

Chapter 32

Alyssa

Zuri's loud cry jolts me out of my sleep, my heart racing as I groggily look around for her. I find Niko standing over me, holding my screaming baby. Her face is red, and she's reaching out desperately for me.

I sit up so fast it's like I'm the Undertaker coming back to life. "Oh my god. Is she okay?" I ask, my voice thick with sleep as I pull her into my arms, trying to soothe her.

"Yeah, I think she just wanted her mama," Niko replies, his tone calm and reassuring.

He's right. The moment she feels my warmth, her cries cease, and she settles against me. It feels so fucking good to know that she still misses me, even when she's with her new favorite person.

"I fed her dinner already and gave her a night bottle," Niko continues, watching me carefully. "Wiped her gums and two little teeth clean too, like I've seen you do every night. So, she should be ready to sleep soon."

I blink, surprised. "Wow...thank you."

Niko really is amazing with her, and he seems to pay attention to everything I do so he can replicate it on his own. It's sad that her own father never put in this much effort.

"How was King with her?" I ask, my voice tinged with curiosity.



This was only the second time he's been alone with her, and I can only imagine how that went. I'm surprised he even offered to watch her at all. That was nice of him after he managed to fuck the life out of me.

Niko grins. "When Mason and I came back, she was just chilling with him."

His eyes flicker to my chest, and I suddenly remember that I'm completely naked, and my breasts are just hanging out like two deflated balloons. I blush and quickly yank the blanket over my bare chest.

I hadn't meant to fall asleep after King said he'd watch Zuri, but I was so out of it, I just passed out. I know how dangerous it is to give in to King, but I crave the rough way he fucks me, the way he makes me feel alive.

Niko's voice cuts through my thoughts. "Do you want to talk about anything?" he asks gently, sitting at the edge of the bed. "I'm here if you do."

I force a smile, appreciating his concern. "Thanks, Niko, but I'm good."

He doesn't look convinced, his eyes searching mine. There's no pity in his gaze, just a guarded look that I can't quite read.

"I know what you probably heard about earlier," I add, quietly, "but I don't want to revisit that again tonight."

His expression softens, and he nods. "I understand, but if you ever

do, you know where to find me."

I nod in return, appreciating his offer more than I can say. There's no way in hell I can talk about it now, but maybe one day. When the wound scabs over again.

"Do you want to watch a movie?" Niko asks, rising from the bed. "She's asleep now, so we've got some time."

I glance down to see that Zuri is indeed asleep in my arms, her little chest rising and falling in a steady rhythm.

I guess I am free tonight then.

"Sure," I agree, realizing I could use the distraction. I don't want to stay up all night by myself drowning in my own mind.

A satisfied glint flashes in Niko's eyes. "Cool. I'll leave you to put some clothes on. He pauses in the doorway, throwing over his shoulder, "Nice tits, by the way."

I blush, shaking my head as his footsteps echo down the stairs. Once Zuri is settled in her crib, I make sure the baby monitor is on and the door is slightly ajar before slipping into a tank top and sleep shorts. When I head downstairs, I find Mason passed out in King's chair. There's a peacefulness on his face that certainly isn't there when he's awake.

Niko is on the couch, a bowl of popcorn in his lap, the flickering light from the TV casting shadows across his sharp features. He looks up when I enter, a crooked smile spreading across his face. "Come on, sweet girl. Sit next to me, I won't bite," he teases.

No, he'll just fuck me with a bottle.

I shrug and sit beside him, and he gently drapes a blanket over me. "How's that? Comfortable?" he asks.

"Yeah," I murmur, curling my legs up on the couch. "So, what are we watching?"

He chuckles, the sound rich and deep. "If it was Mason's pick, it would probably be something that would give you nightmares for months, but luckily, he's out cold. So, it's your pick."

"Ooh, what about Enchanted? It's my favorite Disney movie," I suggest, my tone a bit sheepish.

His lips twitch, amusement dancing in his eyes. "Okay, girly princess movie it is."

Once he finds the movie on whatever streaming channel it's on, I lean into him, feeling the solid warmth of his body against mine. There's a strange sense of comfort in his presence, a security I didn't expect to find.

Niko sighs softly, the sound almost content, and I swear I can hear it in the way his breath catches. His hand slides up my arm, his touch light and teasing, sending shivers down my spine.

"What are you doing?" I gasp, a giggle slipping past my lips. I quickly clamp a hand over my mouth, glancing over at Mason to make sure he's still asleep. I notice he doesn't sleep much, so I know he really needs the rest.



Niko chuckles too, his fingers continuing his slow, deliberate path up my neck. Then, with a gentle grip on my chin, he turns my face towards his. His blue eyes meet mine, the intensity of his gaze making my breath hitch.

He kisses my forehead, then my nose, each touch sending heat flooding through me. He pauses at my lips, hovering so close I can feel his breath ghosting across my skin, waiting for my consent.

My heart skips a beat, and before I can second-guess myself, close the distance between us, pressing my lips to his in a gentle kiss. It's soft, tentative, unlike anything I've experienced with King. I don't know what the hell is happening right now, but I don't hate it. In fact, I want more.

Though I crave King's roughness, there's a gentleness to Niko that feels just as intoxicating in its own way.

When I pull away a moment later, Niko's thumb brushes against my cheek. "See, sweet girl? You don't need him for everything. I can make you feel good too," he purrs.

I don't know what to say, so instead, I lean back against his arm.

I can think about my actions and their consequences later.

The movie plays on, but neither of us is really watching it. Niko's arm wraps around me, pulling me closer until I'm practically curled into his side. His hand strokes my hair gently, lulling me into a sense of peace I haven't felt in a long time.



Eventually, the warmth and comfort of his embrace make my eyelids grow heavy again. I let out a soft yawn, my body relaxing against his as sleep begins to tug at the edges of my consciousness.

Niko chuckles, the sound vibrating through his chest. "Come on, let's get you to bed," he murmurs.

I shake my head sleepily. "No, it's okay. You can turn this off if you want, but I'm okay with just taking a nap right here."

"Okay, sweet girl," he whispers, kissing my forehead as I drift off to sleep.



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