

Chapter 105

NOAH

"Tell me, Lucy, who have you been visiting lately?"

Her look of surprise was very believable—almost. I knew very well that Monique never gave untrue information. Her vast information network was always accurate. If she said Lucy had been paying frequent visits to this, Mr Thompson, then Lucy was doing just that.

"Talk to me, Lucy," I said. "Have you suddenly gone mute?"

"I- I don't know what you are talking about," she said with a slight shake. "What is all this talk about visiting people? Who am I supposed to have visited?"

"You visited a Mr Thompson," I said. "Yeah. I can see from that look on your face that you already know who I am talking about. So what's this about you and Thompson? Oh, wait. Before you answer that, tell me how you manage to visit this guy regularly. You always claim you can't do anything, move or go anywhere because of your pregnancy, so tell me how you find the time and strength to sneak off to visit people."

"Oh... that."

"Yes. That," I said, mimicking her tone. "If you have been going off to see someone, why didn't you just tell me about it the minute I asked you about it."

"Because-"

"Because? Or do you have anything to hide?"

"No. It's not that at all. I didn't want to tell you about that part until you got the contract." She took a deep breath and continued. "I have been seeing Thompson to try and convince him to give you the contract. It was my way of trying to help, especially after I heard Amelia was in competition to get the contract."

"What did you say?"

"I was only trying to help."

"You didn't help," I barked. "You didn't do any bloody thing. Amelia still got the bloody contract, so what the hell was the use of your visits? Huh? You were of no help and that is because Mr Thompson is not the kind of man you can bribe or seduce. Couldn't you even study the man you intended to work on first to know his weaknesses and how you could use them to your advantage? Maybe if you did, I'll not be so pissed at you right now."

"I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking-"

"Obviously, you weren't! You know how much of a fool I looked when I heard about what you did? For your sake, I'm hoping you didn't blab to him about anything to do with me."

"I didn't." She sounded indignant. "I just thought he would consider my condition and give you the contract."

"You're not the first woman to get pregnant, and you won't be the last. He won't just throw a contract at me because of your condition."

"I'm sorry that I couldn't be of help."

"Just make sure—" My phone rang. "Who is this now?"

I checked my phone and saw that my manager was calling. I exhaled and shook my head. This was bad timing. I really was in the mood to rake an interfering Lucy over the coals.

Somehow, it was taking the edge off my frustration. I picked up the call, hoping for my manager's sake that he had something really important to say to me.

"Speak," I bit off.

"Sir," his voice was clipped as he stammered. "Si—Sir, have you seen the news?"

"No," I replied, thinking about all possible news items that could interest me. "What news are you talking about, and why should it be important to me?"

"You have to check the news. There's a terrible crisis going on, and we are about to sink if it's not handled."

And then I heard the beep of a broken connection. How could my company sink? What had happened? Vaguely, I was aware that Lucy was asking me a question, but I couldn't make out the words. I hurried to the living room, turned on the television and found the news channel.

As my gaze fell on the screen, the world seemed to slow down around me, sounds becoming distant and muffled.

A cold sweat broke out on my forehead, and my head started to tremble uncontrollably.

On the screen was a video of Monique handcuffed and being escorted by two police officers into a police cruiser.

I managed to turn up the volume in time to hear the newscaster say, "...She was arrested at her residence today. She has been on the FBI's list for a long time and was exposed by Damian Donovan, a businessman who suffered one of her fatal blows. It was gathered that Monique, whose real name is Lisa Evans, has been working with some businessmen and corrupt officials. Notable among the former is Noah Allen-"

"Noah? Is that you?" Lucy asked from behind me.

A picture of me appeared on the screen, cancelling her doubts. My skin prickled with a sudden chill, and I staggered back. It was as if my body was disconnecting from my mind, and I was trapped in a nightmare.

The newscaster continued to my dismay.

"Noah Allen is also suspected of being an accomplice in many of her schemes to undermine other businesses, but at this time, detailed information is yet to be released. We'll be sure to bring you updates on this case. Meanwhile, our correspondent was at the police station where-"

A sudden sharp knock on the door jolted me back to reality.

"Someone is at the door."

I turned to see Lucy, eyes wide with fright, staring toward the front door. She made no move to get the door. With dread in my heart and legs that felt like stilts, I walked over to the door.

I opened the door to see three men outside, uniformed police officers who immediately stepped into the house when the door opened. I took a step backwards but was immediately surrounded.

"You are under arrest," the first one said and went on to read me my rights.

"Am I going to jail?" I managed to say.

"You are needed for further questioning. Now move!"

"Noah, what can I do?" I heard Lucy ask as they shoved me out. "Noah! Noah!"

I turned to her and mumbled. "Call my lawyer."

AMELIA

I could not stop the grin spreading across my face as Damian and I sat in front of the TV, watching the news details on Monique's and then Noah's arrest. Not that I wanted to stop smiling, though.

I felt like singing or waltzing across the room when I reflected that just barely twenty-four hours ago, the situation seemed hopeless. There had even been hints of Damian going to jail on the trumped-up charges of child trafficking. Now, those who had conspired to destroy him were the ones taking a one-way trip to jail.

And then the best part came when the newscaster said, "And in many circles, business mogul Damian Donovan has been hailed as staunch and clever. Reports have it that he was the one who unearthed the identity of Lisa Evans, also known in the Los Angeles business world as Monique. The business world, the people whose businesses she has already wrecked and indeed the police are much indebted to Mr Donovan for his help and ingenuity in helping to solve this case. And, of course, all charges of child trafficking against him have been dropped. They were found to be a concoction of Lisa Evans as she sought to punish him for not agreeing to join in her schemes to-"

With a chuckle, Damian turned down the volume of the television.

"It's funny how they can't stop praising me now, considering the fact that they were all calling for my head a few days ago."

"I'm so happy," I said with another goofy smile on my face. "I'm happy and relieved. I honestly don't know how you do it, but you always manage to get us out of every situation. Remember the situation with Lola and Petra?"

"All too clearly," he said.

"You got us out of that too. You're really everything they say, you know. You are smart and clever and very, very resourceful. Congratulations on clearing your name."

"Congratulations to us then." He grinned and pushed to his feet. "I think this calls for drinks. There is a bottle of wine I've been saving..."

His voice trailed off as he walked away. He returned soon with two glasses and a cold bottle of wine.

"There are only 17 bottles of this wine in the world." He said as he poured some into my glass. "To more success!"

"To more success," I repeated. I held out my empty glass to him after I drank. "More, please. This is very good."

"I know. I brought out the very best."

"What about business? Do you think things will get better..." I glanced at the television, where a video of Monique in handcuffs being arrested was being shown. "... after this news broke?"

"Oh. They are coming back in droves. Most of them have been emailing my secretary about how they never really believed the charges against me were true." He waved a hand dismissively.

"Most of them are lying through their teeth, of course, but I don't really care one way or the other as long as I'm back in business, which I am, by the way. So all my shareholders are returning, and I'm sure things will return to normal within two or more weeks."

"I'm glad."

I inched closer to him and crawled into his lap. He wrapped his arms around me and pulled me closer. I knew our proximity was dangerous, especially if I wanted to avoid intimacy. But for some reason, I couldn't stop staring at his eyes—his blue, entrancing eyes that always made me weak in the knees.

Before I could pull away, he pressed his soft lips to mine. I didn't immediately respond. I contemplated if I was making the right decision.

But when he started to draw away, I wrapped my hands around his neck and returned the kiss.

I deepened the kiss, touching and tasting him. It had been so long since we had been together like this, and I missed it.

I missed him.

My fingers ran through his hair. He moaned into my mouth and pulled me closer till my breasts were squashed across his chest.

"Should we take this upstairs?" He asked me hungrily as his fingers ran up my chest.

"Y—"

Damien's phone rang before I could answer, and it was suddenly my cue to get myself together. I exhaled and crawled back to my previous possible.

Damian regretfully picked up his phone, but his smile brightened when he saw it was the mayor calling. He took the call, listened for some minutes, and spoke a few words.

"Certainly, sir," he finally said and hung up. He turned to me, his eyes alight with excitement. "The railway project is back."