

Chapter 61 – Their Beautiful Strong Queen

After the hell I just went through to get set up to sell my paintings, I'm finally heading to the doctor's office. I was ready not to have to use this damn scooter anymore. As I was sitting at a stop light, I heard a loud bike, and when I looked up I saw Aries on his Motorcycle behind me. I rolled my eyes and picked up my phone. I had it connected to the via Bluetooth. I went through my music really fast and put on Miley Cyrus' song Flowers. I turned it on and turned the volume up as loud as it would go.

You would be amazed by how tiny my VW bug is, and how loud the volume will get. It has an awesome sound system in it. And I wanted to make a point because I still didn't know what the hell happened with them. When the light turned green I took off to the hospital and ignored the asshole behind me. At one point he pulled up by my driver's side window while we were driving because it was two lanes. And I started belting out the words as loud as I could, especially on certain parts.

"I didn't wanna leave you, I didn't wanna lie. Started to cry, but then remembered I. I can buy myself flowers, write my name in the sand. Talk to myself for hours, say things you don't understand. I can take myself dancing, and I can hold my own hand. Yeah, I can love me better than you can." With the look on his face when I sang that verse to him, I was really loving Miley at that moment. This song is my theme song at the moment, I love it.

My regular doctor has an office on the other side of town but because I needed an x-ray, I had to come to the hospital to see another doctor. I ignored him and turned off the road onto the one that goes to the hospital. When I got there I pulled into the POC part of the hospital and parked.

After I shut the car off I put my phone in my pocket and grabbed my purse. I took the keys out of the ignition and got out of the car. After I got my scooter out of the back, I locked up my car and headed into the building. When I got inside I waited for the elevator so that I could head up to the second floor. When I got there I went into the doctor's office that I needed and Checked in. It seemed like It was pretty busy, so I found a seat that had some room for my scooter and sat down.

While I was waiting I played around on my phone and checked my social media pages. And even answered some texts from my brothers. They wanted to spend some time with me but they were back at home in Russia. I decided that since I had the time now, I wanted to learn how to speak Russian. I know that it's one of the hardest languages to learn how to speak. But since I am half Russian I decided that I needed to learn the language of my people. It was only right, after all, I am Italian and can speak it as well.

After sitting and watching a few different people go back a nurse finally comes out and calls me back. I got up and used my scooter, carefully trying to avoid people's feet to get back into the back. I don't know why all of these places make the waiting rooms so dang small. I get to the door and she holds it open so that I can go through.

When we get into the back, she takes my weight and then gets my temperature and blood pressure. When she's done she takes me into a room and has me sit on the table to wait for the doctor. It takes him about ten minutes before he comes into the room. "Good afternoon Miss. Russo, how are you doing today?" he asked me.

"I'm doing good, how are you?" "I'm just great, now looking at your chart I see that you're here today for a check-up on your ankle to see how it's doing. You also had a cute on your face, I want to see how it healed up. Have you had any problems with your ankle and are you still taking pain medicine for it?"

"I didn't really take any pain medicine unless it was hurting really bad. I don't like to take medicine unless I absolutely have to. I did end up having to walk on it some because of some personal things that had happened. It hurt and was swelled up and bruised some but It's not too bad now" I told him. "Ok, well if you wouldn't mind, please take off the boot so I can have a look at it."

I took the boot off and laid it on the bed behind me. He grabbed my leg and felt around on my leg and then on my ankle and foot. It hurt some when he was pushing on my foot but not too bad. He turned my ankle back and forth some and when I winced he stopped. "Ok, I'm going to have my nurse grab a wheelchair and take you downstairs for an x-ray. I want to see what it shows and then I'll come up with a game plan. I want to see the X-rays first." "Ok, that works for me."

He nodded and then left the room, a few minutes later a nurse was back to take me down for X-rays. We went down to the first floor and there was someone ahead of me so she left me to sit in the waiting room. After the other girl got her x-ray they took me back to get mine. They had to move my foot and leg in a few different positions to get the pictures that they needed. When they were done someone wheeled me back upstairs and back into the room that I was in.

I sat in there for about an hour before the doctor came back in. "Ok, good news, It looks like it's healing up pretty well. I want you to wear the boot for another three weeks. The scooter you can do away with but if you're going to be doing a lot of walking. Then I would advise you to use it, for example, if you're going to the zoo for the day. That's a lot of walking to be done on your foot right now, so you would need the scooter. Now just walking around the house or going to the store you should be fine but use a crutch for the first week. Take Motrin as needed for pain, I see that you are allergic to Tylenol so I'll write you a script for Motrin 800. It's stronger than store-bought, but it will work as well. If you have the other pain meds that were given to you only take them if your pain is a ten on a scale of one to ten. Ten being the highest. I want you to come back in three weeks and we'll do another x-ray and see how it's doing then. If something happens in the meantime and it starts to hurt again or you get hurt again. Then call in and we'll have you come back in and we'll do another x-ray" he said.

"Ok, thank you doc and I will. But I also plan to be careful, I'm sick of the scooter and have no plans to have to go back to it again. I'm going to be busy getting ready for an art show so hopefully nothing will happen to cause me to get hurt" I said. "An art show, yeah

that will keep you busy. My wife is an artist and is also an art teacher at the local college. She's always busy painting something or bragging about her favorite student."

I lit up when he said that and asked him "You don't mean Skyla Halstead do you?" "Yeah that's her, do you know her?" he asked me. "Yes, I do she's my art teacher and that would mean that you are Benji. She talks about you all of the time, but I didn't realize that you were a doctor."

He chuckled and then said "Yeah, she talks about me like I talk about her all the time. She never cared that I was a doctor or older than her. She just loves me for me and I feel the same way about her. I bet you are the student that she was talking about. She was bragging about the last picture that you painted, the one for your final exam. She said that it was of your grandparents and that she absolutely loved it. I'll let know about your show, I'm sure that she will want to go."

"Yeah, I was going to call her and tell her, but if you'll let her know, I'd appreciate it. I'll get ahold of her and let her know what day it'll be for sure." "Will do, now I have other patients to see. If you need to come in call us, and just take it easy for the next three weeks. And when the boot comes off no high-heeled shoes for about six weeks to give it time to heal completely."

I shook his hand and he left the room. I put my boot back on and used the scooter on my way back out. I didn't want to just push it out of the room and back to the car. So I figured that I would use it to get back to the car and go without it after that. When I left the room I stopped and made an appointment for three weeks. I made it out of the waiting room and back down the elevator to my car.

When I loaded up the scooter I put full pressure on my foot. When it's in the car I go to get in but feel like I'm being watched. I look around and see a Harley with a rider on it on the other side of the lot. I can't tell what the cut says but I'm sure that it's either Aries or one of his guys. I just shake my head and then get into the car.

I go through my phone and make a list of songs about men being assholes. I then start my car and pull out. As I go past the rider I realize that it's Aries again. The first song that I jammed out to was Gayle- ABCDEFU. I have nothing against his sister or his mother but it works otherwise. As I drove passed him, I slowed down, flipped him the bird, and yelled at him. "Fuck off and stop following me. You dumped me so leave me the fuck alone."

I then took off for the grocery store. When I got to the store It was so nice to be able to get out and not have to grab my scooter. I was walking across the parking lot after locking up my car when I heard the bike. I just shook my head and kept walking. I didn't want to deal with him after what he did to me. But it didn't seem like he felt the same way.

I was almost to the door of the store when my arm was grabbed and I was turned around. "Where the hell is your knee scooter at and why aren't you using it." "First of all, let go of me, and secondly it's none of your damn business. You broke up with me remember, so

now anything that happens to me is none of your concern.” “I bed to differ, baby, you are still ours. But there is shit going on that I can’t talk to you about. We’re trying to protect you here, so just trust us ok. We’ll get this shit taken care of and then we’ll all be able to be together again. Now where is your scooter at?”

“What the hell are you trying to protect me from?” I asked him. “I can’t tell you that right now?” “Then I can’t answer your questions. There won’t be an us again, so please stop following me around and leave me the hell alone.” I jerked my arm away from him and walked into the store. I wasn’t going to listen to their bullshit. If they were actually protecting me from something then they needed to tell me what that something was.

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I continued into the store and grabbed a buggy. This store had a Cuppa Joe Coffee shop in it so I stopped by there and got a coffee before going after snacks. I ordered an iced Carmel Frappe and paid for it. When it was ready I got it, put my straw in it, and took a drink. I threw the paper wrapper from the straw away and then headed around the store.

I grabbed a bunch of chips, cookies, theater-style boxes of candy, popcorn, ice cream, and pop. I made sure to grab vanilla ice cream and root beer. I wanted a root beer float and I think that I deserve it after the day that I had. I went down the aisle checking to see if there was anything else that we would want or need. I grabbed a few other bags of candy and a few things snack-wise to restock in my room.

After I had a buggy full of stuff I headed to the registers, I passed by the bakery on my way to the register and saw the donuts. They had a couple of boxes of the chocolate and maple longjohns and I grabbed three boxes. Hey don’t judge me, they are my favorite and I’m eating my emotions today. I deserve it, and I’ll hit the gym as soon as I can.

I went to the register and got checked out. After I had paid and had my bags back in the buggy I headed out to the car. As I was walking to the car I looked around and saw Aries on his bike a few cars down from my car. This asshole just won’t give up, I swear. I rolled my eyes and kept heading in the direction of my car.

When I got there I unlocked the trunk and started putting the stuff in. I put the pop in first and then put the lighter stuff on top of it. I didn’t want to smash any of my stuff and my trunk wasn’t very big. After everything was in it, I shut the trunk and then took the buggy back. When I came back up I got into my car and headed for home. I know with it being a family movie night, that someone would order pizzas and all of the sides that we usually get. So I was ready to get home, I love pizza.

I continued to blast songs about hating men on the way home. Just because Aries was right behind me for most of the drive home. When I got close to my house he turned off and went back towards the clubhouse. I kept going towards home and when I got close to my gate I saw why he turned for home. There was a prospect sitting outside of my gate.

I pulled up to the gate, stopped my car, and put it in park. The guard stepped out of the little security building that we had there. I got out of the car and looked at the prospect and said "Listen, I get it you were probably put here to spy on me by Aries and the club. But your ass needs to leave, I don't want nor do I need the club's protection. They dumped me and If I keep getting stocked and harassed by anyone from the club then I will call the cops and press charges. And I don't really want to do that to you, so please leave. If Aries has a problem with it then tell him that I said he can kiss my ass."

With that I got back into my car, the guard opened the gate and I drove through it. When I pulled up to the house, I pulled into my spot in the garage and parked my car. When I went to get out Nicco, Dante and Enzo were there to carry the stuff that I got in. So I grabbed my purse, phone, keys, and coffee. When I got out of the car Nicco, opened the back door to get my scooter out.

I was as happy as a clam when I told him "I don't need that, so it can be put up for now. I do need a crutch to use for the first week though. After that, I'm good to go without it. The scooter does need to stay in here and in one piece for now though. Doc said If I'm going to be doing a lot of walking to use it."

"That's awesome, I'll put in here out of the way so if you need it then you can get to it pretty fast. Go ahead and head in, we'll bring everything in and take it downstairs" Nicco said. I nodded and told him that some of that was my snacks for my room and then headed into the house. When I walked into the kitchen, it was nice to see the whole family there. Nonno, Nonna, Uncle Zain, Aunt Bella, Chris, Ren, Francesco, Anna, Luciano, Angela, Carina, Massimo, Renzo, and Giorgio.

I was happy that Dom wasn't here and I hoped that it stayed that way. When Nonna noticed me she came to hug me and then frowned down at my foot. "Where is your scooter and why are you not using it?" She asked me. "I don't need to use it anymore," I said and then proceeded to explain to her what the doctor told me.

Everyone was happy that I didn't have to have and that I was healing up. They all hugged me as they greeted me and Chris and Ren hugged me tight and didn't want to let go. "You and I have a lot of talking and catching up to do missy. But I need another hug I missed you. You need to come see me tomorrow, I have an appointment open tomorrow and I have enough time to work on your tattoo. We need to get it finished" Chris told me.

"Yeah, I was just thinking that same thing. I'm not busy tomorrow so just let me know what time and I'll be there. And I have missed you as well, so much." I moved on and hugged everyone else and Nonna Anna hugged me a long time and told me to come see her soon. When I got to Angela and Luciano he asked me "Where are the guys at? I figured that they would come with you."

I was stunned because I figured that they would know what happened. "Do you guys not know? Aries, Dom, Zeus, and Marcello all broke up with me a week ago. Aries was following me today and told me that there was a reason for it. And that they would

explain when they had everything situated. But I honestly don't care what their reasons are. The way that they did it was cold and a bunch of bullshit. I didn't deserve the way that they treated me."

"I'm sorry River, I honestly had no idea. He's not been around to see us and won't answer my calls either. I guess that partly explains it. Do you boys know anything about this?" Luciano asked his sons. They all said no, that he's not answering for them either. "I'm sorry, I'll try to figure out what's going on and let you know."

"It's ok Luciano, I'm not worried about it. I have more important things to worry about. I actually have good news to share with you all. In a few weeks, I will be having my very first art show. I talked to Miss Marston and she's going to come by in a few days and look at all of the paintings that I have done. Because I have so many and it's enough for an art show. We're going to plan it three weeks from now" I told everyone.

"That's amazing my little Artista, I am so proud of you. Make sure that you reserve tickets for all of us to go. You tell me how much it is when the time comes and I'll gladly pay it" Nonno said. I looked at him and Nonna and just realized that I didn't think that they had seen the picture that I did for them. So I asked them "Since we have been home have either of you been into the living room?"

They both stood there thinking about it for a minute and then shook their heads no. "No, I don't think I've been in there at all this week. I've been busy between the diner and spending time with Sal. Why?" Nonna asked. "I'd rather show you, so come on," I said. I took my phone out and turned my camera on as I led the way into the living room. When we got to the door I turned around and walked backward so I could get a picture of their faces. I held the phone up and when Nonna and Nonno walked in and saw the picture that I painted. I took a picture of their faces.

Nonna covered her mouth with her hand and said "Oh, River, It's so beautiful. You painted this didn't you?" "I did actually, It was my picture for my final exam for art. I got a one hundred percent, by the way, my teacher loved it. Legal had gone to college with me my last week as protection and watched me painting. He wants, err well wanted me to paint a picture for Sunny. I had Zeus hang it up as a surprise for you when you got home. I just didn't think that Nonno would be with us when we came back home. I knew how much you missed him, Nonna. And I know that this is your favorite picture of the two of you. So I wanted to paint it and make it bigger so that you'd always have him with you" I told her.

She hugged me tight and then looked back up at the picture again. "You did a wonderful job on it and I love it, thank you." "You're welcome." Everyone else came in to see it and tell me how good of a job I had done on it. While everyone was looking at the painting, the guard out front called to let us know that our food was there. So Nicco and the boys went to get it.

I went up to my room and changed clothes. I was in a dress and changed out of it into a pair of shorts and a tank top. I pulled my hair up into a messy bun and looked through the

bags of snacks that were on my bed. Nicco left the right stuff sitting on the bed, he usually knows what I get. I left my purse in my room, stuck my phone in my pocket, and headed back down to the kitchen.

When I got in there everyone was getting their food so I washed my hands and then loaded up my plate. I got two pieces of pizza, cheese bread, cheese sticks, broccoli cheese bits, onion rings, and chili cheese fries. The guys had taken everything except the ice cream downstairs. So I grabbed a big glass to put ice cream into. I got it out of the freezer and put ice cream in my glass then put it back in the freezer. Then I picked up my plate and glass and headed to the elevator. Everyone else was taking the stairs down but I didn't want to try that yet.

When I got down to the theater, I grabbed a can of root beer out of the mini fridge and opened it up. Then I poured it into the glass with the ice cream. After it was done I put the rest of the root beer back into the fridge and then went to my recliner. I felt my phone vibrate in my pocket and when I checked it, it was Aries. I hit the fuck up button, or the hang-up button for you non-pissed-off people. I didn't want to speak to him. I felt it buzz with a text and just ignored it. I got comfortable in my chair and then waited for the movie to start.

It was Nicco's turn to pick and he picked The Guardians of the Galaxy movies. I loved this series of movies, Groot and Rocket are my favorites. I even have a keychain that has them on it. So I cuddled up and ate my food, watched the movies, and enjoyed being with my family. I love movie nights, and I'm so happy that we started these when I was younger. It's definitely the best night of the week, hands down.

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The next few days were pretty busy for me. I had to get all of the pictures that I wanted to use for the art show out and set up for Miss Marston to be able to see them. I didn't know how many she would want to use so I set out the best fifty I had. I had a lot more than that, but I figured that we could start with fifty.

The ones that I wasn't using, I put into the closets in my studio if they were small enough. If they weren't then I put them into a corner out of the way and covered them up. I only had about thirty other paintings so I was able to find room for them all. I had Nicco come out and help me move stuff around so that I could get the pictures all set up.

While we were moving things around there was a knock on the door. I went to see who it was and was very happy when I opened the door and saw Nonno standing there. "Hey there my little Artista, Nonna had to go to the diner something about an emergency. I figured that I'd walk out here and see if you and Nic needed any help." "I think we just about have it but you're more than welcome to come in and look at all of the pictures that I've done over the past few years," I told him.

He came in and walked around looking at all of the pictures that I've done. Nicco helped me get the last few set up and then I was ready for my meeting with Miss Marston tomorrow. I walked around after we had it all done and was happy with the way that it all looked. It looked like a little overcrowded art studio but it looked good.

I walked up to Nonno and wrapped my arm around him. I asked him "So what do you think of them?" "These are all fantastic River. You did a fantastic job with them all. Some of these make you think that they're going to jump off of the page right at you. I love this one that you did. The way that you painted the coral reef and all of the fish. It's just so beautiful and feels so life-like."

"That is actually from a trip that we took a few years ago. I had a waterproof camera and took lots of underwater pictures. I used them for inspiration for when I came back. I did a lot of painting when we got home from that trip. I used some of my pictures from Italy to paint these pictures over here" I told him as I showed him the rest of the pictures.

We walked around and I showed him some more of the paintings that I did and explained them all to him. "After these are all out of here I'll have to show you some of my other paintings that I did. The ones from when I was younger, I still have some of them. Although there was about a year there that I didn't paint. It was just way too hard, especially right after losing you. Every time I picked up a brush I thought about you and how much you loved to watch me paint. And then I'd break down crying and wouldn't be able to do it. Eventually, I was able to start painting again."

After showing Nonno the rest of the paintings and talking about them, we got ready to head back to the house. I grabbed my keys off the hook by the door and made sure that I had my phone. I grabbed my crutch and after we all stepped out of the studio, I locked it up. Nonno wrapped his arm around me and we headed back to the house with Nicco following us.

When we got into the house I excused myself to my room. I was leaving for a few hours to go see Chris at the studio. He was going to finish up my tattoo for me. I took the elevator up to the second floor and went to my room. I grabbed a pair of blue jean shorts and a button-up shirt. I was going to forgo a bra but use nipple covers. After getting my clothes I headed to the bathroom to get a shower. I was sweaty from moving pictures around all day.

After jumping into the shower and washing up real fast I got out and got dried off. Then I got dressed and brushed my hair. I threw it up into a messy bun and then put some makeup on. When I was done I put my boot back on and slipped on a ballet flat. I grabbed my phone and purse, keys and crutch and headed downstairs. When I got to the kitchen Nonna was back and she was sitting at the island with Nonno and Nicco was standing across from them.

"Hey guys, I'm heading out to Chris' studio. He's going to finish up my tattoo today. So I probably won't be back for a while" I said. "Ok, sweetheart, we were just talking about

ordering in for dinner. Do you want us to order extra for you when we decide where we are eating?" Nonna asked me. "No, that's ok, I'm not sure how long it will take. So I'll just grab something on my way home. I shouldn't be out too late though because Miss Marston will be here around ten to check out the pictures that I have ready for her."

"Ok, you be careful my little Artista and we'll see you when you get home," Nonno said. "I will, I love you guys." "We love you too." I left and headed out to my car, after I started it and pulled out of the garage I headed towards the gate. The guard manning the gate today opened it up and let me out and I took off in the direction of Chris' studio. It took me about twenty minutes to get there. And when I pulled in I saw Marcello standing out front so I figured that Dom was inside. So I turned around and pulled out and drove down the road to the coffee shop. I pulled up into the drive thru and it was a long line so I pulled out my phone and sent Chris a text.

Me-Hey, I pulled into the studio and saw your asshole cousin there and pulled right back out. I just went up the road to get coffee so text me when he's gone, please.

After I texted him I waited in line and when it was my turn I pulled up and ordered a large iced caramel mocha frappe and six of their chocolate muffins. Then I pulled around to the window and paid and waited to pull up to the next window. When the car in front of me left I pulled up and got my coffee and muffins. Once I had my stuff I drove back toward the studio and parked back behind it in the staff parking lot. I checked my phone and saw a text from Chris.

Pops- Hey baby girl, they won't be here long Dom's trying to get me to do a tattoo for him but I refused because of what he wants. Not only that but I told him my next appointment will be here soon so he needs to leave.

Me- Ok, well I'm parked in the back behind your studio. I don't want to see either of them. And you should tattoo him. Tattoo "I'm a giant fucking tree who is a mother fucking asshole, douchebag" on his forehead. And tattoo a giant dick beside it.

Pops- Lmao, I just told him that I was advised to tattoo that on his forehead and I won't tell him who told me to do it. But I'm pretty sure that he thinks it's you. He's not amused but I find it funny. He's an asshole and I'm getting rid of him now. No one hurts my kid and gets away with it, family or not. I'll let you know when the coast is clear.

Me- Ok Pops.

While I was waiting I ate one of my muffins to tide me over until I get dinner. I got extras so that I could bring Chris and Ren a treat. I ended up eating both of my muffins while I was waiting and they were good but not as good as the ones that I make. Mine are soft and fluffy and these are a bit dry. I still ate them though because I hadn't eaten since breakfast. Finally, Chris sent me a text.

Pops- Hey he went out the door but they were standing out talking, I think Marcello saw your car pull in and back out. Dom keeps looking back in here. Stay parked in the back and come in the back door He won't see you. I'm going to the door to open it for you.

I grabbed my purse, keys, phone, coffee, muffins, and crutch and got out of the car. I put my purse over my shoulder and after I locked my car I clipped my keys to my purse, put my phone in my pocket, and everything else in my left hand. Then I made my way to the back door. I was almost there when It opened up and Chris stepped out. He got me inside, then closed the door and locked it.

He got me into his tattoo room without me being seen and then locked that door as well. "Ren knows what is going on and won't let him in here. If he wants to see you then those dickheads should've thought about that before breaking up with you. I asked him about it today and all he'll tell me is that once things are straightened out then they'll work stuff out with you. That they cant you tell right now because it's for your own good. He knows that if he tells me that I will tell you. I told him that they just needed to leave you alone."

"I told Aries to stop following me around a few days ago." I then went on to explain about what all happened that day. "Ok course I will have you and Ren down to send an invite for the art show. I went through all of the pictures today with Nicco's help and found all of the ones I want to use. I have around fifty for this show and still have like twenty-five that I'm not sure what I'll do with yet. But I'm excited and can't wait. I'll be meeting with Miss Marston in the morning so she can look at the paintings that I have."

"That's awesome and I'm there and I know that Ren will be as well. I can't wait to see your work. You have always been such an amazing artist. I need to get some of your paintings to put up at the house. And not just the ones that are still on my fridge or were on my fridge from when you were little" he joked.

I sat my stuff down and gave Chris the muffins for him and Ren. Then I got situated on the chair and took my shirt off and Christ helped me get covered so that he could start on the tattoo. He already had everything set up and ready to go, he just had to add the coloring to the little containers. He just got started on my tattoo when the banging on the door started.

I could hear Ren outside the door "Dom, you need to leave you are disturbing our customers. And your banging is liable to cause our artists to mess up their work. So either stop or leave. But if you don't stop then I'll call the cops if I have to or better yet I'll call Uncle Luciano and have him come get your ass out of here."

I could hear a growl and then Dom said "I'm not leaving until she at least speaks to me. I know that she's here and I want to see her. I'm not leaving until I see her." I didn't want to see him and Luciano knew that so I sent a text to him.

Me- Hey Luciano, It's River and I have a problem I wanted to see if you would take care of it, please. I came to Chris' tattoo studio so that he could finish my tattoo and Dom and

Marcello were here. So I pulled back out and went to get coffee and then came back but pulled behind the building. He was outside when Chris brought me into the shop and now he's banging on the room door and won't leave. He's refusing to leave until he sees me he says. We could hear him and Ren through the door.

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Chris continued to work on my tattoo, and we ignored Dom. He really didn't want me coming out there and talking to him face to face. Because as pissed off at them as I am, I'm liable to punch him and Marcello in the faces. Granted it was Aries and Dom that officially broke things off with me. But Marcello and Zeus haven't tried to contact me or anything. So I'd love to punch them as well. Actually, I'd really love to punch all four of them in the junk for what they did to me.

I didn't want to get upset right now, I needed to stay calm and relaxed so that Chris could work on my tattoo without problems. I took a deep breath and let it out the next time that he lifted the tattoo gun to get more ink. Chris always had music playing in his room and kept the remote on the bottom of his cart. I didn't want to listen to Dom anymore so I grabbed the remote and turned the music up.

He was listening to a station that played mixed music and wouldn't you know it. My favorite song just came on. Miley Cyrus' song Flowers was just coming on and I looked at Chris and smirked. Then I turned it up and blasted it so that he could hear it. I knew that we weren't disturbing anyone because Chris said that I was the last appointment that he had today. I could just barely hear Ren laughing on the other side of the door. And then he said something but I couldn't hear what it was. But I got a text right after that from him and I laughed at what he said.

Ren- OMG Baby girl, I can't breathe. When you send a message you sure do send a fucking message. Dom's face is like fifty shades of red right now. It's so fucking funny and Marcello just came through the door with Uncle Luciano and Mario. So now Marcello is also pissed off and fifty shades of red. And to make it worse Uncle Luciano and Mario are laughing at them both and telling them that it's what they get. And that you deserve to have someone that will love you and treat you right.

Me- LMAO that's funny as fuck. Make sure that you tell Luciano and Mario that I intend to find such a man. I have plans to find me a GOOD man soon. Make sure you take pictures of their faces to btw, lol.

I giggled out loud over the text and then told Chris what it said. He smirked and said "It would serve them right if you went out and found a new man. I don't know what the hell their problem is but I'm sure that Uncle Luciano will straighten them both out."

He kept working on my tattoo and when the song was over I turned it back down to a decent level. Now that Luciano was here I wouldn't have to worry about Dom. Luciano

knew that I didn't want to see them and he would make them leave. I could hear talking and yelling going on out there but I ignored it and just relaxed while Chris worked. While I had my eyes closed relaxing my phone went off with a text. It was from one of my brothers.

Leandro- Hey sissy, just wanted to check in and see how you are doing. We're going to try to come visit soon. We had some stuff to take care of back here at home in Russia. We all want to spend time with you and get to know you. So I'm trying to get everything done as fast as possible.

Me- Hey, I'm going good, I've had some problems but that's a conversation for another day. I was actually going to text you later. I have an art show coming up and I'm probably going to be showing fifty of my pieces. It's in about two weeks so I don't know if you'll be able to make it or not but I'd love to see you all there. Maybe after my show is over I can come and visit you guys for a couple of weeks so that we can spend time together and you can still get your work done. I'd love to get to know you all better as well.

Leandro- I'd love to come to your show and I know that the other boys would as well. Let me check with them and you send me the date and I'll see what I can do. And if you want to come stay with us and visit we'll make that happen. We'll come to the show and then you can fly back with us. I don't want you flying alone and we have a private jet. Will it be ok if you leave and come over here for a few weeks? Your men won't mind?

Me- It will be fine, my men aren't my men anymore we split up and I don't know why. And yes I'm ok and no I don't want to talk about it. Getting away for a few weeks will be good for me. I could use a break from everything right now. I don't have to use the scooter anymore unless I'm doing a lot of walking. But I go back to see my doctor the day before my show. So I'll be all set to go after the show is over. Let me know for sure if you all will be here for it and I'll make sure that your names are on the list. It's going to be by invitation only.

Leandro- Ok sissy, if you need to talk about it I'm here for you. And they need their asses kicked. I'll let you know tomorrow who will be able to make it for sure and we'll plan to fly out the day after your show. I'll talk to you tomorrow and let you know what's going on. It's late here and I need to get a shower still and get some sleep. I have an early morning meeting tomorrow but I wanted to check on you.

Me- Ok, that works for me, I'll make sure my stuff is all packed up and ready to go before the show. That way I don't have to worry about it afterwards. And ok, I'll talk to you tomorrow, have a good night bubby.

When I put the phone down Chris looked up at me and asked me "Do you have a man already? You sure were smiley there." "Ha ha, Yeah, no man. I was talking to one of my big brothers. Do you know how it feels to have a sibling who actually wants to be a part of your life and be around you? And not just want to kill you and tell you that you shouldn't have been born. It's nice, don't get me wrong Nicco is my brother and always will be. He's

been there for me since Nonna first found me and took me to the hospital. And I love him just like a brother, and to me, he is my brother. But having an actual sibling text me and check on me is a new experience for me. I've never had that before and it's nice."

"I know what you mean, Daniel and I used to be close. But in the past few years, he has changed so much. He goes from one girl to the next and he's closed himself off to all of us. I don't know why, I just can't figure it out and he won't talk to me to tell me. He used to act kind of jealous when I first brought Ren home and introduced him as my boyfriend when we first started dating. I didn't understand why he acted that way and still don't. Over the years it's just gotten worse. I don't know if he thought that me being with Ren would take away from the time that I spent with him or what."

I sat and thought about it for a minute and said "What if that's not what his problem was?" "What do you mean?" he asked me. "What if his problem is that he was jealous that you were able to come out to your parents? That you had the courage to tell them, hey I'm gay and this is my boyfriend. He could either be gay or bi and just too afraid to come out. I've seen it happen before. He could be afraid of disappointing your parents because Nonna Anna keeps asking him when he'll settle down and have kids."

Chris got quiet as he was working on the tattoo and thinking over what I had said. I knew that when he was ready he would talk again. "I'll get ahold of him and talk to him about it. I think that your right" he said. I lay there and listened to what was going on around us. I could hear the guys all leaving and Ren locking up behind them. Then a few minutes later Chris' room door was opened and Ren walked in with a set of keys in his hand.

"Well, they have finally left the building. They are all still outside but Uncle Luciano said that he'd talk to Dom and Marcello and make them leave. Marcello wouldn't even look at Dom while they were here. Hell, he barely even spoke to him. Other than when he came in with Uncle Luciano and Mario he wouldn't step in here. He'd send in another guard to relay information. Usually, he would do it himself. So it's trouble in paradise all the way around, it looks like. Uncle Luciano told me as they were going out the door that he talked to Ripper. And Zeus is treating Aries the same way. So my best guess is that whatever is going on only Aries and Dom know about it and they're making the other two follow along. Or they all know and whatever is going on they don't agree with it. But whatever it is they are pissed off at the other two about" Ren said.

"Honestly, right now I just don't care. They hurt me pretty good and I don't even want to speak to them right now. There is more to it I'm sure because everything was fine when we got home. Like really fine, but sometime when I was asleep something changed. All I know is that I woke up in bed with Zeus once and when I finally went back to sleep he was still there. The next time that I woke up it was to an empty house and me trying to get downstairs alone. I just need a break from them and from here honestly. Because the instant I leave the house to go somewhere, one of them is following me. So I just talked to my brother and after the art show, I'm going back to Russia with them for a couple of weeks. Please keep that to yourselves though. I don't want anyone but close family to know that I left though."

“We understand baby girl and we won’t tell anyone but you better call and text and check in with us while you’re over there,” Chris said. “I promise that I will.” “Good, because if you don’t we’re coming after you,” Ren said. “I’ll call or text you every day.”

Chris finished up my tattoo and it was now all colored in and it looked so good when it was done. I loved it and the best part was that it now covered up all of my scars. After he was done he whipped it all down and after I looked at it he put a thin layer of ointment on it and then covered it up. I already knew what to do for aftercare, so I put my shirt back on and buttoned it up.

After I grabbed my stuff I walked to the front with the guys to pay what I owed left on my tattoo. As always Chris didn’t want me to pay but I wasn’t going to not pay him for his awesome work. He deserved to be paid for all of his work and I’d never not pay him for a tattoo. With me finally done the guys just had to finish up their nightly work and then they’d be leaving.

They both walked me to the back door and then Chris walked me to my car. I hugged Ren before we headed out and at my car, I hugged Chris as well. After I was in my car with the doors locked and it started he headed back inside. I made sure that he was in before leaving.

On my way home I stopped by a fast food place and grabbed a double bacon cheeseburger, two twenty-piece chicken tenders, and a basket of fries. I also grabbed an iced mocha caramel coffee, then headed home after I had my food. It was a long day and after dealing with Dom all I wanted to do was go home, eat, and go to bed. I was tired and hell and had to be up early in the morning. Good night everyone, sweet dreams, and I’ll see you tomorrow.

Chapter 65 – Their Beautiful Strong Queen

“Gooooood Morning Vietnam, goooooood Morning Vietnam, Gooooood Morning Vietnam.” My alarm goes off and it’s a different ringtone playing over and over again. Nicco” I yelled at him “I’m going to kick your fucking ass. The alarm tone that I had was just fucking fine, you dickhead.” I could hear him laughing in the hallway so I knew that he was still out there.

He stuck his head in the door and while laughing his ass off said “What, don’t you like your new ringtone? You said that you needed up early.” “Yeah, but not sic o fucking clock early. I didn’t need to be up until eight. She won’t be here until ten so I could sleep in a little bit you dick. As much as I love Robin Williams please change my ringtone back. And then go away” I said as I rolled over and snuggled back down into my bed.

“Yeah, no can do on going back to sleep. You need to get up, Mom is making breakfast before we leave for work. Come on lazy bones get up” he said as he bounced up and down like a two-year-old on my bed. “Nicco, I’m going to say this as nice as possible. FUCK OFF.

I finally fell asleep just a little bit ago. I've not been sleeping well lately" I said while glaring at him. "Come on get up and I'll make you a big cup of coffee." "Ugh, fine you dickhead."

I put my boot on and then, got up out of bed and stretched my arms over my head. It was hard to stretch like I usually do with the boot on my foot. I had a pair of shorts and a tank top on so I slipped one of my Jack Skellington slippers on. Then I grabbed a zip-up hoodie and put it on. "The tattoo looks good, Chris did a good job." "Yeah he did, I love it."

I followed Nicco over to the elevator and we rode it downstairs. When we got to the kitchen Nonno was sitting at the counter drinking coffee and reading the newspaper. And Nonna was at the stove fixing breakfast. I gave Nicco and look and he chuckled and then walked over to the coffee pot. I went and sat beside Nonno, leaned over, and kissed him on the cheek. I loved that he was still alive and back where he belonged.

He kissed me on the head and wrapped an arm around me while still looking at his paper. "Good morning my little Artista, how are you feeling this morning?" he asked me. "I'm tired, I didn't sleep very much and then when I did fall asleep I got a rude awakening from Nicco," I told him. I had to stop talking to yawn and when I was done I said "I wasn't planning on getting up until eight. Miss Marston won't be here until ten this morning. So getting up at eight would give me plenty of time to get ready." Nicco brought me over a cup of coffee and I took a much-needed sip of it.

"I'm sorry Amorina, that's my fault, I told him to come wake you up. I wanted to have breakfast this morning. I have to work all day at the diner and Sal is working with Zain and Nicco all day. It will probably be late when we both get back so I wanted to have breakfast with you guys this morning" Nonna said.

"It's ok Nonna, I understand. I want to talk to you guys about something. I talked to my brother Leandro last night while Chris was working on my tattoo. He texted me to check on me. They want to come and visit and get to know me better but they are busy with work right now. I told him about my show and he said he'd let me know if they could make it for it. I have my doctor's appointment the day before the show and I should get my boot off. I think that I'm going to go to Russia with them after the show. They won't leave until the next day and I could use a break from here right now with everything that's going on. And It would give me a chance to get to know my brothers better."

"If that's what you want then we will support you. Just don't stay over there forever or think about moving over there" Nonna said. "No way in hell am I moving over there permanently, visiting is one thing. But I couldn't live there I'm not built for there kind of cold." Nonna finished up breakfast and we all sat down at the table to eat. She made us scrambled eggs, fried potatoes, biscuits, gravy, bacon, and sausage. We all filled up our plates and started to eat.

As we were eating we talked about our plans for the day and my art show. We also talked about my going to Russia for a few weeks. I had to be back in time to go on our family

vacation, so I'd only be over there for two or three weeks. It's an almost fourteen-hour plane ride to get to Russia from here and it's not a trip that I'm looking forward to. But I'll do it because I want to spend time with my brothers.

When we were done eating Nicco and I cleaned up the dishes and then they got ready to leave. I gave them all hugs goodbye and then went to the elevator to head upstairs. When I got to my room, I went and got a sundress to wear for the day. It was a yellow color and had sunflowers on the bottom of it. I also got out a bra and underwear and a ballet flat.

When I had my clothes out for the day, I headed to the bathroom to get a shower. I started the water and then took my boot off and got undressed. I took a quick shower so that I didn't get my tattoo wet. When I was done I got out and got dried off. I changed my bandages on my tattoo and then got dressed. I used the blow dryer on my hair and then pulled it up in a ponytail on top of my head. I sat down at my vanity and then put my makeup on.

Because I don't use much makeup, it doesn't take very long for me to get ready. I put my boot back on and then when I'm done I head out to my bedroom. I slip my ballet flat on, put my phone and my keys in my pocket, and head back downstairs. After riding in the elevator, I make a stop in the kitchen to get my cup and then head down to the theater room. When I get there I fill my cup up with orange cream sickle slushy and then go sit down. When the doorbell goes off I'll be able to hear it down here. Not only that but it's connected to my phone, as well as Nonna's, Nonno's, and Niccos.

So I sat down and turned the TV on and went through the shows to find something to watch. I finally settled on watching Once Upon a Time. It's a good TV series and it's been a while since I've watched it. I made it through a few episodes when I got the text from the front guard letting me know that Miss Marston was here. So I paused the TV show and then headed to the elevator to go back upstairs.

When I got to the door and opened it she was just getting out of her car. I stepped out on the porch and when she came up towards the steps I said "Good morning Miss Marston, how are you today?" "Good morning River, I'm good how are you doing?" "I'm good, come on in, would you like something to drink?" I asked her. "I'm good thank you, I just had a cup of coffee. I don't need anything else at the moment."

"Ok, then we'll head out to my studio behind the house. I went through all of my paintings and I have fifty set up for you to look at" I said as I led her through the house and out the back door. I took her out to my studio and unlocked it and we went in. When I flipped on the light she gasped and said "Oh my goodness River, they are all so beautiful and so amazing. You painted all of these?"

"I did, I've been painting since I was little. I usually only paint once a week because I'm so busy with everything else. So some of these are ones that I've done over the years and some I did for college. About fifteen of them I have painted in the last week alone. I've been through the wringer with some personal stuff and I decided to paint my feelings out.

I have a big painting that I did that's in the house of my Nonno and Nonna. It's their wedding picture and I did it for my final grade for college this year."

"I'd like to see it as well just to see how well you've done. I know a few people who would pay to have a portrait done. And these here, I know that they will all sell very fast. I have a list of people that we can send invites to. They are the usual people who come to the art shows. If you have anyone that you want to invite let me know so that I can add their names to the list. I'll also send out invites to them as well that they will have to have with them to get in."

"Can you send out the invites by email or is it by regular mail only?" I asked her. "We usually send them out by regular mail. But I can send an email if need be. Why do you ask?" "My brothers are going to try to come and they live in Russia. They may have a house here but I'm not sure. Actually, they have to have a house or something here because one of my brothers has been going to college with me. I just recently learned about them, it's a long story" I said when she gave me a funny look.

I gave her the shortened version of what happened. "Ok, just let me know in the next few days when you have a list and the mailing addresses. And we'll get them shipped out. I was going to have a show the week before yours but the artist had to cancel and reschedule. They had a family emergency and there not able to do it in two weeks. If you can get your pictures to us this week, then we can get yours set up and have it in two weeks" she said.

"I stood there thinking about it for a minute and then nodded and said "I can get them there, I'll use one of our SUVs and have Nicco and my cousins help me. Between the four of us, we should be able to get them all there in one trip. If you need help setting them up, I can help with that as well." "I'll let you know but I should be good, I have a couple of people who come in and help set up for shows. What's this piece back here, it looks like a portrait as well?" she asked me.

"That is a picture that I started doing for one of my ex's dads. He wants it as a present for his wife. I started sketching it out while I was still with the ex. I don't know if he still wants it or not but I'm going to finish it and hang onto it just in case he does." "It looks like it'll be beautiful when it's done." We finished talking about the show and when to get her the list she needed and then we left my studio and I locked up. I led her back through the house and showed her the picture that I did of Nonno and Nonna. She loved it and said that if I was interested she could set me up with a list of clients that would love to have a portrait painted.

After she left I watched her pull out of the gate and then locked the door. I headed up to my room, grabbed a notebook, pen, and my address book, and headed back downstairs. When I got back to the theater room I refilled my cup, sat down, and restarted my show. While it was playing I made out the list of people that I wanted to invite to my show and put their addresses on it. I even made a list of people that I didn't want there. It was a short list, but it had people that I didn't want to be around on it. Let's just hope they don't find a way to show up.

Chapter 66 – Their Beautiful Strong Queen

A few days later I had dropped off the lists that I had made for the show. One with people that I wanted to invite with their addresses and one with people that I didn't want there. I found out from my brother that they actually have a mansion a couple of streets over from our house. He said that Rodion even called the guards himself and told them that If I stopped by there to let me in.

Leandro said that he even had the maid make sure that I had a key and the passcodes to the estate as well. He let me know that if I ever wanted to stay there I was more than welcome to. Leandro gave me the address for it so that I could have their invitation sent there. I have been texting my brothers back and forth for the past few weeks now. They are super overprotective of me already and want to kick the guy's asses.

They made it in yesterday and I had dinner with them last night. They had some stuff to take care of today while they were in town. So I won't see them until tomorrow but I have packing to do and a doctor's appointment to go to in a little bit. I went through all of my clothes and laid out enough clothes to last for a couple of weeks. I had a few pairs of shorts, leggings, blue jeans, tank tops, t-shirts, long-sleeve shirts, hoodies, open-front long sweaters, sundresses, bras, panties, socks, tennis shoes, boots, and ballet flats. I was going to use a couple of suitcases to pack all of my stuff but I wanted to find out about my foot before I packed my shoes up.

I also packed up most of my toiletries, leaving out what I would need for the next few days. I didn't have to worry about shampoo or body wash because Leandro asked me what I used and said that he'd make sure that my room was stocked with everything that I needed. He even said that he'd make sure I had the girly shit like blow driers, curling irons, and whatnot, boys. So all that I had to pack was my makeup, toothbrush, toothpaste, tampons, and anything else that I may need.

I packed up everything that I could and sat my bags by the door as they were full. So far I only had my clothes packed because I was waiting to hear from the doctor about my foot. I also had my laptop, sketchbooks, writing pencils, colored pencils, tablet, charges, camera, and my camera bag with all of my stuff for it.

I had a duffle bag sitting out as well, I planned to stop at the store on my way home to pick up snacks and stuff to take with us. Leandro told me that I could take as many bags as I wanted since it was a private plane. So I don't have to worry about how many I can take as a carry-on. All I plan to take on board is my purse, laptop bag, and duffle bag with my comfy throw blanket, a pillow, and lots of snacks. As long as the plane ride is I want to make sure that I have stuff to snack on while in the air.

I had to stop to go to the doctor for my checkup so I figured that I would finish when I got back home. I grabbed my purse, phone, and keys and headed downstairs via the elevator. No one was home today, everyone was busy with work. So I went out the garage door and

set the alarm and locked the door back. I got into my car and hit the button to raise the door. After I was situated and had backed out, I shut the door back and then left.

I waved bye to the guards as they left me out and then headed into town. For once I didn't have a tail today, they must've gotten the hint finally. At least I didn't see any bikes but that didn't mean that I wasn't being followed. I had taken to driving with my doors locked and the window up. If it was hot then I used the air conditioner in my car. I wasn't taking any chances because I knew the one creep was still out there somewhere. The last thing that I needed was for him to find out that I was driving alone again and start following me and trying to kidnap me. I'd have to shoot his ass then and I would because I always have my gun on me now.

When I pulled into the doctor's office I saw a vehicle that had been behind me pull in a few spots down and a row back. I couldn't tell who was in the SUV though. I put my purse strap over my head so it was across my body and not easy to get from me. Then I grabbed my key out of the ignition and put my fingers through the holes of my kitty knuckles. I grabbed my phone and called Enzo while I was getting out of the car.

He picked up and said, "Hey shouldn't you be at a doctor's appointment right now?" "I just pulled in actually. I think that someone in an SUV followed me today and they are parked just far enough back that I'm not sure who it is. I wanted to be talking to someone as I walked into the doctor's office just in case." While I said this I got out of my car and locked it up, and hit the alarm button on it. I was using my left hand to talk on my phone so I had my kitty knuckles on my right hand. I was parked close to the front so I didn't have far to walk.

When I got inside I looked back at the doors and saw a big guy that I didn't know standing right inside the doors. I hit the elevator button and then waited for it to open up. "We don't have anyone following you that I know of, but I'm not sure about your men. Are you still wearing your necklace?" he asked me. "Yep I sure am, I'm almost picked up, just have to finish with a few things when I make it back home," I said.

The guy was standing kind of close and I wasn't about to get on the elevator with him. So I turned toward the door like I was waiting for someone. I don't know if it was luck or what but Sunny came through the door with Colt and Bacardi with her. When I turned towards the door and stopped Enzo said "Got it and I'm running a background check on him now. I see Colt coming in the door with his mom and sister. I'll shoot him a text to let him know what is going on."

"Ok, thank you." "Do you have anywhere else to go when you're done there?" he asked me. "Yeah, I have one no two stops to make before I head back home." "Ok, I'm letting Dad know that I'm coming to the doctor's office now to meet you. I'll have one of the guards bring me or else make Dante do it. Then I'll go with you to do the stuff you need to do. Knowing you, you probably need to get snacks and shit for your trip."

“You know me so well,” I said to him. Sunny walked up to me and pulled me into a hug and whispered “I’ve missed you so much.” I got choked up some and said “I’ve missed you too. Where are you guys heading?” When she released me the elevator finally arrived and we all stepped into it. The guy that was following me didn’t get on so after the four of us were on and the doors closed I pushed the button for our floor and the one for the floors above it and below it. I wasn’t taking chances of him following me and this way he wouldn’t be sure what floor we got off on. The elevator shows what floor it stops at so he’d know otherwise. “We have to go see Dr. Halstead, Bacardi got into a fistfight a couple of weeks ago and broke her hand. And because of that fight Colt also ended up in a fight and fractured his hand. Damn, kids, don’t listen to anything” she said.

I giggled and then spoke to Enzo “Hey Zozo, I’m going to go, I’ll see you when you get here. Do you know where I’ll be?” “Yeah, I’ll be waiting in the waiting room for you. I’ve already let Dad and Nonno know what was going on and Colt knows as well. He’ll keep watch out until I get there. I’ll see you soon, and make sure that you’re not alone.” “Ok, I will, I’ll see you when you get here. I love ya.” “Love you too,” he said back and then we hung up.

“Sorry about that, Zozo is coming to meet me. I have a few errands to run before I head home and he’s going to help me with them.” “And you are being followed and you don’t know who is following you, right?” Colt asked me. “Yeah, that as well. When I left the house I thought that for the first time in a while, I didn’t have a tail. Because Aries has been following me, but I didn’t see him or the prospect that follows me when he can’t” I then went on to explain what else happened.

“Good thinking on your part, and you can put your knuckles away now,” he said with a laugh. I looked down and sure enough, they were still in my hand. I laughed and then attached my key chain to my purse. We got out of the elevator on our floor and headed into the doctor’s office. After checking in we sat and got caught up. I told them about my show and Sunny said that she got the invite to it. Legal was happy to be going and Aries and Zeus were pissed because they didn’t get an invite. She also followed that up with it serves their asses right for what they did.

I was happy to know that she didn’t agree with what they did and that both she and Ivy as well as the girls were pissed at them and not talking to them. Right before I got called into the back I told them “I want to let you know, but please don’t tell any of them. I’ll be leaving town for a few weeks. Leaving the country actually, my brothers came in for my show and I’m going to go back with them for a few weeks. Take a much-needed break from here and get to know my brothers while I’m at it. I’ll be back a few days before our family trip is set to start so that I can repack for it.”

Colt whistled lowly and said “Russia huh, that’s a long assed trip to take. That’s a long flight that I wouldn’t want to take.” “Right, which is why Zozo is coming. He’s going with me to the grocery store so that I can stock up on snacks and stuff. I have most of my stuff packed already but I can’t pack my shoes until I know if I’m done with this thing. And then I had a duffle bag that had my throw blanket and a pillow in it. And it will also have a shit load of snacks in it when I get done, as well as drinks.”

“I don’t blame you for that at all, when I have to do any traveling, I always have a bag of snacks and a cooler of cold coffees,” Bacardi said. “Thank you that’s something else that I need. I can’t forget the coffee. I wouldn’t survive with it that long on a flight.” We were still talking when a nurse called me back. I hugged them all and then headed back to a room. Let’s see if I get this damn boot off today or not. I really hope that I do.

Chapter 67 – Their Beautiful Strong Queen

After the nurse took me back, she got my weight, temp, and blood pressure. She made notes of it all in my chart and then had me sit in a wheelchair to go downstairs. She said that Dr. Halstead wanted her to have an x-ray before he saw her today because it was a busy day with a lot of patients. So she took me down and we waited for about fifteen minutes before they took me in. They took all of the x-rays that they needed and then she took me back upstairs.

When we got there she put me in a room and I got up on the bed to sit. I had left my boot off after the x-rays were done because I knew that Doc would want to look at it. It was taking a while so I took my small sketchpad out of my purse and sat and sketched a picture. I wasn’t thinking about what I was sketching or what I wanted to sketch. I was just doing it free-handed, and whatever came to my mind.

When Doc finally knocked on the door I looked up at him and said “Hi Dr. Halstead, how are you today?” “I’m good River, how are you?” I’m doing good, ready to get this boot off though.” “I bet you are. Let me look at the X-rays real fast and see what they show. Then we’ll see about getting you out of that boot.” As he was looking at the x-rays I looked down at the picture that I was drawing and it was of a nursery scene. It was weird that I drew that, I don’t know why I would. I’m not having kids for a long time. Especially now, after what those dickheads did.

I closed the sketchbook and put it in my purse. Then I sat down and waited for Doc to finish looking at my X-rays. I kept my fingers crossed hoping that I wouldn’t have to wear this boot for much longer because it sucked balls. I was so sick of this big assed bulky thing. After looking through them for about five minutes Doc sat down on the stool in front of me and started to ask me questions.

As he started with the questions he picked up my foot and started to feel around on it and move it around. “Ok, River do you have any pain anymore? Is it sore or does it hurt to walk on it at all?” “Nope, it’s been fine, I’ve even been able to put pressure on it while I shower. It’s not hurt or bothered me for a while now.” “Ok, It seems like it’s fine and the x-rays all look good. I know that you have a show tomorrow and that will be a lot of standing for a long time. Wear it tomorrow and then after that you should be good. If you start to have problems with it come and see me again. But overall, you should be fine.”

“Ok, I’m going to be out of town for a few weeks. I’m leaving the day after my show to go to Russia. What should I do if it is bothering me while I’m over there?” I asked him. “I will

have the girls make a copy of your records to take with you. That way if something happens then you will have the papers to show what happened. Then they will be able to recheck it and make sure that it's ok. Take your boot with you if you plan to do a lot of walking and use it if you think that you need it. I can always do a video call with you, but I can't do an x-ray that way. Do you have any other questions?" he asked me.

"No that was it," I said. "Ok, well have a good trip and I will see you tomorrow night. The misses and I will be at your show, she was so excited when she got your invite." "I look forward to seeing you both tomorrow." After he said goodbye and left the room, I put my boot back on and grabbed my purse. After I made sure that I had everything I headed out to the checkout desk.

"Hey River, just give me a couple of minutes to get your file printed out for you," she said. "Ok, thank you." As I waited for my file I looked down at my phone and saw a text from Enzo. So I checked it to see if he was here yet.

Zozo- Hey I'm here and so isn't Dante and Nicco. They are waiting out in the car and I'm in the waiting room. I'll be waiting here for you when you are done.

Me- Ok, I'm almost done now, just waiting for my file to be printed out so that I have a copy to take with me. I'll be out in a few minutes."

Zozo- Ok.

After texting with Zozo, I put my phone away and then waited for my file. When it was finally printed out she stapled it and then put it in a folder for me. "Here you go River. If you need anything else just call. Here is a business card and it has Dr. Halstead's personal number on it. He said to tell you that if you need anything while you're out of town to call. He'll try to help you the best that he can." "Ok, thank you," I said. "Your welcome hun, have a good day and a great trip."

I headed out to the waiting room and looked around. I saw Zozo sitting close to the door so I headed to him. He was looking down at his phone and when he heard me he looked up. He stood up and waited for me and when I got close to him he wrapped his arm around me and we headed out the door. Once we were in the hallway he said "So what's the verdict, do you get to take the boot off?

I explained to him what the doctor said as we waited for the elevator. We it came we rode down to the first floor and then headed out the door. He kept his arm around me the whole time and when we stepped outside Nicco and Dante were standing there. "Hey shorty, where all do you need to go?" Dante asked me. "Just to the grocery store, I need to get snacks to pack. I got to have my snacks for the plane ride and I want to get those cans of cold coffee. It shouldn't take me long to get the stuff that I need. Then I plan to stop on the way home and get something to eat" I told them.

“Ok, well we are all going to take you to get what you need and then we’ll stop and get food and then take you home. After that, we have to get back to the office. The guards are all keeping an eye out all around the property. You’ll be safe at the house while we’re at work” Nicco said. “Ok, well who is riding with me, then?” I asked them. “I’ll ride with you and Dante and Enzo can follow us,” Nicco said.

As we were walking up to my car I looked at where the SUV was parked earlier and it was still there. I didn’t see the driver in it or around it though. So I said, “That guy’s car is still here but I don’t see him anywhere.” “Yeah, we know we saw him sitting on the bench across from the elevators before you came down. We stepped inside and when he saw us, he got up and went into the bathroom. He’s trying to follow us discreetly but once he gets to his car he won’t be able to. There is another team waiting nearby to pick him up and deliver him to a secure location. Then we’ll be able to figure out why he has been following you around today” Dante said.

“Ok.” When we got to our cars we all loaded up and then I pulled out and waited for the others to pull out behind me. Once they were behind me I took off for the grocery store. We didn’t have far to go and after we pulled in and parked Nicco looked at me and said “I honestly don’t know how you manage to drive with your left foot. That would drive me nuts not to mention be hard as hell to do.”

“It’s not hard to do and I’ve gotten used to it now. But I have to say that I will be glad when I can go back to using my right foot again. Thankfully after tomorrow, I will be free from the boot” I said and then explained what Doc said. We got out of the car after we finished talking about it. The other two joined us and we headed into the store. When we got in there I grabbed a buggy and then headed around the store.

The store that we came to had a little bit of everything. So I picked up a few odds and ends that I may need while I’m gone as I made my way to the snacks. When I got to the candy aisle I grabbed bags of mixed mini chocolate bars, chocolate-covered raisins, nonpareils, hard butterscotch candy, jolly ranchers suckers and hard candy, suckers and Dove chocolates. Then I headed to the snacks and chip aisle and grabbed a box of Pringles (the little containers), a box of the little bags of Cheez-Its, Slim Jims, and jerky. I also got a box of little bags of different kinds of chips rice krispies treats variety pack, and a few packs of different kinds of cookies.

I bought a lot of snacks but if my brothers are anything like these three that I’m with today, then they’ll be in my snacks. So I made sure that I had plenty so that I’d have enough for them as well. Next, we headed to the aisle where the cold coffee was kept. I grabbed some mocha, chocolate, and caramel and put them in my buggy. When I had all of that I went and grabbed a cheap pack of throw-away containers and some fruits and vegetables. I needed something that was healthy to take with me.

Once I had that stuff I told the guys that I thought I had everything and we headed up to check out. After everything was wrung up, Nicco tapped his card before I had the chance to. “You don’t have to pay for my stuff I can pay for it,” I told him. “I know that, but I

want to do this for you, so I am” he replied back to me. I just leaned in and hugged him as a thanks.

The guys put the bags into the buggy and when we had everything and it was paid for we headed to the car. We were laughing and joking around as we walked to our cars. Suddenly I felt like I was being watched and as I looked around I saw Aries and Zeus standing beside their truck. I just turned away from them and continued to my car. Nicco told me to get in and they loaded all of my stuff into the back of the SUV.

After everything was loaded they put the buggy up and then we headed for a fast food place. We pulled in and Dante followed me in to get food. I went through the drive-thru and grabbed Nicco and my food. We ordered double bacon cheeseburgers, chicken tenders, fries, and Dr. Peppers. I couldn't wait to get home and eat, I was starving. After we paid and got our food I pulled up and waited for the guys to get their stuff. After they had it we headed for home.

When we made it to the house I pulled into the garage and Dante backed the SUV close to the garage door so that they could carry my stuff in. I got out and headed into the house with Nicco and I's food and drinks. I sat the food on the counter and when they brought my stuff in I went through it. I put my fruit and vegetables in the fridge and set the containers on the counter to cut it all up later. Then they took my other stuff up to my room for me.

When they came back downstairs we sat down and ate our food together before they had to leave. When we were done they helped me clean up and then headed out. I had gotten extra food for dinner tonight so I put it into the fridge and then got the fruit and veggies out. I got them all cut up, put them into their container, and marked what they were on top of them. Now I had all of the snacks and food that I should need to get through the plane ride. Now I just have to finish packing and get ready for my show tomorrow. I couldn't wait for my show but at the same time, I was nervous as hell. I really hope that it goes ok tomorrow. Keep your fingers crossed and wish me luck, please.

Chapter 68 – Their Beautiful Strong Queen

Today is the day of my show and to say that I am nervous would be an understatement. I've not been able to sit still all day. Nonna, Aunt Bella, and I are all going to get our hair, makeup, and mani-pedis done for tonight in a little bit. I've always had spa days and mani-pedi days with Nonna so I was looking forward to this to help me relax.

I was in a button-up shirt and a pair of shorts with flip-flops. I wanted something to wear that I could get off easily so that I didn't mess up my hair. I decided that for today I would wear flip-flops and wear the boot tonight since I would be on my feet all night. After I was ready I grabbed my purse, phone, and keys and headed downstairs. It felt weird to be leaving the house without makeup on. I've always covered my face up with it so that no

one would see my scar. Now I have two scars on my face. I left my hair down to try to cover it up some.

Nonna and Aunt Bella were downstairs when I got down there so we loaded up and headed to the salon. It was semi-formal wear for tonight so I was going to have my hair left down with curls in it and light makeup. I was going to have the girls paint my finger and toenails red. I had an off-the-shoulder rhinestone trim popover jumpsuit that's black and a pair of rhinestone butterfly décor slid red sandals.

The outfit was cute and comfortable and I would be able to move about freely all night in it. I wish that I could wear both sandals but I didn't want to push my luck. After getting our hair and makeup done we headed next door to get our fingers and toes done. The girls at the salon had a rhinestone butterfly clip so they curled my hair and then used it to pull some of it back. It looked really good and hung in waves down to my butt, even with getting it trimmed some.

At the nail salon, I picked out a blood-red nail polish for my toes and I saw that they had fake nails that were a pretty color. They were red but with a chrome, metallic, mirror effect and really pretty. I decided to get the small ones put on. I don't usually wear fake nails but when I do I can only wear the small ones. I honestly don't know how anyone wears those really long ones. Like seriously they are so long how would you wipe your ass without hurting your hoo-ha with them. I'll stick to the small ones thank you very much.

While one girl was working on my fingers another was working on my toes. They let my feet soak and then started on them. I told the girl what I needed and what it was for. So by the time, my nails were done I also had butterfly's in black on my big toenails and on my ring fingernails. I loved the way that they turned out.

After Nonna paid we left there and stopped to get food on the way home. I wasn't sure if I could eat or not but I was going to try. I got a twenty-piece chicken tender with fries and an iced mocha caramel coffee. Nonna grabbed food for everyone else as well, because we were all leaving the house to go to the show.

When we got home I grabbed my food and went up to my room. I just needed some quiet time before it was time to go to the show. I sat down on my bed and pulled my phone out of my pocket. I looked back through the pictures of the guys and me and wished things were still good between us. I could use them right now, but I will manage on my own like I always do. I turned my phone off and tossed it aside. I ate my food and then sat and got myself calmed down.

I waited until we had about half an hour until time to leave to get dressed. I put on a strapless bra because I couldn't wear one with straps with the jumpsuit. I also put on a thong and even though no one would see either of them they were red so that they would match. I then put my outfit on and then my left sandal and my boot. It felt amazing to not have to wear that damn thing today. I hated that I had to wear it tonight, but I'd rather be safe than sorry.

When I was ready I grabbed a rhinestone crossbody handbag with a chain. It was really cute and I could have my stuff and not have to worry about something happening to my bag all night. I put my phone into my case which was red and black with butterflies on it. It also had a credit card holder on the back of it. So I put my license, credit card, and a few dollars in cash in the holder and stuck it in the bag. I also put lipstick and my kitty knuckles in it.

When I was ready I headed downstairs to wait for everyone. They guys were all ready and just waiting on us girls. I could hear them in the kitchen so I headed that way. When I walked in the boys wolf whistled at me. “Looking good River, you look beautiful. And your tattoo looks fantastic” Dante said. “Thanks you guys all look pretty dapper yourselves,” I said.

The guys were all wearing black button-up long-sleeve shirts with the top two buttons undone and a pair of black slacks with dress shoes. They all had their sleeves rolled up to their forearms. When Aunt Bella and Nonna came in they both looked beautiful. Aunt Bella had a peach-colored lace open-shoulder spaghetti-strapped dress. Nonna had on an empire waist maxi dress and it was a light blue. They both looked beautiful.

Once everyone was ready we headed out to the limo and loaded up. Nonno has always had a big limo for special occasions and he had it pulled out and cleaned up for today. Thankfully it was big enough for all of us to fit in it. It had a seat that faced the front but then it had a long seat on each side that ran the length of the car and faced each other.

I was nervous and it was showing with the way that my leg was bouncing. Nicco wrapped his arm around me and said “Hey don’t worry everything’s going to be ok. Everyone will love your pictures and you’ll do great. And we will all be with you all night, I won’t leave your side if you don’t want me to.” “Thanks, Nicco, and I’ll probably take you up on that tonight,” I said with a laugh.

When we started to get close to the gallery we started to slow down and I could see a long line of vehicles waiting to drop people off. “Wow, I didn’t think that there would be so many people. Miss Marston said that she had a list of people that she always invites to the opening of shows. But they don’t always show up, especially if it’s a new up-and-coming artist. But this, this is a lot of people, it’s like everyone showed up. This is one hell of a turn out” I said in amazement.

I couldn’t believe that there were so many people. If this is just the line to get in, then how many are already inside? “I am so proud of you River. I don’t know if you know this or not but Miss Marston called me a few days ago. She asked if she could use the photo of us that you did. She wants it as the main piece and will have on it that it’s not for sale. But that you do portrait paintings and to see her about it. She also said that she was putting just a couple of sneak peek pictures on the website. Not the whole picture but like a close-up of a corner or right in the middle. She wanted people to come because she loves your pictures. I told her though that you wouldn’t be able to start on any portraits right now. And I explained why” Nonna said.

“That’s awesome Nonna, and we talked about portraits when she came to see the other pictures and I showed her the one that I did of you guys. I told her that I couldn’t always do them but I’d do a few when I could. With as many people that are here, I can’t wait now. I’m still really nervous but I can’t wait.”

We kept creeping up in the line until we were in front of the gallery. I could see Miss Marston standing at the door to the gallery greeting people. We talked about me being here to great people as well but she wanted to wait and introduce me once everyone was here. A guy was standing there to open the doors for people to get out. He opened up our door and Nonno got out followed by Nonna, Aunt Bell, and then Uncle Zain. Then Dante, Enzo, and Nicco got out. I moved over by the door and Nicco reached his hand in to help me out of the car.

I grabbed his hand, took a deep breath, let it out, and then got out of the car. I put my hand on his elbow and we followed behind Nonno, Nonna, Uncle Zain, and Aunt Bella with Dante and Enzo behind us. The paparazzi was there and was yelling out questions to us but we ignored them and kept walking to the door.

When we stepped inside, we moved over off to the side out of the way. Miss Marston walked over to greet us. I was looking around in awe when she stepped up to me. “Well, what do you think? It’s a packed house tonight, I didn’t think that so many people would show up. This is a great turnout and you’ll make a lot of money tonight, I bet. I also have a signup sheet under the portrait of your grandparents for anyone wanting one. I actually turned it into an action of sorts. The top three highest bids will get a portrait of any picture (a decent one of course) that they want. Like a family member or a friend. I hope that you don’t mind that I talked to your Nonna about it. I know we had talked about it when I came to look at the pictures” she said.

“No, no it’s fine I don’t mind at all. I actually really like doing the portraits. And this is, wow, I don’t even know what to say. I can’t believe so many people came to see the pictures that I painted, it’s amazing” I said as I was still looking around. “I will introduce you at eight o’clock once everyone is here. For now, walk around and mingle. We have a bar and I’ve also had it stocked with sodas as well. And there is a buffet too. Have fun and I’ll see you in a little bit” she said and then walked off to greet someone coming in the door.

I tucked my hand back into Nicco’s arm and we all started walking around the gallery. I was looking around to see if I had seen my brothers, but I hadn’t seen them yet. I did see my art teacher and Doc, and I also saw Legal, Sunny, and Ripper. I smiled at them as we made our way to the bar. As we walked I could hear everyone talking about how wonderful and beautiful the paintings all were. It made my night already to see how many people loved my work. Let’s hope that the rest of the night goes as well. But for some reason, I have a feeling that it won’t, let’s hope that I’m wrong.

Chapter 69 – Their Beautiful Strong Queen

I walked around the room with my family and watched as they and everyone else oohed and awed over my paintings. Seeing how many people loved them and talked about buying them felt so amazing. At one point Miss Marston walked over and asked to talk to me alone for a minute. So we walked back to her office so that we could talk in private.

“River I have to ask, what would you think about selling prints of your pictures? We have so many people wanting your paintings that someone even said that they would buy a copy of it. I was thinking, we could put sign-up sheets under each one and the one with the highest bidding would get the painting and the top, I don’t know, five maybe could buy a print of it. We have the stuff here so we can do the prints, no problem. I’ve already got them all scanned into the computer and It wouldn’t take long at all to get them printed out. But it’s up to you” she said.

I thought about it for a minute and I think that it’s a good idea. Not only do more people get a copy of it but I also make more money from it. More money means more paint supplies that I can buy. So I finally said “Ok, yeah let’s do it. I don’t mind and it’s more money as well. And that means that I can buy more supplies to paint more pictures.”

After our talk, she printed off papers to place under the pictures for people to bid on each one. Then she went to find the guy who prints the copies of the pictures to get him started on it. I headed back to my family and on the way to them, I saw two familiar faces. I didn’t know why either of them were here and I didn’t care. But I had to get to my family and let them know. If they were here then it wasn’t a good thing, especially if he knows who I am.

I looked around and found Nicco and headed straight for him in a hurry. On the way I saw that Legal was a lot closer to me so I beelined straight for him. When I got close to him I saw Ripper and Sunny with him. Sunny was standing between them both but was closer to Ripper and they were talking to someone else, that I couldn’t see. So I slipped in between them and wrapped my arm around Sunny.

She looked at me startled at first and then she said “It’s the girl of the hour, we’re all so proud of you.” She gave me a big hug and squeezed me tight in a hug. “Thank you, Sunny, and I apologize for interrupting but I wanted to see if I could borrow one of your guys. I need to get back to Nonno and Nonna but I don’t want to walk over there by myself” I said.

Instantly Ripper and Legal were on full alert and looking around. “What’s wrong, did something happen?” Ripper asked me. “I had to go talk to Miss Marston about some stuff for the show tonight. And when I came out to head back to my family I saw two people that I know. I know that one shouldn’t be here and I don’t know how he is. But the other I’m not sure about, he wasn’t on my list so he had to be on hers. The one guy is the one that has been following me around. And the other is someone that I remember from my time at the house of hell.”

“Ok, we’ll get you back to Sal and Rosa and then see about getting them out of here. You point out who the other guy is and we’ll deal with him” Legal said. I nodded and we made our way towards where my family was at. They were talking to my brothers who were all finally here. Legal had his arm wrapped around me on one side and Sunny had hers around me on the other. On her other side, Ripper had his arm on her, they were protecting us as we walked.

I tapped Legal’s back as we walked and when he looked down at me I discretely nodded towards a guy that kept looking at me. He looked back up and then barely nodded to let me know that he had seen him. When we got to my family Legal stepped aside with Ripper and filled him in. Ripper nodded and then said “I’ll be right back I’m going to make it look like I’m going to the bathroom but I’m really going to get rid of a problem. I have prospects in the back that will take him to the shed.” Then he walked away.

I hugged all of my brothers and Leandro leaned in and asked me “What was that about?” “A guy from my past is here. I saw him when I came out of Miss Marston’s office after talking to her. I started this way but then I also saw the creep from the coffee shop as well. I was trying to hurry this way but when I saw Legal, Sunny, and Ripper I headed to them because they were closer. I didn’t want to try to walk over here alone. That guy always looked at me wired when I was little and still in the house of hell. I don’t trust him at all.”

“So he’s some of Loretta’s people then. Ripper’s getting him out of here and then I’ll go help deal with him. He won’t be back around you again” Nonno said. As we were talking I saw Ripper step up to the guy and then they were both leaving. I could breathe a little bit better now. I looked around for the other guy and saw him looking around. When he saw me and who I was standing with it didn’t take him long to leave.

We were standing around talking and my brothers were congratulating me on the show and how good my pictures were doing. We heard a throat clear and then Miss Marston said “Can I have your attention, Please? Excuse me, can I have your attention, thank you. Good evening and welcome to tonight’s art showing. All of tonight’s pieces are from one artist. She is from here and has an amazing talent. Before I introduce her I have an announcement. After talking to the artist about it, we made a decision about the paintings. I have had so many people express interest in every one of them and some have even said that they would love to even have a copy of them. So I have people going around now placing sheets and pens up either beside or underneath each painting. If you are interested in one of these please place a bid on it. The highest bid at the end of the night gets the original and the next top five bids will be able to buy the copies. The copies will be available to pick up in a week. but the originals won’t be able to be picked up until the show is over. I apologize if anyone isn’t in agreement with the way that we’re doing it now. But with so many wanting them, this was my only solution. Any questions?”

When no one said anything she said “Ok, moving on then. Many of you probably know our artist. She is not only talented with her art but she’s talented in the kitchen as well. She is twenty years old and will be going into her junior year in college this year. She was raised by her grandparents Salvador and Rosa Russo. She has two uncles, an aunt, and two

cousins from that side of her family. She was pseudo-adopted by Chris and Ren Lombardi. To them, she is their daughter, and they love her more than anything. She also has grandparents, and an uncle on that side as well. Not only that but she just found seven big brothers that she didn't know about until recently. She is loved by everyone who knows her. And if you know her really well then you will know that most of the time she had a glass of orange cream sickle slushy in her hand. Please give it up for Miss River Russo."

By the time she got done talking, I was a nervous mess. But I took a deep breath and walked to the front of the room where she was. After giving Miss Marston a hug I stepped up to the mic. I took a deep breath and said "Thank you Miss Marston and thank you so much everyone for this wonderful turnout tonight. I have to admit that when we pulled in tonight I wasn't expecting that there would be so many people here. It truly means the world to me that so many of you showed up tonight. Most of you probably know my story and for those of you who don't. I was adopted by my Nonna and Nonno when I was five because of the abuse that I went through by my biological family. When Nonna took me out of that house of horrors I never went back. My therapist suggested that I find a way to help me cope with everything that I had been through. So I started to draw and with my Nonno's help eventually paint. Over the years I've only gotten better with both. And my family, especially my Pops, Chris can attest to it. Over the years I developed two loves, one for painting and drawing and the other for cooking. Chances are, if you've ever been to Nonna's Diner then you've eaten the food that I make. I've had a project that I have wanted to start for a while now. And with tonight's proceeds that I make, I'm going to put half of them into a separate bank account that I set up. I'm going to use those to buy a piece of property and start up a safe haven house for victims of abuse. Women, men, kids, hell even animals, If someone is abused I want them to have a safe place to go. Somewhere that they can get a hot meal and a good night's sleep without being afraid. No one, especially kids, should have to be terrified to go to sleep at night. And they shouldn't be used to sleeping in the cold because they're locked in a basement or in a trunk. So thank you all in advance to anyone who buys a painting or a copy of one. And know that your money will be going to a good cause. What I don't put towards it will be used to paint more painting for my next show. Thank you all for being here and have a good evening."

This project is something that I have wanted to do for a while now and have been saving up for. I had started a checking account a few months back and started putting money into it for the safe haven house. If I can save even one person then that's one person that doesn't have to suffer from the abuse of another.

When I walked back to my family everyone else was there and they all hugged me and told me how proud they were of me. Luciano and Angela were there and as he hugged me he said "Let me know when you get back from your trip and I'll write you a check. I want to help you make this dream a reality. We'll help everyone that we can so that no one has to go through what you did. We're in your corner a thousand percent." "Thank you, that means a lot, and thank you for coming to my show." "You're welcome, there's nowhere else that I'd rather be."

The rest of the night went by amazingly. Every one of my pictures sold and the highest bids on them were crazy high. I've never seen such big numbers before and the fact that

they are bidding that on my paintings had me in awe. When we finally left for the night Miss Marston was telling me that the numbers were so high that they may do ten copies maybe twenty of each picture. That she had to figure it all out and then let me know.

My first show went off without a hitch. I thought that we may have drama there for a minute when I saw the creepy guy of my past. But thankfully Ripper got him out of there fast. And I'm glad he did, after all, who would want the pedophile that was going to buy you as a kid, a baby practically anywhere around him? I really hope that they chop his dick off and feed it to him. I wanted to but they won't let me, apparently, they've been looking for him. And they need answers from him about some shit and need him alive, pity. Maybe when they're done with him I'll get my turn.

When we got home I changed out of my clothes once into my room and put my sleep shorts and tank top on. I was exhausted and needed to sleep. When my head hit the pillow I was out like a light. Good night people, sweet dreams, and I'll see you in the morning. Just not too early because if you wake me up like Nicco did, we're going to have problems. And not good ones, so we'll see you at about noon, later.

Chapter 70 – Their Beautiful Strong Queen

The next day I woke up at ten, got a shower, and put comfy clothes on. My brothers said that we wouldn't leave until six tonight so I had time to get stuff done. After my shower, I dressed in yoga pants, and a tank top and had a hoodie laying out to put on before I left. I went down to the kitchen and thankfully Nonna was up and had breakfast made already.

No one was in the kitchen, so I fixed myself a plate of scrambled eggs, biscuits, gravy, pancakes, bacon, and sausage. I sat my plate on the table and went and made myself a cup of coffee with cinnamon toast creamer. I walked back to the table sipping on the nectar of life and sat down. I had my phone in my pocket so I took it out to scroll through social media while I ate. There were quite a few articles about the show last night and how well it did for a new artist.

One journalist even said that they could see me being a big-shot artist because my pieces were all amazing. A few others even praised how well my paintings were and told people to be on the lookout for me because I was well on the way to making a name for myself. They even talked about Rivers Safe Haven House as they had dubbed it. They talked about my story and how I was going to use half of my profit from the sale of the pictures to start a safe haven house for people of abuse. They were all praising me and talking about last night and I just couldn't believe it.

There were so many posts that I had been tagged in about the show that I lost count of them all. What surprised me the most was the number of people asking how they could donate to help me make the safe house a reality. I kept reading through the posts and watching the videos as I ate. The local news had even covered the show and they showed

us walking into the gallery as well as my speech. I finally turned my phone off and set it aside and finished eating.

When I was done I put my dishes in the dishwasher and and grabbed a cup. I reached up into the cupboard and grabbed my favorite orange camo cup. I really missed my other cup, but seeing as how I'm not a queen to my, no sorry, the guys. I guess It's not my cup now. I took my cup and headed downstairs and filled it up with my slushy and then went back to my room.

I double-checked the bags that were packed and made sure that I had everything in them. And then I went through my shoes and packed them and my boot up into my other bag. Since I didn't have to wear the boot now I made sure that all of my shoes were pairs. I got them all packed up and sat my bag by the door. I even double-checked the big duffle bag that had the snacks in it. I made sure that everything, including my throw blanket and pillow, was in it. I also stuck a big pair of fluffy socks into it. I was going to make sure that I was comfortable on this long assed flight.

I had a few different power packs and I made sure that they were all charged up and packed. I downloaded a few movies onto my tablet to watch on the flight as well as downloaded new books from my favorite authors. On the Dreame app, I had a few different ones that I liked and downloaded. Like Tatienne Richard, TheNiche29, JM Snap, and a few others. On my Kindle app, I downloaded books by Bink Cummings, Keri Arthur, LeAnn Ashers, Pepper North, and a few others.

I was prepared for the long trip and now I had everything packed and ready to go. I sat my bags all outside of my door and then made sure that I had everything that I would need in my purse. I double-checked that my passport and license were both in my wallet. I even put my phone charger in it. When I knew that I had everything packed into my purse I sat it on the end of my bed on my hoodie. I even had my fuzzy boots sitting there to put on.

When I was finally done double-checking everything and packing up what I would need it was three o'clock. I had two hours before I would have to leave so I started taking my bags over to the elevator. I put my laptop bag on my shoulder and my duffle on top of one of the wheelie bags and wheeled them to the elevator. When I got downstairs, Nonna was in the kitchen with Nonno.

Nonno got up and came to help me. "Here let me help you with those. Are we taking you to the airport or are your brothers coming to get you?" he asked me. "They're coming to get me, Leo told me last night that they would be here at five. Our flight leaves at six" I said. "Do you have everything that you need to take with you?" Nonna asked me. "Yep, other than the containers of fruits, veggies, and homemade dip that's in the fridge. I figured that I'd get it out before we left. All I have left upstairs is my hoodie, shoes, and purse."

Nonno and I sat my bags by the door and then I went back upstairs and made sure that everything was turned off in my room and bathroom. I slipped my boots on and grabbed my purse and hoody. Before I went out the door I grabbed the pain pills that the doctor prescribed me as well as my big bottle of Motrin. I've not been taking them for pain but I grabbed them just in case I needed them. I didn't want to be over there and in pain and not have them. Better safe than sorry.

When I was done I grabbed my cup and left my room. I shut my door behind me and locked it. Nonna had a key for it should she need to get in there. I went back down to the theater room and refilled my cup. Then headed to the kitchen to spend my last couple of hours at home with Nonna and Nonno.

Nonna ordered food for us and when it got there we had lunch together. The rest of the family came in before it was time for me to leave. When it was almost five Nicco took my cup down to fill it back up again and then brought it back to me. Right at five a SUV pulled in with two of my brothers in it. "Hey, where are the other boys at?" I asked them.

"They headed to the airport so that they could start getting our bags loaded onto the jet. We came to get you and then we'll be right behind them" Leo said. They grabbed my bags and Nonna got my stuff from the fridge and put it in a grocery bag. After everything was loaded up I hugged everyone goodbye and then grabbed my phone, purse, and hoody. I headed out to the SUV with the boys and was ready to leave.

We started towards the airport and Leandro said "You did an amazing job on your show last night. We were all impressed with your work. I think that we all bided on a few paintings a piece. They really were amazing. Are you looking forward to your first trip back to the motherland? You've never been to Russia before right?"

"Thank you, I couldn't believe the turnout last night. I honestly didn't think that there would be so many people showing up. And you didn't have to bid on the paintings I can paint each of you a picture. And Yeah, I'm pretty excited about it, I need away from here for a little bit and I'm excited to see where I'm from."

"You'll love it, there's a lot of beautiful places to see and where we live there is lots of stuff for you to paint pictures of. We live in Moscow and the Red Square is beautiful. But there are other places that we can take you and different sights to go see. You'll have fun, we promise. And our dad has promised to stay back and give you space until you're ready to speak to him. He fills like a pile of shit for what he did. He never should've taken that abusive whores word for anything. We all told him we got a bad vibe from her that she just seemed off. But he wouldn't listen to us. The only thing that he did listen to us about was giving her money. After she said that you supposedly died she wanted money for the years that she raised you. But we wouldn't let him give her shit. We didn't trust what she said about you, that's why we didn't know about him having your family. And why Leo started school over here, to find out about you."

I thought about what he said and then said “I just need a little bit more time. Maybe before I leave we can talk but It will be on my terms.” “Agreed,” Leandro said. We pulled into the airport and the others were already there and getting our stuff loaded up. When we pulled in and got out I explained what bags went where so that the bags with snacks were with us. The last thing that I needed was for them to be put below.

I grabbed my cup, purse, hoody, and laptop bag and the boys grabbed the others. They had the duffle bag and the bag with fruits and veggies in it taken on board and the rest put under the plane. The guards that were following us would take the SUVs back to their house. We also had a few guards traveling with us.

It didn’t take long once we were on board for the plane to take off and us get headed off to Russia. I couldn’t wait to see where my brothers were from and learn about my heritage. But I most definitely wasn’t looking forward to this long assed flight. You wouldn’t either right? Who would want to be stuck on a plane for almost fourteen hours? Thankfully I’ll get to spend it getting to know my brothers better. See you when I land in Russia.

Aries POV

I felt miserable and have for the past few weeks. Everything was going great for us. We had found the love of our lives and couldn’t wait to be with her forever. We went and rescued our other men and were finally back at home and ready to see how things between the four of us would be. The first night back was amazing but it would’ve been even better if Dom had joined us. He really wanted to but had shit on his mind.

At the time he didn’t tell us what was going on and we didn’t find out until the next morning when the envelope was left on the front gate addressed to us. He apparently got a text message and an email while he was overseas the same as ours. So even though he wanted nothing more than to join us he didn’t want it to hurt even more when we had to leave her for a little bit.

I wanted to be at her opening for her art more than anything, we all did. But since we couldn’t go we had our parents there in our place. I sat in my office and watched the live feeds of the show and when she showed up. She was so gorgeous. I could tell that her tattoo was finally done and I wanted to see how it looked. Dad snuck around and sent me pictures of her as well.

Of course, they had to be sent to a burner phone in his name. My regular phone was being monitored. Zane could easily override it but we were trying to set a trap to get two vipers and a snake out of our way. I was hoping that at the end of this, we would all be ok and be back together. As things stand right now Dom and Marcello don’t come around or speak to us. Unless it’s on the burner phone. And Zeus spends most of his time in his office on the computer.

If it wasn’t for his mom and sisters, I’m not sure that he’d even eat, sleep or shower. Because he won’t speak to me and if I try to get him to leave the office to go home he

blows up on me. I'm about to spank his ass for the way that he's acting. He's not the only one who loves her, we all do. But for some reason this is eating at him badly. ,

The next morning I watched the videos of the art show and read all of the articles. Dad told me about the safe haven house that she wants to start. I'm going to plan a ride to try to help raise money for it so that we can help her get it started. I've already started looking up safe places for it to be. I'm reading through another article when a text pops up on my regular phone. It's got a picture of River from last night on it with what looks like a gunshot on her forehead.

Viper Bitch- Aww looks like the little bitches show went well for her last night. Too bad that it'll be her last one. As soon as we see her alone we're taking her out and then you and Zeus will be mine. And we can finally be a family along with our son. Don't worry Dom and Marcello will be taken care of. They'll be a family with Dom's true wife and baby. Just like they were supposed to years ago. But first, we have to take the trash out. That way she doesn't come between us anymore. Better say goodbye while you still can. She'll never see it coming.

"Fuck" I yelled out into my office. This bitch is playing a dangerous game and when I find her and those that she's working with I will end her. I won't let her harm River. It's the whole reason that we left her, or pretended to. We were trying to protect her and keep her from getting hurt again. Especially with some of the shit she's threatening to have done to her. And this kid she keeps saying is mine, yeah it's not. Rivers is the first woman that I've been with in years and we haven't even gone all the way yet. This bitch is claiming she's pregnant and it's mine. Nope not possible at all.

At the same time that I picked up my burner to call Dad, he walked through the door with Sal and Zeus came in from his office. I looked up at them and said "River needs to go into hiding, put her in a safe house. One that no one knows about and preferably far away from here." "Why, what's going on?" he asked me, so I explained everything from the beginning. Why we left her and why we did what we did. I didn't want her to hate us and was only trying to protect her and we explained that to Dad and Sal.

When I was done telling him everything he looked at me and said "Don't worry, no one's going to be getting to her anytime soon. She left the country, her flight took off from the airport at around six pm, and it's an almost fourteen-hour flight." "Where the fuck is she going and who is she with?" Zeus demanded the answer from Sal. "Don't worry, she's with her brothers and is heading to Russia. They know that there has been a guy after her and they will protect her with their life. While she's our Principessa she is also there Printsessa and they will protect her. She is the only daughter ever born in the Smirnov family from my understanding. I will call Rodion and let him know to keep an extra eye out just in case. Now that I know that you're just trying to protect my daughter I don't want to kill you all anymore. But if she forgives you and you ever hurt her look out. Because it won't be me coming after you, It'll be here. In all honestly I'm amazed that she didn't come after you this time. But her being hurt prevented her from being able to."

I could agree with that and In all honesty I've seen the way that she hits and I'll pass on that one. I like my face right where it is thanks. I do hope that she forgives us and we can be together again. I miss her and love her so much. We all do, and we even picked out a ring that we want to get her so that we can marry her. I just hope that it turns out ok and we get our girl back. Please let her forgive us.