

Family

Flair POV

I forced back my groan as the sunlight hit my eyes, my head throbbing with what felt like the world's worst hangover, and stumbled to the bathroom, where I forced my body underneath the shower and out of hibernation. I blinked back the sleep from my eyes and carefully got ready for a new day, heading out of the room, fully dressed, only to come across Rachel looking a little worse for wear at the dining table, munching on a large piece of toast, with a woebegone expression on her face.

"I drank too much last night" she moaned, sipping coffee and making a face "now my head feels like it's about to explode.

"Tell me about it" I muttered, grabbing some juice and aspirin "I feel like severing my head from my body" I complained, sitting down next to her.

Rachel smirked "Still, it was worth it, just to see that b***h Charlotte Deluca's face when you gave her what for," she said teasingly, wincing slightly.

I stared at her uncomprehendingly. "Sorry, what?" I asked.

Rachel snorted "Don't tell me you've forgotten already," she said with a shake of her head and then grabbed the newspaper, handing it to me as I gripped it with slightly shaking hands.

Spoilt Heiress Has Affair with Married Man. Given Slap by the Woman She Wronged!

I swallowed hard, grateful not to be eating anything for fear it would have come right back up. There, in black and white, as plain as the nose on my face, was a close-up picture of myself slapping Charlotte Deluca in the face. Oh boy. Suddenly I was grateful to be sitting down. I gripped the edges of the table. This had to be some sort of prank. I glanced at Rachel who was smirking at me. Slowly images from last night began to ash into my mind. "I slapped her," I said incredulously "Oh my god, I actually slapped her."

What was I thinking? I had never slapped anyone before in my life. Not only that but if I were honest with myself, it had felt good to slap that heiress b***h in the face. This was not like me. I wasn't some vindictive hateful woman. But right now, part of me wanted to do that to her again. Rachel laughed "Trust me she deserved it. I'm actually surprised you didn't slap Johnathon as well considering he had a few choice things to say. Shame really" she sighed "Maybe next time" she added hopefully.

"Rachel, how could you let me do this?" I demanded, turning to look at her "What if they find out my real identity?"

She waved her hand at me, dismissing my concerns "Honey I doubt they'll care enough to look into it. It's a juicy story, but only because they think you're a nobody. Trust me their focus is on Charlotte Deluca and that bastard Johnathon. Knox was there last night and I promise you, he would never let them smear your real name. You're safe" she said cheerfully, as I sipped at some juice "I'm going to cut this picture out and frame it" she breathed excitedly.

"Why didn't the Deluca's have this story held?" I said frowning "The last thing they would have wanted was their precious heiress to have her name smeared in the paper again."

"Oh, that's the thing. According to Knox, her half-brother Grayson refuses to intervene with the papers and her grandfather has given them strict instructions that unless Grayson says to hold them, the stories should continue to run. So little Charlotte has no sway with the papers at all, despite having the Deluca name" Rachel said with satisfaction.

I raised a brow "You seem pretty chummy with my brother" I said as her cheeks turned pink "You must have had quite the chat last night after I went to bed."

"No, just a little conversation. He was worried about you" she said hurriedly, avoiding my gaze "and he also said to expect a phone call."

"A phone call?" my tone sharpened.

"Well, your face is in the paper and you know that your father reads them religiously," Rachel said reluctantly "So it's hardly surprising that Knox believes you should expect a call from him is it?"

I groaned and put my head on the table. "Don't tell me you regret hitting her?" Rachel asked incredulously "After everything she's put you through."

I turned my head and looked at her "No" I said honestly "but what's come over me? I want to make her pay Rachel, so bad it hurts. Doesn't that make me a terrible person?"

She blinked. "Honey, it makes you human," she said, staring me hard in the eyes "If you could see what goes on in my mind, you'd probably be scared shitless" she added with a glint in her eyes, "I think you're going through a lot of pain right now and you are dealing the best way you know how. Speaking of which" she added mysteriously "what is your next move Flair Rourke, soon to be Flair Summers?"

"I haven't even thought about it. There's the yoga studio, which Johnathon doesn't even know anything about, other than I work there. But outside of that, I want to focus on myself. I spent so much time doing everything for Johnathon, helping with his law firm, being his secretary and personal assistant so he wouldn't have to hire one, cooking, cleaning, and working for myself, I haven't had time to stop and think about what I want" I told her honestly "I stopped being Flair and became Mrs Rourke, the woman Johnathon wanted me to be. I need to be Flair again."

Rachel's expression turned thoughtful. "I understand that," she said slowly "and I think you might be right. The first step, would be a whole new wardrobe," she said meaningfully, glancing down at my clothes as I stiffened "I know for a fact that Johnathon picked out the clothes he wanted you to wear that would look suitable for his clients" she added knowingly "you look like an old maid instead of a young woman that's desirable and hot."

"I don't want to look desirable and hot. I'm not about to go looking for another husband" I protested.

She had a devilish look on her face "Who said anything about a husband? A one-night stand here or there wouldn't kill you Flair, might even make you loosen up a little" she teased "And what woman doesn't like to feel like she's desired?"

She had a point. I blushed and looked down at the ground as Rachel gathered up her coffee cup and placed it carefully in the sink. "We should go to that new upscale boutique that opened last week," she said nonchalantly "It's supposed to be high-end and extremely fashionable."

"But you know that I only like to..." I trailed off as she grinned at me.

"All their clothes are eco-friendly and sustainable," she said as I relaxed "so there's no excuse for not checking it out. Vegan friendly," she said triumphantly.

"But I don't have time to go shopping, I'm supposed to be in the studio..."

"Don't even think of it. We both took today off so that we could recuperate from the club" Rachel interrupted.

Damn. I deated. I nished my juice and Rachel handed me a granola bar to nibble on.

I heard my cell phone begin to ring and Rachel glanced at it before she handed it to me to answer. "Speak of the devil" she whispered, giggling slightly.

I glanced down at the caller ID and my heart almost stopped. It had been over three years since I had heard from him and yet, it was like I couldn't wait to hear his voice again.

I knew instinctively why he was calling. I didn't care. I turned my back to Rachel who was eyeing me with a wicked grin and pressed the answer button, my voice cracking slightly. "Hello."

The voice of my father reached my ears, hoarse and powerful, instantly lling my heart with joy and at the same time causing my stomach to churn "Come home. I've seen the papers."

The dial tone as he hung up. Rachel hovered over my shoulder as I resolutely put the phone down. "So what did he say?" she asked eagerly.

I gave a cracked smile, reaching for my handbag and purse. I woodenly began to make my way towards the door, while Rachel followed behind me.

"Nothing," I said in a monotone, opening the door and getting my keys out "other than to give me instructions to return home."

My childhood home. The last time I had been there, I had deeded my father's wishes and married the man I had convinced myself I was in love with. I hadn't stepped foot inside it since. Now I was going back. Would my father embrace me with open arms, or was I to be shunned for the choice I had made, so many years ago?