

Chapter 9: Alvaro.

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Alvaro's POV.

I was nine years old when my father passed. No, I shouldn't say he passed, it made it sound like a natural cause when he was murdered in cold blood on the street.

There was an up-and-coming gang in the city called the Diabolos and for initiation—to be the gang leader's left nut I suppose—my father was the target.

Put a bullet in him and you were going to be the pet. The right hand man of the new boss.

My father didn't know it yet because he was too distracted by my mother. She was cheating on him with one of his men and he found out. It drove him insane.

Heartbroken he turned to the bottle. I would come home from school to find him passed out in the living room. I was just a kid but I should have done something more to save my father from himself and what we didn't know was coming.

He felt embarrassed. He had a lot of regrets and I remembered one crucial piece of advice he gave me. "No te cases Una mujer te romperá de maneras que no sabías que eran posibles."

He said, don't get married. A woman will break you in ways you didn't know possible. I was still a boy I knew nothing of women but there was this urgency in his voice and I had to believe him. It's why I never married for love.

And then one day it happened. The Diabolos came for him. He was an easy target drinking himself sick at the bar with none of his men around as protection. The Diablos caught him outside; two of them held him up

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and one man pulled the trigger.

I know this because when I went for these men I asked them to tell me what happened before I took their lives.

I was rageful. My mother left me with abuela and abuelo and I was very much like Mateo, eavesdropping for hints that abuelo might know who killed his son. But he never found out until a few years later when one of the gang members betrayed the Diablos.

And I was ready. Abuelo tried to keep me out of this lifestyle but my destiny was set the day my father was killed. The gang member told him that there was a wedding celebration going on at their hideout. The groom my father's killer would be intoxicated and so would his men.

I knew exactly what to do. I put on my father's black pair of gloves— the ones I still wear today— and I took abuelo's gun. I walked into their den and acted like one of the guests.

I drank their wine and I ate their food. Some people who I never saw again entertained me with stories throughout the night.

I was patient. I had waited a long time for this moment. I fantasized about every detail of when I finally got the upper hand on these men.

The guests soon left, leaving the men alone to continue their celebrations. Drunk, laughing and carefree, unbeknownst to him that his new bride will be a widow come morning.

The men soon noticed I was the only other guest left. "What are you- still -" one man couldn't even speak and I knew these conditions were most favourable for me to start.

I opened fire and they tried to run. I shot at their legs causing them all to fall to the ground. I enjoyed watching them crawl to the door. One man screamed for help and I hit him with the butt of the gun.

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"Shut the fuck up," I ordered. "I'll make this quick." One man had raised his gun and I kicked it out of his hand.

I checked them and took all their guns. Not in their right senses, unarmed and unable to run. I pulled out a chair and sat in the centre of the room demanding their attention.

It was my first taste of power. "Tell me why you went after Castillo?" I demanded.

"You're fucking dead kid!" One of the men said.

I reloaded my gun. I was not leaving without the answers I came for and I was not leaving without avenging my father. I cocked the gun and moved to crouch in front of the man so he could recognise who I was. I looked like my father and I think he saw it too because he gulped.

"You're his boy, aren't you?" He looked at me like I was the angel of death and maybe for that day I was.

I pressed the barrel of the gun against the murderer's forehead, and he sang like the puta he was. "It was an initiation. We only had to get rid of the biggest boss in town to make room for our boss." He further pointed out his friends that helped him. "They all helped me. We were struggling we had no cho--"

"You always have a choice," I growled.

"Who gave the order on the hit on Castillo?" I demanded. "I want a fucking name or all you puta's are dead." 1

"Our boss, he goes by the name El Diablo Ramirez." The man shivered.

"Where do I find him?" I asked and the man looked apprehensive. "Or there will be fragments of your fucking skull on the fucking floor."

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"He lives in up town. He has the engraving of a pitchfork on his gate," he cried out.

After I got all of the information I needed, I killed them all. I disposed of the gun in an alleyway bin and left their bodies to rot for someone else to find.

It was the first time I took a life and I took five along with it that day.

Abuelo soon found out it was me that killed those men and he was disappointed. "Se suponía que terminaría conmigo," he caught me in my room.

"Tuve que hacerlo, abuelo." I didn't fight him or try to run away from the confrontation.

He pulled out the gun I used to kill all those men. "It was supposed to end with me, Alvaro!" He shouted. 1

"It was never going to end," I declared and he took a step back. Looking at me as if I was a man and not a boy anymore.

I had a vendetta. Abuelo may have been angry, but I knew it would pass. I needed to do what was necessary for my family. This was a territory war now and I waited... I plotted, I got older and smarter.

And then I went for Ramirez when the time was right. I was older and I had men with me this time to infiltrate his house. I looked him dead in the eyes and said one last thing to him before I pulled the trigger. "My name is Alvaro Castillo. The son of the man you ordered a hit on." The look of realization dawning on Ramirez's face didn't last long because I pulled the trigger sinking a bullet right between his eyes.

Abuelo was disappointed. But he soon lost his ability to walk after he got shot in the kneecap. I started doing all the heavy lifting and I knew he hated the fact that I was now into this life. My exact words to him were, "

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You can't save my soul. I chose to damn it."

People aren't born evil or in fact, I wasn't. It was actions against my family and my reactions to those actions that lead me down the path of eternal damnation. After I did what I did I couldn't just flip the switch and live a normal life.

I had blood on my hands. I saw what I did to those men. I relived my revenge on most nights. It may have haunted me in the beginning but as I grew into a man I couldn't bring myself to regret the choices I made.

I thought my revenge was complete, but how could it be when the cause of all of this was sitting at my dinner table, drinking rosé and mincing words with my grandfather, son and wife.

"Why are you here?" I asked unable to take her presence no more. Her voice was annoying and she was lucky she was my mother or she would have been fish food long ago.

"Mi hijo," abuelo said, "I called her because I think it's time you put this behind-"

My hands balled. "Abuelo," I said, not believing what I was hearing. 'This woman made me the man I was today because she couldn't keep her legs closed.

My father was dead and I was supposed to just eat chicken and dine on wine, acting like it all didn't happen.

"Son please."

Jane was staring at me as if she was sitting in a room with a wild animal. I wanted to tell her she could go to her room but I just couldn't form the right words without coming off too harsh.

"So your will has already been made out?" Christine asked.

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"I don't see how that's any of your business," I said. She wouldn't even get his leftover dental floss. She had the nerve to think she would come here and get treated with kindness.

Abuelo shot me a look and then turned back to her. "Yes," he said and Mateo looked like he was about to explode with the way he was clutching his fork and knife.

"Mateo full my glass up for me," she ordered and I was about to swear her out.

"Full your own damn glass," Mateo said and I couldn't be any prouder of the boy. He pushed his chair back from the table and stood. "Excuse me, abuelo, but I don't need to be here for this," he said and abuelo nodded. "Bruja," he muttered on his way out.

"You see if that boy was blood he would have more respect for me," she said. "Don't you agree, Jane, that Alvaro shouldn't be living with someone else's mistake?"

Jane's mouth fell open. "I love Mateo and I'm happy he is around. He makes me smile every day," she said and Christine rolled her eyes. 1

"Christine please do not speak of Mateo in that way," abuelo said.

I stood up and everyone's eyes turned to me. I threw my napkin on my plate and left the room. If abuelo wanted her here, he could entertain her shit. I had nothing left to say to her.

I went into my study and sat down at my desk, rubbing my temples. My body was shivering with rage and I was trying very hard to control myself. I got a bottle from the liquor cabinet and took a swig from it.

The door opened and there she was again. "Get out, Christine," I demanded.

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"Alvaro I am your mother!"

I slammed the whiskey bottle down hard. "The fuck you are," how dare she say that to me. "My mother's name was Rosé. I stood walking over to her— to look her dead in the eyes while I said this. "You're nothing but a surrogate. I can't remember one nice thing or one good memory I have of you because you were never home. You're nothing but a whore—" she moved to slap me and I caught her hand.

"Don't," I warned.

"Watch your mouth." She pointed a finger in my face.

"I want nothing to do with you if I hadn't made it clear enough to sink in that thick superficial skull of yours. You weren't there for me as a child and I don't need you now as an adult. Now you can either tell me what the fuck you want or get out of my house."

She clenched her jaw. "I need money," she said and I laughed. Of course, she needed money.

"Get out."

"My husband took out a loan for our house and now they threatening to liquidate his assets for payment," She explained.

"That's just not my problem now, is it? I couldn't care less if you and Frank ended up living under a bridge in a box."

Her nostrils flared. "You're a despicable man and I am ashamed to call you my son," she said and I laughed. It was funny that she thought I cared what she thought of me.

"I guess that trait came from you." My eyes settled on her and she snarled.

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"I'm warning you, Alvaro," she pointed her finger in my face again, "you are going to regret this."

"You should just be lucky you're still alive so I would not vex me right now. Don't come near my family again."

"You think you're the boss but even a boss has his day." She threatened, turning to leave my study.

"You should be careful who you threaten, Christine," I said and she stopped, "I'm not my father."

She left my study and I went back to my bottle. What was abuelo thinking, knowing how I feel about her. She was the reason his son was dead. How could he forgive that.

"Alvaro," Abuelo wheeled himself into the study and I put the bottle down.

"So what. Is that one of your conditions too?" I asked and his face sunk, "you want me to forgive her?"

"Mi hijo, I thought she would have changed after all these years. She called me when she couldn't reach you saying she wanted to make things right and I asked her over."

"She only wanted money, abuelo! She only ever comes along when she needs something."

"Alvaro I'm sorry, mi hijo." I placed my hand on his shoulder, trying to breathe. I get that abuelo probably has a list of things he wanted to accomplish before his time ran out but this was one thing I couldn't do for him.

I could feel my chest rise and fall. Usually, when I felt like this I would think about something funny. Like something Mateo said or did, but



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strangely all I could see was Jane's face. Her smile when she thinks she's being a badass and how she sasssed me.

She was so good and I couldn't trust her because everything about her seemed too good to be true. I dug and dug for information on her and there was nothing bad about her. No bad comments of her on her social media accounts either.

On top of everything I did to her, she was willing to have a baby with me for abuelo's sake. How could one woman be so selfless and caring. I had only ever met one woman like that and it was my abuela.

I would never understand how Jane and abuela did it and maybe I envied her for it. Maybe I wanted her to be bad so it justified the way I treated her.

"I'll see you in the morning, mi hijo. Get some rest," abuelo said, patting my hand that was on his shoulder.

He wheeled himself out of my study and I chugged the whiskey down as if it was water. The only difference was this burned and I liked it.



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