

## Chapter 24

I blush a little to hear Christian's private nickname for me on Nico's lips.

"How do you...know about that?"

"Oh my god," Nico says, shaking his head and staring at me as he sits slowly down next to Frankie. "Whenever Christian ever does talk about the years before he came home, he changes names so that no one can figure out where he was or where he came from. So, you're Kid's sister?"

I smirk a little. "Yeah, I guess I am," I say, wrapping my arms around myself and remembering Christian's nickname for Damon. "Wait, who did you think I was?"

Nico just laughs a little. "I just thought you were some hooker the boss wanted brought back. I mean, I figured out pretty fast that he'd met you before, but I figured..." he hesitates, shrugging suggestively, and I squeak a little in protest.

"Nico! I am not a hooker!"

"Well, you are a stripper!"


"They are not the same!" I shout, grabbing a throw pillow and hurling it at him. Nico just catches it, laughing.

"Look, I'm sorry," he says, smiling, "but I honestly just figured that he had been previously impressed by your...talents. And that he was saving you from Bonetti's dirty cat houses, which are not nice."

"How do you know they're not nice, Nico," I say a little wickedly, leaning forward and narrowing my eyes at him. "You been inside? Do you go like, biweekly?"



Nico laughs darkly at me. "Why do you want to know, Iris? You going to apply for a job there, after you get whatever information out of Christian that you came here to get?"

"I am not a spy," I insist again, glaring at him. And then I take a moment to flick my eyes over him, really taking him in for the first time. Nico – he's not a bad looking dude, with his dark hair and his chiseled features, but he is so tense all the time, so worried. "Besides," I say, "you'd better pray I never work at any cat house you attend. Because even if you could afford me, with how freaking wound up you are? The experience would probably knock you out cold." 

Frankie tilts his head back and howls with laughter. I can't help the smirk that spreads across my face. Even Nico laughs a little after glaring at me for a second, conceding that it was a good dig.

Just then the buzzer rings and Nico gets up, moving to the door, murmuring something about pizza. And when he comes back into the apartment ten minutes later with his arms full of groceries and indeed a hot pizza balanced on his hand, I am relieved to see that the tension between us has indeed broken, at least a little bit.

Even if he doesn't trust me yet, he's not as wary as he was a couple hours ago.


I help in the kitchen, sorting groceries and setting out plates for the food. When I see that Nico is just shoving groceries into the fridge with no apparent order I click my tongue and shoo him away from it, making him go sit down with Frankie and eat while the pizza is hot.

The two bodyguards chat to me while I organize things, and I'm glad they let me be useful. As nice as it might be for some people to watch video games and television all day, it's kind of torture for me – I like to

be busy. So I fuss over the bodyguards a bit, laying out their salads on plates and listening eagerly as they answer my very basic questions about Christian's life.

The details that they spill – I mean, I guess what Frankie said is still true, they don't tell me anything I couldn't learn from reading the thousand newspaper articles that have been published about my old friend. But still – it's rather shocking.

My eyes are wide as I pop the caps off of beers and set them in front of Frankie and Nico, listening to them tell me about how Christian's father found the woman who ran away when she was pregnant and brought the preteen Christian back with him, refusing to let his son grow up outside the fold.

They tell me, too, about how good Christian is at this work, even though he wasn't raised to it for the first thirteen years of his life like his brothers were. But Christian – he's accomplished. Apparently, he has a knack for seeing through his enemies' lies, for staying a step ahead of their plans. His talents, Nico informs me, reflects his father's prowess in a way that his brothers did not inherit. 

SURPRISE GIFT: 100 BONUS FREE FOR YOU

 GET IT



Comments



Support



Share