

Chapter 32

“You told Marc what? Did I not tell you to keep her identity to yourself!” Lucio yelled out and stepped from his desk to face his son.

“I told Mare the truth about Serena, about everything—I am sick and tired of hearing that I don’t care about this family,” Christian said.

It was all he had heard for the past week, and the only people who had thought otherwise were the people who had taken the time to get to know Serena. Lucio, Johnny, Marc, Enzo, and Emmanuella.

Christian was furious at Serena for calling his mom the worst name possible, but he did not want Serena to do something reckless as packing her bags and leave. He was angry because she did not listen, but also amused because he knew that the baby was in safe hands. Serena listened to no one other than herself, and even though it backfired at the time—it was not necessarily a bad thing.

He knew of Serena’s reckless decisions and after Francesca’s outburst, he knew that the other families would start talking— meaning the truth about Serena might’ve been revealed if someone stuck their nose where they shouldn’t.

Even then he was not planning on letting Serena go, so if going against his own mother was what he had to do to keep the baby safe, so be it.

“I told her I would handle it, and she...” Christian clenched his fist and looked at his dad. “She called your wife a whore, threw a drink in her face, are you not angry with her?” Christian tested his dad to see if he shared the same opinion as him. Although Serena’s should’ve kept her mouth shut—it was not her fault.

Lucio chuckled and shrugged his shoulders. “No, because I knew this would happen, I told you to not take her in and you did without even knowing her. But now you know that Serena is not the puppet you want her to be although it’s unfortunate you had to find out this way.”

“Is that why you didn’t want her here?” Christian asked Lucio.

“Yes, I’ve had tons of phone calls asking me to reconsider my decision and there have been many people asking about Serena so it will only be a matter of time before someone starts digging for information,” Lucio spoke.

Christian had already expected for everyone to call his father to ask him to reconsider his position and in the past he wouldn’t care, but things had changed. He had decided that he would follow up his father and clean the family’s name, for the baby sake. Even though others feared and admired the Lamberti’s he had always been ashamed of his last name and would change it. He needed this position so he could protect his baby, but knew he couldn’t do so with Serena’s big mouth. She could not expose herself.

“How about Matteo or Fabio?” Christian asked Lucio, who seemed stressed out. “Matteo could laugh about it, but he wouldn’t do so if he knew it was his daughter.”

“And Fabio....” Lucio spoke. Considering the past there were no words to describe how he felt about Fabio, but they had to get along for the sake of the families. “Fabio is waiting for this family’s downfall, I’m sure he heard but as long as he stays away from Serena...”

Christian stared at his father’s troubled face and started to doubt himself. Perhaps I made a mistake after all, were the thoughts going through his head.

Only now had he realized that he wanted to be a dad so badly that the thought of not knowing Serena hadn’t even crossed his mind.

He knew that he was also to blame and that Serena who had a good heart— would’ve not acted that way if she had known the truth about everything. Out of fear of her seeing him as a monster and running away with the baby he shrugged it off, but he was willing to go against all the families if the truth against Serena came out. The only thing he used to care for was the baby, but he wanted the baby to have a mother so would do anything to protect Serena too. Christian knew that she may not know it at the moment, but not opening his mouth to defend her was for her sake.

“You know mom started it, so regardless of what happened she owes Serena an apology,” Christian said, once again choosing Serena over his mom. Ever since the dinner Francesca had ignored him and waited on a proper apology.

“I can’t argue with that if she treated Serena nice from the start.” Lucio sighed. He wanted to stick up for his wife but he did not feel like Serena was in the wrong. Francesca dared her, and Serena defended herself.

“How are things between you and Serena?” Lucio asked but Christian shook his head.

“She’s getting on my nerves, why can’t she just listen for once? Seriously--“ Christian stopped complaining and looked at Lucio who let out a laugh. “You guys are much more alike than you think...this baby will be something.”

Christian’s thoughts went to Serena and how much different she was from what he usually went for. He thought she was beautiful and she had always been obeying and shy— but ever since the pregnancy, it seemed like her behavior had changed. Although he felt more at ease with her standing up for herself, she was still getting on his nerves.

“Treating women like this is not the right way. You need to show her affection, hug her, take her on dates— tell her she’s strong for carrying your ba--“

“And how would you know that? Your mom’s puppet and I don’t plan on being one, especially to someone who will be leaving in a few months.” Christian told his dad. "And the relationship is fake— in case you hadn’t noticed."

“Very well then,” Lucio spoke embarrassed and scratched the back of his neck. Many feared Lucio Lamberti and showed him respect, but Francesca and Christian had always been different. They did not care about his position and opened their mouth as they pleased. For Christian it was fascinating to see how the man who had never showed him or anyone else other than Francesca any kind of affection had changed into a warm and loving grandfather.

“And I’m not touching Serena ever again, look where it got me. She can get a pat on the shoulder and that’s it.”

“I agree, you two falling for each other would end up being a nightmare...anyway, you shouldn’t be this stressed out especially with a baby coming along the way and you need to be there for Serena, I put all of your tasks on hold— so for now please try to snuggle up to all the families in case Serena’s secret does get exposed and Fabio plans to try something,” Lucio spoke.

“Also...what’s the situation with Vincenzo?”

Christian thought about Vincenzo and the way he told his friend to stay away from Serena. The poor guy genuinely liked her, and Christian had no problem with that, but he did have an issue with him being Fabio’s son and knew that he could absolutely not be near her or the baby.

“I think he got the message.” Christian sighed. “It’s also a good thing that everything went well with Emilio. They resemble each other so much but still...luck was on our side.” Lucio said.

“Good, now let’s stop talking. I think maybe you should buy something for your mom, Serena, and the baby so you can make up with them? I’ll help you with it— lately I’ve been reading your sister’s fashion magazine.” Lucio suggested while Christian couldn’t help but smile at the big Lucio Lamberti’s newest hobby.

“Dad, I don’t know what I would do without you...thank you.”

“I know I’ve been hard on you in the past...but I don’t want you to make the same mistake as I did. I want you to be the best dad you can be, a better one than I was.” Lucio chuckled, thinking about what he had put his sons through. Even till this day everything was still a competition.

He took them to the worst places possible and showed them how to get rid of someone who could not keep their end of the deal. He taught them what his father had once taught them, but the way it affected Gio and Christian and turned them into cold individuals was something he had regretted every single day. In his mind Enzo had never been in the running to take him over, so he let him go his own way. He was the only son who had remained calm and cheerful.

“Christian, despite everything I’ve been fighting so hard for you and I will make sure that once I’ve reached my limit— all of this goes to you and the baby so please, hold on for a bit longer,” Lucio spoke. Christian’s statement of wanting to leave the baby so please, hold on for a bit longer. He was aware of how Christian’s brains worked and knew that he would end up changing a lot, but that was a risk he was willing to take. Just so that the family business would fall into the right hands.

“I will...why are you suddenly being nice to me?” Christian wondered. He had been scared to tell Lucio about the pregnancy, and initially, Lucio gave him the reaction he had expected, but seeing his dad go soft was something he was not prepared for. It was no secret that Lucio had always been nicer to him than he was to his brothers, but even then it had never been anything like this.

Lucio stood up and walked to Christian. “I’m doing this because you’re my son, and I love you,” Lucio spoke, almost making Christian choke in his own spit.

“Uh...thanks...I...appreciate you,” Christian said, refusing to say it back. This new Lucio was scaring him, and he never thought he would say it but he wanted the old one to come back. There was not a single day Christian could remember that Lucio told him or any of his brothers that he loved them. Those words were only meant for Francesca and the twins.

“Can’t you say it back?” Lucio spoke embarrassed while Christian looked away. “Stop being nice and understanding, it’s weird.”

"So you don't love me?" Lucio smiled and gave him a kiss on his forehead, while Christian tried his hardest to push him away.

Originally he had called Christian over to tell him that the truth might come out sooner than expected, but after he saw the look on his face he decided to spare him.

Lucio’s biggest fear had come true, he was aware that his best friend Matteo Alfonzo who was amused by the idea of someone sticking up to Cesca, had been digging in her past after hearing she was an orphan as did other families who could not stop talking about her behavior.

He knew that it would only become a matter of time before his friend found out the truth.

He knew that it would only become a matter of time before Fabio Garcia would find out the truth.