

Meeting the family

Luca's POV

I could tell Mara was nervous, but she hid it quite well. As we left the room, she took in her surroundings. This place is a Spanish-style villa, lots of yellow and green tones surround the area.

"Wow", Mara whispered in awe as she looked around. "Do you like it?", I asked with a grin. Marabella nodded, "Yes, it's beautiful", she answered softly. "Yes you are", I said, looking right at her. A beautiful red tint covered her cheeks as she looked away.

"Wait until you see the gardens and vineyards", I teased. She looked at me shocked, "You have a vineyard?", she asked. "We do. We have our own wine company", I answered proudly. "Wow. That's amazing", she uttered, as we continued walking.

We walked into the dining room, where my mom and brothers sat at the kitchen table, along with a guest I had not expected. Zera, my advisor's daughter. Why the f**k is she here?

My family looked tense when we walked in. My mother immediately jumped up and engulfed Mara in a hug. "Oh Mara, it's so nice to nally meet you. Can I call you Mara? Oh, you are so pretty. My son will make you so happy. Please call me ma", she rattled off. "Ma!", I snapped.

"I'm sorry. I'm just so excited", my mother mentioned happily. "Luca, it's so good to see you," Zera's nasally voice chimed, as she walked up and wrapped her arms around me in a hug. I didn't return the hug, instead I tightened my grip on Mara's ngers when she tried to slip her hand from mine.

"Don't touch me, Zera. Since when are you allowed to touch me?", I snapped, irritable, as I nudged her away from me. "Oh", Zera sneered, a bit shocked. Her eyes traveled to Mara before it contorted into anger and jealousy.

"She's touching you", Zera protested. "She is my wife. She is allowed to touch me whenever she wants.", I stated, pulling Marabella closer to my side and wrapping my arm around her waist. Mara smiled sweetly, "It's nice to meet you Zera, I'm Marabella", she greeted her politely. Zera's jaw clenched, "It's nice to meet you too", she said through gritted teeth.

"Great! Now if you sit down, my wife is hungry and I'd like to get her fed", I smirked. I knew Zera had a thing for me. A school-girl crush that is not mutual. She's way too stuck up and self-centered for me. All she cares about is money and looks.

I led Mara to her chair, next to mine, and pulled it out for her. She was a little stunned by my actions but gave me the sweetest smile, that I returned with ease. "Thank you", she whispered softly. Once, I was seated next to her, I leaned over and whispered in her ear, "You're welcome, precious".

Mara blushed feverishly, bringing me an unprecedented amount of joy. My brothers all stared wide-eyes with curiosity at us. "Are you going to introduce us, brother", my youngest brother, Marco asked.

"Yes. Mara, these are my brothers Sergio, Carlo and Marco. Brothers, this is your sister-in-law Marabella", I said, introducing them. "It's nice to meet all of you", Mara said sweetly, trying to hide her nervousness.

"It's nice to meet you, too. Luca had never brought a girl home before. So you'll have to excuse our shock", Carlo said with a grin. Marabella chuckled, making my head snap in her direction.

I hadn't heard her laugh yet, but it was melodic. Though I'm a little jealous for not being the one who made her chuckle, I'm still grateful to have heard it.

Light conversation started at the table, as I loaded Mara's plate down with fruits, biscuits, meat, gravy and eggs. I felt her hand touch my thigh, making my breath hitch. I had to close my eyes momentarily to take a deep breath before I opened them to look at her.

"I can't eat all this, Luca.", she whispered with a blush. "Then, just eat what you can, love", I replied softly, pushing her bangs behind her ear so that I could see her gorgeous face. Mara blushed deeply at my action, satisfying me.

"So what happened to your face?", Zera blurted out, disgust laced in her nasally voice. I glared at Zera, before turning to look at Mara. Marabella seemed to be trying to decipher Zera's intentions. Which I know isn't good. "You don't have to answer that, amore (love)", I whispered.

Mara looked at me with furrowed eyebrows before smiling softly, "No, it's okay, Luca. I was attached on my walk home from work, I was lucky enough to defend myself and escape", Mara replied simply, as she looked back at Zera.

"Oh no, that's horrible, dear", my mother gasped. "What happened to the men who attacked you?", Zera asked, feigning sweet innocence. Marabella stiffened next to me as she gave Zera a cold look. "To hell if I know. Or care", Mara's voice was stern as she spoke. I f****g love it. My d**k immediately jumped at the harshness of her voice. What the f**k is wrong with me?

"Nor should you, bambina (baby)", I commented, putting nality behind her statement and ending the conversation. Zera's face paled when she realized she wouldn't pull one over on Mara. Stupid b***h.

I placed my hand on Mara's thigh, noticing she was still tense. She jolted slightly at the contact before putting her hand over mine and relaxing. "I need to talk to you after breakfast, Luca", my brother Sergio said, drawing my attention to him. I nodded in understanding.

I noticed Mara was drawing soft circles on the back of my hand, as she ate. I don't know if it was to calm her nerves or not, but it was calming mine. So, I returned the favor and drew smooth circles on her thigh.

Halfway through her plate, Mara sat her fork down. "You full?", I asked softly. I had just nished eating my plate as well. "Yeah", she nodded softly. "Good", I smiled, as I ran my thumb over her bottom lip. "I need to take care of something really quick. It shouldn't take me longer than thirty minutes. Will you be okay here with ma?", I asked softly.

I know everyone can hear me, but for me, it's just her and I. "Yes, of course. Go do whatever you need to do. I'll be ne.", she answered, her voice as silky as ever. She reached up and gently caressed my forearm. I leaned over and kissed her forehead, before bringing my lips to her ear and whispering, "I'll show you around when I get back. I promise", then placed a gentle kiss on her cheek.

I stood up from the table, Sergio following suit. "You boys better get your butts to work", I told my two youngest brothers. "Yes boss", they replied sarcastically. When they looked up and saw my glare, they scrambled from the table and ran.

Mara broke out in a t of giggles, as did my mom. When Mara looked up at me, her giggles only got worse, making a smile cross my face. I couldn't stop myself from leaning down and sealing her mouth with mine. Her giggles immediately ceased, as her hand came up to grip my wrist that I held her face with.

When I pulled away, a deep crimson red tinted her cheeks. I smirked, "Your giggles are absolutely adorable, amore (love)", I commented, making her blush darken.

My smirk amplied, as I left the table and led Sergio to my oce. "You both seem pretty acquainted already", Sergio commented as we neared my oce. A smile tugged at the corner of my lips, "She's f****g amazing.", I muttered, shaking my head slightly. I don't know what it is about her. But something about her draws me towards her.

"Is she now?", Sergio smirked, as he arched an eyebrow at me. "Yes. So what do you have?", I asked, as I sat at my desk and Sergio closed the door. "Well, her last name is Calsut", he answered. "Yes, I already know that. What about the marriage certicate?", I asked, feeling impatient, already ready to see Mara again.

"Damn, Mr. Impatient, yes here's your certicate along with everything I found on her", Sergio said, handing me a Manila envelope. "She's a good girl. No record with the police. She started working at 16 years old at Nick's sports bar, washing dishes and bussing tables. When she turned 18, she started cooking, but only recently did she start bartending, when she turned 21. She's halfway through her third year of college, ironically, she is studying agriculture and architecture.", he explained, while he took a seat.

My eyebrows shot up in surprise at that. A double major? "Her rst two years of college tuition was paid for by scholarship for having a 4.0 GPA. She used the money she saved from her job for books. This year, though, she had to apply for nancial aid. She makes monthly payments on her tuition.", Sergio relayed.

"Pay it off. Next year, too.", I ordered, as I looked through the folder I was given. "What? Are you sure, Luca?", Sergio asked credulously. "Yes. She also needs a bodyguard to go with her to her classes", I instructed him. "Luca-", he began to protest. "I made her a promise. I intend to keep it", I interrupted him, getting tired of his antics and protests. "Yes, Boss", Sergio sighed, nally submitting.

Reading through the folder I was handed, I came across Mara's medical le. A piece of paper that made my blood boil in an instant. Five hospital visits in the past year for cuts, burns, broken ribs, and a fractured femur? Carl! That motherfucker. Marabella's words repeated in my head. 'He's poison to my mom', is what she had said. But, he was actually poison for her. Abusing her brutally for God knows how long. It makes me wonder what else he has tried to do to her. Now I wish I hadn't killed him. He deserved so much worse than death.

"How are you doing the wedding, brother?", Sergio asked, breaking my train of thought. I looked up from the folder at him, my mind was still trying to process his question. I had to shake my mind clear of my mying thoughts.

"I'm going to get her a nice dress, and a beautiful ring to match mom and dad's wedding bands. As for the ceremony, probably right here in the oce with you, the boys and ma. It's probably best.", I brainstormed out loud.

Sergio arched an eyebrow at me in question. "I'm trying to keep her safe for as long as possible. Especially since she wants to nish college", I explained. "And for safety purposes are you going to reveal the details about Franky to her?", Sergio asked, concerned. Now what that concern was for, I was unsure.

"Yes, I am", I answered condently. "Keeping her in the dark will only put her in more danger. If she knows about him, she can be better aware of her surroundings.", I justified. "That could scare her, Luca. Make her super paranoid. Maybe even make her try and run away. Aren't you worried about those things?", Sergio asked irritably.

A slow smirk appeared on my lips. "I'm not worried about s**t, brother. Go ahead, ask my men about the details of last night. You have my permission", I waved my hand, dismissively. My condence about my new bride surpasses even my own expectations. "You seem pretty relaxed about this whole thing, Luca", he replied, his jaw tightening slightly.

"And you will too, when you've done what I told you to. My bride is a f****g Queen. You will see.", I explained. Sergio stared in shock, his words slipping him.

"How are things on the Franky front?", I arched an eyebrow, changing the subject slightly. Sergio's face contorted, showing the seriousness he held for the situation. "Nothing recently. It's been radio silence. Which can only mean one thing, he's planning something major.", Sergio informed me.

"Well, let's try and nd out what that is, yeah? When's the next export due?", I asked. "Friday, everything is ready", Sergio nodded. "Perfect. Make sure you are asked, just in case.", I commented, as I rose from my chair. "Where are you going?", Sergio asked, arching an eyebrow in surprise.

"To nd my beautiful bride, show her around the compound, get to know her better. You know, something better than this", I replied coolly, as I waved my hand around, gesturing to the situation in the room. Sergio huffed out a breath of frustration, as I surpassed him and left my oce.

I headed down to the kitchen where I left Mara with my mom. I found the gorgeous creature standing at the kitchen counter helping mom wash fruit. She was quietly listening to my mom rant and rave about my childhood, and how much of a hand full I was.

I could hear Marabella giggle as I approached her from behind. Zera sat on the opposite side of Mara staring daggers of death at her. Ugh, I can't f****g stand that woman. I wonder if this will prove a point?

I wrapped my arms around Marabella and hugged her back close to my chest, as I buried my head in her neck. Mara gasped, as she jumped, startled by my actions. "Oh, Luca. You scared me, goodness", she panted softly, one of her hands atting against her chest as the other wrapped around my hand on her stomach.

"I'm sorry, amore (love)", I whispered, planting a slow kiss on her neck, making her head lull, ever so slightly to the side. "Are you ready for your tour, bambina (baby)?", I uttered, dragging my lips up her neck to her ear gently. Marabella shuttered before looking at my mom. It made me grin, knowing she was silently asking for my mother's permission to leave her in the kitchen.

"Go ahead, honey. Zera can help me nish up", my mom said sweetly. "What? I don't-", Zera began to protest, "You will help me, Zera", my mother's voice held nality.

"Come, bellissima (gorgeous)", I whispered in Mara's ear, as I took her hand and led her out of the kitchen and away from the loud argument breaking out between her and Zera. Well, more like the whine coming from Zera. "I want to start inside, if that's okay", I suggested, a smile tugging on my lips. "Okay", Marabella chirped happily, as she grabbed my bicep with her free hand.