

## Mr. Rude

\*Mariya\*

After a few days in Florence.

The time had come for me to participate in another fashion show. However, the tension between my father and me lingered, leading to numerous arguments. Dad was reluctant to let me leave Italy after the dangerous attack I had faced.

Despite our ongoing feud, I continued to ght for my independence, and eventually, Dad relented. So, in two days, I would be leaving.

"Mariya, I haven't stopped you from pursuing your dreams, but you have to be more careful this time." Dad warned, his voice laced with concern. He had come to talk to me when I was packing in my room.

"Yes, Dad. I will be careful, and I'll have my bodyguards," I assured him, nodding slowly.

"Mariya, the thing is, I have a new bodyguard for you," Dad revealed, a glimmer of relief shining in his eyes. "Come with me. I will introduce you to him."

A new bodyguard?

Dad led me to the foyer, where a tall, imposing gure in a tailored black suit stood with his back to us. His hands were casually tucked into his pockets.

"Mariya, meet Domenic Mancini, your new bodyguard," Dad introduced, and the broad-shouldered man turned around. Shock and surprise washed over me, leaving me momentarily speechless. I blinked several times.

Oh. My. God.

There he was.

The incredibly attractive knight in shining armor who had saved me in New York. My heart skipped a beat.

This couldn't be another dream, right?

I couldn't help but grin at the sight of him, but he completely ignored me, as if we had never met before. Confusion washed over me.

"Domenic, this is my daughter, Mariya, and from today onwards, it is your responsibility to keep her safe," Dad commanded rmly.

"I will do my best, sir," Domenic replied in his deep, cold, and husky voice.

But he said nothing to me, not even a simple greeting. He didn't even spare me a glance.

I took a step forward, and his icy eyes observed me without a hint of familiarity.

"Hey! Remember we've met before?!" I reminded him, offering a soft smile.

He let out a sharp exhale, and his indifferent gaze snapped to meet mine. I trembled under the intensity of his dark stare.

"Miss Leonardi, it would be better if we maintain a professional relationship. I have no interest in discussing past encounters," he replied coldly, a faint grimace the only visible expression on his face.

I was rendered speechless.

Sure, he was undeniably handsome and attractive, but that didn't give him the right to be arrogant and rude.

I couldn't fathom working with such an insolent man, let alone having him around me 24/7 as my bodyguard. So, I pleaded with Dad to change my assigned bodyguard. However, he insisted that Domenic was the best in his eld and had proven himself when he saved me in New York.

Now, I had no choice but to be stuck with this arrogant bodyguard.

Okay, then, as you said, let's keep it strictly professional, Mr. Bodyguard.

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Present day in Paris-

"Riya, your bodyguard is so hot," my friend Alice sighed, licking her lips and ogling Domenic.

She had been practically undressing him with her eyes all evening.

"Yeah? I never noticed," I snorted.

He was rude and had a devilish aura. That was all I knew about him.

"If you don't mind, can I ask him out?" she asked desperately.

I laughed inwardly. She wanted to try her luck with the devil.

"Of course, he's all yours. If he agrees, I'll give him a day off to go on a date with you," I encouraged her.

Her face lit up, and she grinned mischievously. She got up and sensually swayed her hips as she slowly made her way toward Domenic.

Although I couldn't hear their conversation over the loud music, I noticed her talking to him. Domenic stood like a solid wall, seemingly oblivious to her presence as if she were invisible to him. Alice was undeniably sexy and attractive. Men would kill for a chance to go on a date with her.

I felt sorry for Alice as we all watched her desperately trying to get a response from Domenic, but he remained indifferent, staring straight ahead like a statue.

Poor Alice, disappointed and defeated, returned to our table. Our friends all laughed at her, but I empathized.

Because I knew it wasn't her fault; the fault lay with the man himself.

I icked my wrist and glanced at my watch. It read midnight.

From the corner of my eye, I saw Domenic glare at me for a long moment before striding toward me.

I shifted, turning my face away from him, pretending not to see him.

But oh my sweet God, the man knew how to exude hotness without even trying, and his predatory walk was so masculine and sexy that it could make ladies drop their panties.

"Miss Leonardi, it's time to go," his deep, husky voice whispered in the air.

But I ignored him and took a generous sip of my gin and tonic. He snatched the glass from my hand and slammed it on the table.

I turned to face him, anger ashing in my eyes. How dare he do that?

"I said it's time to go!" he repeated, his voice lled with impatience and a hint of anger, his eyes glaring at me.

I glared back at him, refusing to back down. We held each other's stare in a silent challenge, neither of us willing to yield. Frustration welled up within me, but I knew there was no point in arguing further.

"Fine, let's call it a night. I have to go anyway. My bodyguard needs his rest after midnight, and I wouldn't want him to suffer from amnesia," I scoffed, mocking my rude and overprotective bodyguard.

"Alright, Riya, see you tomorrow," Alice said, her voice tinged with sadness. I could sense her disappointment, and it made me feel guilty.

"Good night, babe!" I hugged her tightly and whispered in her ear, "He doesn't deserve you."

She nodded, mustering a smile that didn't quite reach her eyes. I wished there was something more I could do to help her.

After bidding farewell to my friends, I made my way toward the parking lot, and Domenic followed closely behind me, his presence both comforting and infuriating.

"Tell your slutty friends to back off and stop hitting on me. If they don't, I won't be responsible for what happens next time," Domenic growled as soon as he settled into the driver's seat of the car.

My mouth fell open in disbelief. I blinked, trying to process his audacity.

"Excuse me?! What's your problem, dude? I can't control my friends' actions. They are free to do whatever they want. And if you're not interested in going on a date, you can simply say no. There's no need to overreact like this," I retorted.

"Yeah, you can't stand up to your perverted friends because they have this hold over you, and you do whatever they want. Spoiled bratty princess!" he provoked, trying to get under my skin.

"Hold on, Mister! In my world, nobody controls anyone. You're the only control freak here who wants everything to be according to your liking. And when it doesn't go your way, you get frustrated just like you are right now," I shot back, refusing to let his words affect me.

"Who wouldn't be frustrated living in your fake world?" he grimaced, his frustration mirroring my own.

What?!

"Mr. Rude, you don't have to be a part of this charade. Just do your duty and leave me alone. Don't even try to pretend to be my boyfriend," I whispered the last line under my breath.

But to my dismay, he heard it. I could tell by the immediate glare he shot my way. God, his dark eyes were so intimidating when they turned red with anger.

"It's my bad luck that I'm stuck here with you, having to endure all this unnecessary drama," he muttered coldly.

I couldn't help but roll my eyes at his comment.

He was such a drama queen.

Oh, man, your bad luck hasn't even begun. By messing with me, you've landed yourself in a world of trouble. Now, I will make sure you experience hell rsthand.