

A Bold Move

Domenic

Before I could respond to the unexpected moment, my phone erupted with a jarring ring, and I knew it was him. I swiftly stepped out of the car, slamming the door behind me before answering the call.

"You slaughtered my men. What the f**k were you thinking? Did you want to be the one to end your own son's pathetic life? Let me do you the favor," the kidnapper's voice seethed with fury as he snarled through the phone.

"No! Please, listen to me! Xavier Leonardi knew about it, and to win his trust, I had to do it," I lied desperately.

"What?! That can't be true!" he protested.

"It is! It's the truth. He is very clever, and to avoid being on his list of suspects, I had to kill your men. If I hadn't done it, he would have doubted me, and our plan would have been ruined," I insisted firmly, attempting to make him believe my words.

"Your son is with me, and let me make this clear: one slip-up, and I'll kill your son—no second chances. So think about your boy before you make any stupid moves because he'll be dead if you try to double-cross me," he threatened.

"No! I promise, and I'll bring the girl to you. This time, my plan will work," I pleaded.

"That's exactly why I chose you. I knew you wouldn't fall in love with that witch, would you?" He laughed mockingly, and I cursed silently under my breath.

He ended the call with a final warning, leaving me standing alone on the desolate road. Frustration and fear consumed me, and I couldn't contain my anger any longer. I threw my head back and let out a gut-wrenching scream into the darkness, hoping somehow my pain would be heard. The weight of the situation pressed heavily upon me, and all I could do was desperately hope that the kidnapper would keep his word and not harm my son.

"What's the matter? You look so distressed," a soft, melodic voice reached my ears from behind, momentarily startling me.

I turned around and saw Mariya standing there, her eyes filled with concern amidst her own fear.

"Stay the hell away from me!" I shouted furiously, my anger boiling over.

She inched, taking a step back, her face displaying a mix of confusion and fear.

"W-what... what's wrong, Domenic?" she stammered, her voice trembling with nervousness.

"Just stay away from me and don't you dare touch me. Got it?! You make me sick. Stay the hell away!" I yelled, my words dripping with venom.

Shock and hurt flashed across her face, her eyes widening as her complexion paled. Good. She deserved to feel the weight of my contempt. Because of her, my son's life hung in the balance.

"Now get in the damn car, and do it fast!" I snapped, my madness apparent.

Mariya quivered, slowly retreating before breaking into a run toward the car. She hastily climbed inside, her trembling hands fumbling with the door.

On the way, I contacted Xavier Leonardi and informed him about how I had saved his daughter. He sounded to be impressed.

As I reached the hotel, I quietly led Mariya to her room. After ensuring her door was locked, I quickly went to my room right next door. Closing the door, I was overwhelmed by anger. I grabbed a glass and angrily threw it to the ground. The glass shattered into numerous pieces, filling the room with a sharp sound. I was just a step away from reuniting with my son, but my plan had failed. I tore off the bedsheets, tossed them away, and then ripped apart the pillows, releasing a cloud of cotton into the air.

I screamed wildly, pulling at my hair until my throat burned, releasing all the frustration and anger that had built up inside me.

Suddenly, a knock echoed on the door. I knew they must have heard the commotion. Wiping a trembling hand across my face, I took a deep breath. I ran my fingers through my disheveled hair, trying to compose myself, before opening the safety lock and cautiously peering outside. The hotel staff stood there, wearing apprehensive expressions.

"What happened, sir? Are you... okay?" He asked, his voice filled with concern.

"I'm fine, just slipped in the bathroom," I replied, trying to brush off the incident.

"I hope you didn't injure yourself. Do you need any assistance?" He mumbled, still worried.

"No, I'll manage. Thanks for asking," I mumbled back, abruptly closing the door.

As I surveyed the room, it resembled a chaotic aftermath of a storm. My eyes desperately searched for my phone, eventually spotting it on the table. With trembling hands, I picked it up and frantically scrolled through the photo gallery, searching for my son's picture.

There was only one person I had pictures of on my phone—my son. My heart ached, and tears welled up in my eyes as I gazed at Nic's innocent face. It wasn't his fault, yet, he was the one suffering because of some deranged person's desire to kidnap a girl, and I had no idea why.

Wait!

That lunatic had his eyes set on Mariya, but he wasn't out to kill her. If he wanted her dead, he would've done it already. So, what was his motive for kidnapping Mariya? If I could uncover the reason, I could get closer to finding the culprit. Perhaps he was an obsessed fan, a deranged ex-boyfriend, or even a rival from the entertainment industry? The possibilities were endless, and time was not on my side. I needed answers, and I needed them fast.

Without wasting a moment, I dialed Knox's number and issued him some urgent instructions. Every second counted.

I lay on the bed, but sleep evaded me completely. The life of my son hung in the balance, and I couldn't rest until he was safe once again.

Mariya

The next morning, I stepped out of my room, fully dressed for the day, only to find Domenic standing outside, wearing a calm expression on his face as if nothing had transpired the night before. It was hard to believe that he had spoken to me with such rudeness. No one had ever dared to address me in such a manner, not even my father. Ignoring him completely, I briskly made my way toward my car, with Domenic's footsteps trailing behind me.

I quickly ran through my schedule in my mind. First on the agenda was a meeting with the sponsors. My manager had set up an appointment that I couldn't afford to miss. Then, I planned to visit my dear friend, Marie. She was a truly kind-hearted person and my closest confidante.

I headed to meet Mr. Benjamin, the organizer and one of the sponsors of the fashion show. Niki, as always, was the star of the show, the one who always stole the spotlight. She was the show-stopper, without a doubt.

This time, I needed this opportunity. My manager, Daniel, had insisted that only Mr. Benjamin could help me if I met him in person and made my case.

So there I was, at his private bungalow, pleading with him to give me a chance.

"Mr. Benjamin, I need an opportunity to prove myself. I can do better than Niki, but how can I showcase my talent if I never get a chance?" I reasoned, my voice filled with desperation.

Mr. Benjamin's hungry eyes scanned me, his lips curling slightly. I gripped the corner of my knee-length black dress, which had ridden up to mid-thigh as I sat with my legs crossed. I fought the urge to cringe. I was used to people ogling me, after all—it came with the territory of my profession, where we lived for the spotlight.

"Riya, you deserve more chances to showcase your talent. So why don't you start today? In fact, show me right now what you're capable of," he suggested, leaning closer. His hand rested on my bare thigh, his rough fingers trailing over my exposed skin.

"Mr. Benjamin, I... I don't understand what... what you're implying," I stammered, attempting to remove his hand.

But before I could, he pinched my thigh forcefully, leaning closer with his foul breath reaching my ears.

"Mr. Benjamin!" A deep, resonating voice boomed, interrupting the unsettling moment. A large hand landed on Benjamin's shoulder, forcefully pulling him away from me.

"Know your limits!" Domenic growled, his voice filled with warning.

"Riya, your bodyguard is incredibly disrespectful. This is precisely why I warned you not to bring him into my bungalow. He has no idea how to speak to a man of my reputation," Benjamin frowned.

"I apologize, Mr. Benjamin. He's new to this profession and still learning. I will make sure to teach him the proper etiquette," I offered a gentle apology before turning to face Domenic.

"Mr. Bodyguard, focus on your responsibilities and stay out of my business," I instructed, glaring at him. He had no business interfering.

"I have been doing my duty all along. But, of course, it's your line of work," he spat out, making it sound cheap and repulsive.

I wanted to punch him in the face for mocking my profession. Instead, I held back and redirected my attention to Benjamin.

"So, Mr. Benjamin, are you ready to witness my performance?" I whispered seductively.

Benjamin's eyes gleamed with lust as he flashed a lewd grin.

Smiling, I picked up a champagne glass from the table and swiftly hurled the champagne at Benjamin's face.

"What the hell is this?!" he bellowed, hastily wiping his face.

"Oops, my apologies! Didn't you enjoy that?" I gasped, pressing a hand to my lips.

"Would you like me to do it again? Perhaps I can perfect it with a little practice," I mocked.

"You f****g b***h! I'll show you what happens when you mess with me," he growled and lunged towards me.

But before he could reach me, Domenic grabbed him by the collar and forcefully pushed him back into place.

"The lady only threw champagne, and if you don't want something worse on your face, I suggest you don't try to provoke me," Domenic coldly threatened that scumbag.

"Leave him, Domenic. Let's get out of here," I commanded, swiftly standing up and heading toward my car.

"Damn it! I messed everything up. Now I have to call my manager and break the news," I muttered to myself, running a hand through my blond curls as I approached the vehicle.

"You didn't mess anything up. You showed that jerk where he belongs," Domenic's voice resonated behind me.

"I don't need your advice," I rolled my eyes and reached for the passenger seat door.

But just as my hand was about to touch the handle, Domenic reached for it at the same time. I instinctively jerked away, remembering his warning from last night to stay away from him. I quickly stepped back, creating distance and avoiding eye contact.

Domenic held the door open, and I swiftly climbed into the car without looking at him.

I took out my phone and dialed Daniel's number. I knew that after this, I wouldn't be part of the show anymore. I had messed up big time. Now, Daniel was going to be extremely disappointed.