

Condition

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Grace

I feel a little uneasy.

What will Alma think when she finds out, I held a funeral for Lily and spent a whole day by her grave?

I don't need to explain everything to Alma or anyone. But something in me just doesn't want Alma to be sad. I don't want her to think that I don't care what Lily did to the Roberto family.

"You are back." The moment we step inside the mansion and get close to the lounge, Alma's voice stops me.

I grimace, imagining the look on her face. She is definitely going to be disappointed. I should have told her before doing all this.

"Alma." I turn around to find her walking towards us.

"Did you take care of everything?" She turns to Tristin and asks.

"I did, Mom." He nods in reply and rubs his shoulder.

My gaze is drawn to Tristin's shoulder. He must be tired. I can tell he didn't sleep well last night, and from the morning, he was dealing with my issues.

I sigh, feeling a little guilty over making him tired.

"How are you feeling now, Grace?" Alma turns to me.



I flinch and direct my gaze towards her. " Fi—Fine, I guess? "

Is she angry? Or is she not angry?

She doesn't look like someone about to blow up, though. She looks like her usual self—soft eyes and a kind smile.

" If you need anything... " She moves past Tristin and reaches me. " Anything...let me know, okay? "

I feel dumbfounded. " O—Okay? "

She smiles and pats my shoulder. " come now. We were waiting for you. Let's have dinner. "

" I am not— "

" Hungry or not, Grace, you need to eat. You can't go without having dinner. " Her smile falls, and a frown settles between her brows.

I was starving, but I didn't want to linger around and make her uncomfortable. I guess that won't work now.

Alma walks towards the dining room. " Come now. "

Tristin smiles when he notices me standing there, pouting and sulking. He comes close and grabs my hand, intertwining our fingers gently.

" Come on. Eat a little, hmm? "

I nod, letting him lead me towards the dining room.



Alma is not alone in there. Ania is already occupying the chair to Alma's right.

A smile spreads on my lips when I see her sitting there. She picks her head, and her lips twitch as if she is barely holding herself back from smiling back.

Thank God.

She finally came out of her room.

"Ania told me you two had a little chat in the greenhouse, and now she feels better." Alma says while Tristin pulls a chair out for me opposite Ania.

"Oh." My cheeks heat up as I take my seat.

Tristin sits beside me and instantly turns my plate. I watch as he piles up food without even asking and then hands me the spoon and fork so I can start eating.

"Thank you." I mumble.

"I should say that." Alma says. "Thank you, Grace."

"I didn't...do anything." My gaze meets her soft eyes.

"You did." She sighs. "You did a lot, Grace. Thank you."

I want to tell her that I didn't do anything again, but I can't bring myself to keep going. I just nod and turn to my full plate.

"You don't need to feel guilty, Grace. No one in this house will judge



Condition

you for mourning a family member anymore. " Alma adds before I can start eating.

A lump forms in my throat at her words. I grip my fork tighter and nod again.

" I mean it. " Alma asserts.

My heartbeat skyrockets as I pick my head and meet her eyes once more. For a moment, I just stare at her, wondering if she is only saying such things because she wants me not to feel bitter...but the sincerity in her eyes is so clear that I can not ignore it.

" Thank you...Alma. " I swallow the lump in my throat.

" Let her eat now, Mom. " Tristin groans, grabbing my hand to direct it towards the plate. " don't bother her. "

Alma scoffs playfully. " You are not even married to her, and you are already taking her side. I don't know what you will do to us when you two have children together. "

The tips of my ears heat up and turn red as I imagine that scenario. Silently, I scoop rice into my spoon and start eating to avoid the teasing topic altogether.

" I am willing to settle my dispute with you two. " Ania speaks up for the first time, her voice loud and clear. " But I have a condition. "

We all turn to her, the food long forgotten. A strange glint flashes across her eyes, peaking my interest in what she is about to say.

" I don't mind any conditions. " Alma smiles sweetly.

Condition

" I don't mind either. " Tristin blurts.

I lean back, taking in the family before me. They are a little chaotic, but the love in their eyes shines brighter than any conflict in their lives.

" What about you? Do you mind? " Ania's looks straight at me, making me jump in my spot.

" M—Me? " I smile awkwardly.

" Yes, in this house, if you are sitting at this table, you are obliged to state your opinion. If you have any objections, speak up now. " She is saying that in a serious tone, but it sounds so funny to me. It's like she is about to hold her wedding.

It makes me smile, but it also warms my heart. It's like she consciously wants me to think that I am a part of their family and my opinions matter.

I sigh. " I don't have any objections...at all. "

" Good. " Ania nods and straightens up. " so my condition is... "

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