

Husband With Benefits

chapter 71-80

chapter 71

Making a split-second decision, Nora entered the lobby of Frost Industries which stretched out before her, sleek and modern. This must be Lucien's place of work, so he would naturally not jeopardize his job only for the sake of torturing her.

The security guard, who had allowed Nora to enter the premises on Lucien's nod stepped back, keeping a wary eye on the woman. There was something wrong with the way she looked. As if she was escaping someone or a druggie looking for her next fix. She was sweating and panting while her eyes were not right. He needed to be careful and take into account everyone's safety.

Lucien was at first shocked to see Nora at Frost Industries. And yet, within a moment, he felt happiness surge through him as he wondered if she had come to see him. But once again he realized that he had never mentioned his place of work. So...

As he stepped close to her, she stepped back and told him in a trembling voice, "Thank you for helping me enter. I am here to see my husband. Please excuse me."

Lucien could not hide the surprise as she almost ignored him and asked, " You are married? But haven't you recently broken up with your boyfriend?"

Lucien tried to step closer to her but again she took a few steps away from him. "Nora? Is something the matter? You look troubled..."

Just then her phone rang again and Nora almost threw it onto the ground. It was again that unknown number.

By now, many people had started to gather around the two people in the lobby as they wondered what was going on. It was rare for any of the Frost brothers to stand and chat in the company's lobby. Of course, there would be curiosity.

Lucien looked at the gathering crowd and tried to reason, "Nora, why don't you come to my office. And whoever you are visiting can come to see you there."

"No. No." She shook her head desperately. She would be the safest here. She dared not go anyplace private with this man.

"Fine fine. You don't want to wait in my office. Just go to the reception and tell them who you are looking for. They will summon the person down soon."

Nora glanced from Lucien to the Reception that was away from him and slowly stepped towards it. The lady at the reception gave her a vague smile as she asked, "How may I help you, miss?"

Nora gulped and spoke quietly so that Lucien would not be able to hear her and spoke, "I need to see Demetri."

The lady's eyes widened, and she cast a look from her to Lucien before she slowly shook her head, "I am sorry, Miss. Mr Demetri is busy in a meeting right now and we are not allowed to disturb him."

"Tell him it's urgent! I am his wife." Nora urged desperately.

This time, the receptionist's face turned unpleasant. Just yesterday a woman had come in urging that she was the CEO's lady. Thankfully Gabriel Frost had handled the matter and their jobs had been saved. The CEO had been livid. And today this half-crazy girl was claiming that she was the CEO's wife.

If she had not seen for herself that the woman seemed to be an acquaintance of Mr Lucien, she would have immediately called for security to throw her out.

Trying to maintain a professional smile the receptionist shook her head and said with a hint of impatience, "Look, miss. If you are really his wife, then why don't you call him or his assistant to come and fetch you."

At the end of her tether, Nora groaned loudly, "I've been trying to call him. He is not answering."

The receptionist barely refrained from snorting at the phone which was being shown, wondering if she was supposed to believe that.

"Look, miss, since you don't have an appointment here and you are not allowed to meet CEO Frost without an appointment, I will have to ask you to leave the premises."

Nor wanted to argue but she felt too drained. She turned around to see Lucien approaching her, slowly calling out her name.

She could feel herself losing all hope and all she could do was lean against the reception desk hopelessly. As her energy gave way and despair threatened to consume her. Even though Lucien stood only a few steps away from her, she felt his voice coming far away from her. Her body started to go numb and she could feel that her hands and legs had lost all energy.

Any moment now she was going to keep over. She saw Lucien approaching her and shook her head...trying to get rid of the ringing in her ears as she spoke," Stay away from me."

Lucien tried to talk to Nora and even called out her name repeatedly, but he doubted she could even hear him. Desperately, he turned to the receptionist and questioned," Who does she want to meet? Call them here now!"

The receptionist glanced at the pale lady fearfully and spoke," Mr. L sir, she is looking for the CEO."

Lucien frowned for a moment. The receptionist must have misheard.

However, even as he wondered this, he ordered, "Then call him! Dam* it! Can't you see she is in distress?" Lucien then turned to the guard and ordered, "Call an ambulance."

Nora straightened a bit and whispered," You came..."

Frowning, Lucien heard the relief in her voice and turned around to look who it was.

In a last desperate burst of energy, Nora ran towards the man who had hurriedly walked out of the elevator.

Just as her legs gave out beneath her, Demetri, with lightning reflexes, caught her just before she could collapse to the ground. The lobby crowd fell into stunned silence as they witnessed this dramatic scene while what happened next made them wonder if they'd been drugged.

Their ice-cold demon boss picked up the young girl in his arms tenderly and turned back towards the elevators, all the while whispering words of reassurance.

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"...and with the strategic acquisitions we've made in the past quarter," Mr. Reynolds spoke, "we are well-positioned to capture a larger market share in the coming months."

The meeting was focused on a critical agenda of discussing the reissue of Frost Industries' IPO. A senior executive, Mr. Reynolds, had been in the midst of giving a detailed presentation. The room had been filled with charts, graphs, and financial projections, all meant to demonstrate the company's growth potential.

However, despite this, Demetri found himself unable to concentrate. Even as everyone was engrossed in the meeting, Demetri could feel a sense of foreboding. Something felt profoundly wrong and not knowing what was making him uneasy.

Trusting his instincts, he abruptly halted the meeting and nodded at Assistant Ma to bring his phone. As he retrieved his phone, which had been set to silent mode, his heart sank as he noticed a flurry of missed calls from Nora. Worry set in and he immediately dialled her number. He needed to reach her and find out what had happened. They'd parted on bad terms and knowing her as he did, she would not call him under such circumstances if it wasn't urgent.

But the phone rang endlessly, and Demetri's frustration grew as it remained unanswered. He cursed under his breath, uncaring of those sitting around him, pretending to be deaf. It was then he noticed the notification, indicating he had a message.

"Demetri, someone is stalking me. I am outside Frost Industries headquarters. Please come..." Her broken voice seemed to pierce through him and the message had not even finished playing when Demetri was already out of the door, running towards the emergency staircase.

Every person present in the conference room had also heard the message and the panic in the woman's voice and they naturally followed the CEO to help the woman in distress. By the time, everyone had gathered their senses, Demetri had already raced down the steps.

The chilling words, "someone is stalking me," sent shivers down his spine, fueling his urgency, Demetri dared not pause for a moment. It had already been a while since she had sent the message. What if something had already happened to her? He vividly remembered the bruises she'd had last time.

As he burst out of the stairwell onto the ground floor, his eyes scanned the bustling lobby of Frost Industries and he immediately noticed the abnormal atmosphere near the reception.

Panic had already begun to ripple through the room as many people continued to exchange worried glances. He heard his youngest brother's voice, call out a name, "Nora?"

And then, he saw her. Quickly he made his way to her, a sudden tightness in his chest at the sight of her.

Nora stood there, trembling and pale, looking almost bloodless. Her eyes, wide with fear, darted around the room until they met Demetri's. He watched as relief washed over her features transforming her face from one of sheer terror to one of trust. She whispered something, but he knew not what.

With a determined stride, Demetri covered the distance between them in seconds. She took a few unsteady steps towards him before her legs gave way, and she began to crumple to the floor. He reached her just in time, and caught her in his arms, reassuring her that she was safe.

Her trembling hands clung to his shirt as if he were her lifeline even as she slid into unconsciousness. Without hesitation, Demetri lifted her into his arms, cradling her close to his chest. He could feel her ragged breaths against his neck as he carried her towards the elevators as he barked out orders to bring the doctor. As the doors to the elevators closed, the employees who had gathered there were beyond stunned.

The receptionist was already feeling faint as she realized that the girl, she had just snubbed was really someone important to the CEO... she was going to be dead soon... As her life flashed before her, people had already regained vigour as they started to gossip animatedly.

Ian, Gabe and Seb, who had also seen the last part of the dramatic scene, communicated silently before ordering the senior executives to take a break. The three then marched towards Lucien, who looked as pale as the little girl that they had just seen Demetri carry away and quickly dragged him to another elevator.

They needed details before they went up to support Demon.

In a small closet outside Demetri's office, Gabe, Seb and Ian were all looking at Lucien impatiently, waiting for him to explain what had happened. While Ian had already mobilized their private investigators to investigate the matter of stalking, Gabe's people were also checking the surveillance cameras around the premises. But they needed first-hand details.

Since, Lucien seemed to be still in shock, it was Seb who spoke up, "Was that really our sister-in-law? She looked too young, didn't she?"

"Hmm, she does look young. But she is also beautiful. No wonder Demon was hooked." Ian added his two cents.

Gabe said nothing but his sharp eyes continued to look at Lucien who had maintained his silence.

"You know her." It was a statement, not a question that Gabe made.

Lucien looked up at his brother with wide eyes and nodded. "She is the one I told you about."

Even though Lucien did not explain, it was not difficult for the other three to guess what he meant. Lucien had recently been mooning over a girl and even asked them on how he should ask her out since she was too young for him.

Ian cleared his throat as he asked, "Are you sure, Lucien? She is the same girl?"

Lucien nodded slowly until finally, Gabe burst out, "You said she was too young for you. You are the youngest among us, Lucien while Demetri is the oldest. How old is the girl?"

Dejected, he spoke, "She is a freshman. So eighteen or nineteen years old..."

As the others heard this, they had only one expression on their faces, "F*ck! Their brother had stolen from the cradle."

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Inside the quiet of Demetri Frost's office was a scene that his secretary had never imagined she would witness. First their boss had walked into the office carrying his unconscious wife followed by orders to get him things to comfort her. As she had quickly arranged a small bowl of water and a napkin, she'd seen Demetri Frost tenderly taking off his wife's shoes. The man had then rolled up his sleeves, carefully arranged her on the wide couch so that she would be comfortable and was now gently wiping her forehead with a wet cloth as they waited for a doctor.

Nina looked down at the scene, feeling touched, envious and curious at the same time. Already the office had been abuzz with gossip. And this time, it was people's jealousy speaking as they pointed out how Demon Frost had probably fallen into the age trap of middle-aged men trying to feel young after marrying a trophy wife. The boss' young wife had been labelled from being a sugar baby to a Trophy wife, etc.

However, as she looked at the scene in front of her, Nina had a feeling that there was more to this relationship than her boss thinking with the wrong head. She could see the anxiety in his eyes and even traces of guilt. She could also see the way the girl had been pale and trembling when she had been carried inside but the boss' touch seemed to calm her.

Finally, the doctor entered the office with a soft knock and started to examine the patient. Demetri stood by the corner to watch and she could see that the other Ian, Seb and Gabe were now standing by the door, waiting for the doctor's verdict.

After a few minutes, the doctor had already checked the vitals and started to talk, "Mr. Frost, the lady is unconscious due to shock. She has been in a state of physical and mental stress recently, I believe. You are well aware that there are old fading bruises on her body. It seems to me she was in a physical struggle just now. I can see marks made

from someone's fingers. As you saw there are a few on her waist as well. Maybe someone tried to push her or hold her forcibly."

"She will need physical and mental rest for the near future. I have given her medicines for now, which will help in regulating and calming her emotional state as well as her physical state. She will wake up soon but will remain sleepy for the next few hours. You will also have to take care of her diet. Her blood sugar levels were dangerously low."

As the doctor left the office, Demetri had already turned back to Nora. "Miss Nina, please fetch me a blanket. Also, bring me Lucien. Why is he not here?"

Nina nodded and walked to the outer office where she kept a supply of these things for all the overnighters they were forced to pull and quickly grabbed a fresh blanket. Even though the boss had been focused on his wife, he had not failed to notice the presence of his brother.

Seeing Nina walk out leaving the door open behind her, Ian, Gabe and Seb took it as an invitation to enter.

Ian was the one who took the initiative, placing his hand on his brother's shoulder, in reassurance. "She will be alright."

To all of them, Demetri had always been an invincible force, cold but indestructible. Seeing him now, had been an eye opened for them and gave them a better understanding of their brother. Demetri who had once been warm and full of love towards them was this now because only this way would he be able to protect them all. And somehow, this young girl had been able to break this facade.

Just then, Lucien entered the office, his face ashen.

"D.. Demon..."

Demetri sighed and turned to look at his brothers finally. Looking at his impassive face, they realized that even though their brother had been vulnerable for a few moments, he was still the same. Each wanted to say something but kept quiet. There was no point in pulling a Tiger's tail when it was already so agitated.

"Lucy... did you see something?"

Lucien ran a hand through his hair, his eyes gazing at the way his brother's hand was placed on top of Nora's and sighed.

"I don't know much. Nora was just terrified when I saw her outside the building. She probably was trying to get inside, but then she saw me and got scared. She turned around, as if she wanted to go away but then stopped. I'd already nodded for the security to let her in and first she refused but then she came in."

"You are familiar with her?" Demetri questioned Lucien, honing in on his brother's use of her name.

Lucien nodded and explained, "She is a part-time waitress at a cafe which I frequent. We are...like friends. She is also the friend I told you about yesterday."

Demetri nodded as he heard this. Lucien had come to him telling him that he needed to talk about a friend who might be in trouble. However, He'd told him that he would look into it after the details for the IPO had been finalized.

Demetri sighed and turned to look at Ian and Gabe, already knowing that they would have more answers to the questions he had.

"Ian?"

Ian was about to give his report of what he had discovered when he noticed the girl on the couch had started to stir.

Demetri gently caressed her cheek and they watched as she jerked. It was only as she saw that Demetri was next to her, she lay still, leaning her face into his hand. However, the next moment, her eyes met Lucien's and she jerked away as a small scream left her mouth and she cowered, almost trying to merge into the couch.

As everyone watched in confusion, she pointed to Lucien and spoke, "You..."

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Chapter 74: Leave

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Chapter 74: Leave

In a small apartment, not far from the University, the room was a chaotic mess. Clothes were strewn about haphazardly, mingling with empty beer bottles that lay like fallen soldiers on the battlefield of their night. The curtains were drawn shut, allowing only slivers of weak, grey daylight to infiltrate the room. In the midst of this disarray, two figures moved with urgency.

"Brother? What are you doing? Why are you throwing my things in that bag?"

the man continued to pack the bag while the younger brother tried to protest.

Clothes were tossed unceremoniously into the open suitcase each movement swift and decisive.

The younger man shrouded in black from head to toe, still wore a hood that concealed his face, watched his older brother's actions with a mixture of anger and frustration. He reached out to stop his brother, his voice strained with emotion. "I won't do this, Alex. I want her. You promised me I could have her," he protested, his voice trembling with defiance.

Alex paused for a moment but didn't meet his brother's gaze. Instead, he continued to pack, his jaw clenched in determination. "It's not up for discussion," he replied firmly, his tone leaving no room for argument. "It's not safe for you here anymore. I warned you previously. You need to stop getting obsessed! Last year too, you lost your mind and look what had happened! That girl committed suicide and I was left to clean up your mess! And this time... you saw who that girl was with, kiddo. The girl has already seen my face even if she has not seen yours. And do you think that this pathetic excuse for a hood can hide you from that Demon?"

"I promised mother that I would always protect you but how can I do that if you keep getting into trouble."

The young man stepped closer, his eyes pleading with his brother beneath the hood. "I'm not leaving the country, Alex. No matter how much you try to force me. I love her and she loves me. That Demon is the one who came between us. That is why she must have been scared. She would have been worried about me. That the Demon would hurt me. It is why she ran away from me, to protect me. Don't you remember how I told you that she had specially come to inform me about breaking up with that previous boyfriend of hers?" His voice wavered as he said this but Alex could see the absolute trust in his younger brother's voice, making him worry even more.

The boy had been hanging onto his sanity by a thread, but he seems to have lost now that as well, after meeting Nora Williams. Alex rueful the day the girl had come into his younger brother's life and felt hatred consume him. Why did that woman have to flirt with him in the first place?

Alex sighed with a mixture of frustration and worry as he placed his hand on his brother's shoulder, "You do not understand kid. You saw everything that happened in that building. It is only a matter of time before they find out who we are. We have to disappear before they come after us."

The young man's grip on his brother's arm tightened, his voice desperate. "I don't care about the Frosts or any of this. I can't leave without her."

Alex's patience wore thin, and he grabbed Max by the collar of his hoodie, pulling him closer until their faces were inches apart. "You've already ruined me," he hissed, his eyes burning with a mix of anger and sorrow. "But if you want to ruin yourself, then there's nothing I can do to help you." Dam* it! He had worked hard to secure this job for himself while raising his little brother.

And everything was now down the drain because of the girl and his brother's obsession over her. Faintly, he had recognized that his brother might need a psychiatrist, but he'd not wanted to believe that his only blood relative might be confined to an institute. But now, he could feel regret pinching at him. At least if he had been institutionalized, they would not have been fearing for their lives.

With a forceful shove, Alex pushed away his brother and then proceeded to shut the suitcase forcefully, the sound of the zipper closing serving as a grim finality to their argument.

The boy slumped back against the wall, defeated and deflated. He knew his brother was right, but his heart ached with the unbearable weight of longing. "I'll only leave if she comes with us," he mumbled, more to himself than to Alex.

Alex turned away, his face a mask of frustration as he moved to gather their savings from a hidden compartment in the room. "You're being foolish, kid. We need to be at the train station in an hour if we want to escape swiftly. Kid, only if you escape can you come back for her." Alex reminded finally, hoping that this would help him convince his brother.

The young boy nodded in agreement with his brother and turned to look down at his phone, where a picture of Nora smiled back at him. As his brother left, tears escaped the young boy's eyes and he hugged the phone to his chest. "My Nora. How much are you going to suffer before you can actually be with me? Don't worry, even if I have to leave now, I am going to make sure that you stay safe for me till I am strong enough to return and save you from that demon who has you in his clutches."

With shaky hands and a blurry vision, the boy made a phone call. The call was answered immediately as a quivering voice questioned, "Did you succeed in bringing your love to you?"

The young boy started to cry in earnest at this question and explained how his brother had become an obstruction in his path to love. What the young boy failed to understand was that the other party had become quiet when they heard of his failure...

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Nora pointed a shaky finger at Lucien as she tried to make sense of everything around her. She looked at Demetri and then spoke, "He is stalking me."

Lucien drew in a sharp breath as he finally realized why she had been wary of him and tried to explain quickly. But before he could, Demetri raised a hand to stop him. Frowning, Lucien wanted to speak but was stopped by Gabe who whispered to him to have patience.

"Lucy, her fear is real." Gabe muttered while he whispered back, "I know that. But she is mistaken."

"And we know that. Let Demon handle this for now."

Lucien nodded slowly and decided to wait for Demon to resolve this.

Demetri watched her closely, concern etched across his face. "Nora, kitten, I need you to tell me why you think Lucien is your stalker. We need to understand this."

Nora glanced at Lucien, who stood across from her, his expression a mixture of confusion and concern. She took a deep breath and began to explain, her voice trembling. "I'd been feeling like someone's been following me for weeks. It's this constant, eerie sensation of being watched. There were also notes..."

In a broken voice, Nora explained how she would receive random notes with encouraging words written on it. Until finally things started escalating and she decided to go to the police. But that was dismissed as a prank.

"Why did you not tell me this earlier?"

"You were away for work. And then the things with mother happened and I thought..." Nora hesitated at this. Demetri knowing everything about her mother was different but there were strangers in this room...

"So after your mother's incident, the notes had stopped?" Demetri confirmed slowly.

Nora nodded her head and continued, "Yes and then we went on our honeymoon, and I did not want to think of all the bad things...And when we returned you came here..."

Even though it had only been a couple of days since they had returned, as Nora described everything, he could see the agony she had been in. "And then... I ran into Lucien last evening... outside the police station."

Lucien shifted uncomfortably on his feet, his gaze dropping to the floor. Well, he'd definitely lied about last night when he'd come for the meeting...

Nora continued, her voice shaking with anxiety. "After he dropped me near the community, I received messages from my stalker. It mentioned the place where he dropped me off... It was terrifying. And then just now, I was calling you while running away from them. They tried to kidnap me, but I escaped and tried to call you. But you did not answer so I kept running to here. Then... I received a call from and I didn't check... I thought it was you and told him I was her. It was him and he said he would come to get me..."

As Nora tapered off, Demetri continued, "And then Lucien appeared?"

Nora nodded her head but that slight movement caused her to let out a moan and shiver. Demetri immediately cradled her head against his chest and spoke reassuringly, "Nora, Lucien is not your stalker."

"But..."

"You trust me, kitten? Have I ever done anything that might make you doubt me?"

Nora shook her head slowly, saying nothing.

"Would you have believed it was Lucien if not for yesterday's instance?"

Nora thought about it carefully before shaking her head, "I thought he was a nice person until yesterday..."

"He is a nice person. Nora, this is my youngest brother Lucien."

Lucien nodded and interjected guiltily, "Nora, I did not mean to make you uncomfortable. I'm sorry for that. Also, everything else is a coincidence. I work here..."

Nora nodded weakly as she stared back at Demetri and then giggled, "You call him Lucy?"

The atmosphere lightened considerably at her giggle and the other brothers snickered as Lucien turned a bit red.

Demetri smiled at this and shook his head, "These goons do that. Nora, these are my brothers, Ian, Sebastian and Gabriel. This is Nora, my wife."

Nora smiled at everyone a bit hesitantly. Her day had started out horribly but it seemed it was going to end with meeting his family.

She blinked at the others and as Ian would have come forward, she gave a big yawn. Embarrassed over her sheer lack of manners, Nora covered her face as she apologised but Ian simply laughed as he stated, "We have a cute sister in law now. That is enough."

No need to stand on ceremony, Nora. We have all the time in the world to get to know each other."

Nora nodded heavily, instantly feeling warmed by their welcome. Even though many thoughts warred in her head, she could not help but close her eyes as she snuggled against the warmth of her husband and fell asleep, exhausted.

Finally as they noticed that she was comfortable, all the brothers exchanged a glance, deciding to silently confer in the room next door.

A little while later, as Demetri walked into the room, it was Lucien who spoke up, "Demon, you... she's too young for you. She just broke up with her boyfriend and is vulnerable."

Immediately Gabe and Seb exchanged glances. Did Lucien have a death wish? Hadn't he seen how protective of the girl Demetri was. Yes she was too young but that was news to them and not to Demon.

Demetri stared at his youngest brother considerably causing him to almost shuffle. But Lucien refrained from flinching under his brother's probing gaze and tried to hold his stance, barely.

Demetri nodded in acknowledgement before stating, " She was with me before she broke up with that boy. Do you think he could have compared to me?"

As Demetri made that astoundingly narcissist statement, the other only had one expression on their face "o"

Their brother really was a Demon in every way. He was actually a third party in a relationship and was showing that off? Demon had no moral compass whatsoever.

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Elijah Frost stared down at the pictures in his hand with a glower on his face. How dare he? Did Demetri think he was a teenager with raging hormones? He dared to take his wife shopping and then do the deed in a trial room.

Elijah looked at Arabelle's red face as he handed back her phone and tried to console her, " Arabelle! That girl is nothing but a tart! Why would you hurt yourself like this? So what if she has Demetri's interest now, will she be able to get his acceptance? He keeps her hidden like a dirty secret, which is what she is. Dirty."

Arabelle shook her head and explained, "Uncle, my mother already told me that I should be able to tolerate his mistresses but this is much more. My friend told me that Demetri was very doting on her, so much so that he was willing to buy everything for her. And the island he took her to? It is where his private villa is located, isn't it? No one from the family has also ever been there."

Arabelle hiccuped as she continued with tears streaming down her face. I was willing to overlook everything, even though I was hurt. I even went to his office yesterday to show him I accepted all his needs. But what did he do? He refused to even acknowledge me! If Gabe had not come there in time, I would have been too mortified to show my face! I could even hear the employees snickering behind my back."

Elijah Frost frowned as he heard this. Had Demetri become so arrogant that he would not even give him any face? As he looked at the weeping Arabelle, he could not help but reconsider his decision. Gabe's liking for the girl was not hidden from him. If he could somehow make Arabelle like Gabe instead of Demetri, Frost Industries could still gain benefits from that and he would be able to gain a little control over Gabe as Arabelle listened to him.

Elijah shook his head. Instead of trying to break the brothers apart and let them follow the path he chose for them, it would be better if he could get Demetri to listen. Once Demetri followed his arrangements, the others would follow like good little sheep.

As he thought of something to say to Arabelle, his butler hurried inside. He raised his eyebrow at the man who was trying to gesture to something and sighed, "Arabelle, child, stop crying. You have shown so much patience, have a bit more. I'll get rid of the tart also if you have a problem with that. But after that... you might have to do something..."

As Arabelle raised confused eyes to Elijah's statement the old man shook his head. Arabelle might be beautiful, but she had no idea how to use that beauty like a weapon. He would have to tell her mother that she needs to help her understand some vices... only then would Demetri fall into the trap that Elijah was setting up for him.

Soon after Arabelle had been guided away from his office, the butler quickly explained, "Sir, there are three pieces of bad news."

Elijah frowned as he waited for the butler to continue and once the first piece of news was relayed, his roar could be heard all over the mansion.

"That ingrate! How dare he! I am the one who taught him everything. I made sure that he could inherit everything without facing stiff competition from any of his brothers! And in return, he is turning against me? He wants to dilute my ownership in the company so that I cannot control him! Contact the other shareholders. Tell them I will buy their existing at double the market price! And tell Gabe and Ian, I want to talk to them!"

The butler shook his head and continued, "I've already done that, sir. But all the others have already handed Master Demetri their power of attorney as well as the other shareholders had sold their shares to him.

As Elijah broke into a coughing streak, the butler quickly poured a glass of water and helped the old man calm down. This was only the first piece of news...

Narrowing his eyes, Elijah banged his stick on the floor and ordered, "Call the medical centre! It seems Demetri has forgotten who holds the reins in this family! I will remind him."

The butler sighed. And this brought him to the second piece of bad news. "Sir, you are no longer the official guardian of the patient. Master Demetri discovered that you had signed the DNR. He appealed to a judge yesterday and has attained the legal guardianship of the patient."

This time, the man did not have an outburst, even as his eyes glittered dangerously. Elijah Frost was known as a Lion in his younger days. No one ever dared to cross him. And yet, now, his own grandson was not only challenging him but also doing it swiftly, before giving him a chance to retaliate. The boy it seemed was hell-bent on protecting that woman.

That was all Elijah could think of. Why would his grandson suddenly rebel otherwise? It seemed getting rid of his plaything was the first thing that he needed to do.

Leaning back in his armchair, Elijah Frost closed his eyes and spoke, "What is the third piece of news?"

The butler hesitated this time. Even though the young master had mentioned this matter last time, the old master had not believed him. "Master, there is gossip among the employees. A small incident happened at the headquarters today. It involved the young master and his...wife. It seems the young madam visited the headquarters today and everyone witnessed that the young master was completely smitten with her."

"What did you say? His wife? The tart that he is seeing? His mistress? She actually dared to visit him at the office? Show me. Show me the footage of this woman! I want to see who has the power to make Demetri lose his head?"

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Lucien sat at the table, his brows furrowed, and his poker face crumbling like a poorly constructed house of cards. In direct contrast to his sad face, Gabe, Ian and Seb wore cheeky grins as they eyed Lucien's misfortune. It was their typical Thursday evening,

poker night, and it seemed that fate had dealt Lucien a particularly lousy hand these days. Since their youngest brother was the topic of their teasing tonight, his mood was only spiraling from bad to worse.

Ian, leaned back in his chair, taking a sip of his beer before teasing Lucien, "Hey, Lucy, you look like you just lost your best friend."

Gabe shook his head and pointed out to his brother, " Hey! If Lucy had lost a best friend, he would not have looked like this. His life has just turned into a twisted soap opera. I mean, if Lucy had to go fight any guy for a girl's attention, I would bet my money on Lucy. But not when it comes to Demon. Lucy, you were in a losing battle from the very beginning. Tsk tsk."

Feeling petty, Lucy snidely remarked, " Of course, you'd know that competing with Demon is a losing battle. You've already been on the losing end a few times, haven't you?" as he referred to Gabe's constant attempts to win Arabelle's affection

Gabe placed his bottle on the table with a thump and rolled up his sleeves, " It seems you want some broken teeth to keep your broken heart a company."

As the two men stood up, glaring at each other, Seb, simply banged a gavel on the table. The gavel had always been handy. Lucy and Gabe turned their glares to their brother who simply gave them both a stare and spoke, " We are trying to play here. You want to fight, get out of my house. I don't care about your broken bones but no one breaks my furniture."

Ian only shook his head and said, " Hey! Sit down you two and cool it off. Look at the bright side. Demon is now totally off the limits to Arabelle so you can continue to chase her without worrying that Demon will change his mind someday. And you, Lucy, you do not have to try and impress her anymore. That should reduce your stress considerably. Weren't you suffering endlessly these past few weeks, trying to think of a way to impress Nora."

Gabe and Lucien both gave a glance to Ian, not saying the words but indirectly pointing out that he was not being very helpful. However, both the brothers had lost interest in having a fight and the game continued again.

Finally, when Lucien had lost almost all his salary from the month, he glared at the other three and accused, " You all are terrible brothers, you know that?"

Ian shrugged his shoulders and pointed out, " Hey, we only took your money. You want to voice complaints, go and voice them to Demon. He took the girl you liked."

"Aren't you guys enjoying this too much? Why do I feel I am surrounded by a bunch of ladies, discussing gossip over their tea?"

"Well, even if we are ladies, you lost buddy. So you may leave the table." Seb teased.

Lucien continued to sulk and lament his newfound familial connection, much to the amusement of his brothers.

Ian, always one to stir the pot, asked, "So, Lucy, have you thought about how you're going to handle family gatherings from now on? Awkward much?"

Lucien groaned. "Don't remind me. I can't believe I have to see Nora at family events. And she looks so smitten with Demon! It's like a never-ending nightmare. Do you know that Demon even helped her with Math? I just connected the dots. She was so happy, she was over the moon!"

"Oohh. Did he teach her math? How do you know this? Tell us more." Seb quickly caught on.

Lucien sighed and explained how she had been happy one day and mentioned that she'd been taught Math by an expert. Ever since he discovered that Nora was married to his brother, Lucien had been replaying their few conversations repeatedly in his head and understood one thing. Even though she had never mentioned Demetri directly, she was star-struck by him.

"Well, I can't help but wonder what Demon would have to say about you lusting after his wife... I mean the expression he has been wearing, Demon is not blind you know." Seb said with a straight face as he munched on some peanuts.

Lucien's eyes widened in horror. "You think he'd transfer me to some random place if he found out? Demon seemed so protective of Nora..."

Gabe burst into laughter at this. "Lucien, you watch too many melodramatic movies. I doubt he'd do that. At most, he will have crush you like a bug but he will not throw you away..."

It was only as the night almost came to an end that Ian took aside Lucien and reasoned softly, "We won't tease you after tonight, Lucy. But you need to move on quickly or it will be you and Demon who will suffer the most. And our bond."

Lucien sighed. "I know, I know. It's just hard, you know?"

Ian nodded with a sigh, "Of course it is hard. And I hope you can come to us if you feel the need to talk. Or talk to Demon also. He has already realized what you have tried to hide. I'm sure talking to him will help you as well."

Just then, Seb joined in and added his two cents, "Maybe you should find a new crush..."

Trying to lighten the atmosphere, Lucien chuckled with a hint of mischief in his eyes. "You know what? You're right. I'm going to find a new crush, and this time, I won't let her become my sister-in-law. So if you guys have any girlfriends or find any, you better show them to me right away!"

Finally, they were all relieved and the brothers continued to play poker and enjoy the night away.

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"What is wrong with you? Why are you trying to kill me?" Nora's scream was lost in the wind as it blew past her.

Demetri slanted a glance at her but continued to drive through the winding road recklessly as he manoeuvred the car around expertly.

Instead of answering her, he slowed down the car considerably and watched as she still continued to cling to the car door for dear life. Finally, when she realized that he had slowed down, she opened her eyes slowly before looking at the passing scenery in confusion. Where were they?

At first, when Demetri had told her to come with him, she had been disinterested and simply followed him with no questions asked. These past few days, anytime she was idle, she would keep thinking of the stalker and wondering if he would start to accost and follow her again. As much as she had tried to return to her normal life, she had been on tenterhooks. What if she failed to defend herself next time?

So she jumped on the chance to make an escape. After all, she had a long weekend ahead of her with nothing to do...Who would have imagined that instead of escaping, she would be jumping into the hands of another crazy man. He'd been fine when they had been within the city limits. But then, once the traffic had been minimal, Demetri seemed to have become possessed by the ghost of some Formula 1 racer!

As her heart finally calmed down, she looked at him slowly and gulped, "Uhh, are we going back now?"

However, instead of answering her, he speeded up again. Her words caught in her throat, Nora squealed once again and as her hand would have moved to clutch the door again, it was caught by a hard hand. She tried to pull her hand from his grasp but he wouldn't let go.

Finally the man slowed down again. Cautiously, she opened one eye and then next as she tried to talk to him, "You..."

However, the car speeded up again, and this time she could see it heading straight towards a cliff... This time she did not close her eyes and shouted angrily, " Demetri Frost, are you trying to kill me? You ba*tard!!!!"

Finally, the car slowed down once again. This time, since Nora had not closed her eyes, she simply turned her head and glared at Demetri, "What is wrong with you today?"

Demetri simply shrugged and answered, " I thought you liked being scared so I brought you here. Now you don't have to be scared at small things like the ringing of a bell or falling of a pin. You can simply be scared of falling to your death."

It took her a moment to realize what he meant. She had indeed been scared of everything. It was something that even the professors had remarked about in class. That she was too jumpy. But that did not mean she liked being scared.

How dare he make her feel guilty for being scared when she had been harassed for so long. Demetri Frost was a red flag if there ever was one!

Unexpectedly, Demetri Frost chose to speak again, " I am not telling you to overlook your suffering or even look down on it. But the only one who can conquer your fear is yourself. You've done that in the past when you decided to stand against your mother. So, you can do it again. Don't give the other person the power to control your life."

This time, Nora said nothing but looked at him thoughtfully. Yes, she had been so lost in negativity, that she had not even tried to talk herself out of it. Everything positive she could have told herself was lost in the thoughts that her stalker would return. Finally, silence reigned in the car as Demetri continued to drive peacefully.

It was almost midnight and they had been driving in silence for a few hours when Nora finally gave him a considering glance.

Demetri felt her gaze on him but paid no mind to it. However, when she continued to stare at him for a while, he could not help but look at her with a question.

Nora shook her head in answer but still explained, " Usually, you won't say a word for hours on end and then sometimes you become a chatty person... Demetri Frost, you are too confusing."

Since he had been accused of becoming a chatterbox, a first in his life, Demetri said nothing and shrugged. Sighing that she had failed in getting a rise out of him, she simply asked again, " Are you going to keep driving aimlessly for the night as well?"

"I do not do anything aimlessly." came the stoic reply.

Surprised at this, Nora asked slowly, " Then are we driving somewhere? I thought you just brought me out to help me deal with the fear."

"Hmm." Demetri answered in affirmation.

Confused, Nora continued to look at him questioningly, but he did not explain.

It was almost midnight when they finally stopped. As the engine was cut off, a stark silence replaced its noise. Nora tried to look around to get a feel of the surroundings, but it was already pitch dark and there was nothing she could see since the car's beam had also been turned off. As she peered into the inky darkness and heard the small sounds of nocturnal animals, she could only wonder if Demetri had decided to enrol her into some twisted game of the reality show called Fear Factor.

Yes, she wanted to get over her feelings of being scared but she was not going to be getting into weird escapades with insects and centipedes or jumping from odd places...

Before she could say something to Demetri, a piercing scream echoed in the silent surroundings. Shocked, she squinted into the dark surroundings as another scream echoed. But she had no idea where it came from. She looked at Demetri with wide and somewhat fearful eyes. Just what had this man done?

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In the dark night, Demetri caught hold of Nora's hand and guided her forward. Nora, suddenly feeling fearful at what she would see, almost stumbled in the darkness and almost fell face first. As he pulled her up, she clung to her his hand, her fingers digging into his skin, leaving temporary marks like indentations of her fear. Her heart raced in synchrony with the anguished screams that echoed through the chilling darkness. She had no idea where they were headed, but the ominous aura of the place filled her with a deep, unsettling fear.

Whispering, because it seemed the right thing to do, she questioned him, "Are you very sure you are trying to help me get rid of my fear and not making me more fearful?"

As they walked further, she felt that the path was steeping downwards and suddenly, they stopped outside a large carved rock shrouded in even more darkness. Suddenly, an opening appeared inside the rock, and she followed him with wide eyes.

A small lamp flickered on in the darkness as Demetri continued to lead her inside. It wasn't long before they came upon a cell.

In the dim light, Nora's eyes fell upon the man in the black uniform. She watched as he tossed a bucket of frigid water onto the unconscious person in the cell, with a cruel indifference. Once again the man let out an inhuman scream, jolting awake with a gasp of agony.

As the man's features came into focus, a chilling realization gripped Nora's heart like a vice. This man. Shocked, she turned to look at Demetri and spoke, "This man was the one who had been dressed in a police uniform when that stalker had tried to kidnap me."

Panic surged through her veins, and she recoiled, her grip on Demetri's hand intensifying. "This... What did you do, Demetri?"

Demetri raised an eyebrow as he answered casually, "What did I do? I just captured the person responsible for your nightmares."

"But... he is not the one who was stalking me... Why have you captured him? Shouldn't he be with the police? You can't take the law into your own hands like this. Please release him to the police so that justice can be brought."

Demetri raised an eyebrow as he heard her plead for the person who had almost assaulted her. What was going on? "He will be soon. Come on out." Demetri guided her away from the cell.

Quickly, he took her outside and waited for an explanation. It was a long while before she explained, "I know in your line of work, there are times you have to get your hands dirty. Grandpa William already warned me of that before the marriage. He said that people might try to use this to destroy my trust in you. I thought I accepted this. But seeing this in its truest form, I don't want to ever know all this. And I wish you wouldn't dirty your hands because of me..."

Once again, Nora had succeeded in surprising him, Demetri admitted to himself. Instead of being relieved and asking for details about who the person was that had assaulted her, she had thought and cared for him. He should not dirty his hands because of her.

Demetri sighed and patted her hand. "Whatever your grandpa said, I don't make a habit of breaking the law so you do not have to worry. The man in black inside the cell? He is a police officer himself. It is only tonight that I have that man locked up here. Tomorrow he will be officially arrested."

"Oh." Nora sighed in relief and then looked around, "Then all this..."

"I said I don't do it often. But there are times when I cannot avoid it..."

Just then the man in black walked out and stood before them. Even though he was not trying to be menacing, Nora still felt fear and shrunk a bit, leaning into Demetri. The man quickly reported, "This man's name is Alex. He was trying to escape the country when he was caught. But the person who has been stalking you is someone else, Madam."

The man handed her a photo and as she looked down at the smiling face, Nora frowned. The face looked familiar, but she had no idea where she had seen him... However, the person in the picture was smiling happily at the camera and did not look like he would be the stalker who had been torturing her.

"This... I don't know..."

The man sighed and explained, "This is Alex's brother. He is mentally unstable and needs to be on constant medication to handle delusions and personality disorders. Alex believes that you may have befriended him which led the boy to believe that you were his friend... The boy is missing as of now. Alex had booked tickets for him to escape with him, but the boy never arrived at the airport. It is why we could not apprehend him. Ma'am. This boy is a senior in your university."

As the officer mentioned this, a sudden thought struck her, and Nora looked at the picture carefully. " I know this person..."

"You know? Can you tell us more about him?"

"I don't know much about him. I've only met him twice."

"The first time was with Antonio when I filled in the application for requesting a room in their dorm. The second time when I went to cancel the registration. And even then, we only had a passing conversation. How could it have converted into something like that?"

The man nodded and a glance passed between Demetri and the other man.

"Then we will inform you once this boy has been captured. Since he is not mentally stable, we need to be even more careful. According to Alex, his brother is determined to contact you and take you with him so that you would be happy."

Nora looked down at the man in the picture and could not help but feel as if she had been released. At least now she had a face for the stalker and would not need to fear not recognizing him.

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Lara Anderson looked down at the pictures that she had received and felt her insides burn! Dam* it! She should have known that the old man would not let her win so easily! Hadn't 'Uncle' William been a thorn in her side for so many years? He'd always influenced her parents so that they would think that she was in the wrong.

He'd brainwashed them to the extent that they'd made her marry a man whom she hated to the core! She'd been forced to become a mother and act the dutiful wife just so she could live comfortably. Every day, for so many years, she had patiently dreamt of being able to get rid of her husband. And when it had finally happened, that old man had interfered again, leaving her saddled with these children so that she had to start all over again!

And now once again, when she had almost reached her goal, he had meddled. Instead of letting Sara take the inheritance, he'd arranged matters so that it would land in Nora's lap! But it wasn't enough that he'd guided her to win it but also the person he had arranged to protect her and become her husband.

Demon Frost! Who had not heard of this man in their country? The man was in his early thirties, but he had ruled the city's business and high society with an iron fist for almost a decade now. The man was known to kill his enemy first before inviting anyone to negotiate. And that man was now standing between her and Nora, stopping her from gaining her rightful inheritance.

She winced as she felt the throbbing pain on her cheek, making it difficult to focus on anything else. No wonder she had been so swiftly attacked when she had dared to create trouble for Nora. The bi*ch had actually made complaints to her husband.

Lara looked into the mirror carefully. Her youthful and beautiful appearance was marred with bruises which were still fading to yellow. She had never expected that Nora would be so vicious to hire someone to assault her. She needed to settle these accounts as well. However now that she knew who her opponent was, she was going to be much more careful. Nora was a nobody who was easily manipulated. Demetri Frost was not. She would need to find some weakness in that man so that she would be able to subdue him.

But first, she would have to get rid of the boy. His brother had already been captured by Demetri Frost. While that policeman Alex knew nothing about her identity, Max was a different story altogether. If Max was caught, he might reveal her involvement.

Stumbling upon this senior's mental problems had simply been a gift when she had been trying to get that policeman on her side when he had casually mentioned a suicide last year. A girl had been tortured to death by a stalker. The plan had worked beautifully. She, herself had witnessed how scared Nora had been. And she'd enjoyed it the most! It almost gave her nostalgia as she thought of the time when little Nora used to shiver just at the sound of her voice. Sigh... those were the days when she had the girl under her thumb.

She'd wanted to use Max to torture Nora some more, but now that his identity was compromised... it would be too dangerous. Luckily the boy had not followed his brother but come to them for help.

She looked at the person who had reported everything just now. Picking up a glass of wine, she carefully handed it to him, perching in his lap as she questioned, "What are you going to do with Max? He is of no use anymore. In fact, he could be a danger to us. If he is caught, then he will definitely be sent in for psychological evaluation. And a doctor will be able to tell that he was being guided..."

The other person nodded agreeably, his hands quickly settling on her waist as he caressed her slowly, adding, "Of course I know that. It just seems a waste for him to die alone. I'd worked so hard on him. From slowly switching his medicines to directing his desire towards Nora. At least the boy should have been able to taint her before we needed to get rid of him. But now he has turned from an asset to a liability. It's a pain to handle him..."

Lara caught the button on the man's shirt, slipping it through the hole, as she revealed some skin and whispered, "Fine, you don't handle him. I will. He insists that he wants to be with his brother and take Nora with him. I can tell him..."

As Lara listed her plan, the other person could only listen with wide eyes. This woman seemed to have no boundaries. When Lara first came up with this plan, it had been shocking. And now it was even more so. Even though he felt hesitant, he decided to see this through to the end, if only to not get his name besmirched. He would take care to tie up the loose ends and then himself rid of this woman in his lap. She was like a viper, cool and beautiful on the outside but poisonous inside.

"Nora is being too unkind to you. Your brother was caught by the police and brought in ruthlessly. Max, you have to decide who you love more, Alex or Nora. Your brother has so hard for taking care of you all these years while you have given Nora so much attention and encouragement. But that girl is just an ingrate. You saw for yourself how she treated her own mother. Don't you think that at this time, you should go and help your brother?"

Max looked up from where he was crouching Nora's name and looked at the lady in front of him. At this moment Max, looked unlike the smart and confident senior when he had been talking to Nora in the past, and more like a child who needed to be treated while tears clung to his lashes.

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