

Sold To The Cruel Mafia

Chapter 3: The bodyguard.

I phoned the store manager apologizing for not being to work for the past week. She was a grumpy woman and she threatened to take it out of my leave days.

I had no problem with that, as long as I got my job back.

I got ready for work and walked out of the house to see Mat had already pulled the car out of the garage. He opened the passenger side door for me. "Thank you," I said and he jogged over to the driver's side.

I felt excited to go back to work, and I wasn't going to let having a bodyguard stop me, but Mateo looked young— now that I sat next to him. He was tall, just an inch shorter than Alvaro.

"So who is Alvaro to you?" I squeaked, hating the fact that I was sounding nosy.

"Alvaro kind of adopted me when I was five years old," he said, "I tried to steal from him and he was so amused by it that I won his heart."

"That's sweet of him." I didn't think Alvaro was the type to adopt a child or even care about children.

Mat shrugged. "He's always been so good to me. He is a nice man once you get passed all that anger and broodiness. He thrummed his fingers on the steering wheel," where are we going again?"

"Ebonies."

Mat kept one hand on the steering wheel while digging in his pocket for his phone. "Hey!" I said and he jumped, dropping the phone and swerving the car.

I grabbed the steering wheel. "This is why you are supposed to have both hands on the wheel," I scolded.

"Yes mom," he rolled his eyes, "Hey if Alvaro is my adoptive father, that makes you my mom."

A husband and a child in one week. I was on a role. I cleared my throat, eyeing the boy in the driver's seat. "How old are you?"

"Sixteen," he grinned proudly.

What was Alvaro thinking by making a sixteen-year-old my bodyguard? He was a child and Alvaro expected him to protect me. "I'm twenty-four..." I muttered as I thought about how ridiculous this situation was.

"Really?" He paused, "Alvaro is thirty."

"Seriously? Then how can he have adopted you. He would have been fourteen at the time?" I questioned and Mat smiled.

"I did say kind of. He had taken me home with him. No one even missed me. He gave me a better life than I would have ever had if I remained on the streets."

I guess the details didn't matter if Alvaro was good to him.

"Why aren't you in school?" I asked.

"I'm sick," he fake coughed, "I feel a temperature coming along," he wiped his forehead.

"Hmm," I played along, "you are looking a little green."

"I am not," he looked a little worried pulling down the visor to look at his reflection. "Mat keep your eyes on the road." I smiled at the goofy kid.

"I'm sorry. Please don't beat me, momma," he said, and I scrunched up my nose.

"Okay don't call me momma," I smiled. "I'm like eight years older than you."

"You get used to how weird all of it is. It's why I just call Alvaro, Alvaro. But it doesn't take away the fact that I regard him as more than a brother but a father. He and Abuelo have always been there for me and Abuelo was more than happy to take me in when he brought me home." He drove into the city centre and parked the car on the curb of Ebonies boutique. It was a quaint shop in the middle of two other stores. It had the name Ebonies with a butterfly logo on the glass door.

I got out of the car to see Michelle the manager waiting for me at the three steps into the store. Michelle was a narcissistic piece of work that off on making me miserable.

"You're late," she snapped her red lips at me, "and who is the kid?" She eyed Mateo suspiciously.

"Um, this is Mat," I said.

She flipped her brown hair back. "Why are you here?" She asked him.

"Um, um, when a man loves a woman?" He questioned and I snorted.

He was a snarky one.

Michelle rolled her eyes. "I don't have time for whatever this is," she pointed a scrawny finger at me, "I have a nail appointment."

"I'm sorry but I currently moved-"

"I don't have time for excuses. Now that you're back I will only come back at the end of each week to empty the vault," I nodded as she spoke, "You can lock and open the shop," she tossed me the keys and I caught it.

She strutted down the street, her stilettos clicking against the pavement. She got into her Volvo and drove away.

Mat let out a long whistle once she was gone. "Can I shoot her?" He asked as I opened up the shop.

I laughed. "Tempting but no. I'm going to have to take that gun from you though." I stuck my hand out.

"I was kidding, Alvaro would never give me a gun." I wasn't sure whether to believe that or not.

Mat moved to sit down behind the cash register. He pulled out his phone and got to typing.

"Alvaro wants to know if you're safe."

"Tell him ninjas are attacking the store."

He nodded. "He's coming," he said after a few minutes.

"What!"

"Again I'm kidding," Mat laughed. "So how does this go?" He asked.

"Well in ten minutes I'll turn the sign indicating that the store is open."

He stood and walked around, looking at all the products on the shelves. "Ew, what is all this stuff?" He questioned.

"Those are plant-based beauty products, no chemicals are added."

"And all these clothes, it looks like a shop for little old abuela's," he picked up a sleeve of a sweater, feeling the material.

"The clothes are wool, cotton and silk. We don't sell polyester." I moved to turn the sign on the door so people would know we open.

"Wow, snobbish abuela's then?"

"Okay this is not a store for grandma's," I said and the universe had to make an elderly lady walk in.

Mat gave me a tight-lipped, victorious smile. "Smart ass," I muttered.

"Are you going to beat me?" He asked.

I couldn't help but chuckle this time. "I just might."

-- -- -- -- --

It was a long day. The shop got busier as the day came to an end and before I knew it I was turning the closed sign on the door. It started to get gloomy outside and Mat yawned, looking very much like a baby.

I ruffled his hair. "Let's go home, kiddo," I said and he stood up lazily. He stretched his legs before we walked out of the store and I locked up, dropping the key into my bag.

We were both so tired that we barely spoke on the way back to the house and I actually enjoyed having Mat in the shop. He kept me smiling all day and he grew on me.

By the time we reached the house, the sun was gone and the sky was pitch black. There were no stars tonight and there was a slight chill in the air.

We walked into the house to hear Alvaro shouting. He walked out of his study and he was wearing a suit with the first three buttons of his shirt open. "I don't care whose fuck up it is. Get it done now!" He roared and cut the call, throwing his phone at the sofa.

"Tough day at work?" Mat asked him.

"You don't know the half of it," he said and then his eyes fell on me.

I looked away. "I'll be in my room." I moved to the staircase.

"What's your excuse this time?" Alvaro asked. "Headache, stomach pains or nausea?"

"Just tried," I muttered.

"Wait," he said and I stopped, turning around to look at him. "You will eat with me and Mateo. Abuelo hasn't been here for the past week so you got away with it but when he comes you need to be at that table."

I remained silent and this seemed to vex Alvaro. "Mat go see if dinner is ready," he said and Mat left.

Alvaro glared at me. "If you don't eat with us you'll starve," he threatened.

I clenched my jaw. "I'd rather starve," I said and he was getting angry and I could see it.

His chest began to heave. "Have it your way, Jane," he said and walked away.

Cynthia packed a big lunch for me so I didn't care. I was still full. I walked to my bedroom and decided to take a shower. Just a few more months and I would leave.

I showered and put on my pink PJs with rainbows on them. I looked at the small stack of money I had stuffed into my bag without Alvaro knowing.

Soon, I couldn't help but sigh to myself.

I got into bed and I pulled out my phone. If I saved my entire pay cheque— for the next four months, I'd have enough to buy a plane ticket. But now that I had a plan to get the money.

I needed to decide where I was taking that plane to.

I always wanted to visit London. Maybe that would be a good idea. I searched the city on my phone, and I daydreamed about the day I could finally be free. I'd get a job as a librarian or work at the museum.

I would rent out a small apartment and on the weekend visit museums and art galleries. On the long weekends, I'll tour Britain.

I heard a knock on my bedroom door and I jumped because I knew it wasn't Cynthia. This kind of knock was more urgent and it was louder. "Who is it?" I asked and there was silence.

"It's me," Mat said.

I calmed myself, moving to stand and open the door. I saw Alvaro and Mat was standing behind him. My anxiety returned. "You lied to me," I glared at Mat.

"He made me," he pointed a finger at Alvaro.

"What do you want?" I asked looking at Alvaro's face.

His green eyes appeared to be hazel in this lighting. There was slight stubble growing on his high cheekbones and his hair was combed back and jelled.

Mat nudged him with his elbow and Alvaro grunted at him before turning to me. "I would like it if you would please consider eating with us tonight."

"I thought you told me to starve." I pointed out.

Mat gasped, his mouth falling open. "I knew you were mean to her," he said.

Alvaro muttered something in Spanish. "Please eat with us," he said looking at me, and maybe it was a mistake because he looked into my eyes for the first time.

"Okay," I said, and he gave me one last look before walking away, leaving me with Mateo.

"Was this your idea?" I asked.

"Come on, you stay in this room all day, you must be bored."

I took a step out of my room and he pulled my door shut. "No turning back now?" I joked.

"Nope," he said popping the p. He put his arm around my shoulder as we walked downstairs.

"He's not all that bad. I promise."

"Well, he hasn't threatened you so." I shrugged not knowing how to complete that sentence.

"To kill me?" Mat asked, "he threatens to kill me five times a day on average."

I smiled at his attempt to cheer me up as we walked downstairs together. "I haven't toured the house much," I said.

"You've never toured the house. Because I didn't see you for a week." I had been wondering if Mat knew I was forced to marry Alvaro. "But I'll be happy to show you around later."

He lead me into the dining room and there was a large black table with six black, cushioned chairs around it. Alvaro was already sitting at the head of the table and he was watching us.

Mateo sat down next to him on his right and I looked around not knowing where to sit. Alvaro stood moving to pull my chair out for me at the opposite end of the table.

I sat down and he pushed the chair towards the table, the legs scraping against the tiles. Cynthia and another young lady walked into the room carrying two dishes.

Cynthia paused when she saw me but she gave me a courteous nod and a smile— at least she didn't have to fuss over me today.

They left the food on the table and then excused themselves from the room.

"How was work?" Alvaro asked, pouring himself a glass of red wine.

"Fine," I shrugged.

"Mateo, how was work?" He asked instead.

"Her boss is a real bruja," he said.

"Ah," Alvaro said and he muttered something in Spanish to Mateo.

I narrowed my eyes at him. "What did he say, Mat?" I asked.

"He said you don't listen and you brought this upon yourself." Mat laughed.

Alvaro grinned drinking the rest of his wine, before pulling the silver dome off the two trays.

There was spaghetti in one bowl and fresh empanada's on another tray. "Ladies first," Alvaro said and I wondered if he was being polite because of Mat.

I stood and decided to try the empanadas. I put two on my plate and Alvaro looked at me. "Is that all you're eating?" He questioned.

"I had a late lunch and I only eat twice a day."

"Why is that?" He asked.

"I'm used to it."

Mateo looked uncomfortable with our entire exchange and I felt bad. He was a kid and I didn't want him to see me and Alvaro argue or bicker. But at the same time, I didn't know how to talk to Alvaro.

I sat back down and took a bite out of the hot steaming empanada. The tortilla was delicate—the kind that melted in your mouth and reminded you of Christmas—and the ground beef mixed with vegetables and spices was delectable.

"Mmm," I groaned. "This is good." I finished one empanada.

Alvaro stood, coming over to me with the bowl of spaghetti. "I'm not that hungry," I said, trying to be a little more civil for Mat.

"You should try it," he said, putting some on my plate.

"Thanks." I looked up at him and he moved to sit back down.

We ate in silence for a while and then I noticed Mat smiling. "What's his school situation?" I asked, "I don't want him missing out on school because of me."

"He's homeschooled," Alvaro said.

"Why?" I questioned.

I looked at Mateo and he had a guilty expression on his face. "Tell her," Alvaro said.

"I've been kicked out of every public and private school I went to," Mat smiled like a kid that had just done something wrong and knew he would get away with it. He stuffed a forkful of spaghetti in his mouth, filling up his cheeks.

Alvaro glared at him, picking up the napkin and wiping the side of his mouth. "It's nothing to be proud of," he scolded. "comes como un cerdo!"

Mat said something back to him in Spanish and Alvaro threw the napkin at him causing him to chuckle. I couldn't help but watch in amazement.

Everyone had a soft spot and I had just found Alvaro's.

Mat looked at me. "I wanted to work for Al so I caused a ruckus wherever I went thinking he would bend."

"I don't bend," Alvaro commented, "and you're not going to work for me."

"I already do," Mat said, smiling proudly.

"Yeah? How so?"

"I'm Jane's bodyguard."

Alvaro shook his head. "I'm not paying you so it does not actually count as work."

"An internship then."

"Stupedo," Alvaro shook his head, cracking a smile and hiding it with his wine glass.

Mat regaled us with stories while we ate and I caught Alvaro unable to hide his amusement.

When we were done eating Mateo stood up. "I'm going to see if I can't hustle Cynthia out of some ice cream," he said, "she never lets me have anything sweet before bed."

Alvaro chuckled. "Go ahead."

We were left at the table and I moved to stand. "Stay a minute, darling," he said and I sat back down. "I need to talk to you."

"Okay?"

"Mateo is only sixteen," he said and I nodded.

"Yes, he told me."

"I've taught him myself how to fight with and without a weapon."

I didn't want to say anything against his parenting techniques because I knew it would be the cause of an argument. "Awesome."

"He has never killed anyone," he reassured me as if he knew what I was thinking.

"That's good to know."

"He's at that age where he thinks everything bad is cool. I just want him to enjoy being a kid. So look out for him. I'm not asking you to be a mom to him but just take care of him. He does some reckless things when he is alone."

So there was something Alvaro treasured more than money.

A big man dressed in full black with just as many tattoos as Alvaro walked into the room. "We have a problem downstairs," he whispered and Alvaro's face visibly changed from calm to perplexed.

He rubbed his temples. "I'll be there in a second."

The man left the room and Alvaro turned to me. "He thinks you're cool," he said, standing. "I hope he is right." Alvaro patted the side of my arm before he left the room.

I let out a huge breath. Things weren't going to be as easy as I thought. "I got some ice cream," Mateo said entering the dining room with three bowls and a carton of chocolate mint ice cream.

"Where did Al go?" He asked.

"Something came up at work," I said.

"Oh," he moved and opened up the ice cream, "one scoop or two?" He asked.

"Ten." I grinned and he gave me an appeasing nod.

"You're crazy girlfriend," he slurred, causing me to smile, "Cynthia would have a fit if she saw this now."

"I thought she gave you the ice cream."

He shook his head, something mischievous glinting in his brown eyes. "I stole it."