

Chapter 29

Christian intertwined our hands and held me close as he led me to the huge front door of the mansion.

“You can’t let them see you nervous, they’ll eat you alive.” He whispered in my ear. A man at the doorstep gave us a polite nod and welcomed us. “It’s very nice to see you, sir.” He greeted Christian. Sir? Must be nice to be respected.

Even at the front door, they had people working for them, that was crazy. I tried to do breathing exercises in my head and was hoping for once to not screw things up.

“Serena seems like you’re the topic of the evening and cousin.” Johnny who had been waiting for us in the hallway greeted us. “Johnny.” Christian smiled relieved.

“You sure you wanna go in? Because you could still run.” Johnny joked, but as usual, his jokes were only adding to my nerves. “Stop it,” Christian told him and slapped his shoulder.

We walked further and Christian pulled me along while I tried to take in every little corner of the room. I didn’t even want to think about the price of all these items.

We stopped in front of a big door and Christian looked at me while he squeezed my hand. “Don’t be scared, don’t do anything stupid, don’t say anything stupid— just don’t be stupid and follow my lead.”

There he was again, same old Christian. “You know, I liked you much better in the car,” I told him but he ignored my words.

He opened the double door and instantly a dozen faces had turned towards us as the room grew silent. It seemed as if I was indeed the topic of the evening. My nerves were starting to kick in and just as I was about to look down I felt two familiar strong hands on my shoulder. It were the same two hands that had always comforted me.

“Serena, I’m glad you could make it!” Lucio smiled and gave me a tight hug. I was surprised because it seemed like he had forgotten all about what had happened, but I still hugged him back. I was happy that he was here and hoped he had a change of mind about the baby.

“Never look down, always look up, and don’t let anyone walk over you.” He whispered in my ear and at that moment I had realized that he had saved me from total disaster.

I looked up just as he told me and a woman’s eyes were looking right back into mine. That must’ve been his mother and I could tell she did not like me. “I don’t think you all have to stare at her like that.” She told everyone, making them go back to their business. Woman, you were the one staring at me.

Only now I took a chance to look at everyone and it seemed like he had a large family, if all these people were family.

“Christian, I’m happy to see you!” A girl smiled and wrapped her arms around his shoulders. “Me too, move.” Another girl joined their hug. It was not that difficult to figure out that those were his twin sisters. The smile on his face told me that they were dear to him so it would be best for me to stay on their good side.

“What are you guys doing here, do you have a break from school?” Christian wondered but the girls shook their heads. “We had to meet our future sissie in law and your baby, right Stella?”

“Right!” The other girl mentioned before they had both turned to face me. “I’m Stella, it’s so nice to meet you.” One of the girls shook my hand before the other one pushed her away. “And I’m Mia, the older twin—and I’m so happy that you’re here and please give him more babies!” She spoke with her eyeballs almost falling out. “Yes, many many!” Stella added.

They definitely had a lot of energy. I wondered if Christian felt bad over lying to his own family about the engagement because these poor girls probably thought I would stick around.

“You girls are scaring her,” Lucio spoke and pulled them away. “Sorry, dad.” Stella pouted but I did not mind. I would rather choose this over some stone faces any day.

“It’s okay, I’m Serena!” I finally got the opportunity to introduce myself. “You are extremely beautiful by the way, if the baby looks like you and not like...him, there will be no issue,” Stella commented and gave her brother a daring look. “I hope you know that we all look alike.”

Christian laughed at her. It felt great to see him get along with his family and made me even feel a bit jealous. Would my family also be like that?

The smile on his face had not remained for much longer when the same woman with the hawk eyes approached us and the look on her face gave me enough time to prepare myself for whatever was coming.

“How is the cheek?” The woman asked Christian, completely ignoring every bit of my existence. The cheek?

“It’s fine, mom,” Christian told her. “Good, I hoped you iced it.” She said and patted his cheek before she turned to her daughters. “Girls it’s my turn to interrogate her so if you don’t mind.” She told them and pointed her head to the back, guiding them to leave.

“Cesca,” Lucio warned her but all she did was shrug her shoulders. “I just want to meet the mother of my grandchild, are you saying I can’t?” She glared at Lucio who had immediately taken a step back. Yes, she was definitely the boss in the house.

“Of course, it was very nice to meet you,” Stella smiled once more and left with Mia and Lucio. My nerves were killing me and Christian squeezing my hand in a protective matter did not make it that much better. Him even holding my hand was enough prove the this woman was most likely a monster.

“I am Francesca, the true boss of this household and the most important woman in Christian’s life.” She introduced herself and pulled away from my hand from Christian so she could hold it.

“And after that are his grandma’s, sisters, nieces, aunts, cousins, our dog—and our goldfish...and then perhaps that baby of yours and then...you.” She said, definitely trying to get her point across which had worked. I was not welcome here.

“Nice to meet you and thank you for inviting me, I’m Serena.” I tried to stay as politely as possible despite the disrespect she had shown me. “So I’ve heard you were a stripper?”

That comment took it one step too far and it was obvious that she was out to get me. “Mom, stop,” Christian said but Francesca remained unbothered.

“What, it’s just a question. Did I hurt you, Serena?” She asked with eyes almost pleading me to disrespect her, but I wasn’t going to fall for it, at least not now.

“Of course not ma’am.” I showed her my million dollar smile. “Please call me Cesca, I don’t go through all these facials for you to call me ma’am.” She cringed and turned back to Christian.

“Your grandparents couldn’t make it today, both of them, so before you meet them you have more than enough time to fix...this.” She said gesturing my everything with her hands. This woman was harsh.

Christian ignored her comment. “Of course they do.” He chuckled. I guess it was difficult for him to meet with his grandparents. “Running a business is not easy and out of all people, you should know that. I’m sure Selena doesn’t mind you being gone all day.” Cesca smiled.

Christian gave me a look which pretty told me to let it go, which I would because she was still his mother and if I told her what I was truly thinking he would not be that happy. “It’s Serena.” I smiled back.

“Okay, Serena now if you’ll excuse me I have food to prepare.” She rolled her eyes and walked away with the same fake smile on her face. Just as Christian was about to open his mouth Enzo stood in front of me.

“Hey squirrel, let’s catch up soon, okay?” He said and gave me a small cheer only to turn back around and mingle with others. I laughed at his enthusiasm. As always Enzo made sure to make his presence known.

“You did good, I’m proud of you—but this is not the end and she’ll try to get a reaction out of you, so just keep ignoring her and you’ll make me even more proud.” Christian told me. I felt my cheeks glow red but before I got the opportunity to thank him for his comment someone else was already standing in front of us. I stared at the guy in front of me, he had a warm and welcoming smile on his face.

“Nice to meet you, Emilio.” He stuck out his hand and I gladly accepted it. It was not that hard to see who was genuinely excited to meet me. “Cousin?” I asked, trying to see the resemblance between him and Christian but there was none.

“No, almost like a brother?” He asked and looked at Christian who nodded his head and seemed a bit tensed and nervous. “I’m Serena, it’s nice to meet you.” I introduced myself to him.

He held my hand for a bit longer and stared into his hazel almond shaped eyes. “Serena, it’s really nice to meet you and I have to say, you look very beautiful.” He complimented me and gave me the small bag which he was carrying in his other hand. “This is a gift from my father, Matteo Alfonzo, he couldn’t be here tonight.”

I opened the little bag and grabbed the butterfly-shaped necklace out of it. My eyes got watery at the memories which had suddenly came back. Years ago I had a necklace like that which meant a lot to me but lost it. I took a deep breath and shrugged it off, that past is behind me now and it would stay behind me. “Is there an issue, don’t you like it? Because I can ask my father to replace it.” Emilio spoke with a worried look on his face and I shook my head.

“No, just pregnant and emotional...it’s beautiful,” I told him and he nodded his head. “It is, this exact butterfly is the symbol of the Alfonzo family, and we want to show you that you’re now part of it. Christian is like my little brother, so you will be like my sister.” He told me and that was enough for me to recover myself before I would completely break down into tears. Family.

This Alfonzo family, whoever they may be— went as far as this while I would be leaving soon and I felt guilty.

Christian who had not said a single word and crazy enough seemed bothered by the attention I was drawing in cleared his throat. “Thank you, Emilio, I appreciate it.” He said and pulled him into a hug before he changed the subject.

While the two were talking I quickly took the time to shake everyone’s hand as if I was some kind of queen, but that’s what they came here for. They came her because they were curious as to what a normal girl like me would be doing with Christian. A few family members had even bought me baby clothes, and minus his mom and Gio who had been glaring at me, everyone seemed to be alright. Even if some of the looks they gave me were not sincere, they played pretend and that was all I could ask for. Just play pretend until I’m gone.

“Dinner’s ready, Selena sweetie you come and sit right here!” Francesca called out and forced me to sit on the opposite side of her. Christian who had been keeping an eye on his mother, ended the conversation he had with Emilio and almost immediately sat down next to me while I mentally prepared myself for the horror dinner which would take place.

What did I get myself into?