



Chapter 11

Nico's face stays grave, but Frankie's mouth twists in a smirk as he clearly works to hold back laughter.

Christian just sighs, beginning to slowly wave the metal detector along the length of my left arm, starting at my finger tips and moving inwards.

"Check her hair," Nico directs. "Could have something on...a bobby pin or whatever."

I roll my eyes and turn my attention back to Christian, though I'm pleased to see that he's rolling his eyes too. He checks me thoroughly though, and I find that I'm a little distracted by the closeness of him – the way his hand drifts so close to me, but never touches.

The way I can feel his body heat coming off him.

Despite myself, my breath comes a little shorter as I watch his muscles move under his shirt as he swipes the detector over my body. This close, I can smell him, and god but he smells good. Like leather, and whiskey, and...

I clear my throat, deliberately looking up and away.

Christian finishes my upper half and torso, finding nothing, as I knew he would. I'm not wearing any metal tonight – not even any earrings. He puts a gentle hand on my shoulder and turns me, sweeping the wand down my back and then surprising me by dropping to one knee, waving the wand over my butt and then down my legs.

"Make sure you check my shoes," I say, shooting a sarcastic glance over my shoulder at Nico. "They're about the only place big enough to put anything."



"Not true," Nico says, equally dry, glaring at me. "How do we know you didn't –"

I gasp, spinning suddenly, appalled at his clear implication. "We are not doing a body cavity examination, you ass –"

"Enough," Christian says, loud and sharp.

I snap my mouth shut, glaring at Nico, who glares right back. Christian sighs, looking between us, before tossing the wand to Nico. "She's clean. Obviously. Apologies, Iris, but it is protocol. You'll forgive me, I know."

I look up at Christian then and nod to him, grateful that he's at least being polite about it.

"Come on," he says, wrapping a hand around my upper arm. "Let's get you some warmer clothes."

I follow him, of course – I mean, I don't want to be left here with Nico, of all people. Christian leads me around the couch and towards the hallway, which I guess leads to other rooms. Honestly, how big is this place?

"You'd better not be taking her to my room!" Nico calls after us, suddenly mad.

"Oh, I am definitely taking her to your room," Christian calls back. "You can sleep on the couch for once, cousin."

I blink up at Christian in surprise as we walk down the short hall, entering the first room on the left. "You have a cousin?"

Christian nods sharply, closing the door to the room behind us and dropping my arm as he goes to the closet. I look around the room, which is neat and clean, but doesn't look like a room that belongs to anyone.



Like the rest of the apartment, it's well-appointed and comfortable but there is...no personality here. No pictures, no personal belongings. "Oh," I say, feeling awkward again as I stand nearly naked in the middle of the room. "I thought he was your...bodyguard, or something."

"He's both," Christian answers, coming out of the closet with a black sweatshirt and a pair of basketball shorts, both of which are going to be gigantic on me. I smirk, taking them.

"Is your cousin/bodyguard going to be pissed that I'm wearing his clothes?"

"These are mine," Christian sighs, slipping his hands into his pockets and turning around. "All the laundry gets dropped off together."

I frown at him, confused. "Why are you facing the wall?" I ask.

"So you can get changed," he says, like it's obvious.

"Oh," I say, blinking rapidly. I hesitate before doing as he says. He's the Mafia King, after all.

And so as my childhood crush stands three feet away, with his back to me, I raise my hand to the back of my neck and pull at the tie that's holding my top up.



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