

Chapter 28

Alexander's POV

I couldn't sleep and spent the night pacing around my apartment. At five in the morning, I went down to the building's gym, needing to release all the tension. I spent the next hour kicking and punching a punching bag. By seven, I was already at the company.

I took the opportunity to call Alberto Alan. I knew him and was aware that he was the type of man who woke up early and started working very early, so I didn't mind the hour. We talked for a good while, and I briefly explained what was happening and that looking for him was Catherine's suggestion. He was very happy to hear her name, saying she had been a valuable resource for him and her insight was crucial in finding evidence. 1

After speaking with Alan, I received a message from my assistant asking if she could be late, as she needed to wait for the babysitter to arrive since her son couldn't go to daycare. I replied immediately: 1

"Catherine, stay home with your son today."

The phone screen quickly lit up with her response:

"That's not necessary. My son's fever is gone, and the babysitter is very experienced and completely trustworthy. If anything happens, she'll let me know."

I smiled at that - she was a dedicated mother, I could tell, but also very professional. I replied quickly and saw Mariana entering my office.

"Here so early, kid?" - she never lost the habit of calling Patrick and me 'kids,' even though we were grown men, which always made me smile.



"Couldn't sleep, so I decided to come to the office early."

"Yeah, you look tired," she said, examining me like a caring mother. "You're worried about the company, aren't you?"

"That too, but I know we'll control this damage before it's too late. Catherine's idea was very good. I've already talked to Alan, and he's excited to help us. Our meeting tomorrow is set. By the way, he adores Catherine."

"Who doesn't? That girl has a very special spark!"

"Yes, she does. She's captivating. But what about you, why did you arrive so early?"

"To get ahead with the matters regarding the evacuation of the lower floor. And what else kept you awake?"

I looked at her, knowing she wouldn't let it go until I spoke - she knows me too well. So I decided to ask:

"Mari, why didn't you tell me that Catherine has a son?"

"Because it wasn't my place to tell. And why did that keep you up at night?"

"

"Mari, you're not naive and you know me too well. You know Catherine made quite an impression on me."

"I'd say it was more than that, Alexander. But what's the problem with her having a son?"

"It's not a problem that she has a son," I answered honestly. "But it unsettled me."



"Wait until you meet the boy then."

"I met him yesterday." I quickly told her how things happened, and when I mentioned the doctor's misunderstanding, Mari laughed heartily.

"He's a very clever and talkative little boy. Very welcoming. He reminded me of you when you were a child," Mari commented, and I couldn't help but wonder if that's where this sense of familiarity I feel towards the boy comes from.

"Yesterday he was very drowsy. The doctor said it was because of the fever and the fever reducer the nanny had already given him."

"So you didn't see his eyes?"

"What about his eyes? If they take after his mother's, they must be beautiful." I found her question curious.

"Yes, they are beautiful," Mariana replied, but I got the impression she was leaving something unsaid.

"Mari, what do you know about the boy's father?"

"I know everything, but I'm not going to tell you. That's something very personal, and if Catherine thinks you should know, she'll tell you herself."
"

What the hell is this mystery all about? Is the kid's father some kind of criminal? I would have to contain my curiosity until Catherine decided to talk to me. This curiosity was eating me alive, and I didn't even understand why.

Patrick walked into the office next, looking like he'd had a wonderful night's sleep and wearing his usual cheerful demeanor.



"Well, well, two of my favorite people together so early. How are you both?" he said while giving Mariana a kiss on her hair.

"Your friend here is tired, didn't sleep," Mariana said, piquing my friend's curiosity.

"Alex, we'll sort out the company situation, relax."

"I know, Patrick."

"So what kept you up? Miss Catherine?" Patrick asked playfully.

"Would you look at that, you got it right!" Mariana responded with a smile.

"Cut it out, you two," I said seriously while they giggled like idiots. "She has a son."

Patrick looked at me surprised, and I told him everything again, adding the information that Mariana already knew. Patrick gave me a serious look and asked:

"And what's the problem, Alexander? You're not some jerk who judges women for being single mothers. Or are you going to do that to Cat?"

"Of course not, man. I don't care that she has a son, it only makes her more incredible, stronger. Raising a child alone isn't easy, you know that well, Mari, and I've always seen how hard you fought to raise your daughters."

"Then I don't understand the problem?" Patrick asked, confused.

"Neither do I, my friend, but it's bothering me and I don't know why."



When I finished speaking, Catherine knocked on the door and came in.

"Good morning! Alexander, I just arrived. Thank you for understanding my delay."

She looked tired and probably hadn't slept. She should have stayed home.

"Don't mention it, Catherine. How's Peter?"

"Much better, thank you. Fortunately, kids recover quickly." She smiled sweetly.

"Cat, you mean you have a little guy? You have to introduce me, I'm an amazing uncle!" Patrick said, making everyone smile.

"I bet you are, Patrick. How about this – when he's feeling better, we'll have lunch at my place so you all can meet him. Just don't teach my son to whistle at women, okay?!" she responded with a widening smile.

"I can't promise anything!" Patrick winked at her. He was impossible. "Catherine, you're not alone, you have friends here, so count on us for whatever you need."

She looked at him with teary eyes and thanked him.

Before everyone left, I informed them about my conversation with Alan, mentioning how much he likes Catherine, which made her smile, and confirmed that we would work at my house on Saturday, telling Catherine she didn't need to come. 1

"No way, Alexander! I've never neglected my obligations, and that hasn't stopped me from being a good mother. I've already arranged everything with the babysitter, and Mel will also be home tomorrow. My son will be well taken care of, so I will be working."



She was firm, leaving no room for discussion. I admired her even more.



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