you?”

“Well,” Ivan says, turning his head a little to the side, “if you didn’t text me afterwards, it was me holding on to my pride and moving on with a very pretty brunette.” His smile deepens as I glare at him, unable to hide my jealousy. “But,” he continues, “since it did...”

Ivan lets his sentence trail off there, smiling down at me, shifting his weight to move even closer. And honestly, I forget to breathe as I look up into his eyes –

“Ahem,” Jerome says, not even pretending to clear his throat and just saying the word. I jump a little bit but Ivan stays very cool, keeping his body close to mine as we both turn our heads to look at Jerome standing there, his arms folded, shaking his head at us.

“Oh, hey Jerome,” Ivan says after a second, leaning away from me and giving Jerome a charming smile. “How are you, man?”

I blink in surprise and see Jerome frown for a second. Honestly, I don’t think either of us thought that Ivan knew who Jerome was.

Jerome opens his mouth to answer, but I interrupt, grabbing Ivan’s hand.

“Come on,” I say, tugging him inward towards the stalls. “Come meet Heathcliff.”

Ivan grins at me and lets himself be lead along. When we arrive at Heathcliff’s stall I drop Ivan’s hand to unlock the bolt, but when I turn to invite Ivan to come in I am surprised to see him standing right where I left him – about five feet away, in the middle of the aisle.

“Come inside,” I say, gesturing for him to come forward.

“I’m good,” Ivan says, grinning at me and holding up a hand. “I am...close enough out here.”

“What?” I breathe, and then I laugh as I figure out that Ivan is afraid. My eyes flick to Jerome, who stops about ten feet behind Ivan and he realizes it at the same moment that I do. “Oh my god,” I laugh, coming out of the stall towards Ivan. “You –“

“Um,” Ivan says, taking a step back and watching the dark stall warily. “Do you want to shut that door –“

“Ivan!” I laugh, grabbing his hand. “It’s fine! He’s a big softie –“

Ivan shifts his weight back into his heels and grimaces, actively resisting my pull. “Seriously, Fay,” he says, all pretense dropping. “I am amazing out there – I can see him, he’s so pretty! But I am...good, admiring from afar.”

“Oh my god,” I laugh, rolling my eyes and tugging harder until Ivan gives in and stumbles forward a few steps. “Big mafia boss,” I murmur, looking at him with a little vicious glee as I lead him to the entrance to the stall door, “afraid of the world’s nicest horse.”

And then I drop his hand as I go in to pet Heathcliff, who nickers and nudges me eagerly with his nose, knowing I’ve got sugar cubes in my pocket. “Come in,” I say to Ivan, rubbing a hand up and down Heathcliff’s nose to give him a little scratch and then moving to stand at his side, idly stroking his soft neck. “Seriously, he’s very gentle.”

Ivan sighs and then warily steps into the stall, looking at Heathcliff like he’s a bomb about to explode. “He’s just a very large animal, Fay,” Ivan mutters, crossing his arms and looking intensely uncomfortable. “The biggest animals I’m used to are...cats. Maybe squirrels. Chipmunks.”

“Brunettes,” I murmur, my eyes a little cruel as I smirk at him. His eyes flash from the horse to me, and I see a smirk come back on his face a little bit.

“Sure,” he says, quiet. “I can handle a Brunette or two. Though I prefer a redhead.”

I can’t help the little smile that curls my lips. “Heathcliff’s a redhead,” I say, nodding to my horse. “And you’ve only been rude to him, when the whole point of today was for you to come and meet him.”

“Really, Fay,” Ivan says, his voice dry. “That was the whole point of today? To meet Heathcliff?”

“Sure,” I answer, taking a step closer to him, holding his gaze. And then there’s just a long moment of silence where we just...look at each other.

And the tension between us builds and builds.

My smile grows a little when Ivan's the one to break it.

"Fay," he breathes, taking a step closer to me, his mouth falling open with my name on his lips.

But before he can do anything else, I hold up a finger between us, making him go still.

"Jerome?" I call, and there's a silent pause before I hear Jerome sigh and see him step into sight right outside the stall door. He was lurking there, I knew. Spying. Making sure I behaved.

"What, Fay," Jerome answers, his arms crossed over his chest as he stares at me from the door to the stall.

"Can you go get my phone?" I ask, blinking innocently at him. "I think I left it in the car."

"Fay," he growls, shaking his head at me.

"Go get my phone, Jerome," I snap, returning his glare. And then he sighs and, muttering something about trouble, stalks away from the stall and back towards the parking lot.

I'm smiling then as I turn back to Ivan, who instantly closes the distance between us. "Look at you, Fay," he says, standing over me now, so close that I can feel the warmth his body gives off. "Coming into your own little mafia wife status, aren't you?"

"It looks good on me, doesn't it?" I whisper, earning a little laugh, which makes me smile.

And then I see Ivan's hands twitch, as if he wants to put them on me, but he doesn't, and I bite my lip, wondering if I want him to.

"Why am I here, Fay?" he asks, his voice softer than I usually hear it.

"Why do you want to be here, Ivan?" I whisper back.

"Stop fucking with me, Fay," he snaps, his voice still low as he looks back towards the door, back towards where Jerome disappeared. "Do you want me to take you out of here? Get you away from them?"

"No," I answer softly, instantly, blinking as I realize that that's why Ivan thought I called him here today. And it's the truth – I do not want to be taken away. I just – I just wanted to talk -

"Fuck," Ivan snaps, turning away from me, frustrated. "Fuck, Fay! Why are you being so stupid?!"

"I'm being stupid?!" I gasp, honestly a little hurt by it.

“Yes!” he hisses, coming back and grabbing me by the shoulders, leaning down to look directly in my eyes. “Yes, Fay, you’re being a real god damn idiot by not getting out of there now! This is going down! How many times do I have to tell you – you could be killed!”

“What?” I gasp, shocked by it. I mean – I knew he told me to get out of the house – but he never said killed –

“Are you hearing me now?!” he asks, almost shouting now as he shakes me again. “Why are you even staying there? What’s holding you back?”

“Daniel,” I say, the rehearsed answer instantly on my lips. “He’s my fiancé. I – I love him!” But my words fade away at the end, because I can see in Ivan’s face that the lie isn’t working.

Ivan just stares at me for a moment in disbelief and then he drops his hands from my shoulders, standing up straight to tower over me again, shaking his head from side to side. “Seriously, Fay?” he says, his words rich with irony. “You seriously want me to believe that it’s Daniel, you’re in love with? Daniel keeping you in that house?”

And then, as I stare up at Ivan, my mouth falls open because...

I don’t know how I know it, or he knows it, but Ivan knows.

He knows that it’s not my affection for Daniel keeping me in the house.

And he knows that it’s Kent.

Chapter 132 – My Man, Not Yours

Chapter 132 - Fall For My Ex's Mafia Dad

“How,” I whisper, frozen, staring up at Ivan. “How did you know...”

And then his face falls as I basically admit it – this thing that he’s thinking, that he’s figured out. And I can see that I’ve really, really hurt him.

“Fuck you, Fay,” Ivan whispers, his voice harsh with hate. “Fuck you for picking that old, dead man over me. He’s fucked, Fay,” he shakes his head now as he stares at me like his heart is broken. “And I told you that, and offered you everything. And you picked him anyway.”

And I reach out for him, desperately unhappy at his words – and to see him so hurt – and at first he swats my hand away but then –

Then Ivan grabs me.

And he wraps one hand around my waist, and buries the other in my hair, and pulls me against him, and kisses me like a drowning man. Like I'm the gasp of air he'll ever breathe.

I'm completely surprised by it, and swept away, and confused –

But my body responds and I feel myself leaning into him as he wraps me closer against his chest, as he bends me backwards under the force of his emotions, kissing me like we've come to the end of a great thing.

And then he lets me go, almost all at once.

Just – drops me, his hands and his arms gone in an instant, so fast that I stumble back a few steps and Heathcliff shies a bit at my sudden movement. I put a hand out on the horse's shoulder to steady myself, looking for Ivan.

But he's already at the door of the stall, glaring back at me like he hates me now.

“Get out of the house, Fay,” he says, the words falling from his mouth like bricks. “Now. Immediately. Get out of the house this week, or...” he shakes his head and clenches his jaw suddenly, as if catching himself. But he hauls his gaze back up to mine for a brief second. “Or you'll be dead, Fay,” he whispers. “With the rest of them.”

And I'm still staring after him, my mouth hanging open in shock, even after he's gone.

A few minutes later Jerome comes back to the stall door, looking curiously over his shoulder. “He didn't look to happy –” he says, but his sentence is cut short when he sees my face. I haven't moved, not at all, from my place next to Heathcliff.

“Fuck, Fay,” Jerome says, hurrying in to take me by the shoulders, his eyes darting over my face. “Are you all right? You're white – seriously, it's a cliché, but you're as white as a sheet.”

I suck a deep breath in then, looking up at Jerome, and then I nod shakily. Jerome doesn't believe me, though, and he wraps me in his arms, tucking my head in beneath his chin. He holds me for a long couple of moments, muttering kind and comforting things, stroking my hair softly as I come back to myself.

After a few minutes I pull away a bit, and he lets me.

“Seriously Fay,” he says, his voice desperate and curious and tender. “What the hell did he say?”

But I'm not ready to tell him now.

Kent. Kent has to know first.

And fuck...I want Kent, right now. Want to be in his arms.

“Can you take me home, Jerome?” I ask in a whisper. “We have to go home. Right now.”

I steady myself a little bit in the car, and Jerome helps, realizing that I’m seriously rattled. So he does his best to make me laugh, cracking jokes and holding my hand the whole way home.

I’m smiling at him, grateful, as we drive through the gate and head for the garages at the back of the house.

“You all right, Fay?” he asks quietly as we pull into the garage and he parks the car.

“Yeah,” I say, and then I take a deep breath. “Thanks, Jerome,” I say, giving his hand a squeeze as I move to undo my seatbelt. He’s about to crack another joke in reply when I see him go still and then feel him rip his hand from mine. Confused, curious, I turn towards the windshield and see Kent standing there, glaring at both of us.

“Shit,” I murmur, moving slowly and talking fast as I realize that Kent just saw Jerome holding my hand. “Can you please just tell him that you’re sleeping with Daniel? So that he doesn’t kill you?”

“It will be a race,” Jerome mutters back, reaching for his door handle, “to see what makes him cut my head off faster: the sight of me holding your hand, or the news that I’m fucking his son.”

And I almost burst out laughing at that, but I glance at Kent again, and the laugh dies in my mouth. So I take another deep breath and step out of the car, turning to face him.

“You’re home early, Fay,” Kent says, stepping closer to me and glaring at Jerome, his expression clearly communicating I’ll deal with you later as Jerome heads back into the house, shutting the door behind him.

“I needed to,” I say, stepping close to Kent and then hesitating, glancing towards the door before stepping closer and wrapping my arms around his waist, needing a moment to feel him close to me. “I’m sorry,” I whisper.

Kent hesitates a moment before wrapping his own arms around me, holding me tight to him and dropping a kiss to the top of my head before letting me go and stepping back. His expression is sorry, I can read his regret all over his face – if it were up to him, he’d hold me as long as I needed.

“What are you sorry for?” he asks, looking at me warily, clearly torn between being worried for me and suspicious.

And I swallow the truth a little. I'm sorry because I broke the rules – I let Ivan touch me – but suddenly, I really, really don't want him to know. So I lie. "I'm sorry that I didn't get more information," I say, giving a sad little shrug.

Kent sees through me, I think, a little bit. But he lets me continue, I think because he can see that I'm truly rattled. "What did you get, Fay?" he asks, his posture shifting as he realizes that this is serious. And suddenly, as I look at him, there's none of my Kent left. Just the Mafia King.

"A timeline," I say quietly, straightening my shoulders and looking up into his face. "One week," I say, my voice steadier than I thought it would be. "Ivan told me I have one week to get out of this house. Or else I'll probably die. With the rest of you."

And Kent stares at me for a moment before turning his head sharply and cursing a deep and steady stream of curses. And he doesn't look at me again as he turns and storms towards the house.

I don't say a word either as I hang my head and follow behind.

When we get into the house, my day is instantly made worse.

Because the first person we run into is Natalia.

"Ah, Fay," she says, giving me a false little smile as she peers around Kent to look at me as I come through the garage door. "Good to have you home. You can help me cook!"

"Cook?" I ask, blinking at her, still rattled by my morning and Kent's reaction to it.

"Yes!" she says, smiling at me and then up at Kent. I stare at her, confused, because there's absolutely no way that she hasn't picked up on either of our moods. And then I blink as I realize that of course she has – she's just playing her role as the perfect Mafia wife. The woman who lets her husband handle everything while she just blissfully maintains the home, trusting that he'll keep it under control.

And I scowl at her as I figure that out. Because this morning just further proves that I'm the opposite of a Mafia wife, sticking my nose so far in this business that I'm not sure I'll ever get it out. I see Natalia's smile twist a little as she sees me scowl.

"I'm making dinner," Natalia continues, looking up at Kent. "A proper Italian meal for my hungry Italian men!" Then she laughs and puts a too-familiar hand on Kent's chest. "That is," she says, pretending to hesitate a little and looking up at him with big doe eyes, "if that's all right with you?"

"Sure, Natalia," Kent says, loosening his tie and glancing back at me before striding off to his office. "Whatever you want."

I stare after Kent for a moment and then look back to Natalia, who is smirking at me like she's already won. "So?" she says, nodding towards the kitchen. "You will come help?"

"Sorry, Natalia," I say, instantly shifting into my good fiancé act. "I already told Daniel I'd help him study." And then I pout exaggeratedly at her and turn towards the stairs, my mind already beyond her and turning towards what the hell we're going to do.

"You'll have to learn to cook, Fay!" she calls after me in a teasing, sing-song tone, "if you want to be a good wife!"

"Not if we're all dead, Natalia!" I mutter under my breath, mimicking her sing-song inflection as I haul myself up the stairs.

"Dinner at six!" she calls after me, louder this time. But I just roll my eyes and keep walking. Because honestly? We've got bigger problems than pasta right now.

Chapter 133 – Bigger Problems than Pasta

Chapter 133 - Fall For My Ex's Mafia Dad

I head down for dinner just before six o'clock, having spent the majority of my day laying in my bed, staring at the ceiling. But unlike the last time I did that, this day's staring was fueled by melancholy, not rage, which is...way worse. Because while anger makes me seek solutions and want to tear the world to pieces, being sad and worried just feels...hopeless.

I'm still sighing as I push open the door to the kitchen, and it only gets worse when I realize that my cozy sweater and jeans were apparently not the correct attire for the evening. Natalia sweeps towards the patio carrying a basket of bread and wearing a flowing floral dress with not a speck of pasta sauce on it, despite cooking all afternoon. She sees me and immediately smirks, running her eyes over me like the unkempt ragamuffin that I probably seem to her.

I just take a deep breath and move immediately to the big fridge in the galley kitchen that I know holds the wine. As I get there, I see that Daniel has beaten me to it, closing the door and smiling at me when he sees me. "Hey," he says, holding up the chilled bottle of white wine in his hand. "You want a glass?"

"Can you pour me two?" I ask, quirking my head to the side and blinking at him innocently.

Daniel laughs at me and just shrugs, taking two wine glasses down from the rack and pouring one much fuller than the other. "Why so blue, Fay?" he asks, bumping his shoulder against mine. "You okay?"

“I don’t know,” I sigh, looking up at him and opening my mouth to tell him what Ivan said about the threat to his family, but before I can begin Natalia is back, her eyes instantly on the wine glass in my hand.

“Fay,” she says, clicking her tongue at me as she bends down to open the oven. “Don’t you know that those glasses are only meant to be filled to the widest point? You will ruin the flavor.”

“I poured it, Natalia,” Daniel says, leaning back against the counter and giving her a friendly smile. But I just shrug and drain the glass of half of its contents, until the wine indeed only reaches the widest point in the glass.

“There,” I say, giving her a wide and false smile. “Better?”

Natalia laughs a little at my joke but, as she moves past Daniel and I with a hot dish of lasagna she whispers a new dig. “There is nothing worse than a drunk woman, Fay,” she informs me, giving me a sad little look. “You should watch your drinking. We worry for you.”

And then she’s gone and I bare my teeth and snap at the air after her, making Daniel laugh.

“Damn,” he says, shaking his head after her. “She is going in for you tonight.”

“Is a drunk woman worse than a murderess of obnoxious Italians?” I murmur, narrowing my eyes to a glower. “Let’s find out.” And then I drain my glass. Daniel just obligingly gives me a refill as Kent comes around the corner, peering into the kitchen.

He frowns at us as I wipe my mouth with my sleeve and Daniel pours wine freely into my glass.

“Do I want to know?” Kent asks, looking between us.

“Nope,” Daniel says, giving him a bright grin.

Kent just takes a deep breath, raising his eyebrows, and walks towards the patio.

“Come on,” Daniel says, wrapping a supportive arm around my shoulders. “Let’s go eat. You need to soak up that wine.”

“No,” I murmur, stubborn and not willing to give up my melancholy just yet. “Liquid dinner for Fay tonight. The drunker I am, the less time I have to spend conscious with her.”

Daniel just grins and I wrap my arm around his waist, pleased to have my best friend by my side in these trying times.

When I step outside to the patio, though, any start to a good mood that Daniel raised in me begins to be wiped away by the sight of Natalia pressed close to Kent’s side. I scowl a little when I see her laughing up into his face, raising a hand to tuck his hair behind his ear like she did last night at that horrible dinner.

But I stop dead in my tracks when I see Kent smiling down at Natalia in response, his hand on the small of her back, tucking her body in close next to his.

Daniel comes quickly back to my side when he realizes that I've stopped moving, clutching my shoulder more tightly and pulling me with him this time. "Keep moving, Fay," he murmurs to me, his voice serious and low enough so that only I can hear. "Your my fiancé tonight, remember?"

And then I scowl again, realizing that he's right. That I have no reason, on the surface, to mind that Kent is looking down at Natalia like the long-lost-love she might very well be.

So I turn my attention back to Daniel, taking another big swig out of my glass of wine as he leads me over to the table and seats me down with him.

"Gonna be a long dinner, isn't it," I murmur to my fiancé as we watch Natalia put a fond hand on Kent's cheek before heading again into the kitchen to get more food.

"At least there's gonna be a show," Daniel mutters back, drinking his own wine now.

Kent comes over to the table then, taking his place at the head, not bothering to acknowledge either of us as he takes out his phone and flicks through his messages, clearly preoccupied.

"Seriously?" I say to Daniel and Kent, and both look up at me at the same time with matching Lippert stares. "We're doing this?" I ask, looking between father and son. "We're just...having dinner again? Ignoring the fact that last night she ordered my father's assassination and ended my engagement?"

"What would you suggest, Fay?" Kent murmurs, putting his phone down on the table and turning his heavy attention to me completely.

My mouth falls open, ready to respond, before I realize that...I don't have any answers. I don't have a suggestion for what we should be doing instead. I sputter for a couple of seconds before Daniel comes to my aid.

"She's right, dad," he says, sighing and leaning back in his chair as he takes another deep sip of his wine. "It's kind of ridiculous to expect us to sit here and play nice, considering what went down last night."

"Well," Kent says, leaning back and studying us. "You're free to go, if you want," he says, giving a little shrug and a smirk. "If you're feeling...cowardly."

I glare at him a little, falling for his taunt even though I know precisely what it is.

Daniel opens his mouth to protest, but Kent cuts smoothly in. "Listen, I hear you both, okay? But the Bianci family is an incredibly important ally that I absolutely cannot afford to alienate completely, no matter how much they've pissed you off. And Daniel," he says, looking at him

closely now, “they are your family. Whether or not they’ve made you mad, you are tied to them for life. I would suggest you find a way to create a middle ground, especially with Alessi if not Natalia.”

“And what about me?” I ask, curious and a little miffed that Daniel is getting personalized mafia advice when I am not.

“You, Fay,” he says, smirking at me. “I’m getting the impression that you’ll make your own decisions regardless of my advice.”

“Doesn’t mean I don’t want it just so I can do the opposite,” I say, narrowing my eyes at him and making him laugh. But even as Kent laughs a little, and Natalia comes back through the door, Alessi at his heels, I don’t miss the fact that Daniel frowns at me, just a little.

And I realize that Kent, in that moment...

Well, that intentionally or not, he communicated to both of us that he has a little more faith in me to make my own choices than he does his own son.

But there’s no time to discuss this – not really – as Natalia places a large bowl of salad on the table and then promptly sits down on Kent’s lap, wrapping her arm around his neck and pretending that this is a normal thing in the Lippert house. Kent, to my displeasure, wraps a steady arm around her waist – as casual as a friend but, with the way he lets his thumb rub slowly up and down against her ...

I turn away from the sight and finish my second glass of wine, doing my best to keep my face impassive.

But I place my empty glass on the table and nod at it, silently indicating to Daniel that I’m going to need a heck of a lot more wine if I’m supposed to get through this.

Chapter 134 – Family Ties

Chapter 134 - Fall For My Ex's Mafia Dad

The food at dinner does me no favors by being absolutely delicious. The salad is tart and citrusy, the lasagna creamy and rich, the desert – coconut sorbet which Natalia annoyingly made from scratch – basically makes me moan when I taste it.

And I grudge every bite that I take, wishing to hell and back that I don’t like it as much as I obviously do.

"I'm glad you enjoyed yourself, Fay," Natalia says warmly to me once we've all finished, delicately holding the spoon that she's been using to feed Kent sorbet. There's a wicked gleam in her eyes. "I do like to see a girl who is not afraid to eat, no matter how much it expands her waistline."

I do my best to hold back my glare as I slowly lick my spoon, savoring every drop. "Luckily," I say, lowering my silverware leisurely to the table, "that's not something I have to worry about, Natalia." I give a little shrug. "Maybe in twenty, thirty years."

Her smile falters a little on her face and I decide that this little victory is the perfect note on which to make my exit.

"Thank you!" I say, getting to my feet and stretching my arms above my head in the growing dark. "This was lovely. Daniel?" I say, turning to him. "Are you coming up?"

"Sure," he says, getting to his feet as well and saying his goodnights and thank-yous around the table, as polite as he always is. Natalia, Kent, and Alessi say their farewells to us as well, but they stay at the table, turning towards each other as Daniel and I head to the door.

As Daniel leans forward to grab the handle, though, some of Alessi's words catch my ear.

"Kent," he says, "perhaps now is a good time to go through the details of the little deal that we're working through –"

I turn then, my curiosity getting the better of me, and immediately meet Kent's eyes as he frowns at me. I know, instantly, that he's sending me a very precise message: that this conversation is not for me.

But, stubborn, I pause, turning my head and doing my best to listen further as Daniel pulls open the door and takes my hand, pulling me with him.

"Wait," I murmur, straining my hearing to catch Alessi saying something about plans, about a shipment –

But then Daniel catches his father's glare as well, and he hurries to pull me through the door, despite my silent protest.

"Hey!" I say, frowning up at Daniel as he closes the door to the patio behind us. "I was listening to that!"

"You were eavesdropping, Fay," he shoots back, frowning at me. "There's a reason they were waiting to talk about it until we left."

"Yah," I say, looking up at him as if it's obvious. "Which is why I wanted to hear what they were saying!"

“Dad doesn’t like that,” Daniel says, putting an arm around my shoulders and guiding me through the now-empty kitchen towards the door so we can go upstairs.

“Just because he doesn’t want us to know isn’t a reason for us to let him keep it secret,” I snap, getting angry now. “Daniel,” I say, stopping in my tracks and making him turn to me. “We’re in bad shape. This is not the time to be willingly ignorant about the goings-on of this family.”

And then I take a minute to give him the short version of what Ivan told me this afternoon – that there’s only about a week, maybe less, before something big is coming our way. That our lives are at stake.

“Fay,” Daniel says, sighing and running an anxious hand through his hair as he looks back at the door. “I hear that you’re anxious about this – but honestly, this is stuff that’s all best left to my dad – he knows what he’s doing –“

“Daniel!” I protest, shocked and a little appalled. “I have as much faith in Kent as you do! But clearly, clearly this is getting out of even his hands! We need to know more!”

“Don’t let him hear you say that, Fay,” Daniel says, looking down at me with a worried expression. “He will...not take it well, if you suggest that this is somehow out of his hands. Because of something fucking Ivan told you.”

Something about this – about Daniel coming at Ivan when he is too scared to tell his daddy that he doesn’t like his process – really gets under my skin. “What,” I say, crossing my arms and glaring at him. “Ivan’s as much of a boss as Kent is. And now suddenly he’s full of shit, just because he’s your rival? My intel is good, Daniel. We need to know what’s going on – I’m not just going to sit alone in my room while my life is at stake, hoping that everything is going to be okay!”

“Well!” Daniel says, spreading his hands out like there’s nothing he can do. “I, for one, am going to have faith in my dad! And trust that he’ll handle it, as he’s asked me to, and as he’s always done!”

“Cool!” I say, sarcasm obvious in my harsh tones. “Then I guess you can go and do that! Alone! In your own room tonight!”

“Great,” Daniel says nastily, leaning close to my face now. “Not like I’m not alone every night in your room anyway,” he whispers, bringing his face close to mine so I can hear him, apparently so used to this life that he whispers his secrets even when he’s pissed as hell and we’re alone in a big room.

I press my lips shut though, angry and a little cowed by his words. Because he’s right. My threat doesn’t have much substance to it, does it?

Seeing that I have nothing else to say, Daniel turns on his heel with a big sigh and stalks towards the kitchen door, leaving me alone.

And as the kitchen empties, the last thing I want is to follow after him like a lost little duckling.

But then, as I stand alone in the dark kitchen – a little creeped out by the large empty space – I realize that I also very much do not want to hang out alone in here.

I spin, looking for a solution, my eyes falling on the door to the back patio.

But I know they'll clam up the moment I go out there, and Natalia will use the opportunity to pick me to pieces like a little dead crab.

So I spin again and suddenly find my eyes falling on the little door to the basement – the level where Kent once chained me to a table, where before that I watched him punch the hell out of someone he was interrogating, and even before that where Fiona brought me to a little room full of archives...

And suddenly, I know exactly what I want to do.

A few minutes later, I'm settled in the leather armchair that Fiona placed down here, a little book of photographs on my lap, another glass of wine that I claimed from the bottle in the fridge sitting on the table next to me. After all, I'm not going to look through teenage photos of Kent and Natalia sober.

Hell no.

I had to go through a whole pile of dusty albums until I came across this one – almost a flipbook, really, in its simplicity – just plastic sleeves holding maybe twenty-five photographs? But even one glance told me it was precisely what I was looking for.

I hold it in my lap now, staring down at it, not...not really sure if I want to know.

Because...this is Lenai's book.

I brush my fingers over her name written on the front in her own, looping handwriting, my heart starting to beat a little bit faster. Because Natalia – honestly, Natalia I think I can handle. I didn't like seeing her throw herself at Kent tonight, but all I have to do is close my eyes and think of some of the things Kent does to me when we're alone to be reassured that...yeah. I'm not going anywhere anytime soon.

But this...

Lenai's book. Lenai's memories.

Am I ready to see pictures of Kent and the only woman he ever loved?

I stare at the photo album for a few more moments, taking deep breaths in and out.

But then, I think...fuck it.

And I grab my wine, take a big gulp, and open to the first photo.

Chapter 135 – New Tactics

Chapter 135 - Fall For My Ex's Mafia Dad

To my chagrin, the first photograph in the book is one of Kent with his arm wrapped around Natalia's shoulders, grinning at the camera while Natalia crosses her arms and gives the camera saucy look.

But as I look closer at it, I can't help but smile and laugh a little. Because Kent looks so much like Daniel – so much so that if you hadn't told me any better, I'd have said that that was Daniel in the photograph wearing a flannel shirt with very 90's floppy hair.

My eyes run over Kent's face, his figure, and I have to bite my lip a little at the sight of him. He just looks so...young, so happy. I mean honestly, it's not like I really think of Kent as old now – he's still crazy hot and in incredible shape. But in this picture he's what...sixteen? Christ, he's younger than I am now.

I begin to flip through the album, smiling more at the vintage fashions, the shots of Kent and Natalia in the Italian countryside, then lounging around in someone's bedroom, even eating gelato in a city somewhere – maybe Rome? I linger particularly on the few close-up shots of Kent's face, clearly taken by an admirer, when I realize that this album actually doesn't have any pictures of Lenai in it. And that's when I realize that it's her album because...she took the pictures.

And I go still, a little bit, realizing that this is so much more of a glimpse into her life – into Daniel's mother's life, than it is to Kent's or Natalia's. And that feels just so...incredibly intimate, to be seeing Kent through his wife's eyes before she was even his wife...that I have to close the book.

I let it rest a moment on my lap and then, on impulse, I set it quickly aside. Like it will burn me, or curse me, or something – I don't know.

I pick up my glass of wine and sit quietly in the chair for a long time, trying to parse through my emotions.

And I'm shocked, and a little scared, to find that the one that keeps rising to the top is...jealousy.

Jealous. I'm jealous of Lenai. I want to be the one who watched Kent grow up, who got to go on his first adventures with him, who took photos of him falling asleep on a train in the Italian countryside. I want to be the one who wondered what kind of man he'd turn out to be.

And quite suddenly I'm horribly, bitterly jealous of this woman. Which I know is ridiculous because she's dead – she's been dead for a long time, and I know Kent has moved on from her.

But she got so many wonderful moments with him – moments I'll never have.

And I get what...a few stolen nights tucked away in his bedroom in secret? I mean, has he ever even touched me outside, in the light of day?

I curl up then, in my chair, tucking my face into my hands, completely overwhelmed by the realization that the best I'm ever going to get in Kent's heart is second place.

And I'm absolutely terrified by the realization that I want to be first. I want to mean more to him – I want to mean the most.

Because maybe that's what he is to...

But no. I shut down the thought, making my mind turn to other things. My brain trips over itself in its attempt to find something new to mull over, and – cruelly – it turns to Ivan. To what he said yesterday - that he offered me everything, and I'd picked an old, dead man over him. Someone who will never, ever love me.

And suddenly I feel just...horribly stupid.

God, what had I done?

Is this seriously it?

Did I turn down something that could have been great – the equivalent big love that Kent and Lenai had for each other – because I wanted to have sex with Kent? Did I seriously, seriously choose that? Just because Kent is hotter than Ivan – because that, I can finally admit to myself is true – but seriously, am I just a stupid girl who followed a hot guy down a path that's going to lead to my death?

I start to panic a little bit now, pressing my hands over my mouth and forcing myself – forcing myself to take deep breaths.

A few long moments pass and I start to calm down. But what I need, I realize, is a distraction. A big one. Because if I keep going along with this line of thinking, I'm going to completely freak out.

So, I reach out for the top magazine on the pile closest to my chair and drag it in front of my face, making myself flick through the pages and concentrate on the lewd photographs and the pulp fiction of a vintage Playboy from the 70s.

It takes a while, but eventually through a combination of forcing myself to concentrate, and willfully pushing away my questions about how much Kent loved Lenai, and whether I'm an idiot who is going to die because she was too sex-addled to be smart enough to get herself away, I begin to calm down.

And as I calm down, and let myself be distracted from what are, arguably, the more important questions...I find myself starting to become intrigued.

The first time I came down here into this basement, I had been way too embarrassed to truly engage with this literature, no matter how much Fiona encouraged me. Plus, I had stumbled onto that sex tape from Kent, which had been a step too far.

My eyes flick, just once, to shelf of unlabeled black tapes – but then I decide against it. I didn't need to compare his technique with other women to what he does with me. I just avoided one jealous panic attack – perhaps best to avoid another.

But as I flick through the magazine this time, now that I have what is inarguably more experience under my belt – though much less than Kent, I'm well aware – I find myself not shy at all about exploring what I'm finding on the page.

Some of it does not appeal to me at all. The pictures of solo women bearing their bodies for the photographer don't do much – I'm pretty thoroughly straight, I'm aware, so while I can admire these women's beauty, I flip through these sections pretty fast.

But the images of women actually paired with men...

Especially the ones of women on their knees with men standing in front of them...

These are the ones that have me lingering on the page, studying the men's faces as they bury their fingers in these women's hair, as they come completely undone...

And suddenly, quite suddenly, I realize something. And I blink, and put the magazine down in my lap. Because I know that Kent is going to expect me to show up tonight in his room all upset, demanding answers, making him swear that he feels nothing for Natalia and that he's not going to leave me for her.

As I've made him do before.

And then, once he tells me what I want to hear, he'll take me to bed and fuck me senseless until I can't remember my name, let alone why I was mad at him. I'm well aware that Kent uses sex to influence with my emotions, to sway my decisions towards what he wants.

And I'm also aware that up until now? Well. Let's just say it's been worth it.

But as I glance back at the women on the pages of the magazine, and the men who stand above them with their eyes pressed shut, their mouths hanging open...

I begin to wonder...could I do the same to him?

And I snap the magazine shut, getting quite suddenly to my feet.

Because I think...it may be time to ry.

"Hey," I say to Kent as I lean against the doorway after pressing open the door at the top of the stone steps, which opens soundlessly.

He turns to me, surprised. I'm earlier tonight than I usually am.

"Fay," he says, smiling and sinking his hands into his pockets as he turns to me. "Hi."

"Hi," I reply, returning his smile, my own hands deep in the pockets of the fur-trimmed robe that Kent gave me forever ago. I'm wearing the pretty moccasins he sent me too, but both are a decoy. Because underneath this robe I am wearing a v-neck romper made with completely sheer fabric. Honestly, it barely counts as clothing, the way it dips all the way down to my belly button and barely skirts my ass before dipping between my cheeks. It's uncomfortable and cold, frankly, but damn do I look good in it.

And I want him hard the moment he slips this robe from my shoulders. So. Sacrifices must be made.

"What are you doing here?" Kent asks me, smirking and taking a few slow steps towards me.

I pout and him, pretending to be disappointed. "Do you want me to go?"

"No," he says instantly, slipping an arm around my waist and pulling me close to him. "I had...work to do. But it can wait." He lowers his head then to his favorite place between my neck and my shoulder, deeply breathing in my scent as I wrap my arms around his neck.

"See that's a shame," I murmur, laughing a little as his breath tickles my skin. "Because I was hoping to ask you for a favor."

"Really?" Kent asks, surprised and intrigued enough to lift his head and look me in the face again. "You want something from me?" A smirk comes to his mouth.

“Yes,” I say, biting my lip as an anxious little flutter starts in my stomach, because even though I’m feeling bold – and I’ve had enough wine to make me braver than I usually am – well. I never do anything like this. “Kent?” I ask, hesitating.

“Yes?” he responds, curious.

“Do you think you can teach me how to give you a blow job?”

Chapter 136 – Important Lessons

Chapter 136 - Fall For My Ex's Mafia Dad

Kent stares at me for a moment, going completely still – not even blinking. I think he even forgets to breathe.

And then he hauls in a hard breath, choking on it a little as he take a stumbling step back. I can’t help but laugh, thrilled a little at the result. It’s not often that anyone sees Kent Lippert off balance, and I have to admit – I enjoyed the sight.

“Seriously, Fay?” Kent asks, raising his eyebrows at me and taking one hand off my waist to cover his mouth as he coughs, recovering from his surprise. “Are you – are you serious?”

“You don’t want to?” I ask, frowning a little, pretending to shrink away.

“No!” he says, grabbing at my waist and pulling me back, making me smile, though I try not to make it too victorious. “I mean yes – or –” he takes a moment to steel himself, glaring down at me a little, perhaps figuring out that I’ve intentionally surprised him.

“Believe me, Fay,” Kent murmurs, his voice husky and slow now that he’s recovered himself, “there’s absolutely nothing I’d rather to do than teach you this particular skill.” And he takes a moment, then, to let his eyes drop to my mouth, to raise a hand to my face and run his thumb lingeringly over my lower lip. “I’m just...surprised that you don’t want to talk.”

“About what?” I ask, perhaps too innocently, looking up at him with wide eyes.

Kent smirks a little, studying my face, on to me now. “About Natalia,” he says. “I’m not unaware that you weren’t thrilled to see her seated on my lap tonight, feeding me ice cream.”

“Well,” I say with a little shrug, pulling away a bit. “If you’d rather me go get her so that she can blow you –”

Kent laughs – a surprised, happy thing – and pulls me back against him, which makes me grin. “Not a chance,” he growls. “But seriously, Fay,” he continues, studying my face.

And I let my façade drop a little, letting honesty peek through. Because really, tonight? It wasn’t Natalia I was jealous of. But I shove the thoughts of Lenai away. “Seriously, Kent,” I say, shaking my head a little bit and putting my hands flat against his chest as he tugs me closer. “Didn’t you say to trust you about Natalia?” I shrug one shoulder. “I trust you.”

And then I lower my eyes to his chest and bring my hands together, starting to unbutton his shirt. Kent lets me work for a moment before pressing a finger under my chin and making me pause and look up at him. “Really, Fay?” he asks, likewise quite serious. “Because...Fay, I don’t want you to hide it, if you’re feeling bad about it. Or do this because you think it will make me like you more than her. There’s no contest. We can – we can talk about it if you want.”

I look up at him and let him see the honesty in my eyes for a moment, that I’m really not lying. And then I stand on my tiptoes so that my face is as close to his as I can get it, so that he can hear me well even though I only whisper.

“I don’t want to talk, Kent,” I say softly, holding his gaze the whole time. “I want something besides words in my mouth right now.”

Kent goes still again, and a smile starts on my mouth –

But it doesn’t have time to finish before Kent snarls and snaps me viciously off my feet, making me squeal with laughter as he wraps me up in his arms and kicks the door to the passage closed behind me.

Then, before I can think what he’s doing, Kent strides across the room, only releasing a hand from me once to slam it against a wall, hitting a light switch so that the room goes dark. In an instant, he’s carries me over to the fireplace.

There, he sets me down on my feet and turns me around so that I’m staring at the fire, which is burning on low heat – ridiculous in the summer, I think briefly. But the thought goes instantly away as I feel Kent stand close behind me, as I hear him start to speak.

“You asked me for this favor, Fay,” he murmurs, not touching me yet but sending a shiver through me regardless. “You asked me to teach you. Is that right?”

“Yes,” I breathe, feeling my breath already starting to come fast.

“So, you’re going to listen,” he says sharply, “when I tell you what to do. Right, Fay?”

“Yes,” I say again, nodding a little.

But suddenly an arm is around my waist, pulling my back tight against his chest as he growls in my ear. “Yes what, Fay?”

“Yes sir,” I whisper, my pulse ratcheting up now to match my breathing.

“Good girl,” Kent murmurs, stepping back from me again. Further away this time, so I don’t know where he’s standing. He tortures me for a moment, not saying anything, not giving me any hints, before he issues his next command.

“Take off your shoes,” he murmurs, and I do, slipping out of the soft moccasins so that I can feel the soft warm rug against my feet. I smile a little, thinking that it’s kind of sweet that Kent picked the softest place in the room for me to get on my knees –

But I don’t have time to dwell on it.

“Now the robe,” he demands, and I can hear the rustle of fabric behind me as Kent removes a piece of his own clothing – his suit jacket, I guess, as there’s no jingle of metal for his belt.

I untie the belt at my waist and reach up to push at the robe at my shoulders, letting it fall backwards off me to puddle against the floor.

A moment passes before I hear Kent say or do anything.

“God damn it, Fay,” I hear him mutter as he takes in how my back and my ass looks in this lingerie, his voice already almost a groan.

And slowly, knowing that he doesn’t want me to do it because he didn’t order me to yet, I turn to face him, so that he can see all of me bared before him, my skin hidden only by this ridiculous little whisp of fabric.

Kent’s eyes are so hungry I almost step back. But I will myself to hold my ground, letting him look at me in the firelight, letting him eat me up with his eyes as he unbuttons his shirt and lets it, too, fall to the floor.

“Down,” he orders, swallowing hard, his own breath faster now. “On your knees. Do it.”

I do as he says, holding his gaze as I sink first to one knee and then the other.

“Further,” he commands, nodding his chin towards my feet. “Ass against your heels. Spread your knees.” I sink further down, still staring up at him, letting my hands come to rest against my thighs. I stare up at him, surprised by how much I like the view of Kent, shirtless, towering above me. Surprised at how wet it makes me for him.

Kent takes a step closer to me so that his feet come to rest almost between my knees, so that my face is quite close to his hip-level. “Undo the belt,” he demands, putting his hands on his waist. “It’s time for your lesson, Fay.”

“Yes, sir,” I say, still staring up at him, not breaking his gaze as I lift my hands and begin to undo his belt slowly.

“Faster,” he orders, frustrated, but I just smirk at him and take my time, making him narrow his eyes. Then, when that’s done, he nods down at me again. “Take them off,” he says.

And slowly, my hands shaking a little at the newness of the experience – honestly, I’m no good with new things – I slip the button through the fabric of his slacks and then slowly, suddenly terribly anxious, I start to unzip his pants.

Chapter 137 – Every Drop

Chapter 137 - Fall For My Ex's Mafia Dad

Once Kent is unzipped I fold my fingers over the edge of his pants and his boxer-briefs, tugging down, and Kent helps me, pushing at the back of his pants so that they fall all at once to the floor. And then I’m suddenly quite intimately face-to-face with his rock-hard dick.

I blink in surprise, doing my best to maintain my cool even though I’m – I’m honestly a little freaked out –

I mean, Kent’s cock is in some ways an old friend by now – a very good old friend. But we’ve – we’ve never met quite like this –

Perhaps sensing my reaction, or just wanting to get his pants away from his ankles, Kent takes two steps back, lifting his feet out of his slacks and kicking them away. As he does that, his hand goes to the base of his cock and he runs his palm slowly up the length of it, back and forth, letting me see him do it.

I can’t pull my eyes away from him, half mesmerized, half...half wondering how the hell I’m supposed to get that in my mouth. I mean, I haven’t seen a lot of penises with my own eyes so I don’t have a lot to compare to, and I’ve always been aware that Kent is large, but honestly, considering it now –

“Are you ready, Fay?” Kent asks, his voice hard, and I snap my face up to his. Seeing his dark determination there, I wipe my hesitation from my face and nod once.

He steps close to me again, sliding his hand to the base of his cock and holding it still before me. And then his other hand comes up to my cheek, gently tucking a curl of my hair behind my ear.

“Open your mouth,” he murmurs, his voice rough, though I think he’s trying to be gentle for my sake. It’s hard for him, though – I can tell. Kent’s desire to move fast is in every twitch of his cock, which pulses now along with the beating of his heart.

Something in that settles me, I don't know what – maybe the fact that Kent is apparently feeling just as crazed as I am right now? But whatever it is, I'm grateful for it as I tilt my head back and smirk up at Kent before opening my mouth for him, just inches from his dick, and stick out my tongue just a little bit.

He groans, then, pressing his eyes shut for a second almost as if he can't look at me. Then, after steeling himself, he looks back at me and carefully, almost gently, places the head of his dick against my tongue, beginning to slowly rub it back and forth.

I blink, surprised at the softness of it, the warmth of it, and I stick my tongue out a little further, wanting to feel more of that thick cock against it, rubbing my tongue up and down once over that tender spot on the underside of his dick. I'm surprised to find that it's already a little wet, a little bead of moisture dripping out onto my tongue.

Kent groans again, clenching his teeth, before squeezing out a few words.

"Your hand, Fay," he murmurs, "take it. Here, at the base, where my hand is."

And I obey, lifting my hand and hesitantly replacing his at the base of his cock as Kent lifts his hand away and runs his fingers through his hair, staring at me.

And suddenly I'm in complete control, Kent's throbbing cock hard against my tongue, my hand wrapped around the base of it and –

And I have no idea what to do.

I stare up at Kent, suddenly freaked out, and pull my tongue away as my hand tightens a little, anxious, around his cock. "Kent," I whisper, looking between him and the dick in my hand, "what – what am I supposed to do –"

"Whatever you want, Fay," he murmurs, clenching his teeth and shaking his head a little, clearly – clearly holding back for my sake, because I can tell just by looking at him that the last thing he wants to do is talk about this - that he wants this dick in my mouth now -

"What!?" I gasp. "Kent!" I say, my eyes going wider. "You were supposed to teach me!"

"Fay," he groans, tilting his head back, his shoulders starting to shake with his restraint, "Trust me, if I tell you to do what I really want to do to you right now, you will be...scarred for life. I don't want to freak you out – you should just get used to the feel of it in your mouth – just lick it, see how it feels before you start to –"

"Kent!" I snap, starting to get mad, because – because I'm scared, but I want to get this right, I want him to like it. "This is not about me feeling comfortable! I'm trying to get you off!"

“Oh my god, Fay,” Kent growls, staring down at me now in frustration, anger tinging his words. “I’ve been about ten seconds away from cumming since the moment I saw you on your knees. What you do doesn’t matter – you could probably just lick it twice at this point –“

“No!” I protest, glaring up at him, starting to get mad myself, impulsively raising my other hand and letting it fly in a broad arc towards him. “I want to do it right! You were supposed to teach–“ But I don’t finish my word, because before I can finish my open palm smacks the side of his thigh, hard, dangerously close to his ass.

Kent’s eyes go wide at the same moment as I do as we both realize that...

That I kind of spanked Kent.

But my eyes only get wider as his narrow in rage, as he takes half a step closer to me and buries his fingers deep in my hair, curling into a knot at the back of my head. “Fine!” he snaps, “Fine, Fay! Open your mouth! Put it inside!”

And I do – fast – I open my mouth and lean forward, letting Kent’s dick slide across my tongue as it did before –

Except this time, Kent moves his hips, sliding it deeper into my mouth and back along the length of my tongue. My lips close instinctively around him.

Kent lets loose a deep groan then, squeezing his eyes shut and tearing his head to the side at what I can imagine is the intensity of it. He pulses his hips a few times, sliding his dick back and forth between my lips, and then, with an effort, he stops.

“Like that, Fay,” Kent grinds out from between his clenched teeth. “Back and forth. Like that.”

And I obey, holding him steady with my hand still wrapped around him, and slowly, experimentally, I move my mouth backwards and forwards over his cock, my jaw set wide to accommodate all of him as I take him deeper and deeper towards the back of my throat.

“Oh my god,” Kent murmurs, still not opening his eyes, standing still as I experiment with the feel of him inside of my mouth, feeling him fill me in this new way, finding that I love – I love the way he feels against my tongue, the way he presses towards my throat when I take him deeper.

“Your hand, Fay,” Kent instructs, his head tipped back now, his words coming between thick pants. “Use your hand – press it – press it against your lips.”

It takes me a moment to figure out what he means, but then I find when I move my hand forward and press it against my lips it works as an extension of my mouth, and that my fingers slip easily up and down his cock, now wet with my saliva.

Encouraged – a little excited, honestly, by how much I like how it feels – by what it’s doing to him – I begin to pick up my pace.

Kent begins to curse fluidly now, muttering a stream of some of the filthiest language I’ve ever heard up towards the ceiling as his hips again begin to pulse, almost as if he can’t help it. Encouraged – honestly, turned on by it myself – I go even faster now, pumping him deeper into my mouth, faster, until –

I blink in surprise and gag a little when I feel his dick hit the back of my throat for the first time –

But honestly, something about it – about the idea of gagging on Kent’s cock, about the way he twitches as he feels me do it – it sets something loose in me.

Chapter 138 – Condo in Milan

Chapter 138 - Fall For My Ex's Mafia Dad

Something feral breaks in me as Kent’s dick hits the back of my throat, a part of me that I’m not sure I knew was here, and suddenly I want him as deep as he can go – I want to choke on this cock – I want to feel him cum inside my mouth, want to feel it slip down my throat – and as I realize this about myself, about the way I want to be fucked, I moan while I take him as deep as I can.

And it’s just – it’s too much for Kent. A noise rips from this throat then, something like a yell or a roar as he tightens his hand in the hair at the back of my head. Kent loses control of himself in that moment and pitches his hips forward, sinking his throbbing cock deep into my throat – deeper than I thought it could go -

My eyes go wide as Kent holds my head still, his hips pulsing once, and then I feel him cum – feel him fill my throat hot and thick, feel him continue to cum as he pulls out a little, spilling into my mouth now. And I’m shocked at first, my eyes going wide at the harsh bitter taste of it – gagging in response at the sudden spurt of it against my throat -

But then that feral thing in me takes over again and I moan too, loving it, pressing my eyes shut, loving the feel of it, wanting more as I reach up to grab his hips, pulling Kent back so that he sinks again into the back of my throat as his orgasm pulses through his body, as he pounds two more times deep into my mouth before falling back a step, his hand finally coming loose from my hair.

Kent wraps his hand again around the base of his cock as he pulls it from my mouth, as I gasp a deep breath of air, opening my eyes and closing my lips as I swallow his cum down. And then, as

he watches me, I lift my right hand to wipe at my mouth with the side of my hand, where a little bit has escaped and begins to dribble down my chin.

Kent watches my every movement as I bring that hand back to my face and lick up every spare drop of cum that spilled out of my mouth. Because I want to taste every bit of it.

Undone by it, by the sight of me savoring the way he tastes, Kent moans again and falls to his knees in front of me, taking my face between his hands and kissing me – kissing me – kissing me –

Pulling me on top of him and kissing me as he falls back against the rug, completely spent.

Kent lets his head fall back on the rug and we lay there for a few moments, panting, finding ourselves again. I rest my head against his chest, wrapping my arm around his waist as far as it will go, idly tracing my fingers up and down the skin of his back, which makes him shiver and twitch a little bit.

As Kent finds his breath I close my eyes, trying to sort through my emotions – still able to taste him in my mouth, still marveling, a little, at the side of me that came forward – that wanted to take him as deep as he could go. I mean, I’ve known for a while now that I quite like it when Kent loses control with me, when he goes too far and blurs the line between pleasure and pain.

But half of me – I don’t know, I always considered that I liked it because he liked it. That I quite like pleasing him, even if it meant pushing my boundaries to do it. But this – this was different. I wanted that dick so far in my throat that I choked on it. I wanted to feel that way, for me. Not for him.

I blink a little, considering myself. I just...never really knew that I had this side of myself in me.

And as I think about it, I smile, just a little. Just raising one corner of my mouth.

Because I kind of...like it.

“Fay,” Kent murmurs, suddenly going still beneath me, apparently coming back to himself more completely now. He raises his head a little, bringing a soft hand to my hair as he tries to get a look at me. I turn my face towards him. “I’m sorry Fay – are you all right? I –“

“It’s okay,” I say, moving my hand to his chest, hoping to reassure him. “I liked it.”

He shakes his head at me. “I went too deep – I’m sorry – I wanted to go slow, I didn’t want to freak you out your first time doing that –“

“It’s okay, Kent,” I say, laughing a little as I smile up at him. “I liked it. Next time I want to see if you can go deeper.”

He pauses for a moment, staring down at me, and then he growls, grabbing me and rolling me over so that I'm laying totally on his chest now, his arms wrapped around me. "What is wrong with you, girl," he murmurs, burying his face in that place he likes between my neck and my shoulder. "You're supposed to be this innocent thing – this frail girl who trembles at the sight of me – and now you're defying Italian mob bosses and telling me you like it when I fuck your face _"

I laugh, tickled a little at the truth of this as I put my hands flat on his chest and press until I'm sitting up, my legs falling on either side of him as I grin down at Kent, shrugging one shoulder. "What can I say, Lippert," I murmur. "You corrupted me."

"Maybe," he murmurs, sliding a hand up my side and brushing his thumb against the underside of my breast, making me shiver a bit. "But I'm more inclined to think that this Fay was there all along. Just needed a...little inspiration. To find herself."

I stretch my arms over my head, tilting my head back to the ceiling and sighing with happiness. "Never should have woken this Fay up, Kent," I murmur, jokingly. "Soon I'll have you so ensorcelled with my sexual prowess that you'll willingly hand me everything you own, just for one more night."

"Fay," Kent murmurs, sitting up and wrapping his arms around my hips, tugging me close so that he can kiss my chest, lick his tongue up the soft space between my breasts. "If you don't think I'm already there, then you're more of a fool than I ever thought you were."

I laugh at his joke, burying my hands in his hair and tilting back his head so I can kiss him fully on the mouth.

"Oh really?" I say when I pull my mouth away, still laughing a little. "So, I can have whatever I want?"

"Mmhmm," he murmurs, looking up at me with his pretty green eyes. "Ask and it shall be given, Fay."

"Well," I say, tilting my head back and considering. "I never got my condo in Milan..."

He laughs. "You never approved the listing I sent you."

"That was in Paris!"

"I assumed it was an equitable replacement. You'll like Paris more anyway."

"How do you know that," I ask, narrowing my eyes at him.

"Because," he says honestly. "Paris has chocolate croissants. Which you, I know, will eat by the dozen as soon as you get a taste."

I laugh again, pleased at the thought of choosing a city based on their breakfast pastry alone. “What about a trade?” I say, cocking my head to the side, suddenly inspired.

“I’m listening,” he replies, but he drops his head again, drawing kisses along my collar bone, belying this claim.

“What if...” I say, “I gave back my promise of a condo in Milan for...”

He looks up at me now, curious.

“For the same request,” I whisper, suddenly serious. “For an agreement of...no hands.”

Kent cocks his head to the side, waiting for me to say more.

“I don’t want you to touch her anymore, Kent,” I whisper, the humor falling from my face as I realize how much it’s true. “I only want you to...to touch me.”

Kent is barely silent for a moment before he nods. “All right, Fay,” he says, looking up and holding my gaze. “If that’s what you want. Then I won’t. I can’t control what she does to me, and I can’t stop her abruptly – there’s too much on the line with the Bianci family. But I’ll discourage her. And I won’t put my hands on her again. All right?”

“Really?” I breathe, shocked, letting my hands trail through his hair.

“Really,” he replies. And then he slips a hand up my back and presses it between my shoulder blades, pulling me in for a long, slow kiss. A promise in itself.

We stay that way for a long while, kissing softly, slowly, in front of the fire. And when we stop, it’s because I’m the one to pull away.

“Come on, big bad mafia boss,” I murmur, letting my arms fall across his shoulders. “Take me to bed.”

And I laugh a little as he does as I say, wrapping my legs around his waist as he stands up and carries me over to the bed where he lays me down, and then lays himself on top of me.

/Chapter 139 – Nightmare

Chapter 139 - Fall For My Ex's Mafia Dad

Kent and I fall asleep peacefully that night, his right arm wrapped tight around me, his left arm stretched out beneath me so I can use his bicep as a pillow. But about three hours later I'm gasping awake, my whole body shaking in fear.

My eyes flash around the room as I try to figure out where I am – to find the men who were breaking into the house – who were killing them – killing us all – cutting Daniel's throat, shooting at Kent – who already laid Jerome out on the floor, leaking blood –

But as I look gasping around I see that...everything is fine.

That it's just the two of us, still alone in Kent's cool, dark room.

"Fay," he murmurs sleepily, his voice tense as I moan and curl up next to him, still shaken by the nightmare. "Are you okay? What's –"

"I'm okay," I whisper back, shaking my head, feeling guilty about having woken him over something so stupid. "It was just a nightmare – I'm sorry –"

Kent tsks sympathetically and tugs at my shoulder, a silent request for me to turn. So I do, and he pulls me tight against him so that my stomach and chest are tight against his. "Poor Fay," he murmurs, pressing a kiss to my forehead and then my hair. "What was it about?"

"Nothing," I murmur, shaking my head.

"Tell me," he urges, taking a deep breath as his body again starts to relax.

"It was nothing," I lie, pressing myself tight against him, wanting to be close as possible, to feel the living, breathing reality of him, to let him chase away the fright. Kent murmurs more comforting things to me, but I can tell that he's barely awake, and I'm grateful for it. Because I really don't want to tell him – don't want to be worried about me being worried about him.

But as Kent's breathing deepens next to me, and I can feel the slowing beat of his heart, I know that despite all of last night's very pleasant distractions...

...that what Ivan told me is still haunting me. And as much as Kent wants me to forget about it, and Daniel wants me to let Kent handle it...

I can't do it.

I have to do something. I have to act.

And so I fall asleep again with a new resolve burning in my heart.

When Kent wakes up the next morning, I don't think he remembers my nightmare. But I'm awake first, having only dipped in and out of sleep for the rest of the night. So, when the alarm clock begins its horrible noise, I barely even flinch.

Kent drops a kiss to my neck before turning over to turn it off, but he's back in a moment, his arm wrapped around me. "Good morning," he murmurs, pulling me close.

I smile and turn my face up to him but he frowns down at me, pulling away to look at me. "Are you all right, Fay?" he asks. When my smile drops away he laughs a little. "I mean, I'm sorry – you just don't look as...fresh as you usually do." My jaw drops in horror at his insult and I squeak, covering my face, which just makes him laugh.

"No, Fay," he chuckles, gathering me close. "You're gorgeous as usual, stop. Just – you don't look like you got any sleep. Are you okay?"

"I didn't sleep well," I confess, pulling my hands away from my face with a sigh, pressing a kiss to his chest before looking up at him again. "I had indigestion," I lie, and then I narrow my eyes at him. "Natalia poised me. I'm sure of it."

"I wouldn't put it past her," he murmurs, pressing a light kiss to my mouth. Then, he pulls back again, considering me. "Stay here," he suggests, nodding to the bed. "Just sleep. I'll make sure you're not disturbed."

And, as tempted as I am, I sigh and shake my head. "No," I murmur, starting to sit up. Kent sits up with me as I run my fingers through my tangled hair. "I have things I want to do today. And Daniel will miss me at breakfast."

"You worry too much about that boy," Kent says, running his knuckles fondly down my cheek. "He can handle himself."

"No, he can't," I sigh, giving Kent a dubious little look as I climb out of bed and go searching for my slippers and robe. "Which is why I have to tag-team his emotions with his boyfr–"

And I freeze mid-sentence, realizing what I just said. And that Kent and I have never had that conversation before.

"Really," Kent says, leaning back against the pillows as I turn towards him, grimacing. A wide, eager smile spreads across Kent's face. "So. Daniel's got a boyfriend, hmm?"

"I said nothing," I say, crossing my arms and glaring at him.

"Who is it?" Kent asks, his grin growing.

"Nothing," I say, raising my eyebrows. "I am a lockbox of secrets."

“Fay,” Kent says, leaning forward and laughing at me. “You are at best a basket of secrets. With a very loose weave.”

“That’s not true!” I gasp, my hands falling. “I kept Daniel’s boyfriend secret for months!”

“So, he’s had a boyfriend for months,” Kent says, clasping his hands victoriously behind his head and leaning further back against the pillows.

“That’s it,” I say, slicing my hand through the air and turning away from him. “No more interrogations when I am sleepy!” And then I lean down to snatch my robe off the floor, pulling it hastily over my body.

“I’ll give you a coffee if you tell me,” Kent offers. “Do I know him?”

I glance between Kent and the coffee cabinet, tempted, but then I hold my chin up high, pretending a grace I do not feel. “My loyalty to Daniel is more important than coffee,” I say loftily. And then Kent laughs at me as I slip my feet into my moccasins and head to the door to the passage, pulling it open.

“I’ll get it out of you, Fay!” Kent calls after me, laughing. “Sooner or later!”

“Make it worth my while, Kent,” I say, sending him a little wink over my shoulder. “And...maybe I’ll let that little piece slip.” Then I blow him a cheeky kiss and head down the passage, his laughter ringing out behind me.

I move quickly through the basement corridor, feeling a little guilty that I’ve let Daniel’s secret slip, but I feel less guilty as I realize that it’s nothing that Kent probably didn’t already know. I mean, if he really cared to know who Daniel has been sleeping with, all he’d have to do is scroll through a couple of month’s worth of security tapes in the upstairs hallway to see Jerome sneaking in and out of Daniel’s room.

If Kent doesn’t know already, it’s because he doesn’t want to.

Cheered a bit at this realization, I climb up the winding staircase to my room and push open the wardrobe door. I’m a little disappointed that Daniel isn’t there waiting for me – I want to make things right with him again, uncomfortable that we ended last night on a fight. But I’m also a little cheered, as I realize that it makes my next steps easier.

Because despite my cute wakeup with Kent, I’m still shaken by my nightmare, and still resolved to do something to make a change, to save our lives even if Kent and Daniel seem to be willing to turn a blind eye to Ivan’s warnings.

So, I grab my little burner phone out of my desk and, after sending off some quick replies to my dad and Janeen, I open my messages to Ivan.

Hey, I type out, my fingers flying over the screen. I want to talk. I'm sorry about how everything happened yesterday. Please – I think we can make a deal.

And then, feeling relieved that I've done something, I put the phone away and turn towards my bathroom. But I turn when I hear a little knock at my door. Curious, I quickly cross the room and pull the door open, my face breaking into my smile when I see a little tray with a tiny cup of espresso and a chocolate croissant waiting for me there.

Pleased, I bend down to pick it up, my mouth already watering as I turn back into my room and kick my door shut behind me.

Chapter 140 – Inquiries

Chapter 140 - Fall For My Ex's Mafia Dad

Ivan doesn't reply to me by the time I head down for breakfast, but I don't worry about it. We ended yesterday poorly after all – and he might hate me a little bit now. So, I imagine that giving him a little time to decide what to do makes sense.

Feeling cheerful and confident about how I've taken my world into my own hands at least a little bit, I stride confidently into breakfast in my riding clothes, my hair braided neatly back. I ignore Natalia completely as I pass her on my way to the espresso bar, instead calling warm greetings to the older gentlemen there, who are very happy to see me.

After passing a few minutes with them, I turn towards Daniel, who is already seated at our table. I pass Alessi on the way, brushing a friendly hand across his shoulder as I go, and then I sit down across from Daniel with an apology on my lips.

But he beats me to it. "I'm sorry, Fay," he says, shaking his head, the moment I sit down.

"No, Daniel," I say, reaching out to take his hand. "It's my fault."

We're friends again in moments, laughing together at how stupid we both were last night. Kent hardly gives us a moment alone before coming over to smirk at us and slide our plates of food onto the table.

"Hey Daniel," Kent says, distracting Daniel from our conversation. Daniel looks up to see a wicked smirk on Kent's face and I groan, putting my head in my hands as I realize where this is going. "Anything you want to tell me?" Kent asks, slipping his hands coolly into his pockets.

"Um," Daniel says, glancing between us. "No?"

“You sure?” Kent asks, raising an eyebrow at him. “Because Fay told me...everything. About you and...”

“Fay!” Daniel almost shouts, leaning across the table at me, looking betrayed. “I can’t believe you –“

“Don’t fall for it, Daniel!” I break in frantically, starting to laugh. “He’s tricking you! He doesn’t know anything!”

Daniel’s mouth falls open as he looks between us – at Kent’s wicked grin, at my angry glare.

“This,” Daniel says, looking tensely between us, but shaking his head as he realizes that he’s very nearly fallen for one of his dad’s tricks. “I don’t like this at all.”

Kent just laughs darkly and walks away, leaving Daniel to glare at me.

“Fay,” Daniel hisses. “What did you tell him?”

I roll my eyes, deflecting the blame and glancing anxiously at Natalia and Alessi at their table nearby. “Eat your breakfast,” I command. “I’ll tell you in the car.”

“Where are we going?” he asks, confused.

“To the stables,” I say, gesturing to my outfit as if it’s obvious. “We can talk freely at the stables.”

Daniel wrinkles his nose in distaste. “I don’t want to go there. There’s...animals.”

I roll my eyes at him, taking a big bite of toast and then a slurp of coffee, eager to go. “Come on, city boy,” I say, my mouth still full. “You need some country air.”

Daniel does eventually agree to come with me and we end up having a really pleasant day. He was mad, at first, that I let the boyfriend issue slip with his dad – but he eventually admitted that I was right, that Kent’s not knowing at this point is a choice of ignorance. He also wasn’t kidding about not liking animals, shying away from Heathcliff even more than Ivan did. But I get Daniel in the saddle eventually, laughing as he bounces around on my poor horse’s back, completely uncoordinated.

I’m still shaking my head at him as he drives us home a few hours later. “Seriously, Daniel,” I say, leaning back in the passenger seat and studying him. “How do you stay so fit for someone who is about ten inches from falling out of the saddle?”

“I was born beautiful,” Daniel murmurs, sending me a sarcastic little glance. “The gods have blessed me with this physique and never made me exercise a day for it.”

I look him up and down, remembering the pictures of young Kent that I saw yesterday and considering that that's at least partially true. But I shake my head. Daniel isn't nearly as muscled as Kent, but he's not frail. "I don't buy it," I say as Daniel pulls through the gates and into our driveway. I narrow my eyes at him. "You work out secretly, I know it."

"It's not a secret, Fay," he says, concentrating as he pulls the car into the garage and shuts it off. "I box."

"What!?" I gasp.

He turns to me, confused and laughing a little. "In the gym? Attached to my room?"

"You have a gym?!" I ask, my mouth falling open.

"How did you not know this?" he asks, confused as he unbuckles his belt and climbs out of the car. "It's through the far door in my room –"

"I thought that was your closet!" I exclaim, climbing out as well and staring at him over the roof of the car.

"The closet is next to it," he says, shrugging. "Honestly, Fay," he says, giving me a dubious little look as we head into the house. "You should explore more. You live here."

"Um," I say, glaring up at him, "I don't know what world you were raised in, but where I come from, there's not a lot about a mafia mansion that says 'freely explore me!'"

"Lies," Daniel responds, closing the garage door behind us and putting an arm around my shoulders. "You do freely explore. For instance, I know all about your sneaky little mission to the weird porn room in the basement last night –"

I gasp up at him, blushing. "I was looking at family pictures!" I protest, but Daniel just rolls his eyes. And then we're both laughing as we continue down the hall, but both of us are caught by the noise of voices from Kent's office as we pass.

As one, Daniel and I stop, our heads turning towards the cracked door.

"So, the order is on the way?" Alessi asks.

"Yes," Kent affirms. "Everything is in place for the delivery as well as the distribution. It should all move seamlessly. We're not anticipating any interference from the police – we've flown fully under their radar with this one."

"What are they talking about?" I whisper, looking up at Daniel, taking his hand.

"I don't know," he murmurs, shaking his head, his eyes still on the door.

“This is good, Kent,” Alessi says, his voice pleased and proud. “With this, we as a family know that we can...truly trust you again.”

“It’s rather disappointing to hear,” Kent replies, his voice low and a little angry, “that you ever lost that faith, brother.”

I can almost see Alessi give the little shrug that always accompanies the chuckle that I hear. “When families are so far apart for so long,” he says, “it is easy to...lose a little trust. Especially with your continued allegiance to the Alden girl, despite our suggestion that you...let those ties go.”

I blink when I hear myself referred to this way – especially from Alessi, who has always been nice to me. But this just makes me realize that Alessi and Natalia are two sides to the same coin – he’s just been showing me a shinier face. I narrow my eyes at the door, displeased.

“Come on,” Daniel says, tugging at my hand.

“No,” I murmur, stepping closer. “I want to hear –“

“Leave her out of it,” Kent says to Alessi solidly. “I have my own reasons for wanting to keep those ties in place. And Daniel is...attached.”

“Fay,” Daniel whines, tugging at my hand, truly anxious now, not wanting to get caught.

I flash him a little glare and move closer to the door as Alessi begins to speak again, but then I’m yanked almost fully off my feet as Daniel gives a hard pull on my arm.

“Daniel!” I gasp, probably too loud, because Daniel’s eyes go wide and then he’s hurrying up the stairs, dragging me along with him. But we must make it up fast enough because I have no real chance to see if anyone came out of Kent’s office to investigate before Daniel pulls me into my room, shutting and locking the door behind us.

I glare at him. “Why did you do that?”

“Because, Fay,” Daniel replies, glaring back and crossing his arms. “If my dad caught us eavesdropping, he’s not going to be as easy to appease as you think he is.”

“Speak for yourself,” I murmur, moving towards my desk, eager to check my phone.

Daniel just rolls his eyes and heads into the bathroom. “Whatever, Fay,” he says, done with me for the moment and clearly wanting a minute alone. I don’t stop him, angry myself, and once the door is shut I pull open my top drawer and take my phone out, flicking through my messages.

I scowl, seeing none from Ivan – not yet. And even though he will still probably reply tonight, a little worry curls in my stomach now.

But beside that worry is determination.

There is something going on in this house and outside of it. And despite what Daniel thinks, there's no way I'm just going to sit back and let something bad happen to us without trying to do something to stop it.

But now that I've heard what Kent was saying downstairs?

I wonder if there's something he's doing that's playing into whatever attack Ivan knows is coming.

That...perhaps Ivan himself has planned.