



Chapter 22

Patrick handed me a glass of water, which I took with trembling hands. It wasn't until Alexander ran his fingers across my face that I realized I was crying.

"Easy, Catherine. He has no power to hurt you. Don't be afraid, you won't lose your job because of that idiot." My boss spoke softly while rubbing my back to calm me down.

"That's right, Cat. Don't pay any attention to Johnson, he's a jerk. You're a strong woman, don't let him intimidate you," Patrick said, offering his support.

"Since when do you take the liberty of using nicknames with my assistant?"

"Since we became friends. And don't be a jerk of a boss yourself!"

I laughed at their banter, and my boss stood up, holding my chin to make me look at him.

"Not a jerk, but maybe a bit of a scoundrel," he said with a wink and a smile. Why did this idiot have to be so handsome!

"Oh my God, you two are avoiding the inevitable!" Patrick said with a grin. "But Cat, I was just telling your boss that I've made reservations for our dinner tonight, and he can't make any excuses - we're going to enjoy the company of two amazing women tonight. We're going to Saffron, it's Mari's favorite restaurant, and you'll love it there. But Alexander, I don't know why Cat thinks you'd have any problem with her joining us tonight."

"As if I'd have a problem with that. On the contrary, it'll be delightful to



have Cat at dinner tonight," he said with a hint of ambiguity in his words, using my nickname very intimately while giving me a mischievous smile. "And they have an extraordinary chocolate cake there, Cat!"

"What's with your fixation on chocolate cake today, brother? You had one this morning - I saw the plate on your side table - you had another during the video conference, and now you're already thinking about having it again at dinner? You'll end up getting fat, pretty boy," Patrick said teasingly.

"Oh, my friend, I'm simply addicted to chocolate cake," he replied with a roguish smile, and I felt my cheeks burn.

We heard a knock on the door, and Mari came in followed by Celeste.

"Cat, are you okay, honey? Johnson is really an unpleasant man, but he's crossing the line, Alexander." Mariana spoke, clearly upset.

"I'm fine, Mari, thank you. It was very unpleasant and caught me off guard, but it wasn't a big deal," I replied, holding her hand.

"Don't worry, Mari, I'll take measures to ensure this doesn't happen again. But do you know if Johnson treats other employees rudely?" Alexander asked curiously.

"Rudely is putting it mildly! He's rude, offensive, oppressive, disrespectful. He's a piece of work, Alexander. I know why you keep him here, but it's getting harder for those who have to put up with him," Mariana responded irritably.

"Celeste, I want access to this floor restricted from now on. I'm tired of people trying to enter my office uninvited, and I don't want you and Catherine to continue being exposed to such unpleasant situations."



Alexander picked up the phone and put it on speaker. "Daniel, I want a protocol to restrict access to the executive floor. Celeste will give you a list of names of those who work on this floor. You'll set up elevator passwords for Patrick, Rick, Catherine, Mariana, Celeste, and myself. Other employees can only enter with Celeste's clearance, and any other person needs authorization from one of us who has the password. The elevator should only reach this floor with our authorization. The emergency stairwell door will also be locked from the inside. I also want you to meet with the employees and explain the new directive."

"Yes, sir. It will be done today," a deep voice responded from the other end.

Alexander hung up and looked at us.

"Everyone understands? This should stop the more brazen ones. Celeste, you may go. Thank you very much."

Celeste left and closed the door. Patrick took the opportunity to tell Mari about the dinner. We chatted for a while and laughed as Patrick told Mari how the boss became my savior. He was very funny.



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