

Chapter 036|Chess pieces

"What do you mean by that Titiana?"

I never knew I could be so excited to hear someone else's voice because at that minute, I was completely speechless.

Troy walked towards me, his eyes hardened on Titiana who though didn't show an ounce of remorse seemed confused, like she didn't know what had possessed her to say something like that.

My phone rang at the same time. All pair of eyes were on me even as Troy held my hand, nodding at me to take the call.

It was Mom. That was the first sign that something

was terribly wrong. She never ever called during school hours, she was always too busy, on one of her numerous shifts.

"Hey Mom." My voice sounded croaked even to my ears.

She was quiet for a while and I was just about bringing the phone from my ear, believing she had hanged up even as I could hear chatters behind me. Everyone had resumed whatever they were doing and must be disappointed that there wasn't going to be a catfight, screaming, dragging each other hair, and cussing. Teenagers and the drive they can't help for dramatics.

"Your brother." She has been crying.

My hands were shaking even as I held on to my phone tightly with a vice like grip, waiting,

apprehensively, nauseated, frightened.

"He is at the hospital."

I nodded more than thrice, lowered myself on the floor while Troy slipped his palms into mine, taking the phone from my hand. I barely registered him bringing out a piece of paper from his backpack and writing down the address.

Someone was yelling behind me and asking Titiana how she knew about Rob, I guess it was Troy. Everyone was staring now but I cared less, I just moped at the tile which was suddenly so fascinating, so many years in Evans high school and I was just discovering the beautiful patterned intricate workmanship on the expensive floor of the hallways.

Troy was cajoling me to stand up and I guess I did because my feet just followed his even as he

informed our homeroom teacher that we would be leaving the school premises and even till we entered his SUV, all I did was hug myself and stare into space.

Rob was going to leave me too.

Just like Dad had left us.

Why does nobody want to stay with me?

Was I that unlovable, unmemorable and easy to forget.

Perhaps I was just destined to be lonely because at this point even though I decide to turn to an old cat lady, I'd one day wake up to all of them dead.

This was my curse and it was getting worst because nothing good was even happening to me! and as I

watched the landscape in front of me change from bustling and perfect to uncomfortably serene, I realized that I'll never hear Ariana Grande's melodious "God is a woman" playing from Troy's amazing car sound system without associating it with the distant siren of the ambulance that blared nonstop as I alighted from the car, and the smell of death that engulfed me as I stepped into the linoleum carpeted hospital that had this nauseating air of disinfectants and drugs. Troy was talking to the nurse while his hand were still interlinked with my fidgeting one while I scan the waiting room looking for my mother and when I saw that she was leaning against Law sobbing, I discovered that my sense of smell which was suddenly heightened, trying not to throw up which was becoming unbearably difficult, and my attempt at not going through the different possibilities that ran through my mind amidst the choking fear became the least of my problem because the cover over the stirring whistling kettle of my sanity was

about blowing off.

I tugged my hand off Troy's agitated the minute he sighted me, patted mom's shoulder and made to walk away.

Mom's eyes widened and I knew she could tell at that moment, I didn't feel pain, I wasn't sad either, this wasn't the time for all my insecurities to come glaring at my face as I again wondered why I wasn't good enough. I was beyond pissed.

Troy's finger brushed against mine the minute I blocked Law and without words I knew what he was trying to tell me. The scene I was about causing, whatever I was about doing, the anger... Law fucking Tyler was so not worth it!

I didn't know why he was here acting family member with my mom but If he thought my family were willing

guitar strings to be played then he had better think again.

I grabbed his hand not even pretending to act like we were about to have any dialogue between us that goes close to the word civil in any way because the pointed glare I gave him the minute I got us out of earshot and away from my mom was anything but that.

"What are you doing here?"

"Pretty guy." He raised his brow, "Nice guy so I heard."

Of course I thought, he just had to make this about Troy, it was always about someone else, about something else, except him. Like him hugging my mother was perfectly okay and normal and me showing up with a friend was one of the wonders of

the world.

"I don't know what games you're playing, Law but my family would not be your chess pieces."

He chuckled lowly like I was saying something really amusing and foolish at the same time, "Chess pieces? Very original, Prudence."

I scoffed, "I don't know if you find not talking to me for weeks, which is perfectly okay with me and showing up next to my mom like you were invited, amusing which makes me question your mental health, but ___"

"Invited you said?" His lips twitched, "I'll presume you got my message through Titiana?"

My eyes widened, "You made your girlfriend tell me my brother is dead. What kind of a sick person are you!?"

"The kind that invites a sibling to the hospital were your brother is recuperating and to be fair, he did look dead besides I figured that might grab your attention faster than a call from your mother which you might miss since you're lately occupied with boys like him."

I looked over my shoulder, where Troy was waiting for me, "You mean boys that don't lie to innocent teenage girls, play with their heart, dump them and record it in their championship game scrapbook?"

My heart drummed against my chest even as he shake his head and the damn stupid sad look temporarily made an appearance on his face which made me want to hurt him badly which was shocking since I was 100 percent not a violent person.

"It wasn't supposed to be this hard or hurt this bad."

I glared hard at him not paying heed to one of his crazy ass words that doesn't add up, wondering why I didn't notice this as a red flag when we started talking but then I remember I did notice but perhaps I was too desperate to be loved, cherished, held... Just valuable.

And as I glared at Law's retreating back while I fought the tears that burned against my eyes, I realized that I did feel all of those things and though it was a game for him, to me it was as real as the tears that I failed to hold back that was now sliding down my cheeks.

Someone touched my shoulder and when I turned, I found myself stepping into Troy's arm and hugging him hard and long because I was a fucking weakling who always let Law get under my damn skin all the fucking time.

I rolled my eyes even as mom tried to muffle her tears

as we walked into Rob's room, even though inwardly I was jealous she could do that while I had to stick to my role of being the brave and strong one.

"How did you manage to get uglier with so much ease?"

He shook his head amused even as he struggled to sit up while I watched him, giving Mom a warning glare that told her that Rob won't be so appreciative of her if she treated him like an invalid.

"Getting stabbed by a fellow inmate over a petty argument and sleeping in a slate called bed every night does the trick." He grumbles under his breath as he finally managed to sit up while I gave him a little smile, sitting beside him and scowling when he ruffles my hair with his right hand.

Like nothing had changed.

Like one of his hand wasn't chained to a bedpost and two policemen were not outside the waiting room.

"How are you doing?" Mom finally asked, still hovering around the door which I noticed made Rob frown while I arched a brow at mom trying to discreetly make her sit down and join me in my pretence.

"I'm definitely not feeling like a ray of sunshine and definitely have seen better days. I feel sore here and there but that's all."

Mom swallowed while I nodded even though I knew with Rob's pale skin and blood covered blue colored jumper at the side of his bed, that was the biggest understatement I have heard and that's something because I have been fed with really shitty stuff of recent.

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