

Chapter 12: Mostly confident.

"How do I look?" Mateo asked, grinning at himself in the mirror.

"You look great..." I lied. He looked like he stepped out of a cliché high school movie.

"You look like an idiot," Alvaro laughed, "pull your pants up, mi hijo. Why is your underwear showing?"

Mateo was dressed in a burned orange T, black baggy pants that hung low and a baseball cap. "It's hip." He defended, looking down at himself.

"Dios mío! Jane do something," Alvaro said, putting me on the spot. "Tell him if you were a girl you would never be impressed by that."

"Hey!" I exclaimed, "I am a girl."

Mateo laughed and Alvaro rolled his eyes. "You know what I mean," he said.

I walked over to Mateo's closet and found a grey v-neck shirt. I walked over to him and pulled the hat off his head, ruffling his hair around. "Put this shirt on and maybe pull the pants up. This isn't a movie made in 1999 about high school students."

Mateo chuckled pulling off the bright traffic cone t-shirt and throwing it on the bed. "I guess it's not that bad," he said, looking down at himself. "Mateo was excited to go back to school and I was happy for him. He waited two weeks for this — since they were doing end-of-term exams and weren't accepting admissions while exams were on."

I was happy for Mateo. He could enjoy his last few years of being a

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normal kid

"Are you ready now princesa?" Alvaro asked, "you're going to be late for school."

Mateo grabbed his car keys and Alvaro took them from him. "You don't wanna come off as that rich kid. You will make the wrong kind of friends."

"Right," Mateo said.

"Jane will drive you and Carlos will go along with her as her new bodyguard."

"Carlos?" I asked.

"Yes," Alvaro said like I was supposed to know that.

"You didn't say anything about a new bodyguard," I eyed him.

"You didn't think I was going to let you go out on your own now did you, darling?" He smiled.

"Wait you want Jane to drive? You said she was a speed demon that time you let her drive."

"You said that to him," I glared at Alvaro and he suddenly checked his watch. "I have an important call to make. I'll see you two later," he said and walked away.

I looked at Mateo who was still staring at himself in the mirror.

"Tu cara está pegada así," I said and he turned around, hunching over and laughing.

"Whaaat?" He questioned coming over and hugging me. "Your Spanish is getting better." He sniffled. "I'm so proud," he dramatised.

"Shut up," I shoved him. "Is your bag packed?" I asked and he grabbed his backpack putting it on his shoulders.

"All set."

I left the house with Mateo to see the same goon that walked me down the aisle waiting for us. "You!" I seethed.

"Mrs Castillo," he greeted politely.

"Goon!"

The man looked embarrassed. "I am sorry for the way I treated you on your wedding day. I was just following orders."

I turned my head and moved to get into the car. I heard the man mumble under his breath as he got into the back seat.

Mateo got in the passenger seat. "This feels weird," he said. "I've never been a passenger in my car before."

"Get used to it, kiddo. You are officially a high school student," I said.

I drove to the local high school while Mateo drummed nervously on his legs. "How do you feel?" I asked.

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"Now remember. The key to making friends is in the art of listening to others without criticism."

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"Got it."

I ruffled his hair. "And you're a cutie so be careful of the girls. Some of them are."

"Ah," he closed his eyes tightly, in disgust, "you're cool and all but you're Alvaro's wife. It's as bad as talking about this stuff with you as with him."

My jaw fell open. "I may be his wife but I'm cooler than him!" I felt offended.

I finally made it to the roundabout for drop offs. "Thank you," he got out. "Remember to be back here to pick me up," he said.

"Right right. I won't forget. Have a nice day. I love you!" I shouted and he waved turning away and walking to the school doors.

I felt emotional. As if I had just taken my baby to kindergarten. High school students were horrible from what I could remember. Mateo hadn't been exposed to them as yet and I was worried.

Not for him but for them.

Alvaro taught that boy hand-to-hand combat.

"Are you crying?" The goon asked.

"You don't talk to me," I warned. Wiping my eyes with one hand while still keeping the other on the wheel.

I drove away from the school all the while eyeing the goon in the rearview mirror. "Do you mind staying in the car," I said to him and he shook his head.

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"No can do, Mrs Castillo. I have to be near you all the time. Hence the term bodyguard."

"You're a real wise ass."

"Okay I know you hate me," he said, "but it's fine. It's just a job. I still get paid whether you like me or not."

"You suck," I smiled snidely at him through the review mirror and he chuckled.

"Anything else you want to say to me. Get it out of your system," he said.

"Your one eye looks bigger than the other!" It was a lie but it made him lean forward and check his eyes in the mirror.

I parked Mateo's car in my favourite parking spot next to the shop. I got out and my second shadow followed me inside.

I went to get a chair to put by the door. "Sit here. Anyone asks you're the security guard." I didn't know what else to do with him.

"Is that what you told Mateo?" He asked.

"Mateo doesn't have a face tat. Besides he never held a to me."

"Makes sense," he smirked.

I turned the sign on the door and neatened the shelves of products. I began to feel hungry and I pulled out my lunch. I bribed Cynthia into making enchiladas for me without Alvaro knowing since he wanted me to eat a healthy diet.

Alvaro also ate the same food and so did Mateo. Mat seemed to enjoy the

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food more because he never complained. But I was missing the spicy delectables Cynthia used to make.

Halfway into my enchilada, I began to feel nauseous. I closed up my lunch tin and pushed it aside. I ran into the bathroom and began puking my guts out into the toilet.

"Mrs Castillo are you okay?" Carlos asked, banging on the door.

"Does it sound like I'm alright, Carlos!"

"At least you called me by my name this time."

I flushed the toilet and rinsed my mouth. I looked at myself in the mirror, patting my cheeks down. This was the first symptom I got that I could be pregnant. It had been over two weeks and I waited for symptoms to show up before I could take a test.

Alvaro didn't force me to take tests. He let me do things at my own pace. But now I needed to take a test so that I could be sure and see the doctor.

I walked out of the bathroom to see Carlos leaning against the door. "I need to go to the department store next door," I said.

He shrugged. "Lead the way."

"Can't you just wait here or outside?"

"Why?" He asked.

"Because I got my period and I don't want to be buying my unmentionables with you breathing down my neck!" I snapped at him.

He let out a low whistle. "You are a feisty one. Boss has some really big cojones to deal with you."

"Thanks," I said sarcastically.

Carlos followed me to the department store and he waited outside, surprisingly. I bought the pregnancy test and the cashier put it in the packet.

"Got everything you need?" Carlos asked as I came out of the store.

"Yup," I said and he began walking back to Ebonies. "Look Carlos," I sighed feeling guilty for the way I had been treating him all morning. He turned giving me his full attention. "Thank you for giving me that privacy." He nodded a small smile creeping onto his face. "Don't get a big head about it. I still don't forgive you for threatening me."

He laughed. "I understand, Mrs Castillo."

I went back into Ebonies and went into the bathroom again. I undid my pants and sat on the toilet. I read the instructions on the pregnancy test and proceeded to follow them.

I followed the instructions and I waited fifteen seconds to see the results. Any amount of time felt like a long time when you had to wait. I looked at the stick and my mouth fell open.

I was pregnant.

I stood up not knowing what to do first. I had to tell Alvaro and I couldn't wait until after work and I didn't want to do it over the phone. I pulled my pants up and put the pregnancy test back in the packet before shoving it into my pocket. I left the bathroom and Carlos looked up at me from his phone. "I need to go home," I said.

Carlos didn't argue. I turned the sign on the door from open to closed and

left the store going back to Alvaro's. How was I going to tell him and more importantly how was he going to react.

I brought the car to a stop in the driveway and rushed up to the house. I hoped he was home. I jogged down the hall to his study and I saw a man drag a body out of the room. My steps slowed as I brought a hand over my mouth.

My excitement diminished as Alvaro stepped out of his study wearing a black pair of gloves. "Take him to the docks. And next time no loose ends," he said.

His eyes landed on me and he looked surprised. I moved aside as the man dragged a lifeless body past me. "You were supposed to be at work," Alvaro said and I turned my back.

How was I supposed to have this kid when he did things like this.

"Jane," he called after me.

"You promised!" I whirled on him. I could feel tears prick my eyes.

His face softened. "You weren't home."

"So that makes it right? Tell me Alvaro one day when a kid runs through the door and sees a bloodied body being dragged through the house what are you going to do?"

He remained silent and worst of all he couldn't even look at me. I ran up the stairs. "Jane, okay," he said chasing after me and I made it to my room and slammed the door in his face, locking it. He turned the handle. "Jane open this door!"

"No. Just leave me alone. I thought I could actually trust you for once and

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you already let me down."

"I can't just stop doing what I do because you ask. I have responsibilities, Jane!" He shouted, banging on my locked door and my tears fell.

There was silence and I thought he left. "Can you at least tell me why you came home?" He asked.

I remained silent. He didn't deserve to know. I took out the pregnancy test that read positive and I went into the bathroom and threw the test in the bin.

I heard the sound of a door slamming and I went to my bed and sank into my pillows. What was I going to do. I shouldn't have agreed to this pregnancy... Yet I couldn't regret it. I was going to love this child because they were mine.

I couldn't live here... Abuelo would have to understand. I tried but Alvaro was so stuck in his ways that he was never going to stop killing people.

I closed my eyes tightly. I needed to get out. For the sake of this child. But how. I didn't have enough money yet.

The details didn't matter for now. I would just have to do whatever it took to make sure this child would not be born in a home where things like this were a norm.

I closed my eyes trying to take in deep breaths. I had to remain calm as per the doctor's orders. No unnecessary stress for a comfortable pregnancy. I laid back in my bed and closed my eyes while I tried to organise my thoughts.

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There was a knock on my door and I woke up to see it was dark out. "Jane?"
"It was Mateo. I got out of my bed and dragged my feet to the door. I flipped the light switch on before pulling the door open to see Mateo standing with a plate of food.

"Hey, thanks for picking me up," he said, walking into my room. "Do I want to know why you and Alvaro are not talking?" He asked and I shook my head.

He placed the plate on the nightstand and I hugged him. "Okay, did you miss me that much today?" He chuckled and I nodded slowly.

"How did you get home?" I asked.

"Julia," he said, pulling back and grinning at me. "Man, I'm so glad I got to go. You should see that kid Elton. Total dork. He's mad for her but she sees him as nothing as a friend," he smiled falling back on the bed and resting his head on my lap. "She was so surprised to see me. We have homeroom and every other class together..." He went on and I smiled, threading my fingers through his hair.

I was happy Mateo had a good day.

It also felt sad because I was going to miss him like hell when I made a decision on where I needed to go. I felt like I was abandoning him but my hands felt tied. I had no other choice and I refused to raise a child in a murder house.

And all I could do was hope that one day he'd forgive me for leaving. I never meant for us to grow so close but I couldn't help it as well. He was such a good kid and I hoped my unborn child would turn out to be just like him.

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"Do you want some ice cream?" He asked and I nodded.

"I would love some ice cream."

"I'll be right back," he said, rushing out of the room and the tears I was holding poured.



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