

## Chapter 18

### Am I Yours

Malakai's POV ~

We brought Sol home the next afternoon. He's a dick. Just saying. He complained about everything. The television is too high. The bed moves too fast. The sheets are itchy. It's too bright.

Marisol finally yelled "No wonder you and Isaiah get along so well! You're both two-year-olds. Damn, Grandpa! Shut up. We can change whatever you aren't happy with... so make a list and we will get started."

That old fuck! He said "I guess it's alright. It will do." My eyes damned near popped out of my head. He was just bitching to hear himself talk!

Marisol smiled and winked at me... letting me know she knew exactly what he was doing. She handled him like the mom she is. That's a pretty nifty little trick all mothers seem to have.

We got Sol settled and met with Kennedy in the office, so Isaiah could be with us. He was running around chasing a.... bunny... that didn't exist. I worry for our future.

Kennedy asked "What's little man doing?" Marisol giggles and tells him, in all seriousness, "He's chasing a bunny, only he can see. He's fine! He won't bother you, unless you step on the bunny. I know this because I stepped on the bunny once. He bit me. Just so you know."

I busted out laughing, and Kennedy's face was a study in horror. While Marisol just smiled sweetly and sat down.

Kennedy said "The team is on the way to intercept the Swordfish. We should know something by nightfall. Are you still wanting to bring Weston in, or wait to see the fallout?"

I thought on it... then I said "No. If this goes according to plan, both Morton and Weston will have solid alibis. He should be safe. The piece of shit is related to Marisol... so I guess he lives."

Marisol said "That bastard isn't related to me at all. I think I have only seen him four or five times, my whole life. He is the father of that succubus and grandfather to her demon spawn. Not to me. Thank God!"

We laughed and Kenneth said "That how you really feel?" Making me laugh again. She grinned "Okay... okay. I get a little passionate. Sue me!"

The phone rang... answering it, I found out Robert was awake. Marisol and I headed out to the hospital... after much arguing with Kennedy about staying with Isaiah and Sol. All he had to do was listen out for the baby. He was napping for God's sake!

Robert was still groggy... but coherent. He asked immediately about Isaiah. Then his dad. He said "I am so sorry, Marisol. For everything. I was so wrong. I lived riddled with guilt. I cheated on my wife. I promised to spend my life making it up to her. At the expense of you. I am not a good parent. But you are! And when they started talking about taking your baby, I couldn't let anyone else hurt you."

She had tears rolling down her cheeks "I want to forgive you. I know I am grateful... so very grateful for what you did. We will take this one day at a time. Maybe I can find my dad... the one who went away on my eighth birthday."

There's a story there. We are having a talk tonight. She has some dark shit she's been dealing with alone. Enough of that! A burden shared is a burden halved.

We stayed an hour with Robert... then headed home. Marisol asks "What's two thousand AKs worth on the black market, these days?"

I thought a minute or two then replied "Depending on the need... a supply and demand situation... anywhere from three hundred grand to five hundred. Depends on the dealer, too. Then you add in clips and ammo. Over half a mil."

She whistled low "Damn! Your brother gonna be a lot lighter in the pocket for some limbo sticks!"

I laughed at her. If I could get limbo sticks this late in the game, I swear I would! Then, I would want to be the fly on the wall.

Walking through the door, Kennedy was in the foyer... his shirt half undone... his hair sticking up all over... and he said “Never do THAT to me, again!” And walked out.

We laughed all through dinner. She is so easy to be around. In all the time I looked for her, that was the one thing that stood out the most. How easy it is to be me with her.

Once we had Sol back in his room... and Isaiah down for the night... I brought her out to the balcony for a nightcap. We were enjoying the view... and the crisp air. I asked “What happened when you were eight, baby?”

She was quiet for the longest time. I didn’t think she was going to tell me. I worried I had offended her by asking. Crossed a line I didn’t see.

She spoke so softly, I strained to hear her “That was the end. My eighth birthday was the end of everything. I was a daddy’s girl. I went everywhere with him. We did everything together... but he never believed me. I would tell him Anna had hit me.. shoved me down.. kicked me.. pinched me.. and he would tell me to quit lying. That Anna had told him about my lying phase. So just quit it.

I was standing at the top of the stairs... with Bonita and Anna. My eighth birthday... and Anna said “wonder what your dad will say when you try to lie your

way out of this.” She shoved me down the stairs, just as Bonita grabbed ahold of me. Anna started screaming for my dad... telling him I shoved Bonita down the stairs.

Apparently, she had broken her arm. So, I was to blame. I told my truth... over and over. Each slap. Each punch. Always Anna. Robert didn’t stop her though. I told my truth. Three days. She beat me... then locked me in a closet. Every day. For three days. And still, I told my truth.

After that, I didn’t speak to any of them. I didn’t take meals with them. Grandpa came and got me. I was sent back to visit. But I never stayed. And I didn’t talk. By my fourteenth birthday, they had stopped bothering trying to get me to talk.”

I was blown away. I whispered “I am so sorry you went through that. I can’t imagine your tender soul withstanding that and still remaining so wholesome.”

She laughed “Oh! I’m not. I learned to fight. I have a fast and hard temper. No one will ever raise a hand to me again. And no one better ever think to hurt what’s mine!”

I smirked and asked “Am I yours?”