Chapter Four

Serenity Agnello
POV

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The expectation of what college would be like was high.

My expectation for high school was similar. I thought that high school would be exactly what a high school musical was like. Friends, wildcats, boyfriends and girlfriends—maybe not so much singing and dancing but still, I *hoped*.

Instead what I had gotten was bullies, stares, musty insecure boys who thought skinny was the pretty, and girls who would be my friends just because of their status in life.

Now, I was well aware that college would be insanely different to high school *only* in the terms of classes, the environment, and studying—*but* when it came to parties, friends, and *people*, I had a feeling that nobody would magically change after a break of only a few weeks.

So, I was nervous about the outcome.

Would it be better than high school, or *worse*?

I guess today we'd likely find out.

Luckily for me, Hayden knew how to drive. This meant for me, I wouldn't have to get a driver to take me and make a whole big scene about the great *'Mafia Princess Serenity'* studying at their school.

The bad side of this was that Hayden loved to sleep in, he was incredibly bad when it came to timing whereas I was an early bird. So it was only in a manner of time if he was going to arrive in thirty minutes or not—most likely *not* considering he hadn't answered any of my messages.

To pass time, I decided to eat some breakfast. I hardly ate breakfast, I mostly preferred dinner or late lunch but breakfast was hardly ever on my agenda.

All I ate was some fruit that my mother had cut up a day or so ago, I had placed a handful into a bowl and mindlessly stood and ate behind the counter.

"Morning Papà." I smile up at my father as he walks into the kitchen fresh as a daisy. Crisp in a casual black shirt and denim jeans. He was also an early waker, whereas Mamma was *not*.

He hums in response, pressing a kiss to my hair as he walks past me over to the coffee machine.

"Excited?" He turns his head over his shoulder to look at me, a signature brow raised prior to his question.

I shrug as I shove an orange slice into my mouth— I love oranges.

"Nervous," I answer after consuming the fruit. Papà turns around slowly, taking a few steps until he was in front of me.

His fatherly power has now flared and his expression merely frowned into concern. I braced myself for *the talk*.

"Serene..." He plays with the shorter ends of my hair, a little smile growing onto his expression.

"I remember when you were born, you had me shed my first tear in what was nearly 10 years."

Smiling shyly, I look away from his burning gaze and toward the family photo we have of us behind his head.

"You've become an incredible woman Serenity, and I'm proud of you."

I look back at him with watering eyes, my arms flew around his waist as I squish him into a bear-hug.

"Thanks, Papà."

He tightens his hug and rocks me side to side, one of his rare, favourite cuddles I got from him. He used to tackle me when I was a child, not with all his strength of course, but enough to have me in giggling fits and tears of happiness.

"What the shit?" The sound of my mother's sleepy voice broke me away from my father's embrace, and I now faced her crazy ass hair and smudged makeup face. Somehow she looked even prettier.

Realisation dawns on her when she looks at me all dressed and giddy. A dramatic hand falls to cover her mouth and she warily walks toward me.

"Oh, my baby girl is leaving me."

I groan and Papà rolls his eyes.

She wraps me up in her arms, kissing my cheek millions of times.

"It's just college Mamma, I'm not *leaving*. I'll be home at 4 or something."

"Sto mandando delle guardie del corpo a tenerti d'occhio." Papà says from behind me.

Translation: "I'm sending bodyguards to keep watch of you."

Pulling away from Mamma, I snap my attention toward my father. I knew he would do this, I know it's for my safety but it's only going to attract attention.

As if he *knew* what I was going to say, he quickly made sure I wouldn't stress.

"Non-si vedranno."

Translation: "They won't be seen."

Anxiety rolls over me as I bite my lip to stay intact. "Sei sicuro?"

Translation: "Are you sure?"

Mamma smiles down at me, rubbing my cheek with her knuckle, comforting me. "Don't worry, flower, you'll be safe *and* out of sight."

Inhaling through my nose, I only nod my head slowly.

I need a cigarette.

The sound of our front door opening and closing alerted me instantly. I knew it could only be Hayden, the guards knew him well enough now that he was nothing but a harmless friend.

I move away from my parents and toward the kitchen threshold, allowing my gaze to settle on a smirking Hayden.

"Ready pooh bear?" He primarily shouts entirely corrupting my ears.

His widening grin flashes to something behind me, I had to swerve my body away from him as he had almost tumbled over me to hug my mother.

"Aw, my sweet Hades, how are you?" My mother pats his back softly, yielding in his devilish way.

"Good, good, Mrs Agnello. How are you doing? Serene isn't causing you too much trouble?"

I scoff at his words and pry his hands off of her. "I'm nothing but an angel in this household, thank you very much." I spit out, glaring at him playfully.

The room quietens down as my Papà enters. His overpowering aroma silenced all.

Hayden smiles up at him and holds his hand out for him to shake—definitely the only male having the absolute guts to do so.

Papà gives him a little smirk and shakes his hand.

"All good, Hayden?" He looks him up and down, allowing his gaze to fall to my arm of Hayden's falling over my shoulder.

"All good, sir. Pooh Bear and I are gonna head off. First day jitters and all..." He looks down at me, wiggling his brows to make me giggle—to which I did.

Both my parents nod, seemingly coming to terms with the fact that I'm in college now. Now, all I needed to do was to come to terms with it too.

"Have a good day, flower. If anyone gives you shit remember to—

"Remind them of who I am." I finish off her sentence, rolling my eyes playfully at the arrogant phrase she taught me to say to the bullies from elementary school.

"Good girl." She kisses my forehead once, and I slowly start to back away from them.

"Be careful, Serenity." Papà says in his work voice—which was the stern, cold tone that made me want to cry every time he used it on me when I got into trouble.

"I will!" I exclaimed, grinning at him and waving tremendously before turning my back to them and looping my arm through Hades'.

Hayden had my bag over his other shoulder which I appreciated. We soon exited the home and hopped inside his sleek car.

"Alright, what do we need to know before entering this new form of hell?"

Hades laughs and turns down the ongoing Taylor song.

"Well, nothing *yet*." He says, swerving through cars with one hand and going through the playlist of songs on his phone.

"Are you nervous?" I looked over at him, scrutinizing him top to bottom to find anything that I was feeling right now—yet, found nothing.

"Not at all." He grins, turning the volume up high as one of our favourite songs started to play, "Don't think about it Serene, just enjoy the high." He places his hand on top of mine and rolls down the windows with his other.

Giggling with happiness, soon enough, I let my mind be free for a moment as the car is fulfilled with our terrible voices syncing in rhythm with Frank Ocean.

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"Welcome students to your first English Literature class of 2022."

Our professor was young, surprisingly.

Different to high school with all the oldies who taught us every year, rotating all the way to grade 12. Not that it matters nor do I care about what age my teachers were, it was just... *fresh* to have someone closer to age.

The woman was blonde, with blue eyes, and a petite figure. She had a kind voice and that eased my anxiety. She only seemed to be in her late twenties, which was quite young to be a professor for college students.

Still, I wasn't complaining.

"My name is Professor Leah Levine, you can call me Leah if you want to." She smiles up at us, half of the class smiling down at her too.

I observe as she walks slowly towards us, hands crossed behind her back. Her eyes fall on each one of us, only briefly scanning but for some reason lingers upon me.

Her smile fades an inch before it was replaced with another smile, switching to Hades beside me and falling on the others.

"Why did she look at you like that?" Hades whispers from beside me, I only shrug and whisper back. "Probably knows who I am."

Hayden scoffs and folds his arms loosely around his chest, scanning her briefly.

"Looks a little clammy, huh?" He judges her head to toe and I can't help but roll my eyes.

"You're such a bully," I glare at him and he glares back, mistakenly taking his glare to her. "Only to those that deserve it." I hear him whisper under his breath, only hoping I hadn't heard it. But I did.

Shaking my head, I sink further down in my seat and listen to her confident voice speak aloud to the class—introducing the introductory to the course I'd find myself enjoying sooner or later.

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After an hour and a bit, Hayden and I find ourselves separating between halls. He wishes me luck as he gets lost in the whirlpools of humans.

I hold my head high, easily gliding through students without fuss. It wasn't as bad as I anticipated, yes, eyes were on me, but there weren't any whispers or glares, or the ones with confidence hadn't stepped up to me to ask if I kill people like my mother or my father.

Those were rare though, most are too afraid I'd just snap and pound on them like a lion falling onto its prey.

Class to class, it was the same over and over again. The introductory's were easy-going and as English Lit was the only class I had with Hayden, I was doing okay on my own.

It was finally time for home. Hayden had finished an hour ago but waited for me by a cafe so we could grab something to eat, it was around five-ish so I'd only grab something small enough to fill the urge and then leave the rest to Papà's cooking.

Entering the small venue, I glance behind me and watch my two bodyguards adjust themselves outside of the cafe to keep an eye on me.

"Serenity!" Hayden's voice calls me away from Spike and Phenoix's gazes'. I turn and find him sitting near a window, but what shocks me a bit is the fellow other male sitting beside him.

This guy had piercings galore, yet they suited him. He wore a classic leather jacket, a black turtle neck underneath and what looked like to be jeans at the bottom.

I slowly walked over, taking in the guy's blemish-free brown skin, his buzzed hair cut and perfectly sculpted jaw.

He looked like a model or the main love interest in a classic 'bad boy falls for the good girl love story.

I take in the dark shade of green in his gaze and watched in surprise as he holds his hand out for me to shake.

"Switch." He mumbles darkly, staring holes into my eyes.

His name was Switch. *Wow.*

Without smiling, I take his hand that was littered with scars and rings into my own, nodding my head once in acknowledgement.

"Serenity."

He raises a perfectly shaped brow that was dyed platinum blonde, then switches his gaze over to a smiling Hades beside him.

"*The* Serenity," Switch says with a trace of amusement in his dead tone, enlightening an eye roll from me.

"Just Serenity," I say with a hint of attitude, slumping down in the seat opposite the two boys.

Switch chuckles at that and eyes me a little with suspicion or something close to that, then proceeds to look over at Hayden.

Hayden finally chimes in and explains why on earth *Switch* was sitting with us for.

"Switch works for the Mafia too, I found him in one of my classes."

I raise my brows, connecting my gaze with Switches.

"Who do you work for?" I asked, curious.

He tilts his head at me, smiling slightly. He had dimples too, *classic*.

"The Ceraso family."

My heart suddenly jolts alive at the mention of the family. Specifically the memory of a certain someone that seems to be the head of that family.

"Switch is actually best friends with Silver." Hayden mentions ever so casually, only that it wasn't so casual for me. Did that mean I'd *actually* be seeing Silver around then? I don't think my mental capacity could take it.

"Boss first," Switch says, looking at me and then Hayden, "best friend second."

I say nothing, watching as Hayden sips his drink. That only reminded me of what I was actually here for.

My chair screeches behind me as I stand, the two glances up at me and I nod to the register. "I'm just going to order," I whisper quietly, taking my feet over to the short line-up.

Briefly, my gaze wanders outside although my mind goes elsewhere. Silver pops in again. The memory of his glacier eyes and ebony hair hypnotises my brain to malfunction— literally.

I hated that he had gotten into my head, only knowing him briefly and seeing him as a grown man had somewhat compelled my heart to speed up. I *didn't* know him. But, still, my brain decides to think about him and *only* him every time he was mentioned.

"Hello? What can I get you, ma'am?"

Shaking my head, my eyes snap down to the small girl making me place on a small smile.

"Just a regular Chai Latte and..." I look above her at the menu, deciding on two chocolate chip muffins.

"Two of the chocolate chip muffins, please."

I pay the girl and tell her the table number I was on, then I leave to sit back with Hayden and his new friend...

Well, the way I see Hayden looking at him with his subtle, googly eyes was exactly not what I would describe as a friend. Simply, Hayden was crushing on this *Switch* guy, which only made sense since Hayden wasn't as inviting as I was with new people.

Sitting back down, I look back outside the window as their ongoing conversation fades with my appearance.

In the corner of my eye, I watch Switch stand and tuck his phone into his pocket, picking up the single packet of cigarettes placed on the table too.

"Nice meeting you, Serenity." I nod at him, watching as he looks down at Hayden and gives him a brief nod as well, striding through the cafe and out the door with the bell going off as he does.

"*Fuck*, isn't he hot?"

Hayden's British accent pops out with his words, and all I could do was laugh.

My muffins and my Chai land on our table, thanking the male, I instantly pick up a muffin and moan into it when the heated chocolate makes contact with my tastebuds.

"While you have your foodgasm, I'm going to be thinking about my own with a certain someone."

That's when I choke once again because of the words that fall out of this boy's mouth.

"I'm eating, Hades." I huff and glare at him, drowning my throat with my latte.

"I'm just joking, Serene." He smirks and adjusts himself in his seat, "I'd thought you'd be delighted to know that Switch had a connection with Silver Ceraso."

I stop doing everything and stare blankly at him. Filling Hayden in on what happened last night was only a summary, too many details were only held between Silver and me, though what I told Hades was enough for him to bloat me about it.

Since this was the first and nearly *only* interaction with a boy that wasn't gay or that wasn't Hades himself, he was going to make it his mission to get me in bed with Silver. Or to date him at least.

Little did he know that I won't be doing either of those things.

At least for now.

"I don't *care* about Silver Ceraso." I find myself lying straight through my pearly whites.

"You *so* do. I can see the little twinkle in your eyes every time his name flows out of another mouth."

Scoffing at his words, my fingers begin to control the fork in my hand, playing with the muffin I had half-eaten.

"So what if I do? It's only attraction, I barely know the guy."

"You can get to know him."

I look up at Hades and raise my eyebrows. Blinking at him with no emotion, he does the same.

"Whatever," I mumble, tired of the conversation already.

Hayden chimes up another conversation, most of which contained the moments between him and Switch between classes and such. It did have me smiling though. I was happy that Hayden was talking about a guy who *genuinely* interested him.

By the time the sun was setting, Hayden and I made a move to head back home. Our car rides were always the same, windows down, speakers up—our voices added in additionally too.

As we arrived at my house, both Hayden and I notice a few different cars placed outside. It was unusual for us to have guests unless it was regarding my family—though my parents never held business in our home.

"Well, fuck. Good luck with whatever that is." Hayden chuckles, stopping the car directly outside of my set of stairs.

"Thanks," I reply sarcastically, flinging my bag over my shoulder as I hop out.

"See you tomorrow, Pooh Bear."

Shaking my head, I shut his car door and wave once before turning and moving up the staircase leading to my front door.

The guards move aside, one opens the front door for me and I thank him with a small nod—as per usual.

Instantly, the warmth of my home caresses me like a blanket. The smell of delicious food fills my stomach with hunger and I become awfully excited to eat.

I drop my bag lazily by the staircase that leads to our rooms, I kick off my Nikes and carefully stride my way through the living room, past the hall of office rooms and storage, and right down the corridor leading to the kitchen and dining room.

When I reach the kitchen itself, I was immediately in shock when I see Chef Loraine behind the kitchen cooking away. I was expecting my Papà because we hardly *ever* have a chef in the kitchen, only when—

Fuck.

Slowly, my feet turned toward the chatter that could be heard from the dining room. My body stills between the threshold as my father, mother, and the four other guests are joined at the table.

Mr and Mrs Ceraso, their nephew, *and* their son.

Silver, Silver, Silver.

My brain chants, my gaze falls *on* him and in a brief moment he catches my gaze from the head of the table.

Those icy blue eyes fall on me and I fall into a trance with them again—never noticing the way the table becomes silent and all eyes are on *me*.