

Benefits 120

Chapter 120: Comfort and Protection

Demetri drove through the deserted streets at three in the morning, the world bathed in the eerie glow of streetlights. The silence outside mirrored the weariness within him. His hands gripped the steering wheel, even as his mind wandered dangerously.

As he entered the silent home, his eyes automatically scanned the corner where he usually found Nora. But of course, she must be asleep as the place was dark. His shoulders slumping, he trudged towards his own room, intent on not going to Nora tonight. It was an unspoken rule between them. If they'd been together then they would sleep in Nora's bed, if not, they would simply sleep in their own respective beds.

However, his feet seemed to have a mind of their own. Lost in his own thoughts, he found himself standing over her bed, looking down at her peaceful sleeping form. It made him feel detestable. Everything had been so clear when he had found Nora. Why did he have to change the rules to his own game?

Looking at her peaceful face, Demetri betrayed all thoughts of returning to his own room and sighed over his own lack of control. Discarding his clothing, he slid into the bed with her. But even as he felt her warmth draw him close, it was not enough to simply share the bed. His hand glided along her waist, resting to a stop on her soft stomach. Gently, he pulled her into his embrace, fitting their bodies together like the pieces of a puzzle.

Nora stirred in her sleep, disturbed by the movement and tried to wake up. Opening her blurry eyes, she looked up into Demetri's clear ones and snuggled even closer to him as she said softly, "Demetri? Weren't you not coming tonight?"

Demetri nodded and kissed her forehead, "Yes. But I am here now. Sleep. We'll talk in the morning."

With a lazy 'ummm' Nora went back to sleep, tucking her head under his chin. Demetri's hand slid under her shirt, drawing lazy circles on her stomach as he sighed deeply, letting her closeness comfort him. Only he knew the truth of what a mess he had made. He couldn't help but wonder if he was destined to make such a mess for his brother.

As he continued to be lost, his fingers moving unconsciously over her, Nora opened her eyes. How was she supposed to sleep when the man was teasing her? As she glanced at him with sleepy eyes, wondering if he wanted to do something more than sleep, when she realized that he was lost far in thought.

Puzzled, she turned toward him, concern furrowing her brow at his odd behaviour over the past few days.

"Demetri?" she whispered, the hushed tones of the night surrounding them. Demetri's fingers clenched for a moment before he sighed and reassured her, "Everything is fine. Just sleep."

Nora wanted to say that everything did not feel fine for him but stopped herself. She had no right to pry into his personal matters. However, worry etched her face and she felt frustration rise inside her. Why was it that he was able to protect her and help her while she feared to even question him?

As her mind started to wander, leaving the land of sleep behind, she felt Demetri press a soft kiss to the back of her head, his breath softly brushing against her ear, "Stop thinking. Your thoughts are too loud. I just had a bad day and nothing else."

His embrace tightened around her and Nora could only let herself relax until finally the two of them left behind the world of the awake, sleeping peacefully in each others' arms.

The next morning, Nora woke up with a jolt. The space beside her was empty and she wondered if she had hallucinated the incident from last night. However, the peaceful sleep that she'd had was a sign that it was true. Nora stretched lazily and turned her head to look at the time, sighing when she realized that she still had a while to get ready and go. And hopefully, there would be time to discuss her new plan.

After thinking things through, she had decided that she would no longer wait for the next attack to come. So, naturally, she needed to do something to bring out the person who was intent on killing her. And the only way she could do that was to lure them outside.

As expected, Demetri was out having his coffee when Nora stepped out of her room. Wrinkling her nose at his choice of drinking that poison every morning, she grabbed her own pop-tarts and quickly sat opposite him.

"I am going to lay a trap," she announced abruptly.

He stared at her over the rim of the coffee mug, before questioning, "I wasn't aware there was a mouse in our house. Do you need cheese?"

"I am not talking about a mouse. I am talking about the person who is intent on harming me. See, both times, the plans were well thought out and executed. Because that person was aware of what I was doing and how I would react. Each time the plan would have been successful but for one variable-you."

"If I had not reached you in time that day or if you had not suddenly come to my university, unexpectedly, then I would have been dead or at least gravely injured wanting to die. But now the surprise element is lost. You've put security around me and the person behind all this knows your identity so going further they will be even more careful. However, if I give them an unexpected opening, they might want to rush in unprepared and launch an attack, thus making some mistake... So, I am thinking... a few students are planning to go out for the upcoming long weekend and they've invited me..."

Before she could continue, Demetri placed his mug on the table with a loud sound and interrupted her, "No. Absolutely not."