

Scattered Dreams Chapter 12 - TWELVE | DINNER DATE

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Gio POV

"I'm really sorry for the way we left things the other night, and I want to make it up to you. How about you come over for dinner tonight? I'll cook, and it will just be the two of us; what do you think?"

"Is this just dinner, or is it a date? There's a difference, you know," Jasmine replied.

"It's a dinner date; if you'll give me another chance." I was laying it on a little thick, but I needed to get her over here so I could get some answers. I felt slightly wrong for asking her out under false pretenses, but I had no other choice. Magic had screwed my life up, and I was praying that it could also help put things back on track.

"And you're sure Jenna won't pop up in the middle of the appetizers and crash the party? She seems like she's really good at that."

"It's you and me, no one else; I give you my word."

"Okay, then I'd love to come. What time should I be there? Did you need me to bring anything?"

"How about 6:00? And I have everything we need already, so there's no need to bring anything else."

"Alright. I'm really happy you called Gio. I've missed you like crazy, and it was getting harder and harder to stay upset; I was on the edge of swallowing my pride and crawling back," Jasmine stated with a nervous chuckle.

"It's been a long three days, and I missed you too, beautiful. I need to start on dinner, so I'll see you later on tonight, okay?"

"Okay, see you soon."

As soon as I hung up, I turned around and almost shifted into my wolf Austin. Pixie was leaning against the side of the fridge, staring in my direction. I'm sure she'd heard the entire conversation from the scowl on her face.

"Don't do that! You scared the shit out of me, Pix! Announce yourself or something next time; I almost took your head off!"

"Jasmine really doesn't like me, does she? I don't get it."

"Don't worry about her; she's just trying to mark her territory, and it's hard to do with another female in the area. It's nothing personal," I replied.

"Have you told her what happened the other night? I'm sure it would be personal then."

"No. And I'm not going to tell her; what I do with you is none of her business. Besides, I need to get Jas over here, and I don't want her motivation to come to be fueled by anger and jealousy."

"Maybe she can tell that I see through the bullshit, so she's trying to get rid of me. Does she know I'm a witch?"

"Nah. I've only told Matt and Demetrius, and again: it's not her business." I took a good look at her and could see that Jenna was really bothered; had the call upset her that much? "I feel like I'm in trouble for something. Have I done something wrong?" I asked. This conversation had been cold from the start, which wasn't anything like Pixie at all. She was always smiling and bubbly, and the person standing before me was anything but. I hoped it didn't have anything to do with our kiss the other night. Even though we both agreed that we wouldn't overthink it, knowing that it changed how we interacted with each other would be devastating. She walked over to my wine cooler and pulled out a bottle before pouring herself a massive glass of Riesling.

"You do know that's it's only 3:30, right? I've never seen you drink during the daytime hours. Something is definitely wrong," I said as I sat down beside her.

"Your grandparents make the best wine I've ever tasted; there's nothing wrong with that, Gio."

I gently took the glass from Pixie's hand and sat it down. I needed her to talk to me, truthfully. She couldn't do that if she was guzzling down too much wine.

"Please tell me what's going on, sweetie. I promise we'll fix whatever it is, but I can't help if I don't know about it," I pleaded.

After a long deep sigh, she leaned back in her chair and rested her arms over her head. "I'm sorry; nothing is 'wrong' wrong. My mom found their contact information. Estelle and Ezekiel Proctor; she's found my biological parents."

"Isn't that a good thing? It's what you said you wanted, but just because you have the information doesn't mean you need to do anything with it. We don't have to go to Estelle and Ezekiel for help; I'll find another way. If I knew it would make you this upset, I never would have suggested it."

"It's not that; I just don't want things to change once I meet them. I've always just had one set of parents, and what if I meet them and feel like they are my parents too? I couldn't imagine hurting my mom and dad that way; they mean the world to me," Pixie stated. She gave her glass of wine a longing look, but I wasn't ready to give in. I went to the fridge, poured her a glass of apple juice, and set it in front of her.

"You'll have to make do with that for now; the wine is going down the drain. I'm sure my Nonna will understand." She pouted a bit, but eventually, she picked up the juice and began to sip. "And you shouldn't think that way. Your mom and dad have done everything since the very beginning to make sure you know where you came from. They wouldn't get upset if you felt the need to build a relationship with the people who gave you life; even I know that."

She stared off into space for a few moments, and I decided to try a different tactic on her. "Would you mind helping me out with dinner? I know you can, and it will take your mind off things, so what do you have to lose?"

"You want me to cook for your new girlfriend? Are you serious right now?" Pixie scowled at me and asked.

"No, I want you to help me cook. If things go the way you've predicted, Jasmine probably won't make it past drinks and appetizers, so it will likely be you and me eating tonight."

"And you're okay with that? I mean, I know she's hiding something, but I don't know what it is or why. Once you get confirmation, will you be alright?"

"I think so. It's as you said, we don't know what she's hiding or why. It could be something small that's she's embarrassed about, or it could be something

major; I'll just have to find out before things go any farther. Either way, I have to know, so I refuse to ignore your warnings."

"Makes sense to me. Okay, so what's for dinner? I'll help for about an hour or so; then I'm out of here. If Jasmine shows up early, I don't want her to see me here and lose her shit." Pixie stood up and washed her hands, then walked to the fridge and stuck her head in. She then started pulling stuff out and piling it on the counter. I hadn't yet told her what we were making, but it was clear that I didn't need to; she was a pro in the kitchen. After admiring her for a few moments, I moved to join her, and together we cooked up the dinner that would help dictate the future direction of my love life.

A little before 6:00, Jasmine arrived at the house, and I was nervous when I opened the door to welcome her in. This was my first actual date since Sasha, and it was with someone who was hiding something from me. I just hoped that it wouldn't be too bad; I really wanted this woman to be a part of my life.

"It smells incredible in here. What are we having?" Jasmine asked as she walked in.

"Involtini di pesce spada, or Swordfish rolls. It was one of my mom's favorite dishes back in Sicily, and one of the first things she taught Luca and me to make."

"It's so sweet that you used to cook with your mom; are you guys close?" Jasmine asked.

"We're uncomfortably close at times. All mothers feel the need to be involved in their children's lives, but I think Italian moms take it to the extreme. She lives for her kids and grandkids," I explained.

"Hopefully I get to meet her soon, she sounds great," Jasmine replied. I knew what she was getting at, and even though that was my end goal, we weren't there yet. And I told her as much.

"If and when we make it to that point on our relationship, I'd be happy to introduce the two of you."

"That point, huh? Jenna has met all five of your nieces and nephews, plus your parents. She's even met the Gamma, but all I've gotten is your pervert best friend," she replied.

Hearing Demetrius being called a pervert was funny, because he was, and I made the mistake of letting a small laugh escape my lips. The stare Jasmine set on me in response was almost terrifying, and immediately cut my good time short.

"Sorry, I wasn't laughing at you, just your assessment of Demetrius. Anyway, yes, Pixie has met my family, but none of the meetings were planned. It was a 'wrong place, wrong time' deal when it came to meeting my parents; that dinner was a disaster for me."

"It's fine; I won't let my jealousy ruin our first real date. Besides, that's all water under the bridge now." We made our way to the kitchen, where I'd laid out an antipasti platter for us to snack on. I planned to get right down to business, but I at least had to feed Jasmine a little bit before I did. I went to the fridge and grabbed the wine before I poured two huge glasses. I snuck a look over my shoulder and saw her contemplating the olive selection before her, and I quickly added the potion and swirled it around. It only took a few seconds for the electric blue to fade, leaving an innocent-looking glass of perfectly chilled white wine behind.

"Try this. My grandparents own a vineyard in Sicily, and they recently sent my family a bunch of cases of a few of our favorites," I said while passing the glass over. Jasmine swirled the wine in the glass then shoved her nose down into it before taking a huge breath through her nose. My heart began to race, and I just knew that she somehow found out what I was up to. When she noticed the concerned look on my face, she began to laugh.

"Sorry, I've just seen too many movies and shows where the fancy wine snoots do that. I don't even know what I was sniffing for if I'm being honest," she stated with a smile. She then took a long sip and moaned with pleasure. It was one of the best wines I'd ever had, so I knew it would be perfect for tonight. "You've got to give me a bottle of this to take home with me; I've never tasted anything like it."

"That can be arranged. So have a seat and tell me how you've been. A lot can happen in three days." As was usual for us, we sat down and had an easy flowing conversation as we nibbled on the appetizers and sipped the wine. After a while, I knew that the potion should have kicked in, but again I became

nervous. Did I really want to see Jasmine's true colors? Putting my fear aside, I had an epiphany: ignorance was not always bliss. I was ignorant of Sasha's tricks for years, and my life was anything but blissful because of it. I wasn't anxious to relive that nightmare again.

"So where are you from, Jasmine? In all the time we've known each other, I don't think we've ever discussed your childhood or your family," I asked. You would have thought I asked her to pluck her eyeballs from their sockets; Jasmine's face instantly contorted as she grabbed on to her stomach. Interesting.

"Wow, maybe I've had too much wine, or I ate too fast," she stated as she bent over to relieve some of the pain.

"Just take a few deep breaths, are you alright?" I asked while soothingly rubbing her back.

"Yeah, it seems to be passing. Could I have a drink of water?"

I got up to get the water and walking back over; I could see that she was still nervous. She was hiding something about her past, and I was more than a little curious to know what. I let her have a few minutes to compose herself before I took her hand in mine and smiled. "Are you feeling better?"

"Much. I don't know what happened; it was so weird," she replied with a nervous chuckle.

"As long as it's over, that's all that matters. So, back to the question, tell me about your family. You already know I'm big on family, they mean the world to me but what about you?" Her grip on my hands tightened, and I saw her grimace as she struggled to speak.

"I don't have much contact with my family. I'm a bit of a loner," she finally got out.

"Where did you grow up?" Jasmine's eyes began to dart around the room, and beads of sweat formed over her forehead and top lip. She was lying big time, and it wasn't even that serious of a question. Or maybe it was.

"Jas, what's going on? Do you need some fresh air or something? I hope the wine didn't make you sick. We can always reschedule if you're not feeling well," I suggested.

"No! I'm fine, I just need a minute to get myself together, and I'll be right back." She stood up then rushed to the bathroom, abruptly shutting the door behind her and locking it. I leaned back against the counter and waited, while at the same time wondering what in the hell she could be so afraid to tell me. I didn't have the time or desire for more mind games, so I refused to play them. When Jasmine returned, flashing her brightest smile, I couldn't bring myself to return it.

"Are you alright, Gio? You look like something is on your mind, but I'm much better now, I promise."

I stared at her face for a few moments as I gathered my courage to speak. "You're hiding something from me, Jasmine. Don't ask me how I know, I just do. You can either tell me what it is now or get your things and walk out of my life forever, but I won't be kept in the dark or start a relationship built on lies. So make a choice, right now, because I as good as a guy as I am, I'm not going to stand for the bullshit."