

Kickass 259

Chapter 259

Chloe nods emphatically. "Leah is right. You can" let one setback define you. And you were amazing at the cook-off, despite the mishaps. You have a gift, Abby."

I shrug, avoiding their gazes as I take a sip of my coffee. "Maybe. But right now, I really am enjoying the managerial work. It's less... chaotic. And I could use a little less chaos right now."

"We just don't want to see you give up on something you're passionate about," Chloe says, reaching for a croissant. "Not because of what happened or because of... Karl."

The mention of his name like that makes my breath hitch. "I'm not giving up. I'm just exploring other parts of the business. And Karl has nothing to do with this decision."

Leah gives me a sympathetic look. "You don't have to put on a brave face for us, Abby. We're your friends. We're allowed to worry about you."

I let out a breath I didn't realize I was holding. "I know," I murmur, "and I love you both for it. But really, I'm happy with where things are right now."

"I think Anton can handle that," I cut in, maybe a little too quickly. "He's been doing a great job, don't you think?"

John's brows furrow ever so slightly, and I can tell he's not convinced. "Um... Okay, sure," he says, though his tone suggests that there's more he wants to say. "I'll ask Anton, then."

The door closes behind him, and I let out a breath I didn't realize I was holding.

This whole avoidance tactic is starting to wear thin, and I know it. I lean back in my chair, feeling guilty for my so-called crimes. A chef belongs in the kitchen, I know that; but right now, I don't feel much like a chef at all. Despite the hashtags, despite the support, I feel like a failure.

Shaking my head as if to dispel the thoughts, I return to my work. But I'm not working for long when another knock comes, sharp and urgent this time.